

*The Witness*  
May 2009

# Lutheran Church of the Ascension

OUR VISION: To Worship the Lord, Live by His Example, and  
Reach out Through His Love

OUR MISSION: To Know and Share the Good News of Jesus Christ



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## Beginnings

The month of May has many opportunities for us to celebrate beginnings and endings of all sorts. Usually there are more endings though: graduation, confirmation, and academic programming years among them. Even if graduation is technically a "commencement" exercise, no one is fooled by semantics. It's a celebration for having completed high school, college, middle school, or even preschool.

The story of the ascension from Luke 24:44-53 is both about endings and beginnings. The earthly ministry of Jesus had ended. The time had now come for him to return to the Father and take his place at the right hand of God. Yet what did his departure mean? Is "out of sight, out of mind," what it meant? Not really.

The ascension meant that Jesus would be with believers in the most profound sense. He is with us whenever we gather, two or three in his name, no matter where we may be or how many gatherings may be going on at once. He is with us in word proclaimed, in bread shared, and in wine poured.

What the ascension meant to first century believers in Jesus is that it had become time for them to do their part. They needed to witness to the things that Christ had done in their lives (Luke 24:48). It was up to them to get the word out.

As this congregation's name day, the festival of the Ascension is an opportunity for us to consider how we are living up to our job of witnessing to others about what God has done in our lives. Do God's works enter into the stories that we tell our neighbors and others in our families? Do we invite other people to become a part of the ministry of this congregation?

This year our congregation will be celebrating the festival of the Ascension on Sunday, May 17 (we're moving it up a few days since the actual date of the festival is always on a Thursday) and we're letting the day serve as a kick-off for what will be a year-long celebration of the congregation's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Plan to attend one of our services on that day and to come to the festive brunch that will be served at 10:00 a.m.

Most importantly, let's have our observance of the ascension this year be a beginning—not just a beginning for our anniversary celebration, but a time when we launch out to witness to others about what God is doing in all of our lives!

*Dennis Bushkofsky*

Interim Pastor

## Focus on Health



**Sweet Talk Yourself.** We talk to ourselves all day long—inside our heads. Everyone does. Occasionally our messages are sweet, but often we whisper words which are discouraging, belittling, or even downright nasty. For today, try sending yourself kinder, gentler messages, and see what happens.

**When self-talk becomes self-critical, send in a replacement.** Compose a supportive statement to replace that self-criticism before it begins. Sometimes telling yourself something as straightforward as, "I am using good posture today" can silence the beginning of a barrage. Having an encouraging statement ready in advance is the key.

**Give yourself pep talks—often.** Be your own biggest fan. Frequently tell yourself you are making progress. Recognize your small successes with sweet talk such as, "Wow! I just walked up those stairs without losing my breath." Encourage yourself just as you would your best friend.

**Picture yourself as you wish to be.** Create mental images to play along with your pep talks. We're visual learners, so visualize yourself as a competent, pleased-with-yourself person.

**Find humor rather than criticism in your humanness.** Yes, you were unwise to try to carry all the cups back to the kitchen in one trip. Well, now that they are broken you can continue to berate yourself—or you can enjoy your own imperfections. Your life will be richer, lighter, and healthier when you laugh at yourself—and you will never run out of amusing material.

*Gracious God, thank you for those who have been kind to me in my life. In turn, help me speak kindly to all people, including myself.  
Amen.*

Advocate Congregational Health Partnerships Congregational Health Quick Hit, May 2008

### Senior Housing Fair

Sunday, May 3

9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

A **Senior Housing Fair** will be held at Glenview Community Church, 1000 Elm St., Glenview, on Sunday, May 3, 9:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Here you will have the opportunity to speak with representatives of continuing care retirement communities, rental retirement communities, assisted living communities and skilled care centers all under one roof! There is no cost for this chance to educate yourself about senior housing. For more information, call Marilyn Belleau, Advocate Health Care Parish Nurse at Glenview Community Church - 847-724-2210 ext. 30 or Kim Hand, Village Senior Services -- 847-904-4366.

### Stephen Ministry Commissioning

Sunday, May 17

Four members of Ascension Church have been preparing for service as Stephen Ministers since last September. Dick Amos, Lois Giberson, Peg Sickeler and Vanessa Young bring rich life experiences and have now completed the training established by Stephen Ministry. They are prepared to serve our congregation as distinctively Christian caregivers, skilled as non-judgmental listeners and committed to practice confidentiality. When people in our congregation and community experience life's transitions, such as grief, health concerns or depression, a Stephen Minister can come alongside and offer the support of a caring Christian friend. Please join in commissioning them for service on Sunday, May 17, and extending gratitude to them for their commitment. They join thirteen Stephen Ministers already active in the congregation.

