

The Witness
November 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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A Jubilee to the Lord

Lutheran Church of the Ascension will celebrate its fiftieth anniversary this month (the actual founding of the congregation occurred on November 29, 1959). In the world of biblical numbers, fifty might not seem like such a big deal. Many of us will readily recall hearing about the forty years that the Hebrew people spent in the wilderness between oppression in Egypt and settling into the land of promise. Many kings in Israel's history reigned for forty years, including David and Solomon. The period of seven years is also important—read about the seven years of plenty and seven years of famine in *Genesis 41*. Yet the period of fifty years is significant in that it signals a jubilee: "You shall return, every one of you, to your property and every one of you to your family" (*Leviticus 25:10*).

The number fifty in this passage actually references the number forty-nine. Those familiar with their multiplication tables will know that forty-nine is seven times seven, or in biblical thinking, a Sabbath of sabbaticals! No doubt many people would have viewed it as a once in a lifetime opportunity for celebration as well. It was a time to refrain from sowing in the fields, only eating what grew without labor. Land that had been sold would revert to the original owners descended from one of the twelve tribes. The Israelites were also reminded that the land did not belong to them at all, but that they were merely tenants on land that ultimately belonged to God (*Leviticus 25:23*).

Lutheran Church of the Ascension's fiftieth year (from May 17, 2009 to May 16, 2010) has been designated as a Jubilee of sorts. Many activities have already taken place to celebrate the congregation's anniversary. The congregational dinner on Saturday, November 14, and the festive anniversary service on Sunday, November 15 will certainly be highpoints of the congregation's observances throughout the year, but the celebration goes beyond into the coming year.

I have proposed that part of Ascension's fiftieth year celebrations be in the spirit of Jubilee and an opportunity for the congregation to contribute from its storehouse of blessings to others. Indeed a variety of mission partners were needed in order for Ascension to come into existence fifty years ago, particularly through a number of financial grants from the Augustana Synod. Wouldn't a significant gift from this congregation for the support other congregations' mission work in the Metropolitan Chicago Synod be a way to truly celebrate a fiftieth year of Jubilee?

Dennis Bushkofsky
Interim Pastor



Focus on Health

Yoga returns to Ascension Church
Mondays, 9:00 – 10:00 a.m. through November 23

Whether or not you have experienced yoga, you will reap great health benefits from a newly-forming class at Ascension Church. Sponsored by the Health Ministry Team and under the leadership of certified yoga instructor Pat Constabileo, this class will be geared to beginning students, but all levels are welcome. You don't have to be "in shape" to come---yoga helps us to GET in shape. Yoga helps us to feel younger by promoting flexibility, coordination and balance. During class we will also focus on healthy breathing and relaxation. The class will meet until Thanksgiving, with the exception of Monday, November 9. Cost is \$10 per session. Invite friends to join you, then bring a towel or yoga mat, wear comfortable clothing, and meet in the Education wing.

Ascension Church is committed to serve as a place of health, wholeness and healing for its members and all people in the communities which surround the church. This congregation affirms the importance of health of the whole person, physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual and offers programs which enhance learning, self care, support, serving and worship.

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All Saints Sunday

During worship on Sunday, November 1, prayers will be offered for those saints who have died since last All Saints Sunday, November 2, 2008 and for the loved ones whose names you lift up. Please contact the church office with the names of persons you wish to remember in prayer. You are invited to share your remembrances with Stephen Ministers over a light lunch at 12:00 noon in Fellowship Hall. You may make a reservation with Gail Price in the church office.

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Thank you! Thank you!

To all who shared the gift of life at Ascension's fall LifeSource blood drive, thank you. Your gift cannot be bought, only freely given.

And to all who shared in any way in the 50th Anniversary Weekend of Service, whether at Habitat for Humanity, helping IRIM to prepare for refugee families, at the C.R.O.P. Walk or with the Good News Community Kitchen, thank you for reaching out through God's love to be the hands and feet of Jesus.

