

CONNECTIONS
 Ascension Lutheran Church
 December, 2017



Dec 2	ALCW Advent Luncheon-11:30-1:30
Dec 9	ALCW Bake Sale-1:00-5:00
Dec 17	Children's Christmas Program
Dec 24	Christmas Eve Worship-6:30 & 9:00

Communion Worship every Sunday-9:30 AM.
Education—10:45
www.ascensionlutheran.com

Hearing Devices and Large Print Bulletins are available—ask an usher for assistance.



**Christmas Eve
 Candlelight Worship**

6:30 PM
 FAMILY WORSHIP

9:00 PM
 TRADITIONAL WORSHIP
 Featuring the
 Rogue Valley
 Brass Quintet

Childcare available at
 6:30 only



Prayer and meditation for the season

Pastor Doug Vold

Some years ago, I wrote an Advent litany for use during worship. We used it at Ascension a couple of years ago. But it has come to seem a little long and wordy for that purpose. I decided to offer it in this format, as something to pray and ponder, and I invite you to keep it handy and consider it from time to time as the official holiday season gets wound up.

Amid all the songs of the season, silly carols and profound ones, glorious concerts and musak at the mall...Lord help us listen for you inside them all. You are the joyous melody of life.

Amid the symbols of the season, crowding one another out, clamoring for our attention, overloading our senses...Lord help us realize that you are behind them all. You are the meaning for which we truly seek.

Amid the minutes that we spend and save, none to waste, clocks and schedules to rule our attention...Lord help us remember that you are within them all. You are the stillness for which we truly yearn.

Amid the price tags and the pressure, buying because we want to and because we don't dare not to, caught up in the frenzy once again...Lord help us discover that you are under them all. You are the one of priceless value.

Amid the decorations, beautiful and special, covering over what is ordinary, hiding what is bland or ugly...Lord help us behold that you permeate them all. You are true beauty.

Amid the parties, crowds and laughter, gatherings of friends and others, smiles genuine and forced...Lord help us recognize you beneath them all. You are the one whose fellowship we truly crave.

Amid the expectations, wishes fueled to a white hot flame, visions of how it all should be...Lord help us to know that you are before them all. You are the one for whom we truly hope.

Amid these lives we live, such as they are, pain and pleasure, sorrow and joy, good and bad...Lord help us to receive your advent in them all, bringing God to light within our world.



Ascension receives many calls from the community for help with food, rent, transportation, medicine, etc. Our focus is on food insecurity. To help people in need, we offer \$20 gift cards for Sherm's Food4Less or Thunderbird. We limit our giving to one time a year per household. Even so, in 2017 we've given away more than \$3000 in gift cards. When we offer a gift card, we also give a list of food pantries and community meals.

The money for our giving comes from the Christmas Eve offering. If you would like to contribute this ministry, please write food cards in the memo. Thank you.

~ Community Life Committee



NEW MEMBER IN-GATHERING

We will welcome new members to our congregation in December. On Sunday, December 3, new members are invited to an orientation session during the education hour, followed by lunch together. New members will be welcomed during worship the next Sunday, December 9. We encourage everyone to be fully and "officially" members. If you would like to join in December, please contact Pastor Doug, Jeanette Eliason, or the church office. If you are unable to attend the New Member Welcome on Dec. 9, but would still like to join, contact the church office.



SMART (Start Making a Reader Today) Booksale: Please save your unwanted books for the SMART Booksale. Bring them to church beginning Monday January 8. Return on January 13th to shop for new books for your shelves.

All proceeds go to the SMART reading program in the Rogue Valley Schools.

Please, no dictionaries, encyclopedias or magazines. 3



**Baby Class will meet on
December 10th at 10:45am.**

Come join Sarah Landmann in the nursery!
This is a special time for parents and their little ones to experience faith forming activities and to get to know one another.

Baby Class is a special once a month class for parents with babies, newborn through two years of age. The class will meet the second Sunday of each month through the programming year.



2 to PreK Class is Starting!

On **December 10th** this class will meet at 10:45am in the Sunday School wing.

This is a time to sing, pray and create together. The children will be getting ready, as Advent starts with “**The Christmas Story**”.

Parents are welcome but not required!



Christmas Eve is a Sunday this year and we are providing Nursery coverage for the 6:30pm Family Service. There will not be Nursery available for the morning 9:30am worship or the 9:00pm Evening Worship. Please plan accordingly and thanks for your understanding. If you have questions or concerns please contact Susan at susan@ascensionlutheran.com



December 3 - Middle Schoolers are invited to join the choir for the Christmas Program.

