



Ascension In Action

Ascension Lutheran Church

May 2020

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Easter Season in a Pandemic

We are in our celebratory Easter season where we live in the light of the resurrection of Jesus. We do this at a time where the headlines cast the shadow of the corona virus on people's health and finances. People are still getting sick even with the flattening of the curve. And we know that curve can easily spike back up. Others are out of work, losing business and even going under in their businesses. For some in the world, they are choosing to work and risk their health because that is what keeps their families fed. It seems like the darkness leaves little room for Easter's light and hope.

But the resurrection's light and hope came in dark times. The raised Jesus still had the wounds on his hands, feet and side. When he rose from the dead the Romans still ruled, the local leaders were still corrupt and people were poor and too often sick. Jesus being raised didn't automatically mean people's nature and the world would be raised to some new level of goodness. Rather resurrection is our sign of how God has made a way through the darkness of this life and death.

We, people of the resurrection, will be adversely affected by the corona virus. Churches that have ignored the social distancing guidelines have paid the price of members getting sick and spreading the corona virus. A pastor in a large church in Virginia who publicly pressed against the social distancing has died. The resurrection speaks of the way through the woes not around them.

It is a game changer to know God always will bring us through. God will bring that brazenly foolish Virginia pastor into his eternal light. Neither our foolishness nor the world's diseases will keep us from the light and love of God. At times, we will feel the darkness close in on us. Jesus felt that on the cross. But God will come through leading us through that darkness to a new day, if not in this world, then in the next.

Pr. Dan Holt

A Word from Our President

During my temple talk on March 29, I explained plans to cut expenses in response to COVID-19. Our inability to worship together and pass the offering plate painted a bleak financial picture. The council quickly acted to make changes to church expenses.

We reduced social outreach payments in half, adjusted to an interest-only mortgage for three months and accepted the rostered staff's offer to take significant salary reductions. I also emphasized that we would adjust these cuts if giving returned to normal. You quickly responded! Checks began to arrive at the church office and people signed up for online giving. Because of your response, we did not have to make any salary adjustments for the month of April. Thank you!!

Around the same time, we learned of a Paycheck Protection Program within the CARES Act. The program allows small businesses, including non-profits and churches, to obtain a loan to retain workers and maintain payroll, mortgage and utility payments. The loan can be forgiven in full if the funds are spent entirely on those expenses. Due to the quick efforts of Russ Johnson, Josh (our accountant) and Arlayne McKee, we received a \$95,000 loan from this program.

If you felt a sudden breeze on April 14, that was me breathing a sigh of relief knowing this loan will enable us to retain all our employees with full salaries through the month of June. This includes the staff of our Children's Learning Center (CLC), which has faced decreased enrollment during the Governor's stay-at-home order. The CLC serves essential worker families. Some of our CLC staff live month-to-month, so keeping the CLC running is an important ministry.

Discussions on how to be good stewards of the funds received are ongoing. I'm confident that God will continue to lead us through this time of crisis and that we will maintain our faith and love for others. Thank you once again for your continued support to Ascension and our ministries.

God bless you, Donna Crump, CPC President



What's Happening

- The Council met virtually utilizing the Zoom online application.
- Pastor Daniel opened the meeting with a reading from 1 Corinthians. Several people shared times when they understood the gospel by the actions of others which led us to understand when we create faithful community, God is using us to proclaim the gospel.
- March financial figures were good, especially considering we cannot worship and collect offerings in person.
- Due to the efforts of Russ Johnson and Josh, our accountant, Ascension is the recipient of a \$95,000 loan from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. This, along with a strong response from the congregation, will enable us to maintain full salaries for all our staff, to include the CLC teachers.
- John Hayes reported positive feedback from the ongoing phone tree efforts.
- Pastor Daniel highlighted online worship efforts, especially noting Deacon Mary's work on Holy Week events. We will have future discussions on how to continue online worship once gathering restrictions are lifted.
- Deacon Mary is adding a COVID-19 Update page to the church website and moving the online Directory to a more prominent location.
- Guest speaker, David Urlaub, presented a renovation plan for the basement. Council approved the plan. We expect the project to be complete by mid-June.
- Brad Chewakin updated the council on landscaping plans for our property on the corner of North Circle and Holiday Lane. A final plan is expected for council vote at the May CPC meeting.
- A date for the congregational meeting to elect new officers, board directors, and board members is set for June 28, 2020.
- A discussion was held on the way forward for the Office Manager position as Arlayne McKee is scheduled to retire June 1st. She will stay longer to ease the transition, if needed.
- Pastor Dan closed the meeting in prayer.