Peace and good health to you,

Gail Price

Reach Out Through God's Love

Winter Coat Collection for Adults

November 1 - November 8

Br-r-r-r!! Imagine what it might be like to spend a Chicago winter without a warm coat, hat, mittens, gloves or scarf. Do you have winter outerwear sitting in your closets that you could donate as a gesture of kindness and love? Lakeview Pantry, 2831 Broadway, welcomes your help in preparing adult clients for the cold. Please bring your contributions on Sunday, November 1 through Sunday, November 8. Thank you!

Irm Claiborne

Hunger Chairperson

Thanksgiving Food Gathering Help Fight Hunger

The congregation's annual Thanksgiving food gathering is fast approaching. On Sunday, November 22, we will be collecting donations of food at each of the worship services. Bags for the collection will be available the prior Sunday and during the week. Non-perishable food items as well as disposable diapers, paper towels, and household products, will be collected and donated to area food pantries. Thank you!

LSSI'S Gala

Be a "true friend" of Lutheran Social Services of Illinois and come to the Amicus Certus Gala on Saturday, November 7. The event has a new look this year. We'll be visiting the animals at Brookfield Zoo, and the event is no longer black tie. This year the event is honoring the Women's Network, particularly the founding members who had the foresight to establish an organization for the support of our church's service to the need in communities and places where we cannot be present.

Tickets for the evening are \$250/person. For more information, please contact Nancy Nagel (847-441-5191) or Marlynn Anderson (847-509-0366).

Habitat for Humanity



Ascension members and friends have donated approximately 300 hours of labor toward the construction of homes at Carter Crossing in Waukegan. We have one more work date November 21. This will be your last chance to volunteer for Habitat this year so please contact Bob Reid or sign up on the bulletin board in Fellowship Hall.

A great big **THANK YOU** goes out to all who have contributed to this year's project. You have helped to meet our goal by contributing \$3645, and Builder Bob will not be asking for more until next year.

Builder Bob

Lutheran World Relief: Responding to Disasters

Through Lutheran World Relief, we, the church, are present in Asia. LWR seeks our help to respond quickly with food, water, and other life-saving assistance to the typhoons, tsunamis and earthquakes which have occurred in recent weeks. Donations may be made through Ascension Church and specified "Asia Disasters" or directly to Lutheran World Relief at lwr.org/giving.

Lutheran World Relief, an international nonprofit organization, works to end poverty and injustice by empowering some of the world's most impoverished communities to help themselves. With partners in 35 countries, LWR seeks to promote sustainable development with justice and dignity by helping communities bring about change for healthy, safe and secure lives; engage in Fair Trade; promote peace and reconciliation; and respond to emergencies.

Christmas in November?

Yes, Santa's elves start early in order to bring a joyous Christmas to the boys and girls at Englewood Messiah Head Start, a program of Lutheran Social Services of Illinois. Won't you help the elves by bringing an **unwrapped toy** for a **3-5 year old girl or boy**.

We'll have a special tree in the fellowship hall so you can place your gift directly under the tree **between November 29 and December 9**. This could be an excellent opportunity for Ascension's boys and girls to shop for the boys and girls at Messiah. These gifts may be the biggest gifts these children will receive for Christmas. If you have questions, please call Nancy Nagel at 847-441-5191.



Christmas is right around the corner! There are many families in need of assistance this Christmas season and you can help by selecting a family and providing them with groceries for a Christmas meal and a gift for each child under 18. Feel free to join together with your Circle, youth group, Bible study group, co-workers or neighbors to adopt one of the larger families.

Listings will be posted before Thanksgiving. **DRIVERS ARE NEEDED** to deliver packages to Bethel on Sunday, December 13th. Please call Kristin Merrill at 847-853-8941 to volunteer or with questions.



Care Package Donations Needed!

At the end of this month, Ascension youth will be assembling *College Care Packages* to send out to Ascension college and grad students who are away studying this year! Students will receive these care packages just before their first semester finals. Care packages are a great way to remind these valuable members of the Ascension community that they are cared for and remembered while they study hard at school!