Peace and Good Health in Christ,

*Gail Price*

# Reach Out Through God's Love



## Green Team News

During April, known as Earth Month, the Green Team actively sought to impact the congregation's use of disposables. To replace paper cold cups, reusable plastic glasses are now available for juice, water and other cold beverages. To help reduce the consumption of plastic bags, the Team offered lightweight canvas bags with an Ascension logo as well as ChicoBags. And to reduce the use of plastic water bottles, 80% of which are not recycled but make their way to landfills, all were encouraged to fill up at the fountain or the sink and to drink deeply of Lake Michigan's finest water. To offer your ideas about Caring for God's Creation, contact Carol Mueller or Ellen Kollmann.



Please remember that we are collecting Box Tops for Education coupons, which you will find on the following products: Campbell & Swanson products, Pepperidge Farm products, Betty Crocker products, Pillsbury products, Depends & Huggies, Yoplait products, Ziploc & Saran Wrap, Juicy Juice, Cheerios & Cascadian Farm cereals, Cottonelle & Kleenex, Hefty disposables, Scott & Viva paper towels, Prego products.

more extensive list is available at the following website:

<http://www.boxtops4education.com/about/boxtops/products.aspx#>

## Habitat for Humanity



Ascension members once again are joining with other Lutheran congregations and the Thrivent-Builds program to construct a house in Waukegan. We have already had our first work day and are scheduled to work May 16 and every third Saturday through November. Those wishing to join a work crew can contact Bob Reid or sign up on the bulletin board in Fellowship Hall.

If you wish to work on other days of the week, you don't need to make an appointment. Just show up at the work site at 8 a.m. and the crew will be happy to use you.

We plan to contribute \$4000 again this year for this project. Any amount is welcome! Please make your check payable to Ascension with "Habitat" in the memo line. We will send it to Habitat Lake County to help defray the cost of materials.

Bob Reid will be happy to answer any questions you might have.

*Builder Bob*

## Lutheran Day in Springfield

Since 2004, Lutheran Day has provided Lutherans from across Illinois the opportunity to build relationships with public officials and each other, as well as demonstrate Lutherans' involvement in their communities as citizens and as leaders of charitable organizations meeting human needs.

This year, Lutheran Day will be held on May 6th in Springfield. Plan to join several hundred Lutherans and friends who will gather in our state's capital to learn about key issues affecting our state, advocate for people in need, and spend time in fellowship with other advocates. For more information, contact Stephen Taylor, the Lutheran Day Coordinator at [Stephen.Taylor@LSSI.org](mailto:Stephen.Taylor@LSSI.org) or 847/635-4653 or Gail Price at church.

## Interfaith Refugee and Immigration Ministries Celebration of Hope

Interfaith Refugee and Immigration Ministries creates opportunity for refugees fleeing war, terror, and persecution to build new lives of safety, dignity, and self-reliance. Ascension Church has partnered with IRIM to assist in resettling people in the Chicagoland area. Please join IRIM for the fourth annual fundraiser, *Celebration of Hope*, Friday, May 8 at the Chicago Cultural Center, Preston Bradley Hall, 78 East Washington Street, Chicago. Reception and cocktails begin at 6:30 p.m. with dinner of ethnic food and program of live music at 8:00 p.m. Proceeds benefit refugees served by IRIM. To RSVP, or to inquire about sponsorship, please contact Jennifer Staff at 773-989-5647 or [jstaff@irim.org](mailto:jstaff@irim.org). To share transportation with Ascension friends, contact Gail Price at church.

## Lutheran Social Services of Illinois

Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI) has been caring for people in Illinois since it opened its first orphanage on the western prairie of Illinois in October 1867. Today LSSI, our congregation's statewide social ministry organization, serves nearly 73,000 people of all ages, races, incomes and religions and helps them address important needs and make essential changes in their lives. Children in need of safe loving homes, families dealing with effects of lost jobs, mental illness and substance abuse, older adults living alone on a fixed income all can turn to LSSI for help.

## Good Shepherd Sunday

Each year the fourth Sunday of Easter is celebrated as Good Shepherd Sunday in the church. This year the date is Sunday, May 3. Jesus the Good Shepherd cared for his sheep by feeding them, healing them and reconciling them to themselves, their families and their communities. Through LSSI, the feeding, healing and reconciling power of Jesus continues to transform the lives of people in need. On Good Shepherd Sunday you will have an opportunity to make an offering directly to benefit the work of LSSI. Thank you for reaching out through God's love in this way.

