



Ascension In Action

Ascension Lutheran Church

September 2023

Labor that Satisfies

"Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you that have no money, come, buy and eat! Come buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy?" – Isaiah 55:1-2

The people had sat in exile for long enough. For decades they lived on the edge. Their labor felt like pushing a rock up a hill, never able to reach the summit of thriving. Or worse, their labor benefited the oppressive Babylonians who had captured them. Their toil certainly did not satisfy.

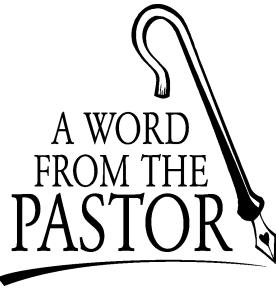
I ponder this verse as we approach Labor Day. I think about those who labor in our city, nation, and around the world. I think about whether their labor satisfies. Whether it provides for them and their families. Whether it leads to prosperity in their communities. Whether it is meaningful and compensated fairly.

I think about your labor. Your labor in your jobs, in your homes. I think about those of you who labor to study; those of you who labor to make ends meet; those of you who labor to care for child, spouse, or parent; and those of you who labor simply to breathe. I think of those of you who labor too hard, and those of you who long for more labor.

Does your labor satisfy? Satisfy you? Satisfy the world? Satisfy God?

Does the labor on which we depend satisfy? The laborers who make food appear in our pantry and gadgets in our hands. The laborers who care for our children, parents, and spouses when we cannot. Those laborers who clean our floors and protect our nation or streets.

God speaks through the prophet to invite the people into a new world. Away from the world of exile, with its



meaninglessness and exploitation. Into a world in which labor satisfies. A world in which we are well fed - all of us. A world in which no one thirsts.

We do not live in the world of exile. But we aren't rid of it either. For too many in our world, their labor never satisfies, and yet we benefit from their labor. And for most of us, our labor can be pretty unsatisfying from time to time, too.

As this labor day comes near, let us join God in holding up this vision for a new world. A vision God is busy creating, and busy calling us to join in creating. A vision that hasn't come to pass ... yet.

God bless,
Pastor Daniel

"I saw a new heaven and a new earth ... And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his people, and God himself will be with them.'" – Revelation 21:1,3

Small Groups: Home Edition

There's still time to sign-up to attend a small group in homes during September and October. We at Ascension are the hands and feet of Christ sharing God's love with those in and beyond our congregation. What better way to get to know other "hands and feet" than by having a chance for conversation, a short scripture reflection and some fun with a small group of people outside the walls of the church. Groups will be meeting two to three times in homes with the hope of making new connections and strengthening old ones. Please contact Marcia Oltrogge at marcia@oltrogges.com. You can also sign up at the Community Hour on September 10 or at this link: <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/14fji7e1a04mUVHy0WoURpQfclnL-VsY5ilpYqt9Xq8U/edit?usp=sharing>.

CHURCH COUNCIL/ EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

At our August Executive Committee and Council meetings, we reviewed our July financials and we continue to be in good fiscal shape as a church. We noted that we've received 3 of our 4 Employee Retention Credit (ERC) checks from the Federal Government COVID-relief program. The Stewardship Program for our 2024 budget year is starting and our Ministerial Teams are working on their 2024 budget inputs. The Council finished its meeting by discussing how our church can encourage friendships beyond current circles so we can help new members integrate quickly into our congregation.

WHAT'S HAPPENING

We continue to enjoy the single church service during the summer. We continue to enjoy the single church service during the summer because we get to reacquaint ourselves with those who attend the other church service during the rest of the year. Our attendance numbers remain strong with our numbers up about 20% from last summer. Our giving reaffirms how generous our congregation is. Thank you to the Lay Ministry Team as we enjoy the fellowship time with coffee and donuts after the 9:15 service each Sunday. Our Intergenerational Event on August 20th was a fun event with a large number of attendees. I'm looking forward to our Church Picnic after service on August 27th. On August 6th, we welcomed about seven new members to our congregation. **As we wrap up our summer and all its activities, please be safe.**

Team Updates:

Lay Ministry (Marcia Oltrogge):

- Sub-sandwich Sunday congregational picnic on Sunday, August 27. Bring a side dish or salad to share.

