CONNECTIONS

Ascension Lutheran Church

April, 2018

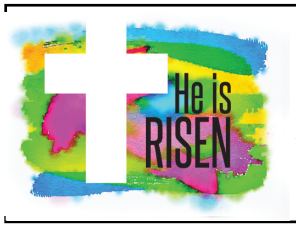
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Living in God's amazing grace

April 1	Easter Worship 8:30 & 11:00 Brunch and egg hunt 10:00
April 14	Oregon Synod Regional Meeting 10:00-4:00

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.



Easter Worship 8:30 and 11:00

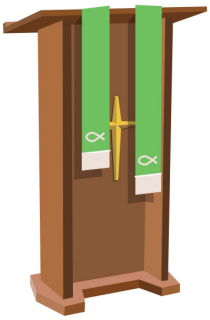
There is an Easter Egg hunt at 10:00
The Youth are preparing a delicious brunch to raise funds for the ELCA Youth Gathering in Houston this summer..

Oregon Synod Regional Gatherings

This year as an alternative to the 3 day synod assembly, there will be a one-day assembly in May, and several one-day regional gatherings around the Oregon Synod. Ascension is hosting a gathering April 14 from 10am-4pm

The purpose includes local needs and perspectives, stories, new work, trends and opportunities. During the gathering, there will be worship, Bible work and conversations with one another. Bishop David Bauer-Rieke, Assistant to the Bishop Susan Kintner, Synod President Deb Chenoweth, and people from the Synod's Mission Table plan to be with us.

Everyone is welcome to attend. The cost is a donation for lunch. We need to take reservations so we can have an idea about numbers. Contact Paul at secretary@ascensionlutheran.com.



Vitality Survey; Report #1

Pastor Doug Vold

You may remember taking a survey during worship one Sunday last summer. (Thank you for doing that.) As Ascension's leaders work through the results document it has seemed good to have me write some comments on its different sections. There are six areas to reflect upon. The first one is a cluster of questions grouped under the heading "Connecting with God." They are scored 1 – 5. "Scores at or above 4 indicate that the congregation feels they are doing well in connecting with God."

This segment seems like good news. (The report, overall, was very positive!) Our "God scale score" is 4.5, with some individual lines higher. "Worship nurtures faith" – 4.7. "Worship joyful" – 4.8. "Worship filled with God's presence" – 4.7. We see our worship as helping children and adults grow in faith and deepen in our relationship with God. We see our congregation as being spiritually vital, focused on God's work, and having a clear sense of mission and purpose. There is excitement about the future. Even "Always ready to try new things" ranked a 4.0, with "Willing to change to live into our mission" coming in at 4.1. These are strong numbers.

Alongside these congregational questions are responses that concern our sense of our own lives as participants. That was how the congregation is doing. This is how we as individuals may be doing. (Reality check!) Regarding spiritual growth, most of us put ourselves in the "slow and steady" or the "moderate" categories. We feel connected to the wider Christian church. Frequency of "Prayer, Devotion, Study" was more broadly spread out, as was "Having meaningful spiritual conversations with one another." This one featured the largest category of "never," but most had some. Frequency of worship was a funny question because the highest category was "Once per month or more" which a few of the every Sunday folks found a little insulting. One question worth noting: "I'm excited about this congregation's future" had overwhelming "agree" or "strongly agree," which reality checks nicely with the congregational material above.

What do we learn? This is our strongest area in the survey, and it's a good area for a church to be strong. This is a subjective measure, so it doesn't mean everyone would like how we are right now – but we pretty much do. This shows we have the capacity to experiment and try new things, which we have been doing in recent years. Nothing drastic, of course, but new worship furniture, new ways of electing leaders, seasonal changes within the overall structure of Sunday worship, thinking and experimenting with Sunday education – these are examples. A living church needs to live in this moment, not some other moment, and the ways we adjust how we operate, while still being recognizable to ourselves, show our efforts to be faithful in this particular time and place.

