

# The Ascension Dimension

News and information for members and friends of Ascension Lutheran Church

## *The Pastor's Pen*



**DECEMBER 2018**

Beloved of Ascension,

As December begins so does Advent. While these weeks before Christmas are often marked by even more busy-ness (on top of our already busy lives), we know that there is more to these weeks before Christmas than just a longer to-do list and fewer hours of sleep.

As the days get darker (and colder!) here in the Northern Hemisphere, they serve as a reminder that there is a different kind of darkness in our world and our lives – the darkness of sin. The Good News is that God comes to us in the darkness. God “moves into the neighborhood” as The Message translation of the Bible puts it. (John 1:14) The light that no darkness can overcome became one of us in Jesus the Christ. Amazing!

With every passing week we light one more candle on the Advent wreath. Not only is the Advent wreath a kind of “countdown” to Christmas (as the kids in the Children’s Sermons often remind me), it is a visible reminder that as the darkness grows the light of God increases. To God, “even the darkness is not dark ... the night is as bright as the day.” (Psalm 139:12) Christ was born in a manger in Bethlehem years ago and Christ is born whenever the light of God shines in the darkness.

Look for the light of God during these dark days. You’ll see it in the faces of the people who love you; you’ll recognize it in those who

strive for justice and peace; you can feel it in quiet times of prayer; you’ll be humbled by it when those who are vulnerable ask you for help; and you’ll receive it in the bread, wine, Word, and water in worship. We have much to be thankful for.

Join us for worship this month, beginning with “Prayer, Music and Candles” on Saturday, December 1 at 7 pm. The theme is “In Silence We Wait.”

On Sunday, December 9, the Chancel Choir and many Ascension musicians will be performing the Advent/Christmas Cantata, “Canticle of Joy” at the 10:15 am worship.

On Sunday, December 16, at the 10:15 am worship the children will tell the story of Jesus’ birth in their annual Christmas program.

Christmas Eve worship will be at 7:30 pm and 9:30 pm. Special music, including strings, will accompany worship at 7:30 pm. Holy Communion and candlelight are at both worship services. Children’s message is at the 7:30 pm service.

And on Sunday, December 30, the first Sunday of Christmas, continue the celebration of the birth of the light of the world with the special worship service, “Lessons and Carols” at 10 am only.

This is a special time. God is with you.

Peace and Light,  
Pastor Josh

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### Contact Information

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[www.ascensionlutheranchurch.com](http://www.ascensionlutheranchurch.com)  
Rev. Josh Miller, Pastor

### Office Hours

Monday-Friday 8:30—12:30



**N.E.E.D.S.**  
**December**  
**Canned meat**  
**(tuna, chicken, salmon)**

## Advent & Christmas Worship Schedule

**December 2:** 1st Sunday of Advent, Lighting of the Advent Wreath

**December 9:** 2nd Sunday of Advent, Lighting of the Advent Wreath, Choir Cantata: "Canticle of Joy" at 10:15 am worship

**December 16:** 3rd Sunday of Advent, Lighting of the Advent Wreath, Children's Christmas Program at 10:15 am worship

**December 23:** 4th Sunday of Advent, Lighting of the Advent Wreath

**December 24:** Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship at 7:30 pm (with Children's Message and Strings), and 9:30 pm

**December 30:** 1st Sunday of Christmas, ONE worship service at 10:00 am, "Lessons and Carols" with artwork

## DONATIONS

**The Wheel of Friendship:** collects pop tabs, pill bottles, wrapped soap, eye glasses, and soup labels (Campbell's, Swanson, Prego, V8) .

**Women of the Red Eye:** collects pennies and loose change.

**First Lutheran:** collects pants, jeans, sweaters, sweatshirts, underwear, and socks for men and women; wash cloths, towels, and deodorant. Please send these items only, as storage is a problem.

**Matthew 25:** collects empty pill bottles to send to third world countries to help distribute medications.

**Aluminum cans:** We collect aluminum cans to raise money for Ascension's ministries.

**Hurricane collection:** Please place your donations in the bins provided in the narthex. Items most needed are cleaning supplies, bathroom supplies, personal hygiene products, cleaning gloves, masks, school supplies, first aid kits, and non-perishable food items.

## Prayer, Music, and Candles: Sat., Dec. 1



The next installment of "Prayer, Music, and Candles" will be held on **Saturday, December 1, at 7 pm.** The theme is "In Silence We Wait," prayer for Advent. We will hold in prayer all those who await the coming of light. This simple and meaningful service lasts 30 – 40 minutes. The music is beautiful and easily learned. Participants are invited to light candles as symbols of their prayers for brothers and sisters throughout the world. Come and join us. Invite a friend!

