

Council Report

February 2023- Pastor Tim Delkeskamp

Grace and peace to you, I hope this report finds you doing well. I am glad to step out of the whirlwind that we call ministry at Ascension Lutheran church and reflect a little bit. Sometimes it is hard to see the forest amid all the trees we encounter each day at One Ascension.

January was a month of scrambling. Due to the need to spend more time with her family, Mara Hassenbein has resigned as our Worship Coordinator. It is an incredibly key position that Mara did very well. She showed us what excellence can look like in her position and now, with worship as a high priority, we need to keep that standard high as we find somebody to fill this coordinator role. On top of that, we want to spend a little time reflecting on how we might reconfigure the job description to be even more effective so for now, many of us are taking on some of those extra duties to give us that time. There is urgency, we cannot simply absorb the job into other jobs so we are living in the tension of the need to come up with the new plan as soon as we can.

In addition to this, we need to find an 11am worship leader. I have been networking, but it has been difficult to find candidates. The ones I have found are unable to commit long term. We covet your prayers as the 11am service is very important to Ascension, and I believe has good potential for growth. Also, I am thankful for the 11am band who has been wonderfully flexible and taken on extra duties in the meantime.

I am excited for our Lenten program. As I write this the daily activity calendars have been printed and are on their way to the church. We will encourage the whole church as well as school families to do these activities together and to come to our evening services on Wednesdays. Thanks to Carrie Leonard who has written a special Life Group curriculum for our sermon series on the parables that goes along with the calendar and for the East family who has paid for the art work and the printing of these calendars.

Our new members class was a success. It was a wonderful group of people that we will receive in two separate groups. One at the 9am service on February 5th and one at the 11am service on March 5th.

Finally, on a personal note, one of my new year's resolutions this year is to grow in self-awareness. This includes focusing on the relationships that I have with people on my staff. I have appreciated the opportunity to self-reflection and converse with Pastor Julie and Kaylee. I believe that as we learn to work together more and more effectively that this can have ripple effect on the whole culture. It's been difficult but very edifying.

In His service,



Church Council Report – Pastor Steve Herder – Feb. 6, 2023

How has the New Year begun for you? Please reach out to your pastors and staff if you'd like a visit (at church, home, or hospital), or a phone call. This month pastoral care of our congregation has been my focus along with our senior adult ministries. See the two-page summary of our Senior Adult Ministries (SAM) Team after this report.

Our SAM work is to, with, and for seniors! At Ascension we have 402 people who are above 65 years old (221 women; 171 men). There are 24 who are in their 90s! We always emphasize intergenerational ministries with our Church, School, and Foundation. Our seniors are involved in almost every ministry of Ascension, in worship, education, and with our community and global ministries.



On January 28 I led the memorial service for our friend Ed Horton (photo above). He and his wife Sue have been at Ascension for a long time, and for the last number of years, Ed served as one of our Eucharistic Ministers. He found great fulfillment in that ministry of bringing the sacrament of Holy Communion to those who could not come to worship. Please keep Sue and her family in your prayers, for God's comfort and peace.

Ed and Sue were also active in our Lunch Bunch. On February 1st we had kind of a Lunch Bunch reunion that was sponsored by The Reserve senior living here in Thousand Oaks. Thanks to Lloyd Hartley from there. Ministry leaders shared about their work: Karsten Lundring (Eucharistic Ministry); Beverly David (3M); Norm Guetschoff (Christian Life Hours); Linda Morrow (prayer ministries); and Rev. Dr. Jack Ledbetter shared a Christ-centered poem for our closing. For that meal we used the tableware that we received as a gift from the Baird family. (Afterwards, Jeff and Cam taught me how to use the dishwasher in Pederson kitchen! On behalf of our Green Faith team, let's all try to use less "throw away" stuff!) Photos from the Lunch Bunch reunion are below.



