



*Ascension*  
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December 2017

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Got Advent?

I have a friend who argues with me about the start of the season of Christmas. He is convinced that November 1<sup>st</sup> is the true start date of the Christmas season. (Mainly, because he wants to decorate the house, put on his elf shoes, and blast the Christmas music continuously through December 25<sup>th</sup>).

Every year, on November 1<sup>st</sup>, he announces that the Christmas season has begun and “O Little Town of Bethlehem” begins to be heard by his neighbors on both sides of his house. I argue that December 15<sup>th</sup> is as early as I can possibly go! You see, I need the season of Advent. It brings me hope. Lingering days of darkness call me to my knees praying to the One who promises that the light will shine in the darkness.

- I need the season of Advent to fill me with anticipation for what is coming.
- I need the season of Advent to remind me that God promises peace to a violent world.
- I need the season of Advent to quiet my own heart for the noise around me.
- I need the season of Advent to call me to love at the manger of my Savior.
- I need the season of Advent to lift up my head bowed down in prayer for the brokenhearted.
- I need the season of Advent to calm my restless soul from its distractions.
- I need the season of Advent to remind me that God’s love has no end.
- I need the season of Advent to share the joy of the shepherds.
- I need the season of Advent to answer the darkness with light.
- I need the season of Advent to shock me out of my complacency.
- I need the season of Advent to remind me that we are Bethlehem-bound.
- I need the season of Advent. It brings me hope. And hope does not disappoint!

So the season of Advent comes to us.

How will you welcome God’s gift of the season? A flurry of shopping, spending, wrapping, worrying, and willing to do Advent differently next year? Or might you take one moment from your day to acknowledge that God has gifted you a season to prepare for the birth of a Savior? To light a candle to chase away the darkness and simply pray the prayer, “Thank you God,” might be all you need to re-center your Advent days into days and nights of peaceful wanderings toward a manger full of joy. I wonder...

Do you need the season of Advent?

I do.

Thank you God.

*Rev. Chris Marien*

The Longest Night Service

The Holiday Season is quickly approaching. For many, the holidays are a festive time marked with joy and cheer. It is a time to spend with family and friends – a time to enjoy great food and spirited fellowship. For most people, this is their favorite part of the year and they have anticipated its arrival for months. They are revived by all the energy that surrounds this season... the baking, caroling, shopping, and visiting. For them, Christmas really will be merry. Unfortunately, this is not the case for everyone.

On the opposite end of the celebration spectrum, there are those who have been dreading the holidays. This time of year, they are confronted with challenging situations, painful memories, or heavy hearts. They may not feel like singing “Joy to the World” or “Deck the Halls.” The reasons abound. Perhaps some have experienced the loss of a loved one and this will be the first Holiday Season without that person. Or perhaps the loss occurred years ago, yet the holidays still hold a certain sadness - never quite the same since their loved one(s) died. Some families may be enduring the heartache of miscarriage or infertility. Others may be battling an illness or attempting to fathom a recent diagnosis. Some individuals may be dealing with empty nest syndrome or otherwise separated from family and friends by great distance. Some families are weathering a stormy divorce. Others may be overcome with financial worry or dealing with unemployment. Other families may be suffering through foreclosure. Some are lonely or depressed. And still others may simply be overwhelmed by the stress of the season. Although the factors may vary widely, there is one constant - our burdens can seem magnified during the holidays.

As the body of Christ, it is vital that we provide an alternative for worship during the holidays. Remember Paul's mandate to believers in his letter to the Romans? We are to “rejoice with them that rejoice and to weep with them that weep.” This year, we will do just that. In addition to our usual Christmas celebratory services, we will also have The Longest Night service on Sunday, Dec. 17 at 7 p.m. The service is called “The Longest Night” because in the Northern Hemisphere, the Winter Solstice is the longest night of the year and falls on or near Dec. 22. (In some congregations, this type of worship service is also referred to as “Blue Christmas.” This name comes from the liturgical color blue during the season of Advent. The color blue symbolizes hope).

During this service, worshipers are invited to enter God's presence and feel safe. Their emotions are welcome as well. Anxiety, grief, tears, and even anger are wholly acceptable. This service of prayers, readings, and thoughtful music is not an all-night vigil, but rather, a time to take a moment of holy calm in the midst of our circumstances and reflect. It is a time to pause, breathe, and lament. Oddly enough, in our shared discontent, God reminds us that we are never alone. Please know that the Longest Night service is open to the entire community. Therefore, feel free to extend an invitation to someone you know who may be hurting this time of year. This is what it means to be the body of Christ.

*Rev. Angela Khabel*



*Singing cheerful songs to a person whose heart is heavy is as bad as stealing someone’s jacket in cold weather or rubbing salt in a wound. ~ Proverbs 25:20 NLT*

Pastoral Acts: Funerals

Janet Schurmann                      November 14



# Important Dates

**Saturday, Dec. 9, 6 p.m.**  
 Advent Concert Worship

**Sunday, Dec. 10, 8:30 & 10:45 a.m.**  
 Advent Concert Worship

**Sunday, Dec. 17, 8:30 & 10:45 a.m.**  
 Children's Christmas Program

**Sunday, Dec. 17, 7 p.m.**  
 The Longest Night Service

**Christmas Eve Worship Services**  
 10 a.m. & 4:00, 5:30, & 11:00 p.m.

**Christmas Day Worship**  
 10 a.m.

# Mary Had a Baby: Children's Christmas Program

Ascension's children will share the story of Jesus' birth through songs, readings, and a live nativity during morning worship at 8:30 and 10:45 on Sunday, Dec. 17. Come and hear the story that never grows old as told through the sweet voices of children! (More on pg. 6).



