


The Witness  
September 2006

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## From the Pastor

*"Heard in these hallways ..."*

"Four Sundays from now..." I am writing this article on Monday morning, August 14, 2006. Four Sundays from now, it all begins again, and I don't remember a year when we have been more ready for it to happen!

Mischa has planned a year's worth of choir anthems and special concerts. Minkyoo is ready to share some of the world's greatest organ music with us one Sunday at a time! Bob and Tiley are thinking ahead in themes for CELEBRATE! Claudia has planned the year's schedule for Rotation themes and Sunday School. Keith has planned a year's calendar for FINK. Jonathan is working on the year's calendar for junior high and senior high youth events. I have the sermon themes selected through next July. Gail is working on the service ministries and the special opportunities like the next trip for Katrina relief for the next six years. Bob has planned for the next Habitat for Humanity work days. John and Joan and Caryl continue planning for Stephen Ministry and for training sessions. And there are so many other folks working in their specific areas of ministry to schedule volunteers, events, and classes. You don't want to miss out on what all these folks are up to! And I hope you are ready to talk with one of these folks and say "what can I do to help out?"

When we resume the three Sunday morning worship service schedule on September 10 we'll go back to one of the settings from the *Lutheran Book of Worship* and use it for about a month until the new *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* book arrives ... and then we'll kiss the "Green Book" farewell and send it home with those in worship that day ... and then we'll spend the next year getting acquainted with this new worship resource.

Thanks to those who have planned and hosted and facilitated all of the excellent *Ascension Connections* events. Thanks to the team that prepared and published the brochure for the new stained glass windows. Thanks to all who have faithfully brought in or sent in their tithes and offerings during the summer months. Thanks to all who undergird our congregation's ministry in daily prayer.

***Pastor Curt***

## Focus on Health

Early in the life of the Christian Church the connection between our faith and our health was realized and celebrated. The accounts of Jesus' ministry recorded in the New Testament demonstrate this inter-connection. Recently I had an opportunity to see yet another example of how faith impacts health and how health impacts faith as I worked in the Free Medical Clinic established at Bethel Lutheran Church in Biloxi, Mississippi.

Almost immediately after Hurricane Katrina struck a full year ago, the leadership at Bethel felt the call to provide free medical care to area residents who had lost not only their homes and their jobs but also their health insurance and their doctors. Today the clinic continues under the sponsorship of Lutheran Disaster Response, the leadership of a registered nurse, and the staffing of volunteer physicians and physician's assistants and nurses and other health care workers and Stephen Ministers. It is one of only two free clinics on the coast and relies on donations from pharmaceutical companies and retailers and individuals for its operation.

Each week a new crew of volunteers sets up in the narthex, the cry room and the library of the church, in full view of the altar, to see 150-200 patients. They come without appointment or referral for treatment of their primary health needs; they receive a listening ear and compassionate care, initial treatment, donated medications, and referrals to community agencies. They are grateful to God for the blessings of this ministry.

Please uphold all who use the clinic and all who volunteer there in your prayers. If you are a healthcare professional or Stephen Minister and would like to know how to volunteer in the clinic, please see me.

Peace and good health,

*Gail Price*

## Home Communion

Each month members and friends of Ascension who are homebound or hospitalized and unable to be present for worship are invited to receive communion from trained volunteers. These lay communion ministers are welcomed into the home, hospital or care facility. They follow a prepared written service for distribution including the reading of appointed scripture and the Prayer of the Day. Visits are generally brief and worshipful as they focus on the sacrament. If you know of someone who would like to receive communion in the home, please contact Gail in the church office.

Volunteers possess gifts of faith or service or mercy or hospitality among many others. They are compassionate and have the desire to strengthen the body of Christ through their presence with others. You are encouraged to use your gifts in this important ministry. Training for volunteers takes just a short time and will be arranged at a time convenient for you this fall. Please contact Sylvia Peterson or Gail Price in the church office to learn more about becoming a lay communion minister.



## Stephen Ministry

Ascension Church has made a commitment to lay caring ministry to its members, friends and the communities in which we are located. In 1994 we became a Stephen Ministry congregation and since then have trained 39 Ascension members as Stephen Ministers. We now invite you to consider becoming equipped for this ministry of presence and caring.

Stephen Ministers work one-to-one with us when we experience change in our lives. They provide a listening ear and a compassionate response when we most need it. They will pray with us and remind us of God's unchanging love for us. They are with us for as long as we need them.

