

February 2014

TheLink



Linking Hearts and Minds with Christ

Our mission is to
invite all people to **celebrate** God's
presence, **grow** in God's grace,
and **serve** God's people!

Pastor's Message

THE GRACE BEHIND CHANGE

*"Are you on the eve of change? Embrace it.
Accept it. Don't resist it. Change is not only a part of life,
change is a necessary part of God's strategy. To use us to
change the world, he alters our assignments."*

—Max Lucado

I don't know of anyone who enjoys change. Change usually impacts us in a way that upsets the applecart, forcing us to pick up some of the mess and figure out a way to make the new reality work.

As we look back, we realize that our lives are in a constant state of change. Some of it is good and some of it bad.

A year ago, I was the Interim Pastor at a Lutheran church in Westminster; now I am your Interim Pastor. Twelve months ago, I wasn't a Grandpa; now I am! A year ago, I was teaching Freshman and Junior English. Now I am teaching Freshman and Sophomore English. Then, I rode my bike at least four times a week; now I am lucky to ride it four times a month!

For those of us at Ascension, change has been a big

part of this past year as well. Some of the changes that have come our way are as follows: Aaron Virgil was walking a year ago. We had a different person leading our contemporary worship team. Pastor Lien was set to be our pastor for the years to come. I was nowhere to be found. We were

planning our first mission trip to Haiti. Our leaders were exploring the possibility of connecting with a new group of Lutherans, the L.C.M.C.

Some of the changes have been good, others have been painful and the results of some of the changes remain to be seen.

Even though we don't like change, resisting or fighting it is not the answer. Embracing change with an eye focused on following Jesus is a healthy way to move toward our future. God wants to use us to change the world with His grace and love. In order to do this, we accept the changes that God sends our way AND we look for the ways that God's strategy calls us to impact the world with His grace and truth.

God has uniquely gifted and empowered you with the ability to bring His message to our world. It is my prayer that we all will be open to the assignment that God has prepared for us.

Under Grace,

Pastor Steve Gilbertson

***"Embracing
change with an
eye focused on
following Jesus
is a healthy way
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our future."***



☑ Congregational Meeting

**Sunday, February 9th
9:45 a.m**

Join us as we review 2013 and discuss critical issues moving forward into the new year. Come, hear, and be heard.

Ascension Lutheran Church and Preschool

BACK TO NEBRASKA

By Faye Schwartz
Director of Worship and Music

Perhaps some of you have seen the recent movie, *Nebraska*. It has garnered its fair share of attention, and has been nominated for many awards. For me, this movie was especially interesting because it was filmed about thirty miles from where I grew up in rural northeastern Nebraska. Seeing the small towns and the wide-open prairies on the big screen brought me right back home again. I felt like I *knew* the people in this movie; all of them rang so true to me – with the exception of one character who was really ridiculously overdrawn, in my opinion. (Do see me if you want to discuss this issue further.)

Although this movie doesn't deal specifically with matters of faith and



The altar at St. Peter's Lutheran, Creston, NE

religion, it also made me think of my first church home. It was at St. Peter's Lutheran Church in Creston, Nebraska, where I was baptized and confirmed,

where I went to Sunday School and learned Bible stories and songs, where I enjoyed Luther League activities, where I sang in the choir and even played the organ for a year or two. This was the beautiful little church that was founded by my grandfather and other German immigrants in the early 1900s -- the church that my nephew's family attends to this day. This is the church that nurtured my faith, and the faith of so many others.

As we look forward to another year of worship and ministry at Ascension, we might ask ourselves what kind of experiences we are providing to nurture the faith of our young people – for our parishioners of every age. What kinds of songs are we singing and what kind of stories are we telling to ignite passionate belief in our God? What kind of Bible teaching and preaching and praying are we doing to bring people into a close relationship with their Savior? How are we encouraging one another in the faith? How are we giving praise to a great God? This is our mission; let's do it joyously together in the new year! ■

ARE YOU BEING CALLED TO WORSHIP?

