



THE HEART OF ASCENSION

May
2020

Making the Most of the Times

Now is a great opportunity to be Christ's hands and feet. Finding some way to serve our neighbors can help distract us from the strangeness of our circumstances and restore a sense of calm, control and purpose. There are a number of suggestions that have been published through organizations like Thrivent or Concordia Lutheran Ministries. Various websites have shared ideas including:

- Making masks to donate to local employers, nonprofits or neighbors.
- Sending video greetings or recorded messages of thanks or encouragement.
- Drawing pictures and writing cards to send to nursing home residents, health care workers, police and first responders.
- Putting signs of support in your front yard.
- Chalking your driveway (including a Bible verse, perhaps!)
- Delivering meals to the front door of friends or neighbors on quarantine.
- Mowing a neighbor's lawn.
- Donating blood.

Do you have an idea of a unique way to serve that you would like to get started at Ascension? Please contact any member of Church Council. We would be glad to hear from you!





Mother's Day Prayer

Lord, thank you for all mothers.

For the new ones, who endure sleepless nights with infants in arms.

For the busy ones, who juggle the pressures of home and family life.

For the steadfast ones, who nurture and care for our special vulnerable children.

For the patient ones, who always seek to forgive and engage with their pre-teens.

For the persistent ones, who cleverly find new ways to connect with their mini-adults.

For the mother aunts, who step in to cradle and care for nieces and nephews.

For all grandmas, who love and support their precious grandchildren.

For the foster mums that are called to gather and cover the fragile ones.

For the Sunday mums who care for our children and lead them in faith.

For the mums who give far beyond their own resources,

who overcome disability to cherish and love.

Thank you Lord for all our beautiful mothers.

Help us to support them and keep them in our prayers.

May You bless them now on this their special day. Amen.

(a Mothering Sunday prayer from www.lords-prayer-words.com)

A Prayer from the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod regarding Coronavirus:



Spare Your people, O Lord! Preserve us from this and every illness. Give healing and strength to those who are sick, protect those who care for them, and grant us steady minds and calm hearts in the face of fear. You have borne our infirmities in this human flesh and purchased us with Your own blood. Keep us in this faith and embolden us in love; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

LWML: The Mother/Daughter Luncheon scheduled for May 2nd has been CANCELLED. If possible, we may try to reschedule later in the year.



SOAR Respite Night has been CANCELLED for May.



As of publication time, the Governor of Pennsylvania has extended the Stay-At-Home Order until May 8, 2020. For up-to-date information on worship services and events during the COVID-19 pandemic, please visit our website at www.ascensionpgh.com and watch your inbox for emails.

The church office hours will remain the same, although visitor access will be limited.

The Elders are available to anyone feeling overwhelmed by all the events from the past weeks. Please contact the church office for more details or email the Elders directly at elders@ascensionpgh.com.

Your Church Council will monitor the situation and advise if any future dates (or changes in current schedule) are warranted.

We pray for all that have been affected by this virus and for everyone in the medical profession during this unprecedented time in our nation. Please be safe everyone.

The National Day of Prayer is May 7, 2020. Join us for an ONLINE National Day of Prayer worship service. Go to our website (www.ascensionpgh.com) and click on the Online Worship Resources link. The online service will be posted by Noon on Thursday, May 7, 2020.



WORSHIP SERVICES ARE ONLINE! – Since all in-person worship services at Ascension are suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic, they are offered online. Our music team, Elders, and guest pastors have and will be sharing meaningful messages and beautiful music to honor our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. There are also extra links for children to continue their learning and worship. Please join us by visiting our website's main page (www.ascensionpgh.com) and click on the Online Worship Resources link. Blessings to all of you, and may we worship together in our homes and in our hearts.

Can't get online for the worship services? If you would like printed copies of the PowerPoint slides from the worship service, please contact Barb in the church office at 412-364-4463 and she will mail them to you. Or, if you would prefer the bulletin mailed to you, just let Barb know.



