

Attendance

Our summer attendance seems to be declining a bit. Our 6 week average is 305, down from the 374 average attendance I reported last month. There was a large drop on Independence Day weekend, particularly at 9:00 and 11:00 services. I looked at our history over the last couple of years and it has been the same trend: a fair drop off in attendance that weekend.

Date:		Sat.	9:00	11:00	Reported Total
6/4/2023		32	342	50	424
6/11/2023		32	240	75	347
6/18/2023	Father's Day	45	165	61	271
6/25/2023		44	195	38*	277
7/2/2023	Independence Day Weekend	34	122	38	194
7/9/2023		34	206	74	314

Maintenance

Cam returned from Conejo Valley Days, and probably hasn't stopped moving since! He and Jeff worked some long hours to make the most of a bulldozer rental moving some dirt and sand around the campus. Large planters by the lunch area had to be emptied and waterproofed from the inside because they had been leaking onto the lunch patio. Cam, Jeff, Spencer, Nathan, Jude, and Jack are working on both outdoor spaces and inside classrooms to get the campus ready for school in the fall. The youth from Senior Luther League have painted the dugout, and their new flooring will be completed in the next two weeks.

I am really proud of Jeff for an additional reason beyond all of the hard work he has been doing here: He got a last minute opportunity to take an amazing trip with his daughter and he took it! He called me last week asking if this timing would work out given all that is going on with our campus right now. I know how hard he has been working and encouraged him to go. We were blessed that Elijah Lomeli is now one of our bus drivers and took take the group we committed to driving after the western states gathering last weekend. That was the one task I wasn't sure how to cover, so it all worked out! Hopefully he'll return Monday looking relaxed and ready to dive back in.

You likely know that the exterior paint is in progress. One of the "growing pains" of being One Ascension and thinking as a holistic organization is remembering to pause and think through how decisions affect each part of the campus. In my excitement to get the sanctuary painted I didn't spend much time thinking how the update would "age" the church office and elementary school buildings by comparison. The School Board was concerned about how the School would look in comparison, and approved to paint the remaining portions of the campus. In positive news, the whole campus is being painted! In growth oriented news, many of us learned how important it is to collaborate on changes and communicate on decisions with our campus partners.

Jeff had worked out an initial schedule for parking lot work in late July and early August, but we didn't know the extended timing for exterior paint, or that our neighbor Colina Middle School would be doing such a major renovation to their parking lots and entry area. One of the biggest brain teasers of the summer has been trying to validate that our schedule works and allows for church staff, ECC staff, Staycation staff, ECC parents, Staycation parents, Walk to Emmaus participants, and church visitors to park. A couple of days that will be particularly difficult are Wednesday August 9th and Thursday August 10th. My suggestion would be to avoid campus if possible. On Wednesday August 9th only the two lots in front of the church office and sanctuary will be available, and they will not have stripes to designate lanes. Thursday, August 10th is when everything is seal coated, so staff may have to move their cars during the day. The paving company will work with us to have lanes available for drop off and pick up of students, but parking spaces for longer use will be very limited.

Phone System

Three years ago we purchased our current Allworx phone system and upgraded the infrastructure of the system. While we have been very happy with the equipment we purchased, the service from the phone carrier hasn't been amazing. The install itself took months longer than anticipated, and we seem to go back and forth between the carrier and the provider when there are issues with service. We were informed recently that the T1 phone lines we use are being decommissioned on September 30, 2023, and our costs would increase \$249-479 per month after signing a new three year contract. We were told that we needed to choose a service level and execute a new three year contract 90-120 days before the decommission date of September 30th in order to avoid an interruption in service. Rather than commit to continuing to do business for a service we have been dissatisfied with, we reached out to Anchor Point, our tech support company to explore other options. After looking into a dedicated fiber line direct from the provider and one through a carrier we have opted to go with a dedicated fiber line through Advantage Telecom. Again, we must commit to a three year term to defray the cost of install, but we will have faster internet service that is dedicated to Ascension. We will have more reliable service with less frequent outages, we can use our existing phones, and we will have a redundant internet line that will automatically take the phone system in the event of an outage. The cost is approximate to the cheapest option given to us by the T1 carrier. We will likely be increasing the spend at the church, Tk-7, and ECC by less than \$100 per month each, but we need to see all of the contracts and components before we advise the school or revise any budget amounts. This would have been necessary in any case as we cannot continue with the current service we based our budgets upon. Craig, Steve Henry, Jeff, and I have worked hard to compare all the options and we are confident that this one will serve the One Ascension community most efficiently.

