



Ascension
LUTHERAN CHURCH
ELCA
February 2016

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THE *Ascension* NEWSLETTER



Ascension
LUTHERAN CHURCH
ELCA



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1415 Dopp Street
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MONDAY - THURSDAY

9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

FRIDAY

9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

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CALLED TO LEAD

Pastor Angela Khabeb

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



This article may sound very familiar to you. Please rest assured that you are not experiencing a case of *deja vu*. I am sharing this article from January's newsletter again. It is my hope that someone will read it again or perhaps for the first time and hear God's voice calling him or her to the Small Group Ministry Team.

Last month, I shared with you how vital Small Group Ministry was for me as a teenager and young adult. I love small group ministry! In a larger church setting, it may be challenging to get to know people on a deeper level. But meeting regularly with a group for bible study and fellowship is an excellent avenue to learn more about God's activity in and throughout our lives. Through small group participation, we grow spiritually, and create lasting relationships. In fact, I still have friends that I met through my high school small group from Omaha, NE back in 1986. Basically, small group ministry is one of the most important building blocks in church relationships.

In 1Peter, 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 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, but 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.

Currently, we have an amazing and vital ministry opportunity. Even though we have a wonderful Small Group Ministry team already in place, there is an opening for a small group coordinator. This lay leader will work with the small group team and help provide oversight for the Fall and Lenten Campaigns. 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.

Unfortunately, without a new small group coordinator, this ministry will be less vibrant and dynamic. Our churchwide campaigns are an excellent opportunity for us to grow in God and to grow closer to one another. I certainly want this vital facet of small groups to continue. 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 group coordinator? Perhaps God is calling you to continue to serve Ascension and God's people?



WALK THE ROAD OF LENT

Pastor Chris Marien

Ash Wednesday will be celebrated on February 10 at both 12 p.m. and 7 p.m. at Ascension. You are invited to gather with your brothers and sisters to worship God and be reminded that God cares about your whole life.

In Lent, we hear God's promises in new ways...that EVERY end is a beginning; that EVERY night gives way to morning; that EVERY hurt can be healed; that EVERY broken moment can be redeemed; that EVERY life lost can be found; that EVERY cross carried can be given to Jesus; that EVERY prayer spoken is heard.

In my life, Lent is the ground on which I walk the journey of my faith. Sometimes the ground is hard and packed down. In other areas, the ground is dry and cracked. Still other roads are muddy and hard to navigate. And then in the season of Lent, I am blessed – as are you blessed – with soft and fertile ground ready and waiting for the new thing God promises to do in each of our lives...should we choose to be open to what God will do in us and through us. Will you choose to walk the road of Lent? Will you let your journey of faith lead you in a new direction at God's invitation? The invitation has been made...God waits for each of us...will you come?

I wrote those words last year to share the wonder of God's promise to be with us. The words were important enough to share with you again as the season of Lent arrives with Ash Wednesday.

After the four weeks of Advent that lead us to Christmas, the 40 days that make up the season of Lent, leading us to Easter, provide the most powerful witness to the events of Holy Week that call us to an empty tomb on Easter morning. God provides everything we need on our journey. You only need to hear God's call and follow. I know that sounds easier than it is. Our journeys of faith are so often complicated by schedules, careers, children, parents, spouses, weather, and those *life* circumstances beyond our control. It is true. And then, it is not true.

Our individual journeys of faith are of God's design. Not one of us travels the same road and yet our journeys provide moments of awareness of the other. I am reminded of the words of the song:

Will you let me be your servant? Let me be as Christ to you? Pray that I might have the grace to let you be my servant, too. We are pilgrims on a journey, we are travelers on the road. We are here to help each other walk the mile and bear the load.

Lent is our opportunity to travel the road together to *help each other walk the mile and bear the load*. You are invited to join us on this journey through Lent. Come and see the new thing God is doing. Peace be with you.



ASH WEDNESDAY AND LENTEN WORSHIP

The Season of Lent begins with Ash Wednesday, Feb. 10. We will gather for worship at both 12 p.m. and 7 p.m. for worship with the Imposition of Ashes and Holy Communion.

