



Ascension
 LUTHERAN CHURCH
 ELCA
 January 2016

Nonprofit Org.
 U.S. POSTAGE
 PAID
 Waukesha, WI
 Permit No. 705

1415 DOPP STREET
 WAUKESHA, WI 53188-4997
CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED



What's in the *January* newsletter

Days of Light	3	The Healthy Aging Brain	10
The Power of Small Groups.....	4	Blood Pressure Check.....	10
Pastoral Acts	4	Sentry Receipts	10
Your Council at Work.....	5	Special Friends.....	10
Gratitude	5	T.E.A. Time	10
Financial Report.....	6	Young at Heart.....	10
Peruvian Choir Update.....	6	Small Group Lenten Study	11
Children's Ministry	7	Reformation Germany Tour.....	11
JOLT	7	A Taste of The Daniel Plan	12
CRASH	7	Cross Lutheran Church Partnership	13
Puppets of Praise.....	8	El Salvador Partnership.....	13
Care Ministries.....	8	Tanzania Partnership.....	14
Winter GriefShare.....	8	ELCA News	15
Winter Yoga.....	8	In Our Own Backyard	16
College Care Package Update.....	8	January 2015	17
Blood Drive	9		

THE *Ascension* NEWSLETTER



Ascension
LUTHERAN CHURCH
ELCA



(262) 547-8518



admin@ascensionelca.org



facebook.com/ascensionlutheran



www.ascensionelca.org



1415 Dopp Street
Waukesha, WI 53188



MONDAY - THURSDAY

9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

FRIDAY

9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

EXECUTIVE STAFF

Pastor

Rev. Christian W. Marien
PC@ascensionelca.org

Pastor

Rev. Angela T. Khabeib
PA@ascensionelca.org

Director of Administration

Amy Gilgenbach
Admin@ascensionelca.org

Director of Care Ministries

Brenda Lytle, RN
Brenda@ascensionelca.org

Director of Faith Formation

Tony Acompanado
Tony@ascensionelca.org

Director of Music Ministries

Vicki Taylor
Vicki@ascensionelca.org

SUPPORT STAFF

Administrator for Joyful Worship and Spiritual Growth

Amy Stryker
AmyS@ascensionelca.org

Administrator for Caring Relation- ships and Mission Outreach

Kate Mattson
Kate@ascensionelca.org

Nursery Staff

Carli Boyer
Rachel Stemper

Wedding Coordinator

Lauri Eckmann
LEckmann@wi.rr.com

MUSIC STAFF

Praise Band Leader

Ben Janzow Ben_janzow@yahoo.com

Folk Choir Leader

Ray Kinney Raywk2003@yahoo.com

CHURCH COUNCIL & MINISTRY TEAM LEADERS

President

Nada Draeger
NJDraeger@msn.com

1st Vice-President

Paul Wehmeier
pwehmeier@wi.rr.com

2nd Vice-President

Cynthia Carlson
cynthiac1966@live.com

Secretary

Katie Voss
katievoss@yahoo.com

Treasurer

Patti Mueller
mombski@aol.com

Members-at-Large

Alan Gilgenbach al@gilgenbach.net
Sheri Greger sheri_frogs@yahoo.com
Becky Klotz Becky.Klotz23@yahoo.com
Jeremy Poling polingi@alumni.msoe.edu
Cathy Rapp catherinerapp@sbcglobal.net
Marcy Schaefer marcymtschaefer@yahoo.com

Director of Ministries

Kelly Hoeg khoeg@wi.rr.com

Director of Operations

Peter Laper
PLaper@oldenburggroup.com

DAYS OF LIGHT

Pastor Chris Marien



What joy to celebrate the birth of our Savior once again in these Christmas days. It always fills me with wonder and awe to see the body of Christ gather to sing the old songs while experiencing the story and love of God in new ways through the journey of Advent darkness to Christmas light. Even as the world often does not know what to do with the birth of our Savior, you and I hear the call of God to be witnesses to the light of God coming into the world.

Now we find ourselves on the edge of the season of Epiphany – the season of light. I am filled with peace in these days of light - each day a reminder of God's presence in my life and in the life of the world. When we see the difficult and painful realities of our world, our hope in Jesus gives us strength to face the days before us.

Some of us are experiencing a broken relationship; some of us are living with the consequences of a decision made long ago; some of us are afraid to reach out to someone in need; some of us are wondering how we will get through one more day; and some of us are fearful of the seemingly downward spiral of a world in turmoil. Through all of these fears and worries, the light of God in Jesus Christ shines chasing away the dark night of our fear.

Our invitation is to trust God and follow God from the manger to the temple to the River Jordan to the healing and saving work of God on the cross and through the gate of death to the other side of the empty tomb. The old Norwegian hymn, *I Am So Glad Each Christmas Eve* reminds us of God's promise.

*I am so glad each Christmas Eve, the night of Jesus' birth!
Then like the sun the star shone forth, and angels sang on earth.
The little child in Bethlehem, he was a king indeed!
For he came down from heaven above to help a world in need.*

He came down from heaven above to help a world in need. This is not a future promise to God's creation, it is a promise already fulfilled. Thanks be to God! In our daily lives, our invitation is to trust what God is doing because of what God has already done. Now there is a promise fulfilled that I can take comfort in during challenging days.

After the Advent Concert Worship weekend, a member of the congregation sent a reflection to the office. I found her words full of the faith we are invited to engage trusting that God is at work in the world. Here are her words.

When I attended the Christmas concert on Dec. 13, I was so moved by [the] production and message I received of Christ's coming to earth to be among us, I felt I had to say something about it. We had the children singing to the glory of God, the choir at its best singing the joy to the world, instrumentalists playing, the Bell Choir ringing their hearts to God, the Folk Choir singing, and Ben and the Praise Band singing for us. The message Pastor Angela read to us was the message that means Christmas to me. I was overwhelmed with joy. As I sat there, I pondered the budget cuts and the many changes in our church in the past several years and I feel that our church is going in the right direction. There is no way we can make changes for the future without stepping on someone's toes. Unfortunately someone gets hurt.

