



Ascension In Action

Ascension Lutheran Church

July 2017

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Welcoming Children

“Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me.” – Mark 9:37

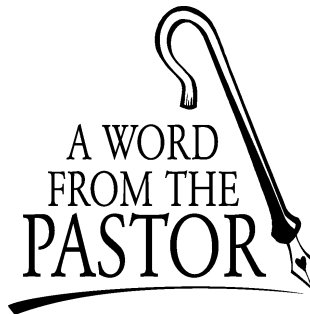
Jesus has a habit of eating with, recognizing, and calling us to consider the least respected in society. Tax collectors, the demon-possessed, prostitutes, and children. Wait ... children?! Yep. In Jesus’ day children were seen as a father’s property worth something only later in life at best, and a burden on the poor, oppressed people living under Roman rule at worst.

But Jesus wants it different. And, Jesus is about making it different, bringing children into the kingdom of God as full members. Not because they might contribute or matter *some day* when they grow up, but because they are loved by God *now*. Same as the rest of us.

Thank goodness we don’t see children as property or burdens (although there are troubling trends across the world). Still, we view children ambiguously, even in the church.

Take children and worship, for example. For some, worship is a time for children to learn about patience, social norms, and the importance of being a family (so we teach them to sit quietly with their siblings). For others, worship is a time for children to learn about God (so we teach them to listen to a children’s sermon). For still others, worship is a time for adults and so we do our best to keep children occupied while adults practice their faith (so we offer a nursery and activity bags).

You probably have a view of worship that involves some combination of all three. I know I do. It can feel kind of messy and ambiguous. So, how are parents to balance these competing priorities, all while getting a kid in a dress and to church on time?! They could use our prayers and support.



In all this ambiguity, here’s something I notice about Sunday mornings: we tend to focus on preparing younger children for a future faith, but struggle to help them experience their faith now. Maybe because faith seems too illusive for the young. Or maybe because our society focuses on children as learners rather than experiencing life now.

It’s not all bad, but here’s the thing: Jesus loves children for who they are *now*, not just for who they might become. And Jesus wants us to welcome children now, not just prepare them to have faith later.

There’s a team here at Ascension working to improve children’s experience of worship. Elizabeth Diehl wrote a great article about it in June’s newsletter, and more information will keep coming out. We’re examining all sorts of aspects about children and worship, including the areas described above. But mostly, we hope that at Ascension, worship engages people in their faith where they are now, not just prepares them for some future faith. We hope that Ascension welcomes children in fully, just as Jesus did.

Pastor Daniel



Refugee Resettlement, KPC Respite Center and LFSRM Update

You are invited to a presentation by Bill Ayen at **9:15 AM on July 9** on key Lutheran Family Service Rocky Mountains programs. As a member of the LFSRM Board of Director, Bill has an excellent understanding of LFSRM programs, their current status, and future plans. Included will be an overview of the refugee resettlement program and updates on KPC Respite Center, Foster Care, and other key programs.



The June 13 CPC meeting included the following actions and discussions:

- Pastor Dan Holt led devotions and had us share where we have seen faith working through love.
- Board Directors gave brief updates on current activities and future plans.
- Pastor Daniel was absent so Pastor Dan filled us in on what the Pastors have going on. They are working with the Board of Lay Ministry on a home gathering devotional for this fall.
- In Donna Crump's absence Pastor Dan gave an update on the strategic planning efforts. He read a motion from the committee to approve one of the firms they had been interviewing. There was some discussion and a vote called. The motion carried. The new strategic planner will start working this fall. For more on the strategic planning discussion see the meeting minutes from the June CPC meeting. They are posted on the kiosk or you can get a copy from the church office.
- Greg Gulliksen gave an update on the sanctuary upgrades. Window film had been installed on two window panes for the congregation to review. This is a first step in process of getting new window coverings. Greg also mentioned he was waiting to hear back from an electrical company about the cost for the new sanctuary lights.
- Rex Rudy reported that we continue to be behind on our general offerings. He showed a comparison between giving from 2016 and 2017 at this same time, which shows the percent of giving being down. Rex, the Board of Stewardship and the Executive Committee are continuing to monitor.
- John Hayes, with the Board of Lay Ministry, informed the CPC that his board has started the process of elevating Pastor Daniel to co-pastor status. This comes from a recommendation of Pastor Dan who noted this would be following what has transpired at Ascension in the past. The process would take them through the fall and the congregation would vote on the change of status at the December congregation meeting.
- Pastor Dan Holt led closing with prayers and the Lord's Prayer.
- The approved minutes of recent meetings are posted on the kiosk in the Fellowship Hall and are available in electronic format from the church office.

