



# Ascension In Action

Ascension Lutheran Church

March 2018

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## O God Our Help

We are in a time of discernment concerning what God is leading us to be and do in the next years. We are discerning because we face challenges in inspiring and attracting people to our community, our gracious understanding of faith and call to serve.

What comes to mind is the hymn line, "O God our help in ages past, our hope for years to come." In ages past (mid 1960s), we struggled to make ends meet and considered closing. What reversed the financial and spiritual crisis was a commitment to give beyond ourselves. Later, Pastor Rudolph picked up on the service theme saying, "**We are not a bricks and mortar church.**" He was getting at the fact that we were a church not caught up in physical buildings (as our facilities were minimal at the time) but committed to serving others.

After that, other challenges came up around growth and membership involvement. The leadership responded by implementing Paul's advice from Ephesians 4 where he taught that leaders were to equip the saints for ministry. This principle of **equipping the saints** meant that our leaders were not first about doing the ministry but training others to do the ministry. Our members were given both the authority and responsibility for our ministry.

Another emphasis from this time period was **Ascension is a community**. People often talk about church as family. You can find references in the Bible to being brothers and sisters in Christ. Family is a way to say how important the relationships we have here are. But there is a downside to speaking of the church as family because families are small and hard to join. Community, however, is open for people to join and participate in. In order to still value relationships and yet not feel too small and closed, the church leadership raised up being community. Small groups and family systems theory helped us grow community.



In the early 2000's, we had issues with disrepair of property and constraints around the building for education and fellowship. We did discernment around our own mission and vision as well as our needs for ministry. We brought together past themes to create the identity slogan: **A Community of Grace, Called to Serve.**

"O God our help in ages past, our hope for years to come." God who has helped us in the past is our hope for years to come. Not surprisingly, in our rapidly changing and secularizing times, we again are facing challenges. To meet such challenges will require dealing with change (which is not easy for us) and being inspired to hope. As God leads us to find our hope in the years to come, we ask you for your patience, participation and prayers.

Pastor Dan

## Walk to Jerusalem

We have started our imaginary walk to Jerusalem! Beginning Sunday, February 18th, we left Ascension Lutheran Church on a journey to Jerusalem, arriving in time for Pentecost Sunday, May 20th. It is not too late to participate! We are logging collective "miles" of walking, or other forms of exercise, to reach our destination. Please join us by signing up and logging your miles. Participate with us as we use the *From Ashes to Fire* devotional during our exercise time, and learn about new countries, geography and cultures as we trek across the USA, the Atlantic Ocean and then Southern Europe, eventually crossing south into Israel.



*Ascension Lutheran Church  
Endowment Fund*

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

**Sabine Wachs – birthday**

The February 13 CPC meeting included the following actions and discussions:

- Pastor Dan Smith led devotions on how we need both the mystery of God and the revelation of God. He makes himself known to us through his mystery and by revelation to us through Jesus and the Holy Spirit.
- Board Directors gave brief updates on current activities and future plans.
- Pastor Dan said this year's emphasis during lent will be on the Ten Commandments.
- Pastor Daniel said he is getting the sanctuary aesthetics teams back together as we are drawing closer to completing work in the sanctuary.
- Greg Gulliksen discussed where we are with the capital campaign and how we will move towards finishing the work associated with the capital campaign. The lighting replacement is to start the week of February 19 with the remaining work to be completed after Easter.
- Council continued discussion concerning the priorities for how much operating reserves, operating cash, and capital replacement funds we should keep on hand.
- Donna Crump gave an update on the Purpose Mapping. Kristin will be here February 23-25 for individual discussions with the congregation.
- Council approved synod assembly delegates and the nominating committee to be taken to the congregation for a vote.
- Greg noted the Congregational Annual Meeting will be held on February 25 between services.
- 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.

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#### **Nominating Committee:**

"A Community of Grace, Called to Serve" is a phrase used at Ascension to describe what we are all about. We are at the beginning stages of assembling our next executive committee, Congregation Planning Council (CPC), and boards for the next two years. If asked by the nominating committee, please consider serving on a board or as a director. Our purpose mapping will be completed this summer with many things for our new executive committee, CPC, and boards to take into consideration concerning who we are as a community of faith and in what direction of service will Ascension take.



