

THE REACH

April 2023

*The Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Ascension
Columbia, South Carolina*



At Ascension, we celebrate the wonderful diversity
of God's family!



Join YOUR hands with ours so we can
REACH out together to serve in God's name!

THE REACH

**The Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Ascension
827 Wildwood Avenue
Columbia, SC 29203-5815**



ALL ARE WELCOME!
SUNDAYS 11:00 A.M. HOLY COMMUNION SERVICE
The Reverend Jackie Utley, Pastor



Office Phone #: 803-786-6429

Office Hours: M W F 9:00am – 5:00pm

Mailing Address: 827 Wildwood Ave., Columbia, SC 29203

Office Email: ascension.office827@gmail.com

Pastor's Email: jackie.utley@gmail.com

Website: www.ascensionlutherancolasc.com

Facebook: www.facebook.com/Ascension.ColumbiaSC

Staff:

Jackie Utley, Pastor – jackie.utley@gmail.com

Laura Browder, Office Administrator – ascension.office827@gmail.com

Greg Stone, Parish Musician – gstone@sc.rr.com

Church Council:

Chair: Mike Lever - MLever@l-jinc.com

Vice Chair: Pastor Jackie Utley - ascension.elca@gmail.com

Secretary: Laura Browder - ascension.office827@gmail.com

Treasurer: Joyce Browder - bbjb1974@yahoo.com

Catherine Garren - cgarren210@bellsouth.net

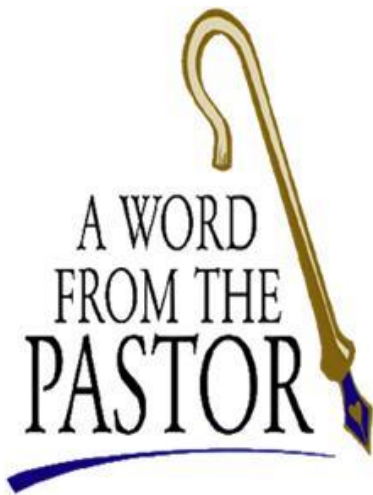
Nancy Kerr – njkerr@yahoo.com

Rev. Herman Yoos – hryoos52@gmail.com

Pastoral Support & Advisory Board:

Billy Browder – bbrowderjr@gmail.com

Catherine Garren - cgarren210@bellsouth.net



There is an old adage, “April showers bring May flowers.” Here in the month of April Spring has sprung and it is a most glorious time of the year! We are drawing near to the end of our 40-day journey of Lent. Soon it will be Easter! I am delighted that during this Lenten season our annual Noon Day Lenten Lunches and Studies on Wednesdays have been well attended. This year, once again, it was such a blessing that there were as many as 16 attendees. Our study from *A Bead and a Prayer*, a beginner’s guide to Protestant prayer beads has gone successfully. Though not everyone will use the beads

while praying, for some, the beads will serve as a reminder to pray at times when one may not have considered communing with God. Overall, this study on prayer has served as a great enhancement to every believer’s prayer life.

As we are fast approaching the Easter season, this time last year, the Covid pandemic was still a deterrent to in-person worship. This year, while the pandemic doesn’t appear to be as threatening, I am hopeful that there will be an increase in attendance at our Holy Week services, as well as on Easter Sunday. While it is no secret that the future of our ministry’s existence is facing jeopardy, I am encouraged by the support we are receiving through cards and letters, frequent visitations and offerings. I fail not to mention that our Sunday worship attendance is continuing to increase.

As I have entertained the concept of a “dying church,” I am mindful of a saying of my late father regarding death and dying. He would often say, “Live until you die,” which simply means that one does not give in to defeat, but thrives to survive, as long as one is able. These are my exact sentiments when it comes to the future existence of our ministry here at Ascension. I have the mindset that we will not give up the ‘fight’ to stay alive in this community. We will live until we die, in moving forward prayerfully that God is working behind the scenes for the sustaining of our ministry.

In the meantime, I look forward to what is to come, and prepare with joy for the paschal feast in celebrating the Resurrection of all resurrections. Oh, how grateful I am for the gift of Easter. Thanks be to God!

Blessings!
Pastor Jackie



Music Ministry Notes

Change is always a bit difficult and can be unnerving. For me personally, change can cause anxiety. The uncertainty of anything new causes stress. Approximately seven years ago, I came to Ascension to be the organist. After talking with Pastor Jackie, we decided that it would be a good idea to revive the music program to include a handbell choir and chancel choir. Over the years, our handbell choir has fluctuated in number; from about six members down to our current number, four. The chancel choir has fluctuated as well from about ten members to our current number of seven. This, in and of itself has been change. We have welcomed new members and seen other members leave for various reasons. These changes have been both rewarding and upsetting. One fact remains the same, and it is a fact that I wrestle with because it can be troubling for me; change is inevitable.

