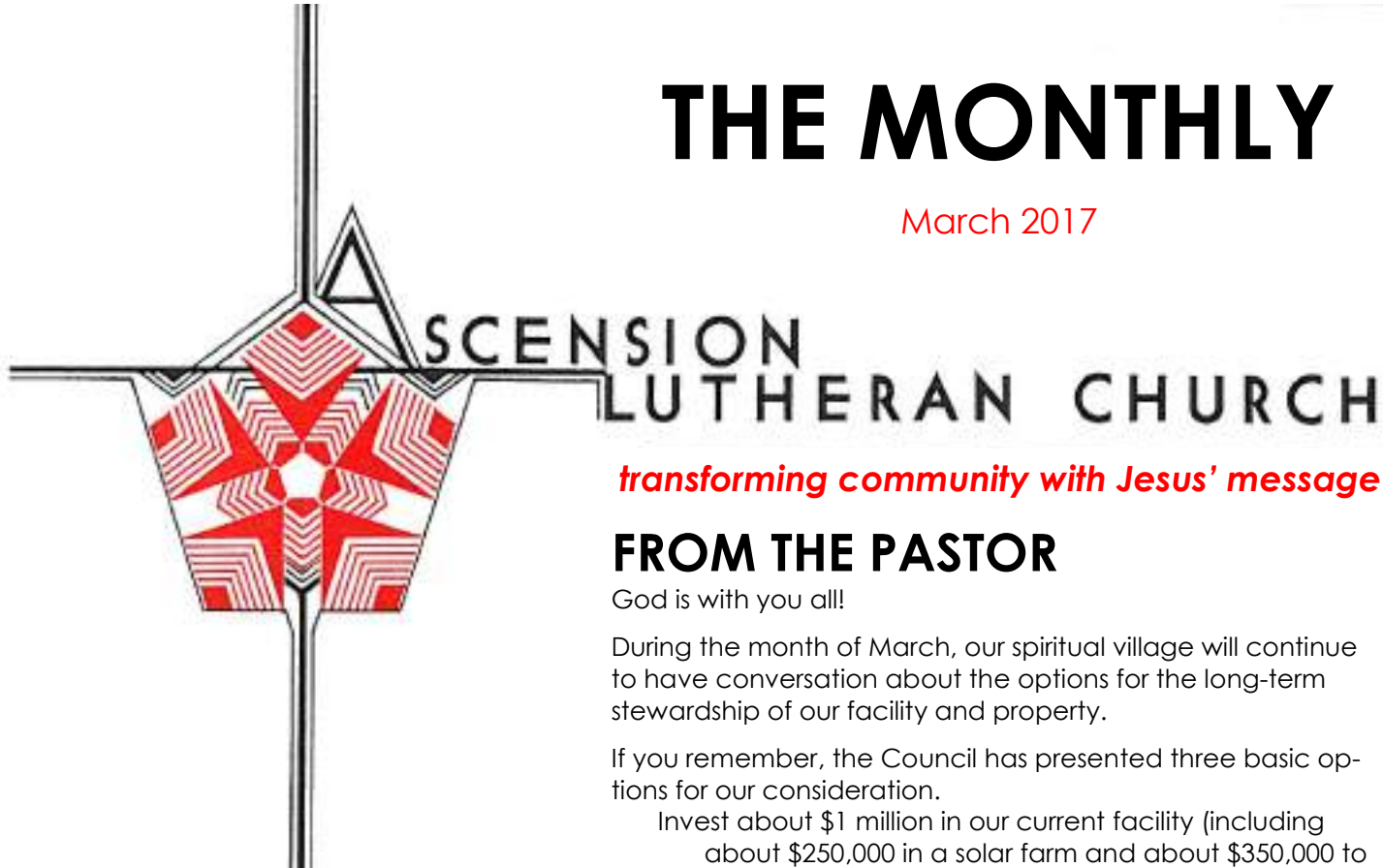


THE MONTHLY

March 2017



Rev. Stephen S. Talmage
bishop

Rev. Ryan M. Hersch
pastor

M. Jayne Baker
diaconal minister

Thomas Mueller
administrator

Tina Samuel
office support

Dale Niehaus
organist

Dr. Christopher Samuel
cantor/choirmaster

Judy Lenz
children's minister



7100 N. Mockingbird Ln. ♦ Paradise Valley, AZ ♦ 85253
www.ascensionparadisevalley.org ♦ 480-948-6050



**Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.

ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH

transforming community with Jesus' message

FROM THE PASTOR

God is with you all!

