

# ***THE REACH***

***July 2021***

*The Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Ascension  
Columbia, South Carolina*



At Ascension, we celebrate the wonderful diversity of God's family!  
Join YOUR hands with ours so we can  
REACH out together to serve in God's name!

**The Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Ascension  
827 Wildwood Avenue  
Columbia, South Carolina 29203  
(803) 786-6429**

**THE REACH  
The Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Ascension  
827 Wildwood Avenue  
Columbia, SC 29203-5815**



**ALL ARE WELCOME!**  
**HOLY COMMUNION 11:00 a.m.**  
**The Rev. Jackie Utley, Pastor**



**Office Phone #:** 803-786-6429

**Office Hours:** By Appointment

**Mailing Address:** 827 Wildwood Ave., Columbia, SC 29203

**Pastor's Email:** [ascension.elca@gmail.com](mailto:ascension.elca@gmail.com)

**Office Email:** [ascension.office827@gmail.com](mailto:ascension.office827@gmail.com)

**Website:** [www.ascensionlutherancolasc.com](http://www.ascensionlutherancolasc.com)

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/Ascension.ColumbiaSC](http://www.facebook.com/Ascension.ColumbiaSC)

**Staff:**

Jackie Utley, Pastor – [ascension.elca@gmail.com](mailto:ascension.elca@gmail.com)

Laura Browder, Office Administrator – [ascension.office827@gmail.com](mailto:ascension.office827@gmail.com)

Greg Stone, Parish Musician – [gstone@sc.rr.com](mailto:gstone@sc.rr.com)

**Church Council:**

Ken Dobbins, Chairperson – [kdobb007@gmail.com](mailto:kdobb007@gmail.com)

Pastor Jackie Utley, Vice Chairperson - [ascension.elca@gmail.com](mailto:ascension.elca@gmail.com)

Laura Browder, Secretary - [ascension.office827@gmail.com](mailto:ascension.office827@gmail.com)

Mike Lever - [MLever@l-jinc.com](mailto:MLever@l-jinc.com)

**Pastoral Support & Advisory Board:**

Billy Browder - [bbjb1974@yahoo.com](mailto:bbjb1974@yahoo.com)

Catherine Garren - [cgarren210@bellsouth.net](mailto:cgarren210@bellsouth.net)

Ken Dobbins - [kdobb007@gmail.com](mailto:kdobb007@gmail.com)

# ***Guidelines and Procedures***

We are holding in-person worship in the Sanctuary every Sunday at 11:00 a.m. The Church Council is continuing to monitor the current COVID-19 statistics. We are following CDC recommendations as well as from the SC Synod office. If our worshiping practices need to be altered, we will notify everyone via mail, email, and/or phone call. For questions or concerns please contact the office.

## **Based on the CDC guidelines:**

- Fully vaccinated is considered at least 2 weeks after receiving your 2<sup>nd</sup> dose.
- Fully vaccinated people do not have to continue former safety procedures in an indoor setting such as wearing a mask and social distancing.
- Partially vaccinated and nonvaccinated people should continue to wear masks and social distance along with following other former safety procedures.

## **We have changed our worship procedures based on the above CDC guidelines.**

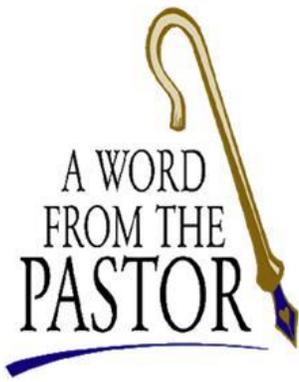
- A temperature check will no longer be required.
- Masks are optional for fully vaccinated worshipers. We ask partially vaccinated and unvaccinated worshipers to continue to wear masks for their safety per CDC recommendations.
- We will resume using hymnals and singing in worship.

## **We will continue:**

- Sanitizing hands upon entering Sanctuary.
- “Passing the Peace” from your pew verbally.
- Come up one household at a time to receive communion, stopping at tape.

## **Other tips:**

- You may want to take your temperature before leaving home.
- Stay at home if you feel sick especially with any of the following symptoms: high fever, cough, sore throat, stomach issues, *EVEN IF YOU ARE VACCINATED.*
- Wash hands for 20 seconds and/or use sanitizer regularly.



