

The *Spirit* newsletter

Ascension Lutheran Church—Waterloo, Iowa

February 2023



Washed Whiter Than Snow

“Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.”

— Psalm 51:7

There’s something beautiful about a fresh snow. Sometimes it can be difficult to see, to be sure, especially when we’re out before the sun comes up shoveling out sidewalks, blowing snow out of driveways, getting out extra early to make it to work on time. Yet when the clouds finally disperse and the sun shines down on a world covered with freshly fallen snow, we can’t help but marvel at the beauty of it all. All the muck and mud disappears, and the glistening white blanket of snow makes everything seem pure and clean, just as it should be.

When David wrote Psalm 51, he knew something about the way that snow made the world look pure. To see it more clearly, it helps to know a little bit about what was happening in David’s life when he wrote the Psalm. At the very beginning of the Psalm, there’s a little heading that reads: “A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet went to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba.” David, the greatest King of Israel, had sinned, and he couldn’t hide what he had done from God even as he tried to hide it from his kingdom. David had committed adultery with Bathsheba the wife of Uriah the Hittite, and he had murdered Uriah by placing him at the frontline of battle and having everyone else retreat. He was hoping to cover up what had happened, but Nathan the prophet came knocking on David’s door with a message from the Lord: David had broken the Law of God. Coming to his senses and brought to repentance, David expresses his prayer to God in the words of Psalm 51. As part of his prayer to God, David prays for the purification from sin that only God can give: “Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.”

Truth be told, we have been washed clean of our sins. Now we might be tempted to think that our sin is not so bad as David’s, but before God all sin is worthy of condemnation, “for the wages of sin is death.” But we have been washed clean from our sin. We are washed clean by the power of forgiveness, forgiveness God gives us through His Word. One way in which we receive this forgiveness is through the sacrament of baptism, that by the washing of water and the Word we would be forgiven our sins, washed pure and made clean. And baptism is more than something that happened some time ago. Rather, we live each day in the reality of our baptism. Every day when we wake up, we remain baptized children of God. Our sin remains forgiven and we awake and arise each day to live out the reality of who God has made us to be through the “washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit,” that we would walk before God in the righteousness and purity He has given us. We are baptized children of God, and each day it would do us well to remind ourselves of the gift God has given us in baptism: Your sin has been washed away, and He has made you new.

So when you see the freshly fallen snow, before you’ve even shoveled off the walk or started up the snow blower, pause for a moment and remember, or even pray, that prayer of David: “Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean. Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.” You have been washed, and you have been made clean. Your sins are forgiven, and you are a new creation brought forth by God Himself. And though we still see the muck of our sinfulness for the time being, God sees us for what we are: His forgiven children, washed by the waters of baptism, buried together with Christ, and raised up to live forever in righteousness and purity. There’s a beauty to freshly fallen snow—a beautiful reminder of our baptism, and a reminder of our forgiveness through Christ our Lord.

In Him,

Pastor Mike Badenhop

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CONGREGATION

SUNDAY, JANUARY 29 ~ 1 P.M.

LUNCH WILL BE SERVED AFTER 2ND SERVICE



Condolences

Condolences to Jan Waterman and family on the death of her sister-in-law, Bette Wubbena, who died on December 11.

Condolences to the family of Bob Prins who died on December 21.



Lifting you in Prayer as you grieve.

Prayers & Praises

I wish to express my deepest gratitude for all who lifted me up in prayer during my extended stay at Mayo! Thank you for all the phone calls from friends and Pastor Badenhop! They brightened my days! The flowers from Threads of Love were beautiful and were admired by all the doctors and nurses! God is faithful and His ways are perfect! "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God..."

Isaiah 41:10

-Ivadean Herter

A sincere thank you goes out to the small but mighty group of "Faithful Fluffers" who decorated the narthex and sanctuary for Christmas. It was much appreciated.

-Jan Moore

Dear Ascension Family of God,

I want to express my appreciation to all the individuals and committees within the congregation who have reached out to me throughout 2022.

