

ASCENSION CONNECTION

VOLUME 40, NUMBER 1

JANUARY, 2009

The 30th Anniversary party on December 5 was one of the highlights in my life. My sincere thanks to the Living Stones, the Preschoolers and staff, Annette Fricke and the youth, the Steiger family, and David Preus.

I am thankful for the 165 people who attended and the many notes and cards and words of blessing from those who could not make it.

I am thankful to Mary Jo and Tara for all they did, but especially to Audra who planned the event and pulled it all together with her able assistant, Nathanael.

I have read and reread every card. Someone also saved the butcher paper from the tables, and I have read every note and admired the good and not so good artwork. The entire experience has left me with three options:

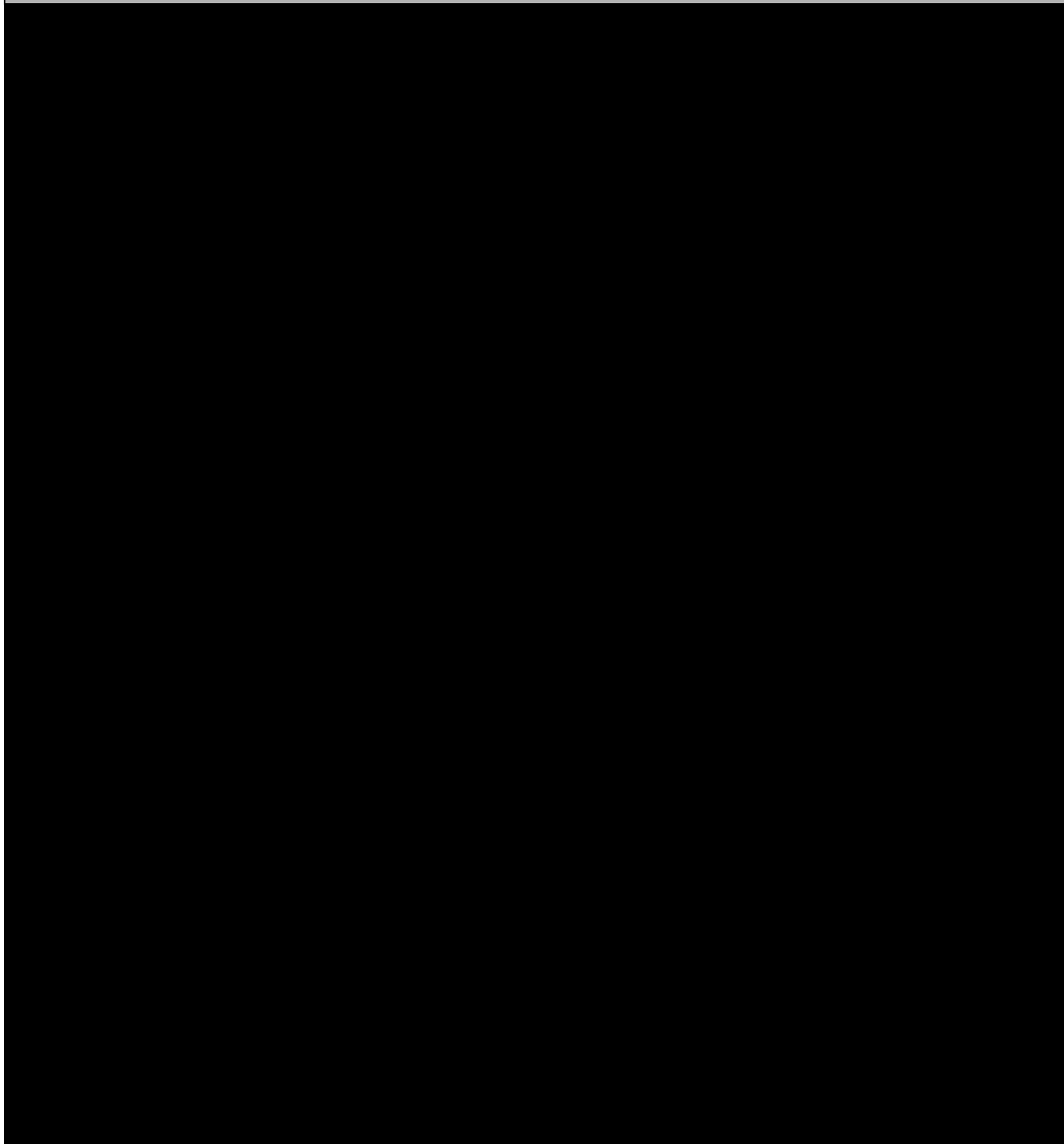
1. I can now die. The apostle Paul said to die is gain, and we already have the power-point presentation of my life and ministry for the funeral.
2. I could retire with grace and applause. Everyone spoke well of me. Is this a good time to get while the getting is good?
3. Or, I could be energized to serve Him longer.

