

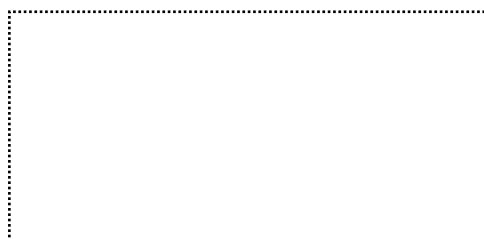


Ascension
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March 2017

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NEWSLETTER CONTENTS

Joyful Worship

Pastor's Perspective.....	2
From Pastor Angela.....	3
From Tony Acompanado.....	3

Spiritual Growth

Road to the Cross	4
Free Family Movie Night.....	4
Annual Easter Egg Hunt.....	4
Pastoral Acts.....	4
First Communion Stepping Stone	5
Schedules: JOLT & CRASH.....	5
Prayer Team - I.C.A.N.!	5

Caring Relationships

Care Ministries Message	6
Needed: Military Ministry Coordinator.....	6
Gratitude for Care Ministries	6
SOS Ministry.....	6
Winter GriefShare	7
GriefShare Meals.....	7
Special Friends	7

New Yoga Session.....	7
Blood Pressure Screening	7
From the Coralline Family.....	7
Small Groups	8
Young at Heart.....	8
TEA = Teach, Encourage, Achieve	8
Knit Wits.....	8
A Taste of the Daniel Plan.....	9

Mission Outreach

Iva Richards: Peacebuilder Award.....	10
Cross Lutheran Partnership.....	10
Partnerships: Tanzania & El Salvador	11
Refugee Sunday	12
Paw Pa Soe.....	12
Literacy Program	12
Donation Center.....	12
Little Free Library.....	12
Outreach for Hope Devotions	12

Administration

Your Council At Work.....	14
Service Opportunity	14
Calendar	16

PASTOR'S PERSPECTIVE



Welcome to the season of Lent!

Wednesday, March 1, is Ash Wednesday. We will worship God with the imposition of ashes and Holy Communion at both our 12 p.m. and 7 p.m. services. Our hope is that you will take time, not find time, to let the world know that for just a moment on Wednesday night, March 1, you will come before your God and bow down and worship and praise to honor the One who has given you life in this world and promises you eternal life in the world to come.

I am always grateful to God for the change in rhythms during the season of Lent. Wednesday night gatherings for soup suppers and worship are a gift to my heart. God provides an opportunity to share in this journey of faith in different ways from Sunday mornings at Ascension. On Wednesday nights, I have more time to simply sit and enjoy conversation with friends in the congregation. Worship is intended to be brief but meaningful. Music orients our focus to the worship of God. Sermons are exchanged for brief meditations. In the dark of night – the candles shine brighter. There is a beautiful quiet that hovers in the sanctuary even with the joyous

sounds of children squealing with delight over the little things in their lives that we so often miss. On Wednesday nights in Lent, this year, Pastor Angela, Tony, and I will all be taking different aspects of our worship. Children's messages will be a part of each Wednesday night and music will guide our steps in worship into the way of peace. I hope you will consider joining us for a time of refreshment...one night a week – you can skip cooking and the dishes (unless you sign up for either one at church). What a wonderful gift to come share in the joy of gathering together to the glory of God.

We will gather for soup suppers at 6 p.m. on March 8, March 15, March 22, March 29, and April 5. March 8 will be hosted by JOLT; March 15 will be hosted by our Tuesday Morning Bible Studies; and April 5 will be hosted by CRASH. Congregational sign-ups will be available to help with soup and bread for both March 15 and March 29. Check the narthex/lobby for the posters. We need about 18 soups each week to provide for the 100-150 who attend. Our Wednesday night gatherings will center on some wonderful reflections offered to provide us with directions to wander while we find ourselves in the wilderness of Lent.

Wednesday Worship Themes

March 8

Discovering the Spirit

March 15

Renewing My Mind

March 22

Redeeming My Time

March 29

Deepening My Relationships

April 5

Transforming My Experience

I am grateful to the psalmist who wrote these words for us, "How very good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!" Come and join us on the journey. I wonder - how could your life be different if you made the conscious decision to gather with fellow believers for fellowship and worship on the Wednesday nights in Lent? What would change in your life? Would you be happier? More content? Would you discover new things about God? Would you find your mind renewed? Would you find your time better spent? Would your relationship with God and other believers go deeper? Would you find your life transformed? My guess is that your answer would be yes! I know, for me, year after year, my answer is always, always...yes! Peace be with you. See you in church.

