

E-News for the Week of Sunday, December 20

4th Sunday of Advent

Children's Program: The Little Drummer Boy

Readings

Micah 5:2-5a

Luke 1:39-45

Luke 1: 46-55

Worship Participants

Celebrant: Pr. Nancy Wright

Liturgical Assistant: TBA

Altar Guild: Johanna White

Communion Assistant: Julia Valliere

Lector: Marcia Gustafson

Organist: Ann Gnagey

Ushers: Bonnie & Paul Lombardi and Richard Butz

Greeters: Donna & Gary Pittman

Upcoming Week

Wednesday, 12/16

4:30-5:30 p.m. Tai Chi

6:15 p.m. Choir

7:15 p.m. Contemporary

Thursday, 12/17

10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Quilting Group

7:00 p.m. Sacred Music Concert

Saturday, 12/19

Cancelled: Men's Breakfast (see announcement)

Sunday, 12/20

9:00 a.m. Sunday School Children's Program Practice

10:00 a.m. Worship Service—Children's Program: The Little Drummer Boy

4:00-8:00 p.m. St. Timothy (rental)

Wednesday, 12/23

6:15 p.m. Choir

7:15 p.m. Bells

Thursday, 12/24: Christmas Eve

6:00 p.m. Worship Service

9:30 p.m. St. Timothy (rental)

Friday, 12/25: Christmas Day

10:00 a.m. Worship Service

Sunday, 12/27

10:00 a.m. Worship Service

NOTE: The office will be closed the week of Monday, December 28th-January 1st.

[Click HERE for a long-range calendar.](#)

Holiday Service Schedule

Thursday, December 24

6:00 p.m. Candlelight Christmas Eve Service with Carols

Friday, December 25

10:00 a.m. Christmas Day Worship Service with Holy Communion and Sermon

Upcoming Birthdays

12/20 Sarah Sturm

12/24 George Qubrosi

12/26 Kristin Peterson-Ishaq

12/26 Niam Qubrosi

12/28 Elizabeth Brackett

12/28 Gudny Rivers

12/30 Bill Harrison

12/30 Nathan Lombardi

Pastor's Message

Dear Ascension parishioners,

As we enter this coming week into the darkest time of year (the Winter Solstice is December 22 at 11:48 am), we are aware of the need to keep alive in our hearts the blessings of light and love. The light of Jesus Christ shines in our hearts, given in birth and baptism, and nourished by prayer, love, and sacrificial ministry and care for others. In the midst of a time of world turmoil and strong movements for justice and peace, let us be thankful for people of good will, peace, and wisdom. Amidst human struggles, including those in our families, we feel a deep awareness of goodness and longing for peace.

May you bring your longings for goodness and peace into your prayers and into our worship services: this Sunday, December 20, the service will feature Ascension's children in their presentation of "The Little Drummer Boy," followed by Holy Communion. Christmas Eve at 6 pm we celebrate with Christmas Lessons and carols, candle lighting, and the blessing of the crèche. Christmas Day at 10 am is a solemn Christmas celebration with hymns, sermon, and Holy Communion.

May the loving presence of God, given in the birth of Jesus Christ, find room in your hearts and minds in the next days.

Blessings, Pr. Nancy

P.S. We will decorate the church after services this Sunday (candles in the windows, crèche beneath the altar, etc.) If you feel inclined to help out during coffee hour this Sunday, great!

Daily Advent Reflections*

Wednesday, 12/16

Wake up

Wake up

Wake up in the middle of the night. Creep quietly to the holiest place in your house. Read 1 Samuel 3. Listen.

Thursday, 12/17

Subtract three things from your day. Now let yourself be drawn by the stronger pull of what you really love (or who loves you).

Friday, 12/18

Swaddle yourself as soon as you're off duty today. Be the baby, close to birth.

Saturday, 12/19

Go to a public library, preferably in a low-income area. Watch the people, in stealth, and pray for them. This too is church.

Sunday, 12/20—The Fourth Sunday in Advent: LOVE

Sing pray or chant this apophatic mantra: God is love, God is not love, God is *not not* love. Now send a beloved a secret message: in sign language, Morse code, or a made-up language.

Monday, 12/21

Sing yourself (or your beloved, kids or roomies) to sleep with lullabies tonight.

Tuesday, 12/22

Make eye contact with a homeless person, or a stranger. Exchange a wordless glance that says: I see your full humanity.

Wednesday, 12/23

Before you speak today, ask yourself: are these words kind, necessary and true? Would I say them with Jesus in the room?

**Shared from an Advent calendar prepared by Rev. Molly Phinney Baskette (Keynote speaker from the 2015 New England Synod Assembly)*

Sunday School News

Children

December 20 will be our Sunday School Christmas tableau presentation, in church. We will rehearse before beginning at 9:00 a.m. The theme this year will be the Little Drummer Boy, as a vehicle for the tableau. Volunteers with special talents are welcomed!

NO SUNDAY SCHOOL on **December 27** or **January 3**.

Adults

The class is reading Pope Francis I Encyclical *Laudato Si: On Care for Our Common Home*. Anyone can join at any time; you can purchase a book from Pr. Nancy or read the Encyclical on line for free. No class preparation is needed, as we read aloud and discuss each paragraph. Class will be held this Sunday, December 20, and take a break until January 17. **(No class Dec. 27, Jan. 3, or Jan. 10)**

HARK! IMPORTANT UPCOMING NEWS AND EVENTS

Duo Toivo Concert at Ascension

DUO TOIVO presents a classical concert for voice and piano at Ascension Lutheran Church, **Thursday, December 17, 7:00 p.m.**

OH! HOLY NIGHT!

Classical Christmas music, traditional and contemporary carols.