What's Happening

The summer sun and heat have returned!

We had a very successful Day Camp this year with many kids joining us from the CLC as well as kids from Ascension, Grace Lutheran, and around the community. Many thanks to all who were involved in making Day Camp a success from the planners to the helpers to those who flipped hamburgers on Thursday night at the BBQ.

Thanks to all who filled out survey forms about Ascension. It was good to see the results from the survey and know we have a strong congregation as we head into our strategic planning efforts. If you did not get a copy of the results please check in the church office.

Need something to do this summer? Join the Thrivent Builds team in helping build a home for a needy family. Be watching for articles in the bulletin, newsletter, and on What's Up for days and times.

As mentioned in the June newsletter, summer is a great time to get involved in one of our small groups, especially if you enjoy the outdoors. Join a small group doing outdoor activities. There were many small group activities on display during the small group fair in April. It is an awesome way to get to know others in our community of faith.

Be watching the newsletter and bulletin for further summer activities.

“A Community of Grace, Called to Serve.”

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

CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY TO...

** the family of Herb Jorstad at his death.

Church Finances

Financial Statement of 2017 Operating Activity

The Council closely monitors Ascension’s monthly operating revenue and expenses so that we can quickly adjust if needed. This year so far, we have received less revenue than we projected and less than we received by the same point last year. As the financial statement nearby shows, through the end of May 2017 actual revenue is 98% of our projections and about \$10,000 less than, or 97% of, our revenue by the end of May 2016. Even though we have spent less than our budget and actual revenue, spending is still about \$4,000 more than it was this time last year, resulting in a smaller surplus and operating cash balance than last year. In addition, monthly giving to the general fund, compared with the same month of the previous year, has been lower almost every month since late last summer. We are still a healthy congregation financially, and we should be proud about giving so generously through the first two years of the Capital Campaign. The Council will continue to watch general fund giving and spending carefully because it supports God’s mission at Ascension.

| Type of Activity | As of 5/31/2017 | Compared with Budget and Last Year | | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------------|-----|-----------------|------|
| | | 2017 Projections | % | As of 5/31/2016 | % |
| Revenues | \$328,169 | \$334,983 | 98% | \$338,180 | 97% |
| Less Expenses | - \$308,863 | - \$334,983 | 92% | - \$304,982 | 101% |
| Surplus/(Deficit) | \$19,306 | \$0 | | \$33,198 | 58% |
| Operating Cash | \$116,826 | | | \$136,343 | 86% |

~~US & THEM WE:~~

Happy July, everybody. Your Board of Social Outreach hopes you are having a wonderful summer! We have taken the month of June off, but want to highlight a few things:

- 1) Hopefully you had an opportunity to attend the KPC Respite Center Open House on June 22 as part of our Day Camp’s Community BBQ. If you did not, but would like to know more about KPC and what they do, you can check out their website <https://lfsrm.org/programs-and-services/prevention-services/kpc-respite-center/>.
- 2) Bill Ayen will be giving a presentation on behalf of Lutheran Family Services regarding their refugee ministry on July 9 between services. Please plan to attend as we take a closer look at this timely and very important topic.
- 3) Mercy’s Gate is one of the many organizations you support through BOSO, and our food pantry is proof of that. They have a brand-new website, executive director, and logo. They are always looking for volunteers and you can easily learn more about them and the work they do here: <https://mercygatecs.org/>.

Thanks for your continued and generous support for those in need in our community, nation, and throughout the world. As we partner together to love our neighbor as ourselves, people’s lives are touched and changed for the better.

Sharla Saunders –
Director, Ascension Board of Social Outreach

Counters Count!

They prefer to keep a low profile, and most of us never notice them quietly counting the weekly offering on a Sunday afternoon long after everyone else has departed. They strive for both perfection and efficiency, balancing correctly the first time and finishing in two hours or less, in time to get home for the Broncos or Rockies game or the Sunday drive to dinner with children and grandchildren. They’d gladly stay longer if there was more to count, but neither e-giving nor check scanners will ever replace our counting teams. Several teams have been counting in service to Ascension for years with little thanks or notice. Leave them alone and let them count, but thank them when you can. I thank you, counters, because you count so well!

