

The Acts of Ascension



Through My Window

By: Pastor
Jim Sprengle



Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ!

“Thanks be to God for His inexpressible gift!” (2 Corinthians 9:15, ESV).

Let the Preparations Begin!

A common tradition among families in America is to wait until Thanksgiving Day to put up Christmas decorations. We haul out the dusty boxes from storage and begin transforming our homes, both inside and out, into festive spaces. For many, this is a labor of love as memories flood back—special times with family, the laughter of children, and the joy of treats and gifts.

Perhaps the thought of gifts brings excitement for some, but for others, it can be a source of anxiety. After all, the to-do list includes purchasing gifts for family and friends. Each year, I keep an eye out for gifts while traveling or shopping locally, hoping to find something meaningful. Unfortunately, it’s rare for me to find the perfect gift early in the year. I often wonder: will the recipient appreciate the gift or simply re-gift it at the next white elephant Christmas party? Is jalapeño-flavored honey a good idea? What about black licorice from Australia? Maybe a blanket with sewn-in sleeves that doubles as a giant coat? In the end, as the season draws to a close, a last-minute trip to the gift card rack at the supermarket often becomes my final solution. After all, who doesn’t like a gift card, right?

Yet, when it comes to memories flooding back, it’s often hard to recall the gifts people gave us. For example, can you name the gifts you received last Christmas? Most of us struggle to answer because truly memorable gifts are rare. Each year, I encourage others to spend less on material gifts and consider giving something homemade or personal instead. The money saved could be used to bless someone in need or support an organization doing meaningful work. Simplifying holiday shopping reduces the stress and removes the temptation to buy things that don’t really matter. It also creates space to reflect on the true meaning of Christmas.

The only gift that truly matters is the “inexpressible gift” of Jesus. God loved us so much that He gave His Son, so that whoever believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16). As we prepare to celebrate Jesus’ birth, the greatest gift of all time becomes our focus. Through His work, Jesus opened the gates of heaven for each of us, giving us the gifts of forgiveness, life, and salvation. Who could forget that?

Thanking God for His gift,

Pr Jim

¡Gracia y paz a vosotros de parte de Dios nuestro Padre y del Señor Jesucristo!

“¡Gracias a Dios por su don inefable!” (2 Corinteos 9:15, NVI).

¡Que comiencen los preparativos!

Una tradición común entre las familias en Estados Unidos es esperar hasta el Día de Acción de Gracias para colocar las decoraciones navideñas. Sacamos las cajas polvorientas del almacén y comenzamos a transformar nuestros hogares, tanto por dentro como por fuera, en espacios festivos. Para muchos, este es un trabajo lleno de amor, mientras los recuerdos regresan: momentos especiales con la familia, la risa de los niños y la alegría de las golosinas y los regalos.

Tal vez la idea de los regalos traiga emoción para algunos, pero para otros puede ser una fuente de ansiedad. Después de todo, la lista de tareas incluye comprar regalos para familiares y amigos. Cada año, estoy atento a los regalos mientras viajo o compro localmente, con la esperanza de encontrar algo significativo. Desafortunadamente, es raro que encuentre el regalo perfecto a principios de año. A menudo me pregunto: ¿el destinatario apreciará el regalo o simplemente lo volverá a regalar en la próxima fiesta navideña del “elefante blanco”? ¿Es buena idea la miel con sabor a jalapeño? ¿Y el regaliz negro de Australia? ¿Tal vez una manta con mangas cosidas que funciona como un abrigo gigante? Al final, cuando la temporada llega a su fin, un viaje de última hora al estante de tarjetas de regalo en el supermercado suele convertirse en mi solución final. Después de todo, ¿a quién no le gusta una tarjeta de regalo, verdad?

Sin embargo, cuando se trata de recuerdos que regresan, a menudo es difícil recordar los regalos que las personas nos dieron. Por ejemplo, ¿puedes nombrar los regalos que recibiste la Navidad pasada?