Administration

I think it is safe to say that Sarah is doing quite well! She did an amazing job helping to prepare for the congregational meeting her first week on the job. She assisted Jeff with some CDS reporting for the City of Thousand Oaks, and jumped into our daily processes with both feet. She and I will attempt to send you this council packet on our own as Jenelle is taking a well deserved holiday this week...Wish us well with the PDF merger! It's a warmup before we head into the annual report. I hope you are thinking about all of the amazing things your ministry groups want to share this year! Sarah will be reaching out with report deadlines soon.

Diane was able to take a holiday without missing a beat on campus space planning or entering contributions. Diane has re-designed the giving tab on our website to show helpful tiles with photos for each category. Stacy has been turning out amazing newsletters, and making some website updates

even as she has been traveling and grieving after the loss of her dad. Jenelle worked full time hours before her trip to help train Sarah, and also to cover the office as Diane and I were on holiday.

Finance

On the seventh day of the business month we are sitting pretty to close the June books and have preliminary reports out by the end of the week. Mike has a couple more tasks to do for year-end like capitalism and depreciation, but we are in good shape to reach out to our auditor and begin the audit process much earlier this year. I am beyond grateful to have Camryn's help in updating salaries and hourly rates into the payroll and healthcare management software systems. It's sensitive information, so we are careful to keep it within the finance/human resource team. Unfortunately, sometimes that has been just me! It's wonderful to have such a well functioning team for these departments.

Human Resources

The proposed Employee Handbook for the church staff was included with the council packet as a separate attachment or two. For your convenience I have included a summary of the changes following this report. You will note that most of the changes are minor grammar or wording clarifications. Materially, we have changed the half day holiday for Good Friday to Easter Monday. We greatly respect the importance of Good Friday, and it's not the most opportune time to close early or work less hours. Much preparation is needed for Good Friday services and into Easter weekend. I feel it would be better to be open, answer calls from visitors about our Easter services, and have the campus looking as good as possible for the visitors we anticipate. Once the Easter Sunday celebrations are completed a half holiday on Monday makes more sense to me. The other material change is to some time off policies. We were informed that the personal necessity days we had been issuing could be perceived as a vacation policy that we were not accruing properly. We have removed the policy and added some flexible holidays. There should not be a financial impact for the change.

Performance reviews is an area I have had to deprioritize to complete some tasks that are both important and very urgent. They are very important, and guiding conversations happen daily, but the written reviews have taken a backseat to urgent insurance, worker comp, phone service, and human resource issues that were necessary to attend to in the last month. My hope is that between my writing this, your reading it, and our meeting I will have made some progress and completed reviews for at least 1-2 of my direct reports. I am really proud of how my team is performing at this time, so I am excited for the conversations.

I aggregated results of 7 exit interviews, and reviewed the results with key leaders and supervisors. We have addressed a couple of issues and provided some feedback and encouragement on the things we are doing really well. I was surprised to hear from multiple people how much they appreciated the One Ascension training and events that we hosted during Professional Development Week in August, at Christmas, and at minor events throughout the year. A great deal of effort went into planning those trainings and coordinating space and food for a team that large, so it was heartening to hear that it is appreciated.

Blessings,

Kaylee Searway

Director of Administrative Ministries

Pastor Tim's Council Report- July 2023

Grace and peace to you my family in Christ! I am happy to report that One Ascension is rolling through summer. As I type, we have 90 kids on campus with an additional number of amazing volunteers going through VBS, kids at the early childhood center, office staff hard at work, the building being painted, etc. This is just more proof that, as I mentioned in my last report, things don't slow-down in the summer, they just switch to different activities.

Summer worship has been fun. While the chancel choir and the bell choir take the summer off, we have been trying to provide special music and keep the energy flowing at all the services. For example, last Sunday we had the "Los Angeles Pops Accordionaires" come and perform at our 9am worship service. Led by Ascension member Janet Hane, they did an excellent job and I am proud that they felt very welcomed here. They had been practicing their 2 hymns for about a year and their hard work showed. Coming up at our Saturday service on July 22nd, we will have a special "Cowboy Service" offering. Nancy Lee does a wonderful job of putting together these services and I am grateful for the extra work that she puts in to make them special.

