



WORSHIP AT ASCENSION

GET THE BLESSING
BE THE BLESSING

Invite			Grow			Serve		
Invitation and Hospitality			Understanding our Motto			Community Engagement		
Invitation Support	Welcome Visitors	Strategic Invite Events	Education	Sermon Series	Life Together	Enhance Existing Ministries	Encourage Ministry Start-ups	SuperCharge Ministries
Provide tools to easily invite friends, family, and community to worship and other campus events.	Create a welcoming environment for Ascension visitors.	Create and implement a strategy for intentional "invite" events (existing and potential) at Ascension.	Together, discover what it means to "Be the Blessing"	Incorporate intentional sermon series throughout the year to encourage living in to our motto.	Leverage and embrace how ministry groups and life groups are central to "Be the Blessing"	Support the growth of our great outreach ministries.	Allow for creativity to explore new areas of ministry outreach.	Set aside resources and establish process to encourage ministry outreach.



ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH COUNCIL AGENDA
Wednesday, May 15th, 2024 – 7:00 PM
Location: Bethlehem Room

Call to Order and Welcome -

Jeannette

Mission Statement of Ascension Lutheran Church:

We are called to create opportunities for all people to become devoted followers of Christ

Motto: *Invite, Grow, Serve*

Approval of Agenda -

Jeannette

Informational Items-

Call /Search Committee Updates

Pastor Tim

Presentation of Treasurer's Report –

Dave

New Business –

2024 / 2025 Budget Approval

Dave / Kaylee

Nomination Committee Candidate Review

Ed

Old Business

Get/Be The Blessing

Ed

Recurring Business

Affirm New Members, Confirmations & Baptisms

All

Action Items Action Tracker -

Jeannette

Approval of Minutes –

April Church Council Meeting

Jeannette

Consent Approval of Reports to Council

Jeannette

1. Administrator's Report

2. Pastor's Reports

a. Pastor Tim Delkeskamp b. Pastor Steve Herder

3. School Board

4. Foundation

5. Communications Report

6. GMT Report

Adjournment

Closing Prayer

Reminder -

Devotion for June meeting is Carrie! Thank you!

Treasurer's Report for May 2024

The Church financial summary for the first 10 months is appended to this report. Given the effort to produce a workable budget for next year, and the intent to provide and discuss the go-forward, detailed budget at our upcoming council meeting, I'm not planning on reviewing this report or sending any corroborating detail other than in the proceeding narrative.

Year to Date Church Operating Results

In gist, we had a less than expected income month. Whereas offerings were within a couple thousand of budget at the end of March, we are now looking at about a \$28K deficit in the offerings category. Nevertheless, the actual giving is up 4.7% year to date compared to the "actual" last year, so certainly not a disappointing performance.

The expense side of the budget continues to be better than expectations, again driven primarily by staffing shortages. The absence of a youth director and the vacant Associate Pastor position continue to be key drivers in the variance. Overall, actual to budget shows a \$59.5K favorability. The church actual to date is producing a \$49K surplus vs. the budget's expectation of a \$10K deficit.

2024-25 Fiscal Year Budget

Staff continues to work on the details of the preliminary budget. An internal meeting is scheduled for May 9, and a Finance Committee meeting is planned for May 13 before making (hopefully) final recommendations to the Council. If possible, the budget will be submitted electronically to Council members in advance of the Wednesday meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Dave Harkins

Ascension Lutheran Church
Budget Summary
YTD through April 30, 2024

	Church '23 - '24 Budget	Church '23 - '24 Budget YTD	Church '23 - '24 Actual YTD	Church '23 - '24 Variance	%
Revenues:					
Offerings (Church)	1,443,210	1,221,848	1,193,427	(28,421)	-2.3%
Other Revenues	37,700	31,050	34,652	3,602	11.6%
Total Revenues:	1,480,910	1,252,898	1,228,079	(24,819)	-2.0%
Expenditures:					
Salaries & Benefits	1,153,170	973,462	910,949	62,514	6.4%
Allocated Staff Expenses	(183,202)	(153,956)	(158,375)	4,419	-2.9%
Benevolences	62,780	52,783	51,914	869	1.6%
Programs / Committees	66,832	58,515	51,759	6,757	11.5%
Administrative Expenses	102,950	87,658	75,746	11,912	13.6% \$5k of unspent Tech budget, timing
Property Maintenance	93,750	82,292	85,794	(3,502)	-4.3%
Utilities & Insurance	94,774	79,317	77,931	1,386	1.7%
Operating Expenditures	1,391,054	1,180,073	1,095,718	84,355	7.1%
Debt Service	99,675	83,063	83,063	-	0.0%
Total Expenditures	1,490,730	1,263,135	1,178,780	84,355	6.7%
Operating Surplus / (Deficit)	(9,820)	(10,237)	49,299	59,536	
Prior Year Surplus Spend	-	-	-		
PPP spend	-	-	96,844		