Rev. Christian Marien

From Pastor Angela

Many of you are aware of a personal struggle that my family and I have wrestled with recently. My father-in-law, Libeney, is very ill and has received conflicting medical diagnoses. At one point, the doctors thought he had pancreatic cancer with three months to live. Then another doctor said he had bone cancer. And still another said the cancer was in his blood. What we do know for sure is that he has endured a serious bout with tuberculosis and recovered. But he is fighting advanced prostate cancer and underwent an orchiectomy two weeks ago.

Libeney, affectionately known as 'Papi', told Benhi that he is not afraid of death. But before he dies, he would love to see our children just once - face to face.

Practically all of Benhi's family lives in Namibia, Africa and visiting them has been cost prohibitive. Well-meaning friends have comforted us with the promise that Papi will see his grandchildren one day in heaven. This is true. But I was encouraged by the words of the Psalmist "This I believe - that I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living" (Ps 27:13).

Pastor Michelle, from Cross-Milwaukee, encouraged me to start a Go Fund Me page and make people aware of this dream. We couldn't believe it. Our goal was exceeded in about four days. We received an incredible amount of support from our Ascension church family. The simple words, *Thank You*, seem so inadequate. We had an amazing, unforgettable time with friends and family creating lifelong memories. While we were still in Africa, Papi said that after seeing his grandchildren, he is born again and will live to be 100! Sisters and brothers, thank you for being part of this miracle our cup overflows with gratitude.



From Tony Acompañado

Last month I celebrated my three-year anniversary here at Ascension, and as I reflect back upon this journey, I am amazed by all that we have been through together. We have celebrated incredible moments of accomplishment and struggled through the most unimaginable of tragedies; nevertheless, we have journeyed alongside one another. Last spring, after years of discernment, I answered the call that God placed on my heart long ago and in doing so God presented a new path for us to travel together, and yes I said, *us*. Eight months ago, I began my journey of seminary studies towards ordained ministry, and you graciously agreed to come along with me. You have encouraged, supported, celebrated, and wrestled this call alongside me and I wish to share my deepest gratitude.

I began my studies at Wartburg Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa, and as a distance-learning student, I enjoy the flexibility of participating completely online. It all began last June with an eight-week intensive course on Biblical Greek. While still a bit overwhelmed and uncertain how God could be calling me down this path, last fall I successfully completed the following classes: New Testament Narratives, Foundations of Christian Worship, Jesus Christ in Pluralistic Worlds, Spiritual Practices, Global Church in Motion, and a Fieldwork Internship at Cross in Milwaukee. In January, I also traveled to participate in a J-term class at Luther Seminary on Children, Family, and the Church. I am thrilled to share that a few weeks ago I began my second semester, and I'm currently taking the following classes: Formation for Discipleship, New Testament Letters, Systematic Theology, Pastoral Care, Spiritual Practices 2, and Fieldwork 2 continuing my internship at Cross.

My friends, as I sit and write this update to you I would not have imagined God would gift my life with such a rich and amazing experience, yet here it is, and everyday I am grateful to be one step closer to answering God's call for me to become a pastor. You are an important part of my journey, and I just wish for all of you to know how grateful I am for your patience, understanding, love, and support. Thank you!

SPIRITUAL GROWTH



Road to the Cross

On Sunday, March 5, from 9:45-10:35 a.m., BLAST will host the second edition of Road to the Cross. 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!



Free Family Movie Night

Looking for something NEW – Join us on Friday, March 17, for Family Movie Night! This new fellowship centered experience is designed to celebrate the gift of community. The featured film is Moana and will be shown on the big screen in East Hall. Popcorn and beverages will be served, but we ask everyone to consider bringing a snack to share. Invite your friends, wear your pj's (yes, really), bring a pillow and blanket, and come to enjoy the movie! Doors open at 6:30 p.m., and the movie begins promptly at 7 p.m. This event is FREE!

Annual Easter Egg Hunt

Ascension's Annual Easter Egg Hunt (sponsored by Supermoms) is Sunday, April 2, 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 your 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 Sunday, March 26**. Drop-off bin is located in the narthex. For more information, email ileenmarien@gmail.com.



Pastoral Acts

Baptism - Sienna Vandermause
February 5, 2017

First Communion Stepping Stone

This year, this stepping stone will occur over the course of three Sunday mornings, beginning on March 19 and continuing on March 26 and April 2. The courses take place in East and West Halls from 9:45-10:35 a.m., during BLAST.

Students in fourth grade, in addition to any fifth graders unable to attend last year, along with a parent/guardian are invited to join Pastor Chris for a time of faith-building and mutual conversation around one of the central experiences of our church.

Prayer Team - I.C.A.N.!

Intentional Caring Acts Now!

The liturgical season of Lent is here, and these 40 days prior to Easter are often a time of spiritual reflection. During this time, people sometimes refrain from eating certain foods they enjoy as a way to deepen their journey of spiritual reflection.