Sanctuary

December 10 - Same schedule as above.

December 17 - Everyone is invited in to Blaar Hall for some German themed food and activities!

December 24 - Christmas/No Workshops

December 31 - Christmas/No Workshops

December 3 - Starbucks and "Pub Talk"

Bring \$ and walk over

December 10 - Cooking

December 17 - Stage Crew for Children's Christmas Program

December 24 - Christmas/No Workshops

December 31 - Christmas/No Workshops



Christmas Program Prep-Workshop



Help is needed!

Linda Vold and Susan Detwiler would like to have lots of help getting ready for the children's Christmas program!

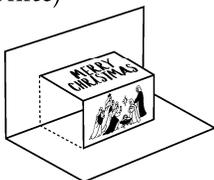
We will be creating pieces to use on the set, repurposing some background flats from previous years, crafting some treasures and much more. There will be tasks for ALL skill levels! Mark your calendar for **December 10th, 3pm till 5pm!** Thanks to all who respond! Contact Susan or Linda for more information or to let us know we won't be alone!

POP-UP CARD

Share the good news of Jesus' birth with this creative Christmas card.

What you need:

- Construction paper (two pieces, including one white)
- Pencil
- Scissors
- Pens
- Glue stick



What you do:

1. Neatly fold the white paper in half, short side to short side.
2. Draw two parallel lines (at least 2 inches apart) from the fold to about halfway to the edge. Cut along the lines.
3. Fold the cut section back and forth so it pops up.
4. Push the section up so it pops up inside the folded paper. Draw a nativity scene on the pop-up box.
5. Fold the colored paper in half, short side to short side. Place the white paper inside it and glue the white paper down, being careful not to glue the pop-up box.
6. Write a Christmas message and give or send the card to someone.



After Mary learned she was pregnant with God's Son, what relative — also miraculously pregnant — did she go visit?

- A. Esther
- B. Elizabeth
- C. Anne
- D. Anna

Answer: See Luke 1:39-40





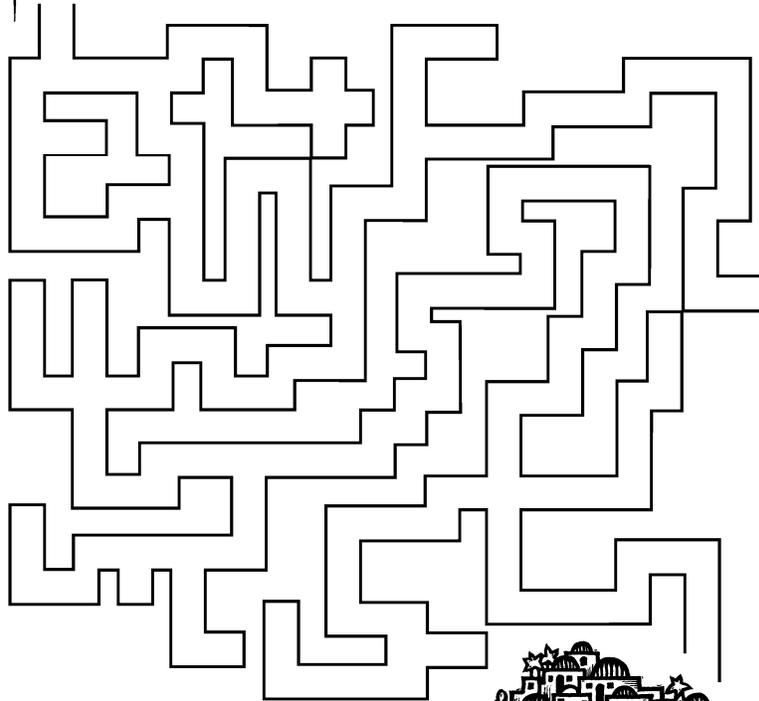
JOURNEY TO BETHLEHEM

In the Christmas story in Luke 2, an angel tells some shepherds to go see baby Jesus in Bethlehem.



START

Directions: Follow the maze to arrive in Bethlehem.



BETHLEHEM



An update and a forecast in youth programing!



This last month, our high school and middle school aged youth combined forces to make a change in local homeless people's lives this winter. 15 youth worked together to make 13 fleece blankets to donate to 1st Presbyterian's homeless outreach program. Along with other donations collected from our church, these blankets will be going to homeless people around our valley.

