

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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Alleluia! Christ is Risen! He is Risen Indeed!

I looked forward to sharing that greeting with you at our Easter services, March 23, as we celebrated the Resurrection of our Lord!

In this issue of *The Witness*, you will find information about a variety of events and programs taking place during the Easter season. Please take note of the **Lutheran Course** beginning March 30 during Adult Forum. The course is for everyone....life-long Lutherans as well as those new to the Lutheran church.

April brings us to an emphasis on the care of God's creation: **REDUCE . . . REUSE . . . RECYCLE.....RESPECT.**

Thank you to our children for leading awesome worship services on Palm Sunday. Special thanks to Mischa, Minkyoo, Jeanne, Marci Hartley and Justyne Reeves for all their efforts. Thank you to all the parents who saw to it that their children came to rehearsals and both worship services.

When I consider all the ministries in which the people of Ascension are involved, it is obvious that things are not "on hold" at Ascension until the called pastor arrives. Continue to pray for the call committee and the candidates they consider. **Listen** and be open to God's voice throughout the interim period and interview process.

Peace and joy to you,

Pastor Carol Wasemiller

Focus on Health



Stephen Ministry Corner

Q. Can my spouse see my Stephen Minister with me?

A. No. The Stephen Minister/Care Receiver relationship is one-on-one. Due to the confidential nature of that relationship, family members do not participate together. If a family member would like a Stephen Minister, they will be assigned one of their own.

If you have any questions regarding Stephen Ministry, talk with any Stephen Minister or Leader.

Have you ever taken a walk for a cause? When I have walked with others from our congregation at the Greater Chicago Food Depository Hunger Walk in June, I have been aware that at least three good things happen: I get some much needed physical exercise outdoors in a beautiful setting, I share the walk with friends and family, and I raise funds for a ministry I truly believe in.

One of Ascension's members, Jan Hincapie, is following in the footsteps of Janice Greenwald and others and taking the Avon Walk for Breast Cancer May 31-June 1 in Chicago. When Jan shared this news with me, she wondered whether there might be others who would like to form a team to walk with her. If you are one, please contact Jan at jphome1@aol.com or 847-272-6195.

Refugee Resettlement

In mid-February, the people of Ascension Church extended the hospitality of Christ to a young refugee family. Have you had the opportunity to meet Ee Mang, his wife CinSan, and Gedion, their four year old son? From the first day they worshiped with us, they expressed their delight at being here, their appreciation for our welcome to them, and their desire to be present as often as possible.

We know little of what caused them to leave Burma, also called Myanmar, four years ago. We do know that they are from Chin state, the only Christian area in this country of Buddhist majority. They tell stories of their parents' faithfulness in service in their Baptist congregations. They are eager to learn English and find work and build a new life here.

Ascension has set up their household and will provide financial support to them for another month or so. Our funding pays their rent and some expenses while they work with IRIM to develop skills that will allow them to become independent. To contribute financially, please make your check payable to Ascension Church and mark the memo line "refugee resettlement." Thank you for welcoming them!

Reach Out Through God's Love

Green Team Report

April 22 is Earth Day throughout the country, but all of April will be celebrated as Earth Month at Ascension. The Worship Team will highlight the Christian imperative to care for creation with special worship, music and prayer throughout the month.

The Ascension Green Team will emphasize the practical aspects of earthkeeping with events that address the four Rs of environmental stewardship - *Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Respect*. Here is the schedule, beginning with a special movie to kick off Earth Month.

APRIL 3 - "An Inconvenient Truth," the award-winning film about global warming, will be shown at 7 p.m. this Thursday evening. Come and bring your friends and neighbors. If you can't make it on April 3, extra copies of "An Inconvenient Truth" will be available on loan from the Ascension library. Borrow one and invite your friends to a planet party.

APRIL 6 - *REDUCE*: We want your mug - and we'll wash it for you. To reduce the use of paper cups, please bring from home one mug or cup to keep at church. Use it for your coffee on Sunday morning, leave it in the dishwasher rack, and it will be cleaned for you or someone else to use the following week. Our goal is to accumulate enough cups for everyone so that we can save money and trees by eliminating paper cups. Members of the Green Team will host the coffee hour throughout April.

