

The Witness
August 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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In this Issue:

<i>From the Pastor</i>	2
<i>Focus on Health</i>	3
<i>Reach Out Through God's Love</i>	4-5
<i>Worship</i>	6
<i>Children's Ministry</i>	7
<i>From our Council President</i>	8
<i>Property Team</i>	8
<i>50th Anniversary Jubilee</i>	9



ELCA Churchwide Assembly to Consider Significant Issues in August

At the 2009 Churchwide Assembly to be held in Minneapolis, August 17-23, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America will consider a number of significant issues, chief among them being a proposed social statement on human sexuality and related recommendations on ministry policies.

In February of this year, the task force for ELCA studies on sexuality released a proposed social statement on human sexuality, a document that we had the opportunity to examine and discuss here at Ascension during an Adult Forum this past April. The document is the culmination of an eight-year process of discussions by the task force and a wide range of advisors, reports to the whole church, hearings on a draft statement during 2008, and consideration by most of the 65 synod assemblies earlier this year, many of which have sent recommendations of their own (known as "memorials") to the churchwide assembly. As with all social statements of the ELCA, the proposed statement on human sexuality is grounded in Biblical teachings and the theology of the Lutheran church. The proposed statement affirms "that the greatest sexual intimacies...should be matched with and sheltered both by the highest level of binding commitment and by social and legal protection, such as found in marriage." In another area the proposed statement acknowledges that the church has not reached a consensus regarding the existence of same-gendered, lifelong, monogamous relationships, and invites church members to trust the "bound conscience" of people who hold divergent views.

A related, but separate document to the proposed social statement on human sexuality is a report and recommendation on ministry policies, which sets forth a process in the ELCA by which "congregations that choose to do so" might "recognize, support, and hold publicly accountable life-long monogamous, same-gendered relationships." The recommendation also makes a provision for "finding a way for people in such publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gendered relationships to serve as rostered leaders of this church."

In other business the 2009 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA will consider a full communion relationship with the United Methodist Church, funding of the HIV and AIDS strategy, a Lutheran Malaria Initiative, and a proposal to begin the process toward the development of a social statement on justice for women.

More information about the 2009 Churchwide Assembly is on the ELCA's web site at www.elca.org (scroll to the bottom of the page and click on "Churchwide Assembly" underneath the "Summer Events" heading). Full texts of documents that voting members to the churchwide assembly have received are available at that web site, in addition to a variety of news stories pertaining to the assembly. That site will also be a good location to check for updates throughout the week that the churchwide assembly is in session.

ELCA Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson has called on people throughout the church to a time of prayer in the days leading up to the churchwide assembly. We trust that the Holy Spirit may indeed guide the work of the churchwide assembly—and all of us—as we further the mission of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Dennis Bushkofsky

Interim Pastor

Focus on Health



Picking the Best Fresh Produce

If you're heading out to pick up some of the season's finest produce, take a moment to review these tips for picking the best of the bunch.

When it comes to choosing vegetables, remember the following tips:

- Tomatoes should be smooth, somewhat firm and have a slight aroma.
- Choose asparagus that is firm, bright green in color and with tight tips.
- The best broccoli has compact clusters of tightly closed, dark green florets. Avoid heads with yellow florets or thick, woody stems.
- Beets should be smooth skinned and leaves should be dark green.
- Summer squash should be firm with smooth skin and should feel heavy for its size.
- Pick potatoes that are firm and smooth with no wrinkles, sprouts, cracks, bruises, decay or bitter green areas.

Remember these tips for choosing the freshest fruits:

- Choose blueberries that are plump and have a light-grayish coating on the surface.
- For raspberries or blackberries, pick firm, plump, well-shaped berries. If they are soft or discolored, they are overripe. Avoid containers that look stained from overripe berries.
- Honeydew should have a waxy white to cream colored rind and barely tinged green.
- Cantaloupes should have pronounced netting, the stem area should be soft to the touch and the melon should smell sweet.
- Peaches should be slightly soft and smell sweet

CPR-AED-First Aid Training

Thursday, August 6

An Automated External Defibrillator - AED - is now mounted on the wall outside the church office. The AED is a device that analyzes the heart's electrical rhythm and, if necessary, prompts a rescuer to deliver a shock to a person experiencing sudden cardiac arrest. CPR training, including the use of the AED, will be offered on Thursday, August 6, 2:30-5:00 p.m. at Ascension Church. First Aid instruction will follow at 5:30 p.m. This life-saving training will benefit you at home, at work, in public. Sign up on the bulletin board in Fellowship Hall for either or both training sessions or contact me in the church office to learn more.