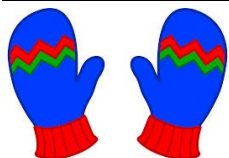
## NEEDS Starbucks Volunteer Opportunity

We're looking for someone who would like to join the Starbucks team. This involves driving to the Reed Hartman/Cornell Rd. Starbucks location to pick up their donations and deliver to the pantry located at Kenwood Baptist Church on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Starbucks can only keep product in the store 48 hours. The job rotates weekly. So with eight volunteers, your turn would be about once every 2 months, and the group is very cooperative. It's easy to switch dates if you have a date conflict. For more specifics, please call or email the office. Thank you.

## Deck the Sanctuary, Sun. Dec. 2

Join us Sunday, December 2, following the 10:15 am worship service to decorate the sanctuary for Christmas. Light refreshments will be provided. This is a fun activity for all ages! Everyone can help. Hope to see you there!

## Give to the Mitten Tree



The Mitten Tree has again appeared in the narthex! Notably it is not the "prettiest tree in the forest", but it will come to life with your help as you decorate it with winter hats, gloves and scarves for school age children. All the items that are donated will be given again to Lockland schools where they will be given to children in need in that area. The tree will remain in the narthex until **Sunday, Dec. 16.** Let's make this year's tree the most beautiful ever!

## Altar Guild: December Sign-Up

This is a reminder for Altar Guild members to check the December sign-up sheet on the bulletin board. There are still some empty spots for this month that need to be filled! Thanks to all of you for your time and all that you do for Ascension.

## Call to Prayer

OneHeart Prayer Ministry invites you to join us in prayer. We meet every other week on Tuesday mornings at 9:30 a.m. This month, we meet on Tuesday, **December 4 and 18.**

# Outreach Corner

## Charity of the Month: Operation Give Back

Operation Give Back is located in Blue Ash and serves students attending Sycamore Community Schools and Steward Elementary School (Princeton School District) as well as families in these areas. They provide after school tutoring to students in 2nd – 8th grade and run a Food Pantry. They have special shopping events for children to supply school supplies and Christmas presents. Multiple volunteer opportunities exist both short term and long.

*Holiday Store – Dec 14 and 15:* The holiday store will allow families to shop for Christmas presents from donations. Families must register and it is limited to the first 400 children. Registration occurs on location Tues-Thurs 11/27-12/13. There is a \$5/child cost to attend. See website for hours. Volunteers are needed before to help sort donations and set up as well as on the days of for parking, shopping, praying, packing, and finally cleaning up. Spanish interpreters are needed. There are limited opportunities for school aged children to volunteer with their parents and for high school students to volunteer on their own during the event. Slots are filling up, but there are still openings for Family slots on 12/1 and 12/8. Additional times for adults: 11/29, 12/10-13 for set up, 12/14-15 for the event. <https://www.ogiveback.com/>

