



Ascension
LUTHERAN CHURCH
ELCA
March 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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IN THESE DAYS OF LENT

Pastor Chris Marien

The baptized do not just 'get together', they are called and gathered by the Holy Spirit. God's people do not hear just any word, but the Word of eternal life, Jesus Christ, who changes the heart and enlightens the mind. They do not share just any food, but the very Body and Blood of Christ. Those who have been gathered, enlightened and fed do not just 'leave' - but, as disciples of Christ, they are sent forth in mission to speak the Word of God and do the work of God in the world.

ELCA Worship Resource, This Far By Faith.



What an incredible description of who we are as the People of God, in Jesus Christ, in the world. Our identity, our calling, our hearing, our sharing, and our sending is enlightened and inspired by the work of the Holy Spirit. I believe, such a description brings both freedom and fear to the hearts of the baptized. So much to experience and so much to live up to as the baptized. What an opportunity for us? What a challenge for us?

Here we are in the middle of Lent. The color purple surrounds our altar and hearts as we live into following in the footsteps of Jesus as he sets his sights on Jerusalem. Whatever he sees on the horizon is too far away for our eyes to see clearly and yet, Jesus continues his steady step to the gates of the city. You and I can only follow—not because we have to, but because our hearts call us to follow the one who has saved us from our sins with holy and precious blood. The journey of Lent continues for each of us.

As you walk into the world each morning do you see how many people are oblivious to the journey we travel during these days? Lent? Church calendar? Jesus? Cross? Good Friday? Tomb? Empty? Have so many chosen to forget the promise and presence of God in Jesus Christ? Have our friends, our neighbors, learned to call on God only in the midst of crisis or tragedy? And where does that leave us? Here we are in the days of Lent, trying to focus on what Jesus sees over the horizon, only to be distracted by those same friends, family, and neighbors who just simply do not understand, or choose not to hear, or really do not care at all about the story we would tell—given the opportunity.

Perhaps, therein lies the real quandary. Have any of us had the opportunity to share our story of faith with anyone in these days of Lent? Has God offered a shoulder, a listening ear, but we have turned away in embarrassment or timidity? Have we looked for opportunities to share our faith in word or in action with those we meet in these days of Lent? Where will this Lenten journey lead us? Where will God enter into our lives and offer an opportunity for us to live out our callings as *the baptized*? When the Holy Spirit calls and gathers...when the Word is heard...when the food is shared...when we are sent...where will we go? To whom?

May these days of Lent continue to move each of us into the world for the sake of the mission and ministry of God in Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord. Peace be with you.

PASTORAL ACTS

Funerals

February 5 Donna Jean Nelson





HOW DO YOU DO LENT?

Pastor Angela Khabeib

I must be honest. I hate Lent. Ok, maybe *hate* is an overreach. But ever since I joined the ELCA in 1999, I've found this practice rather challenging. Certainly, there are fans of Lent, I'm just not one of them. But I am a fan of Jesus and more than willing to explore various avenues to deepen that relationship. Even years later, I find myself straining to wrap my mind and spirit around the practice of Lent. I can appreciate the focus on intentional prayer and Bible study. After all, Christians are called to be disciples and embrace spiritual disciplines that bring us to a more mature faith walk. However, when I was first introduced to Lent, the introduction came wrapped in suffering, self-denial, and repentance. Then, to top it off, the church had the audacity to bury *hallelujah*. I thought, "Sure, self-denial and repentance will certainly lead to spiritual growth. But suffering? Please. Who needs more suffering? From my vantage point, suffering needs no spotlight or invitation. Furthermore, doesn't God's world need more *hallelujahs* and not fewer?"

You've probably heard me say it before, I believe that God is omnipresent. That means that there is no place that I can be where God is not. So as I traveled my first Lenten journey, I made up my mind that I would encounter God someday, somehow even if I needed a space telescope from NASA to do it. You see, years ago I received the revelation that God is everywhere and when we can't see God, we must look again, and again, and again, until God's presence is revealed to us. Fortunately, sisters and brothers, this gets much easier with practice. That is good news for all of us!

Recently, I had a rather intriguing conversation with clergy colleagues about the liturgical season of Lent. We discussed the possibility that, for some people, even the term *Lent* might be considered *insider language* - known only to Catholics, Orthodox Christians, and some mainline Protestants. After all, even lifelong, faithful Christians may be unfamiliar with Lent especially if their worshiping community does not observe this ancient tradition. Now, if some dedicated Christians are unfamiliar with Lent, then what about people with no church affiliation? Every year on Ash Wednesday, someone asks me, "Do you know you have something on your forehead?" (Perhaps you've had a similar experience). Granted, the question can offer an opportunity to share my faith and sometimes that works well in the produce section at the grocery store and other times it doesn't. This makes me wonder if, to some degree, Lent is similar to a secret handshake known only to a select group of Christians.

