

The Witness

November 2006

**Lutheran Church of the Ascension
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**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

STAFF DIRECTORY:

Curt Gerald	Pastor
Janeen Ross	Office Administrator
Gail Price	Service Ministries Leader
Mischa Zupko	Worship Leader
Minkyoo Shin	Assistant Worship Leader
Bob Frost	<i>Celebrate!</i> Worship Leader
Claudia Williams	Spiritual Growth Leader
Jonathan Anderson	Youth Director
Jeanne Schambach	Children's Ministry Leader



Do you need to brush up on your Luther history a little? After all, we are members of the Evangelical LUTHERan Church in America ... and if it were not for Luther, we might all still be Roman Catholics (which is both fortunate and unfortunate).

It is unfortunate because the Body of Christ is divided or became further divided. The first division was the "Great Schism" that resulted in the division of the Church into the Eastern and Western Church in 1054. But when we get into the 1500's, the church shatters with one reformation after another.

It is fortunate because the Church, like any and all organizations do, got musty and rigid and out of focus ... so the Reformation which gave birth to our Lutheran tradition opened the windows to let in some fresh air and refocused the Church on Scripture. "The Word Alone; Faith Alone; Grace Alone."

This would be a good time to view or review the "Luther" video. We have a couple DVD copies of it in the church office ... and we also have one VHS copy. It is also available at Blockbuster (pre-viewed copies are often available for \$7.99.)

You could spend an entire month surfing all the Martin Luther sites on Google (and probably another month checking out all the sites about Martin Luther King, Jr).

Here is a "short biography" from <http://www.luther.de/en/leben.html>.

1483 (November 10) [Born](#) in Eisleben

1505 [Monk](#) in Erfurt

1512 [Doctor of Theology](#) in Wittenberg

1517 (October 31) [Nailed](#) the 95 Theses to the door of the Castle Church

1521 [Outlawed](#) and [exiled to the Wartburg](#)

1522 [Return to Wittenberg](#)

1525 [Marrried](#) Katharina von Bora

1534 Published the complete Bible in German

1546 (February 18) [Died](#) in Eisleben

If you are reading this newsletter before Sunday, October 29, 2006, Reformation Sunday, plan to wear something RED to celebrate the day ... and let's get ready to sing A MIGHTY FORTRESS IS OUR GOD!

Pastor Curt



Smart Eating May Reduce Your Breast Cancer Risk

Breast cancer is a common fear among women for good reason. It is the most common cancer among North American women, striking nearly 200,000 annually. October was National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, the perfect time to take action and reduce your risk.

The causes of breast cancer are not well-understood, but eating a low-fat diet with plenty of fruits and vegetables may help protect you. The complex composition of fruits, vegetables and whole grains may lower your breast cancer risk — especially the dietary fiber, beta carotene and vitamin C found in those foods. So enjoy a variety of vegetables, fruits beans and whole-grains daily.

Obesity may also be linked to breast cancer, so maintain a healthy weight and stay physically active. The best approach to weight management is twofold:

1. Stay physically active with 30 minutes or more of moderate activity on most, if not all, days of the week.
2. Avoid eating more calories than your body uses.

A diet low in saturated fat and trans fats may lower both colon and breast cancer risks. So trim the fat where you can and pay attention to where on your body any extra pounds do settle: Are you a pear or an apple shape? Research suggests that women who carry excess body fat around the abdomen (apple shape) may have an increased breast cancer risk.

If you drink, go easy on alcoholic beverages. As with other health problems, moderation is the key - no more than one drink daily for women. Some studies suggest that your breast cancer risk may go up even with moderate drinking.

During National Breast Cancer Awareness Month (and all year long), make your overall food choices lower in fat, load up on fruits, vegetables and whole-grains and aim for a healthy weight. (*Monthly nutrition tip from the American Dietetic Association.*)

Linda Clinton

Blood Drive November 5

On Sunday, November 5, from 8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Ascension will be hosting our third LifeSource Blood Drive for 2006. Blood supplies are always low in the Chicagoland area. If you are at least 16 years of age and are in good health, we encourage you to come and give the "gift of life." Hope to see you there! For more information please see Terry Willason or contact Gail in the church office.