# Wonders of His Love Advent Concert Worship December 9/10

The musicians of Ascension invite you to join us in worship for our annual Advent/Christmas concerts on Saturday, Dec. 9 at 6 p.m. and Sunday, Dec. 10 at 8:30 a.m. and 10:45 a.m. The Ascension Choir, Handbell Choir, Praise Band, Children's Choirs and instrumentalists encourage you to extend an invitation to family and friends to come and share in the "Wonders of His Love" given to us by God at the birth of Jesus.

# A Star in the East The Jubilate Chorale, December 2/3

The Jubilate Chorale presents their annual Christmas concert on Saturday, Dec. 2 at St. Jerome's Catholic Church in Oconomowoc and Sunday, Dec. 3 at St. John's Lutheran Church in Brookfield. "A Star in the East" features unique arrangements of familiar carols along with beautiful contemporary music of the season. Tickets are available from Ascension members Scott Greger, Sara VandenHeuvel, and Vicki Taylor, or by visiting [www.jubilatechorale.org](http://www.jubilatechorale.org).

# Endowment Fund

The purpose of the Ascension Endowment Fund is to enhance the ministries, missions, and physical premises of Ascension apart from the annual budget. The Endowment Fund completed the 2017 income distribution of available funds based on 5% of our 12/31/16 balance (\$52,758), giving \$900 for each of the following:

- Mission Outreach** – Tanzania fund to help with expenses of planned 2018 mission trip.
  - Ministries** – Youth Ministry; \$700 to fund two scholarships for the JOLT trip; remaining \$200 to defray trip costs.
  - Facilities** – Sound system upgrades for sanctuary
- We are now welcoming funding requests for next year, which must be turned in by **March 31, 2018**. Request forms are available at <http://tinyurl.com/ALCEndowment> or in the church office. Approximately \$900 of funding is available for each of the three categories in 2018. You can discuss your request with the pastors or a member of the Endowment Committee: Jim Hahn, [jwhahn@milwpc.com](mailto:jwhahn@milwpc.com); Rick James, [rickjamesuw72@gmail.com](mailto:rickjamesuw72@gmail.com); Ric Simon, [ricsimon@yahoo.com](mailto:ricsimon@yahoo.com).

Please prayerfully consider making a legacy gift to the Ascension Endowment Fund through one of the methods below to ensure that the Ascension ministries and missions you have supported during your lifetime will continue to thrive when you are in your heavenly home.

- Life Insurance** - By naming the Endowment Fund as a beneficiary, you can practice Christian stewardship with a substantial gift at death by means of small contributions during your life.
- Individual Retirement Accounts** – As with life insurance, by naming the Endowment Fund as a beneficiary, you can practice Christian stewardship with a substantial gift at death and also eliminate the taxes paid at distribution of the funds.
- Will Bequest** - When preparing or revising your will, you can make provisions for the Endowment Fund in several ways with complete confidentiality.

**Appreciated Investments** - Giving appreciated assets, such as stocks and real estate, starts generating income immediately, plus it can reduce your taxes.

*Ric Simon*, Endowment Committee Member

# God Inspires Us to Dream 2018

We invite you to continue to pray about your response to the 2018 budget. Stewardship letters and pledge cards were mailed in November. If you didn't receive a letter, please contact the church office. Pledge cards are available in the narthex.

Did you know you can give to Ascension from your Apple phone via the Give+ app by Vanco Services? Download it from the App Store soon so you can be ready when you want to make a donation. Don't have an Apple phone? You can always give to us on our website, [ascensionlca.org](http://ascensionlca.org), and click "Online Giving."



For where your  
 treasure is,  
 there your heart  
 will be also.  
 ~ Matthew 6:21



SPIRITUAL GROWTH

BLAST Heifer Barnyard Update

We have begun to fill our Heifer Barnyard. Using only the money the students have collected in their Heifer Banks, the three-and-four-year-old class purchased three honey bee hives. While first, second, third, fourth, and fifth grades have each purchased a flock of chickens. Third grade also purchased a share of a water buffalo. Our first purchases totaled \$155.00. The kindergarten class has saved \$19.61 towards their purchase of apple tree seedlings, which cost \$60.00, and the first grade chose a llama as the second animal they want to purchase. The llama is a \$150.00. Thank you, parents, for helping your students learn how to share with others!

Please check our “Heifer Barnyard” bulletin board, across from Tony Acompanado’s office, to see what has been purchased and to get a monthly update of the money collected by each classroom.

Thank you for helping fill our milk pails during our Noisy Offerings in Oct. and Nov. The congregation donated \$309.87 in Oct. and \$273.72 in Nov. Some of these funds will be used to aid classes that need help reaching their goal and some will go towards the purchase of a heifer.

