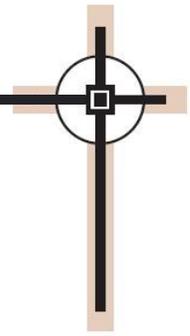


# VOICE OF ATONEMENT



With the turning of the month we find ourselves in the midst of a 7-week party. Early on, the Church determined that following the 5-week observance of Lent through fasting and repentance, a week of weeks of rejoicing was needed to remind us that we are an Easter people. But what are we really celebrating? Do the Easter Bunny, Easter Eggs, and other peripheral Easter customs really get at what this season is about?

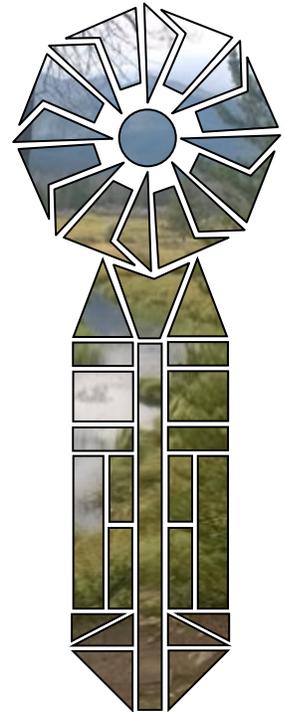
Easter certainly is a fun time for children and adults alike. But what can the practice of a hare coming secretly to hide eggs filled with goodies, to be collected in a competition where the most aggressive takes the bulk of the prize, teach us? The practice is certainly far afield of the one who sought out the company of his contemporary “losers” (tax collectors, prostitutes and other sinners). Christ’s resurrection is about raising up the lowly and flattening structures of power and advantage. It is for all people regardless of their station, and we are commanded then to share all that is ours through the community. There should be no “have-nots” in the Christian community.

No better is the notion that good children receive gifts of chocolate and toys (the same problem as the Santa custom). No worse myth could be used in connection with the celebration of our Savior’s resurrection, who died for all us, sinners though we all might be. It perpetuates the idea that those who have are somehow blessed by God for the good that they themselves have done. SO NOT LUTHERAN!

Though many of the trappings of the celebration of Easter are directly assumed from earlier pagan practices, and are certainly ok to continue, we might think of redirecting how we talk about those practices in order to help our children wake up more excited about the celebration of Christ’s resurrection than the arrival of fictitious characters bearing gifts.

This is where the week of weeks can come to help us. Think about keeping the celebration of Easter in the forefront of the coming month. Bring the children to church and talk about the wonder of the resurrection and its connectedness with all those who have gone before us. It is an ALLELUIA season, not merely a day, but an entire week of weeks to celebrate that the angel of death has no power over us, and that we are full participants in the love so freely given by Christ. Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Peter Hebert



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## ADULT EDUCATION

It's April and we've moved through a real Lent (a loss of a pastor) to a joyous Easter season (new life here now and promised for eternity; also new planning for our faith community)! Welcome back to Adult Ed in April. On April 3rd Faith In Action will present and on April 10th we begin a 6 week series titled, "The Call", about the Apostle Paul. "Follow the journeys of Paul, beginning with his dramatic conversion, as he spread the Gospel through modern-day Greece and Turkey. Travel to the early church sites and explore Paul's conversations with the Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians. In this six-week study, you are invited to experience faith through Christ's greatest teacher and missionary." We'll travel to these same locations areas through the DVD presentation, so this will be a combination of Paul's story, viewing the actual places (modern day) and learning about God's call on Paul. What has God called you to be or do? Join us 9:15 Sunday mornings! We are also seeking Atonement University ideas and presenters, so please send us your suggestions via this online form: <http://goo.gl/forms/YTGNqkxb63>. Atonement University is three fun, consecutive evenings July 26, 27, and 28 where up to four classes are offered each night on all kinds of interesting subjects. In previous years we have offered classes on nutrition, supplements, caregiving, our water supply, biofuels, ukulele class, the Colorado Trail, Food Stamps, making communion bread, financial planning, local geography, the Atonement xeriscape garden - & all sorts of things!

## CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Thank you to everyone who helped with Atonement's Easter Egg Hunt. The last day of Sunday School is May 22<sup>nd</sup>. We will take a break for the summer and resume Sunday School in the fall. We are looking for volunteers for Vacation Bible School during the week of June 20-24. Are you crafty? Do you like to lead games? Are you interested in providing snacks or supplies for our young adventurers? Do you like to share Bible stories with children? Or do you have a young camper who would love to join us on the coolest adventure of the summer? There are lots of ways that you can get involved with Splash in God's Word VBS. Check out the VBS Information Station in the narthex. Our next Children's Ministry Team Meeting will be on Tuesday, April 19 at 6:30 pm in the Education Unit. Please feel free to join us and share your ideas.

Amanda Whitt  
303-667-4997  
[paisley615@gmail.com](mailto:paisley615@gmail.com)

## HANNAH CIRCLE

Hannah Circle meets on April 19, 2016 at 1:00. The lesson from Philippians starts on page 26 of the April 2016 *gather* magazine entitled "Keep on keeping on." A subtopic "Witnessing in a worried world" will be discussed as well. Two copies of *gather* are in the church office and copies of the lesson will be available on the table in the narthex Sunday, April 17<sup>th</sup>. We encourage you to come join us for study and fellowship

## BANNERS - THANK YOU

We want to offer our most grateful and heart-filled thanks to Donna Bloemker for the beautiful 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Banner, what an elegant addition to our 50<sup>th</sup> Year Anniversary celebration. Also, our deepest gratitude to the Worship Committee but especially to the people who did all the work creating the two new banners adorning our sanctuary walls: Sharon Wink for her amazing art work, Jan Lehnertz for her design and handiwork, and Peter Hebert for his leadership.

These four members spent countless hours and effort making our worship space more vibrant and meaningful. A gracious thanks to all.

Your Atonement Church Council

## EVANGELISM

**Paper Shredder Truck:** Coming to Atonement twice this year on Saturday, May 14<sup>th</sup> and on Saturday, September 17<sup>th</sup> from 10 AM-12 Noon. Clean out your files, person papers, and other paper items that you're not comfortable putting in the recycle bin. The truck has no restrictions on the amount of paper you can bring. A free-will donation is accepted.

**New Member Classes:** Come join us on April 3<sup>rd</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> at 11:45 am if you are considering membership. Sign up by phone (303-985-1122), email ([churchoffice@atonement-denver.org](mailto:churchoffice@atonement-denver.org))

## FAITH ADVOCACY DAY 2016

Three members of Atonement attended Faith Advocacy Day at Bethany on February 20<sup>th</sup>. The theme was "Income Inequality: Who Gets Left Behind?" Attendees heard from Bishop Gonia who read Matthew 20:1-16, the parable of the vineyard, and invited discussion on why this verse relates to the issue of income inequality. The different views were very insightful.



Rep. Faith Winter, from HD 35 spoke about legislative efforts to address inequality in housing, job training, access to health care and child care for low-income residents of Colorado. A panel discussion featured representatives from 9 to 5 Nat'l. Assoc. of Working Women, Family Promise of Greater Denver, and the Colorado Fiscal Institute.

Peter Severson, our LAM-CO director talked about legislation that the Advocacy office is tracking and the expectations about the 2016 session. Afternoon break-out sessions were offered on four subjects: Income Inequality and Colorado's Budget & Tax Policy, Communicating Effectively with Your Legislators, Staying Connected to the Issues: How to Follow and Engage the Legislative Process, and Going Deeper on the 2016 Legislative session. All the presenters were knowledgeable and encouraging. The day was brought to a close with a special sending service.

## YOUTH LEADER NEEDED

The Children's Ministry Team and the Youth Ministry Team are both in need of a LEADER. These are lively ministries with fun activities all year long. It's incredibly rewarding to be involved in the faith development of the youngest members of our congregation!

