

GOOD AFTERNOON! WHAT'S HAPPENING (January 9)

Worship Services are Saturdays at 4:00 p.m., and Sundays at 8:00 and 10:30 a.m. Adult Bible Study is at 9:15 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall, join Pastor John for his study on the Book of Lamentations!

Pastor John will have an Adult Instruction Class on Saturday, January 18 from 9:00 am – 1:00 pm, and Sunday, January 19 from 1:00-4:00 pm. This two-part class is designed to teach the basics of Christian faith and the Lutheran denomination. There is no cost. The instruction book will be provided. If you are not a member of Ascension and would like to see what we believe (or even if you are a member, and would like to have a refresher of Lutheran doctrine), you are invited to attend.

The Memorial Service for Barry Kratzer will be this Saturday, January 11 at 11:00 am. A meal will follow the service in the Fellowship Hall.

Time to renew your Lutheran Witness subscriptions! Please contact the office ONLY if you wish to CANCEL a current subscription or if you wish to ADD a new subscription. The cost of an annual subscription is \$20.65 (you can place your check made out to Ascension and noted 'Lutheran Witness-2025' in the offering plate). **The deadline for changes is January 16!** (*New subscriptions will begin in March.*)

The Lord gives a promise, "So is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it." (Isaiah 55:11) Since March of 2020 Ascension Lutheran Church has had a presence online, on YouTube, and I am amazed at how God's word has been received across our country and even beyond our country. During 2024 we had over 10,000 views (10,006 to be precise) on our YouTube channel - an average of 192 every weekend. In addition to that means of sharing God's word, the printed copy of the sermon is also available, both online and in the mailboxes (south side, on the top). I hear from people who take a copy of the sermon to a neighbor, a relative or a friend, and that becomes a part of their spiritual nurture. Pray that God would bring much fruit through these ways of sharing His love, salvation and mercy. Pastor John

As we begin 2025, I would like to give a report to you about this past year at Ascension Lutheran Church. Our congregation has 504 baptized members, 444 who are communicant members. This compares to 509 baptized members in 2023, with 458 of those who are communicants. Our weekly attendance was 213 in 2024 (220 was our average in 2023). 7 of our members died in 2024 (much less than the 19 who died in 2023!) We lost 29 of our members during this past year – the majority of that coming by way of release of membership due to inactivity (15), transferring to another congregation (7) and deaths (7). But we also saw 26 folks join Ascension. The majority of this was by reaffirmation of faith (8), Adult Confirmation (7) and transferring to Ascension from another congregation (5).

Our congregation completed two large projects on our building. In the early part of the year the bell tower was removed and in the middle of the year the roof of our sanctuary was shingled. Though both of these projects were quite expensive we were able to use funds that we had saved or set aside to complete these projects.

During 2024 both our Evangelism Committee and the Congregational Life Committee, newly formed committees at Ascension, set some lofty goals and worked hard to accomplish them. A number of new ideas were well received by the congregation.

As a congregation we work together to bring grace and mercy to many others. We desire for more to know the salvation that God brings through Jesus and the love that we have for them. Well over \$130,000 was given through the offerings of the congregation, and the work of the Ascension Lutheran Church Foundation, our Ladies Guild, our Christmas Committee, the work through Angel Tree, and the work of the Social Ministry arm of Congregational Life. A special project that came to us due to the hurricanes in the southeastern part of our country was the need to help those devastated by the storms. Within a month our congregation raised \$10,000 to help with those needs. I thank you for your generosity.

2025 is a new year, with new challenges, undoubtedly. But our Lord is ever faithful. He'll lead us and stand with us. Pastor John Larson

The work of a congregation is found in many people who help lead and serve. We are thankful to those who have served their Lord and this congregation in the past years. We especially give our thanks to those completing their service at Ascension: Margo Pasha (Treasurer), Dawn Munson (Evangelism) and Ian Kirschner (Youth). Those who will help lead our congregation during 2025 are:

Bob Hea (President)
David Kaiser (Vice-President)
Mike Price (Treasurer)
Barbara Rutter (Secretary)
Jim Wert (Elders)
Christa Kirchner (Education)
Shelia Beu (Congregational Life)
Linda Achziger (Ladies Guild)
Chuck Mielke and Terry Utecht (Trustees)
Anita Baresel and Bob Hea (Evangelism)
The Youth Board is presently vacant.