Flu Prevention Clinic

The Health Ministry Team invites you to save the date of Sunday, October 4 for the annual flu prevention clinic at church; pneumonia vaccine will also be available. Early immunization is recommended this year.

Peace and good health to you!

Gail Price

Blood Drive Thanks!

Thank these people who volunteered to donate blood at the LifeSource summer blood drive on Sunday, July 12. LifeSource regrets and sincerely apologizes for any delays that were experienced that morning and joins us in thanking you for sharing the gift of life! Please rest assured that this issue had been addressed and will not occur at future blood drives. A special thanks to Terry and Ruth Willason, Fran Gustafson, and Helen Costello for setting up and running the blood drive. Ascension's next blood drive will be Sunday, October 18.

Reach Out Through God's Love

Lutheran Church of the Ascension Summer 2009 Refugee Resettlement Family of four from Iraq

We don't have an arrival date from IRIM yet but we do know this. . .

- They fled Iraq in August 2006 and were officially registered in Feb 2007 in Amman, Jordan, where they now are living.
- Arabic is their native language.
- They are Sunni Muslims.

Mohammed Fadel Joad (father), born February 9, 1975, is mechanic (2 year vocational school degree/certificate after high school). He owned a furniture shop in Iraq for 6 years before fleeing. He worked as a mechanic in a factory in Jordan for 6 months. He reads, writes and speaks some English.

Rana Tariq Al-Sheikhli Abdullah (mother), born November 7, 1974, is an accountant (university degree). She worked as an accountant at a bank in Iraq for 6+ years before fleeing. She has had two different accounting jobs in Jordan: at a bank and at the factory where her husband worked. She reads, writes and speaks some English.

Rawan Mohammed Fadel (daughter), born September 1, 2000 is a student who speaks no English.

Rayan Mohammed Fadel (daughter), born September 2, 2005, speaks no English.

One of the father's friends is here already and would like to provide the food for this family when they arrive. The friend, however, is also a new arrival and therefore cannot provide support beyond the donation of food.

Contact Pam Carlson to volunteer or if you have any questions, p Carlson640@comcast.net.

Habitat for Humanity



The building program is moving along and I thank those of you who have participated. Plan on coming again, and you can bring a friend. Our next congregational work date is Saturday, August 15. We are about halfway through the year and our contributions, so far, are slightly less than last year. Keep this ministry in mind when you are feeling philanthropic. A family of four is hopeful that they will become homeowners this year. Let's get this house finished by November!

Bob Reid

Greater Chicago Food Depository Hunger Walk

Approximately 3,524 meals (\$881 where \$1 = 4 meals) are being provided by Ascension people as a result of your donations to the Greater Chicago Food Depository Hunger Walk which took place on Saturday, June 20. Hundreds of people walked the paths along the Chicago lakeshore from Montrose to Foster and back. Ask Lois Giberson and Gail Price to tell you more about the walk. The Northfield Township Food Pantry, recipient of our donations, sends a big "Thank You!"

Green Team Goes to the Farmers' Market

Members of Ascension's Green Team will be at the Glenview Farmers' Market on Saturday, Aug. 22, from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m., telling visitors about the steps our congregation has taken to care for creation. We feel privileged to have been invited to offer "green inspirations" at the market's new Green Table, a part of the village's Go Green Glenview! campaign, which is co-sponsored by the Glenview Natural Resource Commission and the Park District. The mission of the Green Table is to build community, promote conversation and provide education about environmental sustainability.

The Glenview Farmers Market, located at the historic Wagner Farm, attracted an average of more than 1200 visitors each Saturday last year. Its mission is to enhance and strengthen sustainable lifestyles through education and support of local farmers and artisans.

Throughout the farmers' market season, the Green Table will feature an array of topics that are vital to our local environment, from Seed Banking by the Chicago Botanic Garden to Lake Michigan by the Alliance for the Great Lakes, and from Sustainable Seafood by the Shedd Aquarium and Energy Efficiency at Home by Abt Electronics.

Stop by and say hello on August 22 as we share what we have learned with people from other communities of faith. And take advantage of the Green Table resources every time you visit the Glenview Farmers' Market. It's located across Wagner Rd. from the Wagner Farm, just north of Lake Avenue. Parking is in the lot at SS Peter & Paul Greek Orthodox Church. Hours are from 8 a.m. to noon every Saturday through October 10.