Road to Bethlehem

On Sunday, Dec. 3, from 9:45–10:35 a.m., BLAST will host Road to Bethlehem, an event that focuses on connecting children and parents to the season of Advent and the celebration of our Savior’s birth. Together, children and parents will rotate through interactive stations in East Hall. There will be tables in the center of the room available so anyone may come and watch the excitement unfold. Don’t miss it!



Children’s Christmas Program

Join us for the Children’s Christmas Program that will take place at both services on Sunday, Dec. 17. Led by Ascension’s Director of Music, Vicki Taylor, our three-year-olds through 5th graders will celebrate the story of our Savior’s birth through scripture and Christmas hymns. The final rehearsal will take place in the sanctuary on Saturday Dec. 16, from 9:00–11:00 a.m. Cookies and beverages will be served.

BLAST Schedule

Dec. 3	9:45–10:35 a.m.	Road to Bethlehem
Dec. 8	7 p.m.	Free Family Movie Night
Dec. 10	9:45–10:35 a.m.	Classes meet in classrooms/ Jesus is Born (Luke 2:1-20)
Dec. 16	9:00–11:00 a.m.	Christmas Program Rehearsal
Dec. 17	8:30 a.m. & 10:45 a.m.	Christmas Program
Dec. 24		No BLAST – Christmas Break
Dec. 31		No BLAST – Christmas Break
Jan. 7	9:45-10:35 a.m.	Welcome back to BLAST!

JOLT

Wednesday evening JOLT sessions take a break in the month of December. During this time, students will be working independently on their assigned Advent project. All Advent projects are due on, or before, JOLT resumes on Jan. 17, 2018. JOLT students are expected to attend and participate in worship regularly throughout the month of December.

Progressive Dinner

On Dec. 10, from 5-9 p.m., join us for a fun evening spent together celebrating the faith and friendships built in CRASH. We’ll indulge in appetizers, entrees, and desserts, each one hosted at a different location. A hilarious and exciting gift exchange wraps up this beautiful evening. RSVP is required by Friday, Dec. 8.

Mime Lunch, Orientation, Tryouts, and Life of Jesus Event

The upcoming Mime performance season will kickoff on Sunday, Dec. 17, from 12–1 p.m. with a brief, yet informative, orientation for senior high students and parents of those interested in participating in Mime this upcoming season – this will take place over a potluck lunch. Parents will depart after lunch and the students will continue by taking part in the Life of Jesus event and tryouts from 1-3 p.m.

All 9th grade who wish to be confirmed in 2018 and parents are expected to be in attendance.

CRASH Schedule

Dec. 10	9:45-10:35 a.m. Sunday Morning Conversations, Youth Room
Dec. 10	5–9 p.m. Progressive Dinner
Dec. 17	12–5 p.m. Mime Lunch Orientation Tryouts and Life of Jesus Event





# CARING RELATIONSHIPS

## Help for the Holidays

While December is a time of joy and love for many people because of Christmas, it is also a time of loneliness and despair for others. I worked as a nurse in emergency rooms for years, and the amount of mental health issues I saw between Christmas and New Years was always astonishing. Do you realize how important hope is to your mental, emotional, spiritual, and physical health? People without hope in their lives are destined to be miserable and depressed, feeling as if they are locked in the prison of their past. To escape prison and be free to move ahead into a more promising future, they need a key...and that key is hope.

We can practice being positive in every situation, and a strong commitment to maintaining a healthy, positive attitude will lead to hope! Some suggestions to combat depression and loneliness over the holidays are listed below:

1. Get in a routine. If you're depressed, you need a routine.

2. Set goals. When you're depressed, you may feel like you can't accomplish anything.

3. Exercise.

4. Eat healthy.

5. Get enough sleep.

6. Volunteer with a ministry or by helping others

7. Seek medical advice from a physician, therapist, and/or psychiatrist

Brenda Lytle, RN, Director of Care Ministries



*The Lord is good to those who wait hopefully and expectantly for Him. To those that seek Him inquire of and for Him and require Him by right of necessity and on the authority of God's word. ~ Lamentations 3:25*



## Winter GriefShare

Ascension's winter GriefShare is Jan. 9–Mar. 27, from 6-8 p.m., in the Youth Room. GriefShare helps participants from Ascension and the larger community. The beauty of this program is we see growth in how group members are able to overcome their sadness and develop a new normal for their lives. Participants form relationships and our program is filled with tears along with laughter.

Free meals are provided at 5:30 p.m. in West Hall. The meals are made by Ascension's wonderful ministry groups and individuals. If your small group wants to make a meal for GriefShare, please contact Brenda Lytle, [brenda@ascensionelca.org](mailto:brenda@ascensionelca.org).

## A Labor of Love

The mittens pictured above were made from clothing brought by GriefShare participants...the clothing belonged to their deceased loved ones. Prayers were said in the making of each mitten. Ascension's Bonnie Thiesenhusen, maker of the mittens, said, "I feel like the mittens symbolize the hands that are being held with our Lord as someone is walking through their grief journey." What a beautiful ministry shared with our members and people hurting in our community!