- Groups at Ascension continue to meet. If you need help setting up a gathering, talk to Deacon Mary or Pastor Daniel.
- Chris Koehler and Terri Moore are leading efforts to provide food to CLC families.
- Scott Ewing is collecting grocery store gift cards to help families in the Interfaith Hospitality Network. Families have a place to stay but are missing food usually provided by host churches.
- Don't forget about the \$200 on-going match for each family that signs up for online giving.
- Fellowship after church continues even when we worship online. The church website will have the Zoom link. Please join us!
- Thank you to the Nominating Committee: Dennis Bagenstos (chair), Chris Koehler, Joe DesJardin, Jim DeLoughry, Karen Rubinow, and Dallas Shrawder for their efforts to fill positions on our Boards and CPC. Please talk to one of them if you feel called to serve.



Got Your Goat?

Thank you to all of you who contributed to this Lenten season's ELCA World Hunger Drive! We raised \$5,495, which will buy 109 goats & have a little extra left over. On behalf of the Board of Social Outreach, thank you - you are awesome!

Ascension Phone Tree

While our church services are suspended because of the CORONA virus, we are trying to contact each member of Ascension once a week to make sure you're doing well and if you're not, what can we do to help out. If you haven't been contacted by anybody, please let John Hayes know so we can establish contact with you. John's e-mail address is blazehayes@aol.com and his phone number is (719) 572-1052.



TENTATIVE DATE June 13!

We will be collecting items once church is back open, but continue to save up your things! What a great time to clean out some closets and cupboards!

Us & Them We

The Board of Social Outreach has been busy even though it seems like the distancing we're doing has slowed things down a bit. The World Hunger appeal ended on Easter and we met the goal of 100 goats. That's remarkable given what's going on and a true testament to the congregation who is always willing to help others in need.

Social Outreach has continued supporting organizations through this troubled time that we have been doing for years. We recently sent donations to Family Promise/IHN, Lutheran Family Services (which includes support for KPC), and Rainbow Trails Lutheran Camp just before everything closed.

We continue to help homeless families from Family Promise/IHN with collection of grocery store gift cards so families can buy the food they need while staying in Family Promise housing while churches are closed and unable to help with housing and food as churches usually do. Thank you to Scott Ewen for organizing collection of the grocery store cards.

There has been tremendous food support for the small pantry and the CLC kids and their families. Members have dropped off food or sent money for these families. Your generosity is wonderfully helpful when so many are in need.

Blessings abound!
Karen Askinas and the Board of Social Outreach

CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY TO...

- **the family of Marcile Riber at her death.
- **Robbi Dollar & family at the death of her mother, Charlotte Rogers.
- **Floyd Buhler at the death of his brother, Allen.
- **Scott & Donna Crump at the death of his brother, Jim.
- **Chuck Sebald at the death of his mother.

Create a Legacy!



*Ascension Lutheran Church
Endowment Fund*

Celebrating a special event? Remembering a special person? Memorialize those people and events in your life with a gift to Ascension's Endowment Fund, and create a lasting legacy!

Thank You for Your Continued Generosity

On behalf of the Board of Stewardship; thank you for your continued financial support of Ascension. In times of virtual worship, it can be easy to forget the physical offering. We appreciate those who have been able step up.

You can sign up for Simply Giving on our church website. We also offer the opportunity to make a one time donation via the web. Finally, if you like the feel of paper and the smell of ink; you can mail your offering to the Church Office.

Be well and stay safe,
Your Stew Crew

Ruth Circle

Due to the uncertainty how long the restrictions for Covid-19 will be, we will suspend meetings until August 2020. Ruth Circle does not meet in June and July. More information will be coming later. If you are new to 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.

Ladies' Lunch Bunch Meets the 3rd Tuesday

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

A Message from the Deacon

Happy Easter, Christ is Risen Indeed!

Each Gospel shares a slightly different perspective of Jesus' life, death and resurrection. This year, we read from the Gospel of Mark. It begins with the women, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Salome, bringing spices to Jesus' grave to anoint his body. The women encounter an angel who instructs them to share the Good News of Christ's resurrection with the Disciples. Instead, the women leave the tomb afraid, telling no one.