During the month of March, our spiritual village will continue to have conversation about the options for the long-term stewardship of our facility and property.

If you remember, the Council has presented three basic options for our consideration.

Invest about \$1 million in our current facility (including about \$250,000 in a solar farm and about \$350,000 to bury our mortgage).

Invest about \$2 million to demolish our current facility, build a new, right-sized facility, and bury the mortgage.

Liquidate our valuable property, bury the mortgage, and relocate, building a new, right-sized facility in the new location, possibly with no fundraising except for bridge loans.

So far, we've had three formal listening posts about these options, in addition to many informal conversations. Whenever and wherever we gather for conversation, it's important that we keep the following context in mind:

The ELCA has challenged us to think strategically about our congregation's future.

Fewer people are participating in congregation-based religion nowadays.

Fewer young people than ever are participating in congregation-based religion.

Patterns of attendance are changing among faithful members of congregations.

Denominational congregations have targeted or limited appeal.

Lutherans have many congregations in our area—probably too many!

Ascension is located on a church row of successful congregations, so there's very little cross-shopping (pun intended) going on.

Ascension's primary service area is fairly low-density in terms of population.

Ascension's fixed costs are fairly significant for a congregation our size.

(Continued)

FROM THE PASTOR *(continued)*

Multiple services are a cause of growth, not the result of growth; but the size of our sanctuary effectively prevents us from offering more than one service.

Attendance should be between 60 and 80% of a worship space's capacity.

There's something special about this congregation! We should hope for and work towards a best case scenario and prepare for a worst case scenario.

Our next listening post will be following the regular 10:00 AM worship service on **Sunday, March 5**. Information on more opportunities to gather will be included in our weekly announcements.

Please make an effort to participate in one or more of these gatherings. This conversation and our eventual decision will have a significant impact on our ability to transform our community with Jesus' message today and in the future!

God bless you all!

Ryan+

FROM THE DEACON'S STUDY

EVENT INVITATION —Wednesday, March 8, 2017

Congregations and individuals across the ELCA will be celebrating International Women's Day on March 8 by sharing stories, praying for and celebrating the cultural, economic, political and social achievements of women around the world.

This year, our own Jen Smith is planning our special local event with an evening of storytelling, bearing witness and listening deeply to each others' stories and creating together a safe place to tell our own truth. In the stories of our lives, we discover our common humanity. In coming together to learn, we build community and gain the courage to risk authentic love for all neighbors. A pretty bold goal—the theme for this year **#BEBOLDFORCHANGE**

The event is open to Ascension folks and friends of Ascension folks. Please add your voice to the harmony and your heart to the listening. We'll begin at 6 p.m., Wednesday 8 March, at 9030 N Cerrito Vista Drive.

For more information and RSVP contact Jen at jen@mylineofsight.com or 480 518 7241

A short story worth hearing:

One of Ascension's long time members, (Gloria Hanson) offered to pray for a friend who happened to be Jewish. Gloria shares her friend's reply:

"I can't see any reason not to ask for G-d's (she never spells or says the word God) mercy to expedite a recovery for — and your willingness to include him in your prayers and asking permission is a sign of your righteousness. It is said in our tradition that one who prays for another's welfare also benefits from blessings.

You have many merits of goodness and kindness and a fine example of Godliness to all those who know youthanks

Upon receiving this, Gloria says, "This is so different to me, because I pray for people who need help and they haven't even asked for prayers. Maybe I'm just learning of more ways God works."

Indeed, Gloria, indeed. It's called LOVE. Thanks for sharing.

