



Ascension In Action

Ascension Lutheran Church

February 2020

Published monthly in Colorado Springs, Colorado

LGBTQ: Moving from Letters to Stories and People

In January we hosted Bill Oliver to discuss faith and LGBTQ issues. Bill describes himself as a Christian man who happens to be gay. At our second session, Bill brought his friend Marcy, a Christian woman who happens to be transgender. In inviting Bill, we wanted someone who could help us understand the alphabet soup of LGBTQIA+. We knew with some research one of us pastors could present the information, but that it would be better to have someone with some lived experience. But I learned something much more than that in those two sessions. In telling us about themselves, Bill and Marcy showed me how important it is to tell our stories. That when discussing so many “issues,” it is better to know people than to know acronyms. Bill helped me to see that knowing who Bill is and who Marcy is matters. A lot. Too which you might be saying ... duh! Of course that’s true! I’ve discovered that so often with all of you. As I’ve come to know your story – your upbringing, your family, your values, your passions, your fears, your struggles – I’ve learned a lot more than I ever would have by reading your resume. I don’t yet know what will happen next after these sessions with Bill and Marcy. We may end up having a discussion on same-sex marriage. I hope we’ll continue engaging in these tough conversations that just aren’t happening in fruitful ways on the internet, on cable TV, or even in most families. I hope that as we have discussions on tough “issues” we will focus on the people involved. Which reminds me of two stories:

When we were discussing same-sex civil unions at church 5 or 6 years ago, one of our youth told me she was very uncomfortable with the discussion. I assumed it was because this indirectly had to do with sex, and 17 year olds don’t necessarily like talking about that with their pastor. But I was wrong.



“Why are you uncomfortable?” I asked. “Because it feels like we’re talking about people, instead of talking with them.” I wish I was that smart at 17. I wish I was now.

In the Gospel of John, there is a woman who comes to a well in the middle of the day when no one else is there. She was five times widowed (or divorced) and no one really wanted to be with her. No doubt they still talked about her. But Jesus came to the well and talked to her, asked for water, and then offered her living water. He knew her, and in knowing her he changed her life.

We’ve been known by Christ and our lives have changes. May we also seek to know the faith, stories, and humanity of one another. If we do, I think we’ll all be better for it.

God bless,
Pastor Daniel

IHN is coming! Ascension will be hosting families who would otherwise be homeless through the Interfaith Hospitality Network for two weeks from **February 16 until March 1**. Our partner congregation, **Beth-El Mennonite is hosting now and we are helping Jan 28th and 29th plus Feb 4th and 5th**. They will return the favor of helping out for 2 days each week when we host. We are asking volunteers to provide meals, serve meals, host in the evening, and stay overnight. You can sign up at our Ascension website or at church. Please help us put our faith in action.



CPC Notes

- Pastor Daniel provided a devotion based on a reading from 1 Thessalonians focusing on thankfulness.

- The Organ Evaluation Committee presented a detailed report to the CPC and briefed a summary of their findings regarding our current organ's deficiencies and the reasoning behind the recommendation to replace it with a Keg pipe organ.
- After noting a decrease in 2019 revenue, Russ Johnson, treasurer, asked CPC Directors to keep a close eye on expenses for the coming year to help us maintain a balanced budget.
- Donna reported a positive response from the congregation on the Staff Salary Matching Challenge. The council approved a way forward to provide salary increases once the initiative ends and the final numbers are known. The plan will be presented at the February congregation meeting.
- The council discussed options and approved an initial plan to utilize two large gifts received during 2019. A portion will be used for a new sound system in the sanctuary, basement upgrades, additional benevolence to charitable organizations, food for the CLC, and the Youth Bell choir. Other uses will be discussed at future CPC meetings.
- John provided an update on our Strategic Planning efforts, highlighting Deacon Mary's recent conference attendance on social media marketing and the implementation of the Belonging Pathway team recommendations.
- Although not listed as a regular attendee in our constitution, the council voted to add the position of Deacon as a regular ex-officio member of the Congregation Planning Committee. The council will work to upgrade the constitution.
- Pastor Dan closed the meeting in prayer.