There is something else about this that is interesting. What does it look like when it lays alongside our recent trends in worship attendance? Worship attendance has been declining somewhat recently. For two years now, we have been below our six-year average. That is even though we say we are quite positive about the quality of our worship experience. It could be that only the ones who really like it filled out the survey. Some version of this is possible. But it could also be that these worship trends are driven by something different than the worship experience itself, and we should be careful not to jump to conclusions. The world is changing. People's lives and decision-making processes are changing, and we are influenced by factors we have yet to fully understand. I suspect the vitality survey will help us with this, as we better learn what is really going on, and where best to focus our attention.

At any rate, good for us that we feel positive about the spiritual vitality of our congregation. "Connecting with God" is not the only measure of a community's health and well-being, but it surely is of central importance. What a great source of energy and wisdom for the on-going work of mission and ministry. It can give us both the strength and the flexibility we will need as we face the future. By the way, regarding the future of this congregation, I'm excited about it too!

BABY CLASS!

April 8th at 10:45am

Come join Linda and Sarah in the nursery!
For parents with babies, newborn through two years of age.

April 8th at 10:45am in the Sunday School wing.

Parents are welcome but not required!

April 1 - **Easter**
April 8 - **Family Sunday**- "Doubting Thomas"
April 15 -**Workshop**
April 22 -**Service Project**
April 29 -**Workshop**

The Nursery is looking for 2 or 3 more folks to help in the Nursery. This would create a pool of folks that would only volunteer 5 or 6 times per year, every other month.

If you have questions or would like to volunteer, please contact Susan at 541-773-3594 or email susan@ascensionlutheran.com

Vacation Bible School
2018
August 6th - August 10th

Registration will begin in mid-April so keep a look out for an email with the registration link! Currently this is open to children 5 through 5th grade, but if you would like to lead a Preschool option for 4 year olds let me know ASAP!

Volunteers needed to open VBS: 2 people to run the Games Workshop, 1 person to help Lauren White with Snacks, 1 or 2 people to host our Community Workshop, 1 or 2 Friday Picnic Coordinators, 1 or 2 people to run 3 afternoon workshop for our teens in the afternoon.

Youth Counselors Needed!!!

Call Susan at 541-773-3594 or contact by email at susan@ascensionlutheran.com.

April 1 - Easter
April 8 - Family Sunday
April 15 - Bible Study with Pastor Doug
April 22 - Intergenerational Service Project
April 29 - Homebound Communion

April 1 - Easter
April 8 - Starbucks and "Pub Talk"
April 15 - Cooking
April 22 - Intergenerational Service Project
April 29 - Homebound Communion

ALCW NEWS

ALCW Board Meeting, Thursday, April 5, 2018, 9:30 a.m.
Sarah Circle, , **Tuesday**, April 10, 2018, 9:30 a.m.
Martha Circle, **Wednesday**, April 11, 2018, 12:30 p.m.

Last Month: The **Lutheran Women' Retreat at St. R**ita's in Gold Hill, was an inspiring break for all who attended last month. Meeting together with women of some of the other ELCA churches in the Cluster to which we belong is a once-a-year pleasure, and a way to charge one's spiritual batteries at the same time!

Coming Attractions: The **Spring Luncheon** is planned for May 5, 2018, at 11:30 a.m. More details will be available in this month's weekly bulletins, and tickets will be on sale after services on April 22 and 29.

We also want to ask your help in taking care of any tablecloths that are to be used in the future. There will no longer be anyone in charge of cleaning and care of them. We will appreciate that someone from any group needing to use them will take charge of cleaning and returning them to their storage place within a week of use. Thank you for your cooperation.

Bible Quiz

In John 10, what metaphor does Jesus use to describe himself?

A. "I am the gate..."
B. "I am the good shepherd..."
C. Both A and B
D. Neither A nor B

Answer: C (See John 10:9, 11.)

Are you ready for Easter Brunch?

This year Darbi Sumption will be taking charge of the kitchen!

Darbi, is one of the 10 youth from Ascension going on the Houston trip this June. She has been working very hard to create a fabulous menu for everyone to enjoy on **April 1st**!

This year we will be having: Dutch Babies, Handmade Sausage Patties, Fried Potatoes and Fruit Salad

Coffee, Tea and Orange Juice will be available

*there will be dietary options for those who are gluten free and vegetarian

Brunch will be served from 9:45 – 11:00

All donations will go to the youth service trip to Houston this summer we can take cash, check, or card.