Our hope is that these days of Lent will provide a time and space for each of us to deepen our relationship with God. Wednesday nights in Lent will begin with soup suppers at 6 p.m. and worship at 7 p.m. Wednesday worship will include communion as we ground ourselves in God's grace and are reminded of the ways in which we hunger for God's presence.

Please join us for soup and worship on Wednesday, Feb. 17 and 24 and Wednesday, March 2, 9, and 16.

LOVE YOUR CHURCH, LOVE YOUR WORLD

Pastor Chris Marien

As the world and the Hallmark Company will celebrate Valentine's Day on Feb. 14, here at Ascension we invite you to consider celebrating the gift of love in a slightly different way.

During the month of February, we are celebrating Love Your Church, Love Your World month. On the windows of the sanctuary are a variety of hearts with different items the church can use in this new year.

Along with the items the church is seeking to assist in ministry in 2016, we are also inviting you to consider items that will be shared with our partner churches throughout the world. In El Salvador, we are hoping to help the Agroferreteria with more supplies. In the Meru Diocese of Tanzania, we want to assist in the building of the relationship with our sister congregation, the Samaria parish. At Cross Lutheran Church in Milwaukee, we are hoping to assist with items needed for the Bread of Healing Clinic.

The great gift in giving through Love Your Church, Love Your World month is in sharing in the journey of faith we will walk together as the people of God.



PASTORAL ACTS

Baptisms

January 3 Emma Bradley (*pictured left*)

January 21 Beckam Blaschko (*pictured right*)



STARTING POINT NEW MEMBER CLASS

Amy Gilgenbach, Director of Administration

Interested in joining our church community? We will hold a Starting Point session Sunday, Feb. 14, between services. Please register and submit the new member form online <http://tinyurl.com/AscensionNewMembers> or contact the church office (262-547-8518 or admin@ascensionlca.org) to let us know you're interested. If for some reason you can't attend the class, please let us know! We can make other arrangements.



PHOTO DIRECTORY

Amy Gilgenbach, Director of Administration

I'm happy to announce that the wait for the member photo directory is almost over! Thank you to all who submitted photos. Out of 446 member households, 268 families submitted photos for the directory, a great response rate.

The directory will be available for pick-up on Sunday, Feb. 14. It will also be available for viewing (members only) on our website.





YOUR COUNCIL AT WORK

Nada Draeger, Council President

I was not at January's council meeting, so cannot write about the agenda outcome. I know Paul Wehmeier, incoming council president, will update everyone in March's newsletter.

As I write this goodbye (of sorts), it feels pretty anticlimactic. I was looking forward to spending one final meeting with this wonderful group. I know Paul will lead the 2016 council members forward in our ten year vision plan. I truly feel that it is God's plan that we have three members who were willing and excited to stay on council for another term. Craig Greenwood, who has facilitated ARISE 2025, is also joining council as 2nd vice president. This development only further solidifies the vision's success.

I want to thank everyone who contributed to the council process this past year and to the success of ARISE 2025's year-long planning. It has been an honor to serve as your council president.