So what is this thing we call Lent? Here are the nuts and bolts of Lent: it is a centuries-old practice marked with confession and repentance, self-denial and humility, and fasting and prayer. This liturgical season is a time to delve deeper into our faith and jettison habits and thoughts that deter our spiritual growth. Ultimately, Lent is about God, not us. Sisters and brothers, this is good news. Just the other day, I stumbled upon an article by William Arthur Ward where he encourages Christians to embrace Lent as a season of spiritual growth brimming with new life. Ward's perspective inspired me to approach my Lenten journey from a different vantage point. On the next page is a modified excerpt of his writing.

*Fast from the shadow of death;
Feast at the table God has prepared.*

Continued from page 4

Lent can be more than a time of fasting. It can also be a joyous season of feasting. Lent is a time to fast from certain things and to feast on others. It is a season to:
Fast from judging others; Feast on the Christ dwelling in them.
Fast from emphasis on similarity; Feast on God's gift of diversity.
Fast from idle gossip; Feast on words that empower.
Fast from rumored darkness; Feast on the reality of light.
Fast from pessimism; Feast on optimism.
Fast from worry; Feast on trust.
Fast from complaining; Feast on thanksgiving.
Fast from hostility; Feast on peacemaking.
Fast from bitterness; Feast on forgiveness.
Fast from disappointment; Feast on possibilities.
Fast from problems that overwhelm; Feast on prayer that overcomes.
Fast from the shadow of death; Feast at the table God has prepared.
Fast from everything that separates us from the God; feast on everything that draws us closer to God.

-an adaption of *Fasting and Feasting* by W. A. Ward (American author, 1921-1994).

Beloved, you are a child of God. You are created in the image of God. You are born to live. You are born to love and be loved. You are called to forgive and be forgiven. You are called to be heard but also called to listen. And sisters and brothers, you are called to be sent. You are light to a broken and hurting world. May your Lenten journey inspire you to look to the future for new beginnings and may God breathe into you a new life in Christ!

YOUR COUNCIL AT WORK

Paul Wehmeier, Council President

Our family has been members of Ascension since 1974. During that time, I served on council as chairman of boards of education, elders, church properties, and president. For 19 years, I led the children's lesson for the opening of Sunday School.

It is important that your concerns, comments, and suggestions are made known to the council. On the first Sunday of each month, there will be a council member at the Welcome Center. I would encourage you to talk to any council member face to face or by email.

Council agenda for this year:

1. Director of Ministry and Wing Leaders will maintain a focus on the Arise 2025 vision.
2. Review policies and procedures for background checks for members who visit homes of Ascension members or work with children and procedures for handling, posting, and dispersing money.
3. Review of constitution and by-laws. If changes are indicated, this will be presented at the annual meeting in November.
4. The Directors of Ministries and Operations will review Wing and Leg Leaders responsibilities with the leaders as detailed in the by-laws.
5. Council members will be reaching out to members who have not worshipped with us since 2014.
6. Develop a plan to respond to medical emergencies and safety, intruder, and fire or weather emergencies.

Please read the council meeting minutes that are posted on the bulletin board by the soda machine to see details of the February meeting. In the future, I will highlight discussions and motions in this column in order to keep everyone informed.





FINANCIAL REPORT

Pattie Mueller, Treasurer

JANUARY 31, 2016 YEAR-TO-DATE

<i>General Fund Activity</i>	Jan 2016 Actual	Jan 2016 Plan	Variance to 2016 Plan	2015 Actual	Variance to 2015 Actual
Income					
<i>Contributions</i>	\$45,062	\$53,325	\$(8,263)	\$57,345	\$(12,283)
<i>Rent, interest, other income</i>	\$3,858	\$5,421	\$(1,563)	\$5,869	\$(2,011)
<i>Restricted Income</i>	\$8,250	\$8500	\$(250)	\$6,871	\$1,379
Total Income	\$57,170	\$67,246	\$(10,076)	\$70,085	\$(12,915)
Expenses					
<i>Communications</i>	\$1,783	\$2,242	\$459	\$2,114	\$361
<i>Facilities</i>	\$14,350	\$21,363	\$7,013	\$27,764	\$13,414
<i>Financial Development</i>	\$8,267	\$8,244	\$(23)	\$8,241	\$(26)
<i>Leadership Development</i>	\$0	\$33	\$33	\$0	\$0
<i>Administration</i>	\$22,937	\$22,281	\$(656)	\$22,128	\$(809)
<i>Caring Relationships</i>	\$1,614	\$2,345	\$731	\$2,966	\$1,352
<i>Joyful Worshipers</i>	\$7,237	\$8,055	\$818	\$9,315	\$2,078
<i>Mission Outreach</i>	\$2,345	\$2,208	\$136	\$2,597	\$252
<i>Spiritual Growth</i>	\$6,477	\$7,072	\$595	\$6,579	\$102
Total Expenses	\$65,010	\$73,843	\$8,833	\$81,704	\$(16,694)
Surplus/(Deficit)	\$(7840)	\$(6,597)	\$(1,243)	\$(11,619)	\$(3,779)
Mortgage Balance	\$719,914				
Restricted Funds Balance	\$150,676				
General Fund Balance	\$(36,634)				
Ascension Arise Contributions	\$5,636				
Restricted Contributions	\$12,364				

WHAT THE NUMBERS MEAN

Our general contributions are \$10,076 behind what was budgeted for January 2016. Our expenses are \$8,833 less than what was budgeted for January 2016. Even though our expenses are less than budgeted we still have a loss of \$7,840 for the month of January.