FOR PASTORAL NEEDS/EMERGENCIES, please call Pastor Barry Keurulainen at 724-352-2777 (office) or after hours at 724-352-3841 (home). You may also reach him via email at bjk@stlukecabot.org. If you would like to speak with an Elder instead, please feel free to contact one of the Elders listed below:

Mike Fiffik, Head Elder	412-780-1647
Cooper Blake	412-654-4146
Bob Booth	808-295-1835
Pete Candreva	412-999-4856
David Dille	412-726-1934
Darryl Gunther	724-272-0441



THANK YOU to everyone who has contributed or continued their monetary contributions to Ascension during this time of crisis that we cannot be together! It is very much appreciated, but it is also understood if you cannot contribute at this time. If you can, your continued support throughout this pandemic will enable Ascension to continue its mission. Together we will get through this emergency situation and be even stronger for it!

WITH CHURCH SERVICES BEING SUSPENDED due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it's very important to remember the church's expenses continue. There's still a mortgage to be paid, payroll to meet, utilities to pay, etc. Now more than ever it's important to continue your support of Ascension financially. If you are still able to continue donating to the church, there are three ways to do this:

- **Online/app:** Go to the church's website (www.ascensionpgh.com) or download the app (Give+) from Vanco to your phone. You can set up recurring or one-time donations.
- **Mail:** Feel free to mail in your donation if you wish. For the safety of everyone, please do not drop off your donation in person.
- **Phone:** Vanco is now accepting donations over the phone for congregation members. Just call 800-675-7430.

It is perfectly understandable if you are impacted financially by this crisis and are unable to contribute at this time. We pray for your safety and well-being and for a swift end to this emergency situation. Questions? Contact Bob Marcellus at finance@ascensionpgh.com or call him at 412-635-8458.



In Christ we extend our love and sympathy to two families who recently lost their mothers:

Janine Nicolette's mother, Geraldine Nicolette, went to be with her Lord and Savior on March 18, 2020 after valiantly battling cancer. Please keep in your prayers Janine, Michael, Emily and Isabelle and all of Geraldine's family.

Carolyn Fagen, a longtime member at Ascension and mother of Jeannie Connolly, passed away peacefully on April 3, 2020. Please remember Jeannie and Shaun Connolly and their family and all of Carolyn's family in your prayers.



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED! Mystery Island Vacation Bible School (by Answers in Genesis) will (hopefully!) be held July 13-16, 2020 from 5:45-8:15 PM! Please plan on joining us as we uncover the truth about our Creator God by doing crafts, playing games, making music, and learning how amazing God is through the pages of Scripture! So kids (entering PreK through 6th Grade), grab your sunscreen and get ready for a taste of paradise as we track down the one true God at Mystery Island. In order to make VBS a success, **we need volunteers to help.** Whether you want to help behind the scenes or be involved with the kids, we have a spot for you! Mark your calendar, tell all the kids you know, and volunteer to help! **If you can help in any way, please see or contact Emily (EmKeflavik@gmail.com) or Lisa (lisa.a.marcellus@gmail.com) Marcellus.** Thank you for your help and for your prayers for VBS! ~ Emily and Lisa



May Birthdays:

- | | | | |
|----|-----------------|----|-----------------|
| 4 | Paul Adams, Sr. | 20 | Matthew Gunther |
| 5 | Nancy Farris | 20 | Phyllis Kitzki |
| 15 | Connor Ciccone | 21 | Ben Connolly |
| 16 | Leah Lucas | 24 | Ron Curcio |
| 18 | Savannah Vogel | 25 | Elva Fields |
| 20 | Gabriel Blake | 27 | Bob Booth |
| 20 | Brad Farris | 27 | Dawn Gaertner |

May Anniversaries:

- | | |
|----|----------------------------------|
| 14 | Steve & Amy Diak |
| 14 | Michael & Mariann Kaczmarek |
| 18 | Joe & Karen Meinert |
| 19 | Michael & Lydia Jarboe |
| 19 | Maggie & Nate Rothert |
| 20 | Darryl & Lynn Gunther |
| 27 | Coleen Henkelmann & Mark Koorsen |
| 28 | Jim & Luann McMillin |



IF WE MISSED YOUR BIRTHDAY OR ANNIVERSARY, PLEASE CALL THE CHURCH OFFICE AT 412-364-4463.