If your college/grad student daughter or son has been a part of the Ascension community in recent years and you would like them to be included in the fall college care package mailing, please submit their current college address by writing it on a note card and putting it in Vanessa Young's church office mailbox, or emailing it to vanessa@ascension-church.org.

We also need to collect items to send in the care packages themselves, so please consider donating any of the following!

- small snack items (granola bars, fruit snacks, Ramen noodles, microwave popcorn, etc.)

- \$5 Starbucks gift cards

- \$5 Target gift cards

- notes of encouragement!

- other small, random items that would bring a smile to the face of a stressed-out college student! (ie., jars of bubbles, mini-slinkys, mini jars of playdough, etc.)

Thank you for supporting this ministry! Ascension college students are grateful to be remembered in this way, so thanks for helping to keep them connected to the Ascension family!



YOUTH MINISTRY

The month of November will bring many more opportunities for Ascension's youth to get involved in the events of the wider congregation, as well as the wider community with service projects and fellowship activities!

> **LYFE Sunset Cinema is making a special appearance during the month of November!**

Instead of watching a movie on the front lawn, we'll be setting up the big screen, giant speakers and pulling in a bunch of sofas to create a 'living room' atmosphere in the Fellowship Hall for a presentation of *Twilight* on Friday, November 13 at 7:00 p.m. Bring a few friends and \$2 to share in the movie snacks (popcorn, candy and soda). The next movie in the *Twilight* series comes out the following week, so be sure to join us in order to 'brush up' in time for *New Moon*!

> **Confirmation youth will be heading to Lutherdale Bible Camp from Friday, November 20th to Sunday, November 22nd!**

More than 100 youth from other congregations in northern IL and southern WI will join this fall confirmation retreat with the theme 'Found and Lost and Found'. The Ascension youth who attended last year had a FANTASTIC time (just ask them!), so all of Ascension's 6th, 7th & 8th graders should really be looking forward to this weekend away! We'll meet at the church at 5:00 p.m. on Friday and return to church by 1:00 p.m. on Sunday. More details, permission slip, etc. will be distributed via email and handouts in class. All confirmation students are expected to participate in this retreat!

Confirmation class will continue as usual on Sunday mornings from 10:15 a.m. - 11:15 a.m., and please stay tuned for more info about service projects related to Bethel Christmas Family Sharing and Christmas Caroling in early December! High school youth activities will also continue meeting as usual on Sunday mornings for the Breakfast Club from 10:15 - 11:15 a.m. and for LYFE in the evening from 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. We'll be assembling College Care Packages at the end of this month, so your involvement will be very much needed as we prepare these to send off to our friends away at school!

You can always check out www.ascension-church.org/youth for more info about all Ascension Youth Ministry activities, or call/email me with any questions. And although it's a bit early and I'm sure I'll see you before the end of the month. . .Happy Thanksgiving!

Peace,

Vanessa

Adult Spiritual Growth

Everyone is still most welcome to join in our study of The Psalms on Wednesday mornings from 10:00-11:00 a.m. When this study concludes on November 11, there will be new opportunities to learn together!

A three-week study from the new ELCA Book of Faith series will be held on November 18, December 2, and December 9 at 10:00 a.m. This study, God's Will For Life, is based on Mark 4 and 5.....readings we have heard in the Sunday lessons this fall. The facilitator will be Alice Kosnik.

God's Will For Life will also be offered on Monday evenings November 16, November 30, and December 7 at 7:00 p.m. This is an excellent opportunity for a short-term study that will fit into your busy life. For planning purposes, please let the church office or Alice know if you will participate in this evening study. (alice@middlefork.net).

Adult Library

Featured books for the month are:

Anna's Ring by Anni Bodmer. Anni, a former member of Ascension Church, authored this book. Ascension was honored to have Anni present and discuss her novel in October. This book is available in the our Library and you are encouraged to check it out. It is cataloged under "W-Fiction."

