

# Ascension Lutheran Church

712 Storey Boulevard  
Cheyenne, WY 82009

307-634-6575

ascensioncheyenne@gmail.com

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# Ascension Storey



Evangelical Lutheran  
Church in America  
God's work. Our hands.

**Ascension Lutheran Church**

Cheyenne, Wyoming

ascensioncheyenne.org

January 2018



## Christmas Pageant

Zofia Orla-Bukowski, left, contemplates being an angel as part of Ascension's children's Christmas pageant, right, December 16. (Adam Orla-Bukowski and Kris Rude photos)

## PASTOR'S PIECE Four wise words for a new year

The *Christian Century* is a simple, slender, biweekly periodical that has sustained a

readership among mainline clergy and interested laity for more than a hundred years. The motto of the *Century* appears on the cover of every issue, in small italics: *Thinking Critically, Living Faithfully*. I often extol the wisdom of those four words, and a recent experience only renewed my appreciation for them.

A member of our family celebrated a "milestone birthday" near the end of December. Typical birthday party traditions were augmented with a compilation of recollections and tributes, gathered from family members near and far. My own contribution took the form of an eclectic list of some of the things I like about this likable in-law, including (1) his faithfulness to the Gospel and many-faceted work in behalf of the church, and (2) his open-mindedness and willingness to think things through. It now occurs to me that this pairing of attributes relates very well to the *Century's* motto of *Thinking Critically, Living Faithfully*.

### Thinking Critically, Living Faithfully

"Thinking Critically" requires the humility, courage and initiative to re-visit one's

convictions in light of new information, new perspectives, new challenges, to revise or even supplant them when they are lacking or wrong.

"Living Faithfully" is well-served by this kind of flexibility. The Word of God is not a set of wooden "talking points"; it's a living Word, which freshly engages and redeems our changing lives and world.

*Thinking Critically, Living Faithfully*: We might consider adopting those four words as our own congregational "motto" as we enter a new year.

Pastor Wes Aardahl

### Vicar thanks congregation

Dear members of Ascension,

Thank you for all the treats, cards and warm wishes given me during Advent and this Christmas season. You've all made this a warm and welcoming season for me; I'm grateful for each one of your kind gifts and thoughts, and for all of you. May God continue to bless each of you and our lives.

Vicar Katelin Bingner

**Because the Church Council did not have a quorum at its December meeting, no minutes are available.**

## Two committees support improving ministry

Ascension Lutheran Church has two committees dedicated to improving the ministry at the church. The Mutual Ministry Committee offers support to Pastor Wes Aardahl, while the Internship Lay Committee does the same for Vicar Katelin Bingner.

Both committees encourage the members of the congregation to bring concerns and comments to these groups in order to foster good communication.

In agreement with the Healthy Starts program, Ascension began a Mutual Ministry Committee about eight months after Pastor Aardahl began his ministry here. According to the model constitution for congregations of the ELCA, this committee should be composed of six persons who are appointed for two-year terms, three each on alternating years. Appointments are made by a congregational leader together with the pastor. However, the size and method of appointment may vary from congregation to congregation.

According to Chairwoman Kari Chandler, the purpose of the Mutual Ministry Committee is to affirm and strengthen the mission efforts of the congregation and the ministry performed by the pastor. The committee listens to both pastor and congregational members so that there can be a clarifying of expectations and open communication. The committee, which meets monthly through the school year and just completed its first year, also serves to stimulate support of the pastor through prayer and caring by congregational members.

Functions and benefits of the Mutual Ministry Committee include the following: (1) helps develop open communication about expectations, attitudes and concerns within the congregation, the community and the pastor; (2) identifies early warning signs of misunderstandings and takes action to diffuse certain problem situations before they get out of hand; (3) becomes the "listening post" for the pastor and the people of the congregation; (4) serves as a group with

whom the pastor can test new ideas and share confidential matters; (5) can plan strategies to improve the skills of the pastor or help develop plans within the congregation to solve problem situations.