I think I will begin the New Year with #3. Why? Because I am a very ordinary man with a call to serve in an extraordinary role in His church.

To God be all glory,

Dr. Dave Mulder

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:



Publisher: Rev. Dr. David Mulder

Editor: Eddie Steiger

LET'S CELEBRATE!

January Birthdays

1/1 Lloyd Dean

Winnifred Griffiths

Noel Lambert

Charlene Marvin

1/3 Kathi Blakey

Gale McEachron

Matt Miessler

1/4 Darin Larson

1/5 Ed Marvin

Louise Robbins

1/6 Bernard Johns

Raleigh Sims

1/7 Alfred Tumin

1/8 Doug Munding

Carol Rhodes

1/10 Mark Moyer

Karis Thompson

Ed Topoleski, Sr.

1/11 Betty Mason

Carol Stoltenberg

1/13 Eda Gronli

Ariella Guerrero

Carol Wadley

1/14 Brooke Brennan

Olivia Isenhardt

Amy Thomason

1/15 McKenzie Graham

Shawn Graham

Dale Grignon

1/17 Kim Bachmann

1/18 LaDena Moyer

Adeline Prado

1/19 Elise Frenk

Lloyd Hulse

Roberta Isaacson

1/20 Florence Luce

1/22 Michael Jones

1/24 Janie Klusmeyer

1/25 Matthew Mackie

Paul Patterson

1/26 Brett Feldman

Scott Feldman

Dale Nelson

1/27 Myrtle Bowles

Elizabeth Moyer

Ethan Peterson

Janet Withrow

1/28 Bill Wilson

1/29 Betty Hosea

Lauren Parslow

1/30 Kim Norman

1/31 Laraine Day

Vanessa Schaefer



LET'S CELEBRATE!

January Anniversaries

1/1 Richard & Janet Bachmann (61)

1/24 Dean & Lorraine Berube (28)

1/3 Phulbert & Josy Lerebours

Loran & Peggy Goff

1/11 Myron & Roma Christensen (45)

Jeff & Vicki Hopper

Michael & Vanessa Strickland-Dobbs

1/31 Harold & Doris Levinus (55)

1/17 Bill & Winnie Wilson (56)

1/22 John & Susan Calathes

Laraine & James Day (43)

[We note anniversaries of 25 years or more (in parentheses). If your important date has not been included, please call 831-7788 x14 to let us know]

MITES Report:

I am privileged to report that our Ascension MITES collection for 2008 was in excess of \$500. Ascension sends all MITES monies directly to the FL-GA LWML district. The district, in turn, submits 25% of the monies received to the National LWML for mission grants.

This is an update of the Mission Grants for 2007-2009: 7 mission grants were paid in full of the 18 proposed. Approximately \$850,536.00 has been given of the \$1,700,000.00 pledged.

Our Florida-Georgia district has realized at least \$26,658.00 (as of 11/2008) MITES of the \$163,000.00 pledged for the 2008-2010 period.

Praise to our generous God, who oversees all our benevolence. Thank you, Ascension, for supporting the LWML during the 2008 calendar year.

Noel Lambert

SPECIAL CRUISE GATHERING!!!!

Attention all you lady sailors! There will be a cruise GATHERING on Saturday, January 17, from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm. Please bring a (very) light dish to share. We will get to know our fellow mates and discuss and finalize some important topics, such as activities, how we are going to travel to the port, and possibly whether or not we get t-shirts, etc. HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!

Thank You

Thank you so much for all the prayers and thoughtfulness, phone calls, cards, flowers, and food. It was so appreciated by myself and all of my family. In God's love, Lillian Casciano



Marion Lieske

October 13, 1912 – November 27, 2008

David Scott

January 26, 1940 – November 30, 2008

Sue Christenson

August 4, 1948 – December 5, 2008

The Orlando Lutheran Academy

Emerald Evening Goes Mardi Gras!

Mark This Date!! Plan now to attend the annual Emerald Evening Dinner and Auction on Saturday, February 21, 2009, at The Country Club of Orlando starting at 5:00 pm. Watch for more information after the first of the year.

Help Needed!

We are looking for a few good people to assist with brownie-baking and a few to assist with food preparation once a month for the homeless population of the Orlando metropolitan area. If you are available on the second Friday morning of the month, from 8:00 am to 11:00 am, and willing to help prepare food, or if you are willing to bake three pans of brownies once a month (we furnish the brownie mix), we would like to talk with you. Just call Betty or Walter Hosea at 407-699-4434. You may also volunteer to help us serve the meal at the homeless shelter in Downtown Orlando on the second Friday of the month. Just give us a call if you feel like helping.