Minute Meditations for Women by Emilie Barnes is a series of 5-minute devotions created especially for busy women. Enjoy a time of quiet reflection for just a few minutes in the morning, during lunch, or at the close of the day. You will be uplifted by thoughtful prayers that end each devotion, and be inspired by practical suggestions for putting God's Word to work in your life. Catalogued under "P-Devotionals", this book is currently on display at the check-out stand, and is available for check-out.

Come visit the Library in the Augustana Room. It is open any time the church is open, and all books are available by self check-out.



Fall 2009

Augustana Room

10:30 to 11:15 a.m.

- November 1 The Role of the Holy Spirit In our Lives – Part 2, *Rick Rybak*
- November 8 The Role of the Holy Spirit In our Lives – Part 3, *Rick Rybak*
- November 15 No Adult Forum
- November 22 No Adult Forum
- November 29 No Adult Forum
- December 6 O Come, O Come Emmanuel
Dr. Mark Bangert
- December 13 Holiday Tradition Celebration
Spiritual Growth Team
- December 20 No Adult Forum
- December 27 No Adult Forum

Can You Share Your Christmas Traditions?

The Adult Forum on December 13 will focus on how Ascensionites celebrate Christmas. Would you be willing to contribute to this fun event? Do you have a traditional decoration to show, family custom to tell about, or delicious traditional recipe to share? Examples from the Kosnik household include the crèche my father made filled with plaster figurines bought long ago at Woolworths, the decorating of extremely ugly - but tasty - cut-out cookies, and the traditional "frown in front of the Christmas tree" photos. What does your family do?

To make this a really fun hour, we need everyone to share something! To facilitate planning, please let Alice Kosnik know what you would like to share or show! (847 564 1346 or alice@middlefork.net)

Stewardship

All That Glitters is God

Last week we kicked off our Fall Stewardship campaign, during which we're asking all members to make a financial commitment to Ascension for 2010. The campaign will conclude on Sunday, November 8, which we have come to refer to as Commitment Sunday. That's the day we celebrate and respond to our many blessings through a financial commitment to Ascension. In the meantime, we'll talk about some important stuff, like the many ministries being done at and through Ascension. And we'll talk about the fact that, in order to continue to do those ministries, and to expand them, we'll need to increase our budgets.

But stewardship is at its essence a response to the glory of God in our lives. And to highlight all the ways that God acts in and around us, we've begun something we're calling GLITTER, which stands for *God Lives In This Territory*. It's a bit of a corny takeoff on Twitter, the online social network in which you send quick electronic notes, called Tweets, that say what you're doing right now. But we're turning the focus from "What **I'm** Doing" to "What **God** Is Doing". We're asking you to jot down or send a quick note that answers the question- "How have you seen God at work today, or this week, in our world?" We're calling that a GLEET (rhymes with Tweet, but notice that Glee is there when God is at work?)

Here are some wonderful Gleets that we've already received - "Here's I saw God at work":

"The music of October 3rd!"

"My mother-in-law babysat so we could go out to dinner last night"

"Thanks be to God the Almighty for giving me good health this morning to be able to attend the Sunday worship"

There are multiple ways to submit Gleets. In the pew friendship folders you'll find a Gleet form, which you can complete and put in the offering plate. You can email them to gleet@ascension.com. Or you can leave your Gleet on the church voice mail.

We'll be posting the Gleets in the Fellowship Hall over the coming weeks, and we'll see all the incredible ways, big and small, that God is at work and blessing us richly.

So Happy Greeting!

The Stewardship Team

A Letter from our Council President

As we prepare for the arrival of our new senior pastor, we take a moment to thank our interim pastor. The following are remarks that I delivered during the 9 a.m. service on Sunday October 11th:

When you joined us, Pastor Bushkofsky, you found a community of faith gathered around God's table, but one that had endured four of its last 10 years under interim pastor leadership. It would be fair to say that we were floundering.