*Fast from worry;
Feast on trust.
Fast from complaining;
Feast on thanksgiving.*

NORSEMAN BAND AT ASCENSION

Vicki Taylor, Director of Music Ministries

Ascension will host the Norseman Band of St. Olaf College (Northfield, Minnesota) in concert on Sunday, March 13, at 3 p.m. Plan to attend and hear this dynamic ensemble from one of our own ELCA colleges. The band includes Ascension member Aleah Maas on flute. An ensemble of woodwinds, including Aleah, will also share music during the 8:30 service on that day. We will be serving lunch to the 70-member ensemble at 12:30 p.m. prior to the concert and are looking for volunteers to provide food, serve, and clean up. Please contact Arlene Davis (rdavis98@wi.rr.com) to offer assistance. Thank you in advance for providing a warm welcome to the Norseman Band.



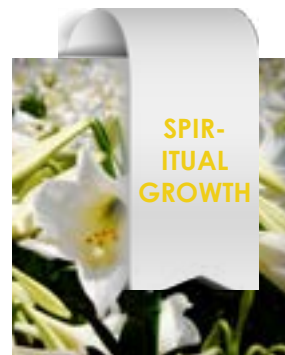
St. Olaf's Norseman Band

REFORMATION TOUR: LEARN MORE

Peggy Thrasher, Tour Liaison

Spend Reformation Sunday 2016 in Germany with Martin Luther! Join Ascension on the trip of a lifetime, following Martin Luther's journey from birth through the Reformation, Oct. 29-Nov. 9, 2016. You won't want to miss this spiritually uplifting and historic trip.

Jimmy LaPrelle of Globus Travel will be at Ascension on Sunday, March 6, from 9:45-10:30 a.m., in East Hall to give us details and to answer questions. Treats provided. Contact Peggy Thrasher, letstalksoon@hotmail.com or 262-442-8841 (please leave a message), by April 1 to sign up for the trip, and receive an over \$100 discount!



PRAYER VIGIL

Bonnie Thiesenhusen, Prayer Team Leader

You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. ~ Jeremiah 29:13

You have taken a step in faith. Maybe you have been on a faith walk for quite some time. Now what? Lent has been a time for pondering. Now what? So many questions; so many concerns; and oh so much to be grateful for! Would you consider spending an hour in prayer? There is great life-changing power in this special dedicated time with the Lord in prayer for you, your family, the church, community, nation, and the world.

Please sign up for an hour slot on the sign-up sheets located outside the sanctuary. The Prayer Team hopes that all the time slots will be filled. The Prayer Vigil will start after the conclusion of the Good Friday service on March 25 and end at 6 a.m. Easter morning. There will be devotional guides available to assist you.



FAITH STORIES

Do you have a personal faith story that you would be willing to share with others? The Ascension Prayer Team would like to assemble faith stories from Ascension members into a devotional to be distributed later this year. Please limit your faith story to one page or less, and include a Bible passage that has been meaningful to you. You may also include a short prayer.

Please send this in a Word document to the church office or write it out and place it in slot #35 above the coat rack outside the church office. Please contact Bonnie Thiesenhusen with questions, bothh@milwpc.com.





THE GIFT OF HOLY COMMUNION

Pastor Chris Marien

Someone told me about a member of Ascension asking about why Pastor Chris was communing a young child during worship. The storyteller said, “Oh, Pastor Chris will commune anybody.” It is possible that the words of this church member are one of the highest compliments I have ever received. Although, there are some situations in which I could find it necessary to refuse the sharing of communion with someone, I am generally all-too-happy to share the sacrament with all who come forward with a sincere desire to receive the promise of God in the tangible gift of bread and wine. Before I tell you why, I thought it might be helpful to remember the reason and benefit for the Sacrament of Holy Communion. From the *Small Catechism* authored by the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther:

What is the Sacrament of the Altar?

Instituted by Jesus Christ himself, it is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, under the bread and wine, given to us Christians to eat and to drink.

Where is this written?

The holy evangelists Matthew, Mark and Luke, and also St. Paul, write thus: "Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, 'Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, 'Drink of it, all of you. This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.'"

What is the benefit of such eating and drinking?

We are told in the words "for you" and "for the forgiveness of sins." By these words the forgiveness of sins, life and salvation are given to us in the sacrament, for where there is forgiveness of sins, there are also life and salvation.