Heavenly Father, on this Memorial Day, we pray for those who courageously laid down their lives for the cause of freedom. May the example of their sacrifice inspire in us the selfless love of Your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Bless the families of our fallen troops, and fill their homes and their lives with Your strength and peace. We pray through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Author Unknown

FOUNDATION FOR CHRISTIAN COUNSELING FUNDRAISER - THE ANNUAL FUNDRAISING EVENT FOR THE FOUNDATION FOR CHRISTIAN COUNSELING HAS BEEN RESCHEDULED TO **JUNE 5, 2020**. THERE ARE THREE WAYS YOU CAN HELP: PURCHASE TICKETS AND ATTEND THE DINNER AUCTION FUNDRAISER, PLACE A BOOKLET AD IN THE FFCC DINNER/AUCTION PROGRAM, OR MAKE AN ONLINE DONATION. VISIT ccawpa.com FOR MORE DETAILS.





JUST WHEN A BOY FROM THE SLUMS WAS READY TO GIVE UP HOPE, HE RECEIVED AN OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD SHOEBOX GIFT THAT SHINED THE LIGHT OF THE GOSPEL INTO HIS LIFE.

Kululu Atsiaya often felt forgotten, especially at Christmas. He knew his family loved him, but life was hard for the boy growing up in the slums of Nairobi, Kenya. He had heard stories of people receiving gifts, but he had never experienced it or known anyone who had. Most families in his neighborhood struggled to just get by.

Kululu and his six siblings lived in a shack with several other family members and slept on the bare floor. For Kululu, Christmas was a reminder of what he and his family didn't have—enough food, new clothes, or sometimes even the acceptance of those around them. The boy felt looked down upon and ignored, especially by those in a nearby gated community who would have nothing to do with people from the slums. He had heard all too often that stealing was a way to make money. “The only successful people in my neighborhood were thieves,” he recalled.

Though feeling the pull to follow that destructive path, Kululu resisted. “The days I used to go hungry were the days that I felt like I needed to go steal, but something would tell me, ‘Hold on, hold on just a little bit longer,’” he said. But it was a daily struggle. Just when he felt like there was no more hope in sight, the then 11-year-old received an **Operation Christmas Child** shoebox gift.

A local church that provided food assistance in the community was hosting a special event for children at Christmas, where the boys and girls heard the Gospel and received Operation Christmas Child gift-filled shoeboxes. The shoebox full of school supplies, hygiene items, and toys sent a clear message to Kululu that “somebody loved me.”

(Continued over)

At night, Kululu would gaze at his shoebox gift that he had placed on the floor close to where he slept. He was captivated by having seen the depiction of a shoebox with wings on our Operation Christmas Child logo and envisioned flying a plane, “taking gifts to poor children like me in various corners of the world,” he said, recounting his dreams. Kululu’s favorite item in his shoebox was a flashlight because he could use it to light his way home in the slum, which didn’t have electricity. Other children in the neighborhood started to follow him, and he guided them home. “At night as I could light my way through the slum, it made me feel like a leader,” he said. “In a society where you have no one to look up to, all you needed was a glimpse of light, and that glimpse of light came to me through the gift of a shoebox,” Kululu said. “It lighted my life not only outside but inside, it was the light of God.” He said that light changed his course in life and set him on a path to follow Jesus. “That love that’s shared in that box was so contagious because through that love, I was able to find the greatest love that a man or human being can ever find, the love from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ,” Kululu said.

Kululu today serves as an Operation Christmas Child spokesperson, sharing his testimony with churches and other groups to encourage them to get involved in the Samaritan’s Purse project.

*Source: Samaritan's Purse website:
www.samaritanspurse.org/article/lighting-his-way-to-jesus/*

This is what can be accomplished through you packing a shoebox!!



**Thank
You!**

THANK YOU to everyone who supports the Thrivent Choice program! Over \$2,100 was given to Ascension in 2019 through this program. This is free money for the church just for you having certain Thrivent products. All you have to do is designate Ascension as the nonprofit organization that will receive these funds. Just go to www.thrivent.com/thriventchoice for more information. Again, thank you!



