



Ascension In Action

Ascension Lutheran Church

January 2020

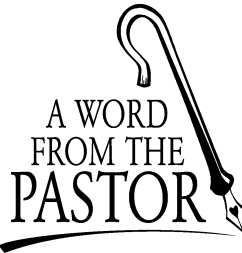
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Seeing Clearly

In the year 2020, my hope is that people see others with 20-20 sight. I find that we have often seen others through the warped, foggy lenses of negative stereotypes. Negative stereotypes are inaccurate and often come from third parties. Using negative stereotypes has a way of increasing fear, distrust and dislike. In our fear, distrust and dislike, we tend to separate out and live in likeminded bubbles.

Seeing others with 20-20 vision means we need to take fresh and direct look. It means moving past third party sources for our views on others. Listening directly to others is key. I find that beginning conversations with others feels risky as the disagreements can surface quickly. But with some listening and patience, a clearer and truer understanding grows. Recently, we worked toward such a conversation in our adult education on immigration. We have people on both sides of this highly charged issue. Some were concerned about illegal immigration and the need for enforcement. Others were concerned about how we treat all immigrants. I came away understanding much more about the issues and that we both need laws and enforcement and that we need to treat all immigrants with decency. People still had differences about what was happening and the way ahead but I came away realizing that we are not as far apart as some would have us think and proud that we talked.

Part of my vision for us as a congregation is to continue to have conversations on topics that are not easy. Our mission is. "In God's grace, Ascension creates faithful community." For me, part of being faithful community is being able to talk about harder topics. The goal is not to change minds but to understand the issues and each other. Personally I hope I learn something new and my mind is changed. But success is not tied to that. Success for conversations comes from genuinely and respectfully engaging others – especially those who may differ from us. For adult education, we are going to continue in this



path with a presentation on LGBTQIA on the first two Sundays in January. I hope we might see others more clearly in 2020.

Pastor Dan Holt



Fill the Wheelbarrow for Rainbow Trail!

Rainbow Trail Lutheran Camp is a part of the Rocky Mountain Synod that serves all ages in their faith journeys. We are going to give them a boost in the month of January by contributing items from their wish list. A Thrivent Action Team grant will buy a sturdy wheelbarrow or two. On January 12 and 19, we hope you will donate an item, large (like a vacuum) or small (like a roll of duct tape). Look for their list of needs and wants in the Sunday bulletins. Thanks to you and Thrivent! Please contact Judy Leiseth (jleiseth@hotmail.com) with questions.

Join Us Jan. 25 to Tie Quilts!

Quilts for New Beginnings will hold a quilt tying event on Saturday, January 25th at Ascension Lutheran Church, beginning at 9 a.m. The quilts will go to the world relief programs of the Lutheran & Mennonite churches. This is a wonderful way to spend a Saturday in January – men, women, children, friends, neighbors are invited to join us. We will be through at noon. Light snacks will be provided. A signup sheet will be on the kiosk in the Fellowship Hall. Come for the whole three hours or leave when you must – we will appreciate your efforts to make the world a warmer place. Questions – contact me at slwalker@q.com. Sally Walker



Response to 2020 Budget Concerns

Thank you for your attendance and feedback at our budget-focused Congregation Meeting in December. The council consistently operates within the financial limits of the congregation. This year, we stretched ourselves with an ambitious goal to increase general giving by \$45,000.

Your generous response to the Stewardship campaign committed an additional \$12,000 with 16 fewer participants. Because our staff did not receive a pay increase in 2019, the council placed highest priority on increasing the salaries of those who serve us in ministry. Unfortunately, our “must-pay” expenses, (utilities, insurance, staff benefits, janitorial services) increased by the same amount.

Board Directors scrutinized their budgets, either maintaining or reducing 2020 expenses. Even so, the council was unable to recommend increasing staff salaries in order to balance the budget. As I mentioned in the meeting, the Rocky Mountain Synod publishes a recommended salary range based on individual education levels and years of service.