- Small Groups- Home Edition sign-ups happening now for small groups to meet in homes in September and October with a kick-off at the Community Hour September 10.
- Small Groups Fair planning underway.
- Art Gallery Open House September 9 at 4 pm in the Fellowship Hall.

Social Outreach (Sue Trinko): The Social Outreach Team is working on recommendations for distributing the funds coming from the ERC loan. A list of recommendations will be given to the council this fall.

Stewardship (Paul Just): Preparing for the Stewardship Campaign.

Worship (Ingrid Daniel): We have overspent our budget for music in preparation for doing more cantata events this next year.

Become a Knight of the (Scripture) Roundtable

Every Tuesday morning at 10:30, a bunch of folks gather together to talk about the scripture passage for the coming worship service. Sometimes we spend 30 minutes on the first verse and never make it through the whole passage. Sometimes we get a bit off topic, but never too far. Sometimes we help a pastor discover what he *thought* the passage meant is not quite right. Sometimes we all feel drawn to the same thing and sometimes we disagree but learn from the disagreement. Sometimes (most of the time) we get to know one another better, growing to care for each other. Every time we grow in faith together.

The pastor leads the hour, but everyone contributes. And so can you. All you have to do is come! Tuesdays at 10:30 in the library.

Small Group Sunday Sept. 17

The Small Group Team is excited to be hosting a Small Groups Fair in the Fellowship Hall between services on Sunday, September 17th. This will be an opportunity for the congregation to learn more about the various groups we have to offer. You can sign up for groups and ask questions of the group leaders. Oh, and there WILL be treats!





Join the Choir this Season

We appreciate the dedication of all those who share their talents with us each week and those who participate with us occasionally. We are expanding the opportunities in the coming season with the hope to provide many opportunities for the musicians of our congregation.

So, Cantata Choir is just not for cantatas anymore! With the success of our two big choir presentations last season we are offering up not only two cantata opportunities this coming season but a few extra events for the 'big' choir to sing.

We would like to invite all singers to a kick-off potluck on Thursday, September 7 at 6:00 pm. We will have a rehearsal after we share dinner and prepare a great piece for Sunday, September 10 for Rally Day. The selection is an arrangement of 'Amazing Grace' by Joel Raney. We will send out learning tracks for you to practice.

We will again gather the 'big' choir for Reformation Sunday on October 29, 2023 with brass performers. One rehearsal the prior Thursday. We will send out learning tracks for you to practice.

The Christmas Cantata is 'The Winter Rose' by Joseph M. Martin on Sunday, December 16, 2023 with rehearsals beginning in early November.

In Holy Week we are planning to present 'The Seven Last Words of Christ' by Theodore Dubois on Passion Sunday, March 24, 2024 with rehearsals beginning in February 2024.

In addition, we hope we can gather a good size choir for Easter Sunday, March 31, 2024.

Please contact Scott or Megan with any questions or thoughts. If you would like to be on the email list please get that information to us. We look forward to a full choir loft for 23-24.

Blessings,
Scott and Megan

Pastor Dan's 25th Anniversary at Ascension



Daniel Holt
Associate Pastor

We are excited to celebrate 25 years of faithful ministry with Pastor Dan Holt. He has been a blessing to our church family, and we are grateful for his leadership and dedication. Please join in the celebration between services on Sunday, November 12.

Ruth Circle Begins September 14

Ruth Circle is a casual women's Bible study group that meets the second Thursday of the month. Our next meeting is September 14, 2023 at 9:30am in the Fellowship Hall. We are using the book, "Just Like Jesus" by Max Lucado and will be discussing chapter twelve, "When Heaven Celebrates". 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, or book information, at 719-243-8978 or Njshatto@yahoo.com.