We can also share our food by an I.C.A.N.! commitment to set aside one can of vegetables, fruit, or soup each day during Lent to donate to the hungry of our community and to our partner church Cross Lutheran in Milwaukee.

CAN you? Will you make this I.C.A.N.! Commitment of 40 cans

Praying is powerful. Your Intentional Caring Acts Now! are powerful. Sharing is powerful. Praise God from Whom all blessings flow!

Please join the Ascension Prayer Team on the first and third Mondays of the month, at 5:30 p.m., in the Prayer Room for an hour of prayer addressing the concerns of our church, community, and nation.

*And all the believers met together
constantly and shared everything they had.
~ Acts:44*

Schedules

JOLT

Thursday evening JOLT sessions take a break during Lent. Instead, students should work independently on the Lenten project they were assigned. All projects are due when JOLT resumes on April 27. JOLT students are still expected to worship regularly on Sundays and are strongly encouraged to participate in the Wednesday evening soup suppers and worship throughout Lent.

CRASH/Mime

March 1	7 p.m. Ash Wednesday Worship & Mime Blessing
March 5	Mime Travel - Cross Lutheran (Ixonia)
March 12	Mime Travel - Reformation Lutheran (Brookfield)
March 19	Mime Travel - St. John's Lutheran (Brookfield)
March 26	Mime Travel - St. Stephen the Martyr (Greendale)



CARING RELATIONSHIPS



Care Ministries Message

I have had some challenges (perhaps many of you can relate) with my parents as they get older and are presented with increasing health issues. Sometimes it feels like a “role reversal” because decisions need to be made in their best interest. Being my mom and dad and my children’s grandma and grandpa, they have a certain level of experience and influence in my life. So when these sudden health setbacks occur, my first instinct is to take charge. However, before jumping in to make changes in their lives, it is important to communicate with them and help them cope with their feelings. Here are a few words of advice from my parents:

- I don’t like the idea of needing your help. I enjoy being with you, appreciate that you do things for me, but you’re taking over doesn’t feel honoring. I know your intentions are good, but it makes me “feel” even less independent.
- When you’re doing things for me, I feel guilty because I know you have such a busy life. If I thought that you enjoyed doing those things for me it would make me feel less of a burden.
- As my health has begun to fail it takes me longer to get ready, which causes people to become impatient with me and their frustration causes me anxiety and that is when relationships can get strained.

Perhaps you have had similar thoughts, consider sharing them with your loved ones. Give them, and yourself, the gift of understanding.

Brenda Lytle, Director of Care Ministries

Gratitude for Care Ministries

Dear Care Ministries,

Thank you so much for your care package. I love the book *God is With You Every Day* and will include it in my morning Bible study. Your thoughtfulness is greatly appreciated!

God Bless,

Carol Peters

SOS Ministry

Nada Draeger has stepped down from her leadership position for SOS Angel Ministry. We do not have a ministry in place for rides or help at this time. Feel free to call **Interfaith Senior Programs** at 262-549-3348.

Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God commanded you, so that your days may be long and that it may go well with you in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.

Deuteronomy 5:16

Needed: Military Ministry Coordinator

Do you have a passion for the military? Ascension’s Military Ministry supports military families connected to our church and provides outreach to service men and women in our community. Would you be interested in coordinating a ministry schedule for events that help our Ascension military members? Please contact Brenda Lytle at 547-8518 or Brenda@ascensionelca.org if interested.

Winter GriefShare

If you are suffering a loss and looking for support or healing, please feel free to join us for GriefShare. The program is set up so anyone can join it at any time. The program continues through March 28 from 6-8 p.m. in the Youth Room. Free meals are provided to our participants beginning at 5:30 p.m. in the West Hall. The meals are provided by the wonderful small and large groups in our congregation and are greatly appreciated!

GriefShare Meals

It is so nice being able to join fellow GriefShare friends and share a meal each week. I look forward to it since I have been so lonely with the loss I endured. The food has been delicious! Thank you!" (GriefShare Participant, winter 2017).

Do you enjoy cooking and making meals for others? Are you looking for something rewarding to do with your time this winter? We have about 10-12 GriefShare participants who enjoy getting together and sharing a meal on Tuesday nights. If you, as an individual, enjoy cooking or your small group would like to make a meal, please contact, Brenda Lytle, at 262-527-8518 or brenda@ascensionelca.org, or sign up on the Care Ministries bulletin board.

Special Friends

We celebrated February, the month of LOVE, by spending time together at the Country Springs water park. They offer a reduced price (\$6.50) every Monday for families with special needs and our group has gone there for many years because they give us an excellent welcome!

March's event will be at Touch of Glaze, preparing for Easter celebrations. In April, we plan to have a fundraiser at Monkey Joe's.