New Members & Baptisms Report

May 2024

Baptisms for April

Name	Date of Birth	Date Baptized
Preston James Harrison	3/7/23	4/14/24

New Members for April

No New Members

Council Action Tracker

Action Item No.	Action Item Description	Assigned To	Date Assigned	Date Due	Notes
1	Be the Blessing	Ed, Dave	02/15/23		The committee is taking requests.
11	Reserve Study	Kaylee, Jeff	20-Sep		This project has taken a back seat to preparing for summer.
13	Budget for new fiscal year	Kaylee, Mike, Camryn	Feb	June	Let's approve at May meeting!
15	Senior Pastor's Review	Jeannette		May	
16	Names to Nominating Committee	council		Spring	Kaylee and Ed will meet May 16th to discuss the slate and prepare bios and ballots.
17	Plan Congregational Meeting	Jeannette	05/15/24	06/23/24	Agenda included in tonight's discussion

**Ascension Lutheran Church
Council Meeting Minutes
April 17, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.**

The council meeting was called to order by Jeannette Ruggiero at 7:03 p.m.

Council Members In Attendance: Al Baker, Rachael Bowen, Bonny Chick, Dave Harkins, Kyle Jones (School Board Rep), Ed Klodt, Carrie Leonard, John Rarick, Jeannette Ruggiero

Others: Pastor Tim

Guests: Ascension School principal Rich Gregory

Mission Statement of Ascension Lutheran Church

We are called to create opportunities for all people to become devoted followers of Christ.

Motto: *Invite, Grow, Serve*

Approval of Agenda – Jeannette

Add - Open Forum item.

Move – Treasure’s report prior to Informational Items.

A motion was made (Al), seconded (Dave), and passed unanimously to approve the agenda as amended.

Open Forum – Rich Gregory

1. Pederson Hall Remodel

A school family has come forward as a possible major donor for a remodel effort of Pederson Hall. Changes would include new flooring, adding bleachers, hanging new banners (which have already been donated), and new paint. The changes would not impact walls or ceiling or structure. Plans were submitted to a vendor who returned a \$400,000 bid. The potential donor is negotiating a lower price with the vendor. Rich is bringing this information to Council since, should plans fall in place, Council’s approval would be needed to allow the plans to proceed.

2. Possible Recommendation for Changes to the By-Laws

The School Board has been reviewing the School Handbook and has determined that it may be necessary to recommend a change to the church by-laws as they pertain to the School Board. Any such recommendation would be presented to Council at a future date. It would ultimately have to be approved by the congregation.

Devotions – Dave

Reflections on 1 John 3:16-18

¹⁶ This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. ¹⁷ If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? ¹⁸ Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.

We know that Jesus loves us because He gave His life for us. How do our neighbors know that we love them? Not necessarily in giving our lives, but rather in smaller, personal gestures. These are the seeds that, with God’s nurturing, can grow into something bigger.

Informational Items

1. Nominating Committee Update - Ed

There is one open School Board position, two open Foundation positions, and two open Council positions.

2. Call / Search Committee Updates – Pastor Tim

The Call Committee session with the congregation last Sunday was very well received. The Synod has not been responding as quickly as the Call Committee would like, but the committee is being persistent in getting the needed information / actions from the Synod. Several candidate names have been submitted by the Synod but the committee is not yet in the interview phase. If the committee would like to interview non-Lutheran candidates, the Synod must be notified.

The Youth Director Search committee interviewed six candidates last week via Zoom. A second round of interviews with some of those candidates will take place next week. Rich Gregory and a Youth Group representative will participate in next week's interviews.

Treasurer's Report – Dave

Financials for the school show that both revenues and expenses are up but holding steady.

For the church, revenues are at budget for the quarter ending March 30th. Overall, there is a \$45,649 surplus at quarter end, in part due to lower expenses because of the associate pastor and youth leader vacancies.

A motion was made (Ed), seconded (Bonny), and passed unanimously to accept the Treasurer's report.

Informational Items

3. Budget Process Update – Dave

The budget process is on-going. The Salaries and Benefits line item under Expenditures represents the most significant budget change. The budget includes a 5% salary increase across the board. This also applies to salaries for the future Associate Pastor and Youth Director. A portion of the Administrative Ministries Director salary is allocated under the School budget to recognize the time that will be spent by Kaylee Searway for school matters. Additionally, insurance premiums for staff will also increase substantially.