## LSSI Women's Network

25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Forget-Me-Not

Brunch and Fashion Show

Saturday, May 9

The Meadows Club, Rolling Meadows

*Bonding with Books*, a reading enrichment project of LSSI's Head Start programs, benefits from your participation on this delightful day. Marlynn Anderson, Teri Colmar, Jan Leverenz, Nancy Nagel, Gail Price and Gloria Rowley welcome your attendance. Gift and fashion boutiques open at 10:00 a.m. with brunch and fashion show at 11:30 a.m. Reduced price tickets are available for children ages 5-12. Call LSSI at 847-635-4656 for more information.

## YOUTH MINISTRY

April was a busy month for Ascension youth! Confirmation students assembled both College Care Packages and HIV/AIDS Hospice Kits at the end of the month for "Service Night." Fifteen Care Packages were sent out to Ascension college students in time for their 2<sup>nd</sup> semester finals, and fifty hospice kits were sent to Global Health Ministries in Minneapolis to join hundreds of others being delivered to Tanzania. Thank you to all who donated items for either of these projects during the month of April!

High school youth participated in a few more great evenings of 'LYFE House' in the homes of Ascension members during the past several weeks, and they hosted this year's Easter Breakfast for the congregation earlier in the month! From setting up tables and chairs to boiling and dyeing dozens of Easter eggs, making centerpieces, shopping at Costco, flipping pancakes and browning sausages, pouring orange juice, hiding Easter Eggs out on the front lawn, and washing dishes—an amazing team of people made this happen! A huge, HUGE thanks to all youth, parents and adult volunteers for making the breakfast possible: the Barnas family, Linda Clinton, Lauren Michalec, the Nelson family, the Newman family, Beth & Greg Peterson, Andy Price, Meghan Reilly, and Kristina Spillers. You are stars!! Here are some dates to keep in mind, looking to May and beyond.!

### Confirmation youth:

- › Friday, May 29<sup>th</sup> from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. @ church - End of Year Dinner/Family Game Night/Confirmation Rehearsal! How will all of this fit into 1 night, you ask? Stay tuned for further important correspondence to find out!
- › Sunday, May 31<sup>st</sup> @ 9 a.m. - Confirmation Service. All 8<sup>th</sup> graders who decide to be confirmed - this is the big day! Conversations with Pastor and Vanessa will take place in the weeks leading up to the 31<sup>st</sup>; further details will be emailed to help you as we prepare during May!

### High school & 8<sup>th</sup> graders:

- › This is our last month of Sunday morning Breakfast Club and Sunday evening LYFE youth group before the school year ends, so don't miss out! 10:15 a.m. for Breakfast Club, and 6 p.m. on May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> for LYFE!
- › High school seniors will be honored on Sunday, May 31<sup>st</sup> during services! If you're an '09 grad and would like to participate in Senior recognition that day, please respond to Vanessa so that we can be sure to include you.
- › Although everyone will be on summer break for most of June, July and August, there will be a few activities taking place to keep Ascension youth connected! Information about activities on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of each of these 3 months will be sent via email and postcards. In addition to these dates, here's 1 activity to go ahead and put on your calendar: Promisedland Paintball on Saturday, June 27<sup>th</sup>. Interested in going?? See Vanessa for a copy of the permission slip and submit a non-refundable deposit of \$25 to her in the Youth Office no later than Saturday, May 30<sup>th</sup> (with balance to be paid by Saturday, June 13<sup>th</sup>).

The month of May will be another busy one, but it's been a great school year thus far and is looking to be a fantastic summer for Ascension's youth ministry!

Peace, *Vanessa*



May is here, bringing us May flowers, warmer spring days and the final few weeks of what has been an amazing Sunday School year! We have been truly honored and blessed to be able to work so closely with the parents and getting the opportunity to know their wonderful kids these past many months. We've reflected on the many special events we've had this past year: Rally Day, the Intergenerational Advent Concert, our first-ever Sunday School parents/kids fellowship event at Pump It Up, the children-led Palm Sunday services and the First Communion class of 2009, not to mention just the many fun, spontaneous moments we all shared both in the classrooms and the halls at Ascension. It truly has been a memorable year for us and I hope for you and your children as well.