These groups need the support from an enthusiastic and dynamic leader. Atonement has voiced its desire to encourage young families to join our Atonement family. To make this vision a reality, people need to be willing to help. In order for the children's and youth ministries to GROW, every person who reads this should prayerfully consider how they can contribute to these vital ministries. Please contact a church council member if you would like to be involved with one of these ministry teams.

## REFORMATION JOURNEY

The book "Ask the Beasts—Darwin and the God of Love" will be the next topic of discussion in Reformation Journey. For millennia, plant and animal species have received little sustained attention as subjects of Christian theology and ethics in their own right. Focused on the human dilemma of sin and atonement, theology has treated the doctrine of creation to be mainly an afterthought. But what value does the natural world have within the framework of religious belief? The crisis of biodiversity in our day, when species are going extinct at more than 1,000 times the natural rate, renders this question acutely important.

In this book, Elizabeth Johnson, Professor of Theology at Forham University, shares a pastoral passion and ethical commitment to show that Darwinian theory of evolution need not stand against religious belief in God. Instead, she provides a theology of creation that integrates an understanding of evolution with God's (however one may define that) love and grace in the world, but also encourages us to take responsibility for the earth, its environment and its living creatures.

Reformation Journey will meet on Tuesday evening, April 26th, at 7:00P.M. For any questions or comments contact Cathy Bajcsi, Eric Benson, or Darrell Wiedman.

## WOMEN'S FSS 2016

Sign up to plan a Monthly Activity for FSS for 2016. Just pick a month—sign your name—and if you know the place write it in also. You don't have to pick a place right away.

When your month is coming up, make a reservation and let the office know which restaurant you have picked and we will make a sign-up sheet.

Any questions, call the office.

# FAITH IN ACTION

**04/03/2016 Lutheran Advocacy Ministry in Colorado**

Peter Severson, Director of Advocacy for Rocky Mountain Synod

Peter will speak at the Adult Education session on 04/03/2015 on advocacy efforts in our synod and he will preach at both services.

## **2016 Faith Advocacy Day**

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## **Help a Refugee Family**

Faith In Action committee sponsored a speaker from Lutheran Family Services on Sunday, Jan. 31. We are now assessing Atonement's interest in forming a team to visit refugees when they arrive in Denver. So far, Barbara Kaare-Lopez, Cathy Bajcsi, and Michelle Healey are interested in forming a team. IF you would be interested in joining our team, please either call Barbara at 303-716-0530 or email her at [bkaarelopez@hotmail.com](mailto:bkaarelopez@hotmail.com). Please RSVP by April 7.

## **FIA Picks**

### Museo de Las Americas

Detention Nation: "...experience conditions thousands of detainees endure every day. Chain link fences, razor wires, and cameras alert your instincts of your captivity. The installations challenge viewers to contemplate the consequences of broken immigration policies, and to experience the subhuman conditions that prevail in detention facilities across the country and the world." Exhibit runs through 5/27/16 at 861 Santa Fe Drive Denver CO 80204, Hours: Tuesday-Saturday 12:00pm-5:00pm, Admission \$5 or \$3 for students/seniors.

### Ted Talks

*We Need to Talk about an Injustice* by Bryan Stevenson, author of *Just Mercy*: [https://www.ted.com/speakers/bryan\\_stevenson](https://www.ted.com/speakers/bryan_stevenson)

*The Future of Race in America* by Michelle Alexander, author of *The New Jim Crow*: <http://tedxtalks.ted.com/video/The-future-of-race-in-America-M>

## OUTREACH MINISTRY

**No Child's Wet Behind** – During the month of April, the Atonement Family will be collecting diapers and pull-ups for the Community Ministries Food Bank families in our area. Watch for sales and coupons in your newspapers for these. This is an on-going need and their supplies are just about out. Diapers are to be collected under the sign in the narthex of our church.

**Soles for Souls** – We continue to collect all types of shoes – even single shoes. Spring is a good time to clean out your closets and under the beds and give your old or unused shoes a new home.

In addition to providing thousands of free shoes to individuals, they also provide shoes in times of disaster and to families to sell in their communities. The sales of these shoes can significantly raise the standard of living for a family. Collection boxes are in the narthex. Keep them shoes a comin', Atonement.