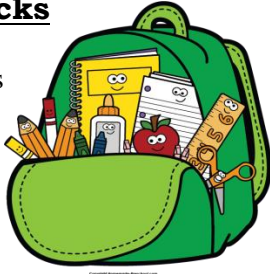
Sincerely, Rex Rudy, Finance Director

RUTH CIRCLE

All ladies of Ascension are invited to join us on the 2nd Thursday of the month. But we will take a summer break and meet back up on August 10, when we will begin a study from the book, Having a Mary Heart in a Martha World, by Joanna Weaver. If you have questions or to get a copy of the book, contact Nancy Shatto at njshatto@yahoo.com or 426-9444. We will look forward to an interesting study!

Blessing of the Backpacks

The Board of Parish Education is pleased to announce that the annual Blessing of the Backpacks is scheduled for Sunday August 6 at both services. All students, teachers and other school personnel are invited to receive a special blessing. The Board of Parish Education will give small tokens to be worn on backpacks, messenger bags or whatever you carry to school as a reminder of God's presence as the new school year gets underway. Be sure to bring your school bag on August 6!



this program to Ron and Debbie Mohler. The Mohler's are relatively new members at Ascension and they will need your continued support to keep this vital program successful. We were blessed to be a part of the unbelievable support from our Ascension family as we helped almost 500 IHN guests. For John, it was a way to serve people after his AF service ended. For Kathy, it was a way to help people who have needs that we can all relate to. Thank you for living our church's motto - "A community of Grace, called to serve."

Gleanings from the Johnson Institute on Spirituality and Aging: Jim Deloughry, Mary Stoneback and Elisa Thompson

In a book entitled "Den of Lions," the memoirs of seven years of captivity in Lebanon by journalist Terry Anderson, there is a poignant insert: "Faith is what you find when you are alone and find you're not." Think about that for a minute and recall times when you were alone and scared or apprehensive and realized you were not alone. That to me is probably the greatest proof of the existence of God that I know. It also supports the belief that people of faith do much better as they age than those who don't.

In our Johnson Institute course we are studying the link between faith and aging and the intrinsic thread between spiritual health and mental health. While the course covers multiple generations, for the next two months we will be focusing on the ages 55-75, the "Boomer Generation." We will examine fears, hopes, and challenges that are faced in those years. As we progress through the summer months we will continue to update you on where we are and ask your thoughts on how we can better incorporate spiritual practices to support each other on our aging journey.

Jim Deloughry

BECOME INVOLVED...

****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 you are so appreciated! See the sign-up sheet on the Kiosk in Fellowship Hall.

****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.

We will also be collecting school supplies for the elementary students who attend before and after school care at Ascension Children's Learning Center. Approximately, 25 CLC kids need help acquiring school supplies. Any leftover supplies will be donated to the CLC & Audubon Elementary School. If your family could use some assistance with school supplies this year, please contact Pastor Daniel or Pastor Dan.

A table for collecting donations will be set up in the narthex starting Sunday July 16. If you have questions, please contact Elisa Thompson 719.641.5184 or elisat92@gmail.com. If it's easier for you, feel free to make a monetary donation.

IHN Update

Thank you for your continued support of this vital program to provide homeless families with safe temporary housing in Colorado Springs churches. As a charter member of IHN, Ascension has been supporting this program since it began in the mid-1990s. Kathy and I took over as IHN Volunteer Coordinators at Ascension from Margie and Louie Smith in August 2010. During that time, our church supported the IHN program either at Ascension or at Beth-El Mennonite (our mission partner church) for a total of 30 times. We've had over 200 members of Ascension participate in the IHN program by bringing food, serving food, playing with the IHN children, staying overnight with our guests, setting up the IHN rooms, converting these rooms back into Sunday School rooms, giving massages to the IHN mothers, helping children make Mother's Day presents for their Mom's, providing Christmas gifts to our IHN guests, and numerous other ways we've helped our fellow neighbors. We've had multiple generations of Ascension families help with the IHN program and it is great to see the youth of Ascension playing with the children of our IHN guests. It is now time for us to turn over the reins of

RE·FORMATION

THEN·NOW·ALWAYS

On October 29, 2017 we will celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, but over the course of this year, there will be a series of events, classes, and materials made available to our Ascension family to give us a better understanding of the reformation. The Ascension Endowment Committee recently approved a grant to cover the cost of the lunch that we will have after the service on the 29th, so **MARK IT ON YOUR CALENDAR!** This lunch will be in lieu of our church picnic and will have a German theme honoring the German roots of the Reformation and of the Lutheran Church. The timing also coincides with October Fest so we can expect German beer and wine with our lunch.