## Journey Of Hope Cancer Ministry

Ascension's new Journey of Hope cancer ministry is ready to serve. We have six trained members who have answered the call to assist Ascension members with a cancer diagnosis. Our leaders were installed at worship on Oct. 22. They are Nada Draeger, Sandy Sadowski, Cathy Rapp, Kathy Williams, Natalie Mustapich, and Roger Nordberg. Do you know of someone who belongs to our church family who would benefit from this ministry? Please contact Brenda Lytle at [brenda@ascensionelca.org](mailto:brenda@ascensionelca.org).



## NEW - Foster and Adoption Ministry!

### Open Your Heart, Open Your Home

*We are foster parents because we wanted to make a difference in the life of a child. Kids have come to our home to heal and grow and we have provided safety and security for them. Becoming foster parents was one of the best decisions we ever made.*

~ Brenda Lytle, RN, Director of Ascension's Care Ministries

There are 6,918 children in foster care in WI; 1,380 of these children are waiting for adoptive families. The children in foster care are from all cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. The children's average age is 5 to 14 years-old. While there is a need for foster and adoptive families for children of all ages, an area of unmet need continues to be finding families for older youth and sibling groups.

Perhaps you are looking for information about fostering or adopting, or perhaps you are a foster parent or have adopted a child and are looking for resources and support. This ministry may be for you. Contact Brenda Lytle at [brenda@ascensionelca.org](mailto:brenda@ascensionelca.org) if interested.

## Knit Wits

Pastor Chris blessed 516 hats, plus 393 other items at the 6th Annual Hat Blessing on Nov. 12. The hats, scarves, and mittens are going to the Waukesha Christmas Clearing Council, the Salvation Army, and Cross Lutheran Church. We will continue to distribute hats and scarves all winter. We delivered the lapghans (lap afghans) to the Clement Zablocki VA Medical Center in West Allis and the Twiddle Muffs to the ADRC for Alzheimer's patients. (A Twiddlemuff is a double thickness hand muff with ribbons, fringe, and pom-poms attached inside and outside to provide a stimulating activity for the restless hands of dementia patients).

Thanks to all the Knit Wits for their dedicated work and thanks to everyone at Ascension for your generous contributions of yarn. New members are always welcome to join Knit Wits.

Want to knit or crochet for charity, but can't join a group? Need an outlet for your charity items? Become a *silent* member of Knit Wits. We can supply you with yarn. You make hats, scarves, lapghans, baby sweaters or blankets, or Twiddle Muffs, and we'll distribute them for you. For more information, contact Maddie Goetter, 262-527-4013.

## Surviving the Holidays

Have you suffered loss and are concerned about how you will survive the holidays? Come and join us, 6-8 p.m., in the Youth Room on Tuesday, Dec. 5. We will show a GriefShare video and discuss ways to cope this holiday season.

## HOPE Ministry Healing Our Pain... Eventually

This ministry arose from GriefShare and gathers for social events and service work. During Nov., the group went to dinner and a movie. On Dec. 5, HOPE will provide a meal for GriefShare. In doing so, HOPE will come full circle by giving back to those suffering grief. If you have suffered loss and would like to get your life back on track, this is the group for you! Contact Brenda, [brenda@ascensionelca.org](mailto:brenda@ascensionelca.org), to get involved.



CARING RELATIONSHIPS



Winter Yoga

Care Ministries will host an eight-week session of yoga from Monday, Jan. 15-Mar. 5, from 6-7 p.m., in East Hall. Cost is \$20 for the entire eight weeks (\$2.50/class). Bring your fee, mat, and water bottle on Jan. 15 and get in shape and reduce stress for the new year!

Mark Your Calendars

Blood pressure screenings are done between worship services in the Hearth Room once a month. Care Ministries provides healthcare professionals for this free service.

Dec. 3	March 11
Jan. 14	April 15
Feb. 11	May 6

Annual Cookie Swap

With the hustle and bustle of the Christmas season, who has enough time to bake all the cookies that we would really like to? Don't fret! Women of Ascension is hosting the Annual Cookie Swap. 'Tis the season to indulge in the finest cookies this side of Waukesha!

Sunday, Dec. 3, 3-5 p.m.  
Martha Merrell's Books, 231 West Main St., Waukesha

Here is the general concept: Bake 3-5 dozen of one kind of cookie. Come to the party, enjoy good company, complete some holiday shopping, and leave with an assortment of 3-5 delicious cookies!

If you want to participate, kindly notify Jessica Jahner at [jessicajahner@gmail.com](mailto:jessicajahner@gmail.com) or 414-213-3679 by Nov. 26 with the type of cookie you will bring. We hope everyone can bring a different kind of cookie to keep the swap exciting. Once we know the number of people attending, we'll notify you with the confirmed quantity of cookies each person needs to bring. If you want to enter the Best Tasting Cookie contest, bring an extra dozen cookies for sampling.

Back by popular demand! Norm, the owner of Martha Merrell's, will be giving his book talk again on great new books for kids and adults. This has been a favorite part of past years' swaps. See you there!

Annual Cookie Swap  
Thursday, Dec. 3, 3-5 p.m.  
Martha Merrell's Books, Waukesha

Young at Heart

On Sat. Dec. 16, our group will be attending the Leahy Family Christmas Program at the Wilson Arts Center in Brookfield. Please be at Ascension by 4:45 p.m. to catch the bus. First, we will go to Maximum's Restaurant for dinner. Then, we'll attend the program. See you then.

