

*The Witness*  
May 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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*This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. (Psalm 118:24)*

These words are taken from the Psalm text for Easter Sunday. The Psalm, when connected with the other texts for Easter, celebrates a fundamental belief in a God that saves God's people from those things that threaten the promise of abundant life. The day that is celebrated in verse 24 is that day in which God's people recognize that God has acted to deliver them.

In a sense, this day is every day of our lives as followers of Jesus Christ. Every day is a new day! Every day is an opportunity to recognize God's activity in the midst of our lives. Every day is a journey from fear to love.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all of you who made our journey from Ash Wednesday to Easter Sunday so meaningful. Throughout this Lenten and Holy Week journey, we reflected upon a God whose love is steadfast and constantly calls us to come home again. We are invited to take a journey home that takes us from fear to love, from lives of despair to lives of hopefulness, from darkness to light, from chaos to creation, from brokenness to wholeness, from bondage to freedom. It is God's love as shown to us through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ that makes it possible for us to come home to God.

We now turn our attention towards the next great festival of the church: Pentecost. On Sunday, May 23, we will gather to celebrate the events that gave birth to the church. The same spirit/breath that gave birth to creation, the same/spirit breath that gave life to all living things, the same spirit/breath that inspired the great prophets of the Old Testament now enters into the lives of Jesus' disciples. With this creative breath, the church is born and followers of Jesus Christ are empowered to tell the story of God's salvation. This story is captured in the words of the following hymn: *O Living Breath of God (ELW #407)*

- 1 *O living Breath of God, wind at the beginning upon the waters;  
O living Breath of God, bearing the creation to wondrous birth;*
- 2 *O living Breath of God, by whose pow'r the Son came to birth among us;  
O living Breath of God, who to the creation gives life a new;*
- 3 *O living Breath of God, bearing us to life through baptismal waters;  
O living Breath of God, sighing with creation for freedom's birth;*

*Refrain*

*Come now, and fill our spirits; pour out your gifts abundant.  
O living Breath of God, Holy Spirit, breathe in us as we pray.*

This spirit/breath is moving amongst us at Lutheran Church of the Ascension. I look forward to seeing where it leads us.

Yours in Christ,  
Dennis Kelly, pastor

## Worship Notes

What a night we had on Maundy Thursday! The cast and crew for "Beneath the Upper Room" were phenomenal and over 100 people participated in that service. From the opening soundtrack to the closing with the meal in fellowship hall—which included stuffed dates, dolmas (grape leaves) and other Mediterranean delights—it was a complete sensory experience that really brought us back to the time of the last supper and helped us feel what it must have been like. Again, a big thanks to Linda Clinton for pulling this all together and for all of you who assisted in making this a night to remember!

Our Good Friday and Easter services were also very moving events. The Easter services were nearly equally attended this year and there was a wonderful spirit as nearly all of the worship leaders of our church (choir, children's choir and praise team) contributed their gifts to this joyous celebration. It was good to connect with all of you that day and spend time together during the Easter Breakfast in between. Thanks to all who contributed to the worship and the meal!

At the time I am writing this, we are ramping up for our Spring Musical *All Nature Sings*. Rehearsals have been going extremely well and there is a ton of creative energy going into this. I anticipate a very inspired morning of worship as we look at the many gifts of creation God has bestowed upon this planet. Hopefully, by the time you read this, you will have seen the production. If you were inspired by what you saw, we encourage you to volunteer to be part of future events.

Just to remind you, we have been making changes to the Celebrate service. We are attempting to make it more accessible to a broader cross-section of our existing membership and a more welcoming experience for the visitor. Beginning in May, we will be using liturgical setting 8 of the ELW during both the 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. services in order to provide more continuity between our two services. Please take time to come to the 11:00 service and see what is taking shape. Your presence and feedback would be most valuable.

The April 24 concert has been POSTPONED. Unfortunately, we had to postpone the first of two of our spring concerts, featuring cellist, Nicholas Photinos and pianist, Yasuko Oura. The timing just wasn't working as we got closer to the date, but rest assured, you will have an opportunity to hear this dynamic couple perform in the fall.

