

*The Witness*  
August 2010

# 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>	2-3
<i>Worship Notes</i>	4
<i>Children's Ministry</i>	5
<i>Youth Ministry</i>	6-7
<i>Adult Spiritual Growth</i>	8
<i>Reach Out Through God's Love</i>	9
<i>Focus on Health</i>	10-11
<i>Property</i>	12



### *THE GREATEST OF THESE IS LOVE*

When this edition of the Witness goes to print, Mary and I will be on vacation so I have two choices. The first is not to submit an article for August. The second is to write my article early and submit it well in advance of the deadline. So choosing the second option, I now sit in the Gurnee Panera on Friday, July 2<sup>nd</sup> writing an article that you will likely not receive until late July. It feels somewhat strange.

Mary and I are taking this trip to the San Francisco Bay area as an early celebration of our 30<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. Our actual anniversary date is August 23<sup>rd</sup>, but Mary will already be back at school at that time. So we plan to toast to our thirty years of marriage dining in a restaurant in Wine Country!

My how these thirty years have flown by! We were married on a hot August Saturday at St. Andrew's Lutheran Church on the northwest side of Chicago. I had just finished 10 weeks of CPE (Clinical Pastoral Education) at Loyola Hospital. The wedding took place just hours after my final shift. I would soon begin my year-long Internship at St. Andrew's, and so the week before the wedding also involved moving into the parsonage that would be our home for that year. It was a time of excitement as well as stress.

Being young and depending solely on Mary's salary to pay for the wedding, we didn't have the money to plan that dream honeymoon. Since we were given a complete set of camping gear for a wedding present, we ended up camping on an island. Sounds exotic? Not really. It was Beaver Island, Michigan which is located in the middle of Lake Michigan about forty miles outside of Charlevoix. What an experience that was!

That was how our marriage began. And now thirty years later we reflect upon our lives together between then and now. Mary often says she fell in love with Dennis the musician but married Dennis the pastor. She has learned to adjust to life as clergy spouse and she has adapted to every change, every move we have made along the way in support of my ministry.

Mary's career has also taken some twists and turns. She has worked for the Federal Government as a public health officer, for Chicago Easter Seals as an administrator, for two family-owned accounting firms, and now for Antioch High school as a special education teacher. Each change brought its own set of challenges and opportunities.

Our greatest blessings have come with the gift of family and friends. Two years into our marriage our daughter Katie came into our lives. Twenty years later she brought her husband Charles into our lives. And nearly two years ago we welcomed our granddaughter, Kamryn. We can't imagine what our lives would have been like without this gift of family. We have also been blessed with the many friends we have made along the way both within and outside of the congregations I have served, including those we are making in this, the first year of my ministry at Ascension.

Indeed these thirty years have flown by. And yet the words of one of the lessons read at our wedding continue to guide us:

*Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends....And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love. (1 Corinthians 13:4-8; 13)*

Grace and peace to you all,

*Pastor Dennis Kelly*

## Worship Notes

Have you thought about the music in our worship? Listening to music is a personal experience, and everyone has an opinion about what he or she likes and doesn't like. I liked a song we sang in worship recently, but Mischa thought it sounded like a campfire song from the '80's. A song that he picked for communion reminded me of a dark, smoky jazz bar. Obviously, what one person enjoys doesn't always suit everyone; however, each piece of music speaks to somebody, whether that be you, your friends and family or the person sitting in the pew across from you. The important thing is that we recognize that all of our music is written for the glory of God, whom we worship together as one family in Christ.

Saturday evening worship services are scheduled for **July 24** and **August 28 at 5 p.m.** Obviously, by the time you read this, the July service will have already taken place, but you will have one more opportunity to experience this special service. This is a casual family service welcoming everybody of every age. If you want to have fun Saturday evening with your friends and family, join us after the service for a potluck dinner. We look forward to seeing you there and we welcome your feedback.

Rally Day worship will take place on our church lawn on **September 12<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m.** (ONE SERVICE ONLY). Detailed information and needs for the service will be announced toward the end of August. If you have children who would like to be involved in the service, please contact Lisa Rude.

