



Ascension In Action

Ascension Lutheran Church

June 2018

Published monthly in Colorado Springs, Colorado

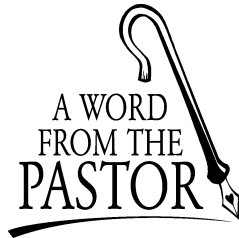
Humanity

“What’s driving the increase in homelessness in Colorado Springs?” The question hung in the room for a minute as Stu Davis from Springs Rescue Mission reflected. Finally, he responded: “I’d say two things. First, the failure of many to see the humanity of those who are homeless. Second, a lack of affordable housing.”

Pastor Dan, Deacon Mary, and I are part of “Faith Table,” a group of faith leaders in Colorado Springs trying to do our small part to lift up the plight of those of the margins of society. About a year ago our group decided to focus on homelessness.

So we invited Stu Davis to come and speak with us, and his answer to that question has shaped our learning and work over the last 9 months. Homelessness is too big for our small group to handle, and we needed a more narrow focus. So we’ve been learning more and more about the lack of affordable housing in our community.

I could write a lot about affordable housing, but Stu’s other answer keeps haunting me. “We fail to see the humanity of those who are homeless.” The answer stung. It stung in the way that now I see examples of what he was talking about all over the place. I see it in the way we talk about some public policy that affects those who are homeless or who are this close to becoming homeless. I see it in dehumanizing comments on news stories. I see it in the media’s stock photos used of the homeless. And I see it in myself, in my knee-jerk reactions to stories and encounters, and in the fact that I’m still surprised when I hear a homeless family’s story. A story that reveals they are just like we are. That shouldn’t surprise me – of course they’re like we are, they’re people! – but it does.



Our failure to see the humanity in others is not limited to the homeless. The poor, minorities, foreigners, the elderly – you name it. Pretty much anyone who is different than I, anyone on the margins loses their humanity, especially when they’re talked about. We’re all people, but we need reminding of that fact.

Now here’s the good news: God refuses to play along. We try to divide. We try to rank some lives ahead of others. Our prejudices and self-centeredness cause us to see others as less. But God doesn’t play along. God keeps seeing each and every one of us as beloved. “There is no longer Jew or Greek, slave or free.” “Go and make disciples of all nations.” “Christ died for all.”

God refuses to believe otherwise. And as God continues to open our eyes to the truth that all are God’s beloved, perhaps we’ll see the humanity in each other, and God’s will might be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Pastor Daniel Smith

CONGREGATION MEETING

We will be holding a congregation meeting at 9:15am on Sunday, June 10, 2018. We will be voting on our next executive committee, board directors, and board members. All are highly encouraged to attend and take part in this aspect of our community of faith.

Tentative Agenda

Call to Order

Opening Devotions

Roll Call of Voting Members

Approval of Congregational Meeting Minutes—
February 25, 2018

Financial Accounting Contractor Position

Capital Campaign Update

Purpose Mapping Update

Vote for 2018-2020 Congregation Planning Council
and Boards

Closing Prayer



The May 8 CPC meeting included the following actions and discussions:

- Pastor Daniel Smith led devotions and talked about being united in Christ and having Christ in the center from Paul's writing to the people of Corinth.
- Board Directors gave brief updates on current activities and future plans heading into the summer.
- Pastor Dan spoke of Dorothy Brown's funeral in a few weeks. A few take-aways from the ELCA Rocky Mountain Conference was the prison ministry at the Denver Women's Facility and a Doctrine of Discovery that is being put out there.
- Pastor Daniel said the organ committee is working through their review of our organ and that the sanctuary aesthetics team has begun looking at new paraments.
- Greg Gulliksen gave an update on the sanctuary upgrades. Phase II of the sanctuary finish work is complete. Carpet is scheduled to be replaced in July.
- Donna Crump noted Kristin would be here on May 19 to speak to the present and future leadership of the congregation and will speak to the congregation on May 20.
- Rex Rudy discussed the accounting consultant position. A position description will be sent out to select firms, proposals will be accepted and reviewed by financial people in the congregation. Upon acceptance by the CPC, the position will be voted on at the June 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.



*Ascension Lutheran Church
Endowment Fund*

Thanks and God's blessings to the following donor(s) for gifts to the Endowment fund:

Dave Steinhauer, birthday

CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY TO...

**the family of Dorothy Brown at her passing.



What's Happening

Thank you to all who have answered the call to serve as executive committee members, board directors, and board members.

It's Summer!!! That means there are many summer activities going on at Ascension. There are still many ways to get involved with our faith community over the summer. Here are but a few.