(Continúa en la página 2)



The Acts of Ascension

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Ascension Lutheran Church

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Church Office Hours

Monday – Friday, 9:00am – 3:00pm

Web site:

www.alcportland.org

Our Mission Statement:

Go and Share Jesus Christ

Our Vision Statement:

Take part...

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SNOW AND ICE POLICY

'Tis the season to remember our policy on canceling services due to weather. If a snow and ice day affects a scheduled service, always call the church office to listen to the updated message before driving to church that day. We will also update the website, send out a Constant Contact email and text, but for those without Internet access, call the church office.

THROUGH MY WINDOW

(Viene de la página 1)

A la mayoría de nosotros nos cuesta responder porque los regalos verdaderamente memorables son raros. Cada año, animo a otros a gastar menos en regalos materiales y considerar regalar algo casero o personal en su lugar. El dinero ahorrado podría usarse para bendecir a alguien necesitado o apoyar a una organización que realice un trabajo significativo. Simplificar las compras navideñas reduce el estrés y elimina la tentación de comprar cosas que realmente no importan. También crea un espacio para reflexionar sobre el verdadero significado de la Navidad.

El único don que realmente importa es el “don inefable” de Jesús. Dios nos amó tanto que dio a Su Hijo, para que todo aquel que cree en Él no se pierda, sino que tenga vida eterna (Juan 3:16). Mientras nos preparamos para celebrar el nacimiento de Jesús, el regalo más grande de todos los tiempos se convierte en nuestro enfoque. A través de Su obra, Jesús abrió las puertas del cielo para cada uno de nosotros, dándonos los dones del perdón, la vida y la salvación. ¿Quién podría olvidar eso?

Dando gracias a Dios por su don,

Pr Jim

PASTOR'S NOVEMBER REPORT

Deaths / Funerals / Memorials –

- **Harold (Lew) Lewis** – died October 23, (non-member, Sue's husband), memorial Monday, November 18 at Ascension

Marriages –

- None to report

Baptisms –

- Arlo Reinert, son of Brandon and Vanessa (Cindy's son), TBA

Transfers, New Members, etc. –

- C-101 new members class Wednesdays through November 27
 - o Expect one new member through Adult Confirmation

Confirmation –

- Confirmation 2024-2025 will be Fridays from 5:30 -6:30pm in Community Room

Latino Membership –

- Pastor Ruberto is working from his hometown in Yucatán, Mexico
 - o His test results came back negative, so he is waiting for December 6 to book his appointment in Juarez, Mexico to complete his paperwork and return to the U.S.
 - § No date is set, but we pray for a smooth process and return!
 - o He is sending services, recording sermons on YouTube to be played during worship, and keeping in touch with members and friends during his time away
 - o Sunday Spanish services will continue at 5pm with me and other pastors as available, while working with bi-lingual speakers to interpret
- Upon Pastor Ruberto's return, Ascension and Trinity, Portland will be meeting to consider a call for him. As mentioned in former Voters Assemblies and Council Meetings, we need to consider a call Pr Ruberto for our Latino Ministry
- We had a Thanksgiving service and celebration on Sunday, November 24, 2024
 - o Approximately 30 people showed up for worship and food

Circuit Visitor Info –

- Immanuel, Sandy - I'm still covering one Sunday per month
- Nominations, Circuit Forums, etc., being gathered for Northwest District Convention, June 19-21, 2025

Miscellaneous –

- **Building Lease Update**
 - o After many calls, emails, texts, blueprint reviews, and City of Gresham recommendations (including applying for a building permit after a neighborhood meeting),

Carmen decided to stop pursuing a lease agreement with Ascension for the lower level

- Outreach Board

- o Setting up a donuts and hot chocolate event on Saturday, Dec 14 to reach out to community members

- Human Care Board

- o Christmas stockings for My Father's House parents; a free will offering will be collected after services in December to purchase gifts
 - § Thrivent Action Teams are covering some of the purchases
- o Planning for January donations to Ava Health (First Image) for Life Sunday