Raising a Healthy Baby

Expectant Moms:

Rebecca Richburg January

Laura Peterson February



Dianna Norton and Michael "Dallas" Defosse

November 28, 2008

Karen Graham and Scott Hilborn

December 12, 2008

PROTECTIVE PRAYERS . . . WE PRAY THAT GOD WOULD PROVIDE HIS PROVIDENTIAL PROTECTION TO THE FOLLOWING:

Military Watch.....For those whose military duty requires them to go, and those who are trained and willing to go, in harm's way, we "watch and pray" for:

Ryan Davis, son of Mel and Barbara Davis, U.S. Navy – Bahrain

Damian Keenan, grandson of Bill and Eleanor Keenan, U.S. Marines

Joshua Morris, grandson of Patricia Morris – Iraq

Craig Muhlbach, brother of Karl Muhlbach – Iraq

Tim Nowicki, son of Mike and Sarah Nowicki, U.S. Army Reserves

Ricky Perez, son of Pastor Angel and Maria Perez, U.S. Air Force

Matthew Smith, grandson of Paula Campbell, U.S. Navy – USS Roosevelt, Gulf

Jeffery Thomason, nephew of Steve and Amy Thomason, U.S. Navy – USS Stennis

Derrick Van Laere, nephew of Jerry and Annie Housholder, U.S. Navy – Iraq

Nathan Van Laere, nephew of Jerry and Annie Housholder, U.S. Navy – Iraq

Lucy Vargus, sister of Tony Reyes, U.S. Navy

The Quilt Group will take a break until January 20, 2009. Then we will resume our regular meeting on the first and third Tuesday of the month. We have several quilts ready to "tie off." So, if you are interested in helping with this part of the process in getting quilts ready for Lutheran World Relief, please come and join us on Tuesday, January 20, in Zehender Chapel at 7:00 pm. Supplies will be provided.

Thanks-

Mary Ann Massoll

**2009 Florida SeniorFest
Association of Lutheran Older Adults (ALOA)**

This year heralds popular SeniorFests. For the first time, the Fests will be held in five Florida locations. Keynoter Dr. Robert Hughes, past president of Philadelphia Seminary and noted theologian and speaker, headlines each of the Fests. The theme is "Passing on the Faith." Also presenting is Jan Struck and Elaine Bickel, two noted humorists who have shared their humor across the Lutheran Church nationally.

Add to this, two well-known gifted musicians...David Ludwig Jr. and Ryan Hostler and a raft of interesting workshops that cover a myriad of topics: exercise for seniors, clowning, health concerns, stages of retirement, building congregational older adult ministry, crafts, choir, prayer, labyrinth, etc.

If you are 50 or over, we invite you to attend. The cost is \$30.00 for the day and includes a full meal and snacks throughout the day.

Dates and Times:

Monday, February 2 – Life Enrichment Center; 04991 Picciolla Road; Leesburg, FL 34731

Contacts: Donna Vierow, 352-750-3494; or Bonnie Andrus, 352-750-4927

Tuesday, February 3 – Christian Retreat Center; 1200 Glory Way Boulevard; Bradenton, FL 34212

Contacts: Ed Krauss, 727-527-8157; or Bob Zimmer, 941-388-1261

Wednesday, February 4 – Christ Lutheran Church; 2911 Del Prado Boulevard; Cape Coral, FL 34602

Contact: Sue McLaughlin, 239-542-2709

Thursday, February 5 – John Knox Village; 651 SW 6th Street; Pompano Beach, FL 33060

Contacts: Pat Zangmeister, 954-731-3351; or Arlene Landin, 305-665-2562

Saturday, February 7 – University of West Florida; 11000 University Parkway; Pensacola, FL 32514

Contacts: Phil Peterson, 850-474-1648; or Steve Linck, 850-477-8045

Some locations have attendance limits of 150, so register early. Talk to all your friends and bring a busload! See the website for registration forms, workshops, and presenter summaries – www.aloafloridaseniorfest.com

Contacts: Ruth Chancellor – 813-695-0694; Richard Hafer – 813-293-3286 or 813-984-8821; Doris Hanson – 727-461-5135; Karl Thiele – 863-859-0516

Ascension Lutheran Early Childhood Education News

Welcome back! We start 2009 refreshed and renewed from our Christmas break. Help us rejoice and serve the Lord each and every day.

Please note that Seminole County Public Schools will have early dismissals on January 14, 15, and 16. Our preschool/MMO hours of operation will remain the same. Our school will be closed on Monday, January 19, for Martin Luther King Day. There will be a NOON dismissal on Friday, January 23, for our monthly staff meeting. Extended care will be available for regular extended care students.

