

The

Spirit newsletter

January 2023



“The Light Shines in the Darkness”

Have you ever been outdoors on a dark and cloudy night and noticed how much of a difference it makes when the moon finally peeks out from behind the clouds? With but a little bit of reflected light, the landscape changes. All the things that were hidden by darkness begin to take shape with even the faintest amount of light. Paths that were invisible take form. What a difference it makes when there’s a little light shining in the darkness!

As we look back at the last year, we’re likely to remember a landscape painted in shades of both light and darkness, the good moments along with the bad. We’re certain to remember bright times, days when nothing could get us down, when everything was going our way. At the same time, we’re also certain to remember darker days, days when we couldn’t seem to get things right, when bad news came crashing in uninvited, or when we couldn’t discern the right way to go. Every year seems to be made up of both kinds of experiences, yet some years it might just seem like the dark days have won out. Those are the particularly hard years. They are the years when we’ve lost someone important to us, years when we know we’ve made poor choices in life, or years when we have caused others hurt and difficulty which we don’t know how to fix. Then, it would appear that the darkness has won out.

In John 1, however, we hear of a Great Light who has shined into a very dark world. *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and apart from Him nothing was made which has been made. In Him was life, and the Life was the Light of men. And the Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it”* (John 1:1-5). That last verse is worth repeating. “The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.” In those days when the darkness of our world or of our own broken and sinful hearts appears to have the advantage, our Lord Jesus Christ shines brighter. There is nothing in this world that was able to overcome the light of His hope, forgiveness, and peace. There is no darkness we experience, no loss too great, no problem too big, no weakness too severe, no power of sin or hell too strong to overcome the light of our Lord Jesus Christ. Whatever darkness we have encountered in the past year, this New Year the light of Christ shines brighter.

Just as it has been in the past, chances are we may experience some difficult and dark times this coming New Year. However, when these things happen, the Light of our Lord Jesus shines into the darkness, and there is nothing which ever has or ever will overcome Him. This year, He who has overcome the darkness continues to shine on you, and nothing that happens will be able to overcome the light He brings to our hearts and minds. “The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”

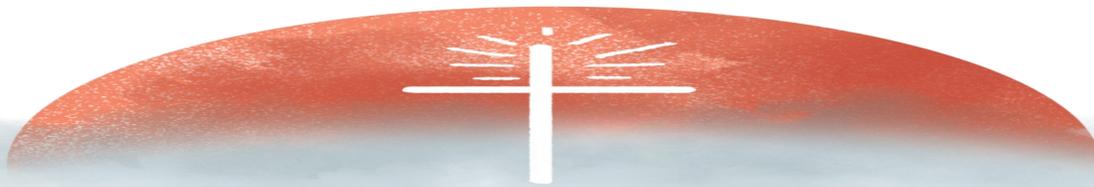
May the Light of our Lord Jesus Christ shine brightly on you throughout the New Year!

In Him,

Pastor Mike Badenhop



Sunday, January 1, 2023 Worship Service
One Service - 9:30 a.m. with communion



Condolences

Condolences to the family of Ruth Prins who died on December 5th.



Lifting you in Prayer as you grieve.



Rose Beier

Ed Billings

Jeff Colvin

Maria Drewes

Ivy Gibbons

Anabell Hakes

Traci McNally

Ken Schwake

Mike Sullivan

Dana Walker

Prayers & Praises

A special "thank you" to Social Ministry for the cards we have received faithfully and for the Advent "gift" delivered by Deb Anderson. We truly appreciate it. Also, to those who sent me birthday cards or phone calls - "I thank you."

-Dean & Glenda Alshouse

Thank you to everyone who reached out to express their sympathy on the death of my brother. The kindness of Ascension shines through in its people. May God bless all of you!

-Jamie Olsen & Family

The World Mission Committee would like to thank all those who came, donated, helped prepare, serve and clean up for the December 7th Advent Meal. The donations you gave are going to help send supplies to Mexico collected by Servant Unique Family Ministries.

I can't thank you Ascension family enough for all the wonderful blessings over the past several months. There have been so many cards, visits, phone calls, flowers, candies and cookies. Thank you is so inadequate in the face of so much caring. And, then the prayers!! I'm sure they made a huge difference. I'm sure God heard every one. He is a great and wonderful God! God bless all of you!