Please see Caryl Scott, Joan West, John West or Gail Price to hear more about the fall training schedule and the joy of serving others in Jesus' name.

## Reaching Out Through God's Love



### Don't Dump it! Donate it to ReStore & Deduct it!

Habitat for Humanity Lake County offers builders and the public the opportunity to donate or purchase new and used building materials. Some materials are used in new homes. Sales help fund HFHLC's building program. Volunteers staff the ReStore.

#### Hours

Monday-Friday: 9 a.m. - 7 p.m.

Saturday: 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

#### Location

3545 Grand Avenue, Gurnee, IL 60031 (between Hwy 41 and Greenbay Rd, on the south side of Grand)

#### Donation Items

New and gently used building materials are welcome. Acceptable donations include:

cabinets, vanities

new tile/vinyl

flooring

windows (thermal pane)

light fixtures

#### Donor Delivery

Donor delivery is encouraged. Please call 847-623-1020 ext. 122 to have your donation pre-approved and confirm a drop off appointment. Appointments are available Wednesdays and Saturdays between 9:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. If you are unable to drop off your donation, limited pick-up service is available. Do not leave any donated materials outside the ReStore.

Donations are tax deductible.

## Habitat for Humanity

Ascension's Habitat program continues to build homes. On our recent work trip August 12<sup>th</sup> six Ascensionites helped install siding on homes in the Carter Crossing subdivision. We became pretty good as the day progressed. You can view our activities on the bulletin board in the Fellowship Hall.

Thanks to the twelve Ascension members who have participated in our three work trips. The next trip is planned for **September 9, 2006**. If you would like to participate, we would love to have you join us on one of these trips.

Thanks too to all who have donated to this project. As of Aug. 12<sup>th</sup> we were within \$100 of our goal of \$3,500.00.

For more information contact Bob Reid in the church office.

#### ASCENSION CONNECTIONS



This summer as part of our *Ascension Connections* events we've begun to explore generally the topic of stewardship and more specifically our spiritual giftedness. At these events we've witnessed some great discussions about the many ways in which God blesses us beyond belief.

This fall we will continue the exploration of our spiritual gifts, expanding the discussion to include financial giftedness. We now are assembling a financial stewardship team and want to extend an invitation to those who might be interested in joining this team. Our first meeting is Tuesday, September 5th at 7 p.m. at the church

If one of the gifts you've identified through the spiritual gifts inventory is *Giving*, or if you just have a passion for this subject and would like to join the team, please let Gail Price (Gail@ Ascension-Church.org or 847-446-8335) know.

# Reaching Out Through God's Love

August 12, 2006

Dear Friends in Christ,

We at Bethel Lutheran and the Lutheran Disaster Response are very grateful for your generous gifts to support our ministry to those who suffered the ravages of Hurricane Katrina. The Walgreen gift cards will be used to help Mississippi hurricane survivors who come to the free clinic and are unable to purchase medications. The Home Depot cards will be used by our volunteer work crews to purchase building supplies the homeowners cannot purchase in rebuilding their homes. The contributions will help meet a variety of needs for many south Mississippians.

This ministry could not have possibly reached the people we have without the kind support of your pastor and the members of your wonderful congregation. We are humbled by your concern and compassion.

We are continuing with our free medical clinic, our case management program and the construction teams. The difference that volunteers have made in our recovery has been exceptional! We are so very grateful to all of you.

The people of Lutheran Church of the Ascension will remain in our prayers and our hearts. Thank you for accepting Christ's call to love your neighbor. Your active love has made such a positive difference!

May our Lord bless each of you and keep you safe in His love. The people of the Mississippi Gulf Coast thank you for your kindnesses. We are humbled by your willingness to serve and will keep you in our prayers.

In Christ,

*Judy Bultman*

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Recovery in the Gulf Coast region will take a long time; Lutheran Disaster Response estimates another six to eight years. Please see the display in Fellowship Hall, watch the video and pray about how you might be part of Ascension's continuing commitment to the people and ministries of the region.

Home Depot provides a 4% discount for its gift cards to any AARP member who purchases a gift card from its website. That's a small way of increasing the size of a gift. Bethel continues to use gift cards from Home Depot, Lowe's, Office Depot, Walgreens and WalMart. You may leave them in the toolbox on the table under the bulletin board.