FINANCIAL REPORT

Doug Bue, Acting Treasurer

DECEMBER 31, 2015 YEAR-TO-DATE

General Fund Activity

Item	2015 Actual	2015 Plan	Variance to 2015 Plan	2014 Actual	Variance to 2014 Actual
Income					
Contributions	\$618,075	\$670,000	\$(51,925)	\$659,622	\$(41,547)
Rent, Interest, & Other Income	\$61,058	\$60,000	\$1,058	\$66,908	\$(5,850)
From Restricted Funds	\$69,070	\$69,428	\$(358)	\$13,551	\$55,519
Total Income	\$748,203	\$799,428	\$(51,225)	\$740,081	\$8,122
Expenses					
Communications	\$27,302	\$24,100	\$(3,202)	\$27,187	\$(115)
Facilities	\$139,654	\$135,016	\$(4,638)	\$146,173	\$6,519
Financial Development	\$97,097	\$97,162	\$65	\$97,123	\$26
Leadership Development	\$1,132	\$1,600	\$468	\$20,206	\$19,074
Administration	\$258,185	\$260,637	\$2,452	\$214,606	\$(43,579)
Caring Relationships	\$25,356	\$26,093	\$737	\$27,416	\$2,060
Joyful Worship	\$99,170	\$97,738	\$(1,432)	\$73,576	\$(25,594)
Mission Outreach	\$60,293	\$67,000	\$6,707	\$74,252	\$13,959
Spiritual Growth	\$81,994	\$96,382	\$14,388	\$89,783	\$7,789
Total Expenses	\$790,183	\$805,728	\$15,545	\$770,322	\$(19,861)
Surplus/(Deficit)	\$(41,980)	\$(6,300)	\$(35,680)	\$(30,241)	\$(11,739)
Mortgage Balance	\$743,995				
Restricted Funds Balance	\$150,901				
General Fund Balance	\$(34,350)				
Ascension Arise Contributions	\$118,663				
Restricted Contributions	\$81,573				

WHAT THE NUMBERS MEAN

Our general contributions are 7.8% behind plan for 2015, and they are 6.3% behind 2014 actual.

Our bottom line is \$41,980 behind plan.

Our general fund balance is currently at a loss of \$34,350.

CONGREGATION STATISTICS 2015

Amy Gilgenbach, Director of Administration

Every year in February, as a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), Ascension reports to the Greater Milwaukee Synod the membership and attendance information listed below. These statistics are compiled from our membership database, information from worship and ministry leaders, and the pew pad forms you fill out.

Over the past four years, Ascension has made an effort to clean up our membership rolls. This effort has resulted in a leaner but more accurate and, consequently, more functional membership roll.

Please remember to update the church office with any changes to your household record (address, phone, adult child moving out, etc.). We do our best to keep track of all our congregation members but sometimes, the only information we have comes from you. You may call the church office, email admin@ascensionelca.org, or use one of the membership forms on our website <http://ascensionelca.org/membership/> to update your household record.

I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me - just as the Father knows me and I know the Father - and I lay down my life for the sheep. ~ John 10:14-15

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Baptized Membership	1878	1856	1713	1496	1322	1124
Confirmed Membership	1397	1394	1306	1137	1037	879
Average weekly worship	589	600	560	561	524	444
New members, including baptisms	72	63	58	28	82	48
Releases/transfers (by request, inactivity or statistical adjustment)	43	78	195	237	250	237
Deaths	8	7	6	8	6	9
Confirmation	12	30	16	15	23	7
Total number of people (including children) actively participating in the life of the congregation	1525	1500	1130	1386	1216	1072

The following information is not reported to the ELCA but is tracked for our own statistical purposes. Please note that member and non-member activities are counted.

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Children's Ministries (Sunday School, 3k-5th gr.)	202*	176	179	151	123**	87
JOLT (gr. 6-9)	30	47	84	68	60	37***
CRASH (gr. 9-12)	34	17	35	70	40	38
Total children involved in Spiritual Growth ministries	266	240	298	289	251	162
Baptisms	19	27	17	22	26	18
Marriages	6	8	13	6	8	4
Funerals	12	13	12	10	10	9

Note * -- Includes 6th grade

Note ** -- Incomplete

Note ***-- Grades 6-8 only





CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Tony Acompañado, Director of Faith Formation

FEBRUARY SCHEDULE

7	9:45–10:35 a.m.	The Transfiguration (Luke 9:28-36)
14	9:45–10:35 a.m.	Tempted (Luke 4:1-13)
21	9:45–10:35 a.m.	God's Promises to Abraham (Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18)
28	9:45–10:35 a.m.	Road to the Cross event in East Hall

ROAD TO THE CROSS

On Sunday, Feb. 28, from 9:45-10:35 a.m., Children's Ministries will host a new event entitled *Road to the Cross*. Following in the footsteps of our Road to Bethlehem event this past December, families will participate in activities that connect them to the season of Lent and the remembrance of our Savior's death on the cross. Together, children and parents will rotate through interactive stations in East Hall while fellowship tables will once again be set up so the rest of the congregation may come and experience the excitement unfolding. Please mark your calendar to join us!