I am currently reading *Accessible Gospel, Inclusive Worship*, by Barbara J. Newman, a special education teacher and consultant for CLC (Christian Learning Center) Network. Their mission is to promote the development of people with a variety of abilities and disabilities to live as active, integrated members of their communities. My goal is to explore the question: how can we set up an environment where persons with disabilities can connect with the gospel message and grow in relationship with Jesus Christ? I hope to find answers that can benefit all of us at Ascension.

Please let me know if you have any thoughts/suggestions for Special Friends as we count on your love and support.

Marge Schroeder, Special Friends Ministry Leader

New Yoga Session

Do you wish to become more flexible and reduce your stress in 2017? Care Ministries has another six-week session of yoga beginning Monday, Feb. 27 through April 3, from 6-7 p.m. in East Hall. The cost is only \$2/class or \$12 for six weeks. The instructor is Jessica Popp.

Blood Pressure Screening

Blood pressure checks will be done between church services in the Hearth Room once a month. Care Ministries is providing health professionals for this free service for health promotion!

~ March 5, April 2, and May 7, 2017 ~

Friendship....is the instrument by which God reveals to each of us the beauties of other.
~ C. S. Lewis

From the Coralline Family

Thank you for the love and support you gave to Aggie. She loved the people she worked with - her church. She had such a heart for service. We received so many comments on how loving, caring, and supportive our church family and friends were to all of Aggie's family. May God bless all of you.

Thank you again, Ed and Sharon Coralline

CARING RELATIONSHIPS



Young at Heart

We would love to see you at Young at Heart's March 15 potluck luncheon. We meet in East Hall starting at noon. Please bring a dish to pass if possible. Jo Buth will be addressing us after lunch. She will be explaining the Refugee Program — how the Burmese people come to live in Wisconsin. Also, we hope to have some of the Burmese refugees visit us. Later, there will be time for Sequence and Sheepshead. If you have questions, contact Celeste Defenbaugh at 262-370-4522; Beth Hoffmann at 262-542-7447; or Arlene Davis at 262-542-9119.

TEA=Teach, Encourage, Achieve

Join us Sunday, March 5, during Children's Ministry time (9:45-10:30) for TEA Time in the prayer room. Enjoy tea, goodies and conversation. You are welcome to bring your little ones who are not in BLAST or leave them in the nursery. Hope to see you there. If you have questions, e-mail Ileen Marien, ileenmarien@gmail.com.

Knit Wits

The Ascension Knit Wits are still busy making charity hats, lapghans for the VA, and baby blankets for the USO, but we have also started making fashion scarves for the Women's Shelter.

Our schedule for March and April

- March 9, 11:30 a.m.– 3 p.m.: Lunch & Knit, at Good Harvest Café, 2205 Silvernail Rd.
- March 18, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.: Knit Fest in East Hall
- March 27, noon - 3 p.m.: Meeting in East Hall
- April 3, 11:30 a.m.– 3 p.m.: Lunch & Knit, at Culver's on Grandview
- April 8, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.: Knit Fest in East Hall
- April 24, noon -3 p.m.: Meeting in East Hall

We will also be in Plymouth, WI for a weekend retreat April 28-30. If you would like to join us, contact Maddie for more information. We always welcome new members!

Small Groups

There is still time to participate in our Small Group Lenten study, *The Me I Want to Be* by Rev. John Ortberg. Please contact Pastor Angela or attend one of the sessions between services.

A Taste of the Daniel Plan: Break the Sugar Addiction

In past issues, we have reported on the negative effects of sugar on the body. Recently, we read an article written by the Medical Director of the Cleveland Clinic's Center for Functional Medicine and co-author of The Daniel Plan, Dr. Mark Hyman. In the article, Hyman points out again many people are addicted to sugar in the exact same way addicts are reliant on cocaine, heroin, nicotine, and alcohol. Sugar, like other drugs, targets the dopamine sensors of our brains, which are the "feel good" receptors. The fewer dopamine receptors a person has, the more stimulation (sugar) that is needed to "feel good," which results in bingeing and overeating.

The good news is people can modify the dopamine activity by modulating your brain chemistry with the use of specific nutrients that help break people's addiction to sugar. Here are five suggestions Hyman offers to help break food addictions:

1. Balance your blood sugar: *Research studies say that low blood sugar levels are associated with lower overall blood flow to the brain, which means more bad decisions. To keep your blood sugar stable:*

- Eat a nutritious breakfast with some protein like eggs, protein shakes, or nut butters. Studies repeatedly show that eating a healthy breakfast helps people maintain weight loss.
- Also, have smaller meals throughout the day. Eat every 3-4 hours and have some protein with each snack or meal (lean animal protein, nuts, seeds, beans).
- Avoid eating 3 hours before bedtime.