Reminder to join us at Christina's on Delafield St. for breakfast on Wednesday, Dec. 13, at 9 a.m. We will enjoy a casual breakfast and *coffee clutching*. No need to register, just show up.

On Wednesday, Dec. 20, we will have our potluck luncheon at Ascension in East Hall. Please bring a dish to pass if you are able. We will have our annual Christmas sing along. This year, we will enjoy music by Mary Lou Charapatta on the piano. Our festivities start at noon. Come join in on the fun. If you have questions, contact Celeste Defenbaugh 262-370-4522, Beth Hoffmann 262-542-7447, or Arlene Davis 262-542-9119.

A Taste of the Daniel Plan: Holiday Strategies

The holiday season can be the downfall for even the most motivated person traveling down the road to health. It can be a time of great joy, but also a time of great stress and lots of overindulging in food and drink. To assist you, the Daniel Plan has a list of healthy holiday party tips to help you enjoy the season without derailing your efforts to live a healthy lifestyle. The complete list can be found at [www.danielplan.com](http://www.danielplan.com), but here are some of our favorites:

- Prepare in advance by having healthy, delicious recipes available for the holidays. Eating healthy during the holidays doesn't have to be boring.
- Fill half your plate with a fresh salad (light on the dressing) first. Add a second veggie. Add turkey and other cooked food last. You'll be more satisfied and less likely to gorge, even if you have seconds of turkey.
- A piece of protein the size of your palm (length and width) is a good amount for most people. (Great tip!)
- Salad and raw veggies are *freebies*, as long as they are not loaded with candied nuts, cheese, and dressing. Raw vegetables are a great way to fill up prior to a meal.
- Avoid processed dips.
- Opt for more wholesome dip choices such as hummus, guacamole, or salsa.
- Don't dip into sauces and spreads unconsciously. Dish a portion of about two tablespoons of guacamole or hummus onto a plate so that you don't overdo it. (Another great tip!)
- If you'll be celebrating the holidays with your well-meaning, but *food pushing*, family or friends, call ahead and find out the menu so you can prepare.
- Ask the hosts if they mind if you bring a dish/es to accommodate the way you eat. Most people appreciate the help, and this gives the hosts a heads-up that you don't eat a typical diet. Be an example!
- Take a wholesome, healthy dessert with you to the party.
- Always carry some healthy food with you just in case: nuts, veggies, hummus, etc. This rule never changes.
- If you know there will not be healthy food served, eat something in advance. This will stabilize your blood sugar, decrease cravings, and increase your resolve.
- Skip the fancy trimmings and opt for the more wholesome staple foods such as turkey without stuffing, salad, fruit, nuts, etc. Most calories and inflammation come from the fat, sugar, and salt-filled additions such as gravy, stuffing, dressings, candied yams, etc. You will potentially cut the calories of your meal by up to 2,000 calories or more! (Wow!)

Holiday obligations can be stressful whether you are the host or the guest. For specific holiday strategies, catch us at church or feel free to contact us at 414-419-2699 or e-mail [cspieker@budgetblinds.com](mailto:cspieker@budgetblinds.com).

Steve & Carol Spieker

Gratitude

College Care Packages

A great big thank you to Ascension for showing love to a large group of our members who are attending college!

Twelve of us spent time on Sunday, Nov. 12 stuffing boxes for 16 young people. Amy James and I want to thank all of our dedicated packers and our fabulous donators for brightening the day of an Ascension member who will certainly be touched by your kindness and generosity!

Blessed and grateful,  
Tanya Maas

New Members

To all at Ascension, thank you for the welcome gift bag and for your welcoming spirit! We are very blessed to have found the congregation at Ascension.

Sandy and Jim  
Kaester

Ascension, thank you so much for the gift bag I received as a new member. God always has a plan! He took my husband, Dick, to heaven in 2014. Through all the hurt and pain, I discovered Ascension and how much I needed God. This church has been one of my greatest blessings!

Carol Peters





El Salvador: News from San Jorge

Brothers and sisters of Ascension Church, we send warm greetings from the whole congregation of our church the Miracle of God of San Jorge, hoping that our Heavenly Father will pour out many blessings on you. The reason for our letter is to greet and express to you that by the grace of our Lord we are doing well here and always doing the work of Jesus. We have set up the library with the help you provided and we are enclosing photographs to show that we are already using it. On Oct. 8, we celebrated the anniversary of the death of our founding pastor Napoleon Vasquez. Bishop Medardo Gomez was present and also performed baptisms and confirmations of faith.

God bless you,  
*Lutheran Church of the Miracle of God at San Jorge*

Tanzania Partnership

**Meru Coffee Project**  
Stop by the coffee cart on a Sunday morning to select a gift for someone on your list or to stock up for holiday entertaining. If you don't see what you want, ask the coffee server, and they will order it for you. There are flavors, k-cups, whole bean and ground, regular and decaf, and 4lb. bags available. What a great way to celebrate Christmas by giving a gift that gives twice: once to your recipient and once to the coffee farmers in our partnership in Meru Diocese of Tanzania.