My prayer for 2016 at Ascension is that we all can work together and we can find ways to make up the shortfalls in our budget. We all need to listen to our Lord who speaks to us through the holiday season and all year. Remember my favorite Bible verse, 'I can do anything through Christ who gives me strength.' We can do it, I know we can! ~ Arlene Davis

What I appreciate most about Arlene's words is her unwavering trust in God. In the midst of worship and praise of our God, Arlene saw the light of a manger overflowing with God's love for a world in need. We will never know a day in our lives without a deep and definite need for God's presence. I am grateful to serve among a community of faith where joy is shared; where faith is active; and where our faith finds grounding and strength through the worship of God.

May these days of light in this season of Epiphany bring you joy and peace.



THE POWER OF SMALL GROUPS

Pastor Angela Khabeib

But you are the ones chosen by God, chosen for the high calling of priestly work, chosen to be a holy people, God's instruments to do his work and speak out for him, to tell others of the night-and-day difference he made for you—from nothing to something, from rejected to accepted. ~ 1 Peter 2:9-10

Attending a larger church has many wonderful ministry opportunities. However, it may be difficult to get to know people and create lasting friendships. And that is why I love small group ministry! Small group ministry offers us the wonderful possibility of growing closer to members of our church family. In other words, small group ministry is one of the most important building blocks in church relationships. I have personally experienced the power of small groups. When I was younger, a classmate invited me to her youth group. I accepted her invitation and soon found myself attending an amazing, vibrant youth ministry with nearly 300 youth and young adults. This youth group was part of an even larger congregation. Given this type of church setting, it was challenging to get to know people on a deeper level. That was when I discovered the power of small group ministry. I regularly attended a small group near my home and through that experience, I was able to grow spiritually and develop lifelong friends.

Currently, Ascension has an amazing and vital ministry opportunity available. Although Ascension already has a committed and creative small group ministry team in place, we are seeking a new small group coordinator. This lay leader will work with the small group team and help provide oversight for the Fall and Lenten campaigns. The congregation-wide campaigns are an excellent opportunity for us all to grow in God and to grow closer to one another. I certainly want this vital facet of small groups to continue. We are excited for a new leader to embrace this essential ministry role. Our small group coordinator will be someone who is excited about learning more about God and growing spiritually.

In 1 Peter, we learn that we are connected to Jesus who is our rock, the living stone. In fact, we discover that Jesus has now become our head cornerstone. Likewise, we are also stones -- building materials to be used by God. Therefore, St. Peter encourages us to present ourselves as building stones for the construction of a ministry that is vibrant with life in which we all serve as holy priests. Martin Luther talks about the *priesthood of all believers* because that is precisely what God's word teaches us.

One of the ways we offer ourselves as stones, as building materials for God's kingdom, is through active church leadership. St. Peter tells us that we are chosen to be a holy people, to be God's instruments and to do God's work. He also encourages us to tell others about the difference that God has made in our lives. Sisters and brothers, we are *a royal priesthood*. That means that the ministry of the body of Christ does not solely belong to the pastors for we are all ministers. We are all priests -- offering ourselves to be stones that can help the ministry of Ascension and give life and encouragement to the rest of the body of Christ.

Perhaps the Holy Spirit is calling you to be part of the small groups ministry team? Perhaps the Holy Spirit is calling you, inviting you to become the new small groups coordinator? Perhaps God is calling you to continue to serve Ascension and God's people?



PASTORAL ACTS

Baptisms

December 27 Cooper Kadrach

YOUR COUNCIL AT WORK

Nada Draeger, Council President



I hope that you and your families, friends, and friends who are like family had a wonderful Christmas together! Ascension's church council did not meet formally in December. We had a Christmas party at my home that included spouses but no business agenda; therefore, I have nothing new to report.

I want to wish all of you a blessed and healthy New Year. It is always a time of reflection and of making resolutions. I would encourage each of you to make the resolution to fill out your Time and Talent survey. It will never be too late to do this on-line or to make changes or additions, <http://tinyurl.com/Mission-MinistrySurvey>. There are so many opportunities to become involved in Ascension's many ministries. Please remember that if/when you agree to volunteer for an event or a ministry, Ascension is not expecting a lifetime commitment to that event or ministry. It is okay to try out different ministries! You will find one (or more) that speaks to you!

Council, Wing Leaders, and other ministry leaders are fully committed to Ascension's ten-year Vision Plan. But ARISE 2025 will not be successful without everyone's involvement. Alluding to the Widow's Mite.....maybe this is not the time in your life that you can give a lot, but you can give *some*. Twenty percent of our congregation cannot continue to do eighty percent of the ministries.

Please kick off 2016 and ARISE 2025 with another New Year's resolution -- complete your stewardship pledge card and to become involved in the life of our church, if you haven't yet. I look forward to the New Year beginning with excitement and anticipation!

GRATITUDE

FROM PASTOR CHRIS

On behalf of the Starbucks Corporation, my wife Ileen, and our whole family, I want to share my deep appreciation for your outpouring of joy at the celebration of my first five years at Ascension. It has been one incredible journey. Our family is blessed beyond measure by your faithfulness to God and your sharing of God's love with us. Thank you so much for your tender care of our family. We are grateful to walk this journey of life and faith with you.

~ Pastor Chris, Ileen, Andrew, Anna, Hadley, and Luther



FROM THE VETERANS HOSPITAL

Thanks to the Knit Wits and Military Ministry for all of the beautiful lapghans and the baby knit items for the USO. They love them and appreciate them!

FROM CAROL PETERS

Thank you for the beautiful prayer shawl from GriefShare. I will cherish it always. Thank you also for the special prayer. Your thoughtfulness was greatly appreciated.