Free by Donation (A third of the proceeds will be donated to Ascension for upkeep of the piano.)

Duo Toivo (Toy-Vo, The Hope Duo in Finnish) Classically trained international soprano, Emili Losier teams up with the Vermont pianist, Melissa Dickerson, to touch hearts with their eclectic Christmas Concert. Music ranges from traditional to contemporary Christmas songs sung in a classical style: Arias from Handel's Messiah; Newly arranged well known Christmas carols; Foreign Christmas Songs; Other composers include Mozart, Bach/Gounod, Wolf and Kotilainen.

For more information about Emili and Melissa (Duo Toivo), [click here](#).

Please come and invite friends and neighbors! Light refreshments will be served at intermission.

Quilt top kits available

If you would like to help make mission quilts for Lutheran World Relief but cannot join us on the first and/or third Thursday or the month at church, you can assemble quilt tops at home. There are kits that consist of cut fabric squares (11" x 11") along with directions. Let Karen Martin know if you are interested.

Next Quilter's Group Meeting is **Thursday, December 17.**

Practical Christmas Gifts

Check out the EQUAL EXCHANGE table at Coffee Hour. In addition to coffee, tea, cocoa, organic nuts, and olive oil, there are 3 flavors of chocolate bars available for the holidays. If you don't see what you need, a catalog is also on the table. E-mail me at dpittman@gmavt.net. Orders can be filled in a week. Christmas shopping that makes a difference around the world! –Donna the Coffee Lady

Pastor's Piano Policy

Ascension received a piano, gratis, from a family in Montpelier and paid to have it moved to ALC through funds originally given by Lynne Dapice. Thank you Lynne. We have the joy of the piano for parishioners (including children) who wish to enjoy playing while at church or taking piano lessons; as well as for public performances and regular teaching. Daimon Ferrante, the composer and piano instructor who rents space from ALC to teach, is personally paying for ongoing tuning. He asks that the piano not be moved, as it upsets the tuning (it is not a young piano). Also, when children play, under gentle supervision of their parents or teachers, they are welcome! We are all respectful of others in the building, who may be praying, worshiping, practicing, talking, etc. Closing doors and making sure the sound system (above the piano) is turned on or off depending on whether the sanctuary practice or service needs to be heard in the fellowship hall, will all help. Let the music sound!

Men's Breakfast

There will be no Men's Breakfast for the month of December. Worry not, Men of Ascension, we will continue in January!

ELCA World Hunger Matching Funds Challenge

Until **December 31, 2015**, friends of ELCA World Hunger are challenging one another with a \$150,000 match. Gifts received by December 31 can help meet the match. To take advantage of this match, please give online at www.ELCA.org/WorldHunger

COFFEE HOUR NEEDS YOU!!!

Thank you for the great response to the new Coffee Hour sign-up sheet. If you were unable to sign up for a week or two, please check out the list hanging on the bulletin board in the fellowship room. There are several empty dates to be filled in yet. Coffee Hour is fun for members but also a very important time for us to greet visitors and new members. We often joke about coffee, food and Lutherans going together as a natural....and they do....so please sign up for Coffee Hour and let's continue this wonderful tradition. Also, the Coffee Can (to defray costs) is on the table to help pay for the coffee. Thanks.

See Beth Dreibelbis with questions.

Church Mouse

The Mouse is available by email on a quarterly basis. But you can tell the office if you prefer to have the Mouse mailed to you. There are always extra copies of the Mouse on the table in the Fellowship Hall. A sheet next to the copies gives spaces for you to sign your name if you wish the Mouse to be mailed to you in future.

[Additional News and Opportunities](#)

[Bethlehem Prayer Service 2015](#)

On **Saturday, December 19, 2015**, the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. invites all to join worshipers in the nave at 10 a.m. EST for the ninth annual joint simulcast Christmas service with the people of Bethlehem. Prayers, readings, and hymns alternate between Washington, D.C., and Palestine via the internet, bringing together people of different lands, languages, and ethnic backgrounds in celebration of the birth of the Prince of Peace.

The Palestinian location for the joint service is Ascension's sister church, the Evangelical Lutheran Christmas Church of Bethlehem.

The December 19 Bethlehem Prayer Service may be accessed via computer from the National Cathedral's home page: <http://www.nationalcathedral.org/>. A program for the service is usually available so that everyone can follow along.

[Meals on Wheels Job Opening](#)

Meals on Wheels is looking for a cook to assist in meal preparation at the St. James Episcopal site in Essex Junction. Hours are 6:30-11:30 a.m. Monday-Friday. No professional experience is required, but you should at the very least be a good home cook, know your way around a kitchen, and possess the abilities to learn quickly and work well with others. Contact Patti to apply at 878-8786.

[Climate Change discussions and Faith](#)

Associated Press reporter Seth Borenstein recently wrote an article entitled "Scientists Enlist the Big Gun to get Climate Action: Faith." This article reflects how religion in the form of individuals and communities will continue to have an important moral impact in solving climate change and other critical environmental challenges. To read the full article,

visit: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/ap/article-3348252/Scientists-enlist-big-gun-climate-action-Faith.html>

[Tai Chi at Ascension!](#)

Tai Chi for All Generations, **Wednesdays, 4:30-5:30 p.m.** with Elizabeth Wirls

Classes are ongoing and everyone is welcome to come as you are, whenever you wish. All generations are welcome! Please note that we have decided to offer these classes on a "pay as you can" basis. That way everyone who is interested will be able to join us! For more information, see the attached brochure and feel free to contact Elizabeth in the church office, 862-8866

[CLICK HERE](#) for full brochure.

Tai Chi will break for the holidays soon. **There will be no classes on December 23rd, 30th, or January 6th.**