## What's Happening

The annual Congregational Meeting was held on Sunday, February 25. Attendees received a copy of the 2017 Annual Report, were filled in about purpose mapping, updated on how the CPC will handle operating cash and capital reserves monies in the future, updated on our endowment funds and disbursement, approved our Synod Assembly delegates, and approved our nominating committee. Additional copies are available in the Narthex or in the church office.

See the article later in the newsletter for our World Hunger appeal this year.

Note Daylight savings time begins March 11. Spring those clocks ahead one hour. Sorry, one less hour of sleep.

Holy Week services will begin March 25.

"A Community of Grace, Called to Serve."

Peace be with you, Greg Gulliksen, President CPC  
637-9313 / [greg.gulliksen@gmail.com](mailto:greg.gulliksen@gmail.com)

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#### **RUTH CIRCLE**

All ladies of Ascension are invited to join us on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of each month at 9:30am for fellowship and casual Bible Study. We will be discussing Chapter 6 from the book *Having a Mary Heart in a Martha World*, by Joanna Weaver. You can join at any time. Hostess for the March 8, 2018 gathering will be Dorothy Reed. If you are new to Ascension or just looking for a casual Bible Study group, we hope you will come and join us! Please see Nancy Shatto for a book, 719-426-9444 or [njshatto@yahoo.com](mailto:njshatto@yahoo.com).

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#### **Call Revision Service for Our Pastors March 11**

At both services on March 11th, we will be revising the Calls for our two Pastors to designate them as Co-Pastors. Bishop Gonia will attend the services and participate in the short ceremony. There will be a reception between the services and then Bishop Gonia will talk to our congregation. Everybody is encouraged to attend one of the services as we formalize this new relationship with our Pastors.



## An Update from Team Stretch

For the last 15 months, Team Stretch has taken monthly courses focused on a variety of subject matters pertinent to the boomers and elders (55+), and their spiritual formation needs. The courses covered topics which focused on a wide range of topics from personal awareness and spiritual gifts to what it means to grow in times of loss and physical decline. We looked at working through transitions like retirement, or caring for a loved one who is ill. Our hope is to continue to promote the purposefulness and dignity of every age, recognizing faith formation is an ongoing, life-long process. While the secular culture and popular media often favors the young, we profess belief in a God who sees we are valuable and part of His plan at every age. Team Stretch exists to:

- Look at older adult ministry through a different lens
- Offer an invitation to consider who we are as we age
- Provide ways for members to continue to grow and connect with all ages
- Attend to the inner person and provide an antidote to the secular meaning of aging

Based on our gleanings from the course and conversations within the community, Team Stretch is offering the following Spring opportunities.

### Intergenerational Conversation Partners

What could possibly make Lenten soup suppers better? We believe getting to know the youth! So, we're pairing five MS Youth with five older adults for fun conversations throughout Lent. If you're interested in getting to know more about the youth in our midst, let us know! We'll gladly connect you!

### Toolkits

In November of last year Team Stretch presented an "Advent Toolkit" to the congregation. The feedback from that presentation led us to begin a program of additional

toolkits to be presented throughout the year. Our next toolkit will take place between services on Palm Sunday March 25<sup>th</sup>. The topic is "Downsizing." We will look at this topic from a variety of perspectives both personal, practical and spiritual. We are delighted to include as part of the downsizing program a presentation by Barb Schlinker, Broker/Owner of Parker St Claire Realty. She will provide tips, ideas and timelines on a topic that is a reality or soon to be a reality for many of us at Ascension.

### Good Grief

Although few of us enjoy thinking about loss and grief, loss is a universal human experience. Some losses are "small", we didn't get that job we wanted, some take a much larger toll on our day-to-day living; such as a divorce. Others, like the death of a spouse or child, can literally stop you in your tracks and turn your life upside down. Team Stretch firmly believes there's no better place to express and receive solace & support for grief than within our church family. We are considering a variety of different opportunities to bolster the care our members can get as they navigate losses small and large. One thing we are considering is the movie, *Voices of Grief*. This is a powerful resource for those who are grieving, but also for those who want to understand grief more clearly or who are currently supporting someone who is grieving. Some of you have shared that more public remembrances of loved ones might be helpful and that they don't have to be somber, but rather offer chances to celebrate the positive aspects of our loved ones' lives. We would love to hear from you! We want to customize our offerings to meet the needs of this community. Please reach out and share your thoughts and ideas. And don't be surprised if you receive a call from us inviting you to share your insights.