If the only prayer you ever say in your life is "thank you" that would suffice. ~ Meister Eckhart

FINANCIAL REPORT

Doug Bue, Acting Treasurer

NOVEMBER 30, 2015 YEAR-TO-DATE

General Fund Activity					
Item	2015	2015	Variance	2014	Variance
	Actual	Plan	to 2015 Plan	Actual	to 2014 Actual
Income					
Contributions	\$543,194	\$602,900	\$(59,706)	\$598,280	\$(55,086)
Rent, Interest, & Other Income	\$60,281	\$54,567	\$5,714	\$60,145	\$136
From Restricted Funds	\$63,534	\$63,642	\$(108)	\$10,751	\$52,783
Total Income	\$667,009	\$721,109	\$(54,100)	\$669,176	\$(2,167)
Expenses					
Communications	\$24,949	\$22,092	\$(2,857)	\$25,337	\$388
Facilities	\$129,911	\$127,181	\$(2,730)	\$139,824	\$9,913
Financial Development	\$89,002	\$89,079	\$77	\$89,042	\$40
Leadership Development	\$637	\$1,567	\$930	\$20,206	\$19,569
Administration	\$237,110	\$238,917	\$1,807	\$194,066	\$(43,044)
Caring Relationships	\$23,513	\$23,918	\$405	\$25,155	\$1,642
Joyful Worship	\$89,526	\$89,656	\$130	\$65,082	\$(24,444)
Mission Outreach	\$54,709	\$58,662	\$3,953	\$65,484	\$10,775
Spiritual Growth	\$75,144	\$88,808	\$13,664	\$82,571	\$7,427
Total Expenses	\$724,501	\$739,880	\$15,379	\$706,767	\$(17,734)
Surplus/(Deficit)	\$(57,492)	\$(18,771)	\$(38,721)	\$(37,591)	\$(19,901)
Mortgage Balance	\$750,121				
Restricted Funds Balance	\$151,973				
General Fund Balance	\$(49,862)				
Ascension Arise Contributions	\$101,570				
Restricted Contributions	\$70,870				

WHAT THE NUMBERS MEAN

Our general contributions are 9.9% behind plan for 2015, and they are 9.2% behind 2014 actual.

Our bottom line is \$38,721 behind plan.

Our general fund balance is currently at a loss of \$49,862.



PERUVIAN CHOIR UPDATE

Vicki Taylor, Director of Music Ministries

We have had very disappointing news from Peru regarding the planned visit of Coro Arpeggio Musical. Last week, the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service denied visas to the choir. This came as a huge shock to the choir since they began the visa application process last summer and followed all instructions given to them throughout the ensuing months. While the choir will reapply for visas, the timing is such that they will not be coming in January. Thank you to Shirley Wehmeier and the Mission Outreach team for their willingness to co-sponsor this event and to all who expressed an interest in hosting students.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Tony Acompanado, Director of Faith Formation

JANUARY SCHEDULE

Jan. 3	9:45–10:35 a.m.	Jesus the Word
Jan. 10	9:45–10:35 a.m.	Epiphany/Jesus' Baptism
Jan. 17	9:45–10:35 a.m.	Wedding at Cana
Jan. 24		No Children's Ministry – School Break
Jan. 31	9:45–10:35 a.m.	Puppets – Large Group Gathering/Jeremiah



JOLT

PIZZA & LASER TAG

Join JOLT for a fun evening of lasertag, trampoline dodgeball, pizza, and more! \$25/person. Meet at church at 5:30 p.m. We'll return to Ascension by 9:30 p.m. RSVP and payment due to Tony, tony@ascensionelca.org, no later than Sunday, Jan. 17.

JANUARY SCHEDULE

Jan. 7	6:30–8 p.m.	JOLT - Advent projects due
Jan. 14	6:30–8 p.m.	JOLT
Jan. 21		No JOLT – School Break
Jan. 28	6:30–8 p.m.	JOLT
Jan. 29	5:30–9:30 p.m.	Pizza & Laser Tag

CRASH

MIME BEGINS

We invite your thoughts and prayers for Ascension's Mime ministry as students and leaders begin preparations for the upcoming performance season. A detailed performance schedule will be available in early February.

DINNER & MOVIE NIGHT

Everybody loves movies and they're even better when paired with food. We're partnering with Christ the Servant Lutheran Church for a fun Dinner and a Movie Night. Students and leaders from CTS will be joining us on our Summer Adventure trip, so this will be a great way to start building new relationships. They will host us at their church and provide dinner. We will bring desserts! Dress comfortably and join us for a fun filled evening! Please RSVP no later than Sunday, Jan. 10, to tony@ascensionelca.org.



DECEMBER SERVICE

In mid-December, a group of CRASH students and leaders committed a Saturday morning to serving at the Milwaukee Rescue Mission. Alongside 200+ other volunteers, Ascension's group sorted thousands of donations, decorated, and then wrapped Christmas gifts for the 500+ children who were blessed to receive gifts through this ministry. Thank you to our students and leaders for this selfless act of service! Check out the video on the CRASH and Ascension Facebook pages.

JANUARY SCHEDULE

Jan. 10	12–2:30 p.m.	Mime lunch & rehearsal
Jan. 17	12–2:30 p.m.	Mime lunch & rehearsal
Jan. 22	6–9 p.m.	Dinner & movie with Christ the Servant Church
Jan. 24	12–2:30 p.m.	Mime lunch & rehearsal
Jan. 31	12–2:30 p.m.	Mime lunch & rehearsal



PUPPETS OF PRAISE

Cheryl Ades Anspach, Ministry Leader

In December, during the Waukesha Christmas Parade, Ascension's Puppets of Praise spread the message that Jesus crosses out the "mis" in misfit. Our toy box float was filled with "fit" toys, puzzle pieces, and, of course, the puppets. We received 2nd place in the Community Group category – way to go! Special thanks go to Shawn Graser at Extreme Woodworking for providing carpentry skills and a warm place to finish the float and to Dan Klemm at Lake Country Candies for providing towing and candy.