Refugee crisis press conference with Lutheran Social Service of the SW—A wonderfully large turn out at Grace Lutheran Church to hear 4 refugees share their emotional stories. In addition, official speakers were Connie Phillips, CEO LSS-SW; Steve Talmage, Bishop Grand Canyon Synod. Others present to answer questions were Rabbi Linder and Kristi Sabbah from the East Valley Mosque. We want to thank all those who support Refugee Focus and the life-giving work they all do—We are proud of all who "welcoming the stranger" from all over the world.



FROM THE DEACON'S STUDY *(continued)*

CPR class On February 19, we had a great turn out for **CPR class** held after worship. There are now 9 members of Ascension on our health urgent response team who have been thoroughly prepared—a good cross-section of both year round members and winter residents. Thank you Dr. Floyd Shewmake for organizing this class and thank you to all that spent several hours learning this necessary skill to keep us as safe as possible. The following people are now Basic CPR certified—Congratulations to all of you!!!!

Floyd Shewmake Peggy Shewmake Sharon Meyer Susan Brandt Ralph Engler
Mary Beth Walker Barbara Schummer Judy Lenz Karen Olson

INVITATION TO INTERFAITH SEDER

The Seder meal will include members from Ascension Lutheran Church, the Islamic Center of the East Valley and our adopted refugee family Ahmad, Anoud and the kids joining Rabbi Linder, Todd Herzog, Alissa Zuchman and Temple Solel members.

Interfaith Seder

Sunday, April 9
1:00 pm – 2:30 pm
Dairy Potluck*



Passover is the Jewish holiday that celebrates our freedom. Along with a ritual meal, we tell each other the dramatic story of our slavery in Egypt and our escape to become a people.

We would love to share this tradition with our friends in the Christian and Muslim communities at an Interfaith Seder.

* Passover Potluck Instructions:

1. We don't mix meat and dairy at the synagogue we are asking for dairy (eggs and fish are OK) or vegetarian food only.
2. No food made with regular flour

Please bring one of the following, enough to feed 10 people:

Appetizer

Salad- including fruit, egg, tuna salads

Dessert- this one is tricky, remember no flour

Temple Solel

6805 E. McDonald Drive, Paradise Valley, Arizona 85253

Please RSVP to Lauren Kaiser lkaiser@templesolel.org or 480-991-7414 ext. 121

MARCH SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

Hi Ascension Kids and Families,

The Sunday school had a wonderful month in February learning about God's Love and how we, as young disciples, are to share this love with others.

March 1st will begin the 5 week Lenten Season with Ash Wednesday. During this season, Sunday school will focus on the amazing miracles and trials of Jesus ministry that correlate with those read each Sunday in Church. So come and join us as we will listen to some wondrous Bible stories and learn about how we can trust in Jesus, and be His light in the world. Remember, everyone is welcome. So feel free to bring your friends and join us for our faith-filled Sunday school program.

Sunday school meets each Sunday at the 10:00 a.m. Service. We look forward to seeing you! Blessings, Judy Lenz, Tammy Barks, Diane Ewell, and Vivian Barks

March Themes:

March 5 – When You Are Tempted - The Temptation of Jesus

March 12– Born Again – A Man Named Nicodemus

March 19 –Living Water - The Woman at the Well

March 26– Here's Mud in Your Eye - The Man Born Blind



ASH WEDNESDAY March 1, 2017

March 1 is **Ash Wednesday** this year. Pastor Ryan will be distributing ashes again down at the **Scottsdale Waterfront** during and around the lunch hour. Come visit with him if you'd like! Ascension's **sanctuary service** on Ash Wednesday is at **7:30 PM**. This service is a non-Communion service, and includes the receiving of ashes on the forehead.



REPORT ON HARMONY MINISTRIES MISSION TRIP

On the recent mission trip to Harmony Ministries in Haiti we saw over 400 people in a health clinic at the Thoman mission and 500 at the LaSalle mission. Each family was prescribed medicines as needed, as well as vitamins, soap and a package of rice. We distributed children's vitamins to the school teachers at each location so over 500 children in Harmony Ministries schools will get a vitamin each day for at least the next two months. I am pleased to report that Ascension's \$2,170 contribution to this effort was gratefully received and faithfully used. Thank you.