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### 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](tel:7195721052) or at [blazehayes@aol.com](mailto: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.***

## Thoughts on an Abundant Life

What do we do with March, it always seems like an “underwhelming” month. It is half winter and hopefully half spring, it has a variety of church holidays depending on the moon and soon we have to change our clocks. [Don’t get me started on that]. So let’s do something to make it special. I recently saw a media plea that starts out with “the season of need out lasts the season of giving”. We are 3 months away from Christmas and the feeling that we as a culture gave to address the needs of others might be wearing off. Let’s use March as another ‘season of giving’ and look for that organization or group that is still doing for others. Look in our neighborhoods and personal communities for that thing that touches our heart and use March as a good reason to give or get involved.

The days will soon seem longer and if we are lucky Colorado weather will give us a little spring. Easter is literally around the corner in early April, let’s use this month of Lenten reflection to look outside of ourselves and find giving a better way to express ‘our fast’. I read Isaiah 58:1-14 in preparation for a devotional and it made so much sense that “fasting is an activity that is embraced actively and embraces the needs of others” [ Rev. Dr. Howard Wallace]. That can truly make March an “overwhelming” month.

God Bless

Happy Spring [And if spring is late stay warm]

Sara Petz

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## Notes from the Music Room

This Lent, we are using setting 5 during Communion for the first time. This setting is a plainsong or chant setting. If you were to look in the indices of your ELW hymnal, you would find 16 different hymns using plainsong tunes, including "Creator of the Stars of Night" (ELW 245) and "Of the Father's Love Begotten" (ELW 295).

Chant developed in the early Christian church, long before the split between the Roman and Byzantine churches. Before the 9th Century, each region would have had its own melodic, rhythmic, and performance style. Though he is probably not its creator, the standardized chant that we know now is named for Gregory the Great (ca.540 – 12 March 604 AD) the beloved pope who reformed the structure and content of Christian worship to something close to what we use today and used the church's resources to distribute food and other help to the people of Rome in a time of war and famine. Gregorian Chant combined several of the existing chant traditions into one, which was then spread as the new standard around the churches of Europe during the

time of the Holy Roman Emperor Charlemagne (742-814 AD). The notation that developed to write chant - four horizontal lines with square or diamond-shaped notes - led to our modern musical notation. For the modern singer, one of the biggest challenges in singing chant is the rhythm. There was no standard rhythmic notation at the time the chants were written down, and much research has been devoted to how the rhythms should be performed. Instead of having 3 or 4 beats to each measure, a regular meter, the beats can vary. Think of it as prose instead of metric poetry. We can all recite the Lord's Prayer together in spite of its irregular syllable patterns. To allow for this free flow with chant, we break the melody up into manageable bites: groups of two or three notes that flow together. An important word, like "Hosanna" or "Lamb" should be held longer for emphasis, so we put a few of these groups of notes together. Then we breath between phrases of words, just as we do when we speak a prayer or psalm together. And that's what chant was intended to do. Chant is a beautiful way for us to elevate the spoken prose of worship by singing it together in a free, flowing way. Plainsong is the ancient basis of all of our sung liturgy. So, feel your connection to the church through time as we chant together this Lenten season.

Soli Deo Gloria!

Megan Miller

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## PILLAR Course Offering

"Once again as part of our partnership with PILLAR, Institute for Lifelong Learning, Ascension is hosting a Christian themed course titled John Phillip Newell on Thursday March 22nd from 9:30 am till 11:30 am. For those of you who do not know this man you are in for a treat. John Newell is an ordained Church of Scotland minister known for his efforts worldwide as a poet, author, scholar and peacemaker "among the great wisdom traditions of humanity". He is a prolific writer with more than 20 titles to his name with Celtic Spirituality as his expertise following themes of prayer, contemplation, sacredness of the earth and " oneness of the human soul".

The presenter RoMa Johnson will focus on John's writings especially his most recent work. RoMa is a graduate of Iliff School of Theology in Denver and has studied Celtic Spirituality for over 30 years. John will be in the area leading a weekend retreat titled 'Finding Faith in Each Other' at Ghost Ranch New Mexico starting April 6th. Then as a special treat John will be coming to Colorado Springs on April 10th to lecture on "Religion Without Borders" at our local library.