What's Happening

- Ascension's Annual Report to the congregation will be provided at the congregation meeting on February 16th, between services. Plan to attend!
- The yearly audit of our finances was conducted on January 18th. The committee, comprised of Sharon Versaw, Julie Barton, and Arlene Schultz will provide a report of the results at an upcoming CPC meeting. Thank you for volunteering for this important work.
- Pastor Dan will be on a week-long vacation starting February 15th.
- Coming soon – A new banner at the front of the sanctuary!
- Our online social media post engagement increased by 134%. I like that! LOL!
- David and Ellie Urlaub are taking a lead role in our plan to upgrade the basement kitchen. If you are a frequent user, please share your concerns with them on needed improvements.
- The new connections cards are generating results. Since their implementation, we've learned of prayer requests, specific interest in service, and desires to join our church. We also use them to note attendance. Please keep using them!

Coming Soon - ELCA World Hunger Appeal

Will it be piglets or chicks or water wells? What will the World Hunger appeal goal be in 2020? Maybe a whole barnyard? hmmm. The annual ELCA World Hunger appeal is coming up soon. There are over 800 million in the world that are hungry - that's about 1 in 8 people around the globe. Ascension has exceeded every goal we've set by generously giving to support those that are in need of food. Stay tuned to see how we will support the ELCA in its effort to help world hunger this year.

THANK YOU...

Thank you to everyone who gave Christmas gifts for those at the Pueblo Mental Hospital. Blessings!

Ascension appreciates Thrivent's donation of a large television for the youth room. Thank you Thrivent!

Endowment Donations

Matthew Wachs - Birthday
 Sandy Trent - Birthday
 Phil & Sandy Trent - Anniversary

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, then 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 hostess for 13 February 2020 is Sally Walker who will lead our discussion on Eve. 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 February 8th 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.

****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.***

****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.***

I love Being a Member of Ascension. Ever since I left home to go to college, I've not lived close to any of my family members. While I'm envious of my friends who do, I have another family I get to see every Sunday morning - my church family. My church family spans the gamut of ages and backgrounds and they energize me every time I come to church. We look after each other and participate in God's work in his world. I am amazingly blessed to be part of the Ascension family. I also love the willingness of our congregation to delve

into difficult, contentious subjects such as immigration and sexuality. Our Book Club gives me the opportunity to learn about and then discuss these issues in a non-judgmental forum. The recent LGBTQIA discussions were another example of how we broaden our understanding of issues while retaining our desire to be a welcoming church family. I had a niece who struggled with her sexuality. At one point she identified as a lesbian. Then she realized that she is transgender and now my niece is my nephew. Unfortunately during his struggle with his identity, his church removed him from their membership. No wonder the suicide rate among the LGBTQIA community is so much higher than the norm. I am thankful my church family wouldn't take these kinds of actions against anybody worshipping at Ascension.

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.

****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.

****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, 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.

****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.

SALE

The youth will be selling the remaining red shirts and sweatshirts between services on Sunday, February 8th and 15th. Limited sizes (kids too) and styles are available. We are clearing out to get ready to offer NEW shirts in the Fall. Also available will be the blue and red travel mugs. Come get your red - just in time for Valentines day.

PANCAKES.... and BACON!

Come join members of Ascension for our 2nd Shrove - "Fat Tuesday" celebration. On Tuesday, February 25th at 5:30pm, FREE pancakes and bacon will be served. Please bring a dessert to share as we prepare for the Lenten season.

GARAGE SALE

Mark your calendars for Saturday, April 4th for the annual church garage sale at Ascension. All proceeds benefit the youth heading to Minneapolis in 2021 for the National Youth Gathering. Start gathering your items. We will start collecting them on Sunday, March 1st in the lower level. If you put one thing to donate in a box beginning February 25th, you will have 40 items - a great remembrance of the 40 days of lent!



AIA February 2020 Issue #2
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

Diaconal Minister of Faith Formation – Mary Stoneback

Office Administrator – Arlayne McKee

Child Learning Center Director – Teresa Adams

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

March newsletter deadline: Feb. 16

*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), Andrea Gallant (sister of Gabrielle Brown), 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, Cassie Shaffer, Helen Schauer, Nancy Shatto, Jeff Sebben, Colleen (Jon) Steinhauer (Daughter-in-law of Dave Steinhauer), Carol Thompson, Lisa Wulf, and all of our men and women serving overseas.