**Bring Your Bag to Church** – We continue to collect grocery items in the grocery carts in the foyer for the food bank at Community Ministries. They can use any type of non perishable food items. The food and grocery items provided by the Atonement Family are a great help to families in our community.

They also collect grocery coupons which they submit for actual cash which helps support Community Ministries.

**Lutheran Family Services** is hosting their Annual Benefit Gala on Saturday, April 23, at 6:00 pm at The Embassy Suites, 1420 Stout Street in Downtown Denver. The theme is A Starlight Garden Party. The attire is cocktail attire. Tickets for this fundraising event are \$150. Contact LFS for ticket information at [WWW.LFSRM.ORG/EVENTS](http://WWW.LFSRM.ORG/EVENTS).

**BREAKFAST FOR HUMANITY** – Habitat for Humanity's annual Breakfast for Humanity will be held at 7:30-8:30 a.m. on Wednesday, April 20 in the Infinity Park Events Center. Come, enjoy complimentary breakfast, and be inspired as you discover how Habitat builds strength, stability and self-reliance through affordable housing in Denver. Information and registration material will be available on the narthex table. Please select "Miracle Workers" in the Table Host drop down if you register to attend.

## THANK YOU

I would like to Thank everyone for your cards, prayers, phone calls, while I was recuperating from my accident. They helped get me through the days during this long recuperation.

God's Blessings to you.

## PRISON MINISTERS' VISIT: I WANT JESUS TO WALK WITH ME

"What could we do in 3 days? Is it worth it to go to Denver?" Rev. Sabune told Rev. Lewis, and later told us Faith In Action members who had invited him and his two colleagues to dine with us at Torres Mexican Restaurant in Denver this past week. Rev. Lewis and Sabune co-founded The Forgiveness and Reconciliation Project, (TFRP), "which has worked with perpetrators, victims, families and communities in Rwanda, Ghana, and Haiti" (Richard Gianzero's biography of these pastors). They initially used Archbishop Desmond Tutu's book, *No Future Without Forgiveness*, as a model. They are both Chaplains in New York State prisons. Rev. Sabune is a Chaplain in the notorious Sing Sing Prison.

(NOTE: Rev. Sabune is from Uganda and lost 3 of his siblings to Idi Amin, from 1976 to 1978. "For 20 years, we did not talk about the killing of my brothers and sister. My brother-in-law worked for Idi Amin.") In 1994, in three months, 800,000 to 1,000,000 Rwandans were killed, Hutus and Tutsis, in Rwanda's horrific genocide. Even Pastors participated in this genocide, by inviting Rwandans into their churches, where they were then killed!

Deacon Velinda Hardy, from rural North Carolina, began working with these two Pastors in 2008, in the TFRP. She spoke of the book *What Can One Person Do?* written by Sabina Alkire as a reference. She stated, "I take the Gospel into the world." She referenced a meeting in Rwanda of Tutsis and Hutus which she attended. A man said to a woman, "I killed your husband. I killed your children." And then the choir sang. Was there healing?

Richard Gianzero, our Iliff Seminary student serving at Atonement, spearheaded the organization of this meeting with the help of Atonement's Faith in Action committee. Richard (who Rev. Lewis calls Richie) met Rev Lewis while incarcerated in a New York prison, and working as a clerk in the Chaplain's office. He later became involved in the prison hospice program.

Faith in Action has been studying criminal justice in the U.S., and racial inequities in the sentencing of so many African Americans. We have read lawyer Bryan Stevenson's remarkable book, *Just Mercy*, which speaks about his work with inmates and their families on Alabama's Death Row. Bryan states we must do four things: Change the narrative; get close to folks who suffer; have hope; and ALL of us are broken. During our Mexican dinner, Rev. Sabune stated that America has NOT dealt with its original sin, which is Slavery. Germany has dealt with theirs after the Holocaust. They have signs and memorials where concentration camps existed. The U.S. doesn't have signs as, "So and So was lynched here," or "this was a slave plantation."