Saturday, May 15 - The **Danae Quartet** is currently still scheduled to perform at Ascension. The 'Danae' is a string Quartet comprised of Music Institute of Chicago Academy Students. MIC's Academy, housed on the Ravinia campus, is home to some of the greatest pre-college musical talent in the country and the member of the Danae Quartet are no exception. Among their honors are a bronze medal at the Junior division of the renowned Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition as well as a Silver medal at the 2009 St. Paul String Quartet Competition.

Finally, I would like to invite any and all of you who sing or play an instrument to come forward and let Minkyoo and/or me know what you do. We would like to include as many of your gifts during our summer worship services as we can. You could do something for a single service or more often if you like. It is a blessing to be able to share our gifts in worship. We hope you will take part in this opportunity!

Peace,

*Mischa & Minkyoo*



As the days get longer and the weather gets warmer, we begin to wind down another year of Sunday School...and what a year it has been! So many amazing events, so many lasting memories...the latest being our spring musical *All Nature Sings!* The Ascension Children's Choir (Wynton Rude, Olivia Engling, Maddie Peterson, Spencer Peterson, Owen Engling, Liam Rude, Faith Hincapie, Emery Engling and Eli Hincapie, along with Colin Hanus and under the direction of Mischa Zupko) took the lead in this production, which also included many of our Sunday School students (whether it be singing along, painting murals which decorated the Sanctuary, helping with props or taking pictures to remember these events) with a few of the Confirmation students as well...everything was pulled together through the hard work of Lisa Rude who choreographed the dancing and worked with the kids on their lines. Lisa was assisted by both Beth and me, along with Angela Erland. We hope you all enjoyed this beautifully performed and expertly organized show as much as the kids and directors enjoyed working on it for you. A special thank you goes out to Angela, Jan Hincapie and Sue Peterson for their costume donations for the pre-schoolers. So many hours of planning and rehearsing...thank you kids for all of your hard work and thank you to all those involved in this wonderful show!

As we have begun to wrap up our Sunday School year (ending later this month) our eyes begin to turn towards VBS 2010...High Seas Expedition, Exploring the Mighty Love of God! We hope that you will all join us the week of Monday June 21st through Friday June 25th (this year to be held at St David's Episcopal Church in Glenview) for this action-packed, high-energy week...last year we had 104 kids from 7 different congregations in the area...and through an exciting week filled with dramas, arts and crafts, games and recreation and of course music all those in attendance (including the many volunteers...in excess of 40!) we all learned about God's love that he shares with us and through us! Beth and I would encourage each and every one of our Sunday School-aged kids to join us for this week (and bring mom or dad along too...we could always use volunteers!). Please keep an eye out for registration forms at church and if you would like to inquire about volunteer opportunities or ask any questions about the possibility, please be sure to contact Beth or me. Be sure to register early as space is limited and we did reach capacity last year!

As of press time Beth and I had not received all of the names of those taking the classes and receiving their First Communion on Sunday May 2nd, we would like to congratulate you all though and will do so again (by name) in next month's Witness.

Soccer balls being dribbled and kicked around the "pitch"...baseballs jumping off bats and being thrown around the diamond...playgrounds filled with laughing kids...or maybe just a quiet walk or bike ride with family members...we've stuck it out through another very long Chicago winter for the days of spring. Get out and enjoy these special times!

See you in church!

Greg and Beth

## YOUTH MINISTRY

Ascension youth have been busy during the past month, and here are some photos to let you know what we've been up to!



Confirmation youth assembled Lutheran World Relief health kits for victims of the earthquake in Haiti, as well as rolled bandages for a Global Health Ministries project. 84 health kits were made and 50+ bandages were rolled all on one night. Great job everyone!! A big thanks to Anne Reilly, Julie Oimoen, Nina McCune and Gail Price for their help with this project!

Our second youth-hosted Easter Breakfast was another great event! Around 100 people from the Ascension community joined us for the breakfast, and nearly 30 children participated in the Easter Egg Hunt out on the front lawn! Many, MANY thanks go to all the amazing volunteers who made this morning possible, especially the Barnas Family, the Althoff Family, the Weinstein Family, Lauren & Kenny Michalec, Colin & Ethan McCune, Beth & Greg Peterson, and special thanks to Elizabeth Rude for taking the great photos above and Elaine & Doug Chester for donating all of the candy for the Easter Egg Hunt!