2. Eliminate sugar and artificial sweeteners and your cravings will go away: *Go cold turkey. If you are addicted to narcotics or alcohol, you can't simply just cut down. You have to stop for your brain to reset. In the same way, you need to eliminate all refined sugars, sodas, fruit juices, and artificial sweeteners from your diet. These are all drugs that will fuel cravings. (Light bulb moment for us!)*

3. Determine if hidden food allergies are triggering your cravings: People often crave the very foods that they have a hidden allergy to. *The Daniel Plan offers a 40 day detox that is a good start in helping to break your sugar addiction as well as uncovering food allergies that may be responsible for health issues.*

4. Get 7-8 hours of sleep. *Research shows that lack of sleep increases cravings. (Interesting to us!)*

5. Optimize your nutrient status with supplements that can help reduce cravings:

- Optimize omega 3's. Low levels of omega 3 fatty acids are involved in normal brain cell function, insulin control, and inflammation.
- Optimize your Vitamin D level. According to one study, when Vitamin D levels are low, the hormone that helps turn off your appetite doesn't work and people feel hungry all the time, no matter how much they eat. *(Another reason to have your Vitamin D level checked!)*

The Daniel Plan can help you break this dangerous addiction. A new Daniel Plan group is starting after Easter. Please contact us if you are interested. In the meantime, go to <http://danielplan.com/healthyhabits/road-mix/> to check out our suggested recipe for this month.

Steve and Carol Spieker

This column offers health and nutritional information and is for educational purposes only. It is not a substitute for, nor does it replace, professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment of health conditions. Please consult your physician or other healthcare professional before beginning or changing any health program to ensure it is appropriate for you.

MISSION OUTREACH: PARTNERSHIPS



This year's Peacebuilder Awards will be presented at Plowshare's 28th Anniversary Celebration at Carroll University the evening of Friday, March 10.

Iva Richards Receives Peacebuilder Award

Each year the community-based organization Plowshare presents its annual Peacebuilder Award to an individual that has made significant contributions to peace and/or social justice in Southeastern Wisconsin by enhancing understanding and cooperation among people from diverse ethnic, religious, racial, and/or socioeconomic backgrounds. This year's recipient is Ascension member Iva Richards.

Iva has centered her life around peace and justice by involving herself in various organizations and actions for four decades. During the 1980's and 90's Iva worked with the local chapter of Beyond War. In the last two decades, Iva has been actively involved in Ventures in Peoples with Haiti, SOPHIA, and our church's refugee resettlement and Mission Outreach programs.

In conferring this award, Plowshare seeks to enhance community awareness of the work that is being done by local groups and individuals to "make peace relevant to the world around us."

Cross Lutheran Partnership

It has been a busy month in our partnership with Cross. Our annual Souper Bowl Campaign where we collect soup cans for the Cross Food Pantry has been a great success. Final numbers are not in yet but watch announcements and Mission Outreach Facebook page for total numbers and the winners of the challenge. Half way through the campaign, we have collected over 300 cans which puts us on target for our goal of 600 cans. That means that we have provided a can of soup for each participant for three weeks of coming to the food pantry. Many of the people who participate in the Bread of Healing Empowerment Ministry depend on the food pantry and the meal to feed their bodies. The Bible study and the prayers feed their souls and the fellowship of the meals and counseling feeds their spirit and minds. What a wonderful way to respond to God's command to feed the hungry!

On February 17, six Ascension members participated in the annual Cross Mardi Gras. This special event for Cross members, partners and friends is a fund raiser but also a fun raiser. It provides an opportunity to learn more about the ministries at Cross and how partnerships can work with them and it provides an experience to celebrate our relationship with the members of Cross.

Shirley W ehmeier,
Mission Outreach Wing Leader





Tanzania

Check out the pictures above and letter from Pastor Lema below. There are more pictures on our Mission Outreach Facebook page to see the joy in the children's faces as they began school with their uniforms, maize and beans, books, and school supplies. Our donations made a huge difference.

Greetings in the wonderful Name above all Names Jesus Christ,
We're doing fine all over here and it is our hope that you're doing fine too. The aim of this message is to give you a brief of what is going on in our parishes as far as the gift you sent to us last December 2016.

First of all, we highly appreciate and thank you all for such a wonderful gift, which you sent to us at a right time. Our people, school pupils and students, church workers and the entire community are conveying a lot of [gratitude] to you all, and they [hope] God blesses you more than how you touch and bless their life. The gift was so useful, touching the life of many beneficiaries within our three parishes.