BECOME INVOLVED...

****Funeral Committee** – Contact Val Rudy, 577-4637, 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!

****Quilts for New Beginnings** – 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.

****Knotty Kneedlers** – We continue to make small blankets and now sweaters and baby burial buntings for the Indian reservations, as well as prayer shawls. If you would like to become involved in this ministry, or just want to join us for fellowship and work on your own project, we meet every Wednesday at 1pm, in Fellowship Hall. Contact Bonnie Vawter, 579-6707, with any questions.

****Terrace Gardens Bingo** – Prizes and Volunteers are needed. Our church has been supporting bingo at the Terrace Garden Healthcare Center for about 35 years. We call three games of bingo from 10:00-11:00AM on the third Wednesday of each month for the residents. We normally have about 15 players. We call out the numbers until every player wins in each game. After they win, we help them (if needed) to the prize table where they can pick out a prize of their choice. The prizes are all donated by members of the Ascension family. We could use some of the following prizes: our #1 need is for gently used men's clothing (sizes Large and higher), then we also have a need for women's clothing (large and Plus sizes), hygiene products (body washes, lotions, tooth paste, shampoo, etc), playing cards, some small containers of ladies' perfumes, adult coloring books/crayons, and lady's jewelry. Please mark items as "Bingo Prizes" and place them in the Terrace Garden Bingo box located on the counter behind the Welcome Center. While we have gained a few more volunteers, we are also in need of some additional volunteers to help the residents with their bingo cards and to help them determine which prize they would

like to have. The residents really look forward to our bingo each month and it is rewarding to help them. Please contact John Hayes at 572-1052 or at blazehayes@aol.com if you'd like to help or learn more about this Outreach program.

****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.

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

SMALL GROUP MINISTRIES QUARTERLY UPDATE



All are welcome; come join in the fellowship!

DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS

Contemplative Prayer Group

Discussions on theology and practice of contemplative prayer and contemplative silence together.

Meets: Bi-monthly on Monday at church 7:00 pm.

Contact: Pastor Dan Holt, 634-1694 or office@ascensioncos.org

LIGHT (Ladies in God's Hands Together)

A gathering of moms who support each other in our parenting roles.

Meets: Monthly on Sunday at church 9:15-10:15 am. Contact Katy for actual dates.

Contact: Katy Snider, 603-767-6274 or katy.snider@asd20.org

Ruth Circle

Women in fellowship and Bible study from *Lutheran Woman Gather* magazine.

Meets: 2nd Thursday at 9:30 am in Fellowship Hall except for June & July.

Contact: Nancy Shatto, 426-9444 or njshatto@yahoo.com

Tuesday Morning Bible Study

One of the Pastors leads study on Bible or religious topics chosen by group, or scripture for the week.

Meets: Tuesday morning at church 10:30 am, except during the summer months.

Contact: Pastors Dan or Daniel, 634-1694 or office@ascensioncos.org

Thursday Night Serendipity

Six-week studies with topics decided by the group. Meets October through May.

Meets: 1st & 3rd Thursdays at 6:30 pm at the church.

Contact: Rich & Judi Johnson, 264-8196, or jrajohnson@aol.com

FELLOWSHIP GROUPS

Ascension Artists

Bring your current art or craft project or start a new one & work on it with other creative folks. We share and learn from each other.

Meets: Weekly Thursdays from 3:00-5:00 at the church in the Fellowship Hall or downstairs.

Contact: Arlayne McKee, 649-8265 or arlayne@juno.com

Bridge

Come play bridge once a month with others who love this card game!

Meets: monthly Saturday night at the church. Actual dates in church bulletin

Contact: John & Kathy Hayes, 572-1052 or kittypawz@aol.com

Dining Out

Group participants take turns selecting the date, time, and restaurant each month. The hosts then make reservations for all those who are able to attend.

Meets: Monthly on Thursday or Friday nights. Call to add your name to the email list. Actual dates in church bulletin and by email.

Contact: Laurel & Art Thorstensen, 550-2882 or revmeme@hotmail.com

Knotty Kneedlers

Bring your latest project and enjoy coffee & fellowship with others while working on it.

Meets: every Wednesday at 1 pm in Fellowship Hall

Contact: Bonnie Vawter, 579-6707 or bonnievawter@q.com

Men's Breakfast

Get together with other men for fellowship over breakfast.

Meets: Thursdays at 7 am at Big Train Restaurant, 3050 N Nevada.