When asked if it was worth it to come to Denver for only three days, our guest clergy responded with the following answers. "It gave me a break from the prison", and "we engaged in a conversation that can lead to conversion and ultimately reconciliation." Deacon Hardy replied, "We opened the hearts of people. You brought Jesus here." She added, "pray for us, and I will pray for you. Prayer can transform us." I will never become a prison chaplain, but I believe that I can "take the Gospel into the world." I plan to read the book, *What Can One Person Do?*

When I play the song, "I Want Jesus...To Walk With Me" on my piano, I get teary-eyed, but also utter a few swear words when I make mistakes. When Rev. Lewis played this same Negro spiritual on the keyboard for his homily at our Lenten service, singing slowly and mournfully, I almost cried.

I also can say, "I want Jesus...to walk with me."  
I hope you do also.

-Written by Barbara Kaare-Lopez, Faith in Action member

## CAPITAL FUND

We received \$2,163 in mortgage reduction contributions in February, which is the current balance in the Mortgage Fund. The balance of the mortgage at the end of February was \$819,206.82.

<u>2016</u>	February	YTD Month Avg	YTD
<b>Budget Income</b>	\$29,320		\$79,751
<b>Income</b>	\$36,682	\$47,345	\$93,928
<b>Expenses</b>	\$26,066	\$26,041	\$52,082
<b>Net Income</b>	\$10,616	\$21,304	\$41,846
Cap Asset Purchased			\$1,537
Principal Payments	\$15,500		\$19,251
Net Cash Outlay	\$ (4,884)		\$21,058

## MISSION SUPPORT

February giving was approximately \$3000 behind the plan for the month, but because of the strong giving in January, we are a little over \$1,200 ahead of the plan for giving for the first two months. We transferred \$11,550 from the Mortgage Reduction Fund into income in order to recognize the income and make the quarterly principal only payment against the mortgage and resulting in net income for the month of February of over \$10,000. Year-to-date, with the special gifts received in January and the transfer from the Mortgage Reduction Fund, the net income is over \$41,000. In February we have received \$761 in Lenten Offerings for our Lent Projects.

## FOOT CARE CLINIC

Join us for our Wellness Foot Care Clinic on the second Thursday of every month from 9:00 AM until 12:00 Noon. To sign up, please call the Visiting Nurse Association at: [303.698.6496](tel:303.698.6496). This month, we will be meeting on the 14th.

## VISIT US

6281 West Yale Ave  
Lakewood CO 80227

Phone: 303-985-1122

Email: [churchoffice@atonement-denver.org](mailto:churchoffice@atonement-denver.org)

Website: [www.atonementdenver.org](http://www.atonementdenver.org)

## QUILTING BEE

The April meeting will be at 6:30 pm at Donna Bloemker's home. Work sessions are planned. Half of the group will meet on Wednesday, April 6th. The others come on Thursday, April 7th. A list of supplies will be provided Contact Donna at 303-284-3504 or Jan Lehnertz at 303-985-9252 with the date you can come. Thanks!

## ALTAR FLOWERS

Phil Pienkos

Laurie Lavine

## IN OUR PRAYERS

**John Krug**  
**Steve Midthun**  
**Sharon Lombard**  
**Helen Pfnister**  
**Shelly Slinkard**  
**Michelle Healey**  
**Eric Anderson**  
**Audrey Clausen**

**Carol Farr**  
**Jenni Walcher**  
**Elaine Litchenwalter**  
**Euvonne Johnson**  
**Ralph Hill**  
**Evelyn O'Dowd**  
**Stanley Kohtz**  
**Joanne Ohlhaber**

## STAFF

Worship Director

Rev. Peter Hebert

◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆

Office Admin.

Linda Neslund

Communications/

Media Office Assist.

Open

Choir Accompanist

Carol Ott

Organists

Carol Ott

Seminarian

Gayle Gunderson

Richard Gianzero

## COUNCIL

Council President

Tom Ayers

Vice-President

Tom Ayers

Secretary

Betty Moody

Treasurer

Ruth Ann Fleming

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Amanda Whitt

Jan Sweeney

Jean Viste

Laura Buhs

Keith Goman