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Parish Notes

Welcome to Worship

December 31, 2023

Pastor Debra Jimenez
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Gathered and gifted to celebrate and share the love of Jesus

SUNDAY	9:30 am	-	Worship (Children's Sunday School during worship)
	10:30 am	-	Fellowship
	11:00 am	-	Adult Bible Study
MONDAY	9:00 am	-	Friendly Ties Quilters (1 st & 3 rd Monday's)
TUESDAY	11:00am	-	Bible Study
WEDNESDAY	1:00 pm	-	Book Club
THURSDAY	1:00 pm	-	Shepherding Bible Study Group – (3 rd Thursday)
	6:30 pm	-	Church Council meeting – (2 nd Thursday)
FRIDAY	8:00 pm	-	AA and Al Anon
Saturday	10:00am	-	WELCA Ladies (4 th Saturday)

MERRY CHRISTMAS

HAPPY NEW YEAR

January Birthdays

Carol Jordan	5
Pam Gould	15
Debra Larsen	17
Anne Engelby	20
Pat Refsdal	22
Chase Rhees	24
Edith Cryts	31



Flowers on the altar given by Paula Del Carlo in honor of her son Thomas and his family.

Upcoming Events

Jan 5 – Annual Ministry Reports due to Nicole

Jan 7 - RIC Discussion following worship.

Jan 11 – Council Meeting 6:30

Jan 14 – VDC Ultreya @ Ascension 3-5pm

Feb 4 – Annual Congregational Meeting



Thank you to the Denniston's for providing treats for coffee hour this morning.

New Sign-Up Sheets

- We need families to sign up for Coffee Hour treats, the list is blank.
- The new Flower Chart for 2024 is available in the Narthex. Sign up - the two flower arrangements are \$30 total per Sunday.

Happy New Year

A Few End-of-Year Reminders for 2023

- If you have receipts for "in-kind" gifts that you would like added to your giving record, please make sure you get those turned in to Pat Refsdal as soon as possible.
- We start the budgeting process on Tuesday, we can still accept pledge cards if you have not had the opportunity to turn them in.
- If any one needs envelopes, let Pat (p.refsdal@comcast.net) know.
- Annual Ministry Reports are due to Nicole (nishane2020@gmail.com) by Jan 5th.
- We will need four new church council members for this coming year. Please prayerfully consider sharing your gifts with our Ascension family by becoming a church council member. Meetings are on the second Thursday of the month beginning at 6:30 PM. If you have any questions or want additional information, please see Eric Engelby, Pat Refsdal, Linda Fallat or Patti Hall.

December 29, 2023

Dear Friends,

It is hard to imagine that another year has flown by! As December began, James and I realized that we have dipped our toes into a 4th year of ministry partnership with you. We are so grateful for your faith and friendship and the incredible ministries taking place here.

2023 has seen these buildings filled with activity. The Friendly Tie Quilters meet regularly sharing their talents and time to make beautiful gifts for our neighbors in their time of need. Your finance and audit teams, church council, altar guild, musicians, gardeners, and a myriad of other ministries continue to bring life, love, and light to the faith you have claimed.

Throughout Advent, we have turned our thoughts to The Gift of Being Present for one another; for people we encounter in our daily lives, and for God. You do this beautifully in the ways I've already mentioned and in a thousand other ways. You take to heart the mission statement of this congregation. "Gathered and gifted to celebrate and share the love of Jesus." You live this mission. It isn't just a statement; it is a way of being - of "doing." You continue to open the doors of your hearts to declare, "Everyone is welcome here!"

Please know that I give thanks to God for you. I pray that each of you know how much God loves you – just as you are! Often, I start my day in meditation and prayer in our beautiful sanctuary. Today was no different and your names and the circumstances of your lives were in my prayers. To all those who find themselves facing an uncertain future or in the middle of trials, times of loneliness or grief, know how much God loves you! To those wrestling with your faith and trying to find your way may you know the presence of the Holy Spirit around you.

In his book, *Your Heart's Desire*, Emmet Fox writes:

Even if it be true that God has some splendid thing that he wishes me to do, and to be, how can I possibly find out what it is? And the answer is Divinely simple—Already in your past life from time to time, God himself has whispered into your heart just that very wonderful thing, whatever it is, that he is wishing you to be, and to do, and to have. And that wonderful thing is nothing less than what is called 'Your Heart's Desire.' Nothing less than that.

God's message of hope and love is for everyone. It is a gift we receive and unwrap each and every day! It can't be bought or earned. It simply **IS!**

As a congregation, we have much to celebrate; our freedom to worship, the gift of family in one another. The stucco repair has been completed and the shattered windowpane above the baptismal font has been replaced. In May you voted to sell a portion of Ascension's property to Family Promise. When the building is completed, families will no longer move weekly. Instead volunteers will come to them.

I offer my deep gratitude to the angels in our midst who send cards, share meals, who make calls just to say hello, to offer their time. Thank you to those of you who pull weeds, shovel snow, plant flowers, trim hedges, decorate the sanctuary, and..... and and.....

Just as we have found welcome here, we are a people committed to welcoming all people to Christ's table of love, grace, and forgiveness.

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life." John 8:12

As we step across the threshold into a New Year, may we continue to be a beacon of wide-welcome reflecting Christ's light in the world.