Join a small group doing outdoor activities. It is an awesome way to get to know others in our community of faith.

Day Camp is back again this year with another exciting program for our young ones.

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

THANK YOU!

I would like to thank those who have served on Council the past two years.

Donna Crump – Vice President

Sharon Versaw – Secretary

Rex Rudy - Treasurer

Kim Knoche – Youth Board Director

John Hayes – Lay Ministry Board Director

Dennis Bagenstos – Evangelism Board Director

Jerry Dollar – Stewardship Board Director

Sue Trinko – Worship Board Director

Jeff Courtright – Property & Grounds Board Director

Elisa Thompson – Parish Education Board Director

Sharla Saunders – Social Outreach Board Director

Thank you for sharing your time and gifts with the people of Ascension and to those who were touched by your service.

Greg Gulliksen – President

Purpose Mapping – It’s Another Step

You’ve heard a lot about “Purpose Mapping” the last few months and have been asking “What’s the next step?” Good question! The process is a series of steps, and like the steps on the Manitou Incline, it’s a bit overwhelming when you are at the bottom and can’t see the finish line at the top.

The first step in the process was realizing we needed to take a concerted effort towards discerning God’s vision for Ascension – that was our goal. So, in October of 2016, I was asked to lead a Strategic Planning Call Committee made up of Jon Thompson, Nancy Albertson, Stacey Jensen and Pastor Dan Holt. The committee was tasked with recommending a compatible firm to guide us in our quest to develop a vision and strategic direction for our Ministry at Ascension. We had taken our first step!

We then entered the “get to know us” part of the journey. In March 2017, you may remember seeing Marcia Oltrogge with several laptops asking people to answer questions centered on our core values which revealed a strong sense of community and service. 38 people participated. We had taken another step!

Last April and May, 107 members of Ascension completed a Comprehensive Vitality Assessment. The survey revealed a healthy congregation, a strong sense of belonging, excitement for the future, engaged volunteers, and strong leadership.. Participants, however, proclaimed a need for equipping people in their faith journey, adult spiritual growth, and clarity in purpose. Another step!

A team from the Rocky Mountain Synod conducted a Comprehensive Ministry Review in July 2017. The team met with Ascension staff, community leaders, and a congregation team composed of John Hayes, Craig Kelly, Ingrid Daniel, Salinda Kuzma, Tom Johnson, the Pastors and me. The report following the review affirmed our need to clarify our purpose, and also encouraged us to explore different leadership models and the possibility for professional support regarding finances.

Armed with a little information about ourselves, the Strategic Planning Call Committee began researching firms specializing in nonprofit strategic planning. We interviewed three different firms and unanimously recommended hiring Kristin Wiersma of the Joshua Group. The Council agreed. Kristin named our process “Purpose Mapping,” and committed to staying with us for 18 months (starting in January 2018) while we continued our climb to the top.

The Purpose Mapping Leadership Team was formed in January 2018 to work with Kristin Wiersma. We added

Sadie Hjelmstad and John Hayes to the previous members of the Strategic Planning Call Committee and took a few more steps. We set up one-on-one listening sessions with 66 members of the congregation in February, implemented a Leadership Systems Assessment with current and past council members in March, organized two Community Panel Discussions in April and provided Kristin with information on our giving practices and congregation culture in May. In doing so, we conquered more steps to the top of our “incline.”

Here we are in June 2018 having finished most of the self-reflection part of our journey. It might feel like the incline’s “False Summit.” We pat ourselves on the back for our current progress but wonder if we will make it to the top. So, “What’s the next step?” Our next steps include two way point teams: Shared Vision and Leadership. These teams will involve people from the Purpose Mapping Leadership Team, the council, and other Ascension members. Please consider serving if asked to be a Way Point Team member. We are closer to the top of our “incline” but we need your continued support to get there.

Donna A. Crump—Vice President, CPC
Chair, Purpose Mapping Leadership Team



A Big Heartfelt Thank You from Parish Education

The Board of Parish Education wants to extend a BIG Thank You to all of those who assisted with Sunday school during the 2017-2018 Sunday school year. Thank you for blessing our littlest members and promoting their faith formation. Sunday school program volunteers were: Tina Krieg, Jeff Courtright, Ashley Brewer, Sarah Bolser, Emily Kindley, Jake Snider, Carol Bramschreiber and Lisa Coltrin.