Carol Mueller



Worship Notes

We are officially underway recording "Winnergy", the song co-written by Carol Mueller and myself that rallies behind wind energy as a way to conserve the earth's natural resources. We have recorded the percussion, bass and piano tracks, and will probably be finished by the time you read this. The recording has been going exceptionally well so far and I want to express deep gratitude to the devoted current and former members of our Ascension Celebrate! team--Chris Rude, Kevin Kosnik, George Lales, Chris Forte and Gloria Sutter--as well as our children's choir. You will be astounded by the results of their labor and inspired by how they have used their gifts to lift up God's creation.

Coming up is Rally Day on Sunday, September 13 at 10 a.m. We are planning on the usual outdoor worship service followed by games, activities and food, so be sure to save the date and bring a friend. We are going to finalize the details of this day at our next Worship Team meeting on Tuesday, August 4 at 7 p.m., so if you'd like to be involved, please come and join the discussion.

The next event in our concert series features music directors of Ascension, past and present in celebration of our 50th anniversary. Participants will include Robert Lind, Jill Hunt, Patrick Shebeck, Minkyoo and myself. This event takes place on Saturday, October 3 at 4:30 p.m. Please come and give a warm welcome back to your former music directors!

There's more to come on the goals and strategies for worship this year. We are working hard to make the worship a deeper spiritual experience for all, and we invite your feedback as we try some different approaches starting in the fall.

Finally, we'd like to remind you that there are four new choral pieces being written in honor of Ascension's 50th anniversary. These works come from composers Dana Kaufman, Ben Fried, Justin Ehrman and myself and will be premiered during services throughout the 2009-2010 program year. The dates of these premieres are as follows: October 4, 2009, November 15, 2009, February 14, 2010 and May 16, 2010.

Dana, a sophomore at Amherst College, has written a composition for us before and has been involved in playing and singing during our summer worship services. Ben Fried and Justin Ehrman were participants in a program I ran at the Music Institute of Chicago this past year called the Composers' Lab. They were awarded commissions to write pieces for Ascension at the Composers' Lab Showcase and Competition held in March 2009. They, like Dana, are magnificently talented young people, and I hope you will make it a point to hear their works and introduce yourselves.

As we approach our 5th anniversary at Ascension, Minkyoo and I would like to express our gratitude for a profound 5 years. We have truly appreciated the opportunity to serve and look forward to growing in Spirit with all of you here at Ascension.

Peace,

Mischa & Minkyoo



In our last article we forgot to thank two people who helped us out with VBS this year. Heather Glowacki worked with the preschoolers, sometimes with baby Alexandra in the baby carrier right along side of her. What dedication! Elise Brekke worked with the kindergarten and 1st graders and did a fabulous job keeping them focused while having quite a bit of fun! Thanks to both of you! Without our volunteers, we could not have VBS. Be sure to check out the pictures of VBS on page 6 of *The Witness*. You will find additional photos on the church bulletin boards!

I also want to thank the 50th Anniversary team for the activities they have organized this summer. The Wendella Boat Cruise, generously sponsored by the Borgstroms, was a fabulous time for members of all generations. It was great to see all the kids there and we enjoyed our time with all of you! There is another great family function coming up on August 16th, the church picnic at the Swedish Gym Club on the shores of Pistakee Lake in Johnsburg, IL. It will be a great way to wrap up the summer before school starts.

On a different topic, this past year the Sunday School children brought offerings to be donated to Heifer International. These offerings, when combined with children's offerings designated for Heifer International from a previous year, enabled us to donate livestock to 8 different families across the globe this summer. Based on the Sunday School children's input, we requested the following to be given through Heifer International: two trios of rabbits, two flocks of chickens, one flock of ducks/geese, bees, 1 llama, and 1 water buffalo. This is fabulous and inspiring. Thank you to all the families who had their children bring an offering.

One of our goals for the Children's Ministry is to teach the children the importance of stewardship and giving. The Children's Ministry Team is exploring options for involving children in worthy causes. We are looking for parent volunteers to help us to reach this goal!

On August 30th, there will be a children's activity during the Ministries Fair, so please plan to attend worship and the Ministries Fair that Sunday. Rally Day this year will be held Sunday, September 13. At the last Worship Team meeting, it was decided that Rally Day will have a theme of "Rally Day," meaning baseball/sports, rally hat, rally around the Church ministries. There will be opportunities for outreach and outdoor activities for all ages that day. We will need your help in making this a great activity for all and there will be lots of different ways you will be able to share your talents! Let us know if you are interested in participating.

September 20th will be the first official day of Sunday School. Plans are underway for a great year! If you have children ages 3 to 5th grade, be sure to get them registered! (A registration form is included in this issue of *The Witness*.) That is also the weekend of Heifer Hoedown at historic Wagner Farm in Glenview, so make sure to pencil this on your calendars! We would like to double last year's number of families from Ascension who participate in this exciting afternoon event.

