



Ascension In Action

Ascension Lutheran Church

April 2021

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Hope Boldly

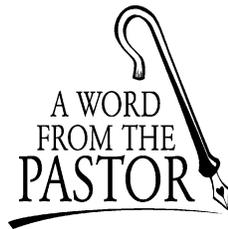
I recently received my first vaccine shot. It was actually kind of an emotional experience. Definitely the most emotional experience I've had in a Safeway. There were a bunch of mixed emotions.

I was excited to be part of this historical vaccine – the fastest ever developed. I was full of grief over the many who have died, who have lost their livelihoods. I was missing those who I haven't gotten to see in a year, including many of you. And I was eager for this pandemic to end – to lose the low level anxiety I've carried around this last year, to hug and shake hands again, to take communion together, to eat together.

I felt like I was finally allowing myself to hope. Which is dangerous, I know. In the great TV show "Ted Lasso," they share a phrase over and over – "It's the hope that kills you." And we've all experienced that. Dashed hopes that just crush you. You see it at every lost Super Bowl. After every job rejection. After pregnancy tests and elections and canceled dates. It's the hope that kills you. Two disciples of Jesus even share that mindset as they walk the road together after the crucifixion, in what I consider the saddest verse in the Bible: "But we had hoped that he was the one to restore Israel." (Luke 24:21)

And so we try to not hope. We limit our expectations. We cast doubt. We keep our eyes peeled for bad news. But, I just don't think it works. No matter how hard we try to avoid hope so that we aren't crushed at failure, we still get crushed. We still get mad or hang our head low, vowing that next time we won't be so naïve as to hope. But we always do. Because hope is a funny thing. It burns deep within us, and we can't quite extinguish it. We hope. It's part of who we are.

So I say, let's hope boldly. Let's stop trying to bury this burning fire within. Let's hope openly. Let's proclaim it. Let's seize onto the hope. Will we get disappointed? Of



course! But that was bound to happen anyway. So we might as well.

And if we do give into hope, we might also discover joy. We might also see the ways our hopes are not lost. We might discover resurrection life in relationships and jobs and even in a Safeway pharmacy. We might have our eyes opened to the way God is near, at work fulfilling our hope and calling us to be part of it.

When those two disciples shared that saddest verse, they'd lost hope and so their eyes were blind. Blind to the fact that Jesus was right there with them! Let's not let the same thing happen to us. Let's hope with abandon. Recognizing that disappointments will come, but that our ultimate hope will not fail us. Thanks be to God!

Pastor Daniel

Family Promise (IHN) "Hosting" is back!

Starting **April 12-23** we need help providing meals for homeless families in Colorado Springs. Things are a little different, we are not hosting the families at church but we hope that changes in November.

Once you have prepared the food (main dish, sides, dessert) you will be asked to bring it to church between 4:00-4:30 PM on the day you signed up for. Before the food goes to Family Promise it needs to be put in separate containers for each family. You are welcome to stay and help divide up the food or drop the food off.

There will be an online sign up available soon, keep an eye out for more information in the weekly What's Up. I will also update give an update with how many people and/or dietary restrictions.

If you have don't want to sign up online or have any other questions please call Ruth at church 719-634-1694.

Thank you for your continued support of this great organization.



What's Happening

- Deacon Mary opened the meeting with a video reflection.
- Russ Johnson, our treasurer, reported a positive financial picture with offerings above budgeted amounts and expenses below budgeted amounts.
- The council agreed with the recommended allocation of reserve funds as presented by Joe DesJardin. The recommendation will be presented to the congregation for approval on March 28th at a Congregation Meeting specially announced for that purpose.
- Ideas on how to best use Gift Funds to further our mission were discussed.
- Pastor Dan closed the meeting with prayer.

Funeral Committee Leaders Needed

After working on the Funeral Committee for three years, Marjorie Essigmann and Val Rudy have decided to step down. The Board of Lay Ministry is now looking for two volunteers to take over providing a pleasant meal and space for the reception following each funeral service at Ascension.

Serving on this post involves the following:

- Working with the pastors to determine date and time, as well as the number of guests expected, then contacting the family to determine their preferences.
- Calling volunteers to help with:
 - Setting up and taking down tables and chairs
 - Donating food, drinks and table flowers
 - Setting food out for the buffet
 - Cleaning up the kitchen after
 - Laundering table linens
- You are responsible for buying the main dish and table service, being reimbursed by the Board of Lay Ministry.

Many Ascension members have volunteered in these tasks so you will have a lot of assistance and experience in learning the ropes. Val and Marjorie will be happy to help in transitioning you in. Currently, due to the Pandemic, responsibilities are limited until such time that guidance from government entities allow Ascension and the families to return to more normal functioning.

If you are interested in helping out, please contact Scott Allen at patrickstar1352003@yahoo.com or call 719-469-2910.