I also thought you might like to personally know several other things:

Pastor Luc told me the \$6,000 plus from Ascension that was sent to him in 2015 was received just as he was deciding whether they would have enough funds to begin rebuilding a school wing at Port au Prince that was destroyed in the 2010 earth quake. Our funds were used to build the foundation! The school is just about finished now and will be occupied in the fall of this year.

When we were there, a Harmony Ministries Mission Team was commissioned at the Port au Prince church. There were about 30-40 of them with matching tan polo shirts imprinted with "HMMT" (Harmony Ministries Mission Team). After church they were going to an orphanage for disabled children — 300 disabled children with all sorts of issues including deafness, blindness, deformities, various reasons to be in wheelchairs, etc. — to distribute rice and soap! Pastor Luc discovered the orphanage and Harmony now provides help as they are able. (BTW, there is a wheelchair ramp into the church in PAP; it's on the courtyard side.)

Pastor Luc has established another church and school where there was formerly neither. It is in Bertrand, Haiti, a rural village far up in the mountains above Thoman (that is pretty remote itself). It is only accessible via donkey path that is a 3 hour round trip walking from Thoman. There is no building yet and both meet under a large Mango tree. There are 68 students and 2 teachers presently.

As you can see Pastor Luc is a pretty special "envoy from God". I hope Ascension can continue to support his ministry whether or not I am still around our congregation. -Submitted by Roy Gust

FUN FRIDAY FOOD TRUCK NIGHT PHOTOS

It was a fabulous night under the stars with perfect weather, great food, and fun for all on Friday February 10. Put the next one on your calendar now— Friday, April 7th!



COFFEE CONNECTION



FEATURING IN MARCH–

NEW – ORGANIC WHOLE BEAN COFFEES – French Roast & Breakfast Blend

ORGANIC DRIP GRIND COFFEES - French Roast, Breakfast Blend & Decaf

1st and 3rd Sundays – March 5th & 19th



Ascension is “connecting” in ministry globally and locally by selling Fair Trade coffee. GLOBAL-
LY, we are connecting with Lutheran World Relief Fair Trade Coffee Project. Your purchase of Fair Trade coffee will help support small farmers to feed their families, educate their children, get medical care and improve their communities. LOCAL-
LY, we are connecting with Mission of Mercy Mobile Medical Clinic. Mission of Mercy provides primary medical care through its six mobile clinics to the uninsured, working poor and those unable to qualify for state or federal medical plans. It is 100% funded by private donations and is the only free mobile primary care clinic in Maricopa County. Three dollars of every coffee purchase will help to provide glucose test strips for diabetic patients (an essential need to help them manage their disease) – normally an out-



Lutheran World Relief
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. LASTING PROMISE.

of-pocket cost of \$100 per month. Through your coffee purchases, you will be supporting TWO ministries for the price of one! Check out the Fair Trade coffee display at the back of the sanctuary. Also available by order, with the same global and local impact: baking cocoa, Fair Trade Equal Exchange chocolate and all occasion artisan gift items.

Easter gift bags will be again be for sale along with fair trade coffee prior to Easter. The gift bags are a fundraiser for Pocket Pal Quilts.

For more information about LWR Fair Trade, click

http://lwr.org/site/c.dmJXKI0YJql6G/b.7521971/k.C73D/Support_Fair_Trade.htm

NEWS FROM DUET



Can you Feel the Gratitude?

As a partner with Duet, our faith community indirectly receives many thanks throughout the year. These are just a few:

“What a huge help you and the support group were to me as I walked down the path of elder motherhood.” – Sheila, grandmother raising a grandson.

“At age 91, I thank God for Duet. I am amazed at the kindness and efficiency of all volunteers.” – Willie, WWII veteran.