APRIL 13 - *REUSE*: ChicoBags, reusable nylon bags so small when empty they can be tied to a purse strap and so big when expanded they can carry a paper bag's worth of groceries, will be made available at cost, about \$2.75 each.

APRIL 20 - *RECYCLE*: Bring your old gym shoes, batteries, ink cartridges and medications* to church to be recycled or properly disposed of.

APRIL 27 - *RESPECT*: Sign a contract with the earth pledging to care for the creation that God has given us. Guest preacher will be Dr. Ted Hiebert of McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago.

* Recent news stories make us aware that traces of discarded medications are beginning to show up in our drinking water. Don't flush those old meds down the toilet! Bring them to church in their original containers with the labels attached (for privacy you can black out your name, but not the name of the drug). They will be brought to a site in Glenview for safe disposal.

Earth Week Green Fair A Green Congregation Workshop

Join the Green Team and others from Ascension at this half-day workshop on Saturday, April 19, at Ashburn Evangelical Lutheran Church, 3345 W. 83rd Street, Chicago. The workshop is sponsored by the Metro Chicago Synod. It will offer an opportunity for us to see what area congregations have been doing, to exchange ideas and concerns with one another, and to receive practical suggestions for how to address glitches and build on existing programs. Local ecological organizations and those who have helped churches become more environmentally efficient will be at the fair to provide us with additional resources and help explore a range of greening strategies.

To allow for advance registration, please inform Carol Mueller (847-729-0985 or cedarile@sbcglobal.net) or Gail Price (Gail@Ascension-Church.org or 847-446-8335) of your interest by April 10. We'll share rides from church.

Habitat for Humanity



We have received the good news that Thrivent Builds has rejoined with Habitat for Humanity Lake County again this year to build a home in the Carter Crossing subdivision.

The dedication of this home will be April 19th at 3 PM. Ascension has a work crew that Saturday so you can join us for a shortened work day, meet the family and participate in the dedication ceremony.

Sign up for one or more of the work trips either on the signup sheet in the Fellowship Hall, or by contacting Bob Reid at rhreid1351@sbcglobal.net

If you would like to support this ministry financially make your checks out to Ascension with Habitat in the memo line. Ascension will join with Thrivent and several other congregations to help build this home.

Bob Reid

Lutheran Day 2008



Wednesday, April 16th

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 Lutheran Day 2008. Contact Gail Price at church for more information.

Partners in Hope 2008 Spring Benefit for Holy Family Lutheran School April 25

The festive annual benefit to raise essential tuition assistance funds for all students attending Holy Family Lutheran School in Chicago will take place on Friday, April 25 at the Hilton Hotel Northbrook. It's a party-with-a-purpose sponsored by a coalition of church members (including our church) and other friends from the North Shore suburban area. Please come - for the fun, for the friends, for the food, for the festivity, and especially for the future of our students! Your presence and participation make a difference. Funds raised are for an excellent and affordable education at Holy Family Lutheran School alternative for Chicago's low-income families!

Tickets are \$65 each. Patrons at \$500 (2 tickets) and Sponsors at \$1500 (10 tickets) are also welcome! Reserve your place by calling Holy Family Ministries at 847-441-4115 or online at www.holyfamilyministries.org/events.php. Invite your friends and come on out! Enjoy the dinner, auctions, program, good company and good cause.

If you have any questions concerning the Holy Family Spring Benefit, please call either Joan West (847-729-0609 or Jan Leverenz (847-998-1799).

IRIM's Journeys of Hope

To enable them to bring families such as Ee Mang's to the United States, Interfaith Refugee and Immigration Ministries relies on congregational and individual support. IRIM invites you to take part in their annual fundraising event, *Journeys of Hope*, on Thursday, April 17 beginning at 6:00 p.m. at St. Andrew Greek Orthodox Church, Sheridan Road at Hollywood in Chicago. The cuisine and entertainment represent Chicago's diverse ethnic heritage. Please contact Gail to learn more about this exciting evening.

