

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



Contact Information

Lutheran Church of the Ascension

460 Sunset Ridge Road

Northfield, IL 60093-2797

Phone: 847-446-8335

Fax: 847-446-8308

E-mail: info@Ascension-Church.org

Web site: www.Ascension-Church.org

Staff Directory

Janeen Ross	Office Administrator	Janeen@Ascension-Church.org
Gail Price	Service Ministries Leader	Gail@Ascension-Church.org
Mischa Zupko	Worship Leader	Mischa@Ascension-Church.org
Minkyoo Shin	Ass't Worship Leader	Minkyoo@Ascension-Church.org
Carol Wasemiller	Spiritual Growth Leader	PastorCarol@Ascension-Church.org
Jonathan Anderson	Youth Director	Jonathan@Ascension-Church.org
Bob Frost	Celebrate! Leader	RFrosty@comcast.net

In This Issue

Focus on Health	Page 2
Reach Out Through God's Love	Page 3
Green Congregations Report	Page 4
Worship Notes	Page 5
Stewardship	Page 6
Fellowship	Page 6



Focus on Health

During a time of loss, holidays are often difficult. Customary routines have changed, new routines have not yet developed. Loneliness may be intense, and it may be hard to feel joy in the midst of holiday festivities. Familiar carols and hymns may only accentuate the loss. Some people wonder how they will make it through the holidays and may be grateful when the new year arrives.

How Will I Get Through The Holidays? is an easy-to-read book which offers hope and encouragement to those who have lost a loved one. Copies are available in the church office.

If you or someone you love is feeling a loss this holiday season, finding it hard to feel joy in the midst of the festivities, or wondering how to make it through the holidays, I hope you will come to Ascension's **Service of Light**. This service of reflection and remembrance will be held on **Sunday, December 16, 3:00 p.m.** at Ascension. Open to all in the community, this worship service invites God's healing presence and peace through prayer, readings, and candlelighting. For those who can stay, an informal reception will follow the service.

Peace, Christmas blessings, and good health to all,

Gail Price

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Thanks to Retail Health Network, Ascension was able to offer flu and pneumonia shots to our people and invite the community to take part as well. Remember, the most important thing you can do to prevent the flu is to wash your hands

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Healthful Gift Ideas

This holiday season, consider giving friends and loved ones presents that encourage a healthful lifestyle all year long.

- Gift certificates to local gyms or exercise classes.
- Exercise apparel such as gym shoes or running pants.
- Yoga kit with video and yoga mat.
- Pedometer.
- A copy of the revised and updated 3rd edition of the [American Dietetic Association Complete Food and Nutrition Guide](#).
- Cooking class gift certificates.
- Gifts for kids that encourage activity such as a jump rope, ice skates, bike helmet or dance classes.

These gift ideas are examples of great stocking stuffers with benefits that will last long after the holiday season is over.

Produced by ADA's Public Relations Team

Habitat for Humanity



November 17th was our last scheduled work trip for 2007. We are thankful to have had the opportunity to serve. On November 10th the houses we worked on this year were dedicated, and the families were able to realize their dream. I want to take this time to thank all of the people who donated financially to this project.

I hope that all those of you who have participated on a work crew have received the reward of being a part of helping others, and the fellowship of a group of giving people. Please continue to support Ascension's partnership with Habitat for Humanity.

Bob Reid

Bethel Christmas Family Sharing

Bethel New Life helps families and seniors in need in Chicago's West Garfield neighborhood. Through the Bethel Christmas Sharing program 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. A list of Bethel families is posted on the bulletin board in Fellowship Hall. Packages should be placed in boxes (marked 1 of 2 and so on) and brought to Fellowship Hall by 11:00 a.m. on Sunday, December 16th. Monetary donations and grocery store gift cards are also welcome. If you need further information or are interested in helping to drive the packages to Bethel New Life on December 16th at 1:00 p.m., please call Kristin Merrill at 847-853-8941.

Fair Trade Fair

Ascension's Service Ministry Team and its Fair Trade Task Force, under the leadership of Eleanor Pattie and Mitch Mitchell, presented a very educational Fair Trade Fair in October. And you and our friends and neighbors in the community learned as we shopped. At the end of the day, the sales of artisans' crafts amounted to more than \$10,000. This translates into employment for about eight people for an entire year! Vincent and Susanne Donoghue of Ten Thousand Villages in Evanston offer these words of thanks:

"Your community were wonderful hosts and I think folks really enjoyed having the opportunity to see as well as purchase the crafts. Our artisans entrust the fruits of their labors to us. I am always very humbled in handling each and every craft. Behind each craft there is a story, a story of artisans working hard to provide for their families. The Ascension community were faithful stewards this past weekend."

"Thank you and everyone at Ascension for such a successful fair trade fair! The sales created work for somewhere around 8 people for a year. People like Rosa Periona, a refugee from violence in Peru, are able to feed their children (Rosa has 12) and send them to school, where they learn things which will enable them to get good jobs as adults and gain them opportunities their parents never had. It was a real pleasure to work with and get to know so many of you. You all worked so hard and efficiently, we were very impressed. Ascension seems like a vibrant community, and we wish you every blessing for the holiday season."