**Sponsoring a Student**  
Thank you to all the individuals and small groups who donated money to sponsor a student. Through your generosity, we are able to again support 89 students to attend school for a full year in the partnering congregations. Education is the only hope the children have of being able to live a better life than their parents have had. They are so very thankful that Ascension is walking with them through this opportunity to provide an education for so many students.

Cross Partnership

Save the date for the annual Mardi Gras Gala to support Cross Community Ministries. Mark your calendars for Friday, Feb. 9 for an evening of good company, good food, music, and dancing. The event will be at Sheraton Brookfield just south of Brookfield Square. The deadline for reservations is Feb. 1, so plan ahead for a fun evening.

A group from Ascension went to Cross to attend their Sunday worship on Sunday, Nov 12. What a joyful experience! Cross's choir sang. Ascension's Pastor Angela and Tony Acompañado preached. What a blessing it was to enjoy worship and communion with another group praising our God together! We are truly blessed to have our partnership with the wonderful members of Cross Lutheran Church.

On Wednesday, Dec. 6, Ascension will serve a spaghetti lunch at Cross Lutheran Church. If you would like to be a part of the group preparing and serving the meal, be at Ascension by 9:30 a.m. on Dec. 6. We will carpool. If you cannot attend and would like to provide a dessert, please have it at Ascension by 9:30 a.m. on Dec. 6. We have a request for some sugar-free desserts or fresh fruit. If this is something you can offer, we would appreciate it! If you have questions, contact Arlene Davis at 262-542-9119.

Community Outreach

The weekend after Thanksgiving, members of Ascension packed and delivered invitations to Ascension's December services and activities to the neighborhood. The invite was a door hanger with an invitation to *Warm up at Ascension this Christmas*. The bag contained the invite, complete with some instant hot cocoa. If you know of someone you would like to invite during December, contact the office and we will get you an invite you can share.

Welcoming the Stranger

One of the goals for Mission Outreach for our Vision 2025 was to reach out more to the community to invite them to Ascension services and activities. Our committee has made some deliberate moves to do that. Now the next step is for all members to welcome the visitors with a warm heart and a welcome smile. What can you do if you see someone you don't know? Here are some simple tips:

- ◆ Introduce yourself. Try to remember at least their first name for the future. It is good to find out something about them that will help you remember their names.
- ◆ Make sure they have a comfortable place to sit in the service. Most visitors don't want to go to the very front of the church, so help them find a spot that doesn't make them feel too conspicuous or feel like they have to sit in the narthex.
- ◆ Be willing to move over if a visitor needs a place to sit.
- ◆ If someone sitting near you does not have a bulletin, get one for them and guide them through the service if they seem not to know what to do.
- ◆ Include them during the Sharing of the Peace.
- ◆ After the service, invite them to return. Ask them if they would like more information about Ascension or the activities. Take them to the Welcome Center if they are interested, don't just point to it.
- ◆ Be genuine. Be friendly. Be gentle.

Tutoring

People have asked us what we do at our tutoring program. We have students from second grade through older adult. Some of the students are brand new to the English language and others are working on advanced skills. The children are building on the skills they are learning at their schools and adults are learning to communicate in English in conversation, reading, and writing.

This month, we are celebrating that Edwin Aparicio became a citizen; Paw Lu Lu is taking the test; and Lay Lwee has completed her application and is studying for the test. Thanks to the dedicated tutors who make this possible.

We also have a student learning the rules of the road in preparation for a driver's license and a couple of people working on learning terminology needed for their future jobs. Beginning students are making progress on understanding and speaking basic English. All of this is done in a fun and engaging way. All the students are eager to improve their skills and especially like the small group and individual attention we can offer. All our tutors are able to get assistance from the Literacy Center.

Habitat for Humanity

Habitat for Humanity is sponsoring Cookies and Santa on Saturday, Dec. 2, at the Waukesha ReStore. Decorate a holiday cookie for a small donation of \$3 for 1 or \$5 for 2 from 10 a.m.- 4 p.m. Kids can also visit with Santa from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. The suggested donation is \$5 to take a photo with Santa. What a fun way to help support one of our community partners.

SOPHIA

If you are looking for a way to make a difference in our community and bring hope and justice to those who are struggling, consider one of the task forces of SOPHIA: Health Care, Immigration Reform, Education, Treatment Alternatives and Diversions, Housing Task Force/Affordable Housing, and Incarceration. Each task force works on the current issues affecting members of our community to bring about change. Contact Bob Stoll for more information on how to get involved.