Safe Sitter November 18

The fall SafeSitter babysitting class is just around the corner. If you know a child, grandchild, friend or neighbor, boy or girl, between the ages of 11 and 13, who would like to learn to be a safe and effective babysitter, please contact Ruth Ann Nally at 847-564-9683 as soon as possible. The one day class will be offered Saturday, November 18, 9:00 a.m -4:00 p.m. at church. Cost is \$35 and scholarships are available.

Flu Prevention Sunday November 19

ASAP Health Solutions will offer flu and pneumonia immunizations at Ascension on Sunday, November 19, 9:00 a.m.-12:00 noon. Cost of the flu shot is \$26, pneumonia shots are available for \$45. Medicare Part B, cash and checks are accepted for payment. Please indicate your time preference by using the insert in the Friendship Book, signing up in Fellowship Hall or contacting me in the church office, 847-446-8335 or Gail@Ascension-Church.org.

Peace and good health!

Gail Price

Reaching Out Through God's Love

I was hungry and you fed me, I was thirsty and you gave me a drink, I was homeless and you gave me a room, I was shivering and you gave me clothes, I was sick and you stopped to visit, I was in prison and you came to me...I'm telling the solemn truth: Whenever you did one of these things to someone overlooked or ignored, that was me—you did it to me. (The Message)

Stephen Tomlinson, economist, Stanford professor, playwright, Episcopal layman, stewardship educator, asked his priest whether he should give money to a beggar on the street. The priest responded that it doesn't matter whether he gives money or not. What matters is that he looks the beggar in the eye. That act results in a change in behavior of the giver, a connection between the giver and the beggar.

Ascension's service ministries afford many opportunities to look "the other" in the eye, to open ourselves to change, to growth, to relationship. When we are willing to look, we will surely see the presence of God in those we serve. We may even find that we gain more than we give. I invite you to serve God by serving others through one of these ministries. I also invite you to share stories of your experiences in serving. Send me an email Gail@Ascension-Church.org or give me a call at 847-446-8335.

Peace in Christ's service,
Gail Price

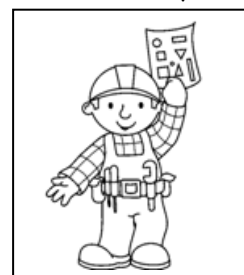


Habitat for Humanity

Ascension's Habitat ministry has continued to work with Habitat for Humanity Lake County to build homes for deserving families. In October we sanded drywall joints, installed a retaining wall and built a stairway from the side deck to the parking area. Please see the photos of all our activities on the bulletin board in the Fellowship Hall. I hope you will note those members who have contributed to this year's effort, and express your thanks to them for representing Ascension.

I am happy to say that we have received contributions sufficient to meet and exceed our goal for this year. A **great BIG thank you** to all who have made this another successful year.

We have one more work trip on Saturday Nov. 18th. If you would like to join us please contact the church office or sign up on the bulletin board.



Thanks to servants!

Thank you for the wonderful response to our clothing drive! Lakeview Pantry thanks you also. Many people will be warmer this winter because of your generosity. Special thanks to Mischa Zupko and Jonathan Anderson for help in loading the van, filling it to the top!

Thanks to CROP Walkers and hunger awareness raisers Elise and Bruce Carlson, Tommy Chapman, Adam Parrott, Caryl Scott and CROP organizers Steve, Margie and Brianna Lindstrom and Becky and Baylee. Ascension's advocates contributed over \$1000 to the Glenbrook CROP Walk.

Thanksgiving Food Gathering

The Thanksgiving Food Gathering will be on Sunday, November 26th. Note that this is the Sunday after Thanksgiving as requested by the food pantries. We will pass out bags the Sunday before, November 19. If you will be out of town over the Thanksgiving weekend, you may bring your items to church on November 19th and place them in or near the pantry collection box. We are once again asking for non-perishable canned goods and dry food as well as toiletries. A more complete list will accompany the bags.