This month, I will be leaving Ascension to take another position as organist and choir director at St. Timothy Episcopal Church. My last Sunday with you will be April 9, Easter Sunday. This has taken place rather suddenly, but I can assure you that prayer has led me through this decision. I'm not sure what God has in store for me in this position, but I truly feel that this is where I am to go. I have prayed daily about this opportunity as well as for Ascension. I'm sure that God has plans for us all, and the human part of us questions it and wants immediate answers. I am both excited and sad about this decision. The increase in energy and activity at Ascension is exciting and something on which I do not want to miss out, but the plan that I mentioned earlier is somewhat different. While I will be in another church leading the music ministry there, I will hold Ascension in my thoughts and prayers. My time with you all has been so rewarding. My love and affection for this church is immeasurable.

-Greg



It is with heavy hearts that we say goodbye to our parish musician, Gregory Stone, as his last Sunday with us will be on Easter. Greg has been called to St. Timothys Epsicopal Church in downtown Columbia. We bid you a fond farewell Greg. We will miss you greatly!

As a thank you for Greg's time here with us, we are having a reception in his honor on Easter

Sunday, April 9th immediately following worship. Please bring your favorite treat to share and join in sending Greg off.

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**Palm Sunday Worship Service ~ Sunday, April 2<sup>nd</sup> 11:00 a.m.**

**Maundy Thursday Worship Service~ Thursday, April 6<sup>th</sup> 6:00 p.m.**

**Good Friday Worship Service ~ Friday, April 7<sup>th</sup> 6:00 p.m.**

**Easter Sunday Worship ~ Sunday, April 9<sup>th</sup> 11:00 a.m.**



**Don't forget to bring fresh flowers for the  
"Flowering of the Cross" before Easter Worship!**



# ASCENSION LUTHERAN IS AN OFFICIAL FOODSHARE SITE!



## HOW IT WORKS:

- **FRESH FOOD BOXES** come in 3 options & FoodShare accepts CASH at this location. (EBT is not set up at Ascension just yet. It can be used at the FoodShare Main Hub to order with pick-up still available at the Ascension Site.) Each box comes with a recipe insert chock full of ideas on how to use the produce content for that week.
  - **Large Food Box \$25 cash:** contains 18 – 22 pounds of fresh produce
  - **Small Food Box \$20 cash:** contains 15 – 18 pounds of fresh produce
  - **No Cook Box \$15 cash:** contains 9 – 12 pounds of fresh produce that will not require cooking before eating
- **PLACE YOUR ORDER** at Ascension Lutheran's office (4305 Arlington St. 29203) on Monday, Wednesday, & Fridays 9:30am to 5:00pm
  - Orders are due by 3:00pm Thursdays
  - Pick-up will be the following Wednesdays 9:30am to 5:00pm
  - Cash Payment is due at the time of ordering
- **FOR MORE INFORMATION** call 803-786-6429 or email [ascension.office827@gmail.com](mailto:ascension.office827@gmail.com)



# FOODSHARE

## 2023 BOX DATES COLUMBIA



**LARGE Box (18-22 pounds)**  
\$10 SNAP/EBT or \$25 Cash



**SMALL Box (15-18 pounds)**  
\$5 SNAP/EBT or \$20 Cash



**NO COOK Box (9-12 pounds)**  
\$15 SNAP/EBT or \$15 Cash  
Includes produce which will not require any cooking before eating.

## A BOX OF HEALTHY VEGGIES & FRUITS AT A GREAT PRICE

**RED DATES ARE ORDER DEADLINES**  
**GREEN DATES ARE PICK-UP DAYS**

You may order as far in advance as you wish! You do not need to wait until the deadline day!



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Boxes must be ordered in person and paid for in advance.

All orders are due by 3:00pm on the Thursday deadline day.

Box distribution is on Wednesday.

Fresh Food Boxes not picked up by 5:00pm on Thursday will be donated.