Our Congregational meeting on June 25th went extremely well. Our plans to keep it streamlined so that could finish in time for the 11am worship service worked. We were able to approve minutes, elect officers, review the budget, cast vision and pray all in that time. Originally the strategy for having the meeting between services was so that we could get as many members to come to the meeting as possible. That strategy is paying off! By my count, we had 150 people at the meeting. That is the best turn out to a non-specially called meeting in my 20 years here. Thanks to the leadership for Ed Klodt doing the hard work of coordinating all the people who presented during the meeting.

As I mentioned that I would be doing at the Congregational Meeting, our "Outreach Team" has now met twice. It is a great group of people which includes Duane and Barbara Cirks, Tim and Carlah Schneider, Ian Chick, Michael Ruggiero, Monica Ballard and Heather Harner. We are looking for more people from a younger demographic. We are charged to help look at what Ascension does from a visitor's perspective and to help create a stronger culture of outreach. We plan to present our plans at the August council meeting.

And speaking of outreach, I want to reiterate how important next year's "Be the Blessing" initiative is going to be for the church moving forward. A survey done in 2019 by church consultant Kevin Tolo and our recent worship survey both indicate that we tend to be inward focused as a congregation. This leads to decline. We need to change this culture. We need to serve our community and we need to welcome those who come from the outside and we need to learn how to do this in an authentic and urgent way. The ELCA (Ascension included) is declining in numbers, I believe serving and welcoming will reverse that decline.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Tim



Prayers for One Ascension Leadership

“Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with thanksgiving.”

Colossians 4:2

“In our prayers for you we always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love that you have for all the saints.”

Colossians 1:3-4

LEADERSHIP

Church Council

Alan Baker
Rachael Bowen
Bonny Chick
Dave Harkins
Ed Klodt
Carrie Leonard
John Rarick
Jeannette Ruggiero
Ashley Steere
Pete Swavely

School Board

Scott Bean
Naomi Little
Kyle Jones
Jocelyn Myers
Chris Poveromo
Kathy Roshanai
Steve Smuck
Ashley Steere
Nelly Nassar-Trumbo
Anna Woodward

Foundation

Alan Baker
Stefano Borzone
Anita Cohen
Susanne Hopkins
Sandra Howe
Lori Hillman
Doug Morrow
Kris Swavely
Ruth Teufel
Don Weeks

ECC STAFF

Christina Alfaro
Stacy Andrews
Jessica Bunting
Brittani Childers
Esperanza Flores
Lyn Derla
Kayla Fromberg
Lauren Jajja
Shelby Hormell
Liz Hoskinson
Arelly Kendall
Jen Ledesma
Grace Ma
Karen Martinez
Tanya Mathews
Jenni McCoy
DeAnna Means
Amanda Munoz
Jessica Peters
Jessica Placas
Vanessa Reyes
Karyn Ring
Marissa Saldivar
Nasha Sobieski
Ariana Stevenson
Alex Trundy
Elizabeth Van Mourik
Greta Weinstein
Josie Zapata

CHURCH STAFF

Stacy Bosco
Matt Cahill
Pastor Tim Delkeskamp
Camryn Force
Jacob Halvorson
Nathan Halvorson
Jeff Hengst
Pastor Steve Herder
Diane Kusnierek
Nancy Lee
Sarah Lizama
Camden Lorentson
Mike Marvin
Pastor Julie McCain
Lan Merrill
Wyant Morton
Margaret Ricci
Cameron Ruggiero
Kaylee Searway
Aidyn Searway
Jenelle Smith
Christian Teufel

Contracted:

Cleaning Staff

Landscape Staff:

Efrain, Jose, Manuel

TK- 6 ELEMENTARY STAFF

Connie Angress
Corinne Angress
Ashley Babich
Elizabeth Bonilla
Erin Borchard
Mary Bordokas
Aidan Delkeskamp
Jennifer Farrell
Spencer Gottmer
Pastor Rich Gregory
Staci H
Camille Harrington
Heather Hartson
Kai Hoffmeier
Carolina Lopez
Emily Lopez
Charlotte Mirada
Tina Mohler
Kelsey Packman
Stephanie Pagano
Kendra Saunders
Sara Wallace
Ryan Weber
Zachary Martino

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