Called to Serve...

Notes from your Social Outreach Team

So where does Ascension fulfill our mission of being a community of grace called to serve? Individually we each work to be the hands and feet of Christ in so many ways. But here I want to share one of the ways we as a congregation work to fulfill that calling through the Social Outreach Team. There are ten organizations that receive funds based on 10 percent of our budgeted giving. One of the organizations you support is Lutheran Family Services Rocky Mountain. (This includes a portion that is dedicated to the KPC Respite Center across the street, which has been helping families in crisis since 2004. Because of our ongoing work with the center, LFS selected Ascension as Distinguished Congregational Partner of the Year!)

Lutheran Family Services Rocky Mountains is a faith based, non-profit human services agency providing adoption, disaster response, foster care, older adult, family support & education, and refugee & immigration services since 1948. They provide help and support to children and families during their most challenging times regardless of race, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation or age.

With locations in Albuquerque, Colorado Springs, Denver, Fort Collins, Greeley, Las Cruces, and Salt Lake City, they partner with communities to address the unmet needs affecting their most vulnerable populations. LFSRM strives to recognize areas in need and to find ways to serve those who have seemingly become invisible. Every day, hundreds of people turn to LFSRM for refuge, help and hope. The hallmark of serving through LFSRM has always been a shared sense of being in this together; joined at the heart with volunteers, clients, donors and neighbors.

I'd like to share part of their most recent thank you letter to the congregation:

"We are filled with gratitude for your *vital* support and trust. Together we are building a legacy of hope through social justice! Thank you so much for your continued support of LFSRM!"

Sue Trinko, Social Outreach Team Leader

Men of Ascension: You're Invited!

Men of Ascension, those of us who gather each Thursday at 8 AM for breakfast at Wooglin's Deli & Cafe (4750 Barnes Road) are amazed. Those of you who are retired

and even those who are still working (but with flexible hours) must be extremely busy. There are weekly church services, adult Sunday School, and an evening Bible study offered for you. Why not take time to socialize with other men from Ascension to get to know each other on a more personal basis? If you need a "kitchen pass" from your wife to attend, assure her that she will enjoy about 2 hours of "personal time" while you are away. Details, or other ideas for times or locations, text Rich Johnson at 719-360-3411, or email me at rich64johnson@gmail.com. Bon Appetit!

Calling All Ascension Women!

Want a deeper spiritual life? Come to "Doing the Disciplines with Jesus and His Friends," a compelling and innovative series presented by Lisa Wulf and friends. You'll leave with tools to really transform your life.

- Discover the spiritual practices of Jesus and the apostles.
- Master fifteen spiritual disciplines.
- Get useful pointers and tips.
- Develop your own personal devotional plan.

And it's not even boring! You'll experience:

- Hilarious skits featuring Romans in Togas
- Interactive practical exercises
- The Gallery of Holy Heavyweights
- Even a game show – The Discipline Dash

Wednesday evenings 7:00 – 8:15 on Sept. 13, 20, 27, and Oct. 4, 11, 18, and 25.

Childcare will be provided if needed. However moms with kids need to sign up by September 3 so it can be arranged.

Don't worry if you can't make all the sessions. Just come when you can! Contact Sylvia Holt (sylvia.holt6@gmail.com) if you'd like to attend.

We still need a few more ushers!

Are you friendly and faithful person between the ages of 13 and 113? You can usher! The time commitment: 9 Sunday's (Sept - May) for the 10:30 service. If you can't commit to 9 Sundays, we are also seeking help for both services on the three Sundays where there are five weeks in the month: Oct 29, Dec 31, and March 31. This would be a very minimal time commitment.

Worried about vacations or unexpected events? Don't be! The usher team will find you a substitute if needed. Worried you're inexperienced? Don't be! We will train and you'll work with an experienced usher. This is a great way to get involved and meet people. Questions: Call Rob Koehler (719) 963-5748 or email: cmkoehle@gmail.com.