In addition to Kari, other committee members are Pastor Aardahl, Roz Schliske, Teisha Hohn, David Talley, Pete Obermueller and Jeff Rude.

Although the Internship Lay Committee has some guidelines from the ELCA, the congregation may adapt where needed. The Ascension group meets monthly.

According to Wartburg Seminary, "the purpose of an internship is to provide a learning environment under which interns can both engage in the practice of ministry and reflect on the quality of their involvement under the direction of the pastor and the intern committee."

Chairman Rick Moler emphasized that the committee does not manage the daily or even weekly activities of the intern, which is the supervisor's role. "We listen, support and try to help Katelin with what she has learned at seminary, thinks about and sees happening on the ground in our congregation," Rick explained.

The Internship Lay Committee's tasks are as follows: (1) assists the intern and pastor in identifying the possible areas of learning and service in the congregation; (2) provides feedback to the intern about her preaching and worship leadership practices; (3) helps the intern understand how she is perceived by others and discuss the impacts of those perceptions; (4) provides support and understanding to the intern; (5) relates to the intern both emotionally and theologically; (6) helps the intern translate her seminary studies into actual congregational settings and (7) interprets the purpose of the internship program to the congregation.

In addition to Rick, the members of the committee are Vicar Katelin, Paul Fanning, Connie Hood, Karen Kelley, Stacey Obermueller and Mike Smith.

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307-634-6575  
[ascensioncheyenne@gmail.com](mailto:ascensioncheyenne@gmail.com)

Pastor's cell phone  
307-421-0159

#### Staff

##### Pastor

Rev. Wesley Aardahl

##### Vicar

Katelin Bingner

##### Secretary

Cheryl Collins

##### Saturday Music Coordinator

Mark Christie

##### Adult Choir Director

Dr. Jane Iverson

##### Organists

Dr. Jane Iverson  
and Gaela Young

##### Newsletter Editor

Rosalind Schliske

#### Church Council

##### President

Jerry Zang

##### Vice president

Tim Leberman

##### Secretary

Katie Wisdom

##### Treasurer

Patti Riesland

Doug Cook

Connie Dambro

Sherri Geringer

Dr. Keren Meister-Emerich

Dr. Frank Mellblom

Ryan Mitchell

Kent Porter

Kim Strand

*If your address, phone number or email address has changed, call the church office or email [ascensioncheyenne@gmail.com](mailto:ascensioncheyenne@gmail.com).*

**Ascension Lutheran Church seeks to be a community that nourishes relationships with God and one another that lead to a deeper spiritual life, based on a grace-oriented Lutheran perspective.**

**Jan. 26 Newsletter Deadline**

# Obituaries

## Edward Bauer

Edward Bauer, 90, a charter member of Ascension Lutheran Church who helped construct the church and served as its first Church Council president, died December 12 at Davis Hospice Center. Services were held at Ascension December 15.

He was born November 18, 1927, in Lyman, Nebraska, as one of 10 children born to Pauline and Jacob Bauer. He grew up on family farms in many rural Wyoming communities and graduated from Yoder (Wyoming) High School in 1946.

Ed served in the Army during the Korean Conflict and was honorably discharged in 1951. In 1952, he married Deloris Schultz in Torrington.

He sold John Deere implements for many years in Mitchell and Kearney, Nebraska. In 1960, he moved to Cheyenne and was employed by Cheyenne Light, Fuel and Power until his retirement in 1989. He was known by many for his talents in gardening, woodworking and repairing equipment. He was a member of the American Legion and the Fraternal Order of the Moose.

He is survived by his wife of 65 years, DeLoris; two daughters, Cindy Farwell (Bob) and Lyndee (Leif) Swanson, of Cheyenne; four grandchildren, Matthew (Beth) Farwell of Cumming, Georgia; Travis Farwell (Emily) of Scottsbluff; Bethany Willmarth (Aaron) and Jordan Ness, of Cheyenne. He is also survived by two sisters, Pauline Walker and Esther Kremer; one brother, Jack Bauer; and many nieces and nephews.