While our tireless and faithful Call Committee went back to work, you quietly but firmly prepared us for our next call. You virtually moved in here - I am aware of precious few committee meetings you did not attend. And on a personal note, you assured me that there was something I, too, might be able to accomplish in this place for the glory of God.

Every Sunday you brought us back to God's table and helped feed us with His nourishment. And the numbers who gathered around His table began to grow again. Some of our former members are returning along with new members. It's both a start and a sign.

And so we have gathered this morning to lift up your ministry, to thank you and to thank God for your leadership. You will go to another congregation, but we will keep a place here for you, your wife Linda, your daughter Judy and your grandson Jaden at our table. You all are part of our family.

We have a two small gifts for you:

1) we have a print for you. We all know that you are a student of the Bible, and some in the congregation may know that you have been collecting copies of the St. John's Bible - the first hand-calligraphed Bible in some 500 years. St. John's University has made available prints of some of the art in that splendid edition, and we have chosen one for you. It shows the Lord's table. It is meant to be never-ending, like our relationship with you;

2) we also have for you a gift certificate, so that you and Linda can meet and celebrate your time with us, around a different kind of table.

We are now better prepared to meet the future and be God's people around this table. We thank you and wish you God speed.

Stephen W. Schwal

Dear friends at Ascension,

Thank you for providing me with a memorable last day with you on October 11. Your affirmation of my time with you from the beginning of this year means a great deal. The framed print of the eucharistic community that I received as a gift will certainly remind me often of you, and at the same time it will proclaim how the church is never more fully gathered than when it surrounds the Lord's table. Thank you also for the gift certificate that Linda and I will be able to use at an area restaurant. May you continue to feed others in body and soul as you have done so with me.

Sincerely,

Dennis Bushkofsky

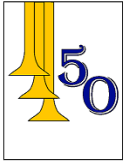
Property

Our current fire alarm system requires two vendors, A T & T, which provides a dedicated land line, and ADT, which monitors the system and contacts the fire department if a signal were received. That system has failed twice this year when the dedicated line was cut. On both occasions, it was an extended period of time (1-2 weeks) before service was restored. We have decided to replace the system with a wireless system provided by Fox Valley Fire and Safety. This system is similar to that being used by most of the surrounding communities and the ongoing expense is less than the one we are terminating.

Four new bathroom lavatories have been installed in the main women's restroom. Why? Similar to the ongoing problem with the fire alarm, we have had ongoing problems with the lavatories that were 50 years old and have required plumbing service several times. We will recover our initial costs by avoiding future plumbing bills.

Things we will be discussing at our next meeting include evaluating our cleaning service, the budget for 2010 and the boiler project.

Kurt Vining



Fellowship and Worship

The 50th Anniversary Dinner will take place on Saturday, November 14 at the Glen View Club in Golf. Share an evening of fellowship and fun, storytelling and reflection with former and present members, and enjoy a delicious dinner. Invitations have been mailed and reservations are due; please inform the church office of the contact information of former members you know want to be included.

The 50th Anniversary Jubilee worship service begins at 10:00 a.m. Sunday, November 15. Former pastors will take part in the service and the preacher will be former Metro Chicago Synod Bishop Kenneth Olsen. Remembering the past, we rededicate ourselves to the mission and ministry of the Lutheran Church of the Ascension in our community, our nation and throughout the world. A special time of fellowship will follow worship.

Thanks to all who are sharing stories and remembrances and songs and photos. Yours are welcome! Many hands are working to decorate and celebrate. Yours are welcome! Contact the church office to offer to help.

Ascension Women's Luncheon Thursday, November 5th Hackney's on Lake

Our guest speaker for the November luncheon will be Joan Worthem, the Director of Development in External relations of the interfaith refugee and Immigration Ministries. This will be an exciting program! The luncheon is open to all Ascension women and their guests. For more information, please contact Jan Leverenz at 847-668-6880.