Green Congregations Report

Greenings, fellow Ascensionites:

That silly salutation is a way of saying that we can be agents of positive change on this planet that God entrusted to our care. Earthkeeping, or care of creation, was the subject of a Green Congregations Workshop sponsored by the Metro Chicago Synod of the ELCA.

Gail Price, Kathy Weinstein, Gloria Rowley and Carol Mueller represented Ascension at the Oct. 13 workshop at Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Arlington Heights. Fifty people were expected and 150 attended, certainly a testimony to the concern that people of faith feel about global warming and a host of related environmental problems created by poor stewardship of the Earth.

"Ninety percent of global warming is probably being caused by humans," said workshop leader Dr. David Rhoads, a professor at Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago and an ardent environmentalist. "Trees counteract global warming, absorbing carbon dioxide from the air and producing oxygen, but each year (worldwide) we're losing forest area about half the size of the state of California."

Underscoring "the American attitude that our world should know no boundaries," Rhoads said, "We need to understand some limits on ourselves." Some of us do. "Thirty eight percent of American people believe we now need to take drastic and urgent steps on behalf of the environment. We cannot be naïve any longer about the decisions we make. We are entering an era of consequences," said Rhoads. "It's time to act unilaterally." Among his recommendations:

- We need to reconnect with the land. We have a spiritual problem about our lack of connection with the natural world.
- We need a new reformation of the church. We have to see earthkeeping as foundational for what it means to be Christians.
- We need to read the Bible in a different way. Dominion includes responsibility. We are called to save and preserve Earth, not just use it.
- We need to be mindful of how we build and remodel our churches. Environmental design is not new; it's just becoming more available and affordable.
- We need to be careful of how we use our churches, making sure we are using all of our space and using it consistently. Bigger is not necessarily better.
- We need to conserve our resources by being energy conscious in our homes and churches. For instance, replacing a single incandescent light bulb with a compact fluorescent light (cfl) will keep a half-ton of carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere over the life of the bulb. If everyone in the U.S. used energy-efficient lighting we could retire 90 average size power plants. Saving electricity reduces CO₂ emissions, sulfur oxide and high-level nuclear waste.

The Metro Chicago Synod offers a shining example of that with its energy conservation program. Churches can get no-interest loans up to \$20,000 for energy-efficient lighting retrofitting projects. There is a three-to-five-year payback period based on energy savings. Once the loan is paid, all energy savings accrue to the congregation. Since the program's inception more than a decade ago, 14 participating congregations have reduced their carbon dioxide emissions by *three million pounds* and saved thousands of dollars. That's impressive, but what can we do as individuals? Dr. Rhoads suggests starting with this simple 1-2-3 program:

- lower your thermostat one degree
- drive two miles per hour slower
- put three cfls in your home

To that I would add an invitation to join the Green Team here at Ascension, which next meets **December 4th at 6:30 p.m.** Efforts to care for creation are vital to our faith, our planet and our children.

Carol Mueller

Worship Notes

Greetings to all!

Let us not forget that on **Saturday, December 8 at 4:30 p.m.** we will host our annual Christmas-Advent concert, titled "...and on earth peace" this year. The theme of peace runs throughout this concert and will feature beautiful music on this theme, of course, special lighting, choreographed tableaux, ritual processions, and beautiful scenery all around. The Chicago Virtuosi are now definitely booked to play this concert with us so you will have yet another opportunity to hear this brilliant group. We will also be visited by harpist, Faye Seemen, from the faculty of Wheaton College and one of the finest harpists in the Chicago area. Of course, our own Ascension choir and children's choir will be singing, joined by some special guests. This concert will be like going to a Christmas spa where you will be bathed in luxurious sounds and surroundings and will leave revitalized with the message of peace that Christ brings in your hearts. We look forward to sharing this time with you and the friends and family you bring.

As the Christmas season approaches, please take note of the worship times:

Sunday, December 23 - 9:00 a.m. liturgical worship; 10:30 a.m. Celebrate!

Christmas Eve services - 4:00 p.m., 5:30 p.m., 8:30 p.m. and 11:00 p.m.

Sunday, December 30 - 9:00 a.m. liturgical worship, 10:30am Celebrate

The focus of the individual Christmas Eve services remains to be determined until we meet our next interim pastor (hopefully by the first week of December). Check the Ascension website for that information as it becomes available (www.ascension-church.org). Rest assured, there will be brass and many of our favorite carols!

Peace,

Mischa & Minkyoo

Stewardship

Two weeks ago in worship, many in our congregation returned their estimate of giving cards for the coming year. It was exciting to see so many people step forward in faith and describe their giving plans for 2008. Many people have responded with significant increases in commitments, including tithes and increases in proportional giving.

If you haven't already done so, we invite you to make a faith commitment to God and your church family. Please prayerfully consider how God has blessed you and how you will respond. Your participation and support is important to our ministry together. Thank You!

In Christ,
Bruce Carlson

Fellowship

Ascension Women's
Christmas
Luncheon

Thursday, December 20

The annual Ascension Women's Christmas Luncheon will be held Thursday, December 20th at 12:00 noon at the home of Jan Leverenz, 753 York Road, Glenview. All women are invited! We will again help the children and program of LSSI. Please bring gift cards from Target, Walmart and Kohl's in \$5, \$10 or \$15 denominations. See you on the 20th!

Jan Leverenz