Thank you to everyone who volunteered and contributed to the Christmas Families program! We were able to serve 85 individuals in 14 families this year!

YOU ARE INVITED TO JOIN THE LADIES' GUILD FOR A BROWN BAG LUNCH & BIBLE STUDY WITH PASTOR LARSON

Next Thursday, January 16 at 11:30 am in the Fellowship Hall! The Ladies' Guild will provide dessert, coffee and tea. Please remember to bring a friend, your mites, nickel bags / socks, your Bible, and most importantly, do not forget your Brown Bag Lunch!

And we are back to school! Having a break is so nice but I was just getting to the point where I knew I needed a bit more "routine" in my day. It is so much fun to hear what the kiddos have done over their break. We have 2 more littles starting in our preschool class this week which will be a wonderful addition. This month we have lots of fun planned with 'snowmen' this week. Yesterday's weather was kind of perfect, lol.
– Grace and Peace, Meg Stenman, Preschool Director

The moment you've been waiting for is here! Time to pre-order your yummy BREAKFAST BURRITOS! The youth will be taking orders as a fundraiser towards the LCMS National Youth Gathering trip this summer to New Orleans. Basic burritos consist of scrambled eggs, cheese, and hash browns. Additional toppings of green chile and salsa are available. \$6.00 per burrito, \$7.00 burrito with sausage. Pick up will be on Super Bowl Sunday, Feb. 9th. Order forms are available in the narthex or contact Stephanie at stephanieroettjer@gmail.com.

Mark your calendars for Friday, January 24th! FAMILY GAME NIGHT is back for another round of Bingo, games, prizes, and fun! All ages are invited! Bring a game and a snack to share. 6:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall.

GriefShare Support Group Ascension's next GriefShare session begins with a new 13-Week GriefShare Support Group, starting Tuesday, February 4, and ending, Tuesday, April 29. Weekly sessions are on Tuesdays, from 6:30 - 8:30 PM. Please share this information with anyone (neighbors, friends, relatives, colleagues, etc.) who may be grieving a loved one's death and could benefit from this successful program. GriefShare programs are Christ-centered and designed to help all grievers, regardless of religious affiliation (or lack of).

At each weekly meeting, group participants will view a video featuring respected counselors, teachers, and health-care professionals on grief-related topics. Small group discussions follow that allow people a time of sharing, support, and personal application of what they learned from the video. Participants also receive a participant guidebook, filled with valuable exercises and information to aid them in navigating their personal grief journey.

Please contact griefshare.org/findagroup to register or contact Sherry Hitztaler, hitz2@comcast.net for more information. All are welcome to attend. Linda Olsen and Sherry Hitztaler are the co-facilitators for Ascension's GriefShare Support Group and are happy to answer any questions. We are thankful that Pastor Larson, Church Council, and the people of Ascension support this valuable ministry.

- Sherry Hitztaler and Linda Olsen, Co-Facilitators of ALC's GriefShare Programs.

SAVE THE DATE for Vacation Bible School 2025! The dates will be Monday, June 2 through Friday, June 6, and the theme will be "True North: An Alaskan Adventure!" True North VBS shows kids that Jesus is a faithful friend we can always trust. He's our True North!

Congregational Retreat 2025 Please save the dates – Friday, August 1 to Sunday, August 3, at Lutheran Valley Retreat near Woodland Park! More info to come!

Flowers Flowers Flowers! The 2025 Flower weekly signup sheet is located on the bulletin board on the landing just down from the Narthex. Simply fill out your name, dedication for a special event, and write a check for the number of arrangements, each arrangement is \$27.00, the cost for both arrangements is \$54.00, this is the same cost as 2024. If you want to share your special event with another person that is perfect – we love to celebrate everyone’s special day.

You are welcome to take your donated flowers home after the last service, or you can opt to give them another good deed. The Ladies of Circle IV will take the flowers left to the homebound and hospitalized members of our church to brighten their day!

