



Ascension In Action

Ascension Lutheran Church January 2016

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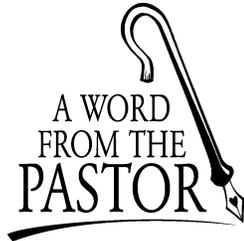
Sky's Torn Open

In this New Year, we are going to be following the story of Jesus through Mark's Gospel. Like a good mystery writer, Mark leaves us a variety of clues to Jesus' identity. As the stories and words of Jesus keep coming, the reader of Mark's Gospel grows in understanding of Jesus and God's working in this world. If you can, I would have you imagine you don't know anything about Jesus and let Mark reveal it to you clue by clue.

One of Mark's few straightforward clues to Jesus' identity came at his Baptism. After John the Baptist baptized him, the sky was torn open and a voice spoke how this was "my beloved son" and God's Spirit descended like a dove. Remember in the ancient world it was thought that God literally lived above the blue dome. When things weren't going well, they wanted God to come down and make it right.

God was the one who tore the sky open. Tearing something open is the kind of thing an excited person would do when she wants to see what is inside a wrapped present. A calm person patiently and neatly opens something. It seems that God is excited to say these words and send the Holy Spirit down on Jesus.

Imagine that all we knew about Jesus was that God tore open the sky, spoke how this was my beloved son and sent the Holy Spirit on him. We would know that God was excited for him, loved him, and was somehow working in him. We couldn't help but have questions around what Jesus would do and where this was going. We would definitely want to friend him and follow his posts. Join us each Sunday as we do



just that. In this New Year, take time in your daily life to do it as well so that you can know the sky is torn open and God's Spirit is here.

Pastor Dan

Congregational Meeting

The annual Congregational Meeting for Ascension will be held on Sunday, February 21, 2016. Reports by each Board and the audited 2015 financials will be presented. All are highly encouraged to attend and see what your Congregation Planning Council is planning for 2016. Be watching the February newsletter and worship bulletins for further information.



Meet Ascension's Worship Planning Team

I'd like to introduce to you Ascension's Worship Planning Team! The team meets a couple of times before each church season to dig into scripture and plan worship. For Epiphany, the group noticed the urgency and authority of Jesus in Mark. The season also often includes a more global focus, so we're introducing a great Hymn of Praise from Cameroon. It's been fun sharing not just the responsibility, but also the joy of exploring how God is using scripture and worship together to speak to us on Sunday mornings. The Worship Planning Team is: Megan Miller, Alice Deloughry, Phil Erlander, Kevin Diehl, Kathleen Madsen, and Tim Coltrin. Thanks for serving, team! Pastor Daniel



What's Happening

Thanks to all who participated in our Advent activities this year. It is truly a blessing to see so many of our faith community involved in various ways. Ascension does not just have a motto, we live it as a Community of Grace, Called to Serve. Here are a few ways in which you all served during Advent. Provide a safe place for families without housing to spend Christmas through Family Promise, providing gifts to the Pueblo State Hospital, caroling at homes of our shut-ins, bringing us God's message during the Sunday School Christmas program, sharing of musical talents for our Cantata, and all of the groups who provide service to others. We are truly a blessed congregation.

On December 6 the congregation approved our operating budget of \$771,070 for 2016. In addition, for 2015 an additional \$16,200 was approved to be used for social outreach, sabbatical fund, and capital replacement fund. We also approved to extend a Diaconal Ministry Call to Mary Stoneback.

No CPC meeting summary is included in this newsletter as no meeting was held in December.

We are truly "A Community of Grace, Called to Serve."

Peace be with you, Greg Gulliksen, President CPC
637-9313 / greg.gulliksen@gmail.com

Ascension Lutheran Church – 2006 to 2015

This is the final installment in the history of Ascension. The past 10 years have been a time of change – in staff, in membership, in finance, in programs, and in facility. Yet, with all those changes Ascension has continued to serve its members and the community through Word and Sacrament, through its generosity, and with the dedicated work of the staff, church leadership, and a multitude of volunteers.

A number of significant staff changes took place, most notably the retirement of Pastor Keith Hedstrom and

the subsequent hiring of Pastor Daniel Smith as Assistant Pastor. Wini Klein, Associate in Ministry (AIM) and Director of Worship and Music, retired after many years in that position. Tiffany Malcom resigned as Youth Director and was replaced by Mary Stoneback as Director of Youth and Faith Formation. Mary's call as Diaconal Minister for Faith Formation was approved in December 2015. Several other changes in office, music and other staff members also happened during this period.

An important initiative was the formation of the Small Groups Ministry. Currently about 20 Small Groups are listed ranging from Bible Studies, to social events, to outdoor activities. In addition, strong support for Family Promise (IHN), KPC Kid's Place, Mercy's Gate, and many more Social Outreach-supported ministries continues. If there is a need, Ascension will respond!