But that's not where the service train stops this holiday season! For the last several years, our church has given every child who lives across the street from us a new set of pajamas and underwear for Christmas. Our youth will be helping out with this gift by wrapping the gifts from our church to the children who live in that apartment complex. ~Stephanie

You can make a difference...

The children and youth of Ascension are supporting ministry with the homeless through 1st Presbyterian Church in downtown Medford.



Homeless Outreach

Bring in blankets, sleeping bags, coats, hat, scarves, gloves, shoes (not dress shoes) and boots. New items are welcome as are lightly used and clean items. Look for the big barrel in Blaar Hall and pop them into it!

German Christmas Treasures on Display

This year we would like to display German Christmas decorations as part of our German-Themed Christmas celebration. We are asking for folks to bring in items that could be set up in the coffee area on December 17th.

The children will be presenting their program during worship and afterward we will continue the fun by having German food, kids crafts and our German decorations.



German Christmas Decorations

If you can add to the display, items may be brought in the week prior to the 17th up to that Sunday! Contact Susan Detwiler or Linda Vold.

Empty Nester *Chr* *stmas* Party

Friday, December 15 from 5:30-8:00pm
Sun Oaks Club House
2585 Sun Oaks Drive

\$5.00 per person for a ham dinner
Tickets will be sold on December 3 & 10 in the Fireside Room.
Signup at church or call Marilyn (541-499-6132)
Gift Exchange (ornaments, wine, gag gifts, etc.)

Bring: Gifts (gag or small)
Wine to share would be appreciated.

Ascension's Finance Update

By Marsha Bones, Finance Chair

Here is just a quick update from the Finance Committee. I am happy to report that we have already reached our 2017 Estimate of Giving of \$319,280 and our 2017 Approved Budget of \$390,678 is totally covered. The abundance we receive for the rest of 2017 will go towards the 2018 Budget Process and front loading our 2018 Budget. So with Thanksgiving blessing to everyone, I am so grateful to the members of Ascension for your generosity this year. What a wonderful way to begin Advent and the Christmas season with anticipation of what is ahead for us in 2018 as Ascension explores new ways to do the Lord's work here and around the world.





Sun	Mon	Tue	W
3 <i>Worship 9:30 Education 10:45 New Member Orientation 11:00</i>	4 <i>Grace Notes 6:30 Com. Quilters 6:30</i>	5 <i>Rosettes 8:30 Quilters 8:30 Youth Chorus 4:00 Confirmation 6:00 FFEC 7:00</i>	6 <i>Bible Study Worship M. Choir 6:30</i>
10 <i>Worship 9:30 Education 10:45 Baby Class 2-Pre K Class</i>	11 <i>Admin 3:00 Grace Notes 6:30 Com. Quilters 6:30</i>	12 <i>Youth Chorus 4:00 Finance 4:00 Confirmation 6:00</i>	13 <i>Bible Study Martha Cir Choir 6:30</i>
17 <i>Worship 9:30 Christmas Program Kid's Craft Party</i>	18 <i>Grace Notes 6:30 Com. Quilters 6:30</i>	19 <i>Arts Mtg. 10:00 G.S. Party 5:00 Council 7:00</i>	20 <i>Bible Study Choir 6:30</i>
24 <i>Worship 9:30 Worship 6:30 Worship 9:00</i>	25 <i>Christmas Day Office closed</i>	26	27 <i>Bible Study</i>
31 <i>Worship 9:30</i>			



Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		<i>1</i>	<i>2</i> <i>Advent Lunch 11:30</i> <i>Youth Event 4:00</i>
<i>Study 9:30</i> <i>Worship Mtg. 5:15</i> <i>6:30</i>	<i>7</i> <i>Joyful Noise 9:00</i> <i>ALCW Board 9:30</i> <i>Girl Scouts 6:00</i>	<i>8</i> <i>Bake Sale Prep</i> <i>9:00</i> <i>AA 6:30</i>	<i>9</i> <i>ALCW Bake Sale</i> <i>1:00-5:00</i> <i>Girl Scouts 2:00</i> <i>G.S. Babysitting 5:00</i>
<i>Study 9:30</i> <i>Prayer Circle 12:30</i> <i>6:30</i>	<i>14</i> <i>Joyful Noise 9:30</i> <i>Community Life 11:00</i> <i>Girl Scouts 6:00</i>	<i>15</i> <i>Med. Garden</i> <i>Club 1:00</i> <i>AA 6:30</i>	<i>16</i> <i>Program Rehearsal</i> <i>10:00am</i>
<i>Study 9:30</i> <i>6:30</i>	<i>21</i> <i>Joyful Noise 9:30</i>	<i>22</i> <i>AA 6:30</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>Study 9:30</i>	<i>28</i> <i>Joyful Noise 9:00</i>	<i>29</i> <i>AA 6:30</i>	<i>30</i>