There are several activities for both high school and confirmation youth during the month of May, so be sure to keep an eye on your email and the mailbox for updates and postcards about youth events throughout the month!

Peace,  
*Vanessa*

## Adult Spiritual Growth



**10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.**

Our Sunday Adult Education series continues through May 2. This series, entitled *The Easter Jesus and the Good Friday Church: The Centrality of the Resurrection in the New Testament*, is presented by Gregory Athnos, Emeritus Professor, North Park University. The topic for May 2<sup>nd</sup> is *The Gospel According to Paul*. Bring your coffee and join us in the Augustana Room.

With this fourth and final presentation in the series, the Sunday Adult Education program year will officially come to a close. Thank you for participating and growing spiritually with us.

If you would like to be involved in future Sunday Adult Education offerings, please let Pastor Kelly know. We are always eager to have new ideas for our adult education programs.



### Adult Library

Not brand new, but always popular in our library, is the "gentle fiction" of Jan Karon. We have a total of seven titles by this author, most from the Mitford years series. Karon's are warm and engrossing stories of everyday life, books with lovable characters, humor, pathos, drama, and romance. These are wholesome, spiritual books with a common thread: life requires friendship and trust. Enjoy one or several!

These books are catalogued under "W - Fiction" along with other novels, and are available for self-checkout in the Library, which is located in the Augustana Room.

Thursday  
BIBLE  
STUDY



**10 a.m. – 11 a.m.**

Adult Bible study has a new day for its final Bible study this program year. Our current study began on April 15<sup>th</sup> and will continue through May 27<sup>th</sup>. Please note that it is on **Thursday** mornings. This seven week study, led by Pastor Kelly, focuses on the New Testament book, *The Acts of the Apostles*. Acts is a sequel to the Gospel of Luke and continues the narrative account of the early church. Come join us as we meet those who led the early church - Peter, James (the Lord's brother), Paul, and others. We learn how, in the power of the Spirit, they were able to carry the gospel "to the ends of the earth."

### Ascension Book Club Forming

Do you enjoy reading contemporary fiction and non-fiction? Do you sometimes wish you could discuss the moral/religious themes in these books with Christian friends? If so, the ABC (Ascension Book Club) may be for you!

As with most book clubs, we will meet regularly to discuss mutually-chosen books. Our conversation, however, may focus on the moral/religious dilemmas faced by characters or on how we as Christians respond to story lines.

Come to a brief organizational meeting at 10:30 a.m. on Sunday, May 23. Based on the schedules and interests of those at the organizational meeting, we will decide when, where and how often to meet. Alice Kosnik will act as contact person for this new small group: [alice@middlefork.net](mailto:alice@middlefork.net) or 847 564 1346.

## Reach Out Through God's Love

### Bhutanese Refugee Family Arrives in Chicago

At the time of publication, our church had received notice from IRIM (Interfaith Refugee and Immigration Ministries) that the Sapkota family would be arriving at O'Hare Airport from Bhutan on April 28. Members of the family include Lal (father), Ambika (mother) and three sons, Lal (age 28), Bhakta (age 17) and Nath (age 15).

By the time you read this, hopefully the Sapkotas will have arrived safely and we will have already helped move them into their new apartment. You are invited to participate in this ministry by helping the family as they settle in and learn the language and cultures of their new country. Volunteers are needed to meet the family and help transport them to various appointments.

Donations toward the first three months of their rent continue to be accepted. Call Pam Carlson for more information at 847-433-1578.

### IRIM Benefit Friday May 7 - 6:00 p.m. Reception 7:30 p.m. Dinner

Interfaith Refugee and Immigration Ministries invites you to attend the annual benefit *Many Voices, One Vision* at the Chicago Cultural Center on Friday evening, May 7. The evening includes a cocktail reception, international cuisine, live music, and an exciting silent auction and raffle. The benefit raises funds to support IRIM's many programs which provide housing, English training, job readiness programs and job placement services for refugees who have come to make new homes and new lives in the Chicago area. Contact Charlie Price [priceaccounting@gmail.com](mailto:priceaccounting@gmail.com) for information.