Council acknowledges that keeping salaries at a competitive level is important for retaining staff but an across the board increase is not necessarily appropriate as that encompasses a variety of diverse staff positions. Dave will bring this concern to the Finance Committee when the budget is reviewed.

The Benevolences line item is allocated at 4.35% of budgeted offerings. This percentage has been applied for many years. These are the funds that are sent to the Synod. Total benevolence for the church is higher through Gifts of Hope, Global Ministries and other special giving efforts but these are not part of the budget.

Be the Blessing is also not part of the budget as this ministry since it is funded from PPP funds from both the church and school.

The 2023/2024 budget assumed a 3% increase in offerings from the 2022/2023 budget. Through March, the increase has been 6%. It has not been determined whether the increased giving in this fiscal year is from long-time members or from new members. The finance and accounting teams will be taking a closer look at this in the coming months.

New Business

1. Roof Repair – Dave

There has been a long-standing leak in the sanctuary roof over the outer doors to the west patio. Efforts to fix it over the past two years have not been successful. It has caused the sanctuary doors to swell, making it difficult to securely close and lock them, creating a security issue. Additionally, a new leak near the bell

tower was also discovered after the recent rains. The quote from the roofing company to repair this is \$12,600. These funds would be drawn from the Property Maintenance budget account. This would put the year-to-date actual amount for Property Maintenance slightly above the budgeted amount.

A motion was made (Carrie), seconded (Bonny), and passed unanimously to approve an expenditure of \$12,600 from Property Maintenance for the sanctuary roof repair.

2. Thrivent Dollars Request – Pastor Tim

A request is made to use \$7,366 of Thrivent Choice funds for the purchase and installation of new carpeting in the church offices. The current balance in the Thrivent Choice account is \$16,752.

A motion was made (Ed), seconded (Al), and passed unanimously to approve the expenditure of \$7,366 from Thrivent Choice funds for new carpeting in the church offices.

A second request for Thrivent Choice funds is to cover the cost for Kaylee to attend a two-day virtual seminar hosted by the Society of Human Resource Management.

A motion was made (Dave), seconded (Bonny), and passed unanimously to approve the expenditure of \$1,480 from Thrivent Choice funds that will allow Kaylee Searway, the Director of Administrative Ministries to attend the SHRM “HR Department of One Specialty Credential” seminar.

Old Business

1. Get/Be the Blessing Update – Ed

- 16 grants requests have been received since the program was initiated. Eight of those requests came at the team’s last meeting.
- 12 requests have been approved, four have been declined.
- We can help guide people into a ministry by encouraging them to follow up on ministry ideas.
- The projects have been publicized in the weekly This Week at Ascension.

Recurring Business

Affirm New Members, Confirmants and Baptisms

Baptisms for March were affirmed. These include Alanna and Emery Waters, Annie Jane Hooper, Nathaniel Khanji, and Samuel Feinberg.

Action Items Action Tracker

All items are on track. The Senior Pastor review is completed by the Council president.

Approval of Minutes – Jeannette

1. March Church Council Meeting and Combined School Board and Council Meeting

The March Council minutes included a discussion about pending litigation against the church. What is the potential liability? This amount is not known. Should this item be included in the minutes which are published on Ascension’s website? Could doing so be detrimental to the pending litigation? The information included in the March minutes is brief, not detailed.

Council should be made aware if the third layer of the D&O insurance is not renewed, This will be added to the Action Tracker.

A motion was made (Al), seconded (John), and passed unanimously to approve the minutes for the March Council meeting and for the Combined School Board and Council meeting.

Consent Approval of Reports to Council

1. Administrator's Report
2. Pastor's reports – Pastor Tim, Pastor Steve Herder
3. School Board
4. Communications Report
5. GMT Report

A motion was made (Ed), seconded (Bonny) and passed unanimously to approve the Reports to Council.

Reminder

Next Council meeting - Wednesday, May 15th at 7:00.
Devotions – Al Baker

Closing Prayer – Pastor Tim

Adjournment

A motion was made (Bonny), seconded (Carrie) and passed unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:11

Respectfully submitted by Rachael Bowen

Attendance

In the five weeks since Easter our attendance average is 338, a slight decrease from the 366 six-week average I reported in April. Our online attendance is averaging 133.

Maintenance

Thank you for approving the \$12,600 roof repair at your council meeting in May. The repairs are scheduled for Wednesday May 15th through Friday May 17th. Jeff and I are both thankful to have this completed from our mental list of issues to complete before we get into the difficult work of summer.