How can bodily eating and drinking produce such great effects?

The eating and drinking do not in themselves produce them, but the words "for you" and "for the forgiveness of sins." These words, when accompanied by the bodily eating and drinking, are the chief thing in the sacrament, and he who believes these words has what they say and declare: the forgiveness of sins.

Holy Communion is a gift, pure and simple. We celebrate Holy Communion regularly in obedience to the command of our Lord Jesus Christ. When someone has seen a child younger than fifth grade receive communion during worship, it is because they have had conversation with myself and a parent and have determined their readiness to receive what God is offering to each of us. Most often, younger children who understand they are being excluded from something everyone else is doing is reason enough for them to begin a conversation with their parents.

This year our First Communion Stepping Stone is being offered to both fourth and fifth grade students and parents to offer a wider invitation to our community. Children who have been receiving communion before their fourth grade year are still expected to attend classes and will be celebrated with their class. We will continue to reflect on the process of inviting our children into deeper relationship with God and with each other in the body of Christ. As always, feel free to share your opinion with me as you have time to reflect on the gift of Holy Communion in your own life.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Tony Acompanado, Director of Faith Formation

SCHEDULE

- 6 First Communion Stepping Stone/The Prodigal Son (Luke 12:1-3, 11-32)
- 13 First Communion Stepping Stone/Mary Anoints Jesus (John 12:1-8)
- 20 Palm Sunday/First Communion/Holy Week (Luke 19:28-40, 22:14-23:56)
- 20 Annual Easter Egg Hunt (see below)
- 27 No Children's Ministry – Easter Break



FIRST COMMUNION STEPPING STONE

On Sunday, March 6 and 13, during the Children's Ministry time, students in fourth and fifth grade, along with a guardian, will gather together with Pastor Chris for a time of faith-building and mutual conversation around one of the central experiences of our church.

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 bin is located in the narthex.

KIDVENTURE

Mark your calendars now for an exhilarating adventure in faith coming this summer! During the week of June 20-24, Ascension will host KidVenture – a fun and active faith immersion event for kids four-years-old through fifth grade, designed to excite them about God and their faith. Games, activities, food, and music are just some of the ways kids will dive into God's Word. We will also be seeking a team of all-ages volunteers to journey alongside them throughout the week, so stay tuned for more information.

JOLT

Thursday evening JOLT sessions take a break during Lent. Instead, students are to be working independently on the Lenten project they were assigned. All projects are due on, or before, JOLT resumes on April 7. JOLT students are still expected to worship regularly and are also encouraged to participate in the Wednesday soup suppers and worship throughout Lent.

CRASH

MARCH SCHEDULE

- 4-6 Mime Travel & Synod Youth Retreat Camp Minikani, Hubertus
- 13 Mime Travel to Our Savior's Lutheran Church, West Bend
- 18 Movie Night, 6-9 p.m.
- 20 Mime Travel to St. John's Lutheran Church, Jackson
- 25 Good Friday Worship & Mime Performances, 5 p.m. & 7 p.m.



Mime Performance



PUPPETS OF PRAISE: SHARING GOD'S LOVE

Cheryl Anspach, Puppets Leader

While we are still waiting for the days to get longer, Puppets of Praise has started their black light performances for Children's Ministry. With black light, the puppets and props seem to float, creating a unique effect. Our next performance is Sunday, March 6, in East Hall.

Over the past several months, Puppets had wonderful home visits with members who are not always able to make it to church or are recovering from illness/injury: Aggie, Donna, Nancy, Dorothy, Elmer, and Mary along with some friends. We learn so much from each of them. If you or someone you know likes visiting with younger people, let Cheryl Anspach, puppetsofascension@gmail.com, or Brenda Lytle, brenda@ascensionelca.org, know so we can schedule a time for the Puppets to visit.

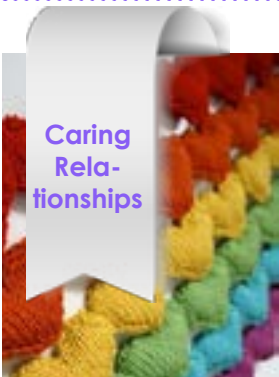


THRIVENT ACTION TEAMS & CHOICE DOLLARS

Donna Savin, Thrivent Liaison

Attention all Thrivent members who are Wing Leaders and benefit/associate policyholders: you can apply to head a Thrivent Action Team online at www.thrivent.com. You can apply for a one time fundraiser, service activity, or educational event that can be completed within 90 days. Once your project is approved, you will receive a Thrivent action kit, including a \$250 community impact card as seed money. All Thrivent members can lead an Action Team. If you are a benefit member, you can lead two projects a year. If you are an associate member, you can lead one team per calendar year.

Do not forget about your Thrivent Choice Dollars, which can be directed to Ascension Lutheran Church. You can call 1-800-Thrivent with any questions regarding Thrivent Choice or Thrivent Action Teams.



