



Ascension In Action

Ascension Lutheran Church

January 2019

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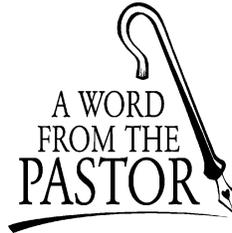
Our New Mission Statement

Our vision team is proposing a new mission statement for us. A mission statement needs to be specific enough to give a general direction without narrowing down to particular goals. It is supposed to be concise, compelling, and understandable. It needs to have roots in who we are but lead us forward. It needs to ground in God's Word. We have landed on **"In God's Grace, Ascension Creates Faithful Community."**

"In God's Grace" speaks to our belief that what we do in mission begins from the grace of God. Our physical lives in this world and our spiritual lives with God all are gifts from God's gracious love. We receive God's unconditional and undeserved love for us through the Word, at the Table, and through the Font. We find it in our relationships and community. From that grace of God, we are formed and transformed. We find ourselves being thankful for all the good and love we have. We find ourselves wanting to pass that goodness and love on to others.

"Creates Faithful Community" is how we are intending to pass the goodness and love on to others. The emphasis on community has long roots here at Ascension. Thirty years ago, being community was the main theme for us here at Ascension. Pastor Keith reported people gave him a hard time because he was going to talk about the C word (community) again. Community was lifted up again in our identity statement of being "a community of grace, called to serve."

Anytime you reduce a statement down to a few words, you leave much unsaid and unexplained. I want to explain some of our thinking behind those words. First, as much as we act to **create** faithful community, we do not create on our own but at the leading and strengthening of God's Spirit. Second, when speak of **faithful**, we speak of our faith acting in love as Paul noted in Galatians 5:6. Third, when we speak of **community**, we mean that people feel a sense of belonging with us and that they take ownership in our common life.



As we look forward to this new year of 2019, we root ourselves again in God's grace so that we create faithful community. We need that. The world needs that.

Pastor Dan

Notes from the Music Room

As we go from Christmas into the new year, I often find myself thinking of bells. Maybe it's



Longfellow's "I heard the bells on Christmas Day," or Tennyson, "Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky, The flying cloud, the frosty light: The year is dying in the night; Ring out, wild bells, and let him die." Either way, bells have a special place in the way that we commemorate time and special occasions.

In England, church events have long been announced by the well-rehearsed efforts of bell tower change ringers. These complicated patterns were difficult to learn without irritating the local community with the clamor, so around 1700, small practice hand bells were made to allow private, indoor preparation. By the mid-1800s, these bells were sometimes carried around to ring out simple melodies. Decades after handbells crossed the Atlantic, the American Guild of English Handbell Ringers was formed in 1954, and handbells gained momentum and spread. From simple melodies in one octave, handbell music has developed into multi-octave, sophisticated works.

If you're curious to know more, ask a ringer near you! Dolores McClaren leads bell choir rehearsals Thursday nights at 6pm, and you can hear them ring every 4th Sunday during the school year. Both children and adults can learn to play beautifully in a bell choir. It is a fun team effort, and we have a welcoming group here if you want to give it a try!

Soli Deo Gloria!
Megan Miller

CHURCH COUNCIL



Instead of a CPC meeting in December, the council celebrated Christ's birth with a potluck and fellowship.



What's Happening

Were you unable to attend the Congregational meeting on December 2nd? Here's what you missed:

- Marshall Nielsen was formally approved as the Director of the Board of Parish Education.
- Donna Crump announced the purchase of new playground equipment for the KPC Kids Place and the Children's Learning Center (CLC). A generous donor working through Lutheran Family Services offered to replace and expand the equipment at KPC Kids Place. A combination of dedicated funds saved over the past few years and another big-hearted donor has allowed us to take advantage of a year-end discount to replace the CLC playground. These improvements are capital investments in Ascension's future.
- John Hayes updated the congregation on the progress made by the Visioning Waypoint Team and announced the formation of a Leadership Waypoint team in the beginning of 2019.
- Board Directors gave brief reports on activities and expected changes to their budgets.
- The congregation approved an operating budget of \$824,905 for 2019.
- Greg Gulliksen celebrated the end of the Capital Campaign and commended the congregation on their faithful commitment over the last 3 years. Final pledges were collected in December. Fortunately, the funds raised exceeded renovation costs to the CLC and sanctuary. Final numbers on the amount collected and spent will be given at the February congregational meeting. Exciting news!
- A discussion regarding use of the remaining capital campaign funds followed Greg's announcement. The original plan called for applying remaining funds to the mortgage. Judy Johnson reminded us that we had originally planned to update landscaping at the corner of Holiday and Circle, if funds were available. Rex Rudy asked to council to consider other uses before committing remaining money to the mortgage. The Council will address both issues in the New Year.