ANNUAL EASTER EGG HUNT

Ascension's Annual Easter Egg Hunt (sponsored by Supermoms) is Sunday, March 20, at noon, after the 10:45 service, outside weather-permitting. Please bring your own basket! All ages are welcome!

After the hunt, please take part in a potluck lunch. Hot dogs and beverages will be provided. If you last name begins with:

A-K Bring Side Dish

L-R Bring Dessert

S-Z Bring Chips

Ascension is looking for individuals to donate filled Easter eggs. If you are willing, please drop the eggs off by Thursday, March 17. Drop off bins will be located in the narthex.

JOLT: FEBRUARY SCHEDULE

4	6:30-8 p.m.	JOLT Session 13
10	7 p.m.	Ash Wednesday Worship
11, 18, & 25		No JOLT – Lenten Projects



CRASH FEBRUARY SCHEDULE

6	5:00-7 p.m.	Chili Cook-Off
7	12:00-2:30 p.m.	Mime Lunch and rehearsal
10	7p.m.	Ash Wednesday Worship and Mime Blessing
14		Mime travel – Cross Lutheran, Burlington
17		Mime travel – All Saints Lutheran, Wales
21		Mime travel – Bay Shore Lutheran, Milwaukee
24		Mime travel – Redeemer Lutheran, Hartford
28		Mime travel – Redeemer, Racine

CHILI COOK-OFF FUNDRAISER

Looking for a spicy diversion from the cold winter gloom? CRASH is hosting our annual Chili Cook-Off on Saturday, Feb. 6, from 5-7 p.m. Tickets are \$5/person or \$20/family. Tickets will be on sale in the narthex following worship services in January and are also available at the door the night of the event. Come sample a variety of amazing chilis from a number of the talented contestants and enjoy an evening of fun, fellowship, and games for all ages including raffles and door prizes.

Think your chili has what it takes to be the best? If so, then consider entering your chili for only \$25/ team. The Zwicky family is coming off back-to-back championships, so you'll have to bring your absolute best if you want to win coveted bragging rights of Best Church Chili and your name on the champions plaque. Thank you for supporting our CRASH students as they raise money for their summer Wisconsin Adventure Trip. Questions? Contact Tony at tony@ascensionelca.org or 262-547-8518.

PRAYER GROUP

Bonnie Thiesenhusen

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. ~ Philippians 4:6-7

Please join the Prayer Group for a time of prayer the first and third Mondays of every month, in the Prayer Room, from 5:30-6:30 p.m.



CARE MINISTRIES

Brenda Lytle, RN, Director of Care Ministries

Do you have a goal in mind to become healthier and get in better shape in 2016? Committing to an exercise routine comes with excellent health benefits. Health authorities recommend 150 minutes (2.5 hours) of exercise per week. Did you know that if you perform five hours of moderate exercise a week, you could reduce your risk of Alzheimer's disease by as much as 40 percent (Lawrence Berkeley National Lab study). Even shoveling snow or walking make a big contribution in lowering the risk of Alzheimer's. There is also evidence that suggests exercise stimulates the production of a protein that helps protect the brain from stress-related damage linked to depression. Ascension has a yoga class on Monday nights that focuses on health, wellness, and stress reduction. It is affordable and great for anyone of any age and any level.

Many things contribute to your health and wellness, including diet, exercise, and increasing your body's ways of elevating your mood. Volunteering can make you feel better. Care Ministries always has opportunities available to help others. We are in the midst of growing our Touch-a-Heart ministry for 2016. We are looking for people who would like to volunteer to make meals, do tasks and errands, drive others to church, visit homebound members, or give caregivers a break. Please contact Brenda@ascensionelca.org if you are interested in learning more.