**HEALTHY RECIPES INCLUDED!**



foodsharesc.org

### TO ORDER CONTACT:

Rev. Jackie Utley or Laura Browder  
4305 Arlington St  
Columbia, SC 29203-5801

(803) 786-6429 | Monday, Wednesday, Friday 9:30 AM - 5:00 PM

A Program of School of Medicine  
Columbia  
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

**The Church Council**  
is scheduled to meet on  
Sunday, April 2<sup>nd</sup> at 12:15p.m.



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## **SHARE THE JOY & SHARE THE JOB**

***Your church needs your help!***

**Every month** we need: Ushers, Crucifers, Lectors, Assistant Ministers, Communion Assistants, & Altar Guild (set-up and clean-up) Volunteers.

Please take a moment to sign up in for an assignment on the sheet in the Narthex or contact the office with your availability!

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*Worship Through Giving*

When making an offering, please **double check your info** for the following: **\*Name      \*Date      \*Amount      \*Special offering**

You can now give online via Givelify at [www.Givelify.com](http://www.Givelify.com) or by using the following link: <https://giv.li/ezpkjx> and via PayPal at [www.PayPal.com](http://www.PayPal.com) or by scanning this QR Code:







## THE NEHEMIAH ACTION

Several members and friends of Ascension gathered with hundreds of other faithful people from across Columbia to ask our local officials to take action on the issues that affect our community every day. This year MORE Justice asked officials present to address areas of Gun Violence, Affordable Housing, Mental Health Issues, and Food Insecurities.

This event took place on Monday, March 27, 2023 at the Township Auditorium. Pastor Jackie is in her 2<sup>nd</sup> year as Co-President of the organization.

If you would like more information about the M.O.R.E. Justice Team at Ascension Lutheran Church, contact our Team Leader, Laura Browder, or Pastor Jackie Utley at 803-786-6420 or [ascension.office827@gmail.com](mailto:ascension.office827@gmail.com) or take a look at [morejusticecolumbia.org](http://morejusticecolumbia.org).





# *Easter Lilies*



## *In Loving Memory of*

*Our departed loved ones by Billy & Joyce Browder*

*Jack & Margaret Mathias by Amber Davidson*

*Chris Stowell by Amber Davidson*

*Donna Mathias & Jim Stowell by Amber Davidson*

*Ked Dobbins by Carol Funk*

*Curtis Freeman by Jacob & Carla Goerlich*

*Walter Freeman by Jacob & Carla Goerlich*

*Minnie Greene by Toure Green*

*Troy Scott Hutchinson & Renee Michelle Hutchinson  
by Phyllis Hutchinson*

*Sadie Beck by Phyllis Hutchinson*

*Eleanor "Memaw" Jenkins by Lily Jenkins*

*Joe & Catherine Fee by Nancy Kerr*

*Tommy & Evelyn Kerr by Nancy Kerr*

*Luther & Lessie Lentz by Russ Lentz*

*Jean Love by Sallie Sharpe*

*Elbert "Cowboy" & Dorothy Dickert Sharpe by Sallie Sharpe*

*Jean Love by Tommy & Alma Sharpe*  
*Dot Sharpe by Tommy & Alma Sharpe*  
*Juanita Eargle by Jeanne & Johnny Smith*

## *In Honor of*

*Pastor Jackie Utley by the Ascension Lutheran Church Family*  
*Selma Foster by Carol Funk*  
*Margaret Freeman by Jacob & Carla Goerlich*  
*Joseph Jordan & Deanna Furniss by Nancy Kerry*  
*Ascension Lutheran Church Staff by Russ Lentz*  
*Pastor Jackie Utley by Gene & Johann Roof*  
*Greg Stone by Gene & Johann Roof*  
*Laura Browder by Gene & Johann Roof*  
*Pastor Russ & Edna Anderson by Sallie Sharpe*  
*Larry, Pennie, Madison, & Colton Tankersley*  
*by Sallie Sharpe*  
*Pastor Russ & Edna Anderson by Jeanne & Johnny Smith*

*The Easter Alter Flowers are given to the Glory of God in  
honor of Greg Stone & Ken Butler by the Ascension Church  
Family.*

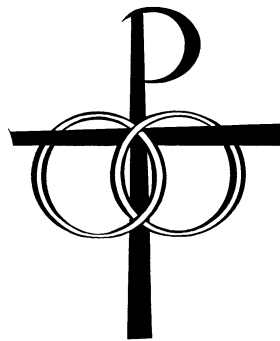
# CELEBRATIONS!