I truly appreciate hearing from you most of all. I do not very often communicate with

other humans during the weeks—just our girls (2 German Shepherds and a muggin (pug/minpin mix).

Again, a sincere thank you for thinking of me throughout the past year, and may God bless you in 2023.

*In His Service,
-Brian Smith*

Dear Ascension Family,

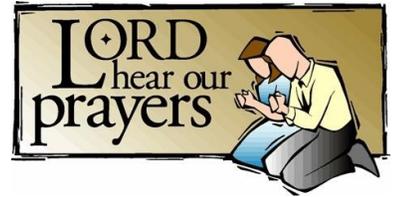
Thank you so much for the generous gift you gave to help purchase supplies for my Valley classrooms!! I so appreciate your thoughtfulness and generosity. It is very encouraging to know the Ascension family is praying for and supporting God's work at Valley. God Bless everyone in the new year and thanks for being a wonderful church family!!

-Martha Stone

I want to thank everyone for all their prayers. My surgery went just great.

I went back to the doctor and everything is looking good.

-Pam Stone



Rose Beier

Ed Billings

Jeff Colvin

Maria Drewes

Avis Gaede

Mike Galbraith

Ivy Gibbons

Anabell Hakes

Ivadean Herter

Traci McNally

Mike Sullivan

Dana Walker

Thank you to all who helped with Bob & Ruth Prins' funerals—especially Kathy Buhr and all of the kitchen crews & Ed Kleiner. What a blessing to have a church family to help us through a difficult time. And thank you to Pastor Mike as well.

*-Sandy & Mike Sullivan
Carolyn & Bob Dohr*

Thank you to everyone who sent me birthday cards.

-Bonnie Wissink

Church

ANNOUNCEMENTS



We rejoice in the confirmation of Pastor Fenn's acceptance to join our church as the Associate Pastor. Please pray for all the details involved in the process to get he and his family safely to Ascension and the Cedar Valley. Also pray for the congregation he has been leading.



Annual Meeting

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CONGREGATION

SUNDAY, JANUARY 29 ~ 1 P.M.

LUNCH WILL BE SERVED
AFTER SECOND SERVICE.

PRAYERFULLY CONSIDER ATTENDING AND
TAKING PART IN THE HAPPENINGS
OF OUR CHURCH.



ATTENTION! All Ascension Women!

Our Women Of Life Committee
is looking **HIGH** and **LOW**
for new members.

If you enjoy making **new friends...**
...help planning events for

FUN, LEARNING AND GLORY TO GOD...

Then this is the Group

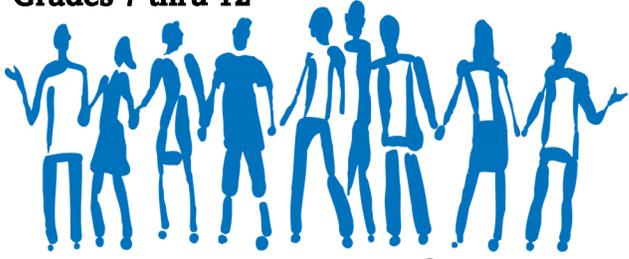
for **you!**



For more information please call:
Kathy Gleason - Portia Licht - Marsha Bock

Contact numbers can be found in the
church directory or by calling the office.

Grades 7 thru 12



YOUTH GROUP ★ News ★

UPCOMING IMPORTANT DATES

FEB. 5 - Colorado Youth Conference Q&A Meeting

After both services, there will be a quick 15 minute meeting in the Fireside Room with Tiffany & Pastor Mike for anybody who has questions about the upcoming Colorado trip.

FEB. 18 - Valentine's Dinner Fundraiser (Colorado Fundraiser)

Tickets will be \$15/person. Meal will be served at 5:30 with main dish being Italian crusted chicken. The youth along with a parent need to arrive at 3:30 p.m. to help with meal preparation and set up.

FEB. 22 - Lenten Meal Fundraiser (Colorado Fundraiser)

Youth will prepare and serve the Lenten meal. MaidRites, chips, carrots w/ dip, and desserts will be served. The youth along with a parent are asked to arrive at 5:00 p.m. ready to serve. Each youth is asked to bring a dessert.