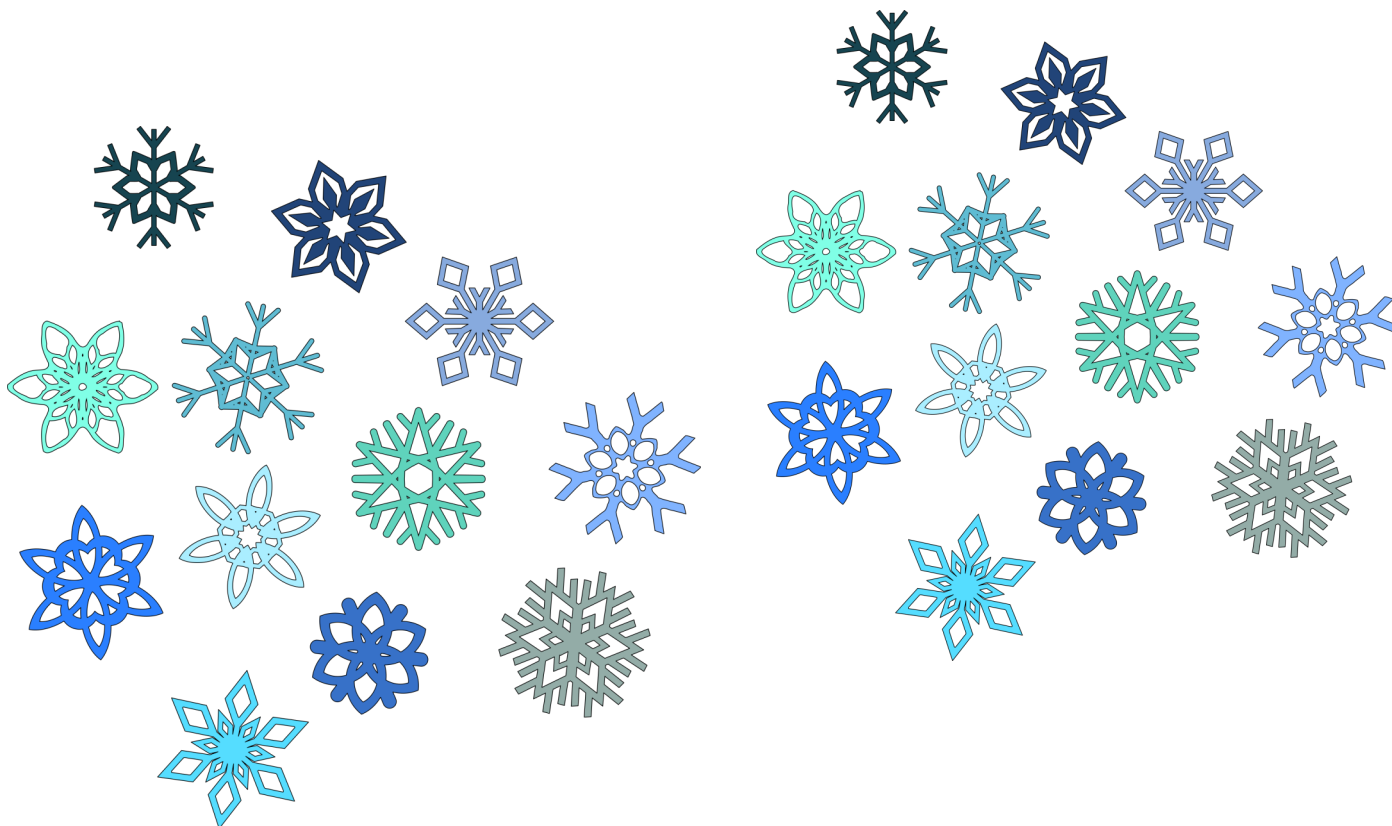
## Upcoming Events—Fun for a Cause

**Dec 5:** Santa Goes Straight to the Hood. A film showing at the Kenwood Theater to benefit the American Cancer Society

**Dec 15:** Hope Factory Pack-A-Thon. Food packing. Ages 5+

**Dec 15:** Winter Wonderland Fashion Show/Disability Awareness Fundraiser. Covington, KY. Benefits Kiddy Kouture Talent Agency (non-profit)

**Dec 15:** Cincinnati Ballet Nutcracker luncheon. Benefits the ballet.



# Opportunities for Social Ministry

## Refugee Resettlement

Many local residents need support and prayers during these transition times. Our refugees want to be accepted, integrated, and respected. Many are lonely, isolated, and unsure of their futures.

There is a great need during these transition times for all of us to be listeners. Listen to both sides of the story. Listen for God's direction in the Bible. Listen to your heart and lend a hand.

We need drivers for our refugee friends. This involves picking up students for English class around 8:30 am and dropping them off at Northminster Presbyterian Church at 9:00 am. The second shift involves picking them up at 11:55 am and dropping them off at their homes. Sign up for one or both.

We also need concerned participants to encourage and partner with individuals. This could be as simple or deep as you would like, but there are many who need a card, a ride, or an occasional food basket.