- Youth Board

- o Meeting regularly to plan youth activities
- o On the third Fridays of each month, a family activity night is gathering
 - § 30 to 50 people are attending with Anglo and Latino members and friends

Dates to remember:

2024

December 1, Sunday – First Sunday in Advent
 December 4, 11, 18, Wednesdays – Advent Midweek (3:30, 7pm)
 December 24, Tuesday – Christmas Eve Candlelight (7pm)
 December 25, Wednesday – Christmas Day (10am)
 December 31, Tuesday – New Year's Eve Service (7pm w/ communion)

2025

January 1, Wednesday – New Year's Day
 January 6, Monday – Epiphany
 January 20, Monday – MLK Day / Inauguration Day
 February 16, Sunday – Sanctity of Life Sunday
 February 17, Monday – President's Day
 March 5, Wednesday – Ash Wednesday (3:30, 7pm)
 March 12, 19, 26, April 2, 9, Wednesdays – Lent Midweek (3:30, 7pm)
 April 13, Sunday – Palm Sunday
 April 17, Thursday – Maundy Thursday (7pm)
 April 18, Friday – Good Friday (7pm)
 April 20, Sunday – Easter Sunday



Brett Monson – Navy, San Diego CA (Grandson of Joann Schulz)

Michael Williamson, Air Force, Reserve, Texas (grandson of Rebecca Williamson);

Jamie Wong-Lopez, Navy, Kaneohe Bay HI (nephew of Merci McInaney);

Clayton Wright, Air Force – (grandson of Virginia Jacobs);

Colton Wright, Navy – (grandson of Virginia Jacobs);
Tyler Young, Navy – Deployed (nephew of Karen Arronson).

Bradley Zeller, Army – Fort Lewis WA (grandson of Neil and Deb Zeller)

Kyle Zeller, Army – Ft. Hood TX (grandson of Neil and Deb Zeller)

If you would like to be a “link” in our prayer chain, or if you have a prayer request, please send an email to: office@alcportland.org or call: 503-665-8821

CHRISTMAS and ADVENT SERVICES

Sunday Services

8:30 and 11:00am
Dec. 1, 8, 15, 22 and 29

Wednesday Services

Dec. 4, 11 and 18
3:30 and 7:00pm

Christmas Eve Services

Tuesday Dec. 24 at 7:00pm

Christmas Day Service

Wednesday, Dec. 25 at 10:00am

PRAY FOR OUR CHURCH FAMILY

Sue Lewis and her family, Barb Cochran and her family, Pastor Ruberto and his family, Carolyn Gordon, Mike Fogarty, Karla Deal, The family of Bob Rekdahl, Jan Galberth, Jim Eckart, Gina Kreps, Herb and Carol Hofer, Mae Smith, Ed Hubbard, Alma Bangs, Marcia Bryant's relative (Ron), Kaye Beaulieu's Brother (Dick), Virginia Jacob's brother (Robert), Esperanza Gutierrez' mother (Antonia), *Barbara Schrader, *Larry Hart, *Mel and Lorraine Haggard. *Home Bound.

** If you know of anyone who needs prayer and you have permission to include them in this publication, Please call the church office to let Michele know. 503-665-8821*

CHRISTMAS CAROLING



Everyone is invited to go Christmas Caroling on Sunday, December 22 after late service. We will gather in the narthex and proceed to various homes and care centers to share Christmas joy with our shut-ins. We hope that you can join us in this wonderful time and show the love of Jesus with those who cannot get out to enjoy the season. Our time ends when we gather to sing at Fairlawn at 4:00pm.

REPENTING OF “YOURS” AND “MINE”

LCMS Stewardship – December 2024

Retailers have had their Christmas displays up since before Reformation Sunday. The kids have made their list and checked it twice, or three times or more. It won't be long before the tree will start shedding its needles, the stockings emptied, the gifts unwrapped, toys broken, and the too small or out of style clothes returned. Before we know it, the annual celebration of Christmas will be over.