In January, we prepare our blacklight performance for Children's Ministry. With the darkness of winter, it is fun to bring this special light to tell stories and praise God.



CARE MINISTRIES

Brenda Lytle, RN, Director of Care Ministries

The New Year brings renewal. Should we improve our health? Should we volunteer and help others? Should we make amends with family and friends? Should we become more organized at home or our places of employment? The New Year gives us a chance to change the way things have been and improve our lifestyle for 2016. I have discussed how our health benefits from volunteering. Helping others makes us feel good psychologically and physically. Care Ministries always has opportunities to volunteer and help others. We are in the midst of growing our Touch-A-Heart Ministry program for 2016 and are looking for volunteers to make meals, do tasks and errands, drive others to church, visit homebound members, or give caregivers a break. Please contact me, at Brenda@ascensionelca.org, if you are interested in learning more.



WINTER GRIEF SHARE

Are you suffering with grief from the loss of a loved one? If you or someone you know is suffering, this GriefShare may help you. It provides a Christian-based program over 12 weeks and provides a great support system. Our new session runs from Jan. 5-March 22, from 6-8 p.m., in Ascension's Youth Room. Pastor Angela will be facilitating the group. A free supper will be available in West Hall, from 5:30-6 for added fellowship before each week's program. If you are interested in GriefShare, contact Brenda, brenda@ascensionelca.org, or attend our first meeting on Jan. 5.

WINTER YOGA

Looking for a way to relieve stress and improve flexibility and fitness for the New Year? Yoga classes start Monday nights, beginning Jan. 11, from 6-7 p.m. Beginners and all ages are welcome! YMCA Instructor Jessica Popp will be teaching. This program is affordable; it is only \$12 for 6 weeks (only \$2/class). Bring your fee and mat to the first session. Bring a friend and see you there!



COLLEGE CARE PACKAGE UPDATE

Seventeen care packages were sent out on Wednesday, Nov. 25, to Ascension college students. The packages contained homemade cookies, candies, snacks and treats, toiletries, and office supplies. Thanks to all of the volunteers and CRASH youth who donated their time and gifts!

BLOOD DRIVE

Ascension is hosting a blood drive on Saturday, Jan. 30, from 8 a.m.-12 p.m., in West Hall. Register at www.bcw.edu/Ascension for an appointment or feel free to walk in!

Blood donation is important to many people, including children like six-year-old Finn Olson, son of Ascension members Heather and Lars Olson. Finn's parents learned about his *broken heart* even before he was born. After birth, Finn endured three open heart surgeries for his congenital heart disease and required numerous units of blood. "He wouldn't have lived through his first week without the blood he began receiving shortly after birth. God bless these people who probably didn't realize they were saving a child's life. They didn't ask, they just gave," Heather remembers thinking as she watched the new units of blood being placed on his IV pole. Today, Finn still receives treatment and will someday need a heart transplant. Let Finn's story about his *broken heart* fill your heart. Please consider donating on Jan. 30.



Finn and Heather Olson

Blood is the essence of life and to give selflessly can make you feel more connected to your community and to the world around you. It's a fulfilling, powerful, and enriching experience to know that your donation could save lives. To donate, you need to:

- Be at least 17 years old (16-year-olds may donate with parental consent)
- Weigh at least 110 lbs
- Feel well on day of donation
- Be free of major cold and flu symptoms
- Present a photo ID with birth date
- Not have had hepatitis after age 11 years
- Not have had any risk factors/behaviors associated with HIV/AIDS
- Most medications are acceptable. For a list of unacceptable medications, please visit the Blood Center's website: www.bcw.edu.
- Antibiotics: You can donate three days after finishing antibiotics for an infection (bacterial or viral). You can donate if you are taking antibiotics to prevent an infection, for example, following dental procedures or for acne. Antibiotics for acne do not disqualify you from donating.
- Dental work: You can donate if there is no infection.
- Flu vaccination: You can donate if you are feeling well.
- Heart disease: Most donors with a history of heart disease that are feeling well and do not have any restrictions may be eligible to donate. Please be prepared to discuss your specific condition with a Donor Specialist.
- Infections: You must be infection-free.
- Injections/Vaccinations: Certain injections and vaccinations require a wait before donating. Please bring the name of the injection or vaccination and the date it was administered.
- Menstruation: Women can donate during their periods.
- Piercings: Ear or body piercing using single-use, sterile equipment is acceptable.
- Pregnancy: Women who are pregnant should not donate. Please wait to donate until 6 weeks after giving birth. Women who are breast-feeding are eligible to donate.
- Tattoos: Restrictions concerning tattoos have changed. If your tattoo was applied by a licensed facility in Wisconsin, you can donate blood. If your tattoo was applied by an unlicensed facility or a facility outside Wisconsin, we require a 12-month waiting period from the time the tattoo was applied.
- Travel: If you have traveled to a malaria area, you may not donate until 12 months after your return.
- Cancer: Certain cancers require a 5-year wait after treatments. Please be prepared to discuss your specific type of cancer with a Donor Specialist.

Unfortunately, fewer than 5% of people who are eligible to donate actually do. Imagine the lives that could be touched by your gift. It's a quick, simple, and amazing way to give back to our community!



THE HEALTHY AGING BRAIN

The U.S. population is aging quickly and we are living longer than ever before. A tremendous threat to the health and well-being of all older Americans is Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. On Jan. 17, from 9:30-10:30 a.m, Brenda Lytle, RN will discuss signs and symptoms, risk factors, and the search for treatments after the diagnosis of these dementias. This in-service is an evidence-based, medical outreach program created by the GrapeVine Project with the Wisconsin Health Foundation.



BLOOD PRESSURE CHECK SENTRY RECEIPTS

Come get your blood pressure checked for free between services in the Hearth Room, on Jan. 3, Feb. 21, March 13, April 3, and May 1. Anyone interested in helping out with these events, please contact Brenda Lytle, Brenda@ascensionelca.org.