Bethel Christmas Family Sharing

Bethel New Life, a dynamic outreach ministry of Bethel Lutheran Church, helps families and seniors in need in Chicago's West Garfield neighborhood. Through Bethel Christmas Family Sharing you can sponsor one of these families. Sponsoring a family or senior includes providing a Christmas meal for the family and a wrapped gift for each child within the family. Larger families may be shared by two or three Ascension families. Bethel families will be posted on the bulletin board in Fellowship Hall this month. To adopt a family, remove the top sheet containing family information and sign your name to the sheet remaining on the bulletin board. Thanks for sharing!

November 28th FINK Project

Over the next month FINK will be collecting newborn baby items to supply the midwives' kits for our next service project.

Global Health Ministries ships these assembled kits overseas for use in places such as Africa, India or New Guinea—areas of need where basic equipment is unavailable and these packages are welcome provisions to the midwives delivering newborn babies.

Last year we set a goal of assembling 30 kits—the response was so heartfelt and benevolent that we ended up putting together 75 kits!

You can help us again this year with your generous contributions. Here is a list of things we will need: items need not be new, but should be clean and in good condition.

- Regular-sized bath towels
- Thin washcloths
- Small cotton baby shirts/undershirts (to waist only as babies do not wear diapers)
- Receiving blankets
- 36" squares of muslin or cotton sheeting
- Newborn stocking caps*

*If you are interested in knitting, crocheting or sewing stocking caps, we would love to include your handmade labors of love. *GHM* has a basic knitted pattern on their website and also instructions for an easy version to sew. You can download them from.

Please leave all new or clean used items in good condition under the main bulletin board at the front of the church by Sunday, November 19th. Thank you for your generous support!

Spiritual Growth

Growing Your Roots Down Deep

Ephesians is one of my favorite books in the Bible. For the first three chapters, all Paul can write about is how awesome God is and all the amazing things he has done for us. He then says, "When I think of all this, I fall to my knees and pray to the Father, the Creator of everything in heaven and on earth. I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit. Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. **Your roots will grow down** into God's love and keep you strong. And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God (Eph. 3:14-19). *NOW HERE IS MY FAVORITE PART OF THIS PASSAGE:* "Now all the glory to God, who is able, through **his mighty power** at work within us, to **accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think**. Glory to him in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations forever and ever! Amen." (3:20-21).

Wow! Paul could not help but praise God for how amazing He is. He is able to work within us to do more than you or anyone else could imagine. The reason that's my favorite part is because it reminds me of why I do what I do. I do it because at the core of who I am is the belief that God can transform people to be what he desires them to be. He can grow our roots **DEEP**, and we have the privilege of coming to an understanding of God's infinite love for us and for all people. When I feel discouraged about ministry, this passage always refocuses me.

As I study Scripture, though, I realize that this growth doesn't happen in a vacuum, nor is it something that happens to us independently of anyone else. *God uses* his community—His body, his church—to grow us. That's what we see in the next chapter, Ephesians 4:11-16. Take a look at it.

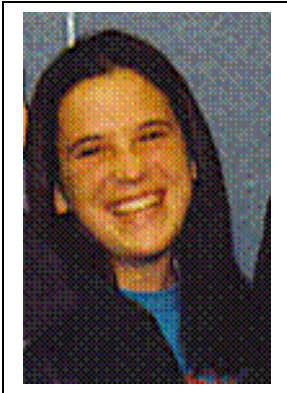
This is why I feel so passionate about the possibilities of spiritual growth through small groups. *The vision for small groups is that people feel connected and live in faith.* How does that happen in small groups? It happens as we take a look at the Word of God for us. As we sit together in community and ask ourselves, "What is God telling us about himself and what does he expect us to be or to do as we are confronted with the reality of a God who loves us and has given himself for us?" *It happens as we grow in love, compassion, and mercy for one another; as we struggle through the difficulties of life, not alone but with a group of people who walk in faith along side us.* These **roots grow down deep** as we come before God in prayer, knowing that He cares for us, knowing that He longs to communicate intimately with us. *The spiritual growth happens as we celebrate together the life that God has given to us, as we have fun together.* I love that God has given us the ability to experience pleasure and fun in relationships. **Glory to God!**