But for the children of God, we know that the gift of Christmas doesn't ever end. Week in and week out, the Lord continues to shower His gifts on us. Every time the Lord gathers us to His house, and we are led to kneel at His table, the gift of forgiveness is repeatedly granted to us. It is nothing we deserve. It comes to us freely!

The fourth stanza of the stewardship hymn, “Forgive Us Lord for Shallow Thankfulness” (LSB 788) highlights both this gift and our response.

Teach us, O Lord, true thankfulness divine, that gives as Christ gave, never counting cost

To learn thankfulness is necessary. The parents of young children are well-versed in the fact that they must teach their children thankfulness. It does not come naturally. The spiritual genetics inherited from our parents allow us to think that the world revolves around us. When we receive something, there is an inward desire to think that we in some way deserve it.

But there is no way that we deserve anything we get from our Lord. We need that ongoing lesson from God Himself. Thankfulness toward God is worked in us by the Holy Spirit. God's Word works this thanksgiving in us. We need this weekly reminder that Jesus didn't consider “equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself” for us, to the point of death on a cross (Phil. 2:6). He didn't bat an eye. He paid the price! Our life of stewardship is one of daily and weekly thanksgiving inspired by the Lord Himself.

That knows no barrier of “yours” and “mine,” assured that only what's withheld is lost.

Because Jesus gave us everything and more, there can be no ownership. The child at Christmas is quick to claim that the newly gifted toy is “mine!” But as Psalm 24:1 asserts, “The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein.” There isn't anything in creation that is ours. When we cling to and claim ownership of anything in creation, we are losing out on the continual gifts with which the Lord desires to shower upon us. Closed hands cannot receive anything new. We cling to the old and dead and miss the new thing that the Lord desires to do in and for us.

We are led to repent of the “yours” and “mine” and remove the lie that we have any ownership. In this we have the promise that God will continue to give to us. Not just at Christmas, but every Sunday at the altar in the Lord's house.

STEWARDSHIP: WILL YOU HELP?

We need you! Here is a fun fact – it takes the support of more than 25 people for **each** service **every** Sunday. We thank God for the volunteers we have and for the people who step in when needed to fill a vacancy. The following areas are short-handed right now and may be an opportunity for you to serve and use your talents.

What happens when you volunteer? You are trained and when you're ready, you are put on the calendar to serve as your schedule allows. How often you serve depends on how many people are added to the rotation, possibly once every month or two or three.

Please call (503-665-8821) or email the church office (office@alcpportland.org) to let us know your interest. This is one more way to serve God and your congregation. We need you and we look forward to hearing from you!

Ushers

Make people feel welcome at church, hand out bulletins, assist with seating, collect offering,

Audio/Video

Operate the camera and sound board during the church services.

PowerPoint

Read the slides and advance them along with the Pastor/congregation.

Readers

Read the day's Bible verses during the worship service; the readings are sent to you prior to Sunday.

Greeters

Greets people with a friendly smile as they arrive each Sunday and assists visitors with signing the welcome book.

Hospitality

Serves during events and special meetings, such as: All Church Worship, Memorials, Luncheons



SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS



Our teachers are looking forward to teaching your kids through the month of December. The month's lessons will continue the walk through the Bible with Buck Denver's: What's in the Bible, follow the birth of Jesus, and make a special craft to remember this year!

Sunday, Dec. 1—Vol. 7 Episode 2: What's in the Bible—Esther

Sunday Dec. 8—Mary learns she will have a baby and that he is God's Son!

Sunday Dec. 15—Vol. 8 Episode 1: What's in the Bible—Learn about the Bible's poetry, Job and Psalms—Start Christmas craft

Sunday Dec. 22—Christmas lesson and finish Christmas craft

Sunday Dec. 29—Vol. 8 Episode 2: What's in the Bible—Learn about the Bible's wisdom, Proverbs

LWML CHRISTMAS GATHERING

All Ladies are invited to join us for our Annual Christmas Gathering on Saturday, Dec. 7 from 10:00am to 12:00pm in the ALC Community Room.