Spiritual Growth



Sundays at 9:45 a.m.
Augustana Room

The Lutheran Course

This video discussion series features prominent professors from our seminaries. The series is for life-long Lutherans and those new to the Lutheran tradition. How well do you remember Luther's catechism? Each session can stand alone. No homework required!

- March 30 "How to tell the Difference between the Law and the Gospel"
- April 6 "Five Things you Should Know about the Lutheran Reformation"
- April 13 "The Anatomy of a Baptism"
- April 20 "How to Receive Communion"
- April 27 "The Three Most Rebellious Things Jesus Did"
- May 4 "How to Read the Bible?"
- May 11 "How to Share Your Faith with Someone"

From Here to There and Back Again: Life's Lessons from Global Women

By Rosanne Swanson
Visiting Lecturer of Pastoral Theology

Saturday, April 12th, 10 a.m.
The Guild of the Lutheran School of
Theology at Chicago
1100 E. 55th Street, Chicago

Registration begins at 9:30 a.m. in the Main Hallway. Lunch (\$15) follows in the LSTC Refectory. A freewill offering will be taken to support the ministry of the Guild.

For luncheon reservations or more information call 773-256-0712.

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Save the date!

Tuesday May 6, 6:30 p.m.

For 5th – 8th grade students and your families

Come for supper, fun, games and surprises

Register for 2008-2009
Confirmation program

Youth News

Got Junk?

RUMMAGE SALE

MAY 24TH

The 2nd Annual LCA Rummage Sale will be held this year on Saturday May 24th from 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. Fifty percent of the proceeds will benefit general youth programs and 50 percent will go towards the Mission Trip to Costa Rica.

Items remaining after the sale will be donated to IRIM (along with other ministries) for incoming refugee families.

If you've got stuff you'd like to donate to this worthy cause, we will be accepting donations starting May 5th through May 17th.

We are also in need of volunteers willing to help with this effort. You don't even have to have children to help! We need help with publicity, donation solicitations, testing and cleaning items, set up, signs, etc.

Please contact Jonathan Anderson, Margie Lindstrom or Caron Hoffman, for any questions or with YOUR AVAILABILITY.

(We do NOT accept clothes at this time.)

Worship Notes

It has been wonderful to worship with you throughout the Lenten season and to celebrate His resurrection on Easter. Thanks to all who have participated in worship and a special thanks to the leaders of the Holden Lenten services; to the children's choir, Sunday School choir, young instrumentalists and praise team for their outstanding job in leading us in worship on Palm Sunday; to Northfield Community Church Choir for joining us on Good Friday; to our own Ascension Adult choir for their participation in many worship services; and to the Welcoming Team for their joyful efforts in receiving all who came to Palm Sunday and Easter services. Worship is a joyful act and one that requires our active participation. It couldn't have been done without you all.

Our next **concert** series event takes place on **Saturday, May 3 at 4:30 p.m.** This concert will feature **rising** star saxophonist, Tim McAllister who is a member of the renowned Prism Saxophone Quartet and a faculty member at the University of Arizona. Tim is very active in commissioning and recording new works for saxophone and has played a significant role in building a new repertoire for the instrument. Several years ago, Tim commissioned a piece from me that I titled "In Transit". This work became the title track of a CD he released in 2006 on the Innova Label and has since been sought after by saxophonists from around the world. The concert in May will feature "In Transit" and will be the first time that Tim and I have performed this piece together. The program will also include pieces by other young composers including James Mattheson (recipient of a Guggenheim award in 2000) and Roshanne Etezady and finally some tangos by Astor Piazzolla. The saxophone has strong associations with jazz and popular music, and the music on this concert is no exception, touching on elements of salsa, tango, smooth jazz and more. Tim is an electrifying performer, and we are bringing him in all the way from Tucson, so please come and bring someone with you to share in what promises to be one of our most exciting concerts to date.