## YOUR COUNCIL AT WORK



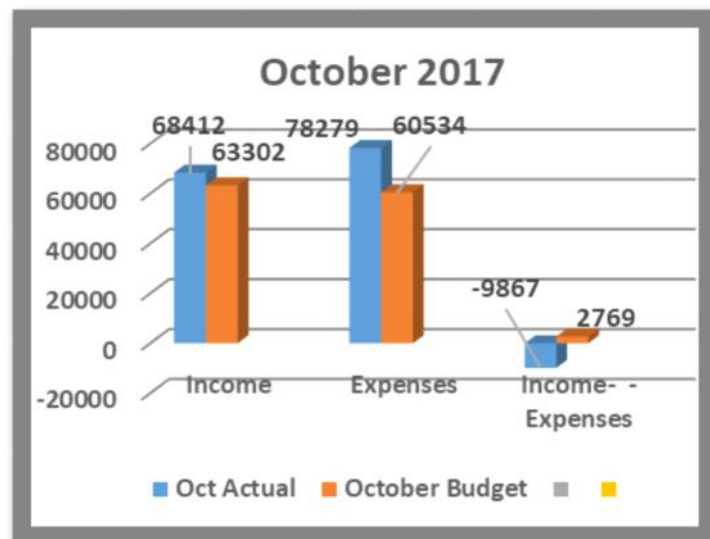
Our Annual Meeting was held Nov. 5. I want to thank all who attended. If you missed it, let me take a moment to give you an update. Along with usual business and reports, we spent time reviewing current facility needs and presented a 5-year plan to tackle the many capital improvements we are currently facing. Years of deferred maintenance have caught up with us and the time has come to give our building some tender loving care. The 5-year plan addresses and prioritizes a variety of needs. Top priorities are the East and West Hall roof, as well as our kitchen. The cost will be \$165,000.00. A proposal was passed allowing council to open a line of credit once we have raised the first \$85,000.00 in cash donations.

Our annual budget was also presented at the annual meeting. This year, we made some changes to the budget you may have seen in the past. A special thanks to our council, budget team, wing leaders, and staff for the countless hours they spent to put this budget together. They worked very hard to bring our budget in line with our 2025 Vision, basing the budget on the four wings. Every aspect of our missions, programs, events, services, building, and staff have been distributed into the four wings.

Along with this, you will see some staggering statistics in the *Ascension Reflection 2017*. These statistics of volunteer hours, people served, and lives that have been touched is truly amazing. Please take a minute to read through the *Ascension Reflection* and budget. Learn how our church is living and working in our community. It really is inspirational. The budget does include an increase of 8% over last year's budget and was passed by the congregation. This increase is vital to continue to support the wonderful things our church is doing.

How can you help? Every little bit matters. Increasing your pledge to general giving can help support a healthy budget. If you are signed up for our automatic electronic giving, consider increasing your monthly support. If you have not signed up, take a minute to learn more about this convenient service. If you are able, make a special offering to help with the roof and other capital improvements. Do you have a talent you would like to share? There are many opportunities to share your talents with others here at Ascension. Visit the Ascension website to see how you can put your talents to work. May you have a very Merry Christmas season and a wonderful New Year.

Gods Peace,  
Cynthia Carlson, President



### Treasurer's Report

As we continue to grow our programs here at Ascension, the congregation passed a new budget for next year that includes a modest increase in spending of 8.4%.

Contributions were down for the month by \$10,100; however, \$13,600 was released for HVAC costs, which caused a positive balance to Total Income of \$5,100.

A one-time expense for paying the balance of the HVAC installation caused a distorted increase in Expenses. However, after removing the monies for the HVAC system, the Expense overage for the month came out to (\$4,100).

Next month should return to more normal reporting. Thank you for your support.

Darwin Moore, Treasurer

### Executive Staff

**Lead Pastor**  
Rev. Christian W. Marien  
[PC@ascensionelca.org](mailto:PC@ascensionelca.org)

**Pastor**  
Rev. Angela T. Khabeb  
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**Director of Administration**  
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**Director of Care Ministries**  
Brenda Lytle, RN  
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**Director of Faith Formation**  
Tony Acompañado  
[Tony@ascensionelca.org](mailto:Tony@ascensionelca.org)

**Director of Music Ministries**  
Vicki Taylor  
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### Support Staff

**Administrator - Joyful Worship & Spiritual Growth**  
Tamie Greenwood  
[Tamie@ascensionelca.org](mailto:Tamie@ascensionelca.org)

**Administrator - Caring Relationships & Mission Outreach**  
Kate Mattson  
[Kate@ascensionelca.org](mailto:Kate@ascensionelca.org)

**Praise Band Leader**  
Ben Janzow  
[Ben\\_janzow@yahoo.com](mailto:Ben_janzow@yahoo.com)

**Nursery Staff**  
Becca Tenwinkel

### Ministry/Operations

**Director of Ministries**  
Kelly Hoeg  
[khoeg@gmail.com](mailto:khoeg@gmail.com)

**Director of Operations**  
Peter Laper  
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### Church Council

**President**  
Cynthia Carlson  
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**Second Vice President**  
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**Secretary**  
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**Treasurer**  
Darwin Moore  
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### Wing Leaders

**Joyful Worship**  
Amy James  
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**Spiritual Growth**  
Vacant

**Caring Relationships**  
Cheryl Anspach  
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**Mission Outreach**  
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### OFFICE HOURS

MONDAY-THURSDAY

9 a.m.—5 p.m.

FRIDAY

9 a.m.—12 p.m.



