

ASCENSION ACCENTS

A congregation called:
to [invite](#), [welcome](#) and [involve](#) all people to share in God's love and service.

Ascension Lutheran Church

Vol. 49 No. 06

June 1, 2009

ASCENSION PERSPECTIVES

Can you believe it? Summer is here again! Well, maybe not officially. That happens at some preordained moment on June 21st. But the signs are surely there—the school year is fast winding down, the central Texas heat is cranking up and the neighborhood pools are full. Folks are also busy making their travel plans. A week here, ten days there to visit family, the beach or perhaps some cooler clime for at a brief respite from the stifling temperatures we know are just around the corner.

As many of you know my summer plans this year include a return trip to Nicaragua. Two summers ago, I spent two months there, learning Spanish and experiencing life in a very different and transforming way. I'm going back for a lot of reasons not the least of which is that I want to go back! I love the people I came to know during my time there and I want to see them again.

But my return is also about promises made. The day I left a dear young friend named Guillermina asked me, "Brian, will you come back again some day?" As the tears welled up in my eyes, I said to her, "Yes, sweetheart, I promise. And you'd better have the UNO cards dealt and ready for me when I do." Later that day as I got on the plane to begin the journey home I made a promise to myself, to never forget how the previous eight weeks had changed my life forever and that one day I would go back.

At the same time my return also has to do with promises broken, a reality for which I as a citizen of the most powerful nation in the world ultimately bear some measure of responsibility.

An extensive review of US intervention in Nicaragua and other Central American countries over the past 100 years is beyond the pale of this column. Suffice to say though that over a period of many years, billions of our tax dollars have been used to destabilize and undermine the very democratic process we hold so near and dear.

Of course the official line was that we were ensuring democracy and our way of life from the growing threat to the south, but the upshot was that my tax money and yours went to support a systematic campaign of terror directed at mostly poor, undereducated and otherwise powerless men women and children. The stories I heard about what US trained and equipped rebels did were enough to turn my stomach. And such reports weren't the stuff of so called leftist propaganda but real life and death accounts from people I know, people I call friends, people I love.

Along the way, US administrations of every persuasion made grand promises. If nations like Nicaragua could finally "see the light" and elect more agreeable governments, we'd be there with all the money and support they'd need to rebuild and move forward. Well, in the case of Nicaragua, that day finally came (in no small part due to US interference in the election). But guess what? The support, the money, the resources never did and today Nicaragua remains the 2nd poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. So much for promises huh?

"Promises were meant to be broken" or so goes an old saying. Whether it be nations or governments, or simply people like you and me, we do a pretty good job making sure the saying is true.

God on the other hand isn't just in the business of making promises, God keeps them. As my good friend Rolf Jacobson reminds us, "Promises are one of the main ways that God works. God promises to forgive sins, to bless us, to be with us always, to be our eternal Big Toe (as it were), *to give us meaningful work to do in God's kingdom*, to give us eternal life on the other side of death, and so on. ([Crazy Talk: A Not So Stuffy Dictionary of Theological Terms](#), Rolf A. Jacobson Ed. 2008 Augsburg Books, pg. 134)

So, although you could say my return to a special place in Central America is about keeping my promise and maybe in some very small way making good on the failed promises of the past, it has much more to do with living out the promise God made to me in baptism, joining me to Christ's death and resurrection, affording me the gift of new life, which in turn calls me to put to use the gifts God has given me to show love to my neighbor, both near and far, the people I meet every day as well as the far away ones I hold in my heart today an look forward to seeing in just a few short weeks.

Finally, if the Spirit moves you, if you'd like to be a part of my trip and share a portion of the good gifts God has given you and in so doing bear witness to the God of Promise, give me a call, drop me a line. I'll be delighted to visit with you. I promise. ;-)

Paz,

Pastor Peterson

CONGREGATIONAL NEWS



Prayer Connection



The **Prayer Connection** program, which our congregation engaged in from October 2007 to October 2008, has been re-introduced as our congregation focuses on **“Passionate Spirituality.”**

The results from the **Natural Church Development (NCD)** survey showed that we want to grow spiritually in our daily and congregational life.

To participate in this *voluntary* program: draw a **prayer card** from the basket in the narthex over the next several Sundays, and commit to pray for the family name on the card. *The prayer cards have family units grouped together rather than a card for each individual member.*

Church Garage Sale

The **Church Garage Sale** raised a total of **\$832** toward the air-conditioning unit for the preschool building! This included matching funds from *Thrivent for Lutherans*.