We continue to collect grocery receipts from Sentry, Fox Run and Meadowbrook stores, for Ascension's Care Ministries. Make sure receipts are only from these two locations and that a sticker is added to the receipt after purchase. Please put your receipts in the marked bin in the West Hall Donation Center. Thank you!



SPECIAL FRIENDS

Ascension's Special Friends are looking forward to 2016 events. We may not be doing an event every month, but we will definitely do the usual favorites. Please let Marge Schroeder know if there is something else everyone would like to do, mschroeder3030921@gmail.com.

The favorites are:

- Country Springs waterpark (Jan.)
- Tim Tebow Prom (Feb.)
- Touch of Glaze ceramic painting (March possibly before Easter)
- Bowling (possibly May)
- Fun on Pewaukee Lake (Aug.)
- Miniature golf (Sept.)
- Trick or Treat at the zoo (Oct.)
- Christmas Parade (Nov.)

Special Friends Service Project

We will continue to do our service projects: Feed the Kids food prep (June) and Salvation Army Red Kettle Bell Ringing (Dec.).



T.E.A. TIME: TEACH, ENCOURAGE, ACHEIVE

Starting Jan. 3, join us for some TEA Time, sponsored by Supermoms, in the Prayer Room. TEA Time will be the first Sunday of each month. Bring your faith, love...and a friend! If you have questions, please email Jessica Jahner, jessicajahner@gmail.com.



YOUNG AT HEART

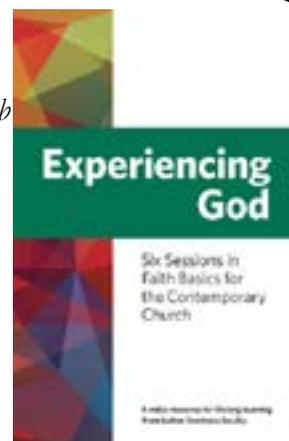
Young at Heart is for any member or non-member friend of Ascension that is over 55. We meet the 3rd Wednesday of each month. We start with a potluck luncheon and then have entertainment or an educational event. After that, we play games. Currently, we have a group that plays Sequence and a group that plays Sheepshead. We are open to new games. We start at noon and end at 3 p.m. We encourage you to join us for lunch and stay as long as you can. Please join us for our January event on the 20th, in East Hall. If you have questions, contact Celeste Defenbaugh at 262-370-4522, Beth Hoffmann at 262-542-7447, or Arlene Davis at 262-542-9119.

SMALL GROUP LENTEN STUDY

Pastor Angela Khabeb

Join our Small Group Lenten Journey video series - *Experiencing God: Six Sessions in Faith Basics for the Contemporary Church*. As we continue our faith journeys, we will further explore our Lutheran heritage with an exciting study. Our six week journey begins on the first Sunday of Lent, Feb. 14, and continues until Sunday, March 20.

This series features ten faculty members from Luther Seminary (Frederick Gaiser, Sarah Henrich, Mary Hess, Diane Jacobson, David Lose, Lois Malcolm, Alan Padgett, Steve Paulson, Matthew Skinner, and Richard Wallace) who help to connect us with the God who is present as Creator, Savior, and Spirit. These leaders invite us to “come and meet the Creator who is flesh and spirit for you.” *Experiencing God* is an intimate glimpse into the heart of God that will help form a mature image of the triune God. Experience an authentic encounter with a God who enters human history and transforms our destiny from death to life.



RICH DISCUSSION AWAITS

Session 1: Who is God?

Our Search for God? Or God's Search for Us?
Let God be God
God the Creator

Session 4: Jesus: God With Us

Beyond Tragedy
Jesus, Once and Always
The Great Reversal

Session 2: What Kind of God?

Is God Angry?
Is God Father?
God - Father, Son and Spirit

Session 5: Who (or What) is the Holy Spirit?

The Spirit and Spirituality
The Spirit and the World
The Spirit in the Bible

Session 3: Jesus: God's Surprise

More Than We Expected
God Was in Christ
A Teacher and More

Session 6: The Spirit is Life

The Spirit's Work
Experiencing the Spirit
Signs of the Spirit

Join us as we grow in faith! Current small group leaders and those interested in leading a new group should contact Pr. Angela, pa@ascensionelca.org, by Jan. 25 so materials can be ordered.

REFORMATION GERMANY TOUR

Make your deposit for the 2016 Reformation Germany Tour by Easter and you will save 5%! That's a savings of over \$100! Trip dates are filling up quickly because we will actually celebrate Reformation Sunday in Germany! Please contact Peggy Thrasher for more information: letstalksoon@hotmail.com or 262-442-8841.



*I have held many things in my hands, and I have lost them all;
but whatever I have placed in God's hands, that I still possess.
~ Martin Luther*



A TASTE OF THE DANIEL PLAN

Steve and Carol Spieker

The holidays have come and gone. How did you fare? Were you one of the average Americans that gained 7 – 10 pounds over the holiday season? It's not surprising when you consider the amount of sugar people consume, especially over the holidays. Most Americans are truly addicted to sugar. It is said that a sugar addiction is harder to break than a cocaine addiction.

It is no wonder. Sugar is in everything...and in outrageous proportions! Most people only think about the white sugar they bake with or perhaps throw in their coffee or on their cereal. That is only the beginning. Go to your cabinets right now and take out a couple of items. Read the labels. Each one probably contains sugar or one or more of the “sugars” contained within the following list. (This, by the way, is only about half of the alternate names for sugar.)