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**US & THEM WE:** Greetings from your Board of Social Outreach. Last month, we announced the theme for our 2018 World Hunger Campaign, “**WELLS FOR LIFE.**” We hope you will join us throughout Lent as we strive to express caring concern for the many throughout the world who do not have access to clean water by helping us purchase wells.

- In the coming weeks, the children will have the opportunity to collect loose change that can be placed in their water bottle banks. These can be brought back on Palm Sunday and will go into the World Hunger Offering
- Look for FREE timers for your shower and water conservation tips on the table in the foyer area
- Enjoy reading stories about the impact of clean water that will be placed in bulletins throughout the Lenten season
- World Hunger Offering envelopes are available every Sunday. They will either be in your bulletin, or on the Usher’s table. Checks can be made out to Ascension with “World Hunger Offering” in the memo section...and if you want more than one envelope, we will happily oblige!

Last year, you generously gave enough so that we could purchase 2 wells (\$2,500 each) to provide safe, clean water. In addition, we were able to contribute funds to other water projects funded by the ELCA. Through your giving, you helped to change people’s lives for the better and allowed for the improvement of their day-to-day experience. Let’s see what we can do in 2018!

Blessings, Sharla Saunders – Director, Ascension Board of Social Outreach

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### **SUP Scheduled for March 15**

Join us for SUP on Thursday March 15, 12pm – 1:30pm. Topic: Lenten Prayerful Practices: Our special Guest will be Kent Matthews. Matthews is a Family Caregiver Case Manager at Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments and is well versed in matters of spirituality. Please bring a side dish or dessert to share, main dish provided.

If you can join us for this month’s SUP, please let Karen Rubinow know. [nodak@sidkar.com](mailto:nodak@sidkar.com)

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### **Lenten Devotionals Available**

**From Ashes to Fire**, *A Lenten to Pentecost Devotional & Collaboration between Co. Springs ELCA Congregations* Pick-up your March Lenten Devotional booklet today! Also available online for download. Thank you to all who have participated in this project to date and we hope it provides you a meaningful way to engage in the Lenten season.

### **Writing Workshop #2**

Mark your calendars. The next writing workshop is Saturday March 10, 9 am - 12 pm at Christ the King Lutheran Church. This workshop will be for all who are interested in writing a reflection for Part II of the collaboration, from Easter to Pentecost.

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### **BECOME INVOLVED...**

#### **\*\*Coffee Fellowship 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](mailto: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, 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.

**\*\*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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## A Brief History of Stewardship

“Stewardship” is a word created by leaders in the Protestant churches of North America in the late 19th century. At that time it was a way of talking about money for the church and especially missions in the West and missionaries abroad. The concept developed in response to the separation of church and state, which meant churches were no longer funded by the state. By necessity, the American church had to find a way to raise money for congregations and missions. Over the last one hundred years, there have been three periods or stages when stewardship has taken a high profile. By the late 20th century, stewardship was commonly used both inside and outside the church.

1. The Beginnings of American Stewardship 1890 - 1918 • This first period linked stewardship with law and connected it with the tithe. • Churches were not supported by taxes and needed to find their own way of gathering funds. • Early methods of fundraising included renting or selling pew space, subscription lists, church suppers, church socials, raffles and lotteries. • Special collections were taken in support of missions in the rapidly expanding West and for other parts of the world. • At the turn of the century, envelope giving offered privacy. • Churches began to adopt unified budgets. • A rising middle class began dealing with the “burden of affluence”. • The enthusiasm for mission collapsed with the loss of idealism in the United States. By the 1920’s many congregations took to erecting new church buildings rather than giving money to benevolences or missions.

2. The Flowering of Stewardship 1945 – 1965 • The second period connected stewardship with the Gospel and began to see money as only a part of a broader understanding of stewardship. • During the post-World War II period, there was a religious boom. The United States entered an era of unprecedented and increasing affluence. • American life was changed by suburbia, the interstate highway system, better automobiles and television. • The situation was ripe for the church to respond to the needs of the people. • In contrast to the atheism of communist nations, Americans were “God-believing church goers”. • Church membership as a percentage of the total population grew from 49% in 1940 to 63% by 1960. • A renewed interest in stewardship brought forth the three “T’s” – Time, Talent and

Treasure. This elicited a positive response in campaigns. • Denominational loyalty was strong. In 1957, 96% of Americans cited a specific religious affiliation.