In this time of Pandemic and stay-at-home and safer at home orders, we too could be tempted to hide behind the face masks and run back inside out of fear. However, I have good news! Over the past several weeks, while practicing social distancing from our homes, we have proclaimed Christ, shared and engaged in our faith, worshipped God together and had a lot of fun! Here is a glimpse of what faithful community has looked like from my perspective, behind the camera lens, and online over the past several weeks.

- Teresa Allen offered *Music Meditations from the Mountain*, an online piano recital to soothe the soul.
- 43 members and friends of all ages from South Dakota, Iowa and Nevada helped lead an online Maundy Thursday worship service.
- Seven congregations and pastors from the ELCA Rocky Mountain Synod's Southeast Conference came together to deliver the Last Seven Words of Jesus in an online Good Friday service.
- The high school youth proclaimed Christ's resurrection in an Online Easter Sunrise service.
- From Colorado to England to Boston to Africa, 15 people from Ascension and beyond came together to provide an online story night and fundraiser for ELCA World Hunger and Ascension's Free Food Pantry. The evening's Storytellers included: Jim DeLoughry, Stacy Jensen, Ingrid Daniel and Pastor Buntausa Amos from the Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria.
- Over 12 people have engaged in the Wednesday evening Bible Study and Experience with Pastor Dan, Pastor Daniel and Deacon Mary.
- Confirmation and high school youth have met online, prayed for one another and our community, and did fun activities.
- Live Streamed Sunday worship services continue to reach out to members and to new congregations in Sugar City and Cripple Creek.
- Zoom Fellowship hour following Sunday's service offers members the opportunity to share

their blessings and challenges and to be in prayer for one another.

- Members are sharing their gifts of singing and their thoughts about God as a part of Pastor Daniel's Storytime and Friends for the Sunday School children and families.

The list could go on. Suffice it say, a lot of outreach and collaboration has been happening. Ascension has been engaged, even during a pandemic and this is not even counting the hundreds who are participating by viewing each week! It is a gift to have technologies that allow us to not only stay connected but to engage and grow in our faith in Christ together.

If you have not been able to engage in these above opportunities yet, or if you would like to see them again, it is not too late. Visit any of the following online platforms to stay connected and check out Ascension online:

- Website: ascensioncos.org
- Facebook: facebook.com/ascensioncos
- Instagram: instagram.com/ascensioncos
- YouTube: tinyurl.com/YouTubeALC

Sincerely,
Deacon Mary

CLC Weekend Food Backpacks



Thank you to Kirsten Johnson and the Youth Board for coordinating youth and families to fill 12 backpacks with food for the CLC children to take home over the weekend!

SAVE THE DATE

Ascension at the Vibes Baseball Game

Ascension is having an outing at the Colorado Springs Vibes baseball game on Sunday, August 23rd. The Vibes are the Single A minor league baseball team for the Milwaukee Brewers organization. The team is mostly comprised of brand new professional baseball players that are just

drafted out of college and high school. 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). As we get closer to the game, John Hayes will be taking ticket orders.

THANK YOU...

We would like to thank everyone for your prayers for my mom when she went into hospice care and for the condolence cards, phone calls, and facebook messages when she passed away. Robbi Dollar & Family

Bridge Group

Our Bridge Group will next meet on a TBD date in May 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...

****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.

****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.

****KNOTTY KNEEDLERS** – We meet every Wednesday from 1:00- 3:00 P.M. We serve coffee and enjoy fellowship. We always like to see new faces. Anyone interested in joining us is very welcome. You can work on your own projects or for charity. Contact person is Bonnie Vawter at 719-579-6707 or you can just show up.

****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, toothbrushes, face soap.

****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.



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Ascension Lutheran Church, ELCA
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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
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Our Website: www.ascensioncos.org

June newsletter deadline: May 17

*In Our Thoughts
& Prayers*

Scott Allen, Beth Ayen
(Daughter-in-law of Darcy & Bill Ayen), Brad Buhler,
Tom & Sandy George, Elaine Glover, Charles Lewis,
Ron Mohler, Hazel Quintd, Rick Rogers, Jeff Sebben,
Cassie Shaffer, Cathy Stanley & Michelle Stanley
(sister-in-law & niece of Marilyn Gulliksen), Teri
Thompson (Sister-in-law of Sandy Trent), Wanda
Wade (friend of Kagarises), Dee Yocum, and all of our
men and women serving overseas, especially Anthony
Calderon.