Ed was proceeded in death by his parents; brothers, Ruben and Bob; and sisters, Mildred Marter, Marie Lehman, Martha Varble and Darlene Hickman.

The family thanks CRMC Home Hospice and Davis Hospice Center for their loving care. Donations may be made to them in Ed's name.

## Fern Sapienza

Fern Sapienza, 90, died December 17 at Davis Hospice Center, and a celebration of life was held at Ascension on December 22. Pastor Wes Aardahl baptized her in October and wrote about it in his November column.

She was born on June 8, 1927, in Avery, Texas, to Jewel and Lee Hegler. Fern grew up near Lydia, Texas, and had a hard childhood, surviving polio and a lengthy hospitalization at the Shriners Hospital in Louisiana. She graduated from Texas State Teachers College in San Marcos. She was teaching in San Antonio when she met John Sapienza, who was stationed at nearby Lackland Air Force Base.

After they married, John was reassigned to Warren Air Force Base in 1950, and Fern began a 38-year teaching career, mostly in the sixth grade at Churchill Elementary.

Fern was a wonderfully supportive and loving wife and mother. She stood by John when he tried twice to open restaurants in Cheyenne, and she waited tables after school. Then, when John decided to get his degree and become a teacher, too, she was the sole breadwinner while he attended UW and commuted from Cheyenne daily. Later, Fern and John obtained their master's degrees and went on to get their MA+30 certifications.

She is survived by her husband of 67 years; brother, Harold (Erma) Hegler, of Daingerfield, Texas; children, John (Carol), of Leesburg, Virginia; Lynn (Tim) Olsen, of Eugene, Oregon; Jerral (Jennifer), of Hillsboro, Oregon; and Laurie, of Cheyenne; four grandchildren and one great-grandson.

## Church Life supports funerals at church

Ascension's Church Life Committee would like to thank the congregation for its support during the recent funerals at the church.

Noting the committee usually serves one or two funerals a year, Tim Leberman, Church Council vice president and committee liaison, said, "We are grateful for the ongoing support of Church Life during the year, especially during the last part of December when we served three funerals within a two-week time-span." He thanked all who supplied a wonderful variety of salads, desserts and other food.

Some of the functions needed to serve a funeral are as follows:

- Vacuum the floor;
- Set up and take down tables and chairs; cover tables with tablecloths; create centerpieces and place water;
- Purchase needed food and supplies;
- Prepare the food such as sandwiches, coffee, lemonade, condiments, etc.;
- Set out the food on serving trays;

## Milton Renner

Longtime Ascension Lutheran Church member Milton Renner, 88, died December 13 at Cheyenne Regional Medical Center. His service was held at the church on December 18.

He was born March 3, 1929, in Columbus, Ohio, to Edwin and Clara Renner. He married Marilyn Wilke on September 18, 1954, in West Miltona, Minnesota.

He graduated from The Ohio State University with a degree in agriculture and followed its football team.

Milton and Marilyn traveled and lived around the world, eventually coming to Cheyenne in 1968 stationed at F.E. Warren Air Force Base. He retired as a major and then worked on the base in civil service. Later he enjoyed working with the trees and customers at Riverbend Nursery. He had a green thumb and loved tending to his trees and garden around his house. He was a member of the Cheyenne Stamp Club.

He is survived by his children, Debra (Bradley) Vilen, of San Diego; Steve (Carolyn) Renner, of Lander, and Rich (Barbara) Renner, of Cheyenne; grandchildren, Michael Fargo, Gabrielle Vilen, Tyler (Audra) Renner, Tanner Renner, Cody Renner and Abigail Renner; step-grandchildren, Luke (Sami) Haugh and Olivia Haugh; step-great-grandchildren, Aubrynn and Kyden Haugh.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Marilyn; parents; and siblings, Elton Renner and Charlyne Bullard.