This is the vision. Is this kind of community life something you long for? Is it really possible for us to have this wellspring of life through the community offered in small groups? I think it is possible and, like Ephesians says, *God can do way more than you and I think is possible.* I call *you* to consider how God may be calling you to be part of this vision for the life he promises in Christ. After all, Jesus did say that his purpose is to give his sheep a rich and satisfying life (John 10:10). This life happens as we experience the presence and power of God in community. Pray about it.

So what's next for our small group ministry? Well, we began our model group on Wednesday October 25th. I am so excited that God has brought us this far along. I ask that you pray for us as we ask God to grow us as leaders and give us a vision for what he will be doing in and through this group of committed leaders.

Blessings,
Claudia Williams

Children's Ministry



There are a couple of changes going on in the Children's Ministry as of late!

First of all, my name is Jeanne Schambach and I am the new Children's Ministry Assistant. I will be working with Claudia in matters concerning the children's ministry here at Ascension. You will see me on Sundays working with your children in Sunday School, assisting in whatever way that I can. You will also see me on Tuesday nights leading the Crosstraining session. I would love to get to know you, so please feel free to say hi!!

Currently we are in our first unit of the new Rotation Sunday School. The current unit is called "Scattered on Good Ground." Our children will have finished this unit on October 15. Beginning October 22, we started Unit 2 of the Rotation Sunday School. This unit is called "The Caring Samaritan." This unit provides four sessions on the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). The Children will learn about and hear Jesus' answer to the question, "Who are my neighbors?" They will also learn what it means to be a good neighbor.

On November 4, there will be a spiritual disciplines conference. This conference will deal with nurturing a love for Scripture in the home. The conference is free. Please sign up today!

Finally, I would encourage all parents to remind their children to bring their Bibles every single Sunday and Tuesday. It is VITAL to the ministry that the children have their Bibles with them at all times.

Any Questions? Please don't hesitate to ask.

Because He is Faithful,

Jeanne Schambach

Psalm 91:2

Worship Notes



Exciting happenings are afoot. By the time you receive this we will already have had our evening with the "Soul Children of Chicago"....as I write this, I am eagerly anticipating all that night will have to offer as we come together to worship mightily. Our next big event is the Christmas/Advent Concert, "A Light Still Shines" that will take place on Saturday, December 9 @ 4:30 p.m. We are getting great response for volunteers for this event....Hallelujah!!! A few things we still need:

1. Decorating crew members
1. Runners (to help get music stands and other items we will borrow/rent from other institutions)
2. Clean up (after the reception)
3. Stage production (helping to run the show during the dress rehearsal and the performance....Friday, Dec. 8 and Saturday, Dec. 9)

We could use at least one or two people on the decorating crew who work well on ladders. The Stage Production team has yet to be formed so if you have a heart for polishing the finished product and managing people, you will do well here. Please consider how you can use your gifts and time to help this event become a giant success and then find a volunteer form in fellowship hall and sign up. We appreciate all you are doing to help make Ascension an exciting place to worship and a bright and welcoming place for all.

As far as Sundays go, Reformation and All Saints will be upon us. We made an announcement in church on October 8th and the 15th telling of our plans for All Saints Day and I would like to reiterate them here. We would like to have members of the congregation send us old photos (preferably jpgs) and names/memories (preferably via email) of important people in their lives that have passed on and that they would like to honor on All Saints Day. We will also accept hard copies of the above items if people don't have access to scanners and/or email. There are no restrictions as to the date of passing of the person you would like to honor, so please feel free to include anyone who had been an important part of your life when they were alive. The deadline for receiving materials was October 29. These photos and names/memories will be worked into a power point presentation that will fade in and out throughout the service as a way of honoring the people and the memories. In addition, we'd like to draw your attention to the insert in this newsletter. Please fill out the bottom portion and submit to the church office at your convenience. We will collect these pieces of paper and utilize them in the creation of a "memory board" that will be adhered to the sanctuary doors as a secondary way of honoring our Saints.