The Board of Parish Education also wants to thank our departing members for their faithful service and hard work! Departing members are Carol Bramschreiber and Lorada Shrawder. And last, but not least, thank you to board members committing to another term of service. Continuing members are Tina Krieg, Lisa Coltrin and Kate Kirkendall. God bless and guide you in your service.

RED HATS & LADIES OF ASCENSION

There will be no Red Hat gatherings during the months of June and July. But watch for BIG NEWS in the fall when we make plans to once again get together for our lunch/brunch gatherings.

~~US & THEM~~ WE:

Imagine that you are striving to climb out of homelessness. You have just been accepted into the IHN program. This will allow you and your family to stay together. You also have found a job. However, you do not have a car, and given the inadequate public transportation system in our city (as highlighted recently in our community impact panels!) you are finding getting to and from your job to be a challenge. Fortunately, IHN does have a small “fleet” of donated cars that they loan out to people just like you. But what happens when those cars need repairs or a little extra “love” to help them run their best? Enter our own Ron Mohler.

For the past several months, Ron has been using his training and expertise as a mechanic to help make sure those IHN cars are running at their best. By doing things like replacing struts and a leaking heater core on a 2001 Saturn or critical brake work on a Suburu, Ron has been giving generously of his time and resources to help eliminate one more area of stress for people in need. Thank you, Ron.

Want to learn more about cars and how to fix them? Want to give some time and energy to a much needed cause? Ron would welcome your help and would be happy to teach you! For more information, send him an email (rdmohler@gmail.com). He'd love to talk to you about it!

On a personal note: Thank you, Ascension Family for allowing me to serve for the last 4 years as the Director of the Board of Social Outreach. And to those of you who have served alongside of me on this board, I cannot thank you enough for your support, wisdom, patience and kindness.

Blessings,
Sharla Saunders
Director, Ascension Board of Social Outreach

From the Stew Crew

Our Call to Stewardship By Chris Brown

When you think of stewardship, what comes to mind?

Maybe fundraising or a capital campaign. Possibly taking care of the environment. Or maybe you think it's just a stale old word you've seen in history books. Maybe, if you're being honest, you're not really sure what it means.

The reality is that many people today, including lots of Christians, don't understand the true meaning of stewardship. And that's a tragedy. Why? Because stewardship is our **ultimate calling as Christ followers**.

It's the first assignment God gave the human race in Genesis 1:28. That's when God told Adam and Eve to “have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

Stewardship is managing God's blessings God's ways for God's glory. See, the Bible tells us in Psalm 24:1 that He owns it all: “The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof.”

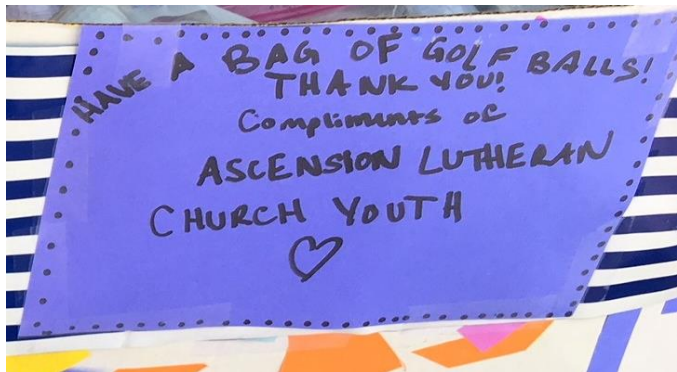
And if He's the owner, that means we're not. Instead, we're His stewards—His managers. God commands us to be stewards over everything He blesses us with. *Everything*. That means our time, talents, treasure, relationships, jobs and, yes, stuff. It's all God's, and He trusts us with it.

Did you catch that? *We get* to manage all of the *Creator's* stuff. How awesome is that? It's both an honor and a serious responsibility! When we get that in our spirit, well, it changes things. It changes our perspective on our family budgets, our daily decisions, even our purpose in life. When we understand true, biblical stewardship, the trajectories of our lives change with every decision we make.

We begin to build a legacy of stewardship in our families. We treat our spouses and kids differently. We approach our work with a new sense of purpose. We become grateful for everything we have. We live within our means. We have more money to give. And we have hope for the future.

I'm here to tell you that I want to reclaim the word *stewardship* in the church today. But it's up to all of us to make sure every believer understands God's role as owner and our role as stewards. When we get to heaven and have to give an account of how we managed God's resources (1 Corinthians 4:2), I hope God will reply to all of us, **“Well done, good and faithful servant.”**

Chris Brown is a nationally syndicated radio talk show host, pastor, and dynamic speaker carrying the message of stewardship and intentional living nationwide. Available on radio stations across the country, Chris Brown's True Stewardship provides biblical solutions and sound advice for questions on life and money. You can follow Chris online at stewardship.com, and on Twitter and Facebook.