Here are some more senior ministry moments: (1) University Village where I visited our oldest member, Irene Sansam, 99, and led a Christian Life Hour at Oak View; (2) the Feb. 2 post from the Bielke family that Don had died that morning, after Marty's passing on Oct. 25th. Don's memorial service will be Feb. 18th at 1:00pm. We will miss him greatly; (3) Photo of Cal Beard and me; (4) and of Les Johnson, who is Jeanne Hengst's father. I brought him and his wife Mickey Holy Communion, and a Valentine card from our school children. Les and Mickey have been married for 77 years!



Our Global Ministries Team thanks you for all your donations to Gifts of Hope. Here are the final numbers! And thanks for your participation in this month's Sunday classes!

thisweekatascension.org



**"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."
-Jeremiah 29:11**

Ascension's Gifts of Hope Ministry 2022 started in November of last year, sharing the message of hope from the words of Jeremiah. Gifts of Hope 2022 wraps up its sixteenth year with hope being shared globally and locally.

At a recent CLU Chapel Worship Service, the message focus was on finding hope in hard times. The takeaway was simple: God is our hope.

Hope springs from God, in, with, and through us, as we come together in community for one another. Coming together in community, we can be hope for the world. We give thanks to the Ascension Community of Church, School and Foundation for coming together with the generous gifts summarized below that will be shared locally and globally.

as of January 26th, 2023		
GIFTS OF HOPE	\$65,113.35	103
St. Andrew's Village Book	\$24,938.58	146
Need a Child for a month	\$301	\$1,960.00 28
School Fees for a Child for a month	\$35	\$945.00 12
Small Apartment for a month	\$50	\$1,000.00 12
Emergency medical Treatment	\$80	\$800.00 6
Chiropractic supplies	\$230	\$1,790.00 10
Lump for staff	\$450	\$450.00 1
General Gift	\$34,443.58	21
Friends of Fieldworkers	\$11,190.00	45
Laundry Love Program	\$50	\$750.00 7
Library Security Network	\$4,340.00	25
Love for Ladies	\$30	\$810.00 16
Gasoline	\$200	\$1,000.00 5
Groceries and hygiene supplies	\$250	\$2,500.00 8
Angel Love for unaccompanied teens	\$50	\$850.00 8
General Gift	\$6,340.00	17
DECA World Hunger Appeal	\$15,485.35	70
God's Global Harvest	\$34,185.36	65
10 Chickens	\$30	\$1,425.00 16
Happy Bee Hive	\$50	\$740.00 24
Piglet	\$30	\$930.00 24
Goat	\$50	\$2,600.00 28
Habitat Community	\$200	\$750.00 8
Cow	\$500	\$1,500.00 2
Family Farm	\$215	\$4,305.00 6
General DECA Gift	\$2,535.36	11
Other World Hunger	\$1,760.00	7
Harbor House	\$12,961.49	40
Supply for Daily Meals	\$25	\$675.00 14
Bag of Groceries	\$50	\$2,300.00 28
Tank of Gas	\$75	\$1,200.00 9
Care Management sponsorship	\$100	\$1,300.00 7
Car Repair	\$500	\$2,000.00 4
Pay rent for one-half month	\$750	\$1,000.00 3
General Harbor House Gift	\$8,481.49	23
Other Gift (Nurses Leadership Fund)	\$800.00	1




Thanks, Stacy, for the graphics!

ADULT ED. PRESENTERS FOR FEBRUARY SERIES

THINK GLOBALLY, ACT LOCALLY

Feb. 5



Martita Martinez-Bravo, (left) Executive Director, Friends of Fieldworkers, and Karla Leitzman (above), LIRS Philanthropic Advisor

Feb. 12



Louise Evenson, (right) LWR Board Emerita, Global Ministries Team - Matthew 25: 31-46 "Who is My Neighbor?" and Welcoming the Stranger at Ascension

Feb. 19




Rev. Dr. Tim Delkeskamp and Dr. Carol Bartell: Reflections on Learning and Service Opportunities.

Feb. 26



Christina Sanchez, Associate Provost for Global Engagement at California Lutheran University, with some of her students.