<div>December</div>						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<div> <div>KEY</div> <div> <div>EH East Hall</div> <div>HR Hearth Room</div> <div>N Narthex</div> <div>NR Nursery</div> </div> <div> <div>PR Prayer Room</div> <div>S Sanctuary</div> <div>WH West Hall</div> <div>YR Youth Room</div> </div> </div>					<div>1</div> <div>6pm JOLT/CRASH Laser Tag, Offsite</div>	<div>2</div> <div>8am Event Set-up</div> <div>9am Tutoring 106, 107, HR, PR, WH</div>
<div>3 Advent 1</div> <div>8:30am Worship</div> <div>9:45am Road to Bethlehem EH, WH</div> <div>9:45am BP Screening, HR</div> <div>10:45 Worship</div> <div>6pm Daniel Plan 107</div> <div>6pm AA Beginner WH</div> <div>7pm AA closed WH</div>	<div>4</div> <div>9:45am Al-Anon WH</div> <div>5:30pm Prayer Group PR</div> <div>6:30pm AMEN 107</div>	<div>5</div> <div>6:30am AMEN 107</div> <div>9:30am Women's Bible Study HR</div> <div>5:30pm GriefShare Meal WH</div> <div>6pm GS Surviving the Holidays YR</div>	<div>6</div> <div>8am Private PR</div> <div>9:30am Cross Meal</div> <div>12:30pm Women's Nurture Group PR</div> <div>3:45pm Tutoring 106, 107</div> <div>5:30pm Youth Ringers S</div> <div>6:15pm Handbells S</div> <div>7pm Ballantyne Grp 107</div> <div>7pm AA Wisdom WH, HR</div> <div>7:30pm Choir S</div>	<div>7</div> <div>10am Al-Anon WH</div> <div>10am TGBG PR</div> <div>5pm Angel Choir</div> <div>5:30pm Joyful Sounds</div>	<div>8</div> <div>6pm Church Council, Offsite</div> <div>7pm Movie Night, EH</div>	<div>9</div> <div>9am Rehearsal S</div> <div>9am Tutoring 106, 107, HR, PR, WH</div> <div>6pm Advent Concert Worship</div>
<div>10 Advent 2</div> <div>8:30am Advent Concert Worship</div> <div>9:45am BLAST</div> <div>9:45am CRASH YR</div> <div>10:45 Advent Concert Worship</div> <div>5pm CRASH Progressive Dinner EH, WH</div> <div>6pm AA Beginner WH</div> <div>7pm AA Open Mtg EH</div>	<div>11</div> <div>9:45am Al-Anon WH</div> <div>1pm Living Letters 106</div> <div>6:30pm AMEN 107</div>	<div>12 Newsletter Deadline</div> <div>6:30am AMEN 107</div> <div>9:30am Women's Bible Study HR</div> <div>7pm Holloway Grp 107</div>	<div>13</div> <div>8am Private PR</div> <div>9am Young at Heart, Christina's Diner</div> <div>11:45am Men's Nurture Grp 106</div> <div>3:45pm Tutoring 106, 107</div> <div>7pm Ballantyne Grp 107</div> <div>7pm AA Wisdom, WH</div>	<div>14</div> <div>10am Al-Anon WH</div>	<div>15</div>	<div>16</div> <div>9am Pageant Rehearsal S, EH</div> <div>9am Tutoring 106, 107, HR, PR, WH</div> <div>8pm Young at Heart Outing, Offsite</div>
<div>17 Advent 3</div> <div>8:30am Worship Children's Pageant</div> <div>9:45am BLAST</div> <div>10:45 Worship Children's Pageant</div> <div>12pm Mime WH, EH, YR</div> <div>12p Praise Band S</div> <div>6pm AA beginner</div> <div>7pm AA closed WH</div> <div>7pm Longest Night Service S</div>	<div>18</div> <div>9:45am Al-Anon WH</div> <div>5:30pm Prayer Group PR</div> <div>6:30pm AMEN 107</div>	<div>19</div> <div>6:30am AMEN 107</div> <div>9:30am Women's Bible Study HR</div>	<div>20</div> <div>8am Private PR</div> <div>12pm Young at Heart Lunch EH, WH</div> <div>12:30pm Women's Nurture Grp PR</div> <div>6:15pm Handbells S</div> <div>7pm Ballantyne Grp 107</div> <div>7pm AA Wisdom, WH HR</div> <div>7:30pm Choir S</div>	<div>21</div> <div>10am Al-Anon WH</div> <div>10am TGBG PR</div>	<div>22</div>	<div>23</div> <div>9am Tutoring 106, 107, HR, PR, WH</div>
<div>24 Advent 4 Christmas Eve</div> <div>10am Worship</div> <div>4pm Worship</div> <div>5:30pm Worship</div> <div>6pm AA beginner</div> <div>7pm AA closed</div> <div>11pm Worship</div>	<div>25 Christmas Day Office Closed</div> <div>9:45am Al-Anon WH</div> <div>10m Worship</div>	<div>26 Office Closed</div> <div>6:30am AMEN 107</div> <div>9:30am Women's Bible Study HR</div> <div>7pm Holloway Grp 107</div>	<div>27</div> <div>8am Private PR</div> <div>7pm Ballantyne Grp 107</div> <div>7pm AA Wisdom, WH HR</div>	<div>28</div> <div>10am Al-Anon WH</div>	<div>29</div>	<div>30</div> <div>9am Tutoring 106, 107, HR, PR, WH</div>
<div>31</div> <div>8:30am Worship</div> <div>10:45am Worship</div> <div>6pm AA beginner</div> <div>7pm AA closed</div>						