Youth Christmas Party

2022



DuckPin Bowling
White Elephant Gift Exchange
Fun & Fellowship

A special note from our youth:

| We continue to feel the love and support from all of the congregation. We would like to thank
| you for your continued prayers, hugs and love, which we see and feel every week. Our trip to
| Colorado is just around the corner. If you have any fundraising ideas or opportunities
| that you would like to bring to the youth, please contact me at your earliest convenience.

| Thank you again, your sister in Christ,

| Tiffany Kearney Ledesma
| Youth Director



Thank you for your gifts of love to Servant Unique Family Ministries.

Servant Unique Family Ministries

As we reflect on 2022, we wish to express our gratitude for your support to SUFM's Humanitarian Aid Project with our partner, Latin American Lutheran Mission and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Mexico as well as other groups LALM works with in meeting the needs of the poor in Mexico and around the mission compound in Laredo.

It is through those gifts that we are able to collect goods for shipment throughout the year for distribution in churches in Mexico and Laredo. These items are not just passed out without discussion of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and His saving grace. That is what is different of the shipments that we send. If it was up to us to deliver humanitarian aid without the presentation of the Gospel, we would not be providing the humanitarian aid to LALM and their work with the ELCM. We could not justify the mission project if this endeavor was just to deliver humanitarian aid without the Gospel being shared.

We have communicated with the Director of LALM about how the items you give are used. The Gospel and Scripture is shared along with prayer and sometimes a Service of Prayer and anointing with Holy Oil found in the green LBW's Pastors Occasional Service Book printed by Augsburg around 1978. So be assured that your donation of goods and money to support SUFM's Humanitarian Aid Project is being used appropriately.

Also, as Director/President of SURM, we appreciate those from Ascension who have been assisting us in packing and collecting humanitarian aid this past year. It has been a real blessing to my heart and soul as we wait and see how the Lord might work with SUFM to continue after I step down from the leadership role. We have personally assumed SUFM's financial shortfalls when donations do not meet expenses. Please pray with us for guidance for God's hand to guide us.

In closing, I also want to thank those responsible at Ascension for the pew chairs that were donated to SUFM to give to LALM and the ELCM. They will be put to good use once they get shipped and are able to travel to their final destination as decided by LALM.

Again, thank you for your donation of items of humanitarian aid, money to help SUFM with its operational and shipping costs, and physical labor. Most of all thank you for your prayers because without prayer it would be impossible to do anything.

May our Lord be glorified and the grace He has given us be shown for these endeavors.

Sincerely in His Service,

Brian M. Smith

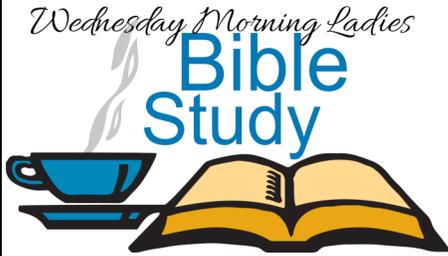
President, Servant Unique Family Ministries



The Hickory Hills Light Display brought the meaning of Christmas in a spectacular way. Left is the lighted display worked on by many members from Ascension. The banner below was also at the site.

Thank you for the hard work and time put into this project.





Wednesday Morning Ladies Bible Study is LOOKING AHEAD TO SPRING!!!!!!
Our new topic for Bible Study starting WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 22, 2023 will be:

TWELVE ORDINARY MEN
HOW the MASTER SHAPED HIS DISCIPLES for GREATNESS,
and WHAT HE WANTS TO DO with YOU

The author, John MacArthur explains that “*The personality types of these men are familiar to us....Despite their shortcomings, they are fitting role heroes and role models for us....To realize that they were ordinary people just like you and me is a great blessing. May the Spirit of Christ who taught them, transform us the way He transformed them — into precious vessels fit for the Master’s use.*”

Each of the 12 lessons will concentrate on an individual disciple and how their life story applies to our personal journey of discipleship.