CARE MINISTRIES: SPRING EVENTS

Brenda Lytle, RN, Director of Care Ministries

Yoga: A new six-week session begins after Easter, on Monday nights, April 11–May 16, from 6-7 p.m., with the same YMCA Instructor, Jessica Popp. The cost is \$12 for six weeks. Sign-up will be on the Care Ministries bulletin board.

GriefShare: Ascension's GriefShare Program continues on Tuesday evenings, until March 22, from 6-8 p.m. Our facilitator is Pastor Angela. The meals for GriefShare have been greatly appreciated by the program participants. Many of our participants eat alone every day; the donated meals have made it possible for these participants to enjoy the fellowship of sharing a meal with the friends they have made at GriefShare. Care Ministries and those people who are a part of GriefShare are grateful to everyone who volunteers and supports this ministry!

Ascension Plant Sale: Sale dates are April 17 and 24 and May 1 at a table in the narthex. Pick-up date for the flowers is the morning on May 21.

AARP Safe Driving Course: This class is April 22, 12-4 p.m., in room 107. This course could reduce your insurance premiums. Sign up on the Care Ministries bulletin board. \$15 for members, \$20 for non-members. The instructor is Marie Renn.

Blood Pressure Screenings: Care Ministries offers monthly blood pressure checks between the 9 and 10:45 worship services, in the Hearth Room, on March 13, April 3, and May 1.

BLOOD DRIVE UPDATE

The Blood Center Blood Drive hosted at Ascension on Saturday, Jan. 30 had 25 participants - a great turn out for a winter blood drive! Thanks to all who gave blood and saved lives that day.



AED

The AED (Automated External Defibrillator) is located on the half-wall, on the right (next to the fire extinguisher) as you enter Ascension's front doors. It is labeled with a sign. You don't need to be afraid of using it because it is completely voice prompted. The important thing to remember is that AWARENESS of this location and use of the AED can save lives!

SOS

Nada Draeger, SOS Ministry Leader

SOS means *call out for help* or *save our souls*. Ascension's new ministry is just that - *a call out for help* for those in need. Could you help someone that just came home from the hospital with errands or tasks? Maybe a run to the pharmacy or doctor? Are you able to help someone get to the grocery store? Are you interested in visiting people that are homebound? Or helping a caregiver get a break? Can you give a member a ride to church on Sunday morning? Are you able to use a snowblower, lawn mower, or do some light yardwork to help those that want to stay in their home, but may not have the health or stamina for such chores? Are you interested in doing some light housekeeping for those that just had surgery? Or assisting with a load of laundry or two?



Your service helps provide a better quality of life to someone who has difficulty getting out of their home. We are looking for volunteers to help shovel sidewalks and driveways. However, whether you are able to shovel, drive, or do light housework for someone, the gift of your time will make a huge difference to someone in need. If you can help, please contact Nada Draeger at 262-548-0351 or njdraeger@msn.com.

MILITARY MINISTRY

Sheri Greger, Military Ministry Leader

The Military Ministry met in February and wrote cards to send to the current enlisted military members and to the Milwaukee VA. Over 100 cards were delivered to the VA.

We continue to partner with Ascension's Knit Wits and Living Letters to support our veterans and enlisted members of the military. We are still looking for people interested in making foley bag covers to donate to the VA. These covers are a quick and easy sewing project. If you are interested in getting the pattern and making foley bag covers, contact Maddie Goetter or Sheri Greger (sheri_frogs@yahoo.com) to get the instructions.

We are also continuing to help dispose of old or tattered flags. There is a collection bin in West Hall to place the flags.

Upcoming events include an opportunity for the congregation to remember a loved one and purchase a flag to be displayed with a tag on Memorial Day. Continue to check the bulletin and upcoming newsletters for more information.

If you have questions or would like more information contact Sheri Greger at sheri_frogs@yahoo.com or 262-424-6219. We would love for anyone to join us in this ministry.





GUYS AFRAID OF BIBLE STUDY

Attention all men, are you interested in checking out any of the Bible studies that AMEN Men's Ministries offers? We have several days and meeting times for any man that is interested in learning more about the Bible or looking for more opportunities to strengthen his faith with other men with similar interests and goals. No need to preregister. Just show up to room 107 and there will be a chair open for you!

- Monday Evening Introductory Bible Study – 5:30–6:30 p.m. Contact Mark Otto, markjotto44@yahoo.com, with any questions.
- Monday Evening Bible Study – 6:30–7:30 p.m. Contact Bob Zastrow, rkzastrow@gmail.com, with any questions.
- Tuesday Early Bird Bible Study – 6:30–8 a.m. Contact Dave Hammer, d-bhammer@wi.rr.com, with any questions.