The last day of Sunday School will be held on May 17th and we will be doing a group activity on that day. Please do not forget to mark your calendars with the dates for this year's Vacation Bible School. Crocodile Dock will be held at Lutheran Church of the Ascension the week of June 15th-June 19th from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. each of the 5 nights. Make sure to sign up early; space is limited and last year's VBS filled up quickly. Any questions can be directed to Beth or Greg Peterson or to the church office.

*Grace and Peace,*

*Beth and Greg*

## Worship Notes

Bravo to all the kids who participated in the Palm Sunday service and to the parents and Sunday school teachers who worked with them. What an inspirational time that was as the kids led us in with "Marching in the Light of God" and led us out with "This Little Light of Mine." From the dramas to the reading and prayers and excellent singing, the worship was a powerful testimony to the week that changed the world (Holy Week). I'm very proud of the young people here at Ascension. Beth and Greg, thank YOU for all you've done in such a short time to make the children's programs here come alive.

Further into Holy Week, we saw a spectacular dramatization of John 13: 1-17. Thanks to all who participated in this and the other dramas throughout Lent. This new dimension to our Lenten worship touched a great many people. Regarding Easter, a special thanks to the Ascension choir for all of your hard work.. The Hallelujah chorus was sung splendidly and the spirits were kept high with your leading of the hymns and liturgy! Thanks to Ellen Kollman, assisted by Diane Carlson, for preparing the beautiful white drape over the altar. The Celebrate team certainly is also deserving of gratitude for all of their efforts in putting together an incredibly inspiring Easter service. Finally, thanks to all who helped prepare the Easter breakfast. It was reported that around 120 people stayed to share in this time together....testimony to the fact that Ascension truly IS family.

We have been getting a lot of really positive feedback about the improvements that have taken place over the last month or so in our Celebrate! service. I invite you to worship at this service. If you haven't been there in awhile, it is certainly worth coming around to see all that has happened. I can promise you won't be disappointed.

As we gear up to the start of our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations, we look to May 17 as a day where we will recognize the gifts our choir has shared with us over the years. In saying this, we mean, ALL CHOIR MEMBERS, current and past. On that day, we would like to form a choir with as many people who have sung with the choir in the past as we can. If you are or ever have been in choir, we will be trying to reach you over the next month, but we also invite you to contact us to let us know you are on board. We are looking forward to this opportunity to thank you for being such key participants in our worship over the life of this church!

Peace,

*Mischa & Minkyoo*

## From Our Council President

Grace and Peace to You:

As I write this to you, it is the Saturday between Good Friday and Easter - a time of transition. Tomorrow we celebrate the risen Lord and the promise that is the gift of faith.

Like our Lord before Easter morning, we are in a time of transition, we are ready to rise. Searching for a new pastor, looking for ways to rebuild our aging facility, getting our committees and teams working together and preparing for our jubilee celebration - these are our challenges. They are also gifts, wonderful opportunities to work together and prepare the way for others to join us in fellowship in our community of faith. In the months ahead, you will see and hear about how you can help us realize these opportunities, including an open building planning forum meeting that will be held on Sunday, June 7, between services.

It takes careful planning to realize the potential in challenges, and so we have scheduled an on-campus vision and strategic planning retreat for Saturday May 2, from 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Please join us as we chart the course for Ascension's future. All are welcome to attend. There are many ways in which you can serve. Come and find out how.

Meanwhile, your church Council continues to meet the third Thursday of every month, 7-9 p.m. in the Augustana Room. You are most welcome to attend and watch your servants at work. If there is any particular issue you would like us to address, please call or email our Office Administrator, Diane Carlson, our Council Secretary, Lois Vining or me. And, if you are interested in serving on the Council until next February, a position recently became available, so send your name to a member of the Nominating Committee, Pam Carlson, Steve Kollman, Nancy Nagel, John Rowley, Lois Vining and Michaela Ward.

All of these are empty tasks unless we use them to witness to our Lord. It's not what happens on Sunday that is most important, but how Sunday enables us to serve our mission Monday through Saturday in our daily lives. Remember: We lift up!

*Stephen Schwab*

## **Council Update**

The first meeting of the newly-elected Council met in March and opened with introductions of the new members: Duain Claiborne, Brian Lee, Ruth Newman and Curtis Spillers. Reports from staff on current activities were received along with a few written reports from standing committees. In the future, all committee chairs will be asked to provide brief written reports to Stephen Schwab in advance of council meetings to facilitate sharing of information. The council agreed that to fill a vacant position on the council, an open invitation for volunteers would be extended. Improving the process of responding to volunteers for limited openings included developing a protocol to be shared for use when this situation occurs. Last, the council agreed on to hold a congregational meeting in September to share information and allow time for members to ask questions or voice concerns.