The following [is some] short data of how we plan [to] utilize the gift. As you may remember, you sent the gift [which can be utilized for two things], one for parishes' administration activities and another for schools support. School support was used in such a way that: each primary school ie: Maroroni, Nazareth, Savanna and Samaria received 10 bags of maize and 20kg of beans. Also from each parish, we picked needy pupils and supported them with school uniform and supplies as follows:

- Maroron Parish 63 pupils and 15 secondary school students
- Samaria parish 64 pupils and 15 secondary school students
- Kilimamoja Parish 43 pupils and 10 secondary school students

This distribution [total was to] 170 pupils and 40 students - the beneficiaries of the gift. Praise be to the Lord God! ~ P astor L ema

El Salvador

Ascension delegates for the Holy Week trip to El Salvador are getting excited about the possibilities of the week spent with our Salvadoran brothers and sisters. The week will provide the travelers with a chance to learn more about the country and the region where our sister congregations are located. They will worship and work side by side with the members of Iglesia Luterana de un Milagro de Dios de San Jorge. (The Lutheran Church of the Miracle of God at San Jorge). There will be touring experiences with both churches. The delegates will also visit the Agroferreteria and celebrate the success of a project started by Ascension. The original hardware store continues to expand in size and products available increase, and additional stores have been started in neighboring areas. There will be opportunities to talk with the people of the congregations to learn more about the challenges they face every day. Most importantly, there will be a chance to see the power of the Gospel at work with our dear friends so many miles away and how the Gospel has united us.

While a limited number of people are able to travel to El Salvador, they represent us all. Donations to help offset the costs for the delegates are greatly appreciated. Part of the costs of the trip include sponsoring events and activities so the people of our partnership can participate. Please pray for those who will be taking time from their busy schedules to make this trip on our behalf.

MISSION OUTREACH

Refugee Sunday

On Sunday, March 26, we will celebrate Ascension's long commitment to refugee resettlement. Ascension has sponsored seven refugee families over the last 15 years. Resettlement involves helping families adjust to a new life, in a new country, with a new language, and getting a household set up from scratch. Many people have helped in this mission over the years. Looking back, it is good to see that the families are doing well. Praise God for this ministry that changes lives. With all of the publicity about immigrants and refugees, this program continues to work according to Jesus' command, "I was a stranger and you took me in."

Ascension Refugee Families — Where are they now?*

- 2001 - Karacic family from Bosnia now own a house in Waukesha
- 2002 - Mohammed-Zai family from Afghanistan are living in Waukesha
- 2004 - Haidary family from Afghanistan are now living in Virginia
- 2005 - Umarov family from Russia (Meskhetian Turk ethnicity) now owns a house in Waukesha
- 2006 - Ghorbani family from Iran are living in the Waukesha area
- 2007 - Moses Ta family from Burma (ethnic Karen) are members at Ascension & own a house in Waukesha
- 2009 - Prae Reh family and Ai Beh family from Burma (ethnic Karenni) living in Milwaukee

While Ascension has not had a refugee family recently, we continue to support Refugee Resettlement, especially with the Karen people who came from Burma. Jo Buth is our refugee angel for all that she does to help the Karen families. Together with Galilee Lutheran Church, St. Bart's in Pewaukee, and most recently Christ the Servant, Ascension assists the more than 112 Karen refugees in 23 families who live in Waukesha. Thirty-five of those refugees are children and eight of them are college students. On any given day, Jo drives families to doctor appointments, goes to school conferences, assists in studying for citizenship tests, and just being Pe Jo (Grandma Jo). Her love for the families is contagious!

The families can tell you sad stories of their escape into the jungle because soldiers were shooting at them as they ran and then watched as their food was stolen and their homes burned. They finally entered refugee camps across the river in Thailand and applied for resettlement to another country. Eventually they landed in Waukesha. There are about 60,000 Karen Refugees in the US -- about 3,000 in Wisconsin. These Waukesha Karen families came from different areas of Burma and have made a close-knit community in Waukesha. They have their Christianity and language in common.

They are doing well as employees, homeowners, college students, and licensed drivers. A couple of the families are the proud owners of a Habitat for Humanity home. The children are excelling in school and the little ones learn to speak Karen and English at the same time. Many of them participate in our literacy program. During spring break, Jo and a member of St. Bart's will take nine middle school and high school students to Washington DC.

If anyone is interested in helping with this ministry, please contact Jo Buth. You will be blessed!

**This information was provided by Jeff Kirk who has been not only a leader at Ascension regarding refugee resettlement, but he has written a book about the steps in welcoming refugees.*

Paw Pa Soe: A Wonderful Success Story

Paw Pa Soe came here as a nine-year-old from the refugee camp and did not know English. She excelled in school, was active at Ascension, and now, as a freshman at the University of Wisconsin in Whitewater, has just become a citizen. We will celebrate her success on Refugee Sunday.