The early years in this period were challenging times financially. But through strong stewardship on the part of members and church leaders, Ascension has resources through which it can expand its programs and ministries. One such area of focus is the maintenance of our facilities.

In 2006 the addition of the Fellowship Hall, Youth Room, and other areas was dedicated. In 2012 the Sunday School rooms in the Lower Level were renovated. Following that a Task Force began considering the upgrades to the original portion of the building which primarily house the Children's Learning Center (CLC). Since 2014 the plans were refined, options for financing considered, and a successful Capital Campaign was completed in November 2015. Pledges totaling \$456,000 have been received.

We believe that is a fitting conclusion to the celebration of 60 years of ministry in Colorado Springs. Ascension is indeed: "A Community of Grace, Called to Serve".

Diamond Anniversary Steering Committee

THANK YOU...

****to everyone** who helped out the Colorado Institute of Mental Health in Pueblo by giving gifts to the residents. They are human beings rarely seen outside those walls and live very isolated lives. Your generosity and thoughtfulness are God's hands at work in our very broken world.

- Board of Social Outreach

Create A Legacy



*Ascension Lutheran Church
Endowment Fund*

**God's People Using God's Resources
to Fulfill God's Calling**

Gift's-Wills-Property-Insurance-Memorials-Estates

Legacies Created

Thanks and God's blessings to the following donors for gifts to the Endowment fund:

Bill and Dee Yocum, Anniversary

Leave a Legacy

You can "Leave a Legacy" by leaving a lasting gift through the wise distribution of your accumulated wealth. Your funds or possessions can do double duty and work for you during your lifetime. Then they can go to care for family beneficiaries for a period of years and finally help spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ through the many areas of ministry, mission, and education in your local church or church at large. For more information, contact a member of the Endowment Committee, one of the Pastors, or visit Ascension's web site; www.Ascensionlutheranelca.org

US & THEM WE:

Greetings and wishes for a very Happy New Year from your Board of Social Outreach! We want to extend our heartfelt thanks to all of you for your recent approval (December 6, 2015 Congregational Meeting) to give \$10,000 from the 2015 budget surplus to BOSO. Thank you so much!

Through your generous giving, we were able to send \$7,500 of that gift to KPC Kids Place across the street. Because of a recent very high caseload, KPC has been having a difficult time keeping up with expenses. Your gift will go a long way toward closing that gap, allowing them to continue their ministry to families in need of respite child care. In addition to KPC, we also were able to send an additional gift of \$2,000 to IHN/Family Promise, and \$500 to ELCA World Hunger Relief.

We also want to thank you for your lavish response to the Pueblo Mental Health Christmas gift drive. The church office was positively filled with beautiful gift bags to be distributed to these who are in desperate need of feeling loved and cared about.

You are extravagant givers of the resources with which God has blessed you, and we are thankful!

Sincerely,

Sharla Saunders – Director, Board of Social Outreach

Family Promise/Interfaith Hospitality Network

We are truly blessed to be a part of this congregation! During Christmas week when so many of us are busy preparing for our own celebrations the people of this church came forward to help those that would not have something to celebrate. We would need a whole newsletter to thank everyone who participated in one way or another to make IHN week such a great success. We would like to thank the Sunday School for making ornaments and helping decorate the trees and downstairs to those who provided or helped serve food and to those who spent time with the families doing various activities during the week. Thanks also go to those who help with set-up, take down, laundry, cleaning up each night and those who are overnight hosts. Snowflakes and red and green paper chains were provided by Kristen Daugherty Smith's school classroom. A big thanks to those children for helping! Thanks is not a big enough word for how grateful we are for all the help this congregation does for the IHN program. May you all have a Blessed New Year!

THANK YOU...

****Christel Walter** for her year-round foliage, decorating and maintenance of the large plant pots at the entrance to the church. She does such a wonderful job of making our church entrance more inviting.

****to our awesome children** and youth for singing, dancing, playing instruments, speaking, stage help and creative input in presenting "His Story for Christmas" on December 13. It was a wonderful celebration! We would also like to thank all who helped with and attended the service or set up and brought food for the celebration. Your support in this process meant a lot to the kids!

Sunday School News

Thank you to our awesome children and youth for singing, dancing, playing instruments, speaking, stage help and creative input in presenting "His Story for Christmas" on



December 13. It was a wonderful celebration, and we would like to thank all of the adults who helped with and attended the service, or setup and brought food for the celebration. Your support in this process means a lot to the kids! See below for notes on the service preparation:

One of our biggest goals was for ALC's children and youth to be involved in the planning process—to feel excitement in telling.