## Spiritual Growth



### September 10<sup>th</sup>

**9:45:** Phil Hefner will discuss "Religion in an Age of Science—Beyond Intelligent Design": We must not let the trendy public debates about creationism and intelligent design divert us from the central place of religion in a scientific-technological age. The most important role of religion is to speak from its traditions of wisdom to address the perennial questions of life that science and technology make even more urgent.

**11:00:** Keith Williams will discuss "Our Great God—Who is He and What Does It Matter?" The beginning place of theology is God. We will focus on what we know about God, mysteries that we don't understand and how it should impact your life today.

### September 17<sup>th</sup>

**9:45:** Phil Hefner will discuss "The Son of God was made man—Going Deeper than the Da Vinci Code": The popular novel and movie, *The Da Vinci Code*, makes an important point about Jesus' humanity, and in this respect corresponds to the Nicene Creed's affirmation that He "was made man." The novel takes this theme in a sensational direction that claims to debunk our faith. It is more faithful to recognize that the Incarnation is an extraordinary statement about the significance of God's relation to the world and to everyday life. We will focus on the question, "What Does Jesus' humanity tell us about our own humanity?"

**11:00:** Keith Williams will discuss "Made from Dust and a Little Lower than the Angels—The Theology of Humanity." What does it mean to be human? We will talk about the significance of being human, being created in the image of God, and the reality of sin.

### September 24<sup>th</sup>

**9:45:** Brent Laytham will discuss "Theology Matter: the Trinity." This session will focus on why theology and particularly the Trinity is important to being a vital congregation and vital Christians.

**11:00:** Keith Williams will discuss "Son of God, Son of Man—Understanding Christ." We will be taking a look at the divinity and humanity of Christ and its implications for how we view our world and how we live in it.

## Weekday Opportunities

Join us as we survey and explore the Bible with *Crossways International*. This is a Bible study that delves deeply into the Biblical narrative and its major themes. We will search the Bible and learn together how God has dealt with humanity from Creation through the Exodus, the Promised Land, the Exile, the Messiah and the early Church.

There will be two weekly groups offered: One during the day (time to be mutually determined and led by Ruth Willason; please call her if you are interested), and one Monday evening from 7-8:30 p.m. starting September 11<sup>th</sup>, being led by Donna Irmis. This is a historical, academic overview of the Bible that will carry over two years. Preparation consists of 1-2 hours per week of Bible reading and answering questions. There will be a charge for materials.



## Paul's Remarkable Journeys

When you travel with people, you learn a lot about them. You watch them deal with unexpected setbacks and changes. You see them when they're tired, hungry, frustrated, excited. You see how they interact with those traveling with them.

Paul's journeys took him many places. He traveled with many people. He was thrown into many different circumstances. Despite all the hardships he faced along the way, Paul traveled in obedience and reaped an abundant harvest for the kingdom of God.

Join us as we travel with Paul on his missionary journeys. Share the ups and downs of his travels, and see how his message inspired people to follow him as he led them to the Cross. Classes are Wednesday morning from 10-11 a.m. starting September 13<sup>th</sup> and will go for six weeks and will be led by Ruth Willason.

## Children's Ministries



### Sunday Mornings

Rally Day is September 10<sup>th</sup>! Join us for a day of fun and following Jesus! This year our preschoolers will learn about God's love and provision for the Israelites as they learn the stories of Moses, the Ten Commandments, and Joshua.

Our elementary school children will be rotating to art, drama, cooking, games and listening to stories as they experience Kingdom Stories: Learning Jesus' Parables.

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## Cross Training For All Ages

Cross Training takes place on Tuesday nights from 6-8 p.m. starting September 12<sup>th</sup>. We start at 6 p.m. with a catered dinner (\$6 per person) and then we offer two groups for adults from 6:30-8 p.m. We offer a mixed adult group who will gather around a spiritual growth topic of their choice and there will also be a parenting class offered to parents of kids of all ages. We highly encourage parents of children or teenagers who attend Cross Training and confirmation to take advantage of these opportunities so that you too can be nurturing your spiritual lives as your children are developing theirs. For more information contact Claudia in the church office.



A 15-week Men's Bible Study will meet on Tuesday nights from 7-8:30 beginning September 12<sup>th</sup>. The study, "Paul, the 13<sup>th</sup> Apostle," focuses on God's call to Paul as recorded in Acts 13-28. Study Guides will be available in the church office. Come and enjoy learning "The Word" in fellowship with your Ascension Brothers. If you would like more information please contact John or Claudia in the church office.