COMPANION PETS – Concordia Lutheran Ministries is seeking some sponsorships for Companion Pets (robotic “pets”) for our residents. A few of our Activities Directors have used these for residents, especially those with some memory issues, and they love them. Now, more than ever, they would be incredibly helpful. Those who love animals might be inclined to share their fondness for dogs, cats and kittens in this way. The furry species are priced at around \$100. Joy for All Companion Pets allow socially isolated older adults to receive similar gratification and comfort that they would from live pets by calming anxiety, decreasing loneliness, and providing a better quality of life—without needing to worry about food or vet bills. You can visit <https://joyforall.com/> for more information. Checks may be made out to CLM Foundation (with the memo line: Companion Pets). You may mail donations to CLM Foundation, 134 Marwood Road, Cabot, PA 16023 to the attention of Larissa Yates. If you know anyone who might be interested, please contact Larissa Yates, Development Director, at lyates@concordialm.org or call her at 724-352-1571, extension 8363.



CONCORDIA LOOKING TO HIRE CNAs

With unemployment rates so high right now due to COVID-19, many people are looking for a new job. At Concordia, we’re looking to hire additional CNAs (certified nursing assistants) at all of our skilled nursing facilities (SNF), so if you know anyone who may be a good fit, encourage them to apply. Ask for the Human Resources Department. Those locations providing SNF care include:

Concordia at Cabot	724-352-1571
Concordia of Monroeville	412-373-3900
Concordia at Rebecca Residence	724-444-0600
Concordia of the South Hills	412-278-1300
Concordia at Villa St. Joseph	724-869-6300

Five Finger Prayer.....

1. Your thumb is nearest you. So begin your prayers by praying for those closest to you. They are the easiest to remember. To pray for our loved ones is, as C. S. Lewis once said, a "sweet duty."
2. The next finger is the pointing finger. Pray for those who teach, instruct and heal. This includes teachers, doctors, and ministers. They need support and wisdom in pointing others in the right direction. Keep them in your prayers.
3. The next finger is the tallest finger. It reminds us of our leaders. Pray for the president, leaders in business and industry, and administrators. These people shape our nation and guide public opinion. They need God's guidance.
4. The fourth finger is our ring finger. Surprising to many is the fact that this is our weakest finger, as any piano teacher will testify. It should remind us to pray for those who are weak, in trouble or in pain. They need your prayers day and night. You cannot pray too much for them.
5. And lastly comes our little finger – the smallest finger of all which is where we should place ourselves in relation to God and others. As the Bible says, "The least shall be the greatest among you." Your pinkie should remind you to pray for yourself. By the time you have prayed for the other four groups, your own needs will be put into proper perspective and you will be able to pray for yourself more effectively.





The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

LCMS Stewardship Ministry

Our Savior calls us to follow Him in generosity. “For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you.” (John 13:15) We cannot give our lives for the salvation of the world, of course. Praise God – that job’s already done!

But with hearts full of thanksgiving for what Jesus has given us, we can follow Jesus’ example of generous giving. And this is not merely an example alone. It’s also our Lord’s command. “The one who contributes, (let him give) in generosity.” (Rom. 12:8)

So, when we give to help others who are in need, and when we bring offerings to the Lord, we should strive to heed His command and follow the pattern He has established for us. Jesus did not give us leftovers. He gave His best. So, we should not give leftovers, either, but the first and best of what He has given us. Jesus did not give as an afterthought, but according to the plan of salvation God established from the foundation of the world.

So, when it comes to our offerings to the Lord, we should make a thoughtful plan to give generously, in proportion to the way He has blessed us. Like the Macedonian Christians, who gave according to their ability – and even beyond their ability (2 Cor. 8:3) – we can and should give a generous portion of the income that God provides us to honor the Lord.

So also, we should give freely, just as Jesus gave freely for us. There is no compulsion involved in our works of love and our offerings to the Lord. Nor do we give grudgingly. We should give freely and cheerfully because we want to out of thanksgiving. “Each as he purposed in his heart,” as the Lord says. (2 Cor. 9:7) There is no New Testament ceremonial law involved here. Rather, we are free to give as generously as our Savior has given for us.