Participants will need a copy of John MacArthur’s book ***Twelve Ordinary Men.***

There is a Workbook /Study Guide available, however, it is optional and not considered necessary for our study of the Book.

Participants have 2 options for ordering their books:

Cost: \$18.00/book (through Amazon Prime)

1. Ask Cindi Mason to include you in the group order (payment made to Ascension when you pick up your book in February). *Contact Cindi Mason by Monday, February 6 (Contact number can be found in the church directory or by calling the office.).*
2. Order your own book (Amazon Prime (with free shipping) seems to be the best option.)

Wednesday Schedule: 9:00 -10:00 a.m. - Social time with coffee and treats!
 10:00 -11:00 a.m. - Bible Study

QUESTIONS????

Call: Cindi Mason

Contact number can be found in the church directory or by calling the office.

We would love to welcome new members to join us anytime!!!!

mission needs



The World Missions Committee is sending a "We Care Package" to Pastor Scott and Lena and want to share the opportunity with you! Something from home can really lift their spirits and show them we really care.

We are seeking funds (for shipping costs) to send the "We Care Package". We asked them for suggestions and here are there requests:

Creamy Peanut Butter

Peanut Butter M&M's

Reese's Peanut Butter Cups

Cool ranch Doritos

Corn tortillas

Jelly belly's

Kraft Mac and cheese (blue box)

(don't even need the noodles could just be the cheese packets)

"Better Than Bouillon" brand chicken stock base

Look for a donation box in each of the church entrances.

Thank you, World Missions Committee

Young Disciples

SLEDDING

We're gonna' hit the hill across the street with some sledding and include a game called "Grab the Stick" at the same time!

February 10

6:00 to 7:30 p.m.

What to Bring:

- Outdoor clothing
- A sled, if you have one
- A friend!*



Ascension Church-Family Event Snowshoeing at Hartman Reserve Sunday, February 5 @ 1:00 p.m.

Join us at Hartman Reserve and go snowshoeing! Never tried it? It's easy! If you can walk - you can do it! This event is simply a time where we hike through the woods or on the trails and enjoy the beauty of God's creation.

Questions? Contact Shanda Knight or the office.

ALL AGES

**\$5
Snowshoe
Rental**

Availability is first come first serve.



Sign up by the youth bulletin board so we can call you for weather changes!

****Don't let the cold weather stop you, we will just break more often to warm up****

In case of extreme cold or no snow, we will have an inside event instead.



Sunday Fellowship Treat Volunteer List

FEBRUARY 5

FEBRUARY 12

FEBRUARY 19

FEBRUARY 26

March 5

Lois Jerke	Sandra Scobee	Kathy Buhr	Marie Easter	Donna Willig
Portia Licht	Marsha Bock	Linda Morrison	Kimm Green	Lorrie Billings
Roberta Moritz	Mary Potter	Sandra Shippy	Sandy Walker	Ila Akers
Pat Morrison	Judy Mikeska	Stephanie Kleiner		

Thank you to everyone who is helping provide treats for each Sunday. You are appreciated!

	Dec. 18	Dec. 24 & 25	Dec. 26-31	Jan. 1, 2023	Jan. 8, 2023
Current Expenses	\$9,665.40	\$8,807.54	\$8,310.00	\$3,058.00	\$6,144.20
Benevolence	\$1,921.60	\$1,893.01	\$1,748.00	\$502.00	\$924.12
Building Fund	\$1,491.00	\$660.79	\$145.00	\$110.00	\$253.50

CHURCH CALENDAR



Available in print
included in your monthly newsletter or in each narthex

-AND-

on our **Website**
click on the events tab,
it may take a few moments to load

A great way to check when services
and activities are taking place.

Website version is the most up-to-date.



*Want a simple way to
serve at church?*

Available on the 3rd or
4th Wednesday of the
month at 12:30?

NEWSLETTER ASSEMBLY IS FOR YOU!!!

Collating, folding, applying labels, THAT'S IT!

Low stress

1x per month

Have questions? Contact the office.