Those who wish may contribute to the Navajo Evangelical Lutheran Mission School in Rocky Point, Arizona.

# News

## WELCA to meet January 16

The Women of the ECLA (WELCA) will meet at 9:30 a.m. on Tuesday, January 16, in the upper fellowship hall. The Bible study from the *Gather* magazine is by Mark Allan Powell titled "Multiple meanings: learning from other interpretations," session one from Mark 7: 1-8. For questions or more information, contact Shirley Toppenberg at 634-4946.

## Family Promise thank you

Ascension's Family Promise coordinator, Margie Sewell, said that originally Ascension thought it would have the responsibility for helping with the evening meals for the Family Promise families December 24-31, but through a generous donation from the corporate office of Taco Johns, the two families currently in the program were lodged in a motel and given gift cards for sit-down restaurant meals.

"Before we knew of the donation, however, we did have Ascension folks volunteer to cover meals if needed," she noted. So thanks goes to Carol Toft, Lynne Iversen, Kari Chandler, Anne McGowan, Dave and Marcia Talley, the Hohn family, the Rude family, Sheryl Fanning and a generous donation from the Zang family.

Ascension's next rotation in conjunction with St. Paul's Lutheran Church will be March 11-18.

## COME A volunteers needed

Volunteers from the congregation are needed for the next COMEA meal preparation on Sundays, January 21 and February 18.

Six to eight cooks/servers are needed each month to prepare and serve the dinner. Food preparation starts at 2 p.m. and continues until 5:20 when the dinner is placed in vehicles for transport to the COMEA shelter. Serving takes place from 6-7 p.m., then back to the church to finish cleanup and unload utensils.

A sign-up sheet is available in the narthex. For information, contact RC Reiman.

## Church book club to begin

Pastor Wes Aardahl has announced the creation of a book club at Ascension with "Gilead" by Marilynne Robinson as the first selection. "It's a noteworthy book, so you should be able to find it at the library, a used bookstore, Barnes & Noble, or that 'gargantuan.com' place where you can order anything!" pastor said. "I'll set out some sheets of discussion questions beforehand."

Where and when should the group meet? A "think-outside-the-box" option could be the Paramount Cafe, 1607 Capitol, from 6-7 p.m. A more practical but deeply "inside-the-box" option would be Ascension's upper fellowship hall from 7-8 p.m. The best days would be the Thursdays when Church Council or its executive committee do not meet or the Tuesdays when the Mutual Ministry Committee or Internship Lay Committee do not meet.

Let pastor know your preferences as soon as possible.

# Youth activities

## Accessories donation

The youth offered a huge thank you to all who donated hats, scarves and gloves to the Cheyenne Christmas Angels. In one weekend, the youth group collected 58 pairs of gloves, 62 hats and 26 scarves for the elderly and disabled outreach program. The congregation's support at the pie social in November also allowed the youth group to sponsor two families through this program, giving four local children gifts and stuffed stockings.

## Taking down the Greens

The youth group will take down the Christmas tree and wreath on Sunday, January 7, about 11:45 a.m. as soon as Sunday school ends. Lunch will be provided. Text Nichole Morris at 719-321-7038 or email her at [ascensionyouthcheyenne@gmail.com](mailto:ascensionyouthcheyenne@gmail.com) if you can help in order for her to have a count for lunch. This is considered a youth work event.

## Souper can collection

In order to stock Ascension's Little Free Pantry, the youth group will collect canned soup on Super Bowl Sunday, February 4. They challenged the congregation to surpass last year's total of 152 cans.

## Shrove Tuesday dinner

Mark your calendar for the annual Shrove Tuesday meal February 13. Youth will set up from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m.; dinner will be served from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m., with cleanup to follow. This is a work event for youth.