In the same way, our Lord teaches us to give generously out of love – love for Him and for our neighbor. Genuine love is always love in deed (1 John 3:18), love such as Jesus showed us all. It is love that sees our neighbor in need and gives generously to help him. It is love that hears the Word of the Lord and does what it says. If we truly love, we give generously. If we give without love, our giving is not truly following Jesus.

Finally, we follow Jesus in generosity when we give for a good purpose to thank the Lord and support His gospel ministry and other works of mercy. The people of Israel gave generously for the service of God’s gospel purposes, to construct and support the operation of the tabernacle. For that was the place where the Lord received the Old Testament sacrifices, through which He bestowed the forgiveness of sins on His people. So, they gave abundantly – so abundantly that they had to be told to stop giving. (Ex. 36:5-6)

In the same way, we should bring generous offerings to support the Lord’s work of bestowing His gifts of forgiveness, life, and salvation in our congregations through the preaching and teaching of His Word, Baptism, and the Lord’s Supper. We should support the Lord’s work of caring for those who are poor and needy.

Our Savior calls us to follow His example in generous giving. Let us then, with thankful hearts, rededicate ourselves to following Him in generosity.



www.lcmsfoundation.org 800-325-7912 Ext 1684

Lydia had been a lifelong member of her Church. You know her. She was the one who helped with every service project. During the hymns, she was singing loudly. When friends were struggling, she was at their house with food to ease their burdens. She was even known to whistle her favorite spiritual songs at times. One day, someone asked her, "*How can you be so happy all the time?*" Lydia answered, "*I'm not. I just know Jesus loves me.*"

That was Lydia's story. What is your story? Certainly, there have been times that you have been dropped to your knees by the force of challenge. But other times, you have had the greatest day of your life. There have also been many days in-between. Yet from the day of your baptism, there has been one common thread. You know that Jesus loves you! That is your story. When the Lord's call removes us from the living out of these days, we long to have people know what we have known. We want them to know the love of Jesus too.

That's why we do our planning. We write a Christian testimony to place in our wills or use as a family blessing to leave behind. We order the distribution of our earthly gifts through a will or trust. We organize everything around the theme, "*I want everyone to feel loved by what God has done through my life. I want them to know Jesus.*"

Life now seems to defy organization. Just about the time we put our plans in place, life changes and our plans need to be updated as well. Is it time for that review for you? Your LCMS Gift Planning Counselor can help. Contact Robert Wirth, LCMS Foundation Gift Planner at robert.wirth@lfnd.org or 716-863-4427 for more information.





FOR HEALTH & HEALING

For all those ill with coronavirus; Marie (breast cancer – friend of Becky and Gordon Marquette); Eileen Vogel (recovery from surgery); Susan, Carol, and Karen (health issues – friends of Trish Young); Cookie (health issues – Trish Young's sister-in-law); Joe (mass on heart – Cheryl Sedar's son); Gene Williams (mesothelioma); Shut-ins: Elva Fields, Helen Goettmann, Lois Kitzki, Phyllis Kitzki, Clay McClellan, Don Sohngen, Nadine Weber

FOR STRENGTH & COMFORT

For all those who lost loved ones, especially Jeannie Connolly and family on the death of Carolyn Fagen; Al and Amy Todd on the death of their daughter, Abbey; Janine Nicolette, Michael Fantin, and Emily and Isabelle Nicolette-Fantin on the death of Geraldine Nicolette; Gino's family (friend of Gene Williams); Mark, Coleen, and Nick Koorsen and Mark's three grandchildren, on the loss of Mark's daughter, Rebecca; for the citizens, survivors, relief workers, missionaries, and families affected by hurricanes, earthquakes, terrorist attacks and disasters worldwide

FOR THANKSGIVING

For the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ; the gifts of love and God's Word; family and friends; our country

FOR SAFETY/PROTECTION

For all affected by the coronavirus pandemic; Chris Schroeder's grandmother; missionaries; our armed forces; unborn children

FOR DIRECTION AND FAITH

For our pastoral call process; those who are experiencing a crisis of faith; women with unplanned pregnancies