His Story for Christmas:

***God's Rescue Plan* PK through 5th grade**

Each of the PK-5th children chose a role, along with the quantity of lines he/she wanted to say. Then, the children and teachers wrote lines inspired through discussion and reading of *The Jesus Storybook Bible*, *The Spark Story Bible*, *The Jesus Calling Bible Storybook*, and *The Jesus and Me Bible Storybook*. Since the first half of the Sunday school year has focused on learning stories from the Old Testament, we thought it was fitting that the angels introduce the story by telling us about some of the Old Testament prophets who foretold Jesus' birth.

There's a Place at the

***(S)Table for You* Middle School**

Building on the Sunday School theme for this year, "There's a Place at the Table for You", the middle school youth met to discuss ideas for what they would like to do for the youth and children's Christmas service. From that brainstorming session, most of the ideas for their Christmas presentation today evolved. Knowing that Jesus still loves us and doesn't leave us, even during our different ways of celebrating Christmas, is the important message. We ... the silly, the adventurous, the foolish, the reserved, the ignorant, and the scholarly ... are all Children of God and welcomed by the Christ child.

Christmas Presence

High School

The high school youth were also enthusiastic in planning their part of the service and expanding the Christmas message a bit further. They brainstormed a lot of ideas, reading from Luke 2 and discussing their observations of the Christmas story, and how it is still relevant today. They felt it was important to portray the message that Christmas' true meaning is in Jesus' presence in our lives.

We look forward to seeing the kids in Sunday school again on January 10!

THANK YOU...

****to Mary Stoneback** for being the guest speaker at the December Ladies' Luncheon. And to all guests who joined the ladies of Ruth Circle, thank you for coming. It was a great celebration and way to say thank you to our staff!

****to Megan Miller, orchestra member and choir members** for a wonderful Cantata celebrating the birth of the Savior!



PrimeTime Ministries

"Jesus for President"! As I read about and listen to all the presidential candidates, I wonder about those who seem not to have a lick of sense about the treatment of mankind. What I learned from the Richard P. Johnson workshop held last October is that there are two basic emotions: fear and love. He went on further to explain that we can choose to follow Jesus' example of love or we can create fear! With the presidential debates moving forward, can we not look for the candidates that propose to follow Jesus' ideas of love and not those that create fear towards our fellow man? Each time I hear a candidate that wants to shut out groups of people or carpet bomb radical extremists, it makes me shutter! In this time of Peace on Earth and Goodwill Towards Men I ask myself, "How would Jesus respond to this fear we are creating?" Or, maybe we should follow a line from my college years: "Make Love not War"!

Shalom and Merry Christmas, Deacon Ron Cornell
528-5142 or roncornell@q.com

CONGRATULATIONS...

****to Adam Johnson & Michelle Stringer** who were united in marriage at Ascension on December 5, and to Adam's parents, Rich & Judi Johnson, who are excited to be adding a daughter and grandson to their family.

NEW ADDRESS: Arnie & Kay Wehofer
2520 Latoka Dr. SW, Alexandra, MN 56308

SENIOR LUNCHEON starts the new year at "Hu Hot Mongolian Grill" (Powers & Constitution), Friday, January 16, 2016, at 11 AM. Meet new friends! Renew friendships! All of you 55+ are welcome to come along. Call Susan (573-4776) with questions, resses, map, or want more information. February takes us to "La Baguette." Join in the fun! See you there!

RUTH CIRCLE

All ladies of Ascension are invited to join us on the 2nd Thursday of each month at 9:30am for great fellowship and casual Bible Study from the WELCA *Gather* magazine. We will begin a new study for the January 14 meeting, from the first book of Philippians, *Confidence in God's Beginnings and Endings*. Sally Walker will lead the study but we ask if you have left-over Holiday treats you would like to share, please bring them. If you are new to Ascension or just looking for a Bible Study group, we hope you will come and join us! Copies of the study are available in the church office.

BECOME INVOLVED...

****Funeral Committee** – Contact Pat Suter (641-4982) or Bonnie Vawter (579-6707) if you would like to be added to the list of volunteers to help with food or serving at funerals. We are always looking for volunteers!

****Coffee Fellowship Hour – Smell the Aroma!** Please help keep the coffee hours going by signing up to host a Sunday morning Fellowship Hour! All directions for coffee making are in the coffee station, or just ask for assistance. One or two people is all it takes, and it is so appreciated! See the sign-up sheet on the Kiosk in Fellowship Hall.

****Quilters for a New Beginning** – meets every Wednesday from 9-1 in the Fellowship Hall. They spread out quilts in all phases of creation, and if you'd like to help put together quilts for a good cause, come

and join us. No experience necessary, just a good heart willing to learn and participate.