-Mary Volker

Church

ANNOUNCEMENTS



ONE SERVICE

**9:30 a.m.
with communion**

ANNUAL MEETING

Sunday, January 29 10:00 am

Members are encouraged to come take part in the future of our church.

Lunch will be provided after the 2nd service and before the meeting starts.



Message from Stewardship & Finance Committee

2023 offering envelopes have arrived! Please pick yours up in the narthex at your earliest convenience.



YOUNG DISCIPLES

(Youth group for 4th - 6th graders)

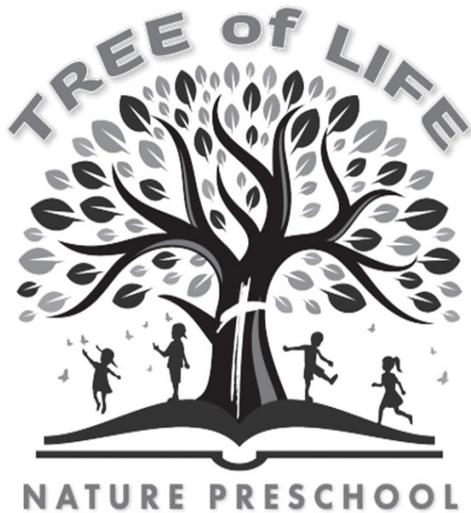
Peanut Butter *Mania!*

**Sunday, January 8
12 to 1:30 p.m.
Lunch will be served
(Peanut butter sandwiches, of course!)**

***It's gonna be fun!
It's gonna be crazy!***

Come and make memories with your Ascension friends. Can also bring a friend from your neighborhood or school.

	November 20	November 27	December 4	December 11
Current Expenses	\$7,129.50	\$5,272.90	\$9,136.00	\$5,901.50
Benevolence	\$1,240.00	\$750.61	\$1,217.47	\$1,041.00
Building Fund	\$634.79	\$402.50	\$573.50	\$194.50



The Preschool Steering Committee is looking to expand!
We would be thrilled to have some assistance in the following areas:

- Marketing
- Classroom furnishings/décor
- Outdoor landscaping and play areas
- DHS licensing standards
- Grant writing
- Early childhood curriculum
- And MORE

Contact Angie Holman or Kathy Schuhmacher if interested or if more information is needed.

Phone numbers are listed in the church phone directory or by calling the office.

*If you have experience in any of these areas or if you have a heart for children, we could use your help!
We would like to start meeting in February.*

Bibles & Burgers

January 15

5 pm

@ Ascension Lutheran Church

2211 Maynard Ave. ~ Waterloo, IA



Men of all ages, kick off the new year right by joining your brothers in Christ for some good food, a time of fellowship and study of the Word.

Invite a friend, neighbor or co-worker to this event .

We plan to host this event every 6-8 weeks.

We look forward to seeing you there!

Please Bring

Your Bible

(If you have one)

(A Bible will be available, if not)

A drink for yourself

A friend when possible!

If possible, please sign up on the list in the Narthex or contacting Tom Knight.

Phone number available by calling the office.

Pastor Scott Update: Pastor Vlado , Mysho and Jano, our friends from Slovakia came to Ukraine this week and delivered 7 gas powered generators, over 350 pounds of food, 440 pounds of clothing and 175 pounds of diapers, plus a box of batteries and other items. They arrived on the coldest night we've had, during a blackout on a day when Russia fired over 70 rockets at Ukraine. We are so thankful that God provided safe travels to and from Ukraine for them. We were so happy to see them again. Our friend Oleg is making trips to the east of Ukraine near the front and will be taking these supplies to people in desperate need. Currently there is no electricity, gas, or water in many of the areas near the front. We are so thankful to Pastor Vlado, Mysho, Jano and all those working at the MEMC Ichthys Youth Center and to Pastor Miroslav Mato and the Lutheran churches in Slovakia including Batizovce, Gerlachov and Velky Slavkov. We are grateful for Oleg and his church for their work in delivering these goods to the east. Please pray for Oleg and others for their travels to dangerous areas. We are so thankful for David Breidenbach and Angela Breidenbach and Spiritual Orphans Network, and of course we are thankful for all of your prayers and support. Your giving to the Ukraine Relief Fund helped make all of this possible. Even in the darkness with the blackouts in Ukraine, the Lord's light is shining bright!