So it was that on the last Sunday in June, we celebrated the 109<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our church's founding and continued existence. However, this was not the only anniversary for us. That last Sunday in June also marked a 1-year celebration of the church resuming our in-person worship services here in our sanctuary. For the last 6 months of 2020 and the first 5 months of this year, we gathered here practicing safety measures according to the CDC guidelines; mask-wearing, roping off pews, having no chorus, nor congregational singing with uplifted voices, to name a few.

Then, this year, in the latter part of May, with the majority of our congregants being fully vaccinated, we turned a corner, so to speak, in returning to a bit of normalcy in worshipping. On the verge of preparing for our anniversary celebration, we removed the masks, re-opened all the pews, broke out the hymnals and sang congregational hymns with uplifted voices. Well, this paved the way for our anticipated celebration, and a day of celebration it was!

Leading up to this eventful day, whereas of recent we had been averaging 24 in attendance for Sunday morning worship, with anticipation that the attendance for the anniversary service would at least double, I was not disappointed. Just shy of having 50 in attendance, it was a delight to see the visitation of numerous family members and friends.

It was a glorious service which began with an uplifting prelude, "A Joyful Peal," performed by our bell choir, The Ascension Ringers. It was a joy to sing as a congregation with uplifted voices, the hymns selected for the occasion. I suppose the highlight of the music selections were rendered by our Chancel Choir; an anthem following a Dialogue of Praise titled, "Praise Ye the Lord," and the canting of Psalm 30 with refrain. As there was exhortation of the faithfulness of God in our reading of Lamentations, "*Great is your faithfulness*" (v. 23b), I was intentional to encourage ourselves in a message that God has been, is now, and forever will be faithful in sustaining our ministry in this place. This was further cause for celebration.

A celebratory service it was, indeed, which was followed by a small reception in the Fellowship Hall, rather than the usual fellowship meal of past celebrations, due to the still existing pandemic. We are hopeful that by this time next year we will be able to resume our traditional festivities. As it will be our 110<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we are anticipating celebrating on a larger scale. We are grateful to God for sustaining this ministry over the past 109 years and we endeavor to remain steadfast, un-moveable, and always abounding in the work of the Lord, here in this place for several years to come. To God be the glory!

Summer blessings,  
Pastor Jackie



# Music Ministry Notes

Greg Stone, Parish Musician

The month of July is upon us! With us being in the midst of summer, we spend much of our time enjoying the warm days by visiting with family and friends at barbeques, vacations at the beach or just sitting on the front porch engaging in a simple conversation. While this might be considered by most as the best time of year, I can't help but begin focusing on the fall and winter months.

As a church musician, I use the summer months to prepare and plan music for the fall and winter months. As I was putting away music and the handbells this week, I was thinking about what special music the choirs and soloists might present for our services this coming fall, Advent and Christmas. Truthfully, this is an exciting time for me.

This past Sunday, at our anniversary service, Pastor Jackie mentioned our vibrant ministry here at Ascension. Although our numbers are small, we do have a vibrant ministry. Included in this is the music ministry. We have dedicated volunteers who give of their time and talents to make our liturgies more meaningful. I mentioned some months ago that I aspire to grow this part of the church's ministry. It might be considered ambitious by some to think about gaining more numbers in our chancel and handbell choirs, but I think it can be done. Even if we gain one new member, that indicates growth!

The rehearsals for both the Chancel and Ascension Ringers choirs will resume Wednesday evening August 4. The handbells will begin rehearsal at 5:00 and the Chancel Choir will rehearse at 6:00. Please come and see what fun it is to be a part of these groups. If you don't feel called to sing or play, perhaps you know of someone who might want to be a part of a music group. Please consider helping to build the music ministry at Ascension. Since the pandemic has begun to loosen its grip on us, I feel a sense of new energy in our church. We need to tap into this energy and grow our congregation!

What a blessing and joy it is for me to be the musician at Ascension Lutheran Church.