Think globally, act locally




Unless otherwise specified, Adult Ed. Classes take place following 9 AM Sunday services, in Founders Hall

An email received Feb. 6th from the Gene Haas Foundation in Oxnard, for our Agape Fund!

Praise God!!

Good afternoon, Ascension Lutheran Church:

I'm pleased to share our board has approved funding in the amount of \$50,000.00 as continued organizational support....



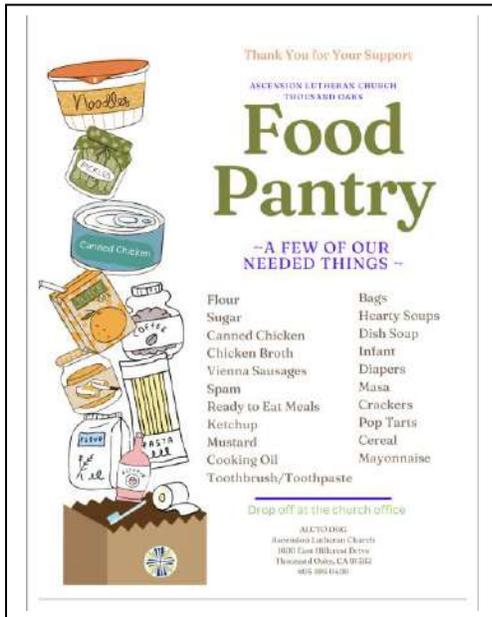
Thank You

Pastor Steve Herder with Friends of Fieldworkers Executive Director Dr. Martita Martinez-Bravo

Thank you Ascension Lutheran Church of Thousand Oaks, CA for your generous donation to Friends of Fieldworkers!



Thanks too for your generous donations to our food pantry. The next Project Response (food drive) will be March 4-5. Our leader Chris Daleiden is doing a super job, along with all our volunteers.



An email to Pastor David in Peru, for his grandmother Emilia who is possibly near the end of her life:

Dear David and family,

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with each of you.

Your friends here have all been praying for Emilia and for each of you.

Please give her our love, hugs, prayers, appreciation, and blessings.

We always remember you with great gratitude to God for your faith, compassion, joy in the Lord, and love of all God's children, especially the most vulnerable. Thank you for always welcoming us so warmly and lovingly.

Thank you, Emilia, for giving me my favorite nickname ever, "Pablo." You will always be in our hearts.

May Jesus our Good Shepherd comfort you now and forever.

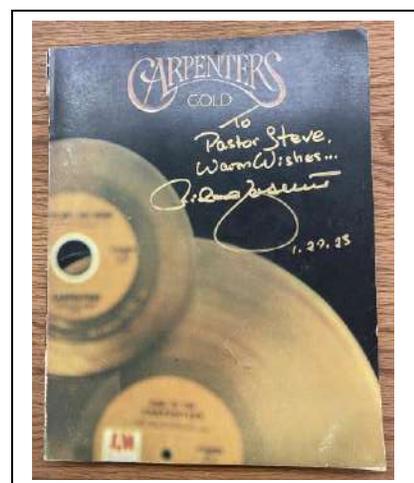
Well done good and faithful servant of the Lord.

Family in Christ,
Pastor Steve, Julie, and Natalie
and Ascension Lutheran Church

Sister Emilia,
92, in Lima,
Peru



Two music stories! When I came to sing with our Early Childhood Center on Feb. 3, I discovered the children had made this cross! And then we sang "Jesus Loves Me!" The second story is that when the Carpenter family was in worship recently, I told them about my songbook (pictured here). They weren't sure Richard had it, and said if he does, we'll bring this one back for you, signed by him! Fun to have!



Even though I no longer work with adult education, I'll do a shout out to Janet Gardner for organizing the wonderful adult education time on January 16 with several Ascension authors sharing about their books/writings!