PROJECT GOLFBALL

So how did 37 dozen golf balls from the Air Force Academy golf course end up in care boxes for young soldiers at Ft. Carson? Well, following a FOIA request and lengthy redaction process, the story is now declassified and can finally be told. It begins with our own John Hayes.

John took it upon himself to collect lost and lonely golf balls left behind by others in the woods and high grasses of the USAFA Golf course. Having no need for close to 500 used golf balls, he donated them to the youth garage sale. Those unsold, provided the impetus for Project Golf Ball.

Jake Snider and Carol Bramschrieber's Sunday school class designed and decorated two large boxes and put personal messages to the soldiers on each of the 37 bags of golf balls. They were delivered to the manager of the Golf Course at Ft Carson, where a free bag of one dozen golf balls, with a personal message, will be given to young soldiers when they rent golf clubs.

From one generation to the next, Ascension provides opportunities for so many to give back to the community. Youth contributors to Project Golf Ball were Emma, Millie, Emmalee, Lachlan, Austin and Makena. We are indeed blessed to be part of such a church.

Jim Deloughry

Summer Thoughts

We survived May with its usual rain, hail, wind and temperature swings. Colorado is never boring. The Thunderbirds raddled my house for the AFA graduations and school is out for the summer. Now what do we do with all this available time...just kidding. It seems that the demands never stop for "adults." How special childhood was when I was 10 or 12. We had a swimming pool, and we cleaned and filled it over the Memorial weekend [it

was Michigan by the way] and summer was off to a great start.

Is your summer off to a great start? Do you have awesome plans for a getaway or "state vacation" to a favorite mountain town? I hope so and I pray for safe travels.

Whatever you end up doing, take a special moment to appreciate the Lord's priceless creation. Be awestruck by the complexity AND the simplicity of the mountains and meadows, the lakes and streams and even the flowers in our backyards. To steal a message from the National Park Service, "if you pack it IN, please pack it OUT when you leave." And most recently, be very alert for smoke in the area and treat fire with the utmost respect. The Lord will heal the heartbreak and sorrow of loss from a wild fire but it still takes 50 years to grow His new forest.

Have a great summer. Stock up on sunscreen and learn to enjoy lots of water.

God's blessings, Sara Petz

Team Stretch Update

An Update from Elisa Thompson, Jim DeLoughry and Deacon Mary: We have completed the Johnson Spiritual Formation Certificate for older adults. Already the congregation has experienced the benefits of the team's gleanings from the program with the recent viewing of "Voices of Grief" documentary, various toolkits throughout the year and presentations during SUP gatherings and adult Sunday School hour. We look forward to the upcoming year and continuing to encourage the older adults of Ascension in their faith journeys. To mark this milestone, there will be a special blessing for the team on June 3rd.

RUTH CIRCLE

All ladies of Ascension are invited to join us on the 2nd Thursday of each month at 9:30am for fellowship and casual Bible Study. We will be taking a summer break for June and July. We resume August 9, 2018 at 9:30 discussing Chapter 10 from the book *Having a Mary Heart in a Martha World*, by Joanna Weaver. You can join at any time. If you are new Ascension or just looking for a casual Bible Study group, we hope you will come and join us! Please see Nancy Shatto for addition information, or call 719-426-9444, or njshatto@yahoo.com.

Board of Lay Ministry Updates

Thank you to the members of the Board of Lay Ministry who served for the last two years: Scott Allen, Ken Britsch, Eric Dyer, Karen Rubinow, and Nancy Shatto. It has been a distinct pleasure serving with you and thank you for your service to our church and our congregation.

A couple of months ago, I mentioned that we would be installing a cubbyhole correspondence distribution system at church. Marty Essigman is building this for our church and I expect it will be in place in June. In conjunction with this, we will begin using nametags at church so our new members can more easily remember our names as they join our church family.

Ascension at the Sky Sox. Ascension is having an outing at the Sky Sox baseball game on Sunday, August 12th. We have reserved a section of the Family Picnic Terrace Area along the right field line at Sky Sox Stadium for Ascension members and our guests. The game starts at 1:30PM and we can enter the Picnic Area at 12:30 to begin eating our meal. The cost is \$27 per person for everybody over age 12 and \$18 for children between ages 2-12. The price includes all you can eat buffet (hamburgers, hot dogs, chicken, potato salad, coleslaw, and cookies) and drinks (Pepsi products; beers can be purchased at your own cost), parking, and admission to the game. The Ascension Choir will sing the National Anthem at the start of the game (but choir members will have to pay as well). If you'd like to reserve tickets, contact John Hayes at blazehayes@aol.com or call him at (719) 572-1052.