“Our support group hits on so many levels, as my father goes through the dementia journey. Blessings to all!” – Lavina, family caregiver.

Let's bring help and hope to even more people. How? We can tell others about Duet's free-of-charge services. More volunteers are also urgently needed to provide visits, grocery shopping, and/or transportation to isolated elders. Please contact 602-274-5022 or www.duetaz.org to volunteer, donate, or ask for help.

We're Invited to Duet Cabaret

Duet, our congregation's partner in service, presents Duet Cabaret on Sunday, April 30th at 1:30 pm at Montelucia Resort & Spa - Omni. Enjoy a delicious meal, silent and live auctions, the fun music of the Swingtips, plus dancing for those who wish. Proceeds will support Duet's free-of-charge health and aging services. Make your reservations at www.duetaz.org or 602-274-5022. Thank you!

Will Your Will Be Known?

A will can give final voice to your values and wishes. Learn about the importance and legal aspects of having a will by attending a free presentation offered by Duet's Professional Advisory Committee, including attorneys Lynn Anderson and Nat Nিকেle. RSVP to Duet at (602) 274-5022; please indicate your preferred date.

- Saturday, March 4th, 10:30 AM-noon; Peace Lutheran Church, 18265 N. 89th Ave Peoria, AZ 85382
- Thursday, March 9th, 3:30 – 5:00 PM, Duet, 555 W. Glendale Ave Phoenix, AZ 85021
- Saturday March 11th, 1:30 – 3:00 PM, St. Maria Goretti Catholic Church, 6261 N. Granite Reef Rd Scottsdale, AZ 85280

THANK YOU FROM ERIN

Dear Ascension Family,

I have recently returned from my assignment in the United Kingdom. I want to express my sincerest gratitude for the love and support I felt while I was away. Many thanks for your prayers, letters, and thoughts while I was over there. Your kindness was appreciated more than you know. I am happy to be back in Phoenix and looking forward to continuing my stewardship and life at Ascension.

In peace, Erin LaHaye.

BOOMER WOMEN OF ASCENSION

The Boomer Women of Ascension was established to bring together like minded women at similar age and stage of life. This group enjoys lively conversation and discussion that builds community while connecting us by faith. The group is open to all interested.

If you have not joined us yet, you are cordially invited. We have organized the group to provide outlets for social, stewardship and support. For additional information please contact Dawn Jeffers at jef-fersdm@hotmail.com or 480-824-8207.

PART-TIME POSITIONS AVAILABLE

Ascension has two staff positions that were approved at the congregational meeting to start May 1, 2017. Please send applications and/or resumes to ascensionoffice@aol.com. Applications must be received by March 15, 2017. Interviews will begin April 3, 2017.

Part-time custodian

The custodian will provide for the satisfactory appearance and maintenance of the church building, equipment, and grounds, giving special attention to general neatness and cleanliness. A complete job description is available by request.

Weekly schedule: Part-time; four hours weekly

Compensation: \$16.00 per hour for 2017.

Part-time assistant administrator

The assistant administrator will provide redundancy in knowledge and execution of office functions, finance, facility operations, and campus maintenance. The assistant administrator helps to create an open, accepting atmosphere for all who interact with the office; works closely with members to keep lines of communication open between office and congregation; teams with Parish Administrator to help ensure situations and tasks are handled promptly and effectively. A complete job description is available by request.

Weekly schedule: Part-time; 20 hours per week, flexible shifts Monday through Friday between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. (five 4-hour shifts or four 5-hour shifts.) Two weeks unpaid vacation is available annually.

Compensation: Starting wage is \$16.00 - \$18.00 hourly, depending on experience. (\$16,000 to \$18,000 annually).

SERVING BREAKFAST TO THE HUNGRY

On the first and second Sundays of each month, we partner with Grace Lutheran and New Covenant Lutheran to help serve breakfast to 300-400 homeless people in downtown Phoenix at Grace Lutheran Church. Email deandurkee@cox.net to join us. You will need to arrive at Grace by 6:15 AM; we are finished by 8:30 AM in time to come to worship at Ascension. Training will be provided. All ages from tweens to adults are encouraged take part in this needed mission in our own back yard.