You may pay for your flowers using the envelopes located below the sign-up sheet and place it in the weekly offering plate. It is particularly important to mark your check clearly “ALTAR FLOWERS” so the offering counters do not credit it to the General Fund, but to floral budget, the church does not have a floral budget, and all Altar Flowers are made possible by donations. Please remember to pay for your flowers by the Sunday you are dedicating them.

Thank you all for your flower donations and the beauty, which they bring to our Church.

We are so grateful for your many prayers and words of encouragement offered on behalf of our grandson, Tommy. Our family firmly believes that prayer was part of his recovery and the logistics of bringing everyone back to the great USA.

Remember, you too, can email me any prayer requests and receive the same support, care and love from our members on the prayer chain plus other members of this congregation. May the Lord's favor be upon you in this His new year. Jude Donovan, heyjude264@aol.com

Homelessness Awareness and Action Task Force (HAAT Force) After the closing of the Severe Weather Shelter Network last spring, the services the Shelter Network had been providing for homeless adults were transferred to the Homelessness Awareness and Action Task Force (HAAT Force). This organization was founded in 2010 out of a concern about homelessness in the South Metro Denver area. Today they serve a variety of individuals and families who are unhoused. SWSN served only adults and was a partner of HAAT Force and is now a part of their shelter program. This program is different from SWSN, in that it uses a motel model. Clients stay in motels when the weather is severe. They are also provided with meals.

HAAT Force needs are the same as those of SWSN. You will see a box in the church entryway for your donations. Thank you!

Ann Kaneko, kanekoa43@gmail.com, 720.289.6782 and Lori Rolling, rollingbarn@gmail.com

Ascension’s Quilters Group meets on Fridays at 12:30 pm in the Fellowship Hall. Come and see what it is all about! For more information, please call Jackie Adams at 720-877-0162.

Young Adult Bible Study The Young Adult Bible Study will meet this Friday, January 10, at Jenna and Michael Lawrenz' house. For more information, please call or email Jenna at 303-913-3512 or jenna.lindeman@cune.org

Bible Study with Pastor Don Ginkel The group is studying the Book of Acts every Wednesday at 10:00 am in Room 106. All are welcome!

Saturday Afternoon Bible Study Please join us Saturdays at 3:00 pm for the Lifelight Bible Study, Wilderness Wanderings on Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, in Room 106. Please note, there will be no Bible Study on Saturday, January 18. Email Curt at Kengle0920@gmail.com

Putting an estate plan together presents many competing priorities around which to make decisions. Certainly, you wish to care for the family you love. Yet even families can present competing priorities. In your family, is there someone who has special needs such as long-term care or support through a disability? Inheritance doesn't have to be "fair". It does show God's grace and mercy. Your Ascension Gift Planning Counselor can help you begin figuring this out. Contact Jason Jones at Jason.Jones@lfnd.org or call him directly at (970) 988-0305.

Paid Position Available! Temporary assistant caregiver needed for Lisa O'Neal's 10-month-old granddaughter, Charlotte, while Lisa O'Neal is healing from two fractured wrists. Lisa needs help with feeding and diapering Charlotte, etc. Lisa will be present during work hours, 9:00 am – 1:00 pm Monday through Friday. The location is near Wadsworth and Crestline Avenue in Littleton. This is a paid position. Please call Lisa at 720-980-3750 or email her at lisonal77@gmail.com

Prayers: For healing for Christopher Coleman, Nancy Lugton's nephew in New Mexico, who has been hospitalized and suffers from depression; For Pauline Louchren and her family, at the loss of her husband, Bill, in Nevada. The Louchrens are friends of Joyce Gallagher. For Patti Zeggert's sister, Debi, who will have a heart catheterization procedure in Georgia; For Larry Nelson, with health issues; For Edna Achziger, who has been ill; For Larry Nisbet; For Lisa O'Neal, with two fractured wrists; For Jerry Gerdes, who will have heart valve replacement surgery; For Carmen Gutierrez, recovering from back surgery on December 31; For health and strength for Rick Westra, Phyllis' son, as his cancer has returned; For John and Lori Rolling's friend, Shane Alexander; For Lawrence Brown; For James Cooper, with pancreatic cancer; For those who are lonely or grieving during the holidays; For those affected by the fires in the Los Angeles area; For the people of Haiti, and for the children living there; For those affected by violence in Israel, Lebanon, Gaza, and Ukraine; For our beloved country, and for its leaders; For God to send His Holy Spirit on all believers for strengthening of faith and witness.