Literacy Program

Ascension's literacy tutoring program continues to grow. As of mid- February, we had 30 students and 29 volunteers. The Literacy Council has been invaluable in partnering in this program. We have volunteers from Christ the Servant and family of Ascension members, in addition to our Ascension volunteers. We thank everyone who has volunteered for their commitment and faithful service. It is a blessing to see the relationships grow between the students and tutors and between the students. There is more than learning English happening at the sessions. We see self-confidence grow, cultural awareness increase, and both students and tutors learning to accept new ways of doing things. For more information, contact Shirley Wehmeier or Barbara Nordberg.

Donation Center

During the past few weeks, volunteers have taken donations to Hope Center, Waukesha Food Pantry, and the Salvation Army Winter Shelter! These were in addition to the Love Your Church, Love Your World campaign. What a generous outpouring of care from Ascension members! Your donations help to support the ministries of the local aid agencies in our own backyard! We love because He first loved us (1 John 4:19).

Little Free Library

As the weather warms up, more people are walking on the sidewalk in front of church or spending time at the park. They will be walking by Ascension's Little Free Library. Please remember our library as you do your spring cleaning. The books have been so well received in the neighborhood. One man told a neighbor that he often stopped to take a book and then returned it for others to read. He is also bringing books from his house to contribute. For some of the children, this may be the only library they go to. Place donations in the bin at the West Hall Donation Center.

Outreach for Hope Lenten Devotions

This year's Lenten devotions, Walking Together in Hope, are now available for download on the Outreach For Hope resources page. Individuals can sign up to receive daily emailed devotions, as in the past by using the link in the right hand column on the Outreach for Hope home page to provide your name and email address. Then check the box marked Lenten Devotions. If you are already signed up from past years, you will receive this year's devotions. If you're not sure, you can sign up again. The system will recognize you if you are already on the list.

Bishop Erickson has provided us with a framework around the theme of "Accompaniment" and the five values that are part of authentic accompaniment. He leads the first week with four devotions, beginning Ash Wednesday. A team of authors gives personal perspectives on the five accompaniment values: mutuality, vulnerability, inclusivity, empowerment, and sustainability.

ADMINISTRATION



Your Council at Work

I would like to introduce myself. My husband Mike and I have been attending Ascension since 2008 and became members in 2013. This is my third year on council. During the upcoming year, I look forward to continuing our work on the Arise 2025 Vision short-term goals, while looking towards moving forward with our long-term goals. It is so exciting to see how several items have come together.

I would like to thank all those who have served on one of our wings, small groups, committees, ministries and partnerships. I encourage all those who are thinking of volunteering to contact our wing leaders to learn more about our ministries and how you too can be a part of them.

Please feel open to contact myself or any of our council members with any comments, concerns, or questions you may have. I look forward to meeting all of you.

Thank you,

Cynthia Carlson, Council President

Service Opportunity

For quite a few years a handful of congregations in Waukesha County have been organizing and taking part in a hands-on mission trip, including Atonement Muskego, St Luke's Waukesha, and Dr. Martin Luther Oconomowoc. This spring, we're sponsoring a trip to Baton Rouge, Louisiana, working in partnership with Camp Restore. They've set up a worksite to help those recovering from last August's floods. We've reserved 50 spots for our trip (March 25 - April 1), and we have a few spots available, and would love to fill those spots with folks from around the Synod. If you have people in your congregation that have a heart for trips like this and time to take in late March, I'd love to be in touch with them. We're leaving early the morning on Saturday, March 25 and returning on Saturday evening, April 1. The cost is \$500, and includes transportation, registration, lodging, and over half of our meals. Participants must be 18 years of age or older.

If you are interested, please e-mail Dave Dringenburg at dave@at-onechurch.org or call 262-744-0333.



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OFFICE HOURS

MONDAY-THURSDAY

9 a.m.—5 p.m.

FRIDAY

9 a.m.—12 p.m.