"I thought your Easter message was great, except when you went off on a bunny trail."

Ascension's Finance Update

By Marsha Bones, Finance Chair

Spring is here and soon Easter will be too with much celebration. Ascension has much to celebrate as we continue to do the Lord's work and grow our ministry. Our finances continue to be strong. I am thankful to be a part of this caring and generous Congregation, where our members consistently give and honor their Estimate of Giving from Consecration Sunday. Currently, 2018 is about 21% history and our financial reports reflect that our general fund giving is at 20.5% and budget coverage is just above 30%.

Ascension has also been blessed to have a wonderful, hard-working, and dedicated Finance Staff. In 2009, when Finance Committee and staff, set out to make changes to improve the efficiency and accuracy of Ascension's financial records, our Financial Secretary, Vicki Risner was a key member of that group. She has been instrumental in developing her position and the guidelines to determine our annual Estimate of Giving. She has blessed us with her talents and gifts for the last nine years. Vicki also has a very demanding full time job with growing responsibilities, so she has given us her resignation. As the end of March approaches, so does Vicki's last days as our Financial Secretary. Ascension has truly been blessed with the service Vicki has provided and I am very grateful. Moving forward to April, Ted Menold will be filling in until a replacement is hired sometime in April or first of May.

If you have made a prayer shawl, you may leave it in the church office with a note "FOR PARISH CARE," or give it to Mary Ellen Campbell.

Each prayer shawl will be blessed at the altar before it is given away. A helpful website is: www.shawlministry.com and there are more patterns in "The Prayer Shawl Companion" a book available in the church office.

Memorial Scholarships Available

By Marsha Bones

Attention, High School Seniors and College Students! Just a reminder, Ascension has a couple of Memorial Scholarships that you can apply for. The **Ascension Memorial** and **Mary Whitford Memorial** scholarships criteria, procedure and application are on the church's web site at ascensionlutheran.com or can be obtained at the church. The completed applications for these scholarships must be returned to the church office by June 1, 2018.

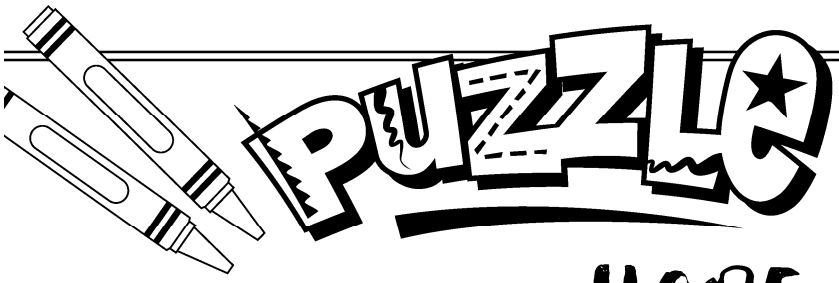
Thrivent Choice Dollars Helps Youth's Mission Trip

By Marsha Bones, Thrivent Congregational Advocate

Ascension's Thrivent Choice Dollars are going to help our Youth get to Houston for The Gathering. So far, Thrivent members have allocated $6180 Thrivent Choice Dollars through March's Thrivent Choice deposit. Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

Ascension's Thrivent Advocates continue to encourage all Thrivent Members to continue to check their Thrivent accounts to see if you have Thrivent Choice Dollars to allocate. Some members receive Thrivent Choice Dollars throughout the year; some quarterly or shortly after premiums are paid. If you do have Choice Dollars, please consider allocating them to Ascension. 100% Choice Dollars allocated through May will go to support our youth's mission trip to Houston.

What a wonderful boost and gift this is for our Youth Program and for those heading to Houston in June.



RESURRECTION HOPE

Romans 6:5 reveals the hope we have because Jesus rose from the dead on Easter.