- The Leadership Waypoint Team, led by Jon Thompson, continues to study our current lay leadership structure to see how we can be more effective and efficient in our processes. Please provide your thoughts if approached by a member of this team. Besides Jon, team members include: Greg Gulliksen, Rich Johnson, Kim Knoche, Sue Trinko, and Pastor Daniel.
- Limited in-person worship (with necessary precautions) has resumed. To ensure we do not exceed recommended numbers of attendees, please RSVP on the church website or by calling the church office.
- Our Children's Learning Center has reached a 20-year milestone for its operation! A celebration is planned at the church on April 9th from 5:00-6:00 p.m. There will be food trucks and fun, family-friendly activities.
- After 4 years of service, Marjorie Essigmann and Val Rudy have stepped down from the Funeral Committee. Please thank them for their service. The Board of Lay Ministry is looking for new volunteers.
- Property and Grounds will hold a Spring work day at the church on April 3rd from 8:00 a.m. to completion. Pizza will be provided for lunch!
- Ascension will host Family Promise (IHN) April 11th through the 25th. The Board of Social Outreach is leading this effort, which is more challenging because of the pandemic.
- The annual Youth Garage Sale will be held in late June. Collections start in April so check your closets to see what treasures you might contribute.

CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY TO...

- **Pete Krieg at the death of his father.
 - **the Family of Bruce Hetzel at his death.
 - **Seth Baum at the death of his father.
 - **Jan Thompkins at the death of her uncle, Rex Sturm.
-

GARAGE SALE

Are you doing some spring cleaning? Are you giving up items for Lent? Do you just have treasures to part with? It's that time again! The annual Youth Garage Sale will be held June 18th and 19th in the lower level. We will start collecting items AFTER Easter in the back classroom (look for signs). Best times for drop off are when the office is open - 9am to noon, Monday through Friday. Please **NO** furniture, large items, mattresses, chemicals, or other items that cannot be donated afterwards. If you need help in getting items to the church or have questions regarding what can be donated, please contact Kirsten Johnson at (719)440-5896. All proceeds benefit the youth traveling to Minneapolis in 2022.



Create a Legacy!

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!

Thanks and God's blessing to Charles and Betty Hatcher for his birthday contribution!

Handmade, Heartfelt Card Ministry

Thank you for your continued support of the Handmade, Heartfelt Card Ministry. Even with the limitations on church access in 2020, we were able to send \$900 to The Place, the recipient of last year's profits. As a reminder, The Place (formerly Urban Peak) has been serving homeless teens and young adults in Colorado Springs for 20 years. They have helped an estimated 7650 people in that time, with 8 out of 10 who entered their housing program maintaining a stable home. They also offer outreach (relationship building) for 15- 24 year-olds, a 20-bed facility for temporary shelter, and counseling for education, jobs, and life skills. If you are interested in helping them in other ways, check their website theplacecos.org. The card ministry will continue to support The Place in 2021. We regularly add new cards...check out the Easter and graduation options!

US WE THEM

As I look at these words - Us We Them, I realize Ascension really is helping all of us, we, and them as donations for food help reach more and more people in need. Social Outreach has been busy with so much support from you all in helping others with food. Our goal at Ascension for this year, and thus, Social Outreach, has been to go above and beyond to help others that are hungry and boy, are we doing that! There have been extra donations for hunger which our board decided to donate to Care & Share, Mercy's Gate (beyond our usual budget), Family Promise (beyond our usual budget), Springs Rescue Mission, and One Nation Walking Together. Let me tell you a little about this last organization, as I think it's not as well known as the others mentioned. ONWT is an organization that helps alleviate hunger on Native American reservations. They are currently running a food drive at the same time as we have the World Hunger Appeal (thank you for buying chickens and roosters!).

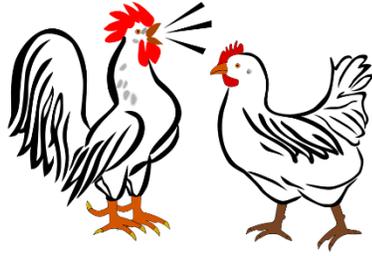
The ever-present issue of hunger is real in this community. Nearly all of the communities served by ONWT are considered food deserts and have limited access to quality and affordable food. One Nation is committed to fighting hunger by delivering monthly food supplies to Native Americans living in crisis situations. Ruth has had a few conversations with them and called to ask about donating some of the money designated for hunger. They asked her how much it would be for so she could pass that along and when Ruth told her it was \$3,000, she then cried for the rest of the conversation and was so touched. She said that it is exactly what they need to be able to deliver food to reservations. The biggest cost is the truck and she said it cost exactly \$3,000 for a truck each time. You are making a real difference to so many!