Blessings,

*Mischa & Minkyoo*



Hope everybody is having an amazing summer...it's already August? Really? Where does the time go! Beth and I would like to use our article space this month to share some photos of VBS 2010 and to thank all of those who shared their time and talents and volunteered with VBS this year. Thank you to Diane Carlson and Susan Vonnegut for helping with registration night and Pastor Kelly for being there on Wednesday evening to say prayer before the volunteer dinner. It was also so great to have some of our "younger" members there all week helping out as well. Thanks to the Reilly girls (Meghan for the second year and Caroline for her first) and former VBSer-turned-volunteer Olivia Engling. Beth and I really enjoyed having you with us all week and loved the energy and enthusiasm you brought with you every night! A big thank you also goes out to Ruth Newman for being our Arts and Crafts leader for the second year in a row. We are so lucky to have you, Ruth! We can't forget to mention our colleague/co-worker Vanessa Young. For the second year in a row you have jumped right in and helped Beth and me (and the rest of the planning committee) with anything and everything we could need, thanks for continuing to be a part of VBS, Vanessa! A last thank you goes out to those of you who signed up on our donation lists. Thanks to Mary Kelly, Lois Vining, Diane Carlson, Gail Duke and Sue Peterson. It was another memorable week for the kids...full of prayer, song and fun activities! We are already looking forward to VBS 2011! Please keep checking the website, weekly bulletin and your emails for upcoming dates and times for Sunday School registration, teacher training dates and Rally Day too!

*See you in church!  
Greg and Beth*

## **YOUTH MINISTRY**

Summer is flying by...can you believe it's August already? We've got one last month of summer-specific youth activities to enjoy before school year programming begins, so I hope you'll join us for a few of the events listed here for high school and middle school youth to get involved in over the next few weeks!

> **Wednesday, August 4<sup>th</sup>, 11:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m., trip to Wrigley Field for Brewers vs. Cubs**

Join us for a day at the ballpark as the Chicago Cubs take on the Milwaukee Brewers! The game starts at 1:20 p.m., and we will be taking public transportation to the park and back. Cost is \$15 (plus the cost of food in the park), and the permission slip is available on the Youth page of the Ascension website or via the Ascension Youth Ministry Facebook page. Friends are definitely invited and welcome to join us! Space is limited, so please RSVP by Wednesday, July 28<sup>th</sup> if you're interested in attending the game! (One other adult chaperone is needed; please contact Vanessa if you're interested and able to help. Thanks!)

> **Sunday, August 8<sup>th</sup>, 8:15 a.m. - 6:00 p.m., Lutheran Day @ Six Flags**

The ELCA Metro Chicago Synod's Youth Ministry Network has organized this day for Chicago area youth and any members/friends of ELCA congregation's to enjoy a day of roller coasters, water rides and Lutheran fellowship at Six Flags! Tickets are \$26 and are limited; contact Vanessa to learn more. Youth interested in participating will meet @ 8:15 a.m. to depart church and arrive at the park in time for the 9:30 a.m. 'Tailgate Worship' in the parking lot with youth from other area churches!

> **Weds., August 11<sup>th</sup>, 8:00 -10:00 p.m. LYFE Sunset Cinema: *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince***

Invite a friend and bring your blanket/lawn chair to join us for our third outdoor movie of the season! The films based on the 7<sup>th</sup> and final Harry Potter book will be released this fall and next spring, so come join us for a fun night to catch-up with this 6<sup>th</sup> installment of the HP series. An assortment of movie snacks and drinks are provided!

> **Tuesday, August 17<sup>th</sup>, 4:00 - 7:00 p.m., volunteering @ A Just Harvest Soup Kitchen (ages 12+)**

Five youth volunteers are needed to help again this month with food preparation and serving at this Rogers Park soup kitchen! Please sign-up in the Fellowship Hall or message me to indicate your interest in serving. A few Ascension families with confirmation or high school youth have gotten involved with this ministry during the past few summer months, so we invite you and your family to consider volunteering together for this great opportunity to love and serve people in need!

> **Saturday, August 21<sup>st</sup>, 7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., volunteering with Habitat for Humanity (ages 16+)**

Help build a house for a family in need with other Ascension members! Youth can volunteer for the full day (7:30 departure from church to begin at 8:00 a.m., and finish at 4:00 p.m. to back at church by 4:30 p.m.), or for half the day (either 7:30 - 12:30 p.m. or 12:30 to 4:30 p.m.). Let me know what time you're interested and able to volunteer so that we can arrange transportation, and

be sure to find the necessary waiver forms on the Youth page of the website. Don't forget your work gloves, sunscreen and bottle of water!