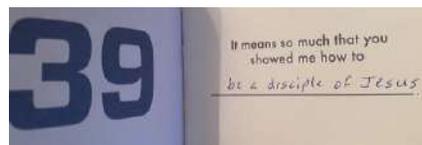
The main reason that I went to half-time work last September is to spend more time with family. In January I enjoyed a week with family in Wisconsin for my father's 93rd birthday. In February Julie and I will have a weekend away in Sedona, Arizona. We are thankful that Natalie will be back with us the end of February and early March.



Our great-niece Vivian from IL



#39 out of 50 reasons why he showed me how to "be



I love my father: a disciple of Jesus!"



Here is a picture of one of our classroom buddies, Kris Swavely, peaking out from the Kindergarten class. She comes every Thursday morning to help and thanked me for this opportunity as she told me what a joy it is to have a meaningful way to contribute. The kids love her and I hope this program can also be a support to the teachers. Also imagine how fun it will be if any of these students were to come to church and see Kris there, ready with a hug! Right now we have 3 classroom buddies and 1 more getting LiveScanned. I would love to grow this program and have many more, and hope that sharing these stories and spreading the word about how fun and easy

A couple weeks ago I had fun teaching and adult ed. class about youth, as the second part of a series with the principal. In case you weren't able to make it, I will share what I talked about in a nutshell.

1. Reminding folks of the 5 points of my vision: A safe place, intergenerational relationships, equipping parents, faith that is practiced, and worship
2. Rich's focus on discipleship vs. consumer churches. We are a discipleship church.
3. I added in some research from Andy Root, who talks about moral therapeutic deism (faith that makes you feel good, helps you do good, but where God is not really active), is what our culture expects Christianity to look like.
4. I asked the question: How can we welcome in consumers who expect moral therapeutic deism and speak their language well enough that they become discipleship?
5. Dianne Beck share some stories of places where she sees faith growing in the youth
6. We talked to the youth and share their responses about what they love and would like to see more of in church.
7. I shared how Dianne and I are planning to zoom in on youth engagement in worship with four particular strategies that we'll be trying in the coming months.
 - a. Youth breakfasts between worship

- b. Youth discussion about worship the following week, so there's something to invite youth we haven't seen in a while back to
 - c. Sundays where youth do most of the serving, and we then invite all the youth to come to support. Not as a one-time thing, but as an invitation to continue serving.
 - d. Opportunities for youth to share in worship and lead parts of worship when they come back from a trip.
8. I shared practical strategies for engaging youth from research in a book called *Growing Young*. Things like:
- a. Wherever possible, empathize with youth. Be curious. Ask questions.
 - b. Become vibrant and engaged disciples ourselves (youth are drawn toward authenticity)
 - c. Serve authentically outside your own walls.
 - d. And, I said thank you to the congregation for being so great at encouraging our young people when they do serve in worship. I have seen us grow by leaps and bounds in this regard and recently saw a young person receive 6 words of encouragement from adults after she acolyte for the first time. This is huge and I was so impressed at how we are doing in this regard.

Kaylee and I are working together in building content for our leadership team to work through in order to continue to grow our One Ascension culture in a healthy direction. We started with some content from Brene Brown's *Dare to Lead*, and will be using every other week of our leadership meetings to share additional content from the book. It is fun and life-giving for Kaylee and me to be able to collaborate and enrich the group in this way.

The school board had an excellent retreat that included work on the 1, 3, and 7 year visions for both of the schools, and which resulted in 5 categories that will be subcommittees who will work at refining our language around these topics and defining what concrete actions might be. There will also be space for teachers and others to join these committees and speak into these visions, and Rich and Jenni always do just a fantastic job of ensuring that their teams have a voice at the table. We also did some team building work at an escape room, where we escaped with 21 minutes remaining, and over appetizers and wine. I am really appreciating the intentionality with which the school board is working and the fact that because the school is no longer on fire, we have the space to be intentional and ask questions that we've never had the space to ask before. The school and school board, under Jenni, Rich, and Scott's leadership, are headed in a very positive direction.

Together, we are building the One Ascension Bridges!