## Birthdays



**Brian Martin 11<sup>th</sup>**

## *Anniversaries*



***Gene & Johann Roof 7<sup>th</sup>***

*There is no more lovely, friendly and charming relationship, communion or company than a good marriage. ~Martin Luther*

*Did we miss your Birthday or Anniversary? Let us know so we can update our information on file.*



# Monthly Scripture Readings

## April 2<sup>nd</sup> – Palm/Passion Sunday

*Today, we encounter the paradox that defines our faith: Jesus Christ is glorified king and humiliated servant. We too are full of paradox: like Peter, we fervently desire to follow Christ, but find ourselves afraid, denying God. We wave palms in celebration today as Christ comes into our midst, and we follow with trepidation as his path leads to death on the cross. Amid it all we are invited into this paradoxical promise of life through Christ's broken body and outpoured love in a meal of bread and wine. We begin this week that stands at the center of the church year, anticipating the completion of God's astounding work.*

**Isaiah 50:4-9a | Psalm 31:9-16 | Philippians 2:5-11 | Matthew 26:14--27:66**

## April 6<sup>th</sup> – Maundy Thursday



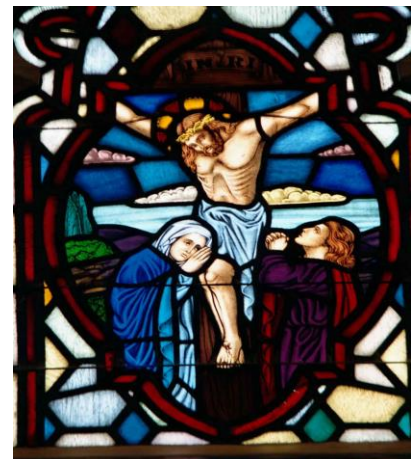
*This evening our Lenten observance comes to an end, and we gather with Christians around the world to celebrate the Three Days of Jesus' death and resurrection. Tonight we remember Christ's last meal with his disciples, but the central focus is his commandment that we live out the promise embodied in this meal. As Jesus washed his disciples' feet, so we are called to give and receive love in humble service to one another. Formed into a new body in Christ through this holy meal, we are transformed by the mercy we have received and carry it into the world. Departing worship in solemn silence, we anticipate the coming days.*

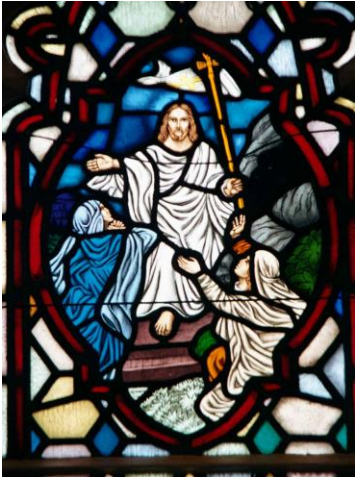
**Exodus 12:1-14 | Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19 | 1 Corinthians 11:23 - 26 | John 13:1-17, 31b-35**

## April 7<sup>th</sup> – Good Friday

*Life and death stand side by side as we enter into Good Friday. In John's passion account, Jesus reveals the power and glory of God, even as he is put on trial and sentenced to death. Standing with the disciples at the foot of the cross, we pray for the whole world in the ancient bidding prayer, as Christ's death offers life to all. We gather in solemn devotion, but always with the promise that the tree around which we assemble is indeed a tree of life. We depart silently, and we anticipate the culmination of the Three Days in the Easter Vigil.*

**Isaiah 52:13--53:12 | Psalm 22 | Hebrews 10:16-25 |  
John 18:1--19:42**





## *April 9<sup>th</sup> – Resurrection of Our Lord*

*This is the day the Lord has made! Christ is risen, and through him all creation is made new! Indeed, “God shows no partiality” (Acts 10:34): Christ’s resurrection truly brings life to everyone. We sing hymns of praise, gather around sacred words, and proclaim God’s faithfulness, power, and love in the feast of holy communion. With the women at the tomb, we are astonished, elated, and grateful. We depart with joy to proclaim the good news of God’s endless love.*

**Acts 10:34-43 | Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24 | Colossians 3:1-4 | Matthew 28:1-10**

## *April 16<sup>th</sup> – 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Easter*

*In today’s gospel the risen Christ appears to the disciples and offers them the gift of peace. Even amid doubts and questions, we experience the resurrection in our Sunday gathering around word and meal, and in our everyday lives. Throughout the coming Sundays of Easter the first two readings will be from the Acts of the Apostles and the first letter of Peter. Even as the early Christians proclaimed the resurrection, we rejoice in the new birth and living hope we receive in baptism. Acts 2:14a, 22-32 | Psalm 16 | 1 Peter 1:3-9 | John 20:19-31*