We plan to: Open with a prayer and devotion - Sing Christmas Carols
Play Ice-Breakers and Paper Games - Exchange small gifts - Bring a wrapped gift that is either "gently used or a new item under \$10 if you would like to participate in the gift exchange.

Bring a healthy snack or treat to share if you would like.

Won't you join us? You can invite or bring a guest.

Contact Mae Smith if you need a ride!





OUTREACH HOT CHOCOLATE AND DONUTS!

On Saturday, Dec. 14 the Outreach Board will be handing out hot chocolate, donuts and invites to the holiday services in the parking lot to community members between 9:00 and 11:00am! For more information or to volunteer to help call or email Cindy Reinert.

YOUTH AND FAMILY NOVEMBER YOUTH AND FAMILY NIGHT

The Youth and Family Ministry held its Thanksgiving gathering on November 15th. To start the night, we played plenty of games. We sang some songs and heard a devotional about giving thanks in all circumstances centered on 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18. We all contributed to a craft where we artistically shared what we are thankful for. What brought us all together in fellowship is the potluck we enjoyed to finish out the night. The Youth and Family Ministry is so thankful to all who brought food



CHRISTMAS GATHERING

Join us for an evening filled with holiday cheer, creativity, and connection! Here's what you need to know:

- ◆ Who: Youth and Family Ministry (ages 29 and under, along with their families).
- ◆ What: Cookie Decorating, unleash your creativity and enjoy a sweet treat!
- ◆ White Elephant Gift Exchange, bring a gift worth \$10 or less, or get creative and make your own!
- ◆ Where: Ascension Community Room.
- ◆ When: Friday, December 20th, at 6:30pm.
- ◆ Why: Celebrate the Christmas season together, share laughter, and strengthen our community bonds.

We can't wait to see you there! Bring your holiday spirit and join us for a festive evening of fun and fellowship.



DECEMBER Baptisms

Becky Mora	Dec. 3	Sean Ritchie	Dec. 17
Joshua Mundo	Dec. 6	Linda Tatum	Dec. 21
Claire Zeebuyth	Dec. 6	Brayson Pardue	Dec. 24
Evan Kreps	Dec. 8	Frances Rippon	Dec. 28
Felix Harris	Dec. 9	Mae Smith	Dec. 28
Pr. Jim Sprengle	Dec. 9	Virginia Hunt	Dec. 29
Brad Hall	Dec. 12	Dave Stabenow	Dec. 1936
Larry Hart	Dec. 16		

DECEMBER Birthdays

Lottie Guericke	Dec. 1	Ed Hubbard	Dec. 9
Rick Wymore	Dec. 2	Cody Brown	Dec. 11
Felix Harris	Dec. 3	Sue Lewis	Dec. 11
Emely Mukul Aguilar	Dec. 3	Israel Zuriaga	Dec. 12
Avi Ritchie	Dec. 4	Jeff Latter	Dec. 13
Christian Mukul	Dec. 5	Jerelyn Carlson	Dec. 16
Bobbie Adams	Dec. 6	Jerry Bangs	Dec. 21
Don Farabee	Dec. 7	Brandy Webber	Dec. 21
Mike Fogarty	Dec. 9	Kim Driessner	Dec. 28

DECEMBER Anniversaries

Rick and Robyn Wymore	Dec. 2, 1978
Angel and Wilma Mukul	Dec. 9, 2000
John and Darlene Knoke	Dec. 14, 1969
Mel and Lorraine Haggard	Dec. 29, 1956

God's blessings and congratulations to all who are celebrating a milestone! Did we miss your special date? Please let the office know so we can get our records corrected for next year!

ADULT CHRISTMAS STOCKINGS FOR MY FATHER'S HOUSE



Once again the Human Care Board is thrilled to commit to filling Christmas stockings for the adults at My Father's House. However, this year we are asking you give monetarily as the stocking size is limited. Members of the committee are buying items that are sure to fit.

