



Ascension In Action

Ascension Lutheran Church

June 2021

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“Love is patient.” – 1 Corinthians 13:4

This past year has been one to try our patience. In the midst of so much sorrow, fear, and grief surrounding this pandemic, we’ve also had to wait. Wait to see one another, wait to eat together, wait to worship together. Some of you received your vaccine way back in January, but still you’ve waited. I want to thank you for your patience. You’ve been patient for your own sake and for the sake of your older or younger sisters and brothers in Christ. It has been a long wait. Thank you.

And now, even as so many in our world are still gripped by the pandemic, it seems here the waiting may be coming to an end. A perhaps no bigger sign of this is seeing one another without a mask in worship. For those who are fully vaccinated (two weeks past their last shot), you are now allowed to come to worship without a mask. That’s worth celebrating! I can’t wait (ha ha) to greet you through glasses that aren’t foggy and share a word that isn’t muffled.

But I’ve decided to wait a little longer. I am fully vaccinated, but for a little longer I’ve decided to wear a mask while not leading worship. I’m waiting a bit longer for the sake of those who haven’t – or can’t – yet receive a vaccine. If you aren’t fully vaccinated, you still need to wear a mask in worship. If that’s you, I want you to know that you are still fully a member of this congregation. If that’s you, I want you to know that even though we’re asking you to wear a mask and it might feel weird with others around not wearing a mask, the grace, joy, and community of Ascension are still for you. So I’ll keep wearing a mask for a little while so you don’t feel out of place.

I hope the vaccine trials go well so that our youngest members can soon be vaccinated. For your sake and for ours, I hope you get vaccinated. I hope the waiting really comes to a full end soon. In the meantime, I’ll do my best to love as God loves: with a little patience.

God bless, Pastor Daniel



Updates from the Building and Grounds Board

- **IMPORTANT:** The exterior church doors have been re-keyed as of May 20. The purpose is to provide additional safety. The locks have not been re-keyed in over 20 years and there are many keys floating around. This has led to some theft within the church. This applies to the EXTERIOR doors only. All interior doors, will remain on the same keys! If you need access to the church, please contact the office and Ruth can provide you with keypad access. Exterior keys will be issued through the office on a very limited basis.
- We have scheduled the parking lot to be repaired and sealed. This will occur in about two months (end of July). We will promote a specific day when this is known.
- Landscaping plantings will be placed in our newly landscaped corner in about a month.

Strategic Planning Update

We have three Waypoint Teams in various stages of activities in support of the Ascension Strategic Plan. The Belonging Pathway team led by Andy Saunders is about 85% complete with work still underway to improve signage in our parking lots, the exterior entrance of our building, and interior signs. This work is intended to make it easier for first time attendees to navigate their way into our church. The Leadership Assessment team led by Jon Thompson is also about 85% complete and they are developing recommendations from their work to present to the Congregation Planning Council. The third team is our Inviting Community Waypoint Team led by Annie Saunders. They had their first meeting in Mid-May and hope to be done with their work by the end of 2021. Our fourth team - Purposeful Living - will be our final team and it will get started in 2022. Please contact the Waypoint Leaders, John Hayes, or our pastors if you have any questions about this work.



What's Happening

- Pastor Daniel Smith opened the meeting with a devotional story from Acts Chapter 6. He encouraged us to identify the different hats we wear and to consider if those roles bring us joy. Discussion further led us to ponder the question, “What is God calling us to do?”
- Jon Thompson’s Leadership WayPoint Team is nearing completion of its charter. While the surveys of past and current leadership did not identify large issues with the church structure, he anticipates providing recommendations to the CPC in June.
- Financially, the church is doing well. Russ Johnson, Treasurer, reported giving at 111% of the budgeted amount for the year. Expenses are below budgeted amounts.
- Chris Koehler provided a recap of her attendance of the Rocky Mountain Synod Assembly. Paul Just and Annie Saunders also attended as voting congregational representatives. Chris found the keynote speaker and closing worship to be particularly inspiring.
- Annie Saunders has agreed to lead the newly renamed Inviting Community WayPoint Team (formerly known as Equipping Evangelism). John Hayes explained the team will look for ways we can grow as a church, such as helping us be more comfortable inviting others to Ascension and how we might appeal to young adults. Annie’s team includes Pastor Dan Holt, Deacon Mary Stoneback, Shelly Sabga, Eric Johnson, and Sam Courtright.
- Deacon Mary Stoneback closed the meeting in prayer.