THANK YOU FROM THE PHOENIX ARTISTS GUILD

Thank you for having the Phoenix Artists Guild exhibit at your church. Everyone was gracious and we enjoyed meeting all of your parish as they made us feel welcome.

Hope to see you next year.

Victoria Lansing
Phoenix Artists Guild



THRIVENT FINANCIAL

Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, a fraternal insurance company which provides many financial products to many Lutherans throughout the United States, distributes funds to Lutheran agencies, organizations, and congregations through a program called Thrivent Choice. Thrivent members who own various products such as life insurance, annuities, term insurance and a host of other financial products can designate how charitable funds that their products earn can be directed. You are able to direct these special charitable funds as you see fit.

We hope that you will keep Ascension Lutheran Church in mind when you make your selections. Previously these funds were directed through regional chapters, but now you as a Thrivent product owner can direct these funds yourself. It also means that Thrivent product owners throughout the world can direct these funds also to our ministry here at Ascension.

MOUNT OF OLIVES FOOD CLOSET NEEDS

Canned vegetables

Canned cranberry sauce

Boxes of stuffing mix (In preparation for the annual Meatsgiving event)

Pop top cans of chunky soup and 15 oz jars of peanut butter

Checks and cash may be placed in the offering plate marked for Mount of Olives. Any food items and diapers can be left at the church in the manger at any time. Many thanks for your participation in this very important ministry. Questions? Call Jan Peterson 480-659-7328.



ASCENSION RECYCLING FOR CASH

Donations of used **printer cartridges, cell phones, digital cameras, GPS devices, iPods** and **laptops** not only earns money for Ascension but keeps our environment clean.

Collect items from home, businesses, family, and friends and bring them in to the church office. Help teach our children how to become a hero and **Reduce, Reuse and Recycle.**



FRY'S COMMUNITY REWARDS

If you shop at Fry's, be sure to enroll in Fry's Community Rewards program! By registering your Fry's V.I.P. Cards online at Fry's secure web site www.FrysCommunityRewards.com. Once registered, every time an enrolled participant shops at Fry's using his or her Fry's V.I.P. Card, Ascension will earn rewards. In addition, once a household member enrolls his or her card, all linked Fry's V.I.P. Cards within that household will begin earning funds for Ascension. If you would like assistance in enrolling your V.I.P. card, please call the church office.



How to Re-Enroll for the Fry's Community Rewards Program

*Go to www.FrysCommunityRewards.com

*Click on 'Sign-In.'

*Enter your email and password then click on 'sign in.'

*Click on your name (top right hand corner), under 'Account Summary' scroll down to Community Rewards.

*Under Find Your Organization: Enter **Ascension Lutheran Church** then select 'search'.

*Under Select Your Organization: Click on the circle next to your organization.

*Click on 'Enroll'

*If you have re-enrolled correctly, you should see a green box with 'Your enrollment in the Community Rewards Program has been updated. Thank you for participating!' You will also see the information listed under 'Community Rewards' on your Account Summary page.

GOODSEARCH

Use Goodsearch to search the web and earn money for Ascension with every search! The

GoodSearch toolbar makes it so easy to use– it also links your rebate to Ascension whenever you shop on the web at a participating retailer!

Click <http://www.goodsearch.com/toolbar/ascension-lutheran-church-paradise-valley> to download this quick utility.



AMAZON SMILE REWARDS

Please support Ascension when you shop Amazon! Amazon Smile is the same Amazon you know; same products, same prices,

same service. Amazon Smile will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible Amazon Smile purchases to Ascension Lutheran Church whenever you shop on Amazon Smile. Support Ascension by starting your shopping at:

<http://smile.amazon.com/ch/86-0148330>



eSCRIP DINING REWARDS



Register your credit and debit cards with the church office! Ascension Lutheran Church earns corporate donations each and every time you shop at an eScrip merchant or dine at a Rewards Network restaurant– automatically!