### Habitat for Humanity



Ascension's 2010 Habitat for Humanity Lake County building season began with groundbreaking on March 20 and our first work day on Saturday, April 17. There were returning faces and new faces on the work crew; there is always a place for you! Through this ministry, Ascension members and friends continue to *Reach Out Through God's Love*. To join a crew, please contact Bob Reid at 847-256-5259 or [RHReid1351@sbcglobal.net](mailto:RHReid1351@sbcglobal.net). Invite a friend to join you. The May work date is Saturday, May 15.

You can follow progress of the crews by checking out work day pictures on the bulletin board in Fellowship Hall. During the season, monetary contributions are sent to Habitat Lake County to help defray construction material costs. We hope to receive and donate \$4000 this season; this amount is not included in Ascension's budget. Please prayerfully consider supporting this ministry; make your check payable to Ascension Church with Habitat in the memo line.

*Builder Bob*

Holy Family Lutheran School  
Partners in Hope Benefit  
Friday, May 14  
Northbrook Hilton  
6:00 p.m. Cocktails and silent auction;  
7:30 p.m. dinner



## Focus on Health

Ascension Church recently provided Safe Sitter babysitting instruction to a class of 11-13 year old students from the congregation and community. The young people who took part are now prepared to recognize a medical emergency and know the appropriate action to take. They have learned about specific ages and stages of development, injury prevention techniques, preventing problem behavior, and the business of babysitting. If additional students are interested, another Safe Sitter class will be offered during the summer.

**Safe Sitter Instructors** are adults who enjoy teaching adolescents and complete the Safe Sitter Instructor Workshop. We will conduct a video-based workshop at church in early summer. Please let me hear from you if you are willing to join a team of instructors who will bring this vital babysitting instruction to youth in our congregation and community.

\* \* \* \* \*

As a result of the collaboration between the people in the congregation who donated supplies and the confirmation class, parents, and other willing adults who assembled them, Ascension Church was able to prepare 84 Health Kits for use by Lutheran World Relief. LWR makes these basic hygiene kits available to people in crisis situations around the world, most recently Haiti. Thanks for helping!

\* \* \* \* \*

During March Pastor Kelly offered home communion training to Ascension volunteers, and last month newly-trained ministers joined those who previously have been bringing communion to homebound people. Home Communion is now offered two Sundays each month; May dates are Sundays, May 2 and 23. If you know of a friend or family member whose health precludes their presence in worship, please inform Pastor Kelly or me and a visit will be arranged. And if you would like to be prepared to share the sacrament with our brothers and sisters at home, please contact me.

Peace and good health to you!

*Gail Price*



A Stephen Minister is a member of our congregation who is trained to listen, care, encourage, pray, and walk alongside you during difficult times. It's confidential, free, and very helpful. To learn more, talk with Pastor Kelly or a Stephen Leader (Caryl Scott, Joan West, John West or Gail Price).

*Bear one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.*

Galatians 6:2



## 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration Concludes on Ascension Sunday, May 16

Ascension Sunday, May 16, is a day of great thanksgiving as Ascension Church marks the conclusion of the year-long celebration of our first 50 years and steps forward into the future of our ministry together. Bishop Wayne Miller, Bishop of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod of the ELCA, will be the guest preacher at two identical worship services at 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. Newly-commissioned music will be included in the services.

During the reception between services, a pictorial review of our history and the year of celebration will be featured. A new time capsule will be filled. Keepsakes will be available for those who didn't receive them in the fall. Good food and friendly fellowship will abound. Don't miss the celebration—plan to be present! Your help with the reception is welcomed; please call the church office.

A letter from Pastor Kelly inviting your contribution to Ascension's mission support of a re-developing congregation in the Synod has been mailed. Thank you for your response and for sharing in this *Gift of Gratitude*.

## Ascension Women's Luncheon Thursday, May 20

Ascension Women's Annual Festive Pot-luck Salad Luncheon will be held on Thursday, May 20, at noon at the church. Please bring a salad for 6-8 people.

Our speaker will be our own Pastor Dennis Kelly. You won't want to miss him! A freewill offering will be taken for LSSI's Lifebook Scrapbook program for foster and adopted children. All women are invited. Please bring a friend!

Please reserve your place by calling the church office or Jan Leverenz at 847-998-1799.