Some exciting new opportunities are coming up this fall as the 2010-2011 school year begins, for both Ascension's confirmation/middle school youth as well as high school youth. Please keep an eye on your email and regular mailbox for more information about changes to programming (dates and times for regular meetings), as well as some fun kick-off activities to get the year started. Plans are coming together for another great year of Ascension Youth Ministry!

Peace,

*Vanessa*

# Adult Spiritual Growth

## Know Your ABC!

The Ascension Book Club (ABC) is up and running and you are most welcome to join! The group meets the second Tuesday of each month at 10:00 a.m. in members' homes. ABC discusses works of contemporary fiction or non-fiction through the eyes of our faith.

The schedule through January is as follows.

July 20:	Hostess/leader: Susan Vonnegut	Book: <u>Sarah's Key</u> by Tatiana De Rosnay
August 10:	Hostess/leader: Gail Price	Book: <u>Little Bee</u> by Chris Cleave
September 14:	Hostess/leader: Alice Kosnik	Book: <u>The Help</u> by Kathy Stockett
October 12:	Hostess/leader: Debby Schwab	Book: <u>Shanghai Girls: A Novel</u> by Lisa See
November 9:	Hostess/leader: Gloria Rowley	Book: <u>The 19th Wife</u> by David Ebershaff
December 28:	Hostess/leader: Mary Kelly Mortenson	Book: <u>Stones Into Schools</u> by Greg
January 11:	Hostess/leader: Peg Sickeler	Book: <u>The Shack</u> by Wm. Paul Young

You are invited to ABC even if you can't attend every meeting. Just let the hostess or Alice Kosnik know you are coming! See you at ABC!



## Adult Library

A new addition to our Library this month is Dr. Timothy Johnson's **Finding God in the Questions**. Dr. Johnson, who you've probably seen as medical editor on ABC nightly news, discloses his personal journey of faith in this book. He shares with us his questions on the plausibility of God's existence, the significance of the person of Jesus, what he has come to believe, and what he still doubts. His thoughts and arguments are pursued with honesty and thoroughness, an intelligent and strong faith. This edition includes a new afterword, and a study guide of questions for personal reflection, along with an extensive selected readings resource.

This volume is catalogued under "Q - Inspirational", and is available for checkout.

*John Vonnegut*

# Reach Out Through God's Love

When we gather in worship, we hear the words of the Kyrie:

*That we may live out your impassioned response to the hungry and the poor; that we may live out truth and justice and grace, let us pray to the Lord, let us pray to the Lord.*

The refrain continues:

*Kyrie eleison, on our world and on our way.  
Kyrie eleison, ev'ry day.*

Lord, have mercy on us, every day. Teach us to care for the hungry and the poor, to represent truth and justice and God's grace in our daily lives. Whether we provide care through ministries of the church or in other ways, empower us to serve people in need. Amen.

## Refugee Resettlement

The Kafley Family thanks you! Yadu, Tika, and Yoshika are settling into life in Chicago and appreciate your visits and your kindness. They were so happy to meet you when they visited Ascension, and hope to return soon. To view a video of the Khudunabari refugee camp where the family lived for 18 years, go to <http://exilevoices.blogspot.com/2010/04/video-of-khudunabari-refugee-camp.html>

## Habitat for Humanity



One Saturday each month volunteers and friends from Ascension Church form a work crew to assist Habitat for Humanity Lake County in building affordable housing in the Waukegan neighborhood known as Carter Crossing. Four work dates remain this year: Saturdays, August 21, September 18, October 16, and November 20. We are always looking for willing volunteers, age 16 or better, to join the crew. Experience is not required to make a difference in a day! Let Bob Reid know if you will come, (847-256-5259 or email him at [rhreid1351@sbcglobal.net](mailto:rhreid1351@sbcglobal.net)) or sign up on the bulletin board at church.

In August a representative of the Lake County Habitat affiliate will be at Ascension to share stories of this Christian housing ministry and invite our support. Prayerfully consider how you might assist Habitat and make your check payable to Ascension church with Habitat on the memo line.

Donations of building materials are accepted for resale at Habitat's ReStore in Gurnee. Call 847-623-1020 x122 to discuss what you have available and to arrange delivery.