- Those who are fully vaccinated + 2 weeks may now attend worship in-person without a mask.
- Deacon Mary Stoneback will be on sabbatical May 23rd through August 15th. Please keep her in your prayers.
- Exterior doors at the church have been re-keyed and we are moving to keypad access for most users of the church. Contact Ruth in the church office to receive your code, if needed.
- Gabrielle Brown continues to study at Wartburg Theological Seminary. The Board of Social Outreach voted to provide additional financial support with some of their outreach funds. Please keep Gabrielle in your prayers.
- It’s not summer yet but Joe DesJardin and the Board of Stewardship have started to consider goals for the 2022 stewardship drive.

CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY TO...

**Family, husband Bill & Granddaughters Meghan & Devon, and friends of Lucille Walker at her death.



*Ascension Lutheran Church
Endowment Fund*

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!

Ascension at the Vibes Baseball Game



Ascension is having an outing at the Colorado Springs Vibes baseball game on Sunday, August 1st. The Vibes are in an independent league and their team is comprised of young players who were not drafted by a major league team and they are trying to get noticed by major league scouts and offered a contract to play on minor league teams with a shot at the majors. 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 \$28 per person for everybody over age 12 and \$19 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.

Ordination and Ministry Anniversary Bonanza!

In 2021, Ascension celebrates:

AIM Wini Klein at 20 years,
Pastor Julie Britsch at 25 years,
Pastor Laurel Thorstensen at 30 years,
Pastor Dan Holt at 35,
Pastor Keith Hedstrom at 50 years,
Pastor Phil Erlander at 55 years.

Congratulations to all and thank you for your ministry!

Children's Learning Center Turns 20!

On May 21, over 100 participants were welcomed to Ascension for Ascension's Children's Learning Center's 20th Year Celebration. The event was made possible through the generous financial support of Ascension's Endowment and a Thrivent Community Action Team grant. And we give thanks for all who have and will nurture the hearts, souls, and minds of the children and families of Colorado Springs. Catch a glimpse of the event on Ascension's social media sites and website.

Deacon Mary Begins Sabbatical

Dear Youth and Families,

I have begun a time of Sabbatical through August 15. I am grateful to Ascension Lutheran Church for this opportunity for rest and renewal. This will also be a chance for me to unplug from email and weekly communications. I look forward to hearing all about your summer adventures on my return! As I prepare for the time away, I wanted to make sure each of you are in the loop for what is coming up for the youth and families of Ascension this summer. In my absence, Youth Board Director, Kirsten Johnson will send out communications through Remind messages and occasionally through email. You can reach her at kirstenej94@gmail.com or by phone at 719-440-5896. For more information about summer opportunities for youth, visit the following link: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1UsvSih2vJiYOpR7I-EIQqC_Ww_i6ooKlaYG8uQi3-I/edit?usp=sharing

Blessings to you all this summer and peace be with you!

God Bless,
Deacon Mary

THANK YOU...

Christel Walter would like to thank the congregation for the many "Get Well" wishes and Easter greetings.