- Before Pastor Dan closed the meeting in prayer, Ron Mohler shared his concerns regarding the homeless in our community. Thank you, Ron.

Board of Social Outreach Update

We received the attached letter thanking you all for your generous support of the **Lutheran Disaster Response, "Middle East and Europe Refugee Crisis"** through the Faster Pastors run this fall with our own Pastor Daniel running. Your kindness was greatly appreciated!



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our homes.

December 4, 2018

Ascension Lutheran Church
2505 N Circle Dr
Colorado Springs, CO 80909-1167

Thank You

*"Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall name him Emmanuel,"
which means, "God is with us."
(Matthew 1:23)*

Dear Ascension Lutheran Church,

Thank you for your gift of \$3,075.00 to Lutheran Disaster Response.

In the wake of fire and flood, wind, drought and disasters of every kind, you have joined with the whole church to offer prayers, presence, and physical and spiritual comfort. Through your gifts to Lutheran Disaster Response, you are in many places here and around the globe all at once – on the front line with families and communities – bearing witness to the power and grace of the Christ child born to bring wholeness and peace to all who suffer.

Thank you for your gifts to Lutheran Disaster Response this holy season.

With the light and hope of Christ,

Daniel Riff

The Rev. Daniel Riff
Director, ELCA World Hunger and Disaster Appeal

P.S. Please see the reverse side of this letter for your receipt.

*Thank you so much
for this beautiful
gift - you are helping
to turn this season
of need to a
season of hope.
- Dan*

**Always
New.**

THE CAMPAIGN FOR THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

8765 West Higgins Road • Chicago, Illinois 60631-4101 • 773-380-2700 or 800-638-3522 • ELCA.org

CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY TO...

**the family and friends of Art Boiselle at his death.

THANK YOU...

****Knotty Kneedlers** for the hats donated to the Lunch Bunch to be distributed to schools in need, and for the hats for the CLC kids on the day of their Christmas pageant.

Faith Formation for Maturing Adults: A New Year Update

Faith Formation for Maturing Adults you say? What's that? Well, the trio formerly known as Team Stretch has graduated from the two-year Johnson Certificate Program. As such, rather than be known as a 90's action toy, we are now an honest-to-God grown up part of the Board of Lay Ministry. Hence, our new name... FFMA for short. (Not to be confused with (MMA, FFA, FHA, or FEMA). Unlike those organizations, our upcoming activities center around three areas: Generation Celebrations, guest speakers/education, Voices of Grief presentations.

Generation Celebrations

Regarding the Generation celebrations, we are delighted with the response to the first two, and still have some Greatest and Silent Generations videos available for a \$5 donation. We will have the next celebration on 27 January for the incredible Baby Boomers! Stand by Boomers to have your socks blown off. Future celebrations will be in March for Gen X; May for those lovable Millennials; August or September for the Post Millennial "I" generation; and a wrap up in the fall. If you are interested in helping, planning or participating in any of the events, please contact any of us. We want this to be special for each group, and the more input we have, the better. Also, if you have any feedback on what we have done so far, positive or negative, please let us know.

Guest Speakers

In April 2019, Ascension will host Faith Formation specialists, Rev. Dr. David Anderson and his wife, Gloria. Saturday April 6 – Sunday April 7 will be a special weekend for all ages.

Rev. Dr. David Anderson and his wife, Gloria started Milestone Ministries, based out of Minnesota. David and Gloria will offer the congregation and larger community two workshops on Saturday April 6 and lead an intergenerational hour during the Sunday School hour on Sunday April 7. This weekend is partially funded through a generous grant from the Endowment. Watch for more information in the next few months. You won't want to miss this special opportunity to connect with others in the congregation and community!

Grief Support

Thanks to a generous grant from the Endowment Committee, Ascension was able to purchase the copyright for the acclaimed film, *Voices of Grief: Honoring the Sacred Journey*. This poignant, 42-minute documentary explores the many normal paths grief takes in our largely grief-avoidant culture. Rich Johnson and Elisa Thompson

had the privilege of showing the film in May and November 2018. Between the two showings, about 75 individuals of all ages viewed the movie and shared fellowship with others who were grieving. About half of those attending were not members of Ascension. This is a great opportunity for community outreach! New to the November showing, was the option for ongoing grief support. Jessica Reyes, who is a certified Grief Recovery Method facilitator, offered to provide this grief support program for those who desired it. Rich, Jessica and Elisa are looking forward to showing *Voices of Grief* in May and November 2019. There is also an option for private or small group showings at Ascension. If that interests you or a group with which you are involved, please contact Elisa or Rich.