GRIEF SHARE JANUARY 5-MARCH 22, 2016

Are you suffering with grief from the loss of a loved one? If you or someone you know living with loss, this program may help. It provides a 12-week, Christian-based program offers a significant support system. Our new session began Jan. 5, from 6-8 p.m. in Ascension's Youth Room; however, you are welcome to join at any time during the 12-week session. The group facilitator is Pastor Angela. For added fellowship before the program, free meals are available in West Hall from 5:30-6 p.m. If you are interested in GriefShare, contact Brenda, brenda@ascensionelca.org, or attend a meeting.

YOGA CLASSES ON MONDAY NIGHTS

Winter Yoga is Mondays from 6-7 p.m. and is lead by YMCA instructor Jessica Popp. At only \$12 for 6 weeks, you can afford an hour a week of your time (only \$2/class). Bring your fee and mat to the first session. Bring a friend and see you there!

FREE BLOOD PRESSURE SCREENINGS

Between services in the Hearth Room - Feb. 21, March 13, April 3, and May 1



ASCENSION SOS ANGELS

Brenda Lytle, RN, Director of Care Ministries

Respite Ministry has evolved into a new Touch a Heart Ministry, *Ascension S.O.S. Angels*. The mission of this new ministry is to provide support and relief to Ascension members' needs. Our focus is short-term, acute needs of a member until they can get back on their feet. A secondary focus is to help maintain the independence of our homebound members. Nada Draeger is the leader for this new ministry. SOS Angels plans to provide services such as:

- Small tasks
- Very light housekeeping (such as cleaning, swiffering, dishes, and laundry)
- Very light yardwork (such as mowing, raking, and emergency snow removal)
- Dog walking, pet care, plant watering, filling birdfeeders
- Local, small errands
- Pharmacy runs
- Doctor appointments
- Light grocery shopping
- Caregiver relief
- Providing a "break" for a caregiver
- Providing a peaceful presence/sitting/reading to them, music, or soothing diversional activities.

Please contact Nada Draeger, at 262-548-0351 or njdraeger@msn.com, if you are interested in volunteering for any of the above services or if you have a need for them. Thank you!



GUYS AFRAID OF BIBLE STUDY

Attention all men! AMEN Ministries is excited to announce a new bible study starting on Monday, Feb. 1, at 5:30 p.m. and continuing on a weekly basis. The Guys Afraid of Bible Study (GABS) is an excellent opportunity for any guy who would like to learn more about the Bible, especially if you don't have much background. The study will take place in room 107 and is designed to be a causal and engaging hour-long discussion that will prove to be a worthy experience! So be sure to check it out – there's a chair open for you! For more information, please contact Mark Otto, markjotto44@yahoo.com.



TEA TIME: TEACH, ENCOURAGE, ACHEIVE

Sunday, Feb. 7, 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

We will again have our Potluck Luncheon on Wednesday, Feb. 17, at noon in East Hall. Please bring a Valentine dish to pass if you are able. We will have games after our luncheon. We need to get out from the winter blahs, don't we? If you have questions, contact Celeste Defenbaugh, at 262-370-4522; Beth Hoffmann, at 262-547-7447; 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 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

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.



Faith is a living, daring confidence in God's grace, so sure and certain that a man could stake his life on it a thousand times. — Martin Luther



A TASTE OF THE DANIEL PLAN

Steve and Carol Spieker

We are reading a book written by a local author Dr. Jay Davidson in which he discusses being a *Three Percenter*. Research shows that only three percent of people that say they want to change their health get the results they wish for. Why do you suppose that is? Three Percenters always have a goal in mind, find motivation, and then take active steps to achieve the goal. The other 97 percent often play the blame game: *It's my genes. The doctors can't help me. I don't have the time or money*, and the list goes on!