Contact: Rich Johnson, 264-8196 or jrajohnson@aol.com

NONY (Not Old, Not Young)

We're a group at Ascension who don't fit in with the youth and don't fit in with the seniors, but want to hang out together. If you feel neither old nor young, you are invited, and so are your friends.

Meets: Occasionally. Dates will be advertised in the bulletin and What's Up

Contact: Pastor Daniel, 634-1694, or office@ascensioncos.org

Quilts for New Beginnings

No experience necessary to make pillowcases and quilts for Family Promise and also for World Relief. We'll teach you all you need to know. Kits are available for those who would like to contribute, but cannot attend.

Meets: Wednesdays 9 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Contact: Anita Arends, 573-4747

Red Hat Flashes

Ladies 50+ invited to come out in red hats & purple to eat brunch & have a good time!

Meets: Monthly on the third Tuesday of the month at various restaurants. Actual location & time in church bulletin.

Contact: Grace Buhler, 528-8976 or fgbuhl@aol.com

Senior Luncheon

Dine at various restaurants around city. Good food and good conversation! 55 + are welcome. Couples and singles

Meets: 2nd or 3rd Friday's, September through May. Locations & times in news letter & bulletin

Contact: Susan Curtis, 573-4776 or sbcurtisz@gmail.com

Walking Group

Walks at various venues.

Meets: Tuesdays & Thursdays mornings as weather permits. Please call to confirm special times & locations as they can change from week to week.

Contact: Wini Klein, 636-1232 or wklein636@msn.com

SERVICE & SUPPORT GROUP

Terrace Gardens Bingo

Have fun helping nursing home residents play Bingo and win prizes.

Meets: Terrace Gardens monthly, 3rd Wednesdays from 9:45-11:15 am

Contact: John & Kathy Hayes, 572-1052 or kittypawz@aol.com

SEASONAL GROUPS

Biking, Holy Pedalers

Most weekends, rides are scheduled. Group members can sign up to schedule and lead rides. Bike riding is mostly on trails, with some lightly traveled roads. Most rides include a stop for breakfast or lunch in support of fellowship.

Meets: Weekly, March – October, weather permitting. Most rides are on Saturdays with occasional weekday rides. Time & location by email & in Ascension Office's *What's up* weekly email

Contact: Bev Godec, 550-9202 or bgodec@msn.com

Camping

Bring your RV, motor home, pull behind trailer or tent and join other folks who enjoy the great outdoors for fellowship and fun! We will share calendar dates and great camping sites with one another via email.

Meets: During the late spring and summer months at different times and locations based on interest.

Contact: Donna or Scott Crump, 622-0927 or donnac664@aol.com

Hiking/Snowshoeing

Breathe the fresh air and enjoy the pristine scenery as you explore Colorado's great outdoors.

Meets: Group will be notified by email when an outing is planned. Please contact Aimee if you would like to plan an outing!

Contact: Aimee Calderon, 387-7379 or aimeebuesing@yahoo.com



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Ascension Lutheran Church, ELCA
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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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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 – off on Friday

Music Director – Megan Miller

Diaconal Minister of Faith Formation – Mary Stoneback

Office Administrator – Arlayne McKee

Consultant for Health Care – Dr. Dennis Caldwell

Child Learning Center Director – Teresa Adams

E-mail addresses: office@ascensioncos.org

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d.smith@ascensioncos.org (Pastor Smith)

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music@ascensioncos.org (Megan Miller)

t.adams@ascensioncos.org (Teresa Adams)

clc@ascensioncos.org (CLC)

ts.trinko@gmail.com (newsletter articles)

Our Website: www.ascensioncos.org

August newsletter deadline: July 16

*In Our Thoughts
& Prayers*

Beth Ayen (Daughter-in-law of Darcy & Bill Ayen), Dale & Dorothy Brown, Sharon Budd (Sister of Darcy Ayen), Brad Buhler, Jerri Butschky, Jacquelyn Ellison (Granddaughter of Marilyn & Troy Goodenough), Ron Elsdon, Elaine Glover, Steve Hahn (Grandson of Joan Magee), Mark & Laurie Hauschild, and their son & daughter, Ryan Hauschild and Heidi Woerdeman, Karen Johnson, Paul Johnson (Father of Russ Johnson), Teddy & Lynni Lockner (Great-grandson of Ruth Andersen & his mother), Jeff Sebben, Jerry Smith, Cathy Stanley, Joshua & Virginia Stanley (Parents of Marilyn Gulliksen), Jim Stannard, Carol Thompson, and all of our men and women serving overseas.