A very special **Thank you** to all those who made this event possible!

New Address

Please make a note of the following new address:

Tony and Jennifer Verhaeghe
 Chloe and Natalie
 13450 Moscow Trail
 Austin, TX 78729
Phone: 294-1181
Email: jenniferverhaeghe@hotmail.com

Ministry of the Month

ELCA World Hunger is a connected, comprehensive, and compassionate program that helps individuals and communities lift themselves out of poverty into self-sufficiency.



To learn more, see <http://www.elca.org/Our-Faith-In-Action/Responding-to-the-World/ELCA-World-Hunger/Our-Work.aspx> and <http://ascensionaustin.org/hungermin.htm>

Youth News

Congratulations to Max Peterson, who was the second place winner of the **Excellence in Writing Scholarship** competition, Large School division. Max received a **\$1000 Scholarship!**

Kale Beckman will be attending Camp Chrysalis this summer for the Lyle 1 Program. Each summer Camp Chrysalis has a service project for the campers. This year *Cross Trails Ministry* is sponsoring the **“Water to Thrive (W2T)”** which is a grassroots ministry changing lives through the gift of clean water.

Currently, **two in three people** in rural **Ethiopia** do not have access to clean water. To make a difference *Cross Trails Ministry* is teaming up with W2T to fund **one well** in Ethiopia, at a cost of \$3500. One well can change up to 500 lives!

The campers are asked to bring \$7 to camp as a donation toward the W2T program. **If anyone in the congregation would like to donate to “Water to Thrive”, there will be donation envelopes available in the Narthex.**

Kale leaves for camp on **July 5th** and will take all contributions with him then. Thank you!

May Offering Total

Week	Apr 27	May 3	May 10	May 17	May 24
Offering	\$1390	\$2506	\$1971	\$1433	\$1135
Attendance	33	32	48	34	33

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS



From the Synod...

ELCA Churchwide Assembly
August 17-23, 2009
 Minneapolis, MN

Senior High Youth Gathering
December 28-30, 2009
 Omni Hotel in Austin



This Month at Ascension

Sundays in June

8:30 am Prayer
 9:30 am Sunday School
 10:30 am Worship

Sunday, June 7th—The Holy Trinity

10:30 am Worship
 11:30 am **Congregational Meeting**
 following Worship

Monday, June 8th

7:00 pm Council Meeting

Wednesday, June 10th

1:00 pm SEEDS Luncheon

Sunday, June 14th—Flag Day

10:30 am Worship

Sunday, June 21st—Father's Day

10:30 am Worship

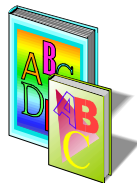
Sunday, June 28th

10:30 am Worship—Healing Service

Upcoming Events

July 26th: Worship—Healing Service
August 24th: NCD Committee meeting
August 30th: Worship—Bluegrass Service

Pastor Brian will be returning to **Nicaragua** in July. Due to the current world economic situation, the Nicaragua school has diminished funds and has had to reduce staff and other expenses.



If you would like to help the school, please consider providing **books, school supplies, soccer balls, or a monetary contribution**. You may leave your gifts in the church office and Pastor will take these items in July.

Please Note:




There is a sign-up sheet in the narthex for those who would like to provide a **special music offering** during our Summer worship.

Timothee Aka
 James Logan Brewster
 Travis Emerson (friend of Matt & Stacie McKelvey)
 Donna Gates (Harry Amon's sister)
 Mildred Gerstmann



Linda Halloran
 Ethel Hester
 Family of Richard Sennet
 Benne Faye Simon
 Our service men and women in harm's way



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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Email: office@ascensionaustin.org

Pastor Brian Peterson

(512) 344-9677

(512) 497-2833 (cell)

The Ascension Sanctuary

Your Church at Home

www.ascensionaustin.org

SUNDAY SCRIPTURE READINGS

June 7	June 14	June 21	June 28
Isaiah 6:1-8	Ezekiel 17:22-24	Job 38:1-11	Lamentations 3:22-33
Psalm 29	Psalm 92:1-4, 12-15	Psalm 107:1-3, 23-32	Psalm 30
Romans 8:12-17	2 Corinthians 5:6-10, 14-17	2 Corinthians 6:1-13	2 Corinthians 8:7-15
John 3:1-17	Mark 4:26-34	Mark 4:35-41	Mark 5:21-43