Storytelling Night January 11!

Mark your calendars! The 2nd Annual Ascension Storytelling Night is coming on Friday, January 11 at 7:00 PM. You don't want to miss it!!



*Ascension Lutheran Church
Endowment Fund*

Thank you and God's blessings for the following gift-away to the Endowment Fund:

Phil and Sandy Trent - Anniversary

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 starting a new book, *Fierce* by Alice Connor. If you are new Ascension or just looking for a casual Bible Study group, we hope you will come and join us! Please contact Nancy Shatto for any questions at 719-426-9444 or njshatto@yahoo.com.

Worship Service Opportunities

Would you like to be part of Ascension's worship service periodically? The Worship Board is looking for more volunteers to be a Communion Assistant or a Lector, particularly at the 10:30 service. If you would like to give either of these jobs a try, email Ellis Conoley (ellisconoley@gmail.com) or Sue Trinko (ts.trinko@gmail.com).

Purpose Mapping - Shared Vision Waypoint Team Update

Our Strategic Planning Team had its second update meeting with our congregation on December 16th. Feedback from the congregation was very positive. Here is a synopsis of what was discussed.

Shared Vision Team: Carol Bramschrieber, Sadie Hjelmstad, Tom Johnson, John Hayes, Pastor Dan, Pastor Daniel, Kristin Wiersma (consultant)

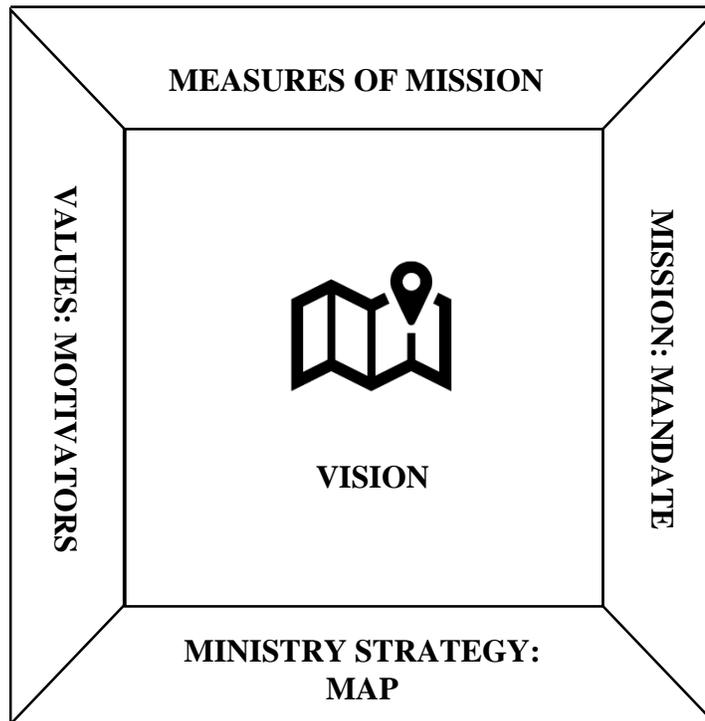
How we got here:

- 2015-2018 – Capital Campaign and Building projects to build a foundation for what’s next
- Spring 2017 – Congregational Vitality Survey – 107 people
- Summer 2017 – Comprehensive Ministry Review
- Winter 2017 – Internal listening with interviews and focus groups – 66 people
- Spring 2018 – Community Listening Panels – 8 guests, 60-70 attendees
- Spring 2018 – Leadership Systems Inventory – 21 Ascension leaders
- Spring 2018 – Generosity Index
- Results of these efforts:
 - Healthy congregational culture
 - Strong outreach and service – “*Community of Grace Called to Serve*”
 - Faith life important for people of Ascension
 - Desire for Faith Growth and equipage for Evangelism

Process:

- Identity - completed
- Vision Frame - completed
- Vision Formation – January 2019
- Integration – February 2019

Vision Frame



Completed Activities:

- Identified Ascension’s Top 5 strengths, Top 3 passions, and Top 3 gifts
- Identified our Community’s Top 3 needs
- Revised Ascension’s Mission Statement
- Identified Ascension’s values/mission motivators
- Mapped Ascension’s ministry strategies to align with mission
- Drafted measures of mission success to allow focus

Mission Statement – Our mandate: In God’s grace, Ascension creates faithful community.