TEA TIME: TEACH, ENCOURAGE, ACHEIVE

Sunday, March 6, join us for some TEA Time, sponsored by Supermoms, in the Prayer Room. TEA Time is 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 enjoyed music by Vern and his concertina in February. We meet again for our potluck lunch and games on Wednesday, March 16, from noon-3 p.m., in East Hall. If you are able, please bring a dish to pass. If you have questions, call Celeste Defenbaugh, at 262-370-4522; Beth Hoffmann, at 262-542-7447; or Arlene Davis, at 262-542-9119.

NEW DANIEL PLAN GROUP STARTING

The Daniel Plan study is six weeks, starting on Sunday, April 10, from 6-8 p.m. People interested in joining the group or seeking more information should contact Steve and Carol Spieker, cspieker@budgetblinds.com.



A TASTE OF THE DANIEL PLAN

Steve and Carol Spieker, The Daniel Plan Leaders

How many times have we all said, “So-and-so can eat and eat and never gets fat?” I know *we* have. It has always been a source of frustration as we have strived to live a healthy lifestyle throughout our adult lives. We all have been conditioned to measure one's level of health solely by his or her outward appearance. However, just because someone is outwardly thin does not mean they are healthy. While it is tempting to judge one's level of health by the size of their waist, we just had that notion dispelled.

Recently, we watched a documentary hosted by Katie Couric entitled *Fed Up*. (It is available on DVD at the Waukesha library). We would encourage anyone with any level of interest in leading a healthy lifestyle to view it. It was truly eye opening, even to us after years of study on the topic.

In an interview, doctor Mark Hyman, co-author of *The Daniel Plan*, spoke about a condition referred to as TOFI (Thin on the Outside, Fat on the Inside). We always feel nervous when we say the word obese because we fear we sound judgmental about one's outward appearance, which is far from the truth. One's outward appearance is unimportant. What is

Continued on page 13

important is that being physically obese comes with a mountain of increased health risks, including greater likelihood of heart attacks, strokes, dementia, diabetes, and many others. What Dr. Hyman points out about people that are TOFI is that they are metabolically obese. Someone who is metabolically obese has the exact same health risks as someone who is physically obese. In some ways, it is almost more dangerous to be metabolically obese because that person would not suspect health problems and thus, would be less likely to take corrective actions. TOFI is especially problematic among children and starts them on a path of illness increasingly earlier in their lives.

Research shows 30% of Americans are physically obese. Another 40% of the remaining Americans are classified as TOFI. Those figures tell us that more than 50% of Americans are obese and thus, are classified as *sick* and very much at risk for significant health issues.

The Daniel Plan, as stated many times before, teaches you how to be proactive about improving your health. The Daniel Plan essentials of *Faith* and *Focus* will give you the *why* to change. The *Food* essential teaches you that the right foods will actually heal your body from a lifetime of abuse. The *Friends* essential will offer you the support to sustain the changes. The *Fitness* essential will rid you of the sedentary lifestyle that many Americans have settled into.

There is another six-week Daniel Plan study starting on Sunday, April 10, at 6 p.m. Why not take a leap of faith to make much needed changes in your life and join the group? For more information or to sign up for the group, please contact us at cspicker@budgetblinds.com. Follow us on Facebook (Ascension Church Daniel Plan) for additional health related postings.

ALMOND MACAROONS

Ingredients

- 2 ²/₃ cups shredded unsweetened coconut
- 1 cup sliced raw almonds
- ¹/₄ cup raw honey or coconut nectar
- 4 large egg whites
- coconut oil (to grease cookie sheet)

Preparation

1. Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Grease two large cookie sheets.
2. In a large bowl, mix coconut, almonds, and raw honey until combined. Stir in egg whites and blend well.
3. Drop mixture by heaping tablespoonfuls, about two inches apart on cookie sheets.
4. Bake cookies until golden, about 20-25 minutes. Remove cookies to wire racks to cool. Store in tightly covered container.

*Fast from disappointment;
Feast on possibilities.
Fast from problems that overwhelm;
Feast on prayer that overcomes.*



CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH PARTNERSHIP

Shirley Wehmeier, Mission Outreach Wing Leader

The past two months have been very busy with our Cross partnership. In addition to our monthly meal preparation and service at the Bread of Healing Empowerment Ministry, we have had opportunities to learn, celebrate, and worship together. Twelve Ascension members joined Cross partners in a two-day, anti-racism workshop. It was a thoughtful and empowering experience, which helped us understand each other in new ways. The Friday before Ash Wednesday, we also attended the Cross Mardi Gras Ball, a celebration of ministry and fundraiser. During the ball, we heard from Pr. Joe Ellwanger about the history of Cross and the challenge of accepting decisive moments that can change the history of the church. We also enjoyed delicious food and celebrated our long history of partnership with Cross. In February, Pr. Chris preached at Cross as a part of our shared worship experiences. What a blessing to walk with Cross Lutheran Church all these years!