Bridge Group

Our Bridge Group will meet on **September 16th at 5:30PM**. Please let John or Kathy Hayes know if you plan to play that night. Feel free to contact them 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.

Get Involved...

****Ruth Circle:** All ladies of Ascension are invited to join us on the 2nd Thursday of each month at 9:30am in the Fellowship Hall, for fellowship and casual Bible Study. If you are new to Ascension, we invite you to join us. Please contact Nancy Shatto for any questions at 719-243-8978 or Njshatto@yahoo.com.

****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! Or if you are interested in starting up this Fall, contact Darcy Ayen, 719-351-0776, or dkdayen@gmail.com.

****Flower Chart** – The 2023 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@ascensioncos.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** – Our church has been supporting bingo at the Terrace Gardens Healthcare Center for about 35 years. Herb Bagenstos started this out-reach program and then Bev Godec took it over from

him. John Hayes took it over from Bev in 2015. This program is supported by a small group of four hardy volunteers. 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 ARE ABOUT OUT OF PRIZES FOR THE RESIDENTS.** Prizes include gently used men and women's clothing (mostly sizes Large and higher for men and large and Plus sizes for women), sweatpants and tops (large sizes), baseball caps, hygiene products (body washes, lotions, toothpaste, shampoo, etc), playing cards, some small containers of ladies' perfumes, adult coloring books/crayons, and costume jewelry. If you would like to contribute gifts, please mark items as "Bingo Prizes" and place them in the Terrace Garden Bingo box located in the cupboard behind the Welcome Center. The residents really look forward to our bingo each month and it is rewarding to help them. We also need to **build up our pool of volunteers** to help us because 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 program. *Thank you for your continued support.*

****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.

To stay connected and up-to-date check out Ascension online:

- Website: ascensioncos.org
- Facebook: facebook.com/ascensioncos
- Instagram: instagram.com/ascensioncos/
- Online Directory: <https://members.instantchurchdirectory.com/>
- YouTube: tinyurl.com/YouTubeALC
- Prayer Request Form: <https://forms.gle/iQEWie3LkVtz3cmLA>
- Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8673682609>



AIA September 2023 Issue #9
Ascension Lutheran Church, ELCA
2505 N. Circle Drive
Colorado Springs, CO 80909

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

CHURCH STAFF

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

Pastor Dan Holt – off on Friday

Pastor Daniel Smith – off on Friday

Music Director/ Organist – Scott Christiansen

Choir Director – Megan Miller

Diaconal Minister of Faith Formation – Mary Stoneback

Office Administrator – Ruth Albrent-Runnells

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)

s.christiansen@ascensioncos.org (Scott Christiansen)

music@ascensioncos.org (Megan Miller)

t.adams@ascensioncos.org (Teresa Adams)

clc@ascensioncos.org (CLC)

ts.trinko@gmail.com (newsletter articles)

Our Website: www.ascensioncos.org

October newsletter deadline: Sept. 24



Mary Ann Bond, Allen Brooks (Foster son of Darcy & Tom Johnson), Brad Buhler, Michael Foret, Jen Gabrius (friend of Elisa Thompson), Elaine Glover, Eileen Hedstrom, Stewart Hellem, Eric Howe, Cheri Hughes, Bob Kelly, Don Knight (friend of John Hayes), Pam Landry, Carol Passon, Cerne Rieves (ALC Quilter), Rick Rogers, Fran Schumacher (friend of Ron Mohler), Jeff Sebben, Cassie Shaffer (friend of Trents), Merrill Sorenson (Uncle of Deb Asiano), Cathy Stanley (sister-in-law of Marilyn Gulliksen), Bruce Thompson (Brother of Sandy Trent), Carol Thompson, Marilyn Thompson (Mother of Jon Thompson), and all of our men and women serving overseas, especially Anthony Calderon.