Prayers of Thanksgiving for the birth of Curt and Karen Engle's baby granddaughter, Abigale, born on Friday, January 3. Blessings to their family!

From Phyllis Westra: I want to thank the wonderful families who visited me to sing Christmas carols! It means a lot to me. Thank you also to Pastor for the visits and Communion. God is Good!! Thank you to the Quilters and the Ladies Guild for the wonderful Christmas gifts!

Flowers on the Altar this weekend are given by Dick and Joanne Castleman, in loving memory of their parents.

<u>Attendance</u>	<u>Service Time</u>	<u>Attendees</u>	
Saturday, 1/4	4:00 pm	51	
Sunday, 1/5	8:00 am	57	
	10:30 am	59	
			Total Weekend: 167

Online Views (as of January 7) for December 29: 211 views.

<u>Stewardship</u>	December 31	Year-to-Date (2024)
Received Amount	\$1,012.00	\$693,463.00
	January 4-5	Year-to-Date (YTD)
Budgeted Revenue	\$14,000.00	\$14,000.00
Received Amount	\$12,841.00	\$12,841.00

Calendar (Saturday, January 11 – Sunday, January 19):

Sat. (1-11)	9:30 am	Ladies Guild Board Meeting
	11:00 am	Memorial Service for Barry Kratzer
	3:00 pm	Saturday Bible Study
	4:00 pm	Traditional Worship with Holy Communion
Sun. (1-12)	8:00 am	Traditional Worship with Holy Communion
	9:15 am	Sunday School / Adult Bible Study
	10:30 am	Traditional Worship with Holy Communion
Mon. (1-13)	8:00 am – 4:00 pm	AARP Tax Aide Training
	9:30 am – 2:30 pm	Extended Day Preschool
Tues. (1-14)	8:00 am – 4:00 pm	AARP Tax Aide Training
	9:30 am – 2:30 pm	Extended Day Preschool
	9:30 am	Ladies' Bible Study
	6:30 pm	Church Council
Weds. (1-15)	9:30 am – 2:30 pm	Extended Day Preschool
	10:00 am	Bible Study with Pastor Ginkel
	5:00 pm	Bible Study with Pastor John
	6:00 pm	Confirmation
	6:00 pm	Gloria Dei Ringers
	7:00 pm	Ascension Chorale

Thurs. (1-16)	9:30 am – 2:30 pm	Extended Day Preschool
	11:30 am	Ladies Guild Brown Bag Lunch & Bible Study
	1:30 pm	Koinonia
Fri. (1-17)	8:00 am – 4:00 pm	AARP Tax Aide Training
	9:30 am – 2:30 pm	Extended Day Preschool
	12:30 pm	Quilters Group
Sat. (1-18)	9:00 am	Heritage Fine Arts Workshop
	9:00 am – 1:00 pm	Adult Instruction
	3:00 pm	Saturday Bible Study
	4:00 pm	Traditional Worship with Holy Communion
Sun. (1-19)	8:00 am	Traditional Worship with Holy Communion
	9:15 am	Sunday School / Adult Bible Study
	10:30 am	Traditional Worship with Holy Communion
	1:00 – 4:00 pm	Adult Instruction

KFUO Radio, the broadcast voice of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, shares Christ for you anytime, anywhere on **KFUO.org** via worship services, Bible and theology studies, practical talk programs, and sacred music. Find programs on demand at kfuo.org and wherever you get your podcasts! Find us on social:

@KFUOradio on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/kfuo), [X](https://twitter.com/kfuo), and [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/kfuo).

CHRIST FOR YOU this week on KFUA AM850 & kfuo.org: We continue our study of Isaiah on Sharper Iron (weekdays at 8 a.m. CT) with chapters 19-24. On Thy Strong Word (weekdays at 11 a.m. CT), we wrap up John's first letter, and continue with 2nd and 3rd John. Don't forget to tune into Concord Matters Saturday (1/18 at 10 a.m. CT) to learn about confessional subscription. What is it, and why do our churches practice it? Find your favorite programs on demand at kfuo.org or on the KFUA Radio app!