Edwin Aparicio & Pastor Blanca

EL SALVADOR PARTNERSHIP

Sarah Aparicio, Mission Outreach Member

During the civil war in El Salvador, many families fled El Salvador to live in the surrounding countries. Fifty-five of the families that lived in refugee camps in Nicaragua during the war returned to El Salvador on March 15, 1991. Representatives from the Greater Milwaukee Synod literally walked back into the country with them. These families went on to form the community of Rutilio Grande, named for the first priest to be assassinated during the civil war.

In the years that have followed, the Greater Milwaukee Synod has continued in brotherhood with the people of Rutilio Grande. Ascension currently sponsors several of the university students. The community's church also has a sister parish relationship with St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, New Berlin.

This relationship has led to the development of a micro-loan program. At planting time, all of the families are eligible to receive a low-interest loan to increase their agricultural options.

In honor of the 25th anniversary of the founding of the community, matching funds of up to \$2,500 have been made available from the Greater Milwaukee Synod to increase the pool of money available in the micro-loan program. We hope you consider making a donation this Lent to this special anniversary gift that will help lift families out of poverty. Checks should be made out to Ascension and marked for the Rutilio Grande Anniversary. Contact Sarah Wehmeier Aparicio (weh22@hotmail.com) for more details about the micro-loan program or the Rutilio Grande community.

REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT

Thank you to everyone who has assisted with our refugee families through donations and other help. It is greatly appreciated. Ascension has not been able to find affordable storage, so at this time, we are not able to take large item donations until the families are able to use them. We will publicize the specific needs as they arise. We are still waiting to hear when the second Burmese family will be arriving.

We continue to have a need for someone with Spanish skills to assist the two younger Salvadoran children (age 5 and 9) in Sunday School and the teen in JOLT. They are eager to be a part of these programs and are learning English, but any assistance in Spanish would make their learning more effective. We also need tutors to work with both families as they learn English. The materials will be provided. Contact Jo Buth or Shirley Wehmeier, pwehmeier@wi.rr.com, for more information.



TANZANIA PARTNERSHIP

CONGREGATIONAL PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

Ascension's council has approved moving forward with a congregational partnership with Tanzania. We will be sharing this partnership with St. Luke's Lutheran Church, Waukesha. We will actually work with three of the parishes that Pr. Lema told us about: Maroroni, Samaria, and Kilima Moja parishes in the Meru Dioces. The Dioces in Tanzania is making structural changes and each of the parishes will become more independent. At that time, Ascension will focus on one parish, most likely Samaria. We appreciate the experience of St. Luke's to guide us on this new ministry. Ascension will host the next meeting of our joined effort. We would welcome anyone who is interested in being a part of this new venture. Please contact Shirley Wehmeier if you want more information, pwehmeier@wi.rr.com.



Pastor Lema and members of the Samaria congregation

TAKE THE MT. MERU TEAMING UP IN MISSION CHALLENGE!

The Greater Milwaukee Synod's Mt. Meru Coffee Project is offering an incentive program called *Teaming Up In Mission* through all of 2016. For every \$10 bag of coffee sold, \$1 will be directed to hunger relief efforts. Ascension will use any money collected through coffee sales for hunger relief within our new partnership. The Global Partners Team will personally match every mission dollar that we earn through coffee sales. This means that for every bag sold, \$2 will be sent to Maroroni, Samaria, and Kilima Moja parishes. Please stop by the coffee cart on Sunday morning, take the challenge, and buy a bag of coffee! Asante sana! Thank you very much!

GRATITUDE

FROM DRENE BRISKI

Thanksgiving is extended from Drene Briski for all the help driving her to appointments and for the meals provided for her since her hospitalization. Thank you to the wonderful women and men who lent her a helping hand during her time of need!

FROM DONNA SAVIN & NANCY LINK

Thank you to Ascension's Pastoral Assistants, Puppets of Praise, and Care Ministries for their visits while Nancy was in the hospital and at home. We are blessed to be a part of the family of Ascension. Thank you for all the prayers, anointing, communion, cards, well-wishes, and meals. Thank you for extending God's love through your service to others.

FROM THE APARICIO FAMILY

We are so grateful for the outpouring of love we have received in these past several weeks. The financial gifts and the gifts of

clothing have been a life-line to us. We have also very much appreciated all of the meals that have eased our financial burdens while also introducing new foods to our recent arrivals. As we continue to pray for peace in El Salvador and for a smooth immigration process, we also share our prayers of thanksgiving for our Ascension family.

FROM GREIFSHARE

Thanks to the volunteers that have made the delicious meals for Ascension's GriefShare program! It is so wonderful how our church has embraced the needs of those suffering with grief and loneliness.

FROM CAROL ZIARNIAK

Dear Prayer Shawl Ministry Members, Please accept my gratitude for the wonderful prayer shawl you knitted for me. Also, the enclosed prayer was so heart warming and gratefully received. Thank you for your good works!