We have been close to meeting our goal to pay staff at 90% of the upper end of the Synod’s recommended guidelines for the Pastors. In 2017, Pastor Dan was at 92.87% and Pastor Daniel was at 89.98%. Deacon Mary, who was initially hired as the Director of Youth and Faith Formation, was paid an agreed upon salary before she became rostered as a Deacon in February 2015. Her new status with provided benefits placed us behind; however, we responded with salary increases for a couple of years. By 2018, Deacon Mary’s salary was at 80.28% of the upper end of the Synod’s recommended guidelines.

Unfortunately, congregation commitments did not allow salary increases in 2019 and we face the same dilemma in the coming year. With additional years of service, Pastor Dan’s 2020 salary will be at 90.66%, Pastor Daniel at 85.6%, and Deacon Mary at 76.18% of the upper end of the Synod’s recommended guidelines. We continue to pay their benefits at 100%.

Several members of the congregation expressed concern over staff salaries as presented in the 2020 budget. A motion was made to use Endowment Funds to increase Deacon Mary’s salary. Article IV of our by-laws addresses the Endowment and states funds may not be used for normal operating expenses. The congregation

may approve an exception by two-thirds majority if the Endowment Committee recommends it. The Endowment Committee did not recommend an exception so the motion was not actioned.

Any voting member may propose changes to the by-laws by submitting amendments to the council at least 60 days before a regular or special congregation meeting. The council then has to provide 30-days’ notice of its recommendation to the congregation. That is one option and is a little more long-term in nature.

A short-term option is for the congregation to increase its financial commitment. If we receive additional commitments before our February congregation meeting, the council will recommend an adjusted 2020 budget with salary increases for all our staff to include those who are not rostered. I have agreed to increase my giving and challenge individual members of the congregation to increase giving as they are able.

Please continue to express your concerns to any member of the council. We are here to represent you by shining God’s light into darkness as we move forward in our mission to create faithful community.

Donna Crump
President, Congregation Planning Council

CONGRATULATIONS...

**and thanks for your service to Zach Carbonell on his return home from deployment.

**to Robert & Lauren Wachs on the birth of their daughter Jennifer. Proud grandparents are George & Sabine Wachs.

**to Olivia Trinko and Zac Shenker on their marriage January 17 in San Francisco. Proud parents are Sue & Tony Trinko.

THANK YOU...

**Thank you for all the prayers and support as I have been discerning a call to service. I have made the decision to attend Wartburg Theological Seminary, beginning in Fall 2020. In the meantime I’ll be researching and applying for scholarships and continuing the candidacy process with Rocky Mountain Synod. I am so very grateful for such strong support from Ascension, and your continued prayers are appreciated. Gabrielle Brown

**Most grateful thanks to everyone for your prayers and cards following my recent hip surgery. I look forward to being back among you soon. Dorothea Mazigian.

CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY TO...

**Chris Mortensen at the death of his father.

**Joan Magee at the death of her Grandson, Steve Hahn.

Ascension Lutheran Church Pictorial Directory

The new Ascension Lutheran Church pictorial directory is online! If you haven't already, we'd like you to go online and create an account for yourself so you can access the directory anytime you'd like. To do so, use this link: <https://members.instantchurchdirectory.com/signup>. (The signup will only work if you previously emailed me. If you didn't...email me! dennisbagenstos@gmail.com.) You will then create a unique password for yourself. Don't forget your password, because I won't be able to recover it for you!

Note that your address and anniversaries and other personal information won't be shown unless you provided permission to list them. If you would like to include that info, you can now add or edit your information by clicking the 'Edit Family' button on your page. Keep in mind that the directory can only be accessed by members of the congregation who have been provided an account and password. And if we don't have your photo yet, or if you'd like to change your photo, you can also do that online.

Oh, and if you've already signed up but aren't sure where to go to access the directory, it's members.instantchurchdirectory.com. Even better, you can get the app for Android, Apple or Kindle; just search your app store for Instant Church Directory.

Let me know if you have any problems accessing the directory. And yes, we still have members we need to add, so if you don't see that family that sits next to you in church listed, tell them to send me an email! All inquiries should go to me at dennisbagenstos@gmail.com.

COFFEE HOUR – Smell the Aroma and Sign Up to Host!