Storyland Theater group will perform "The Three Little Pigs" here at Ascension on Friday, January 30, at 10:30 am. Our Tuesday/Thursday families are invited to come and enjoy the live production with us. Look for information and permission slips in your child's cubby.

Class group pictures will be taken this month. Our 3's class will have their picture taken on Wednesday, January 28, our VPK class picture will be on Thursday, January 29, and our MMO classes will have pictures taken on both days.

Registration for 2009-2010 will begin February 2 for our currently enrolled students. Church member families begin registration on February 9. We will open registration to the public on February 16. Ascension will continue to be a Voluntary Pre-K (VPK) provider for our four-year-olds. Mothers Morning Out children need to be 18 months old or older as of September 1, 2009. Please note that our annual supply fee will be collected at the time of registration. Contact Traci Nelson or Linda Feldman for additional information.

Wishing you a happy and successful 2009!

Linda Feldman

407-831-7788 x16

lfeldman@ascensionlcms.org

A special thanks to those who volunteered to decorate the Sanctuary this year. Your flexibility through the schedule changes is appreciated. The Sanctuary looks great this year. Jesus loves you and so do I. We will now need volunteers to pack the decorations away. This is scheduled (tentatively) for the First Sunday in Epiphany, January 11, after the 8:30 am service. Erik Jensen has volunteered to coordinate this event on the 11th. Please let Bev or Erik know if you can volunteer. Packing up generally takes a little less time than decorating.

What was the most terrifying moment of your life? Mine was the day I was told I had pancreatic cancer, with not much hope of recovery.

This type of cancer is one of the worst ones, because it spreads so fast. I was petrified! I'd hardly ever been sick, never broke a bone. My three times staying in a hospital were to have my three sons. Now I was filled with dread. I felt so alone, like I was in a deep dark pit of despair where I went through all the stages of denial, anger ("why me, Lord?"), and a lot of feeling sorry for myself, but through each stage I prayed. Simply, "please help me, Lord."

Things started to happen. I was sent to the Mayo Clinic in Jacksonville for more tests. I was met by Dr. Nguyen, one of three doctors in the United States who could do my surgery. Dr. Nguyen was Vietnamese and under five feet tall and radiated love. God had sent me a healer.

On December 19, 2006, against all odds, I came through my surgery with such good results I didn't even have to stay in I.C.U. I spent the next nine days in the hospital, Christmas Day included. I had a small lighted tree, lots of flowers. My whole family was there for me, two sisters, two brothers, three sons, and my faithful husband of 51 years. I was alive and felt so blessed.

There came a time for me when I realized I wasn't afraid anymore. I just looked at all my blessings and accepted whatever God had planned for me. I still pray every night before sleeping. I pray for my family, friends, our country; and it comforts me.

I reunited with old friends and cousins and found out people I didn't even know were praying for me, whole church congregations in other states and towns, including my own Ascension.

It took a few months to recover at home. After five months, they started me on chemo and radiation. I was lucky enough to get the kind of chemo that let me keep my hair. I was tired and weak, but I was determined to beat this cancer. After a few months, I had my 1st C.T. scan – NO cancer! My liver was enlarged from the chemo and radiation. I'd lost my gallbladder, part of my portal vein, my whole pancreas, 30% of my stomach, and some intestines. I now had to take insulin and enzymes the rest of my life. Okay, God, I can do this.

I finally came to a point where I told my oncology doctor I'd had enough! No more chemo. I'd thought long and hard about it and prayed about it. Sometimes you have to take your life back and make your own decisions and give your body a chance to heal on its own. Five months later: C.T. scan – NO cancer! My doctors couldn't believe the cancer didn't come back.

My own family doctor who was up to date with test results and my health history was really astonished. My outlook hadn't been good. He said, "Norma, what did you do?" I looked at him and smiled and said, "I prayed. A lot of people prayed. And, I believed." My doctors are calling me their miracle patient.

Three months later: C.T. scan – NO cancer!

My next C.T. scan will be in February, 2009, and I'm not afraid of the results. December 19 will be two years since my surgery. I know every day is a gift. Every breath of air is a little sweeter. Every child's laughter is music. Every person's smile is dearer, and sunsets more awesome.

I thank each and every one for their prayers on my behalf. God has truly answered my prayers many times over. I don't know what the future holds for me, but I know I'm not alone, and I'm not afraid.

I want to see what's over the rainbow; I want to see what's over the hill; I'm not afraid of death any longer; I know it's not mine, but God's will.

Norma E. Albert

Also, remember to give the Church Office any change of address, phone numbers, emails, etc.

Don't forget to give us your e-mail address so we can communicate to you, on occasion, vital information. Send to: bstieger@ascensionlcms.org.

Have you checked out the website lately? There's new information every month. Go to: www.ascensionlcms.org

ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH AND PRESCHOOL

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