Directions: *First solve the math problems. Then put the corresponding words in the blanks; for example, the word next to the answer "1" goes in the first blank, the word next to the answer "2" goes in the second blank, and so on.*

2+2 = ___ united	2x3 = ___ death	7+6 = ___ resurrection
3x3 = ___ certainly	18-16 = ___ have	4-1 = ___ been
0+1 = ___ if	2x4 = ___ we	13-1 = ___ him
2+3 = ___ in	20-6 = ___ like	2+5 = ___ his
2x5 = ___ be	8+3 = ___ with	

"For ___ we _____ _____ _____
1 2 3 4

with him ___ a _____ like _____ ,
5 6 7

___ will _____ also ___ united
8 9 10

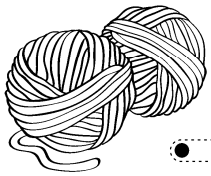
_____ _____ in a _____
11 12 13

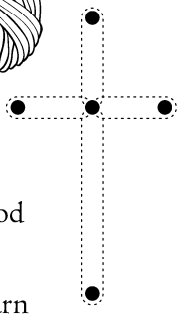
_____ his." Romans 6:5, NIV

See Romans 6.5

CROSS CRAFT

Make this special cross as a reminder of Jesus' death and resurrection.





What you need:

- Adult help
- Piece of wood
- 5 nails
- Hammer
- 2 balls of yarn (blue and yellow)

What you do:

1. Hammer the nails into the wood to form a cross shape (see example).
2. Tie the blue yarn to the bottom nail. Wrap it up and around the top nail and back down to the bottom nail. Then wrap it around the middle nail and around the side nails. Repeat until the yarn is wrapped about halfway up the exposed nails.
3. Repeat step two with the yellow yarn. Wrap it around the nails until only the heads are visible.

Colorectal Cancer

Colorectal cancer (also known as colon or rectal cancer) starts in the colon or the rectum. Colon cancer and rectal cancer are often grouped together because they have so much in common.

Most colorectal cancers come from precancerous polyps. These polyps grow on the inner lining of the colon or rectum. Not all polyps become cancer, but they can turn into cancer in five to ten years, depending on what type of polyp it is. If cancer forms in a polyp, it can grow into the wall of the colon or rectum, eventually infiltrating blood vessels or lymph nodes and traveling to distant parts of the body.

The signs and symptoms of colorectal cancer are rectal bleeding, blood in your stool, frequent cramping in your lower belly, pain during a bowel movement, urge to move your bowels without having a bowel movement, or a change in the shape of your stool.

There are several risk factors - some you can control and some you can't control. Risk factors you can control are: Your weight (overweight increases the risk), physical inactivity, diets high in red meat and processed meats (such as hot dogs and luncheon meats), meats cooked at high temperatures (frying, broiling or grilling), smoking (never good for you) and heavy alcohol use (more than two drinks a day for men and one drink a day for women).

Risk factors you can't control are: Personal history of colorectal polyps or colorectal cancer, history of inflammatory bowel disease (either ulcerated colitis or Crohn's Disease), family history of colorectal cancer or polyps, family cancer syndrome (determined with genetic testing) racial or ethnic background, or having type 2 diabetes.

How do you prevent colorectal cancer? You avoid smoking, limit alcohol usage, eat foods high in fiber, increase your calcium intake, cut back on fats and oils, butter, red meat, charcol-broiled and salt cured foods, exercise regularly and keep a healthy weight. It seems that every place I looked had the same advice, and I admit it's easier to say than to do!

There are several ways to test for colorectal cancer that are safe and effective. One method is a colonoscopy, which is a medical procedure where a scope is threaded through your rectum and into your colon looking for and removing any polyps. A less invasive test is an occult blood screening (occult blood is in your stool and is so minute you can't see it, but can be detected by chemicals put on your stool after you collect it in a little tube).

You should start screening at age fifty. Your primary care provider can help you decide when and what test is best for you based on your risk factors.

If you have any questions, please feel free to ask.

Judy Dahl, RN

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

The Blessing Bags need your help!

We're looking to stock up on cold weather items like: - hand warmers, white socks, men's hats and gloves.

As always, unused fast food condiments packets are welcome. Financial donations are also welcome. Questions? - ask Stephanie Risner.

Tom Anderson

Gloria Luderman

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

Communion Services every Sunday at 9:30 AM

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.

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

Return Service Requested