March

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<div>KEY EH East Hall HR Hearth Room N Narthex NR Nursery PR Prayer Room S Sanctuary WH West Hall YR Youth Room</div>			1 Ash Wednesday 8am Private PR 9am YAH Breakfast at Den-ny's 9:30am Cross Meal 12pm Worship 12pm Private NR 12:30pm Women's Nurture Group PR 4pm Tutoring 106, 107 7pm Worship 7pm AA Wisdom WH, HR 8pm Choir S	2 10am Al-Anon WH 10am TGBG PR 5pm Angel Choir MR 5:30pm Joyful Sounds S 6pm Youth Bells S 7pm Ballantyne Sm Grp 107 7pm Care Ministries 106 7pm Mikecz Grp PR	3	4 9am Tutoring 106, 107, HR, PR, WH
5 Mime Travel 8:30am Worship 9:30am Blood Pressure Checks HR 9:45am Road to the Cross EH 9:45 am TEA Time PR 10 am Adult Ed S 10:45 Worship 4 pm 7 Last Words of Christ, Carroll 6pm Pr. Angela's Group, Offsite 6pm AA Beginner WH 7pm AA closed WH	6 9:45am Al-Anon WH 12pm Private NR 5:30pm Prayer Group PR 6pm Yoga EH 6:30pm AMEN 107	7 6:30am AMEN 107 9:30 am TGIT 107 9:30am Women's Bible Study HR 5:30pm GriefShare Dinner WH 6pm GriefShare YR 6pm Handbells S 6:30pm Mission Outreach 107 7:30 pm Choir S	8 8am Private PR 11:45am Men's Nurture Grp 106 12pm Private NR 2pm Staff Mtg. 4pm Tutoring 106, 107 6pm Soup Supper EH, WH 7pm Lenten Worship 7pm AA Wisdom WH, HR 7:45 pm TNT EH	9 10am Al-Anon WH 5pm Angel Choir MR 5:30pm Joyful Sounds S 6pm Youth Bells S 7pm Ballantyne Sm Grp 107 7pm Mikecz Group PR	10	11 9am Tutoring 106, 107, HR, PR, WH
12 Daylight Savings Mime Travel 8:30am Worship 9:30am Puppets EH 9:45am BLAST 10am Adult Ed S 10am Starting Point, Office 10:45 Worship 6pm Pr. Angela's Group, Offsite 6pm AA Beginner WH 7pm AA closed WH	13 9:45am Al-Anon WH 12pm Private NR 1pm Living Letters 106 6pm Yoga EH 6:30pm AMEN 107	14 6:30am AMEN 107 9:30am Women's Bible Study HR 1pm Pastoral Assistants PR 5:30pm GriefShare Dinner WH 6pm GriefShare YR 6pm Handbells S 7pm Holloway 107 7:30 pm Choir S	15 Newsletter Deadline 8am Private PR 12pm Private NR 12pm YAH Potluck EH, WH 12:30pm Women's Nurture Grp PR 4pm Tutoring 106, 107 6pm Soup Supper EH, WH 7pm Lenten Worship 7pm AA Wisdom, WH HR 7:45 pm TNT EH	16 10am Al-Anon WH 10am TGBG PR 6pm Synod Council EH, WH 6pm Wing Leader Mtg. 106 7pm Ballantyne Sm Grp 107 7pm Mikecz Group PR	17 5pm FREE Family Movie Night EH, WH	18 9am Knit Fest EH 9am Tutoring 106, 107, HR, PR, WH
19 Mime Travel 8:30am Worship 9:45am BLAST 9:45am Adult Ed S 9:45am 1st Communion Class EH 10:45 Worship 6pm Pr. Angela's Group, Offsite 6pm AA Beginner WH 7pm AA closed WH	20 9:45am Al-Anon WH 12pm Private NR 5:30pm Prayer Group PR 6pm Yoga EH 6:30pm AMEN 107	21 6:30am AMEN 107 9:30am TGIT 107 9:30am Women's Bible Study HR 5:30pm GriefShare Dinner WH 6pm GriefShare YR 7pm Council 107	22 8am Private PR 12pm Private NR 4pm Tutoring 106, 107 6pm Soup Supper 7pm Lenten Worship 7pm AA Wisdom, WH 7:45 pm TNT EH	23 10am Al-Anon WH 7pm Ballantyne Sm Grp 107 7pm Mikecz Group PR	24	25 9am Tutoring 106, 107, HR, PR, WH
26 Refugee Sunday Mime Travel 8:30am Worship 9:45am BLAST 9:45am Adult Ed S 9:45am 1st Communion Class WH 9:45am Puppets EH 10:45 Worship 12pm Praise Band S 6pm Pr. Angela's Group, Offsite 6pm AA Beginner WH 7pm AA closed WH	27 9:45am Al-Anon WH 12pm Knit Wits EH 12pm Private NR 6pm Yoga EH 6:30pm AMEN 107	28 6:30am AMEN 107 9:30am Women's Bible Study HR 5:30pm GriefShare Dinner WH 6pm GriefShare YR 6pm Hanbells S 7pm Holloway Group 106 7:30 pm Choir S	29 8am Private PR 12pm Private NR 4pm Tutoring 106, 107 6pm Soup Supper EH, WH 7pm Lenten Worship 7pm AA Wisdom, WH HR 7:45 pm TNT EH	30 10am Al-Anon WH 10am TGBG PR 5pm Angel Choir MR 5:30pm Joyful Sounds S 6pm Youth Bells S 7pm Ballantyne Sm Grp 107 7pm Mikecz Grp PR	31	