Specialty Baked Goods Sale Saturday, December 9th

Wanted: Bakers and “Shop Keepers”

If you are planning on making baked goods for the sale please let Diane Barnes know what you will be making and how many—drop her an email at dkbarnes@jeffnet.org. Please have all baked goods (in bulk-do not package) to the church by Friday morning December 8th.

We need volunteers to help package and price the baked goods on Friday December 8th and to set up the “shop”. There is a sign-up under the bulletin boards; we will begin at 9am. We also need volunteers to man the “shop” on Saturday, Dec 9th beginning at 1pm for 2 hour shifts, sign-ups under the bulletin boards. For more information contact Diane at 541-324-0404 or dkbarnes@jeffnet.org.





As part of our German Christmas Market on December 17th we would like to offer a variety of German food to taste. We are looking for donations!

If you would like to help out, we are looking for someone to make fondue, supply some dark rye bread, make some strudel, a sausage and cheese tray, bring some German Christmas cookies or German chocolate treats. Anybody have any limburger cheese or braunschweiger??

PRAYER CHAIN



Ascension has an active prayer chain waiting to meet your needs. If you or a loved one has a need or is in crisis and in need of support and prayer please call Jeanette Eliason at 779-2912 or bandjeliason@hotmail.com or the church office. Our prayer chain is generally an email chain, but some phone calls can be made. ~Jeanette



Traditions of a German Christmas

The congregation is invited to enjoy the children's annual Christmas program on December 17th during worship!

This year we are exploring German traditions surrounding the preparation and celebration of Christmas.

The program is created by Linda Vold,
the children's singing is led by Jeffrey Myers
and accompanied by Judy Maas.

“Weihnachtsmärkte”



Welcome to the "Weihnachtsmärkte" !

On Sunday, December 17th, after worship come into Blaar Hall for a peek at Ascension's German Christmas market!

Wander through and see the kids crafting gifts and sample some German delicacies!

Visit the Coffee Area to see German Christmas treasures!

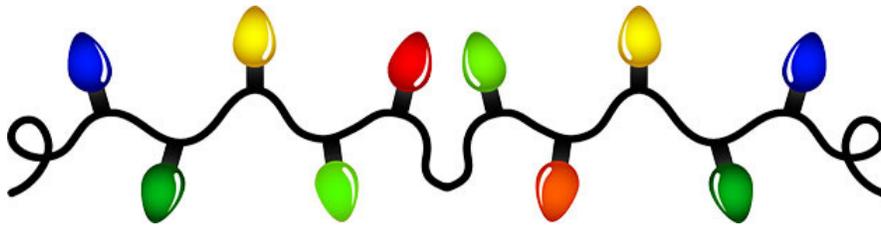
Kids of all ages are invited to come in and create some wonderful gifts! There will be food!

WHAT
IS
THANKOFFERING?

A little history. In the 1800's, some Lutheran church women were told that there were not enough funds in the budget to support their missions. So they founded the "Mite" and "Cent" societies. When, 30 years ago, the Women of the ELCA was formed, they continued these societies calling them THANKOFFERING. All of our Thankoffering of \$811 goes to the national office of Women of the ELCA

How is the Thankoffering money used today? Nationwide and world-wide funds go to: anti-racism training, addressing domestic violence, halting sexual exploitation, stopping human trafficking and supporting families with special needs. Women of the ELCA also offer workshops, retreats, scholarships and global education. All those members who bought quilts are like our Noisy offering "farmers". They are providing seed money for next year's quilts and perhaps some scholarship funds.

Ascension Lutheran Church Women thank you for your generosity.