In the love and peace of Christ,

Pastor Debra

How to Become Reconciling in Christ (RIC)

As we move toward voting to become a RIC congregation, we have schedule two meetings for you to share your thoughts or ask questions that you may have. We will meet today and Jan 7th following worship in the library.

These are the commitments we make as a RIC congregation:

RIC Partner Public Commitments

The purpose of the Reconciling in Christ (RIC) Program is to ensure the welcome, inclusion, celebration, and advocacy for people of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions; work for racial equity and commit to anti-racist work and support the national program.

To be recognized as a Reconciling in Christ (RIC) Partner, your faith community will:

1. Clearly state a welcome to people of "***all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions***" or "***LGBTQIA+***" *and* name its commitment to "***racial equity***" or "***anti-racism***" in its welcome statement.
 1. Anything in bold and quotations above must be included in your RIC Partner Welcome Statement to meet Reconciling Works commitments.
 2. If your faith community has its own statement of racial equity or commitment to anti-racism, be it in public community documents or social statements, polities such as by-laws or constitutions, or in its Mission, Vision, or Value statements, this can also satisfy this RIC Partner commitment and a copy of this additional statement will need to be shared with Reconciling Works.
2. ***Be open to calling*** an LGBTQIA+ and Black, Brown, Indigenous, Person of Color (BIPOC) Rostered Leader.
 1. A Rostered Leader is any clergy/pastor or deacon in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA); this commitment extends to all areas of leadership within the life of your community.
3. Allow sanctuary/community space/ to be used for ***LGBTQIA+ weddings and blessings***.
 1. If your faith community is looking for resources for wedding or blessing services to be more inclusive, see the [ELCA's Marriage Resource](#) or Reconciling Works [Worship, Liturgy, & Scripture](#) material.
4. ***Make a meaningful contribution annually*** to support the national RIC program.
 1. A ***meaningful*** contribution is determined by your faith community, its budget, and the understanding that your generosity funds the RIC Program. Meaningful contributions vary for each RIC partner.

Please Lift Up in Prayer:

- Bridgit Sloan, mother-in-law of Cindy and Alan's daughter
- Tracie Truitt, friend of Alyson's
- Cory, Nancy Gale's son
- Pam Burbank
- Jessica Stewart, Dick Graves's daughter
- Jefferson Barrett
- Maylan Chugg, Don & Dee's granddaughter
- Chris, friend of Alyson W.
- Judy Sherman
- Henry, Nancy G's grandson
- Sean Zeller, Pastor Gene's nephew
- Cheryl, friend of Alyson
- Mark Hughes and family
- Erik Thompson
- Heidi, Diane Shultz' sister-in-law
- Dick Graves
- Bob Peterson
- Dee Brown
- Toni, Pastor Debra's Sister-in-Law
- Lynn and Carol
- Roxanne, David's sister
- Cindy C.
- Carol Reopelle
- Kim, friend of Bob
- Jack, Pastor Debra's nephew
- Suzy and her family
- Bill, Linda's brother
- Scott Chapan, friend of Dick G.
- Alice, Anastasia, and all the people affected by the war
- Brian Washburn, Kamberlynn's dad
- Bob, friend of James
- Terry, Dee Brown's brother

- Charlie Tufts
- Jean Roberts
- Kim, Kelly's sister
- Carol, Sharen Kamp's cousin
- Judy, friend of Shellie
- Mary, Sharen's daughter-in-law
- Judy Sherman
- Bob Bezyack
- Ruth Dupee, friend of Maria
- Tanya, Friend of Pastor Debra's Daughter
- Dayle Young
- Lynn & Carol Benson
- Alan and Cindy Day
- Don Hughes
- Betsy Daley, friend of Nicole
- Sylvia Oliva, Nicole's Mom
- Carroll & Ken, Nicole's sister & BIL
- Pat Shane, Nicole's Brother-in-Law
- Diana Warkinten

†Praying for Loved Ones in the Military or deployed:

- Steve Johnson
- Kaleb Tarr, Ethan Lee, Michael Connelly (deployed 13 July 17, 2021)
- Dariyan Edsinger
- Mason Bushey and his wife Ida, and family
- Brody Wilcock
- Renee Kiel
- Justin Kiel
- Kris Kiel
- Matt Malde
- Jason Chugg
- Alex Treadway

December/January
Ascension Ministries

 SUN	 WORSHIP ASST	 ALTAR GUILD	 USHERS	 GREETERS	 ANNOUNCEMENTS	 COUNTERS
Dec 31	Patti Hall	Kim Engelby	Pat Refsdal	CJ Jordan	Nicole Shane	Pat Refsdal
Jan 7	Linda Fallet	Kim Engelby	Todd & Renee Hart	John & Diana Warkentin	Kelly Martin	Renee Hart
Jan 14	Arliiss Zimmerman	Kim Engelby	Patti Hall & Stef Rhees	Joanna Wolf	Kelly Martin	Mark Denniston
Jan 21	Kim Engelby	Kim Engelby	Sharen Kamp	Stefani Rhees	Kelly Martin	Paula DelCarlo
Jan 28	Cindy Dat	Kim Engelby	James Jimenez	CJ Jordan	Kelly Martin	CJ Jordan