Social Outreach News

Here's some news about upcoming ways to be involved through Social Outreach

- Faster Pastors - Pastor Daniel and maybe Deacon Mary will run with Faster Pastors the **weekend of September 10**. We will do some fundraising for that leading up to the weekend of the run. Stay tuned for the organization that will be the beneficiary.
- Usually, we are looking forward to an afternoon in the fall helping with a variety of tasks inside and organizations outside the church in God's Work Our Hands. Instead of God's Work Our Hands this fall, we'll combine with other area churches that will do work on **Saturday, October 2**, with the Cuz I Love You organization in Colorado Springs. Mark your calendars to volunteer! We will still wear our GWOH t-shirts and it will be organized similarly but will have more groups working at more organizations in the area, and it will be on a Saturday instead of a Sunday afternoon. Sign up sheets coming later this summer.
- John Hayes looked into volunteer opportunities with Care & Share that could involve families or small groups (around 10 people?) that can go to Care & Share for 2-3 hour blocks of time to help them organize food, package food, and other tasks. Thanks, John! We need someone to head this up and agree it is a great idea but aren't sure how often to try to organize the groups for volunteer help. Quarterly? more often? less often? We want to know. If you have ideas or a passion to help with this kind of volunteer work to help organize it, please let Karen Askinas know either by phone or email. kaskinas@gmail.com or 719-229-8799.
- Ascension has a long history of strong support for members in becoming pastors. We are happy to say that the Board of Social Outreach is continuing this support with a donation to Gabrielle Brown for her journey in becoming a new pastor. God Bless you in your learning!
- **Thank you for helping with Ascension's 2 weeks of hosting Family Promise/IHN in April**. We didn't get to have them in our new basement this time but help with dinners was greatly appreciated.
- Mark your calendar for the upcoming Lutheran Family Services 'Over the Edge' event! It's **June 25th and 26th** in downtown Colorado Springs and Denver. Stay tuned for more details about this - Who's going over the Edge?? Would you like to volunteer? Call or email Karen Askinas (same as above).

Update on Ascension's Organ

A couple of years ago an organ review team at Ascension did an assessment of our organ and researched possible organ replacements. The team found that if Ascension wanted to improve our organ's performance in worship, a new organ would give us the best sound and may be a wise investment. We also discovered a wide array of new organs, with a wide array of costs. Through a messy process, we discovered the congregation wasn't ready to make such a large decision or investment. So, we've paused the process.

It's important to know that our organ is still functioning fine and not costing us too much in upkeep and repairs. A while back, the electronic bass generator for the organ failed and so has been disconnected for a couple years, removing the lowest notes played by the feet. It would be better to have it, but we've still had beautiful music and congregational singing without it. Our console (the keyboards, buttons, and pedals that the organist plays) is showing age and needing more frequent repairs, but again we've managed to keep those repairs manageable and should be able to for a while. To be sure, our organ is not a top level instrument, but there is also no reason to believe that it can't continue functioning as it currently does for some years to come.

Leadership is hoping to take advantage of that time by focusing on other aspects of Ascension's mission and ministries. We're in an exciting time as we explore becoming a more inviting church, a church dedicated to creating faithful community and serving in our neighborhood and world. In the meantime, we are also hiring a new organist and getting that person on board - someone who's insight will be important when we resume this process. Our hope is that in the coming years it will become more apparent what sort of organ would serve us and our mission best.

Youth Garage Sale June 18-19

The annual Youth Garage Sale will be held June 18th and 19th in the lower level. We are collecting items 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.

Bridge Group Meeting Scheduled

Our Bridge Group will meet on June 12th starting at 5:30PM. Feel free to contact John or Kathy Hayes at [\(719\) 572-1052](tel:7195721052) 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...

****Knotty Kneedlers:** The knitting group has closed down for now. We will be watching for any interest in the future. If you know of anyone in need of a prayer shawl, please let one of the Pastors know!

****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.

****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.

****Terrace Gardens Bingo** – Prizes and Volunteers are needed. ***John Hayes contacted Terrace Gardens to see when they think they'll be able to let us do Bingo at their facility. They think we'll be able to do it by the end of this summer.*** 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. 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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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

CHURCH STAFF

Normal Office Hours: 9-12 Mon-Fri (719) 634-1694

Pastor Dan Holt – off on Friday

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July newsletter deadline: June 17

*In Our Thoughts
& Prayers*

Beth Ayen (Daughter-in-law of Darcy & Bill Ayen), Brad Buhler, Sonny Campbell, Jerry Dollar, Andrea Gallant (sister of Gabrielle Brown), Elaine Glover, Bev Godec, Steve Hast (friend of Oltrogges), Jean Hinck, Karen Blancett Johnson, Pam Landry, Michael Noble Jr., Carlos Quiles (friend of Ron Mohler), Rick Rogers, Jeff Sebben, Cassie Shaffer, Cathy Stanley (sister-in-law of Marilyn Gulliksen), Matthew Stannard, Ilene Steinkruger, Wanda Wade, Dee Yocum, and all of our men and women serving overseas, especially Anthony Calderon.