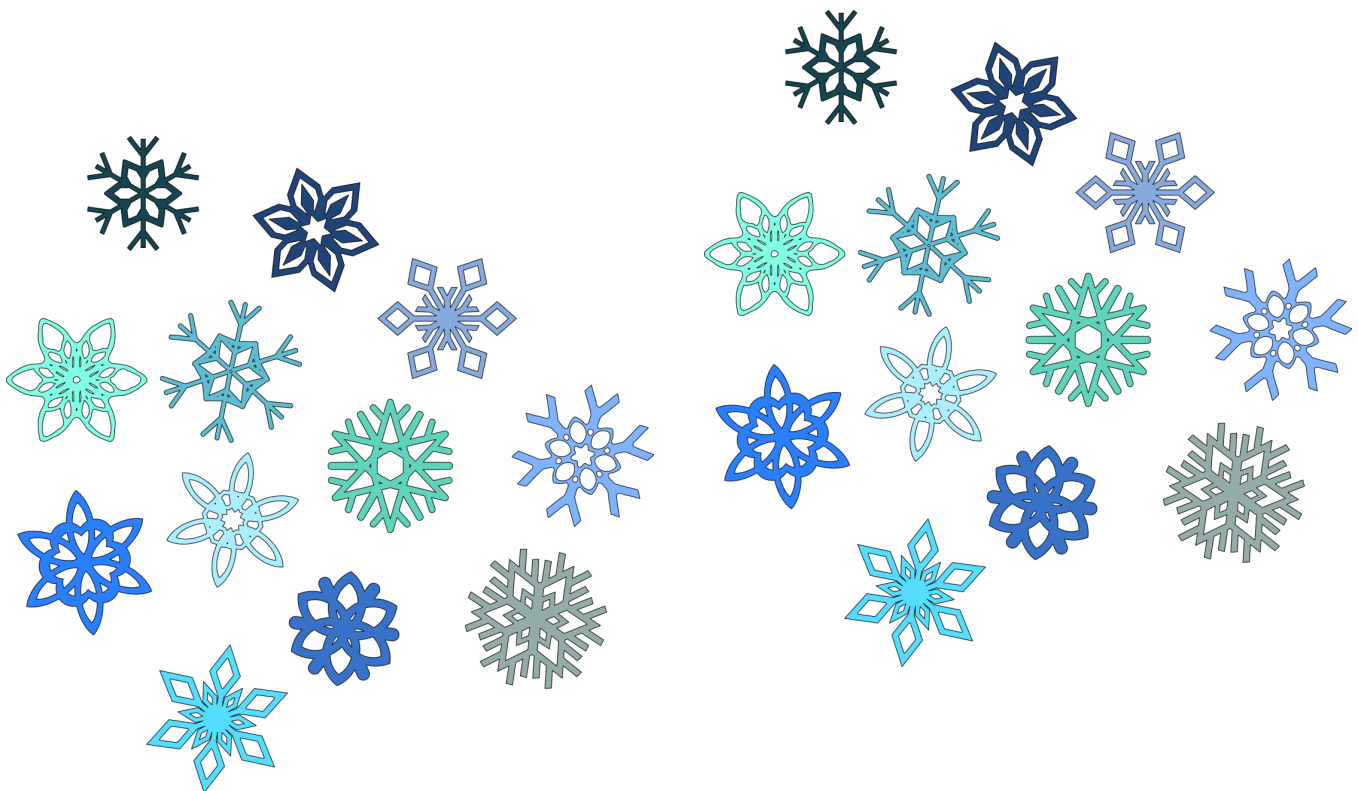
Let the office know if you can drive or if you are interested in partnering. Your life will be enriched!


## Healing Touch

4<sup>th</sup> Tues. each month, sign up on the bulletin board. There are two sessions and usually 5 clients per session.

## NEEDS Updates

NEEDS has just been accepted into membership at the Freestore Foodbank. This means access to much of their low cost or free perishable and non-perishable items. This will help NEEDS to reduce food costs and use the money for other purposes.



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
						<b>1</b> Scrapbooking & Craft Night 5:30 pm  Prayer, Music, and Candles Worship 7:00 pm
<b>2</b> <b>WORSHIP</b> 8:00 am 10:15 am Sunday School, Confirmation, Adult Forum 9:00 am Harps of Faith 11:30 am	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> <b>OneHeart Prayer</b> 9:30 am	<b>5</b> <b>Finance Committee</b> 7:00 pm	<b>6</b> <b>Bell Choir Rehearsal</b> 5:45 pm  <b>Chancel Choir Rehearsal</b> 7:00 pm	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>
<div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #e0ffe0; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> <b>Christmas Cantata Orchestra Rehearsal, 12:15 pm</b> </div>						
<b>9</b> <b>WORSHIP</b> 8:00 am 10:15 am Sunday School, Confirmation, Adult Forum 9:00 am Harps of Faith 11:30 am	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b> <b>Wheel of Friendship</b> 10:00 am	<b>13</b> <b>Bell Choir Rehearsal</b> 5:45 pm  <b>Chancel Choir Rehearsal</b> 7:00 pm	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>16</b> <b>WORSHIP</b> 8:00 am  <b>Children's Christmas Program</b> Worship 10:15 am  <b>Harps of Faith</b> 11:30 am	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b> <b>OneHeart Prayer</b> 9:30 am  <b>Evangelism Committee</b> 6:00 pm  <b>Church Council</b> 7:00 pm	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> <b>Bell Choir Rehearsal</b> 5:45 pm  <b>Chancel Choir Rehearsal</b> 7:00 pm	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>23/30</b> <b>12/23 WORSHIP</b> 8:00 am 10:15 am  <b>12/30 Lessons &amp; Carols</b> Worship 10:00 am	<b>24/31</b> <b>Christmas Eve (office closed)</b>  <b>Christmas Eve Worship</b> 7:30 pm 9:30 pm	<b>25</b> <b>Christmas Day (office closed)</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>