<i>Barley Malt</i>	<i>Date Sugar</i>	<i>High-Fructose Corn Syrup</i>	<i>Raw Sugar</i>
<i>Beet Sugar</i>	<i>Dextran</i>	<i>Honey (natural)</i>	<i>Refiner's Syrup</i>
<i>Brown Sugar</i>	<i>Dextrose</i>	<i>Icing Sugar</i>	<i>Rice Syrup</i>
<i>Cane Juice Crystals</i>	<i>Fructose</i>	<i>Lactose</i>	<i>Sorbitol</i>
<i>Cane Sugar</i>	<i>Fruit Juice</i>	<i>Maltodextrin</i>	<i>Sorghum Syrup (natural)</i>
<i>Caramel</i>	<i>Fruit Juice Concentrate</i>	<i>Maltose</i>	<i>Sucralose (Splenda)</i>
<i>Corn Syrup</i>	<i>Glucose</i>	<i>Malt Syrup</i>	<i>Sucrose</i>
<i>Corn Syrup Solids</i>	<i>Glucose Solids</i>	<i>Maple Syrup (natural)</i>	<i>Sugar</i>
<i>Confectioner's Sugar</i>	<i>Golden Sugar</i>	<i>Molasses</i>	<i>Turbinado Sugar</i>
<i>Carob Syrup</i>	<i>Grape Sugar</i>	<i>Muscovado Sugar</i>	<i>Yellow Sugar</i>

The Daniel Plan refers to sugar as the *white menace*. When sugar enters your body, it triggers a cascade of changes in your body that make you sick and fat. Here's what happens: You ingest sugar or refined carbs like white flour or pasta. Your blood sugar spikes. Your insulin levels spike. Insulin triggers the storage of belly fat and increases your appetite and sugar cravings. This leads to overeating and obesity which unleashes a host of other problems.

This New Year, make it your resolution to make a conscious effort to reduce sugar in your diet. (Don't switch to artificial sweeteners.) We recently wrapped up a 6 week Daniel Plan study in Dec. We treated the participants to a “treat” every week. Nothing contained a grain of sugar. Ask any of the group members and they will tell you they had no problem enjoying what we brought. Thought for 2016: Read your labels!

4 MINUTE CHICKEN

Ingredients

- 1 large chicken breast cut Skinny Chicken style (medallions)
- 2 T coconut oil (or olive oil if you cook on medium low heat)
- 1 1/2 tsp. all-purpose seasoning
- 1 cup asparagus, sliced very thin on a bias
- 1 cup mushrooms, sliced very thin
- Sea salt & pepper, to taste

Preparation:

In a bowl, combine coconut oil and all purpose seasoning. Add chicken medallions and massage well, coating the chicken evenly. In a hot skillet, place chicken in pan, cover and let cook 2 minutes. Turn chicken over. Cover chicken with asparagus and mushrooms. Cover pan and cook 2 minutes. Season to taste with sea salt and pepper. Serve. Optional: Zucchini, onions, tomatoes and most easy to cook vegetables work well with this recipe.

CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH PARTNERSHIP

CROSS LUTHERAN MARDI GRAS BALL

The 2016 Cross Mardi Gras Ball is Friday, Feb. 5, at the Sheraton Hotel in Brookfield. The doors open at 5:30. Tickets are \$75 and the food selections are:

--Flame Broiled Flat Iron Steak topped with portabella mushroom sauce

--Chicken Galliano topped with a Galliano garlic cream sauce.

A vegetarian option is also available. Please purchase tickets as soon as possible and no later than Jan. 18. Ascension is hoping to fill two tables for this fun way to help support our partners. For more information and to register, contact Shirley Wehmeier, pwehmeier@wi.rr.com, or Dave Hammer, d-bhammer@wi.rr.com. Cross is also in need of items for the auction. Please contact Pat Coleman, at 414-540-2184.



OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN TOGETHER WITH CROSS PARTNERS

Ascension is one of at least six congregations working together with the members and friends of Cross Church to help bring justice and empowerment to the community of people Cross serves. Cross is offering an opportunity for its partners to take part in a new endeavor - antiracism training with members of Cross and all the partner congregations.

The training is Sunday afternoon, Jan. 17 and all day, Monday, Jan. 18 (MLK Day). Racial Justice Director Martha Barry and CEO Paula Penebaker from the YWCA will lead discussions

about racism, internal racial oppression, privilege, and how these things keep us from reaping the fullness from our partnership! These sessions will be held at Cross of Life Lutheran Church, 2700 W. North Ave., in Brookfield and are open to all partner members.

Consider committing to this training and learning more about how we can work to dismantle racism within ourselves and our communities. For more information, contact Dave Hammer, d-bhammer@wi.rr.com.



EL SALVADOR PARTNERSHIP

NEWS FROM SAN JORGE

Please receive a warm welcome the church of the Miracle of God in San Jorge and from Pastor Blanca Lidia Chavez.

Brothers and sisters, I am working with the children that were given their first communion, assisting them with Bible studies, taking away their nervousness so they can lead the readings on Sunday mornings. I am very pleased with this group of children. We are also working with them on Wednesdays. They are very happy to receive this opportunity... We pray that God will pour abundant blessings in all of your lives. We hope to hear from you soon and we wish all of you a Merry Christmas.

To see more photos from San Jorge, see the Ascension Mission Outreach Facebook page.

SPRING BREAK MISSION TRIP

We had so much interest for our last El Salvador trip that we are exploring assembling another delegation for Easter week 2016. As we agreed to when we signed our partnership covenant, our trip will consist of activities to build relationships with our brothers and sisters in San Jorge and to learn more about El Salvador. At the request of the Salvadorans and the advice of the ELCA missionary to Central America, we are also likely to meet with officials at the US Embassy to be an advocate for economic development and processes for peace.

One concern about travel to Central America is whether or not it is safe. While it is true that our brothers and sisters are forced to deal with the effects of gang violence, the reality is that visitors from the US are almost never the victims of crime in El Salvador. Instead, we are able to travel in safety, and our Salvadoran hosts are able to have wonderful experiences that they would be unable to have without our presence.

Financial assistance will be available. Contact Sarah Wehmeier Aparicio, web22@hotmail.com, for more information.





TANZANIA PARTNERSHIP

NEWS FROM PASTOR LEMA

As we take the first steps of partnership with a Tanzanian congregation, Pastor Lema writes:

I am happy to have this mere opportunity to say again thank you very much for your generosity and all you did for me during my stay with you.