Your help in reaching the goal of the World Hunger appeal (going through Easter) is so appreciated. We are buying chickens and roosters for people around the world. Continued help with grocery store gift cards for IHN/Family Promise families and food for the small pantry are also so helpful and appreciated. Ascension's 2 weeks of "hosting" Family Promise is coming up in April. We have 10 days to provide suppers for families. Watch for updates on how you can sign up and how many families are included this time. They will not be staying at the church for the rest of 2021 because of COVID but we are still providing suppers 4/12-16 and 4/19-23. Food can be dropped off at the church. Call the church office or watch for notices on how to be included.

Blessings!
Board of Social Outreach

Buy Chicks, Defeat Hunger!

We did it! We've surpassed our goal this Lent of raising \$5,600 (enough for 224 roosters and 2,240 chicks). Through March 24th, we've raised \$7,805! Our annual world hunger campaign is still going through Easter, so check the What's Up for the final numbers. Thank you so much for your generosity! You are truly making a difference in the lives of hungry people around the world. This year, the need is greater than ever. Chickens are easy to care for and provide reliable eggs for a family.



Bridge Group

Our Bridge Group will most likely not be meeting again until a COVID-19 vaccine is distributed to the US population. 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. If you'd like to learn how to play bridge, Charles Lewis would be happy to give you bridge lessons.



BECOME INVOLVED...

****Flower Chart** – The 2021 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 the church office 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. We are specifically looking for nonperishable foods; however, items that are rarely picked up from our Food Pantry located outside the church building are packages of pasta and canned vegetables. Any donations of those items will go directly

to Mercy's Gate. No sugared cereals or sugared drinks, please! While the children will happily eat them, they lack much nutritive value. Finally, **please do not donate expired food of any kind.** Thank you so much for your generous donations!

****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.

****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.** *We will not be supporting Bingo at the Terrace Gardens Health Care Center until a COVID-19 vaccine is distributed to the US population.* 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!

If you'd like to join a group, please reach out to the group's contact person to get the most up to date information on when/how/if the group is meeting.

DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS

Centering Prayer Group

Discussions on theology and practice of centering prayer and centering silence together.

Meets: 1st & 3rd Monday at church 7:00 pm.

COVID change – meeting via Zoom. Possible outdoor meetings.

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! **COVID change** – this is on hold until further notice.

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 July and part of August.

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 7 pm at the church.

COVID change – meeting via Zoom until things ease back up

Contact: Rich Johnson, 264-8196 or

irajohnson@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. **COVID change** – this is on hold until further notice.

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! **COVID change** – this is on hold until further notice.

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. **COVID change** – this is on hold until further notice.

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

irajohnson@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 **COVID change** – this is on hold until further notice.

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 **COVID change** – group currently on hold

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

Men's Breakfast

Get together with other men for fellowship over breakfast.

Meets: Thursdays at 9:00 am at the church. **COVID change** – group on hold until able to meet at church again

Contact: Rich Johnson, 264-8196 or irajohnson@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.

COVID change – meeting online

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. **COVID change** – mall walking

will not be an option when the weather is inclement.

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. If you would like to help from the comfort of your own home, *kits are available to take home*. **COVID change** – the group is not currently meeting in the church, but they are still able to work on quilts and masks from home.

Meets: Wednesdays 9 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Contact: Anita Arends, 573-4747 or Barb Daugherty, bdkm@pcisys.net

Terrace Gardens Bingo

Have fun helping nursing home residents play Bingo and win prizes. **COVID change** – this is on hold until further notice.

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. **COVID change** - If group is larger than 10, we break into two groups. Those participating in the food fellowship following the ride should bring masks for the restaurant. We are trying to go places where we can order take-out and eat at a nearby park.

Meets: Weekly, April – October, weather permitting. Most rides are on Saturdays. Time & location by email and on the Ascension Holy Pedalers' Facebook page.

Contact: Aimee Calderon, 720-318-7479 or aimeebuesing@yahoo.com



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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 – Ruth Albrent-Runnells

Child Learning Center Director – Teresa Adams

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Our Website: www.ascensioncos.org

May newsletter deadline: April 21

*In Our Thoughts
& Prayers*

Beth Ayen (Daughter-in-law of Darcy & Bill Ayen), Allen Brooks, Brad Buhler, Sonny Campbell, Andrea Gallant (sister of Gabrielle Brown), Elaine Glover, Bev Godec, Steve Hast (friend of Oltrogges), Pam Landry, Rick Leiting (relative of Judi Johnson), Daniela Mannerberg (daughter-in-law of Kathy), Rich Paradis, Carlos Quiles (friend of Ron Mohler), Rick Rogers, Jeff Sebben, Cassie Shaffer, Cathy Stanley (sister-in-law of Marilyn Gulliksen), Matthew Stanard, Ilene Steinkruger, Steve Tompkins, Wanda Wade, Lucille Walker, Christel Walter, Dee Yocum, and all of our men and women serving overseas, especially Anthony Calderon.