## **Call Committee**

The Call Committee has had a good response to the Mission Profile that the Council sent to the Synod at the end of February. We have met five times to prepare for the interview process and review applications. We currently have five candidates scheduled for first interviews in the next few weeks. If a candidate appears to be a good fit, we will follow up with additional interviews, observe the candidate lead a service, and conduct background checks. While there is much to be done, we are encouraged by the response. If you have questions or comments for the Committee, the members include David Burk, Jan Hincapie, Alice Kosnik, Grant Krafft, Joan Lee, Lisa Rude, Kurt Vining, and Susan Vonnegut.

*Joan Lee*

## 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Jubilee Celebration

Celebration of our first 50 years as a congregation begins **Sunday, May 17, Ascension Sunday, with worship at 9:00 a.m.** and will include commissioning of Stephen Ministers and recognition of current and past choir members. A festive anniversary kick-off program and brunch follows at 10:00 a.m. with activities for children, youth and adults. Celebrate! worship begins at 11:15 a.m. Please plan to be present to share in the celebration!

### Walls of Remembrance

On May 17, you will observe two banners, our "Walls of Remembrance," flanking the entrance to the nave. We invite you to share your memories of Ascension. Please place your photos, written memories, scripture passages, and inspirational stories in the baskets near the banners. Join in capturing a snapshot of fond remembrances of Lutheran Church of the Ascension.

### Pictorial Directory

In conjunction with the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, a new pictorial directory is being developed, and you will want to be included. Photos will be taken at church on **Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, May 27, 28 and 29, 3:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m. and Saturday, May 30, 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.** There is no sitting fee, and each individual or family who has photos taken will receive a free 8 x 10 color photo and a copy of the directory. Additional photos may be ordered. You may sign up for appointment times at church on Sunday or online using the link to the pictorial directory on the church's website, [www.Ascension-Church.org](http://www.Ascension-Church.org). For more details, see the Sunday bulletin, the bulletin board, or contact Caryl Scott at 847-564-0686.

### Fellowship for the Family

#### **An Evening at Ravinia with Garrison Keillor and *A Prairie Home Companion* Saturday, June 20, 4:45 p.m. seating for live radio broadcast**

Meet Ascension friends at Ravinia to share a blanket, some fellowship, and good old-fashioned Lutheran humor. Pavilion and lawn tickets are on sale online now for this always sold out evening. Visit [www.Ravinia.org](http://www.Ravinia.org) to order your tickets and sign up on the poster at church to tell others you will be there. Gates to the park open at 3:00 p.m.

#### **2010 Oberammergau Passion Play and Lutheran Heritage Sites**

Trans World Travel of Highland Park is offering an eleven day European tour September 12-22, 2010, featuring the famous Passion Play in Oberammergau and many Lutheran heritage sites in Germany. During the Thirty Years War, the deadly and contagious Black Plague struck down one in every three persons throughout Europe, but one little village in Germany was spared—Oberammergau. The townspeople vowed that, if they were spared, they would present a play on the life of Christ every ten years. The first Passion Play was offered in 1634 and productions have continued every decade with few interruptions since that day. The entire village is involved in the moving play, which captures the audience's attention as it clearly depicts Christ's suffering, death and resurrection.

Brochures are available at church. Early registration is advised as a limited number of people can be accommodated. Contact Gail Price at 847-446-8335 or [Gail@Ascension-Church.org](mailto:Gail@Ascension-Church.org) for details.



Ascension Women's Luncheon  
May 7  
Ascension Church

The Women of Ascension will meet for our annual festive potluck salad luncheon on Thursday, May 7<sup>th</sup> at 12:00 noon at the church. Please bring a salad for 6-8 people.

Our speakers will be Linda Post Bushkofsky, our interim pastor's wife, who is the executive director of the Women of the ELCA, and Eva James Yeo, director for membership. They will talk about the dynamic ministry of the Women of the ELCA. Did you know that the organization has given over \$3 million in domestic and international grants since its creation in 1987? Or that it has awarded scholarships in excess of \$500,000 in that same time frame?

Women of the ELCA is a lot more than Bible studies and quilts! Come and find out more from this outstanding program. All women are invited, and you are welcome to bring a friend. Please reserve your place by calling the church office (847-446-8335) or Jan Leverenz (847-998-1799).