**If you would like to learn more about The Music Ministry at Ascension, contact our Parish Musician, Greg Stone, at 803-609-5124 or [gstone@sc.rr.com](mailto:gstone@sc.rr.com)**

*"For 109 years, God has nurtured and fed us.  
For 109 years, God has shown us his grace.  
Praise the Lord for 109 years! Praise him for 109 more!"*

*Sunday, June 27, 2021, we had a wonderful time celebrating our 109th Anniversary. During worship we sang long time favorites like "All Are Welcome" and "A Mighty Fortress," and heard an uplifting message reminding us of God's faithfulness. We enjoyed special music such as a solo by Kelley Lannigan and anthems performed by the Chancel & Handbell Choirs. The Church Community acknowledged Crystal Freie & Greg Stone with Certificates of Appreciation for their hard work and dedication to the ministry. The Ascension Lutheran Church Family experienced lots of laughter and love as longtime members, former members, visitors, and friends gathered to celebrate.*



Pastor Jackie praying for Greg Stone & Crystal Freie after presenting them with Certificates of Appreciation.



Our Parish Musician, Greg Stone, and Pastor Jackie at the Fellowship Reception.

# SOUTH CAROLINA LUTHERAN MEN IN MISSION

in partnership with

## ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH

Invite you to a



## COMMUNITY COOKOUT

SUNDAY, JULY 18<sup>TH</sup>

4:00 PM - 6:00 PM

---

# July Service Project

**Greek Bags for Greek Students at LTSS**

### **Items needed:**

Highlighters	Pencils
Index cards	Pens
Chewing Gum	Hard Candy
Small Candy Bars	Crackers

If you would like to make a monetary donation, please mark your offering envelopes with "Greek Bags."

**Items & donations due by**

**Sunday, July 18<sup>th</sup>**

# CELEBRATIONS!!

## Birthdays



Greg Stone 1<sup>st</sup>

Claird Rawls 4<sup>th</sup>

Erin Hair Foddrill 9<sup>th</sup>

Missy Cannon 9<sup>th</sup>

Laura Browder 20<sup>th</sup>

*Did we miss your Birthday or Anniversary? Let us know so we can update our information on file.*

---

## Correspondence

Dear Saints of Ascension,

Congratulations on 109 years of faithful service to God's people. May you be blessed with many more years to continue being a beacon to light the Eau Claire Community and all of Columbia.

Happy Anniversary!

Blessings from your Sister in Christ,

Nancy Thomas

Stroudsburg, PA

# Monthly Scripture Readings

## July 4<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

*Jesus does great deeds of power and gives his disciples authority over demons. Yet none of this power is unilateral; it all must be received by faith. Jesus asks his disciples to go out without money or supplies, so that they will be dependent on how others receive them. When we are sent from the assembly to witness and to heal, we are asked to be vulnerable, to be dependent on the reception of others. The Spirit always operates in the “between”: between Jesus and his Abba, between Jesus and us, between you and me, between us and those to whom we are sent.*

**Ezekiel 2:1-5 | Psalm 123 | 2 Corinthians 12:2-10 | Mark 6:1-13**

## July 11<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

*When Amos reports his vision of God judging Israel for its mistreatment of the poor, he becomes a threat to the power of the priests and the king. John the Baptist also speaks truth to power, and Herod has him killed. In Herod’s fear that Jesus is John returned from the dead, we may hear hope for the oppressed: all the prophets killed through the ages are alive in Jesus. We are called to witness to justice in company with them, and to proclaim God’s saving love.*

**Amos 7:7-15 | Psalm 85:8-13 | Ephesians 1:3-14 | Mark 6:14-29**

## July 18<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

*Mark’s gospel makes clear how great is the press of the crowd, with its countless needs to be met, on Jesus and his disciples. Yet in today’s gospel Jesus advises his disciples to get away and rest, to take care of themselves. Sometimes we think that when others are in great need we shouldn’t think of ourselves at all; but Jesus also honors the caregivers’ need. We are sent from Christ’s table to care for others and for ourselves.*