3. The Globalization of Stewardship 1980 – 2018 • The current period joins stewardship with the care of this world and often does not mention money. • A broader definition of stewardship includes a lifestyle of working for the environment, justice, peace and the integrity of creation. • The word “stewardship” became more popular in secular circles than it was within the church. • Christianity does not play as important a role in the establishment; secularization is taking over society. • Focusing stewardship on the finances of the church is not legitimate because the emphasis should be on the needs of the whole world. • In the words of Douglas John Hall (1990), “Now the church can assume its proper place as a servant to the world, rather than trying to maintain its own power and position within society. It has an opportunity to act as a steward (servant) and can now take stewardship seriously.”

Reflections on the History of Stewardship • We learn that we are not masters living in a world that we own and control, but we rather are stewards of what has been entrusted to us. • Christian stewardship is rooted in God’s gift of Jesus Christ to us, and we are entrusted with sharing this gift. • Through God’s grace, we freely receive God’s gifts and have permission to use these gifts. • Stewardship has to do with every aspect of living out personal faith, including creation, lifestyle, gifts, finances and callings/vocation. • Churches are increasingly dependent on lay members to assume their rightful place of servant leadership, using their gifts to participate in God’s work in the world today.

Online Source: Rocky Mountain Synod of the ELCA Website

Original Source: “A History of Stewardship” by Dr. William O. Avery of Gettysburg Seminary, published by the Lutheran Laity Ministries for Stewardship

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## BECOME INVOLVED...

**\*\*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](mailto: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.*

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### ***Bridge Group***

Our Bridge Group will meet on a TBD date in March 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](tel:(719)572-1052) or at [kittypawz@aol.com](mailto:kittypawz@aol.com) if you have any questions about this group.

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## Sunday School News

The Lent Season is upon us. The children had fun making new Alleluia banners this past month. In March will continue to study stories from the New Testament. There is no Sunday School on March 25th for Spring Break and April 1st for Easter.

Blessings to all of you,  
Tina Krieg, Sunday School Superintendent

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### **ALC Youth: Did you know?**

The **HS Youth** meet every other week from 5:30 pm - 7 pm at the church, unless otherwise noted, for Bible Study, food and activities. Friends are welcome! March gatherings include: March 11 and March 25. A special thank you to Chaplain Julie Britsch for helping lead the Bible study.

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### **Easter Vigil, March 31, 6 pm:**

The HS youth will lead the congregation in an Easter Vigil service. This is the third of a three-day celebration in the church called the Triduum. The Three Days include Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and the Easter Vigil. The group invites you to come and experience a service of Light as we lift our candles high in expectation for our Savior's resurrection.

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### **Confirmation**

The **MS Youth** combine with two other ELCA churches in the Springs for Confirmation, including Grace and Christ the King Lutheran Church. A special thank you to the youth and families, our fabulous guides (Jim D., Elisa T., Tina K., and Steve F.), and Pastor Paula Stecker, Pastor Michael Tassler and Pastor Dan and Pastor Daniel for everyone's commitment to being church, better together!

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**AIA March 2018 Issue #3**  
**Ascension Lutheran Church, ELCA**  
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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  
Music Director – Megan Miller  
Diaconal Minister of Faith Formation – Mary Stoneback  
Office Administrator – Arlayne McKee  
Consultant for Health Care – Dr. Dennis Caldwell  
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 Kissling)  
t.adams@ascensioncos.org (Teresa Adams)  
clc@ascensioncos.org (CLC)  
ts.trinko@gmail.com (newsletter articles)  
**Our Website:** [www.ascensioncos.org](http://www.ascensioncos.org)  
**April newsletter deadline: March 18**

*In Our Thoughts  
& Prayers*

Beth Ayen (Daughter-in-law of Darcy & Bill Ayen), Dorothy Brown, Sharon Budd (Sister of Darcy Ayen), Brad Buhler, Grace Buhler, Jerri Butschky, Kate Campbell, Michelle Courtright (Daughter of Jeff & Renee Courtright), Libby Dollar, Jacquelyn Ellison (Granddaughter of Marilyn & Troy Goodenough), Tom & Sandy George, Steve Hahn (Grandson of Joan Magee), Richard Ingalls, Jeff Sebben, Kenneth Shodeen, Jerry Smith, Virginia Stanley, and all of our men and women serving overseas.