We, as a church, are blessed to have many members who grace us with their fine musical talents. They, in turn, reap a great spiritual reward when they express their songs of praise in service to God's kingdom. It's a heavenly win-win situation indeed.

If you are feeling compelled to share your harmonic skills with the masses, don't be afraid to step out and join one of our music groups. We offer several ways for you to contribute vocally, instrumentally or even technically. The commitments are minimal, but the benefits are bountiful.



Ascension Ringers

Bell-ringers play for both services on the third Sunday of each month. They rehearse on Thursday nights from 7:00 – 9:00. Men, women and teenagers are all welcome to participate in this fun and unique orchestration.

Ascension Choir

This choir sings for both services on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month. They rehearse from 9:45 – 10:15 every Sunday morning.

The Praise Band

Our contemporary music group plays at both our Saturday 5:00 p.m. and Sunday 10:30 a.m. worship services. They rotate weekly musical duties by instrument and availability. Practices are before the Saturday service.

If you wish to share your gifts with one of our ensembles, email Faye Schwartz at schwartz6544@cox.net, or call the church office for more info. ■

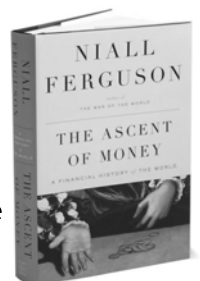


Tuesday, February 11, 8am
Men...Feasting...With Men. \$10.

Please sign up, so we know how many pounds of bacon to cook.
Contact Rick Viersen at 310-377-4017
or RAViersen@verizon.net.

Ascension Book Club

We will be reading **The Ascent of Money** by Niall Ferguson this month on Friday, the 28th at 1:00 p.m. Mark and Anne Pepys will be hosting our meeting at their home. Please let them know if you plan to attend the meeting by calling (310) 375-5639.



Preschool Report

By Darlene Kurt
Preschool Director

Our New Year calendar is full of events and activities. The preschool celebrated **Teddy Bear/PJ Day** on January 13th and 14th by wearing their pajamas, bringing their favorite soft cuddly toy and enjoying our traditional Teddy Bear Bread and chocolate milk for snack. All classes had bear caves set up for the children to enjoy with their friends.

Our phonics program, **Zoophonics**, has started. Our teacher's creative ideas shine with their original art (Ants on an Apple, Buttons on a



Bear), and cooking and science projects based on the sounds of each letter. Special events are also planned, "B"alloon Dance Party, "C"razy Hair Day and inviting the "D"ads to come to school and share "D"onuts with their pre-K students!

Looking ahead, we will have **Snow Day**, a special presentation by the **Palos Verdes School District** regarding their Kindergarten programs, **Valentine's Day** parties, **Speech Screening**, along with our continuing **Emergent Literacy Class**, **Math & Science Club**, **Hotshots Gymnastics** and **Creative Cooking** for our three-year-olds. ■

Student Ministry Mashup

By TJ Spaeth
Director of Student and Family Ministries

Crave and **Intersection** are off to a bang! Join us each week as we compete in games, laugh, get dirty, and find the life and love that God has for each of us! Cravers meet 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. in the Loft while high-school students meet at Promenade Starbucks 7:15 to 8:15 Sunday evenings.



We are also in the processes of forming a rad new **student ministry band**, so if you have a passion for music and want to shred some vocals, keys, drums, guitar, bass, etc., hit me up! TSpaeth@alcrpv.org ■

Classy Cooking Returns!



Join Maria this month as she teaches **Greek cooking**. The class is on Saturday, the 22nd, at 11:00 a.m. in the Kitchen. Not to be outdone by the late Julia Child, Maria Mallowney brings her own brand of humor and eccentricity to the kitchen. Participants will watch and learn, eat the fruits of their labors, and leave with recipes in hand. The cost is \$35 per person (limited to ten). Make checks payable to *Maria Mallowney*. There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board in the Social Hall, or you can contact Maria in the church office with any questions you may have.