**Jeremiah 23:1-6 | Psalm 23 | Ephesians 2:11-22 | Mark 6:30-34, 53-56**

## July 25<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

*Today is the first of five Sundays with gospel readings from John 6, the first four of which focus on Jesus as bread of life. Today Jesus feeds thousands of people with five loaves and two fish. What we have, what we bring to Jesus’ table, seems like it is not nearly enough to meet all the needs we see around us. But it is not the adequacy of our supplies or our skills that finally makes the difference: it is the power of Jesus working in the littlest and least to transform this world into the world God desires, a world where all the hungry are satisfied.*

**2 Kings 4:42-44 | Psalm 145:10-18 | Ephesians 3:14-21 | John 6:1-21**



**Our members, family, and friends with current needs:**

**Members in care centers and at home:**

Ava Hudson	Lisa Mosely	Dorothy Van Patten
David Lever	Delores Richardson	
Margarie Lever	Charlene Van Patten	

**Members with special/long term needs:**

Tommy Boozer	Donna Clark	Clinard Rawls
Laura Browder	O'Neil Derrick	Gene Roof
Ken Butler	Selma Foster	Debbie Shumpert
Pete Currie	Pat Martin	

**Our family and friends with long term needs:**

Russ Anderson, former pastor of Ascension  
Dianne Browder & Linda Poole, sisters of Billy Browder  
Jimmy Bryant & Jackie Bryant (as caregiver), neighbors of the church  
Debra Butler, mother of Ken Butler  
Dave Conant, Friend of Greg Stone  
Lynette Funk, daughter-in-law of Carol Funk  
Charles Garren & Kay Garren (as caregiver), brother of Catherine Garren  
Nancy (Sharpe) & Kenny Glenn, relatives of Joyce Browder  
Linda Green, friend of Phyllis Hutchinson  
Barb Hessesenthaler, sister of Carol Funk  
Marian and Steve Hudson, Ava Hudson's daughter-in-law and son  
Eleanor & Michael Jenkins, relatives of Lily Jenkins  
Francis Jordan, mother of Ruben Jordan and Leisure Time Member  
Conner Miller & Ian Miller, grandsons of Ken Dobbins  
Cleo Morris, frequent visitor & neighbor of the church  
Dihue Paisley, friend of Pastor Jackie  
Wendall Patton, friend of Billy Browder  
Matt Robinson & Carrie Schilling, friends of Catherine Garren  
Bear Sheneman (6 yrs. w/severe health issues), friend of the Browder Family  
Jerry Stone, father of Greg Stone  
Harmon Utley, Jr. & William Utley, brothers of Pastor Jackie  
Charlie Whyde, friend of Ken Butler

### **Our Neighbors & Community:**

The Dowdy House residents & staff  
Eau Claire Community Council  
Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary  
Seminary Ridge Neighborhood Association  
South Carolina Hispanic Outreach staff and clients

### **Our ELCA & SC Synod Ministries:**

The Evangelical Lutheran Churches of America & Bishop Elizabeth Eaton  
The South Carolina Synod of the ELCA & Bishop Virginia "Ginny" Aebischer  
Sagrada Familia & Cristo Rey Lutheran Churches & The Rev. Jorge Leone  
S.C. Lutheran Men in Mission & "One Year to Live" participants  
Journey Ministry & Minister LaVone Griffin  
Lutheran Services Carolinas

### **Our Ascension Groups & Ministries:**

Members of the Church Council & Ken Dobbins, Chairperson  
Members of the Choirs & Greg Stone, Parish Musician  
The Service & Outreach Committee  
M.O.R.E Justice Team & Laura Browder, Team Leader  
Ascension's "Free Little Library" Box participants  
The Parish, Administrative, & Grounds Keeping Staff  
Our Hospitality Representative, Delores Richardson  
"Share the Joy" Worship Volunteers

### **Closing:      **A Prayer for the United States of America****

Sovereign God, your Son Jesus lived within the structures of society even as he spoke truth to those in power and challenged systems of oppression. Empower us to be courageous disciples and responsible citizens. Grant that our life in the public realm be grounded in love for our neighbors, care for the most vulnerable in our midst, and respect for the common life we share, following the example of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Gracious God, we pray for our public servants, that they do their work in a spirit of wisdom, charity, and justice. Inspire them to use their authority to serve faithfully and to promote our common life. Guide our leaders to govern in such a way that all people enjoy a peaceful and just society.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.