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.



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 using the book, *Fierce* by Alice Connor. Our hostesses 9 January 2020 will be Nancy Shatto who will lead our discussion on Asherah. 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, or a book, at 719-426-9444 or Njshatto@yahoo.com.



Ruth Circle

Ladies' Lunch Bunch Meets the 3rd Tuesday

(Note the ladies' lunch is the 3rd TUESDAY of each month. It has been incorrectly listed as Thursday previously.)

Ladies of Ascension meet 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 Tuesday at 11 am at Mackenzie Place
Contact: Judy Conroy, 481-9605
or jnconroy@comcast.net

Bridge Group

Our Bridge Group will next meet on January 11th 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...

****Flower Chart** – The 2020 Flower Chart is posted in the office for you to sign up on for a special Sunday for you or a family member, or a special occasion. Check with Arlayne for more info.

****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.

BECOME INVOLVED...

****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, Allen, Anita Arends, Beth Ayen (Daughter-in-law of Darcy & Bill Ayen), Brad Buhler, Katie Bui (Daughter-in-law of Anita Arends), Dorothy & George Candea, Caitlin Denton (relative of Chris Koehler), Tom & Sandy George, Elaine Glover, Neva Gulliksen, Steve Hahn (Grandson of Joan Magee), Betty Hatcher, Jack Kagarise, Ron Mohler, Terri Moore, Hazel Quindt, Helen Schauer, Jeff Sebben, Colleen (Jon) Steinhauer (Daughter-in-law of Dave Steinhauer), Carol Thompson, Lisa Wulf, and all of our men and women serving overseas, especially Anthony Calderon, toothpaste, toothbrushes, 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. *We need to build up our pool of volunteers to help us.* We've lost a couple of our volunteers because of deaths and moves. 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.



SMALL GROUP MINISTRIES QUARTERLY UPDATE

All are welcome; come join in the fellowship!

DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS

Centering Prayer Group

Discussions on theology and practice of centering prayer and centering 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. 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

Monday Night Serendipity

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

Meets: 2nd & 4th Monday 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 Tuesday 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, 808 Garden of the Gods Rd.

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, outside when weather permits and in Chapel Hills Mall when it doesn't. Please call to confirm special times & locations.

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

SERVICE & SUPPORT GROUPS

Quilts for New Beginnings

Family Promise, One Nation and World Relief need more quilts, and you can help. If you show up, we'll find something for you to do - no matter your skill level. *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

Rides are scheduled most weekends. 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, April – October, weather permitting. Most rides are on Saturdays. Time & location by email & in Ascension Office's *What's up* weekly email

Contact: TBD



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Ascension Lutheran Church, ELCA
2505 N. Circle Drive
Colorado Springs, CO 80909

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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

Church Nursery Supervisor – Shawwna Emilio

E-mail addresses: office@ascensioncos.org

d.holt@ascensioncos.org (Pastor Holt)

d.smith@ascensioncos.org (Pastor Smith)

m.stoneback@ascensioncos.org (Mary Stoneback)

music@ascensioncos.org (Megan Miller)

takmusic530@outlook.com (Teresa Allen)

t.adams@ascensioncos.org (Teresa Adams)

clc@ascensioncos.org (CLC)

ts.trinko@gmail.com (newsletter articles)

Our Website: www.ascensioncos.org

February newsletter deadline: Jan. 19

*In Our Thoughts
& Prayers*

Scott Allen, Anita Arends,
Beth Ayen (Daughter-in-law of Darcy & Bill Ayen),
Brad Buhler, Katie Bui (Daughter-in-law of Anita
Arends), Dorothy & George Candea, Caitlin Denton
(relative of Chris Koehler), Tom & Sandy George,
Elaine Glover, Neva Gulliksen, Betty Hatcher, Jack
Kagarise, Ron Mohler, Terri Moore, Hazel Quindt,
Helen Schauer, Jeff Sebben, Colleen (Jon) Steinhauer
(Daughter-in-law of Dave Steinhauer), Carol
Thompson, Lisa Wulf, and all of our men and women
serving overseas, especially Anthony Calderon