Blessing to all,

Mischa & Minkyoo

ALL SAINTS SUNDAY: Stephen Ministers invite you to share remembrances of people dear to you who have died during a light lunch at 12:00 noon in Fellowship Hall. Please contact Gail@Ascension-Church.org or call the church office to allow us to plan for you.



Council Update

The focus of the September 21 church council meeting was the Fall Stewardship Campaign, which is underway as you read this report.

After conducting routine business, council was apprised of the hiring of Jeanne Schambach as Children's Ministry Assistant, and Pastor Gerald announced that the new hymnals were ordered and should be received by mid-October.

Revisions to Ascension's accounting and human resources manuals were discussed, and it was agreed that these revisions will be addressed by the appropriate groups, including Core Ministry.

Council then heard and discussed an excellent stewardship campaign presentation by Bruce Carlson, Stewardship Chair.

Bruce opened with devotions, as did his written, step-by-step proposals, which began with Matthew 6:19-21. *Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

The remainder of the meeting was spent discussing and refining the proposals and timeline in the stewardship campaign presentation. Key themes and messages, recruitment of the stewardship team, and goals of the campaign - which everyone agreed should include time and talent - were of special interest. When the discussion was concluded, council moved to support the plan.

The focus of the October meeting, was organizational matters; the facilities meeting originally scheduled for October will be moved to November.

As always, members of the congregation are welcome and encouraged to attend council meetings and make their views known.

Peace,

The Church Council

Stewardship

Every day is a walk with Jesus. We Christians believe life is spent in the presence of our Lord. Therefore, we can talk about every day as a day during which we walk with Jesus. Some days we feel Jesus' presence. Some days we feel quite a distance from Jesus. We boldly proclaim that, regardless of how we feel, Jesus is there. Jesus walks with us every day.

As we who are Lutheran Church of the Ascension consider our financial stewardship over the next few weeks, we will be asked to think about our use of money and possessions as a part of our walk with Jesus. This is most appropriate, because when Jesus walked this earth with his disciples, he often talked about money and possessions. If money was a part of Jesus' first walk on this earth, it should be a part of our walk with Jesus today.

We believe that everything we have is a trust from God, given to us to care for and manage. What we do with our money is very much a part of our relationship with our Lord. This will be our focus in the coming weeks.

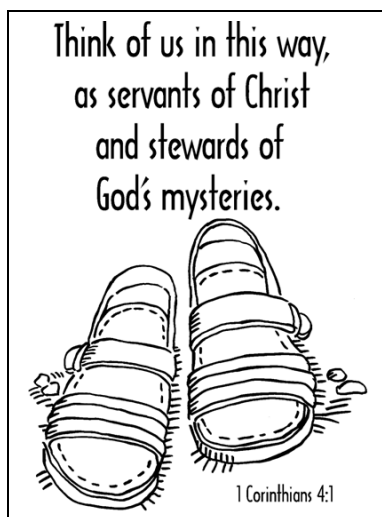
On three Sundays in November we will read a bulletin insert and hear a talk in worship. These will focus on our walk with Jesus, and how money plays an important part in this walk.

Then, on Sunday, December 3rd, each member of Ascension will have the opportunity to provide our estimate of giving card, on which each of us will indicate our plan for giving for the coming year. This not only will be a plan for giving to Ascension, it will also be a plan for how we will walk with Jesus in the coming year.

In Christ,

Bruce Carlson

Stewardship Team Leader



Fellowship

Ascension Women's Luncheon November 2nd

The Ascension Women's Luncheon will be held on Thursday, November 2, at noon at Hackney's on Lake. Ascension's own Lillian Chen Byerly will speak about Autism: All You've Wanted to Know. Lillian is a professional in the field of Special Education. Please come and bring a friend.