My people here, including my lovely family, highly appreciate and joyously express their sincere feeling as I told them all about my trip and good stay with you. The only word together we can say is God bless you abundantly!

Dear friends in Christ, I aim to convey a lot of greetings from my partnership committee and all member of congregation here in our three parishes. We wish you all the best in serving your Lord God. It is this opportunity I also take to say warmly welcome in partnering with us – I can't mention or explain exactly how our people here feel once they heard this wonderful story of you becoming our partner. Great excitement and joy overwhelm them with only word of warmly welcome. Together with synod opinion that you can become partner the same as St. Luke it sounds very good, but becoming partner with Samaria (single parish) sounds good too, so our parishes are much flexible with your partnership feeling/desire. This implies that whatever you decide to be is agreeable to us all here. Our heart is widely opened to you just come in our Brothers and Sisters in Christ - we love you and pray for you ever.

Dear friends, I lastly wish you all the best during this Advent season where in our side is a high season of many church activities including different ceremonies attained by our people like baptism, confirmation, and weddings etc. Church leaders are busy everywhere, possibly you too.

Let our Lord God keep and guide you,

In prayer and love I remain,

Rev. Elias Lema.



MOUNT MERU MEDICAL MINISTRY

Did you know that one of the ministries of the Mount Meru Diocese is a hospital? The Greater Milwaukee Synod is one of the major sponsors of this important project. The hospital has fallen on difficult times in recent years, and in an effort to improve efficiency and quality of care, the Diocese has hired a hospital administrator from Belgium. In addition to her professional abilities, this administrator has spent a considerable amount of time volunteering at the Diocese's hospital, so she brings many experiences to this position.

One of the consequences of the hospital's troubles has been that the doctors and nurses have been working without pay. Although the monthly salary for a nurse is \$250 and \$600 for a doctor, the Diocese has struggled to pay even these meager salaries. Donations to the Meru Diocese's hospital not only allow people living in poverty to receive medical care, but also provides employment to Tanzanian doctors and nurses, giving a much needed boost to the local economy. If you are interested in supporting this vital ministry, contact Sarah Wehmeier Aparicio, web22@hotmail.com, for more information.

*Go into all the world and preach the Gospel.
~ Mark 16:15*

ELCA NEWS

CONFRONTING RACISM: A HOLY YEARNING

Racism remains an enduring crisis in the United States. As Lutheran Christians, we must continue our involvement in and commitment to the important work of naming racism as a sin – a violation of God’s intention for humanity.

Please join others for another live webcast on *Confronting Racism: A Holy Yearning*, on Jan. 14, at 8 p.m., in Ascension’s sanctuary. This conversation will focus on offering a variety of perspectives on the U.S. criminal justice system. As with the previous webcast, the ELCA will continue to ground the webcast by two commitments. One is the ELCA’s proclamation of Christ and the confidence that this good news brings to set us free from the captivity of racism. The second is the ELCA’s enduring commitment to address the complexity of racism and end discrimination.

Mission Outreach will host an opportunity to watch the webcast together followed by a discussion. Even if you were not able to participate in the first webcast, we invite you to join the conversation. We will meet in the sanctuary.

You may read more about this webcast at www.ELCA.org/webcast, where a link to the live webcast will be provided. A live stream also will be available at www.Facebook.com/Lutherans. If you would like to submit a question to be considered during the live webcast, please send it to livinglutheran@elca.org and provide your name and your congregation’s name, city, and state.

WHERE DOES MY OFFERING GO?

A significant portion of Ascension’s Mission Outreach budget goes to the national church, the Evangelical Church in America. In 2014, members of nearly 10,000 congregations in the United States and Caribbean gave \$1.8 billion in regular offerings to support ELCA ministries. When members give through their congregations, a percentage of that money is then shared with the local synod and the national churchwide organization. Of the \$1.8 billion total, the churchwide organization received \$48.4 million, or 2.8 percent of the total regular offerings to ELCA congregations in 2014. This represents the largest portion of the ELCA churchwide organization’s current operating budget of \$70.5 million, which includes additional income from investments, bequests and trusts, grants, and certain designated offerings.

In 2014, 27 percent of this amount went towards growing the church in the US by:

- Planting and supporting 340 new congregations
- Enabling congregations to renew their ministries and reach out to their surrounding communities
- Working together with our African Descent, American Indian and Alaska Native, Arab and Middle Eastern, Asian and Pacific Islander, and Latino/Latina members to develop networks and resources for ministry
- Developing and sharing resources for faith, discipleship, prayer, and worship

Watch the weekly announcements for more information on other ways your offerings are used by the greater ELCA.





IN OUR OWN BACKYARD

HOPE CENTER

Save the Date For Taste of Hope!

The 6th Annual Taste of Hope is Thursday, Feb. 4, at Thunder Bay Grille, Pewaukee. Event details and registration information will be coming soon!

Spread the Warmth!

Once again, Aly Schmidt is running her Spread the Warmth Sock Drive to benefit Hope Center! The drive is looking for new socks in all sizes, as well as new or gently-used hats, gloves, scarves, winter coats, and sweatshirts. For more information, and donation sites visit www.hopecenterwi.org.

Jump For Hope!

Sky Zone Trampoline Park has given Hope Center tickets to sell, with proceeds benefitting Hope Center! For \$15, you get 60 minutes of jumping! You can pick up tickets at Hope Center during our normal office hours: Monday-Friday, 8 a.m-4 p.m.



MULTI-CONGREGATION ADULT MISSION TRIP

There will be an adult mission trip to Harlan, Kentucky, Sunday, April 18-Saturday, April 23, 2016, sponsored by St. Luke's, Waukesha; Dr. Martin Luther, Oconomowoc; Church of the Resurrection, Pewaukee; and Atonement, Muskego. We'll be working with the Mennonite Central Committee at a SWAP (Sharing with Appalachian People) site in southeastern Kentucky. For more information, check out their website at <http://mcc.org/get-involved/serve/volunteer/swap>. We have room for 50 to 55 adults We expect this trip to fill quickly, so registration will be first come, first served.