****Mercy's Gate – formerly Northern Churches Care** – Pantry items and toiletries are collected in the cupboard in the Fellowship Hall. Ongoing needs: crackers, mac & cheese, oatmeal, spaghetti, corn, green beans, spaghetti sauce, tomato products, tuna, gravy toothpaste, tooth brushes, face soap.

****Albertsons Community Partners** – if you shop at Albertsons, please pick up a Partners' card at the Welcome Center. The youth programs receive a percentage of your purchase.

****Knotty Kneedlers** – We continue to make small blankets for the CLC children and the KPC Respite Center, as well as prayer shawls. If you would like to become involved in this ministry, or just want to join us for fellowship, we meet every Wednesday at 1pm, in Fellowship Hall. Contact Bonnie Vawter, 579-6707, with any questions.

****Bulletin assembly** – the church office is looking for a few helping hands to assist with weekly bulletin assembly, one hour a week on Thursday morning. Please call the church office if you can help, 634-1694.

****Terrace Gardens Bingo – Prizes are needed.** Please mark items "Bingo Prizes" and place them in the Terrace Garden Bingo box located on the counter behind the Welcome Center. Questions?? Call John Hayes at 572-1052 or at blazehayes@aol.com.

****Campbell's Soup Labels:** Please just cut the UPC bar code and the picture of the "point value boy" from the following products: Campbells - soups, chunky soups, Healthy Request, Supper Bakes; Pepperidge Farm, Spaghetti-Os, Swanson, V-8 beverage caps and Prego Spaghetti Sauce. Thanks for continuing to collect these to help the people with disabilities.

****Prayer Ministry** – as we pray for people it helps us to have updates to keep us connected to the person and situation. If you have a prayer concern or would like to become a member of our Prayer Chain, contact the office, 634-1694 or office@ascensionlutheranelca.org.

****Pop can tabs** help the Ronald McDonald House. They may be placed in the container in the cupboard in the Welcome Center inside the front doors.

Bridge Group

Our Bridge Group will meet at 5:30PM on January 16th at Ascension. If your card playing skills are a little rusty or you would like to learn how to play this great game, we have cheat sheets and bridge instructors available to help. Feel free to contact John or Kathy Hayes at (719) 572-1052 or at kittypawz@aol.com if you have any questions about this group.



Workshop #1,
sponsored by PILLAR
Institute for Lifelong
learning at Ascension:
*Saturday March 12,
10 AM – 12 PM*

“Collaborative Caregiving” with
Kent Matthews, Care Manager
at Pikes Peak Area Council of
Governments Area Agency on
Aging

**The partnership with PILLAR is sponsored by
a grant from Ascension Lutheran’s Endowment
and supported through the Board of Lay
Ministry. “God’s people using God’s
resources to fulfill God’s calling.”*



*SUP
Thursday*

*January 21, 2015
12 PM – 1:30 PM*



Check out the monthly Parent
Connect for things happenign
for the youth and families of
ALC. We hope this can be a
resource for you, the parent
and your children to use in the home and be
an encouragement for you as you continue
to grow in faith in Christ together. Email

Mary for more information. Check-out
January’s issue for the following:

- Upcoming happenings,
- The ALC youth are hosting a youth group from Lord of Life Lutheran church in Kenosha WI this coming July. Find out more about this partnership!
- January’s Youth and Family Calendar.

Sincerely,
Mary Stoneback
Director of Youth & Faith Formation
youth@ascensionlutheranelca.org,
303-475-4886
*Follow ALC youth on
facebook@LivingFaithTwenty-Four Seven*



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CHURCH STAFF

Normal Office Hours: 9-12 Mon-Fri (719) 634-1694
Pastor Dan Holt – off on Friday
Pastor Daniel Smith
Music Director – Megan Miller
Youth and Faith Formation Director – Mary Stoneback
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Consultant for Health Care – Dr. Dennis Caldwell
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Our Website: www.ascensionlutheranelca.org

February newsletter deadline: Jan. 17

*In Our Thoughts
& Prayers*

Beth Ayen (Daughter-in-law of Darcy & Bill Ayen), Dale & Dorothy Brown, Sharon Budd (Sister of Darcy Ayen), Brad Buhler, Dennis Conroy, Jacquelyn Ellison (Granddaughter of Marilyn & Troy Goodenough), Sandra George, Elaine Glover, Isaac Grimes, Bob Kuzma, Al Mosher, Hazel Quintt, Arlene Schultz, Jeff Sebben, Ken Shodeen, Joshua & Virginia Stanley (Parents of Marilyn Gulliksen), Dee Yocum, Elyse Yocum (Granddaughter of Bill & Dee Yocum), and all of our men and women serving overseas, especially Nick DePalma, and their families.