## Worship Notes

It has been a wonderful summer and we have enjoyed seeing so many of you in worship and at the various Ascension Connections events. We are now gearing up for the fall and looking forward to seeing some returning faces. We are also excited by the many exciting things that are being planned for this year and want to share a few of them with you here.

First and foremost, we want to announce starting rehearsal dates for the various ensembles here. **Senior Choir and Bell Choir** will kick off on **September 6<sup>th</sup>**. We will begin by having a fellowship gathering beginning at 6:30 p.m. followed by a Senior Choir rehearsal at 7:30 p.m. **Bells** will have their first rehearsal the following week on **September 13<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m.** Senior choir will be singing at the service on Sunday, September 17<sup>th</sup>, where the theme is "Welcome Home." We are again blessed to be working with Lisa Rude and her dancers that day and will experience the joy of homecoming by worshipping in full voice and body. The **children's choir and youth choir** will begin on **Tuesday, September 12** with the first day of Cross Training. As it has been in the past, we share a meal at 6:00 p.m., begin the Children's Choir rehearsal at 6:30 p.m. and the Youth Choir rehearsal at 7:30 p.m.

Now, on to the events! As it stands now, our three areas of ministry (Worship, Spiritual Growth and Service) are working together to bring a very special program to you on the **evening of October 21<sup>st</sup>**. We are not 100% there in finalizing the plans so we are obligated to refrain from giving the details, but we can promise you it is on a very big scale and well worth reserving the space on your calendar! Official announcements pertaining to this event will come soon.

We are also looking forward to our Advent/Christmas concert, which will feature a skillfully wrought combination of two musical dramas entitled "A Light Still Shines" and "Light of the World." Both pieces tell us the miracle of Christmas story, the birth of Jesus and remind us how grateful we are for His presence on the earth and His willingness to be with us in spite of all He knew He would have to face. This will be a multi-generational event with wonderful music performed by our choirs and a full orchestra. The style of the music is very similar to the Christmas musical we did in 2004 entitled "Everlasting Light," but this time there will be more children and youth involved in the production as well as an expanded dramatic portion. This concert will take place on **December 9<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 p.m.** We will need a number of volunteers in order to bring this exciting event to Ascension. This event is not owned by us and cannot happen without your enthusiasm and volunteerism. Volunteer sign-up sheets will be posted and made available starting on Rally Day. Please pray about how your spiritual gift(s) could be used for this event, and let us know your area(s) of passion. Finally, this event will be a great opportunity to invite your friends, family and even some new acquaintances to Ascension. Please mark the date on your calendar and start spreading the word!

Blessing to all,

*Mischa & Minkyoo*

## Fellowship

### ASCENSION CONNECTIONS



WORSHIP • SPIRITUAL GROWTH • SERVICE

Here's what people are saying...

I thought everybody relaxed and had a great time.

My first outing with Ascension members—I liked it all!

A wonderful opportunity to get to know people in a different setting.

The DVD was so well done, and it reminded me of how much the church has to offer.

An excellent opportunity to get to know Ascension people better and review spiritual gifts.

Great fellowship! Delicious food!

Very good focus on what gifts we have that we could share.

The event was wonderful. Let's not stop after Rally Day! What fun we have when we gather in His name.



### Women's Luncheon

The first women's luncheon meeting of the fall season will be held on **Thursday, September 14, 12:00 noon**, at Hackney's Restaurant on Lake Avenue. Please note: for September only the luncheon will be held on the second Thursday instead of the first Thursday.

There will be an excellent program. Our own Caryl Scott will speak on her recent trip to Israel. You won't want to miss it! Please come and bring a friend.

### Lutheran Social Services of Illinois Presents Amicus Certus 2006

Come enjoy an evening of dinner, dancing, and an exciting auction while helping teenagers prepare themselves for life after foster care. You will also provide "seed" money to help teens with severe emotional disturbances to develop life skills that will enable them to transition successfully from adolescence to adulthood. You can do all this by attending the Women's Network of LSSI's 25th annual Amicus Certus (True Friend) Award Dinner. "A Masked Ball" will be held Saturday, October 28th, 6:00 p.m., at the Westin Chicago River North Hotel in Chicago. Tickets for this worthwhile event are \$275. For more information, please contact Elaine Chester.

## Staff Directory

Curt Gerald	Pastor	PastorCurt@Ascension-Church.org
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
Claudia Williams	Spiritual Growth Leader	Claudia@Ascension-Church.org
Jonathan Anderson	Youth Director	Jonathan@Ascension-Church.org

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Deadline for October Witness: September 10th