Who: Any adult, 18 years and older

What: Appalachian Adult Mission Project

When: Sunday, April 17 - Saturday, April 23

Where: Harlan, Kentucky

How: Traveling in 15 passenger vans for a 10 hour trip to Appalachia

Cost: \$450/person (financial assistance available)

Why: The opportunity to be God's hands and feet to those living in one of the poorest regions of the country; the opportunity to be in fellowship with some incredible people from Southeastern Wisconsin; the opportunity to travel to a region with a culture very different from our own; and the opportunity to have a lot of fun!

The kickoff meeting will be Wednesday, Jan. 6, at 6:30 p.m., in Cloninger Hall, at St. Luke's, Waukesha to give you trip details. At the kickoff meeting, we would like to have a \$50 deposit (check made out to Atonement Lutheran Church) and your Volunteer Information Form, either hardcopy or electronic. You can fill out an electronic version of the Volunteer Information Form at, <http://tinyurl.com/waukeshachurchstrip>.

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact any of the four members of the organizing team listed below: Dave Dringenburg, Atonement, Muskego; Don French, St Luke's, Waukesha; Rev. Larry Harpster, Dr. Martin Luther, Oconomowoc; Rev. Liz Rossing, Church of the Resurrection, Pewaukee.

JANUARY 2015

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
					1 New Year's Day Office Closed	2
3 8:30am Worship 9:45am Adult Ed. 9:45am Children's Ministry 9:45am Puppets visits EH 9:45am TEA Time PR 10am Blood Pressure Screening 10:45am Worship 6pm AA mtg WH 7pm AA closed mtg WH	4 9:45am AI Anon WH 5:30pm Prayer Group PR 6:30pm AMEN 107	5 6:30am AMEN 107 9:30am TGIT 107 9:30am Women's Bible Study HR 6pm GriefShare YR 6:30pm Mission Outreach 107 7pm Mutual Ministry PR	6 Epiphany 8am Privated Group PR 9am Young at Heart, Denny's 9:30am Cross Meal 12:30pm Private NR 12:30pm Women's Nurture PR 6pm Handbells S 7pm Wisdom AA WH 7:30pm Choir S	7 10am AI Anon WH 1pm TGBG PR 1pm Quilting at Bissett's 5:15pm Angel Choir S 5:45pm Joyful Sounds S 6:30pm JOLT EH, S 7pm Ballantyne 107 7pm Care Ministries 106	8	9
10 8:30am Worship 9:45am Adult Ed. 9:45am Children's Ministry 9:45am Puppets EH 10:45am Worship 12pm Mime lunch WH 12:45pm Mime EH, S 1pm Private Group WH 6pm AA mtg WH 7pm AA closed mtg WH	11 9:45am AI Anon WH 1pm Living Letters 106 6pm Yoga EH 6:30pm AMEN 107	12 6:30am AMEN 107 9:30am Women's Bible Study HR 1pm Pastoral Assistants 6pm GriefShare YR 7pm Holloway 107	13 8am Private Group PR 11:45am Men's Nurture 106 12:30pm Private NR 6pm Handbells S 7pm Wisdom AA WH 7:30pm Choir S	14 10am AI Anon WH 1pm Quilting at Bissett's 5:15pm Angel Choir S 5:45pm Joyful Sounds S 6:30pm JOLT EH, S 7pm Ballantyne 107 7pm Military Ministry 106 8pm Confronting Racism S	15 Newsletter Deadline	16 8am Knit Wits EH 10:30am Folk Choir S
17 8:30am Worship 9:45am Adult Ed. 9:45am Children's Ministry 9:45am Puppets EH 10am Aging Brain EH 10:45am Worship 12pm Mime lunch WH 12:45pm Mime EH, S 6pm AA mtg WH 7pm AA closed mtg WH	18 MLK Day 9:45am AI Anon WH 5:30pm Prayer Group PR 6pm Yoga EH 6:30pm AMEN 107	19 6:30am AMEN 107 9:30am TGIT 107 9:30am Women's Bible Study HR 6pm GriefShare YR 7pm Council 107	20 8am Private Group PR 12pm Young at Heart Potluck EH, WH, K 12:30pm Women's Nurture PR 12:30pm Private NR 6pm Handbells S 7pm Wisdom AA WH 7:30pm Choir S	21 10am AI Anon WH 1pm TGBG PR 1pm Quilting at Bissett's 5:15pm Angel Choir S 7pm Ballantyne 107	22 6pm CRASH Dinner & Movie EH	23 10am Private Event EH
24 8:30am Worship 9:45am Puppets EH 10:45am Worship 12pm Mime lunch WH 12:45pm Mime EH, S 6pm AA mtg WH 7pm AA closed mtg WH	25 9:45am AI Anon WH 6pm Yoga EH 6:15pm Knit Wits WH 6:30pm AMEN 107	26 6:30am AMEN 107 9:30am Women's Bible Study HR 6pm GriefShare YR 7pm Holloway 107	27 8am Private Group PR 12:30pm Private NR 6pm Handbells S 7pm Wisdom AA WH 7:30pm Choir S	28 10am AI Anon WH 1pm Quilting at Bissett's 5:15pm Angel Choir S 5:45pm Joyful Sounds S 6:30pm JOLT EH, S 7pm Ballantyne 107	29 5:30pm JOLT Pizza & Laser Tag	30 6:30am Blood Drive WH 5pm Puppets EH
31 8:30am Worship 9:45am Children's Ministry 9:45am Puppets Perform EH 10:45am Worship 12pm Praise Band S 12pm Mime lunch WH 12:45pm Mime EH, S 6pm AA mtg WH 7pm AA closed mtg WH			Room Key EH = East Hall HR = Hearth Room K = Kitchen N = Narthex NR = Nursery PL = Parking Lot PR = Prayer Room S = Sanctuary WH = West Hall YR = Youth Room			