We were blessed to have the opportunity to shepherd a group of Three Percenters through the six week Daniel Plan study recently. The members of the group all had clear goals they and then found the motivation to make changes. The participants shared some comments with us to include in this article. Almost universally, the members of the Daniel Plan group entered with hopes of improving their health, focus, and how they felt in general. **The Goal** - One person shared the Daniel Plan may seem *too extreme* or *too hard* but with a positive approach and the support of the group, didn't end up being difficult at all. Another shared the study enhanced her determination to improve her health. **The Motivation** - Another participant shared the things she learned in The Daniel Plan had truly changed her way of looking at the food going into her body. **The Active Steps** - The results included feeling better, having *tons* more energy and even losing ten pounds without trying! Beyond eating and feeling better, she is much more in tune with getting the proper rest and taking better care of *me* so she can be a better witness to God's love in her daily life (the sign of a true Three Percenter).

So are you ready to become a Three Percenter? Mark Twain once said, *The secret to getting ahead is getting started*. A favorite catchphrase of evangelist Robert Schuller was, *If it's going to be, it's up to me!* Plans are under way to start another Daniel Plan study in the coming months. Please let us know if you are interested in participating in this new study group.

Here is a tasty recipe made by Cindy Zilske that was recently shared with our Daniel Plan group and was a hit at our monthly Friends & Food group gathering:

MOUSSE AU CHOCOLAT

6 oz organic chocolate chips (65% Cacao)

4 eggs - separated

5 T boiling water

2 T vanilla

Blend chocolate chips at high speed for about 15 seconds. With motor off, scrape chocolate down from sides. Blend in water at high speed for about 15 seconds. Add egg yolks and vanilla blending about 15 seconds or until smooth. Beat egg whites until stiff and foamy. Fold chocolate mixture into egg whites. Spoon into dessert glasses and chill at least 1 hour.

*Even the tiniest of hopes can show me
the way to arrive at my goal.
— Sri Chinmoy*

CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH PARTNERSHIP

SOUPER BOWL CHALLENGE

Yes, it is here again! The famous Ascension Souper Bowl Challenge for the month of February. During the entire month, we will receive donations of cans of soup for the Cross Food Pantry. Last year we challenged the congregation to collect 200 cans and we ended up with 600 cans! Several small groups did friendly challenges that really boosted the results and made it a fun way to help our brothers and sisters at Cross. We will issue the challenge again to small groups to become Ascension Souper Bowl Champs for 2016. Donations should be placed on the Soup Table in the West Hall Donation Center. Remember that every week, 200 bags are filled at Cross Lutheran, so if we collect 200 cans, we provide one can of soup for each recipient for one week. We are going bold and setting our goal at 400 this year so we can provide soup for two weeks. Are you in? Small groups, work groups, children's classes, families, or individuals can all accept the challenge. Keep us posted on your activities so we can post it on our MO Facebook page.



IN OUR OWN BACKYARD

Do you give something up for Lent? We encourage you this year to add something. Consider making a donation of time or treasure to one of our community agencies. As you may know, with the budget cut for Mission Outreach, we had to cut back in our financial support of our community agencies. That in no way should reflect how we honor the work they do, so we want to offer support in new ways. There are several opportunities for hands-on work where we are invited to contribute volunteer hours. There is also a need for in-kind donations to provide things that the agencies need. For more information, contact Shirley Wehmeier, pwehmeier@wi.rr.com. Some volunteer experiences require agency approval. Below are some of the things that are needed:

Volunteer Opportunities

Hebron House: prepare and serve meals at one of the shelters, share a talent with guests, maintenance of buildings and grounds, office support

Waukesha Food Pantry: volunteer as a group or individual to work at the food pantry sorting donations or serving participants, food recovery

Hope Center: sort clothing donations, provide moving assistance, prepare and serve a meal, front desk help

Habitat for Humanity: provide hands-on help with building or rehabbing houses in Waukesha area