## *April 23<sup>rd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Easter*

*Today’s gospel begins with two disciples walking to Emmaus, overcome with sadness, loss, and disappointment. They had hoped Jesus, who was crucified, would be the one to redeem Israel! Yet the risen Christ walks with them and then opens their eyes in the breaking of the bread. Each Sunday our hearts burn within us as the scriptures are proclaimed and Christ appears to us as bread is broken and wine is poured. The story of Emmaus becomes the pattern of our worship each Lord’s day.*

**Acts 2:14a, 36-41 | Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19 | 1 Peter 1:17-23 | Luke 24:13-35**

## *April 30<sup>th</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter*

*Today is sometimes called “Good Shepherd Sunday.” Jesus is called the “gate” of the sheep in today’s gospel. The risen Christ opens the way to abundant life. He anoints our heads with oil and guides us beside the still waters of our baptism. Each Sunday he spreads a feast before us amid the world’s violence and war. We go forth to be signs of the resurrection and extend God’s tender care to all creation.*

**Acts 2:42-47 | Psalm 23 | 1 Peter 2:19-25 | John 10:1-10**



**Our members, family, and friends with current needs:**

Delores Richardson (rehab at NHC  
Columbia)

**Members in care centers & at home:**

|                |                     |
|----------------|---------------------|
| Ava Hudson     | Delores Richardson  |
| David Lever    | Gene & Johann Roof  |
| Margarie Lever | Charlene Van Patten |
| Pat Martin     | Dorothy Van Patten  |
| Lisa Mosely    |                     |

**Members with special/long term needs:**

|              |              |                 |
|--------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Tommy Boozer | Pete Currie  | Debbie Shumpert |
| Debra Butler | Donna Clark  |                 |
| Ken Butler   | Selma Foster |                 |

**Our family and friends with long term needs:**

Kim Benson, friend of Debbie Shumpert  
Steve Browder, Dianne Jordan, & Linda Poole, siblings of Billy Browder  
Dave Conant, friend of Greg Stone  
Avery Denby, friend of Phyllis Hutchinson  
Doris Fletcher, friend of Phyllis Hutchinson  
Lynette Funk, daughter-in-law of Carol Funk  
Charles Garren & Kay Garren (as caregiver), brother of Catherine Garren  
Nancy Sharpe Glen, sister of Tommy Sharpe  
Barb Hessenthaller, sister of Carol Funk  
Marian and Steve Hudson, Ava Hudson's daughter-in-law and son  
Marilyn Johnson, friend of Pastor Jackie Utley  
Taylor Kirton-Davis, friend of Mike and Holly Lever  
Jeff McKulka, frequent visitor  
Cleo Morris, frequent visitor & neighbor of the church  
Bobby Paggett, friend of Debbie Shumpert  
Dihue Paisley, friend of Pastor Jackie  
Michael Peake & Kevin and Brandi Peake (caregivers,) neighbors of  
Phyllis Hutchinson  
Matt Robinson & Carrie Schilling, friends of Catherine Garren  
Timothea Sharpe & Al Potter, sister and brother-in-law of Tommy Sharpe

Kennedy Small, great niece of Carol Funk  
Gerald Smith & Family, friends of Laura Browder  
Jerry Stone, father of Greg Stone  
William Utley, brother of Pastor Jackie

**Our Neighbors & Community:**

The Dowdy House residents & staff  
Eau Claire Community Council  
Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary  
Seminary Ridge Neighborhood Association  
South Carolina Hispanic Outreach staff and clients

**Our ELCA & SC Synod Ministries:**

The Evangelical Lutheran Churches of America & Bishop Elizabeth Eaton  
The South Carolina Synod of the ELCA & Bishop Virginia "Ginny" Aebischer  
Sagrada Familia & Cristo Rey Lutheran Churches & The Rev. Jorge Leone  
S.C. Lutheran Men in Mission & "One Year to Live" participants  
Journey Ministry & Minister LaVone Griffin  
Lutheran Services Carolinas

**Our Ascension Groups & Ministries:**

Members of the Church Council & Mike Lever, Chairperson  
Members of the Choirs & Greg Stone, Parish Musician  
The Service & Outreach Committee  
M.O.R.E Justice Team & Laura Browder, Team Leader  
The Parish, Administrative, & Grounds Keeping Staff  
"Share the Joy" Worship Volunteers

**Closing:**



**An Easter Prayer**

God of mercy,  
we no longer look for Jesus among the dead,  
for he is alive and has become the Lord of life.  
Increase in our minds and hearts the risen life we  
share with Christ, and help us to grow as your people  
toward the fullness of eternal life with you,  
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord,  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and forever. Amen.

(© sundaysandseasons)