Summer is a great time to worship with your family! We hope to see you all in church.

With God's Love,

Beth and Greg

A Message From Your Council President

We are (re)building to grow. Many of you have shown keen interest in revitalizing our facility, including (among other things) replacing the parking lot, redeveloping the administrative offices, and updating the sanctuary. Both during and following the open forum meeting on June 7, members of your Congregation Council heard some strongly held, but divergent views about the office redevelopment component. Over the last three years, plans for that work have been developed by the architectural firms known as JNA and as Serena Sturm, as well as our own Duain Claiborne. A consistent theme running through your comments has been that whatever we do, it should be undertaken pursuant to a comprehensive plan that provides for all of the work needed on our facility to be done in stages and in a financially responsible way. Much has changed in the last two years, not the least of which are our membership and the economy. Unfortunately, no one has yet surveyed the current congregation to learn its appetite for a major capital campaign or borrowing to fund such a plan.

Many members attended the follow-up congregational meeting on July 12 to discuss the boiler replacement and office redevelopment. The boiler project is proceeding. In the interest of deciding what should be done in a prudent and fiscally responsible way with respect of the rest of our facility, I proposed we appoint a team of objective, experienced and trusted congregation members to review the entire situation and develop a comprehensive plan. Following that meeting, your Council approved the appointment of this group, which will be headed by Finance Chair, Andrew McCune. We will have a lot to share with you in September. Thanks for your good thoughts, patience and prayers. Keep lifting up!

Stephen Schwab

Property Team

The Council has approved soliciting bids for the boiler project and hiring an engineering firm to write the specifications for our new boiler. This will assure we install units that are the right size to meet our requirements and it will assure contractors will bid on the same set of specifications. This is a major project for us and we will ask for bids from three HVAC contractors.

Our "curb appeal" has improved with the addition of several new plantings in front of the sign facing the Willow/Sunset intersection, and several sprinkler heads have been added to the area to improve watering in that section of our property. Also, all of the trees have been "ringed" and "mulched," adding to their appearance and health. The area adjacent to the rear parking lot facing Willow has been cleaned up and we are evaluating the possibility of replanting in that area or converting it to grass.

The timing device that controls the exterior lighting broke last month and you may have noticed a lack of lighting in the evening. That has been repaired and is functioning correctly.

The window replacement adjacent to the door leading to Memorial Gardens and repair of the sidewalk leading to the rear entrance are still on our list of things to do and we added two additional items--a fire alarm system and a possible remodeling of the women's restroom. Both of these items will take time to evaluate.

50th Anniversary Jubilee Celebration

Oberammergau Passion Play 2010 and Lutheran Heritage Sites Tour

While September 2010 seems far distant, plans are well underway for Ascension people and friends to travel to Germany. We will attend the historic presentation of Jesus' suffering, death and resurrection in the Bavarian village of Oberammergau and visit cities, cathedrals and churches which played a significant role in the life of Martin Luther. An informational trip meeting will be held on Wednesday evening, July 29, 7:00 p.m. at church. Contact Gail Price at church or cell 847-612-2979 to learn more about the trip.

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Ascension Picnic at the Swedish Gym Club

Sunday, August 16, 1:00 p.m.

Helen Costello invites the congregation to picnic at the Swedish Gym Club on the shores of Pistakee Lake in Johnsburg, Illinois, an hour from church, on Sunday, August 16.

- Do you like to swim? Bring a suit and towel.
- Fish? Bring your pole and bait.
- Play outdoor games? Shuffleboard, volleyball and bocce available. What else could you bring?
- Sit and watch the water? Bring a lawn chair or sit on a picnic bench.

Plan to bring a dish to share (snacks, salad, side dish or dessert) and contribute to the cost of hamburgers, brats, hotdogs and buns. Beverages will be available for purchase. Sign up on the poster at church where driving directions are available. Want to share a ride? Carpools will leave church at noon. See Helen Costello at church for more information.

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50th Anniversary Jubilee Weekend

Saturday, November 14 -- Anniversary Dinner

Sunday, November 15 -- Anniversary Worship

Plan to be present for fellowship and worship on this anniversary weekend. Invitations to the dinner will be mailed in early fall.

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Pictorial Directory

The entire congregation is grateful to Caryl Scott and the pictorial directory team for arranging and managing the May directory photography sessions at church. Thanks to Marlynn Anderson, Elaine and Doug Chester, and Janice Greenwald and especially Caryl for their efforts.

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Ravinia Review

Garrison Keillor and the live radio broadcast of *A Prairie Home Companion* drew a great group of people from Ascension to Ravinia for the first summer anniversary fellowship event.