Church Directory Update. It is time to update our Ascension Church Directory. The Boards of Evangelism and Lay Ministry are working together to produce an updated church directory by the end of this summer. We are looking at options of creating, storing, and accessing the church directory through a password-protected web site that our members can access from their home computer or smart phone. We plan to start creating the on-line directory in July. There will be no cost for our members (and no pressure to buy photo packages) and for those who have not joined the Internet Age, we will be able to print copies of the directory for them.

John Hayes

Connecting Ascension Riders and Drivers (CARD) Program

A few months ago, the daughter of one of our senior members approached me to see if our church had a ride sharing program for members without cars. Her Mom could no longer drive, but she still lives at home and needs rides to doctors' appointments, grocery stores, church, etc. The daughter lives out of town. I was sorry to say that we didn't have a ride sharing program at Ascension, but that we would start one up. As a result, the Board of Lay Ministry is connecting people who need rides with drivers who have some spare time. If you are in need of rides or are interested in providing rides, please contact John Hayes at (719) 572-1052 or at blazehayes@aol.com. Drivers would need to use their own cars and have their own auto insurance. *We are now providing rides for three of our members.*

Bridge Group

Our Bridge Group will meet on June 23rd at 5:30PM 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 help 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.

BECOME INVOLVED...

****Ascension's Free Pantry:** Remember to pick up groceries for the pantry when you do your own grocery shopping. They can be placed directly in the pantry outside the CLC or in the cupboard in the Fellowship Hall. It's making a difference.

****Coffee 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.

****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.

BECOME INVOLVED...

****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 hats and now 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 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. 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. *Thank you for your continued support of this 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.

THANK YOU to the wonderful members who have comprised the Worship Board these past two years: Ingrid Daniel, Alice Deloughry, Megan Miller, Carol Passon (Altar Guild), Val Rudy, and Art Thorstensen. It has been an honor to work with you!

Sue Trinko, Worship Board Director

Organ Demonstration Scheduled

Join us Sunday, June 3 between services for a presentation on our organ by Teresa Kissling. The Worship Board formed an Organ Evaluation Committee to first determine what would be required to get our current organ in better working order and keep it maintained...and if that is even economically and technologically possible. Second, they are being asked to determine what might be the options for replacement. Come see and hear why the committee has been tasked with this job!

Volunteers needed!

We need folks to coordinate/schedule volunteers in the following areas:

- Lectors
- Communion Assistants
- Greeters
- Communion Bread Bakers
- Worship Deacons

Typically, these duties are schedule 3 to 6 months at a time. The coordinator contacts the list of volunteers via email, asking what dates they are (or aren't) available. The assignment list is then sent to those volunteers and the church office. Contact Sue Trinko at ts.trinko@gmail.com, 719-648-8336, if you would like more information or to volunteer.

THANK YOU to Susan Curtis and Val Rudy who have done such a terrific job scheduling volunteers the past years!

THANK YOU!!

A huge thank you to all who brought in your treasures for the youth garage sale in April. We raised close to \$1400 and then another \$280 from ARC with our buck a bag fundraiser when we donated our remaining items. All proceeds for the garage

sale help to fund the youth and adults traveling to Houston later this month. Thank you for sharing your unwanted treasures and for shopping with us!





AIA June 2018 Issue #6
Ascension Lutheran Church, ELCA
2505 N. Circle Drive
Colorado Springs, CO 80909

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

Deacon– Mary Stoneback

Office Administrator – Arlayne McKee

Child Learning Center Director – Teresa Adams

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ts.trinko@gmail.com (newsletter articles)

Our Website: www.ascensioncos.org

July newsletter deadline: June 17

*In Our Thoughts
& Prayers*

Beth Ayen (Daughter-in-law of Darcy & Bill Ayen), Sharon Budd (Sister of Darcy Ayen), Brad Buhler, Grace Buhler, Jerri Butschky, Dennis Caldwell, Michelle Courtright (Daughter of Jeff & Renee Courtright), Jacquelyn Ellison (Granddaughter of Marilyn & Troy Goodenough), Tom & Sandy George, Steve Hahn (Grandson of Joan Magee), Jane Paradis, Jeff Sebben, Jerry Smith, Virginia Stanley, Bruce Yocum, and all of our men and women serving overseas.