Interfaith: snow shoveling for seniors or those with disabilities

In Kind Donations

Hebron House: Personal care items, baby items, cleaning and laundry items

Waukesha Food Pantry: donate food, household items, baby items

Hope Center: donate toiletry items, clothing, coats, food items, furniture

Women's Center: personal care items, bedding



OUTREACH FOR HOPE 2016 DEVOTIONS

In the Midst ...HOPE - The authors of this year's devotions share their personal journeys of hope in the midst of life around them in churches that are part of the Greater Milwaukee Synod and Outreach for Hope. The introduction is written by Bishop Jeff Barrow. For those of you who would like to adopt the Lenten journey of using the daily devotions and then making a donation to Outreach for Hope at the end, you may sign up to receive the devotion by email each morning during Lent. Go to <http://outreachforhope.org/>. Then below the banner, in the right hand column, sign up by adding your name and email address and clicking the Lenten Devotions box. You may support ministries of Outreach for Hope as a part of your Lenten journey by making a donation in response to God's generous gift of hope for all of us in Jesus Christ.





Our Salvadoran Family

MEET THE NEW REFUGEE FAMILIES

For many years, the Ascension Refugee Committee and the congregation have welcomed refugees who were fleeing their home country due to war and/or social upheaval. We have welcomed people from all over the world but in recent years, there have been few new arrivals for us to serve. Jo Buth has continued on her own to work with the local Burmese refugees through all this time and other members have maintained contact with other families. Now Ascension is blessed with two new families from two different parts of the world. To make this a truly congregation-wide welcome, we are introducing them to you and identifying some ways you may be able to help. These families are making major adjustments as they live in a new culture, hear a language they don't understand, try to learn, and struggle to fit it. They come from great tragedy and refugees often have deep fear and stress. Both families are living with others as they make their adjustment with the hope that as they become more financially able, they will move into places of their own. When that happens, there will be a need for household goods. We will maintain a poster identifying their needs as they evolve.

Our Burmese family is Plee Cho and Lar Ku Paw and their nine-year-old son Hsar Shee, who is a student at Hadfield in 4th grade. They are Burmese Karen Christians and came from a refugee camp in Thailand on Dec. 15. They had never ridden in a car until Jo picked them up from the airport. They seem happy to be here. Both Plee Cho and Lar Ku Paw are looking for jobs and will be attending evening English classes at WCTC starting Jan. 18. They came from the tropics and are shocked by our cold weather. Hsar Shee could use some hand me downs. I don't know his size, but he is typical for a nine-year-old. He already has a very nice warm coat and hat, but could use shirts, pants, and socks. The parents need warm clothes as well, small adult sizes. They are living with their daughter who has been here almost three years, so there is no needs for apartment furniture at this time. The biggest need is tutors for all three. We need someone to reinforce the English classes - even going to class with them if possible.

Our Salvadoran family is made up of parents Carlos and Jenny, with children Fabricio age 14, Jhonson, 9, and Karlita, 5. Fabricio is at Les Paul and the two younger children are at Heyer School. They were living among the awful gang violence in El Salvador. There were threats to their lives and the gangs were abusive to the children. They are in the US seeking asylum. They arrived in Waukesha just before Christmas. They too have had to adjust to the cold weather, but the kids enjoy the snow. They are looking for jobs and are hoping to learn English. They have been worshipping at Ascension since they arrived in Waukesha. The biggest need for them is tutors to help them learn English and to help the children with school work. Karlita and Jhonson are attending Sunday School. Anyone who has Spanish skills, who could attend class with them, would be most welcome. Fabricio is interested in JOLT but would also need someone to help him understand the lessons.

For more information or offers to help, please contact Jo Buth or Shirley Wehmeier, pwehmeier@wi.rr.com. This is a big step for the congregation to become involved by putting their faith into action.



GRATITUDE FROM DEB WEBER

Thank you to everyone who sent cards and their well wishes after the passing of my mother Katherine Gustafson.