MARCH 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 6:30am AMEN 107 9:30am TGIT 107 9:30am Women's Bible Study HR 5:30pm GriefShare Meal K, WH 6pm GriefShare YR 6:30pm Mission Outreach 107 7pm Mutual Ministry PR	2 8am Private Group PR 9am Young at Heart, Denny's 9:30am Cross Meal 12:30pm Private NR 12:30pm Women's Nurture PR 5:45pm Handbells S 6pm Soup Supper EH, WH 7pm Lenten Worship S 7pm Wisdom AA WH 7:45pm Choir S	3 10am Al Anon WH 10am TGBG PR 1pm Quilting at Bissett's 5:15pm Angel Choir S 5:45pm Joyful Sounds S 7pm Ballantyne 107 7pm Care Ministries 106	4 Synod Youth Retreat	5 4pm Puppets EH
6 Synod Youth Retreat Mime Offsite 8:30am Worship 9:30am Coffee Fellowship 9:45am Adult Ed. S 9:45am Children's Ministry 9:45am Communion Class WH 9:45am Puppets EH 9:45am TEA Time PR 10:45am Worship 6pm PA Small Group HR 6pm AA mtg WH 7pm AA closed mtg WH	7 9:45am Al Anon WH 5:30pm Prayer Group PR 5:30pm GABS 107 6:30pm AMEN 107 Organ Chime Installation S	8 6:30am AMEN 107 9:30am Women's Bible Study HR 6pm GriefShare YR 7pm Holloway 107	9 8am Private Group PR 11:45am Men's Nurture 106 12:30pm Private NR 2pm Staff Mtg. 5:45pm Handbells S 6pm Soup Supper EH, WH 7pm Lenten Worship S 7pm Wisdom AA WH 7:45pm Choir S	10 10am Al Anon WH 1pm Quilting at Bissett's 5:15pm Angel Choir S 5:45pm Joyful Sounds S 6pm SOPHIA EH 7pm Ballantyne 107 7pm Military Ministry 106	11	12 10:30am Folk Choir S
13 Daylight Savings Starts Mime Offsite 8:30am Worship 9:30am Coffee Fellowship 9:45am Adult Ed. S 9:45am Communion EH/WH 9:45am Children's Ministry 10am Blood Pressure N 10:45am Worship 12pm St. Olaf EH WH 3pm St. Olaf Concert S 6pm PA Small Group HR 6pm AA mtg WH 7pm AA closed mtg WH	14 9:45am Al Anon WH 1pm Living Letters 106 5:30pm GABS 107 6:30pm AMEN 107	15 Newsletter Deadline 6:30am AMEN 107 9:30am TGIT 107 9:30am Women's Bible Study HR 1pm Pastoral Assistants 6pm GriefShare YR 7pm Council 107	16 8am Private Group PR 12pm Young at Heart Potluck EH, WH, K 12:30pm Women's Nurture PR 12:30pm Private NR 5:45pm Handbells S 6pm Soup Supper EH, WH 7pm Worship 7pm Wisdom AA WH 7:45pm Choir S 8pm Schmidt Group PR	17 10am Al Anon WH 10am TGBG PR 1pm Quilting at Bissett's 5:15pm Angel Choir S 5:30pm Synod Council EH 5:45pm Joyful Sounds S 7pm Ballantyne 107	18 6pm CRASH Movie Night EH	19 8am Knit Wits Offsite 11am Private Event EH
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
Holy Week						
Palm Sunday First Communion Mime Offsite 8:30am Worship 9:30am Coffee Fellowship 9:45am Adult Ed. S 9:45am Children's Ministry 10:45am Worship 12pm Egg Hunt/Potluck EH/WH 6pm PA Small Group HR 6pm AA mtg WH 7pm AA closed mtg WH	9:45am Al Anon WH 5:30pm Prayer Group PR 5:30pm GABS 107 6:30pm AMEN 107	6:30am AMEN 107 9:30am Women's Bible Study HR 6pm GriefShare YR 7pm Holloway 107	8am Private Group PR 12:30pm Private NR 2pm Staff Mtg. 6pm Handbells S 7pm Wisdom AA WH 7:30pm Choir S 8pm Schmidt Group PR	Maundy Thursday 10am Al Anon WH 7pm Worship	Good Friday 12pm Worship 5pm Mime Presentation 7pm Worship w/ Mime Presentation Prayer Vigil S	8:30am Organ Prep S 10am Brass Rehearsal S
27 Easter Sunday 7am Worship 8:30am Worship 10:45am Worship 6pm AA mtg WH 7pm AA closed mtg WH	28 Office Closed 9:45am Al Anon WH 5:30pm GABS 107 6:15pm Knit Wits WH 6:30pm AMEN 107	29 6:30am AMEN 107 9:30am Women's Bible Study HR	30 8am Private Group PR 12:30pm Private NR 6pm Handbells S 7pm Wisdom AA WH 7:30pm Choir S	31 10am Al Anon WH 10am TGBG PR 1pm Quilting at Bissett's 7pm Ballantyne 107		