Values – Our motivators:

- Ministry of the people
- Grace-centered theology
- Care and support for one another across generations
- Built to serve

Ministry Strategies – Our map: Belonging, Faith Forming, Purposeful Living

Mission Measures:

| <i>What does it look like when Ascension is achieving it's mission?</i> | <i>What does it look like when a person experiences Ascension's mission?</i> |
|--|--|
| <p>Belonging:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - You see people who talk to one another and laugh and cry together. You see cards in each other’s mailboxes. You see strong small groups that are ready to bring in new people, because they know that’s important. - You feel like you like everyone here belongs somewhere in the church, but not everywhere. - Informal community and created community coalesce and are often indistinguishable. | <p>Belonging:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - They feel like they are part of something at Ascension. They feel like there are people here who care for them, and people here they care for. - They want others to experience this same feeling. - ALC isn’t there sole or main source of friendships, but it is a place of friends. - They feel comfortable talking to people who are different than they are – age, gender, race, profession, etc. |
| <p>Faith Forming:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - You hear sermons centered on grace and what that means for us. - You see a worship service designed for people of all ages. - You see people engaged in worship. - Education opportunities for all ages are well attended, well planned, and engaging. - | <p>Faith Forming:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Worship is engaging. Not just educational or interesting, but something you participate in and are fed by. - The truth of God’s grace becomes something that seeps into our life. - Prayer and reflection are part of life. |
| <p>Purposeful Living:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Broad support for and involvement in service projects, service ministries. - Members stepping up to leadership positions in boards, worship, education. - | <p>Purposeful Living:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In church, you feel like you have opportunities to serve that matter. You feel like you are part of the mission of Ascension. - Outside church, you feel like your relationships, career, neighborhood are not random, but filled with meaning. |

What’s Next:

- Planning Retreat – 19-20 January
 - Create a Vision Storyline with a long-range goal, 3-year goals, 1-year goal and 90-day goals
 - Review current Ascension activities to see how they mesh with Vision areas
- Activate Leadership Team to examine how our Leadership might best be structure to achieve our vision
 - Nancy Albertson, Gabrielle Brown, Kim Knoche, Marcia Oltrogge, Jon Thompson

BECOME INVOLVED...

****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.

****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.

****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 9-11 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 hats and scarves 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: gently used men's clothing (sizes Large and higher), women's clothing (large and Plus sizes), sweat pants and tops (large 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.

Bridge Group

Our Bridge Group will meet on January 19th 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.

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

Ruth Circle

All ladies of Ascension are invited to join us for fellowship and casual Bible Study. We are starting a discussion of "Fierce: Women of the Bible and Their Stories..." by Alice Connor in January 2019. If you are new Ascension or just looking for a casual Bible Study group, we hope you will come and join us!

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

Ladies' Lunch Bunch

Ladies of Ascension meeting once a month to enjoy each other's company over lunch. There is no age requirement. Please RSVP to Judy Conroy by the Sunday before the lunch.

Meets: 3rd Thursday at 11 am at Mackenzie Place

Contact: Judy Conroy, 481-9605 or jnconroy@comcast.net

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

Faith Seeking Understanding

We read books that usually address hot-button issues in order to have the civil conversations so lacking in our world. Topics have included race-relations, immigration, faith and homosexuality, and criminal justice. The discussions at the end of each book are friendly, honest, and happen over a potluck! All are welcome!

Meets: Occasionally. Dates will be advertised in the bulletin, What's Up, and on the website. Pastor Daniel can also put you on an email list.

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

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

Quilts for New Beginnings

No experience necessary to make quilts for Family Promise and 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. – 12:30 p.m.

Contact: Anita Arends, 573-4747

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 blazehayes@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: TBD

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 dannec664@aol.com (please contact Donna or Scott if you would be willing to help plan the trips)

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
2505 N. Circle Drive
Colorado Springs, CO 80909

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CHURCH STAFF

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Pastor Dan Holt – off on Friday
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Consultant for Health Care – Dr. Dennis Caldwell
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February newsletter deadline: Jan. 20



Beth Ayen (Daughter-in-law of Darcy & Bill Ayen), Brad Buhler, Dennis Caldwell, Zeb & Andy Dyer (sons of Clarice Lakota), Tom & Sandy George, Isaac Grimes, Steve Hahn (Grandson of Joan Magee), Hazel Quindt, Judy Resh (sister of Dee Yocum), Jeff Sebben, Jerry Smith, Phylis Smith, Virginia Stanley, Bruce Yocum, and all of our men and women serving overseas.