*Builder Bob*

## Focus on Health



Ascension Church cares about the whole person health, health of body, mind and spirit, of all people in our congregation and our communities. To promote good health, Ascension's Health Ministry sponsors activities and ministries which support wholeness.

Thank you to Ascension's recently-trained Safe Sitter instructors, Jeanne Barnas, Pam Carlson, Beth and Greg Peterson, and Michaela Ward. They took part in six hours of video preparation prior to teaching the Safe Sitter curriculum. And congratulations to the newest class of Safe Sitters who received babysitting training at church in July. They came from within and beyond the congregation and are now well prepared to care for young children. Safe Sitter is a medically accurate babysitting preparation program designed for boys and girls ages 11 to 13. It is nationally recognized for teaching students how to have fun with children while preparing them for emergencies and keeping them safe. We offer Safe Sitter classes periodically during the year. Invite your children, your neighbors, your grandchildren to take part in a future class. ***Better Sitters Today...Better Parents Tomorrow***

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Ascension volunteers and friends from the community took part in the LifeSource Blood Drive at church last month. The gift they shared is the gift of life; it cannot be replicated. It is estimated that 60% of the population is medically eligible to give blood, yet only 5% actually donates. If you missed the opportunity to donate at church, you may contact LifeSource directly at 877-543-3768 to schedule your donation at one of their convenient blood centers.

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Prayer strengthens people, those who pray and those who are prayed for. During communion, Stephen Ministers are available to pray privately with you at the side aisles. During the week, members of the Prayer Chain offer daily prayers for your confidential requests (write them on a purple request form in the Friendship Book).

At all times, you are encouraged to pray for the people whose names appear in the bulletin—they are strengthened by the power of your prayers. Ascension's homebound people appreciate your words of encouragement. You will find their contact information in the church office.

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**Yoga welcomes you!** Each Monday morning at 9:00 a.m. a growing group of yoga beginners meets in the Augustana Room; newcomers are always welcome! Care for your body, mind and spirit in this class. Bring a mat or towel, wear comfortable clothing, invite friends and neighbors. Cost is \$10 per class.

Hospitals do not notify the church of your need for admission or medical care without your express permission. Ascension's pastoral care team desires to be present with you to share prayer when you experience health concerns. Please notify the church office of your needs or contact Pastor Kelly or me directly.

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Ascension's Health Ministry has a variety of donated medical equipment available for your use. Usually on hand are mobility devices—walkers, crutches, and canes—as well as bathing assists— toilet risers, commodes, shower chairs and a bath bench. See me to arrange to borrow this equipment or to discuss potential donation of usable durable medical equipment.

Peace and good health in Christ,  
*Gail Price*

# Property

The Property Committee has been very active the first six months of 2010 with several projects being completed. The landscape adjacent to the church has been changed, a new boiler installed (yes, it is "green"), both men's and women's restrooms have been renovated, an enclosed storage room has been created adjacent to Fellowship Hall and a new conference room has been created in the room located to the left of the front entrance. This room will also be used as a private area for families when special services such as funeral or wedding are taking place at our church. Additional work on the telephone system and cooling condensers has been completed, and we've made unexpected repairs in our mechanical room and the fire suppression system. This is work you normally would not notice, but as our building and supporting systems age, they do need attention. All of the above has kept us busy in the first half of this year and we still have a few projects to work on before the end of the year. Plus, it is time to start thinking about and planning for major equipment changes that will be required within the next 5-10 years. For example, the condensing unit dedicated to the sanctuary and the five furnaces dedicated to the Education Wing are 20 years old. All of them are functioning today and are of no immediate concern. We do preventive maintenance on our equipment and repair items when unexpected breakdowns occur, but eventually they will need to be replaced.

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**Thank you, Don!** After more than fifteen years as our volunteer handyman, Don Gordon is retiring. Don is one of the "quiet" volunteers here at Ascension that faithfully fulfills all of his responsibilities and more, never asking for a "thank you" or special recognition. He is here every Tuesday morning doing whatever needs to be done and paying special attention to our lighting. He has set up an inventory of the bulbs we use and promptly replaces any that have burned out. Yes, even those that are 30 feet above our heads in the sanctuary or those that are even higher in the parking lot. The June 27<sup>th</sup> coffee hour was dedicated to Don as a way of saying "thank you" and providing the recognition he deserves. The next time you see Don please shake his hand and say "thank you."

*Kurt Vining, Property Chair*