Silent Auction Gift Boxes

Having trouble finding the perfect gift? We might just have a solution for you! This Christmas season the Houston bound youth will be presenting themed presents that will be up for auction. Each gift will be full of goodies and put together with love! Starting on **December 3rd**, these gifts will be on display ready for bidding! The auction will close **December 17th** at



ALCW
News

ALCW Board Meeting, December 7 at 9:30
Sarah Circle, *No meeting in December*
Martha Circle, December 13, 2017, 12:30

December is upon us and 2017 is ending this month! A lot was accomplished by ALCW, and we will discuss the goals we set for this year and what is planned for next year at the Advent Luncheon

Looking forward ...

The **Advent Luncheon** will be at 11:30 a.m. on December 2, 2017, at 11:30 a.m. in Blaar Hall. Entrees are a choice of Mediterranean Pasta with chicken or Stir-Fry Chicken, salad and dessert. Don't forget to bring baby items for 3 to 24-month-olds for the Teen Parent Program.

Baking for the **Holiday Bake Sale (December 9, 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.)** is done. Now is the time to think about your wish-list of all the goodies you will want to stock up on for the Christmas festivities you are planning for family and friends. Diane and her baking buddies will be ready for you at the appointed day and hour (s), so come early. One caution: there is a 3-bag limit on Lefse, but plenty of other delicious home-made baked sweet things to rejoice the heart!

⇒ *Lefse will be sold after worship on Dec. 3!*

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LUTHERAN CHURCH BODIES IN AMERICA

Family trees and lineages aren't always the most interesting reading—just try to keep your interest up as you read the first nine chapters of 1 Chronicles. On the other hand, when looking at a church body like the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, a tracing of mergers (and divisions!) can be helpful as we learn where we came from, what issues disturbed us, and thus where we may be headed.



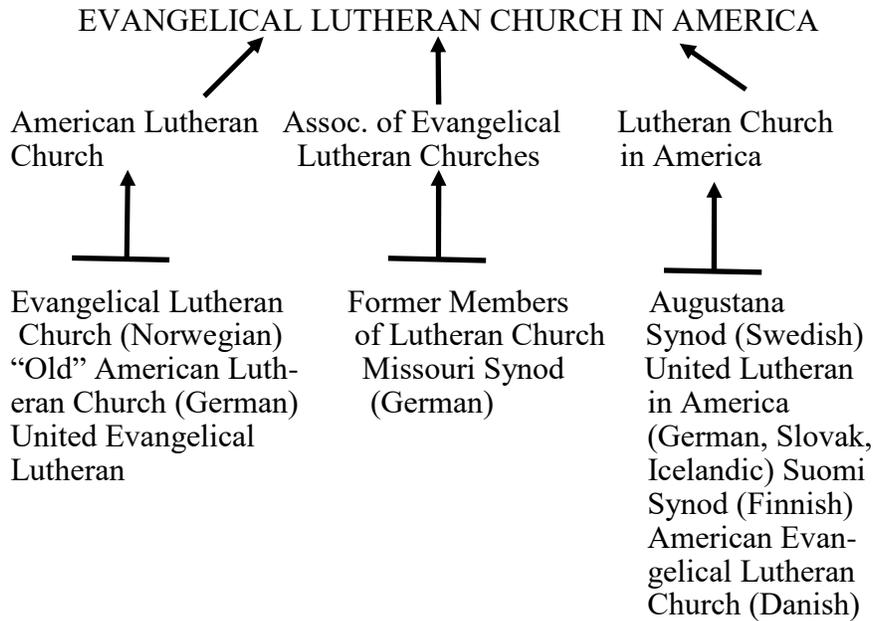
The Lutheran (or evangelical) movement began, of course, in Wittenberg, Germany. And in European countries the church organizations remained relatively stable, thanks to the tradition of state churches. For a long time, the principle was *Cuius regio, eius religio*—meaning, roughly, the king gets to decide the religion. Even in the “old country,” though, that began to break down in the nineteenth century as some Lutheran leaders, such as Hans Nielsen Hauge in Norway and the Sax-

ons who would form the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod, chafed under rules they felt violated their consciences.

When Lutherans began to arrive in the United States, they came from several countries—early on, mostly northern European and Nordic, each group affiliating with their country of origin. But Lutherans, having foresworn strong centralized control from the outset, kept thinking for themselves. Differences of opinion formed, or were inherited, over issues such as relations with Christians of differing beliefs, membership in lodges, and slavery, and theological matters such as millennialism (whether Christ will reign on earth for a thousand years), predestination, and ordination. So there are at least seven German groups, three Norwegian ones, and two Danish bodies, plus Swedes, Finns, Slovaks, and Icelanders, that through a series of mergers became the ELCA. A rough family tree can be seen on the other side.