FROM SAINTA

On behalf of SaintA, I want to thank Ascension for your contributions to the SaintA 2015 Toy Drive. Your willingness to host a Toy Drive donation box helped us achieve our goal of raising at least 2,000 gifts for the children we serve! ~ Jennifer Layton, SaintA Permanency Consultant

FEBRUARY 2015

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
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	1 7:30am Cloverleaf Pictures 106 9:45am AI Anon WH 3pm Cloverleaf Pictures 106 5:30pm Prayer Group PR 5:30pm GABS 106 6pm Yoga 6:30pm AMEN 107	2 6:30am AMEN 107 7:30am Cloverleaf Pictures 106 9:30am TGIT 107 9:30am Women's Bible Study HR 3pm Cloverleaf Pictures 106 6pm GriefShare YR 6:30pm Mission Outreach 107	3 8am Private 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	4 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	5 Cross Mardi Gras Ball, Brookfield	6 5pm Chili Cook-Off
7 8:30am Worship 9:30am Coffee Fellowship 9:45am Adult Ed. 9:45am Children's Ministry 9:45am Puppets visits EH 9:45am TEA Time PR 10:45am Worship 12pm Mime lunch WH 12:45pm Mime EH, S 6pm AA mtg WH 7pm AA closed mtg WH	8 9:45am AI Anon WH 1pm Living Letters 106 6pm Yoga EH 5:30pm GABS 106 6:30pm AMEN 107	9 6:30am AMEN 107 9:30am Women's Bible Study HR 12pm Exec Team 6pm GriefShare YR 7pm Holloway 107	10 Ash Wednesday 8am Private Group PR 11:45am Men's Nurture 106 12pm Worship S 12:30pm Private NR 6pm Handbells S 7pm Worship S 7pm Wisdom AA WH 8pm Choir S	11 10am AI Anon WH 1pm Quilting at Bissett's 5:15pm Angel Choir S 5:45pm Joyful Sounds S 7pm Ballantyne 107 7pm Military Ministry 106	12	13
14 Mime Offsite 8:30am Worship 9:30am Coffee Fellowship 9:45am Adult Ed. 9:45am Children's Ministry 9:45am Puppets EH 10am New Member Class 10:45am Worship 2pm Private Event S 6pm AA mtg WH 7pm AA closed mtg WH	15 Newsletter Deadline 9:45am AI Anon WH 5:30pm Prayer Group PR 6pm Yoga EH 5:30pm GABS 106 6:30pm AMEN 107	16 6:30am AMEN 107 9:30am TGIT 107 9:30am Women's Bible Study HR 6pm GriefShare YR 7pm Council 107	17 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 6pm Soup Supper EH, WH 7pm Worship 7pm Wisdom AA WH 7:30pm Choir S 8pm Schmidt Group PR	18 10am AI Anon WH 1pm TGBG PR 1pm Quilting at Bissett's 5:15pm Angel Choir S 5:45pm Joyful Sounds S 7pm Ballantyne 107	19 6pm CRASH Movie Night EH	20 8am Knit Wits WH 10:30am Folk Choir S 1pm Private Group EH
21 New Member Reception Mime Offsite 8:30am Worship 9:30am Coffee Fellowship 9:45am Adult Ed. 9:45am Children's Ministry 9:45am Puppets EH 10am Blood Pressure Check 10:45am Worship 6pm AA mtg WH 7pm AA closed mtg WH	22 9:45am AI Anon WH 5:30pm GABS 106 6:30pm AMEN 107	23 6:30am AMEN 107 9:30am Women's Bible Study HR 6pm GriefShare YR 7pm Holloway 107	24 8am Private Group PR 12:30pm Private NR 6pm Handbells S 6pm Soup Supper EH, WH 7pm Worship 7pm Wisdom AA WH 7:30pm Choir S	25 10am AI Anon WH 1pm Quilting at Bissett's 5:15pm Angel Choir S 5:45pm Joyful Sounds S 7pm Ballantyne 107	26	27
28 Mime Travel Day 8:30am Worship 9:45am Adult Ed. 9:45am Children's Ministry 9:45am Puppets EH 10:45am Worship 6pm AA mtg WH 7pm AA closed mtg WH	29 9:45am AI Anon WH 6:15pm Knit Wits WH 5:30pm GABS 106 6:30pm AMEN 107					