Finally, I'd like to remind you of our *Celebrate!* service "Birthday Party" worship and fellowship planned for **Sunday, May 18**. We plan to rejoice in all the strides the *Celebrate!* service has made since its inception when the service was led by lay leaders and the average attendance was 10 people. *Celebrate!* has grown to include a worship leader, full band and praise team, and attendance averages 40 congregants per service. Even more significant is the fact that there are not the same 40 worshipping from week to week. In fact, we made a list of all the people who had worshiped in this service at some point in recent months and counted 120. The concept of the *Celebrate!* service "Birthday Party" is to invite those 120 people to a reunion so we can encourage one another to build up this service even more. If you have not worshipped at this service, we invite you to attend and see all that has happened. Even if this isn't the kind of worship service you prefer, we would appreciate your prayers of support in this endeavor.

Blessings and peace,

Mischa & Minkyoo

Council Notes

The first meeting of the new church council focused on Mission of the Church - To Know and Share the Good News of Jesus Christ. As a kick off meeting the discussions were general and intended to lay the groundwork for future assignments and activities. Each Council member expressed an opinion on their favorite things about LCA and those things they would like to see changed. Highlighting the activities in Worship and Education generated a discussion on where we are and what should we be doing to improve for the future.

The Spring 2008 copies of "My Response to God's Amazing Grace" were distributed and discussed. The purpose of this annual effort is for members to identify the gifts they have that they would like to use to serve the church in the coming year.

Gail Price reported on recent activities of the Green Team and plans for coming weeks. She presented a document "Green Congregation Covenant" sponsored by The Web of Creation. Upon review of the document, the Council agreed the participation points were all efforts that LCA has already begun. The Council approved signing and following the covenant document.

General Business included approving transfers and change of status from inactive to active for members who had requested changes of membership.

Lois Vining

Call Committee Update

Currently we have one active candidate. We have interviewed him twice, observed him preach and we are starting the referencing process. If the references are strong we will talk with the Council about the candidate.

The Bishop's Office advises us that they are reviewing our Mission Papers with three potential candidates. If any of those individuals express an interest their Mobility Papers will be sent to us for consideration.

Your prayers about our work and the process are appreciated.

Kurt Vining

Stewardship

My Response to God's Amazing Grace

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. (I Corinthians 12:4-7)

In this Easter season we are reminded in every worship service, through scripture and song and sermons and prayer, of the love that Jesus has shown us through his suffering, death and resurrection. When we grasp the depth of his sacrifice for us, when we realize that we have done nothing to earn this gift, we begin to know God's grace. What then?

In response to God's amazing grace, we are led by the Holy Spirit to live changed lives. We come together as God's people to worship and learn and serve. When we discern and discover the gifts which God has given to us, we joyfully use them to build up the Body of Christ, in our case the congregation known as the Lutheran Church of the Ascension in Northfield.

Our congregation has many vital ministries in place and, if the future resembles the past in any way, more opportunities for ministry will continue to present themselves. How can a person best determine where to devote personal time and energies, how to be a good steward and use gifts in ministry?

In early April each of us will receive a mailing outlining many of Ascension's ministry opportunities. The enclosed brochure will invite us to respond personally and thoughtfully, to make a commitment using the gifts God has given to each of us. Because we weren't all given the same gifts, we will respond to varied opportunities for ministry. We will use our gifts to enhance our congregation's worship, we will discover ways to grow spiritually and to nurture the growth of others, and we will live our lives in service to others. We will find the means and the words to share how knowing Jesus Christ changes lives.

So please be thinking about your personal response to God's amazing grace. You may respond by returning the brochure to the church office; you may also download it from the Ascension website, complete it and email it to Gail@Ascension-Church.org. You can learn more about the gifts God has given you on the ELCA website, www.elca.org/evangelism/assessments/spiritgifts.html or pick up a print copy of the assessment at church.

Gail Price

Fellowship

Ascension Women's Luncheon April 3rd

Ascension member, Dr. David Nahrwold, will be the guest speaker at the Ascension Women's Luncheon on Thursday, April 3rd, at noon, at Hackney's on Lake. He will speak on "Ensuring Quality Health Care." There will be an opportunity to ask questions. You won't want to miss some firsthand information on this important topic.

Join us, and bring a friend!