GENERAL PRAYER, GUIDANCE, AND PROVISION

For Pastor Schultz and his family; Pastor Lee and his family; the Gaertner family; SOAR Respite Nights and participating families; Gene Williams, Jr. and DiscipleMakers; Pastor Eric Andrae and Campus Ministry in Oakland; seminary students; the residents and staff of Concordia Lutheran Ministries; Shepherd's Heart Fellowship; Food For The Poor; Christian Counseling Associates counselors and their clients; those with special needs (physical, mental, or emotional)

***Please note that prayer requests will remain on the prayer list for 60 days and then be removed unless an extension is requested by notifying the church secretary.**



Upcoming Lutheran Hour Broadcasts

May 3, 2020: “Rescue, Test, Rest” God doesn't have to figure out something about you that He doesn't already know. He doesn't have to figure out if He loves you or if He's committed to you or if you're worth it. God's not testing you to figure something out about you He didn't already know. He's testing you so that you can figure out something about Him that you didn't know, so that you can figure out that you can trust Him." (Exodus 16) Speaker: Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler

May 10, 2020: “Stand a Little Taller” When someone special pays you a visit, you stand a little taller in their presence. Dr. Michael Zeigler talks about dignity, humility, and life in the presence of God. (Exodus 18)

May 17, 2020: “Words Matter” Words matter. People matter. You matter to God, and He will stop at nothing to get your attention. (Exodus 19) Speaker: Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler

May 24, 2020: “Life After Rescue” (Exodus 20) Speaker: Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler

May 31, 2020: “TBD” Speaker: Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler

Lutheran Hour broadcasts can be heard on WWNL/1080 AM on Saturdays at 3:30 PM and on Sundays at 8:00 AM. You may also read the sermon or listen to it at <https://www.lutheranhour.org/sermon.asp>.



The Lutheran Hour, the world's longest running Christian outreach radio program, delivers a new message of HOPE starting every Sunday.

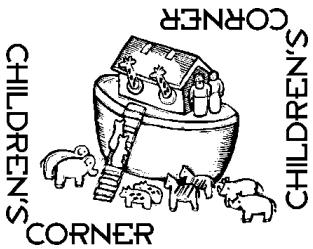
LHM's flagship program airs weekly on more than 1,800 radio stations and the American Forces Network.

Listen 24/7 www.lutheranhour.org

Sirius XM Radio Family Talk 131 Central Time Sun 9:00 AM

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<https://www.lhm.org/newsroom/default.asp>.

Yours, in Christ,
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818-404-6447



MYSTERY ISLAND VBS WORD SEARCH

H	S	O	H	O	L	Y	S	P	I	R	I	T	S	E
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ALMIGHTY
CLARK THE SHARK
CRAFTS
CREATOR
EMMANUEL
FLIP THE OCTOPUS
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GAMES
GOD
GREAT

HOLY SPIRIT
ISLAND
JAM THE JELLYFISH
JESUS
LIGHTHOUSE
MUSIC
MYSTERY
PARADISE
RAINBOW
RULER

SCRIPTURE
SNACKS
SUN
TIDE
TRUSTWORTHY
TRUSTY THE MACAW
TRUTH
VBS

**ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH
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PITTSBURGH, PA 15237**

Address Correction Requested

SUNDAY SCHEDULE:

Prayer time at 8:45 AM in Fireside Room
Worship Service: **Sunday at 9:30 AM**
Christian Education: **11:00 AM**

Office Hours:

Monday – Friday **9:00 AM-Noon; 1:00-4:00 PM**

**OUR MISSION AND VISION
STATEMENT:**

Acknowledging the great gift of God the Father in sending His Son, Jesus Christ, as our Savior, we the people of Ascension Lutheran Church, as guided by the Holy Spirit, are committed to the furtherance of God's Kingdom. We will share and live the Gospel in our homes, our church, our community, and the world. Motivated by Christ's love for us, we are dedicated to spiritual growth and unity, worship and fellowship, and compassionate service. We recognize this as our common purpose and pray that God will enable us by His strength and wisdom to seek His will.

THE HEART OF ASCENSION

A monthly publication of
Ascension Lutheran Church.
Barbara Marcellus is the Editor.

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