Unfortunately, divisions have continued, more recently over issues like biblical inerrancy, relationships with other church bodies, ordination of women, and ordination and marriage of homosexual members. Today, even though the great majority of Lutherans in the United States belong to the ELCA, the Missouri Synod, or the Wisconsin Synod, there are more than thirty additional groups with ties to Lutheranism.

For Christians who follow the Lord who prayed that his followers might be one (John 17:11), such divisions are a cause for sorrow and repentance. The ELCA, a product of mergers, labors and prays that unity in Christ will continue to grow closer.



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**“you are the way”
DEVOTIONS FOR LENT 2018**

You may think I’ve gone crazy advertising for Lent when it’s not even Advent. Last year we ordered devotionals late and Augsburg was out of them. This year, we’ll order the devotionals in early January. Please let me know if you would like one. We’ll collect for them when they arrive. Prices include shipping.

Regular size	\$4.00
Large Print	\$6.00

Lent begins February 14. There is a sample devotional on my desk. If you prefer an electronic copy, you can order it from Augsburg for \$2.99. ~ Carla



SHINGLES

Shingles is a common condition caused by the herpes zoster virus. This is the same virus which has also caused chicken pox. After a case of chicken pox, the virus goes dormant in your nervous system and with any luck at all that's where it will stay. But during stressful times or just for some unknown reason, your body's defenses are down, the chicken pox virus can re-activate and appear as shingles. It can happen to anyone at any age, but is most common in older adults and in people with weakened immune systems.

Shingles is not contagious unless you have direct contact with drainage from the open sores of the shingles rash. It is therefore important that newborns, pregnant women and anyone with a weakened immune system to avoid contact.

Symptoms of shingles usually affect only a small portion of one side of your body and include pain, burning, numbness or tingling, and sensitivity to touch. They appear as a red rash that begins a few days after the pain begins. They are fluid-filled blisters that break open and re-crust over with a lot of itching. Pain is usually the first symptom and can be intense.

If you suspect shingles, it is important to see your health care provider as soon as possible. If you get started on an anti-viral medication it will likely decrease the length of the outbreak and lessen the pain. Although the rash is usually on one side or the other of the torso, it can be on the face, groin, neck or basically anywhere there is a nerve tract. If the rash is near the eyes, you must see a health care provider promptly.

Infection and pain are the most common complications of shingles.

There is now a vaccination to lessen symptoms or prevent shingles. It is available to anyone over sixty years of age and if you've had chicken pox, talk to your health care provider or pharmacist about getting one.

Chicken pox vaccines are available as part of childhood immunizations. If a child doesn't get chicken pox, they will not get shingles.

Come to think about it, maybe those chicken pox parties weren't such a good idea after all! (anyone remember them?) If you have questions on shingles, feel free to contact me. ~ Judy Dahl, RN

Ring in Christmas
Sunday, December 17th at 7pm
First Presbyterian Church Medford (8th and Holly)



Once again the Bell Choirs of the Rogue Valley come together to present an evening of Christmas carols and songs arranged for Handbells. Our own Grace Notes will be participating with three selections. There will be carol singing and a reception following the concert. Admission is free with a free will donation for the First Presbyterian Food Bank. For more information contact Diane Barnes at 543-324-0404.

ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS PLANTS AND WREATHS

If you would like to make a contribution towards Advent and Christmas flowers and greens, please fill out the following information and return it to the Church office.

\$ _____ towards the cost of flowers and greens

Your donation will be acknowledged in the bulletin with the following information.

GIVEN IN MEMORY OF

_____ or

GIVEN IN CELEBRATION OF

YOU NAME _____

Ascension Lutheran Church
675 Black Oak Dr.
Medford, OR 97504-8314
541-773-3594
www.ascensionlutheran.com

NONPROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
MEDFORD OR
PERMIT NO. 85

**Communion Services every
Sunday at 9:30 AM**

Return Service Requested

Our Mission

We, the members of Ascension Lutheran Church, gratefully rooted in the Good News of God's Grace, proclaim our partnership with the whole church of God and give ourselves to worship, witness and service.

Our Vision

We are a community of believers, empowered by the Holy Spirit to support and serve one another.

We believe that we are called to proclaim the good news of God in Christ through our words and especially through our deeds toward all who live in the greater Rogue Valley of Southern Oregon.