February Birthdays

- 1st** Douglas Bovee, Aaron Virgil
- 2nd** Don Barclay
- 5th** Charles Chin, Dane Gramstrup
- 6th** Marlene Stern
- 7th** Geoffrey Lowe
- 9th** Jullia Onouye
- 14th** Gabrielle Allen
- 15th** Sondra Behrens, Kunchoon Yu, Jordan Heckman
- 16th** Scott Beidleman, Jacob Benjamin
- 17th** Dylan Freebury
- 19th** Carolyn Luetje, Anna Sattler
- 23rd** Jenna Solberg
- 24th** Mary Potenti, Tina Virgil
- 26th** Linda Herzberg, Joseph Laetsch
- 28th** Mary Nelsen
- 29th** Kurt Allen

Gather with the GGs

The GGs is a group for those who are coping with the loss of a loved one. We invite you to come for fellowship and games on the first Monday of each month (February 3rd) at 12:30 p.m. in the Social Hall. Please bring your own snack, lunch, and a drink. Dessert will be provided. Have questions? Contact Jackie Wehmeyer at 310-377-5460.

Altar Flower Sponsorship 2014

We still have several weeks unclaimed for sponsorship of our beautiful altar flowers. Patrons may dedicate their arrangement for special occasions, celebrations or memorials and be listed in the **LinkLite**. The cost is \$70 and must be paid in advance. A sign-up sheet is posted in the Social Hall or you may contact Maria (310-373-0454 ext.102 or MMallowney@alcrpv.org) in the office for more information.



Present A Special Luncheon

Friday, February 21 • 12:30 p.m. to 2:15 p.m. • \$10/person

Saul Jacobs, storyteller and commentator, returns to Ascension with master pianist **Bob Lipson** for a Valentine's-themed program of songs about love and relationships. Saul and Bob never fail to entertain us, so be sure to save the date.

Sign up by the 16th on the sheet posted in the Social Hall, or call the church office: 310-373-0454. Make your check out to Ascension Lutheran Church and mark it "OWLS - February."

As usual, this OWLS event is open to all. **So join us!**



Ascension Lutheran Church and Preschool

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Time-Dated Material February 2014

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

The **Link** is published monthly and mailed to members and friends of Ascension Lutheran Church. To make address corrections, please contact the church office.



**What a meal for just
FIVE BUCKS!!**

February 5 - Turkey Sausage Mushroom Potato Gratin and Romaine Tossed Salad

February 12 - Whole Grain Penne Pasta with Meat Sauce, Romaine Tossed Salad and Valentine's Special Dessert of Cheesecake-Stuffed Strawberries

February 19 - Chili, Cornbread and Romaine Tossed Salad

February 26 - Taco Salad made with Ground Turkey

Following the Fine Food and Fellowship:

- Age five to 5th-grade *Kids Rock!*
- Middle-school *Crave*
- Adult Bible Study

6 p.m.

Ascension Lutheran Church and Preschool Staff

Pastor Steven Gilbertson	Interim Pastor
Faye Schwartz	Director of Worship and Music
TJ Spaeth	Director of Student and Family Ministries
Chris Anderson	<i>Kids Rock!</i> Ministry Director
Maria Mallowney	Office Manager
Dave Snow	Media Specialist
Darlene Kurt	Preschool Director
Karyn Luetje	Preschool Administrative Assistant
Analisa Lopez	Preschool Office Assistant
Dr. Joanne Althouse	Organist
TBD	Worship Leader
Tony Alvarez	Praise Band
Ronnie Ciago	Praise Band
Alan Ellis	Praise Band
Sandy Erickson	Praise Band
Armando Velez	Custodian

Council Leadership Team

Julie Botzong, Darren Garber, Keith Vint, Dwight Garbe,
Bob Anderson, Rick Viersen, Donna McLaughlin, and Patty Masai

All **Link submissions are due on the 15th
of each month for the next month's issue.**