There will be a free-will offering after services on Dec. 1, 8, 15 and 22. If you want to put your offering into the plate or mail it in, make sure it is clearly marked "My Father's House Offering".

Let Pastor Jim know if you want to help

NewsLetter
DEADLINE

Please submit articles no later than Mon., Dec. 23

THANKFUL!

THANKSGIVING EVE WORSHIP TO BENEFIT SNOWCAP, BENEVOLENCE AND OUTREACH

The Thanksgiving Eve service was a wonderful worship and gathering to remind us why we are thankful! We had a nice group and a lot of food was gathered for SnowCap. The food was delivered this week by the human care board, you can see a van filled with items pictured below. There was also \$1325.50 given in plate offering to benefit the Benevolence Fund and the Outreach Board to further our ministry in these areas. Thanks be to our amazing God that we are able to bless those around us!





DECEMBER

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>1 Advent 1 8:30am Worship w/Comm. 9:45am Education Hour 11:00am Worship 12:15pm Bell Practice 5:00pm Spanish Worship 6:00pm Online Worship Posted</p>	<p>2 1:00pm Human Care Board Meeting</p>	<p>3 6:00pm Elder Meeting</p>	<p>4 2:00-3:00pm Crafting 3:30pm Advent 1 Midweek 7:00pm Advent 1 Midweek</p>	<p>5 6:00pm Praise Team 7:00pm Choir Practice</p>	<p>6 5:30pm—6:30pm Confirmation</p>	<p>7 10:00am LWML Christmas Party</p>
<p>8 Advent 2 8:30am Worship 9:45am Education Hour 11:00am Worship w/ Comm. 12:15pm Bell Practice 5:00pm Spanish Worship w/ Comm. 6:00pm Online Worship Posted</p>	<p>9</p>	<p>10 2:00pm Women's Bible Study 6:00pm Council Meeting</p>	<p>11 2:00-3:00pm Crafting 3:30pm Advent 2 Midweek 7:00pm Advent 2 Midweek</p>	<p>12 6:00pm Praise Team 7:00pm Choir Practice</p>	<p>13 5:30pm—6:30pm Confirmation</p>	<p>14 9-11:00am Donuts and Hot Chocolate in the parking lot!</p>
<p>15 Advent 3 8:30am Worship w/Comm. 9:45am Education Hour 11:00am Worship 12:15pm Bell Practice 5:00pm Spanish Worship 6:00pm Online Worship Posted</p>	<p>16</p>	<p>17 6:00pm 3:10 Group</p>	<p>18 2:00-3:00pm Crafting 3:30pm Advent 3 Midweek 7:00pm Advent 3 Midweek</p>	<p>19 6:00pm Praise Team 7:00pm Choir Practice</p>	<p>20 6:30pm YOUTH EVENT</p>	<p>21</p>
<p>22 Advent 4 8:30am Worship 9:45am Education Hour 11:00am Worship w/ Comm. 12:30pm Caroling to shut-ins 5:00pm Spanish Worship w/ Comm. 6:00pm Online Worship Posted</p>	<p>23 NEWSLETTER ITEMS DUE</p>	<p>24 7:00pm Christmas Eve Worship</p>	<p>25 10:00am Christmas Day Worship</p>	<p>26 6:00pm Praise Team 7:00pm Choir Practice</p>	<p>27 5:30pm—6:30pm NO Confirmation</p>	<p>28</p>
<p>29 8:30am Worship 9:45am Education Hour 11:00am Worship 12:15pm Bell Practice 5:00pm Spanish Worship 6:00pm Online Worship Posted</p>	<p>30</p>	<p>31 7:00pm New Year's Eve Worship</p>	<p>Jan. 1 2:00-3:00pm Crafting</p>	<p>2 6:00pm Praise Team 7:00pm Choir Practice</p>	<p>3 5:30pm—6:30pm Confirmation</p>	<p>4</p>