Jeff, Cam, Diane, Connie, Rich, Jenni and I met to determine the critical projects that need to be completed, most specifically those that we need to complete in the summer months. Jeff, Cam, and I met after to try and determine how many hours we would need for each project, what we could complete before or after summer, and how much summer help we might need. We'll be converting the school business office into a Spanish classroom and the former Sunday School storage office into a back office for the school administration. Cam has started taking tiles of the west patio so he and Jeff can grind down the concrete there. We'll be painting classrooms, filling in the ECC pavers with sand, assembling a small greenhouse, and all of the typical summer activities to get the campus ready for another academic year. Jude Delkeskamp will be working with us full-time over the summer, and Nate Gregory is now working with us 25 hours a week through the summer. We hope to hire one medium skilled technician to focus on the classrooms and add a couple of hours of entry level labor to help us complete the ambitious list of tasks. The School Board will meet May 20th with hopefully approve the expense of our labor and projects. This is the first summer here where I have mapped out what the team hopes to complete in the brief 10 weeks between academic years. My first pass had Jeff working 676.5 hours out of the 388 he will have available. Draft 7 is looking more realistic with diverting some projects to before and after summer, as well as adding additional people.

Speaking of diverted projects, my team is so excited about the Thrivent Choice dollars you allocated to church office carpet. Thank you! The Foundation also granted our request of funding for the Bethlehem Room and entrance hallway. While we are extremely excited to get the flooring done as soon as possible, we realize that we are not dependent on the school closure to complete the task, so we will defer to September.

Human Resources

While thanks are in order, I would also like to express my gratitude to you for approving my attendance at SHRM's Human Resources Department of One Credential. I have scheduled myself into two days of training May 23-24th to complete the seminar. I would like to attend those sessions first before deciding on the e-Learning sessions that will complement and deepen the training.

It's a great season of training for me. I have been attending the Call to Allyship book study and group discussion hosted by EDLARJ (European Descent Lutheran Association for Racial Justice, which is re-branding to White Lutherans for Racial Justice.) We've had some great discussions,

and it is nice to be community with other congregations currently in the call process. I've also registered for a couple of free webinars from CLU's Center for Nonprofit Leadership including Power of Data: Qualifying and Shaping your Fundraising, Strategies, Cash Flow Projections 101, and Developing a Successful Strategic Plan.

I developed a performance review form that Pastor Tim and I have agreed to use this year, and started writing performance reviews for my 8 direct reports. I created the attached document, called Portrait of a One Ascension Team Member in collaboration with Rich and Jenni's Portrait of a One Ascension Teacher. I'll be using this language with the team and intentionally calling our positive examples as they are demonstrated.

Finance

Camryn, Mike, and I had a great meeting with Dave Harkins on May 2nd to refine what might be a realistic offering ask to the congregation. We are sharpening our pencils on pay increases and church expenses to make the budget palatable and possible while still affirming the team of their worth to the organization.

A recent monkey wrench was higher than expected proposals on tech upgrades from our IT provider. The church and school servers are both reaching end of life, and we had discussed migrating to Microsoft 365 with our storage in the cloud. There is an upfront cost, but not a need to purchase a new server every 3, 5, or 7 years. Initial numbers last year increased to a rate where we are back at the discussion table and considering other options.



Portrait of a One Ascension Team Member

Loves Jesus

- Seeks the Kingdom first knowing everything else will be added appropriately.
- Prioritizes their spiritual health and growth, seeks discipleship and mentorship in their faith.
- Is actively involved in the spiritual life of the school through participation in weekly chapels, staff meetings, prayer groups, devotions, and other spiritual formation opportunities as they arise.
- Models a life committed to following Jesus; imperfect, but characterized by love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control.
- Sees their vocation as ministry.

Prioritizes Their Own Health

- Works effectively and with great commitment to the church, and also prioritizes their time away from work in order to rest, retreat, and seek recreation.
- Prioritizes undistracted time with family and friends.

Loves Their Colleagues

- No gossip: has difficult conversations face to face instead of “rallying the troops.”
- Listens.
- Sets and maintains appropriate boundaries.
- Works for the success of their team.

Loves the “One Ascension” Community

- Partners enthusiastically with Congregation, ECC, the Elementary/Middle School, and the Foundation whenever beneficial and appropriate.
- Seeks ways in which “all boats will rise.”
- Is a thoughtful steward of the “One Ascension” campus and its resources.

Loves Professional Excellence

- Is committed to professional development.
- Always aims to showcase the organization, their team, and themselves as professional, welcoming, and pointing to Jesus.
- Stays on track with the bigger picture goals of the organization.

Pursues a Growth Mindset

- Receives constructive criticism without defensiveness.
- Seeks to find areas of improvement.
- Sees evaluations and observations as opportunities to grow and get better.



Tim's Council Report- May 24

Grace and peace to you my family in Christ,

At the woman's breakfast gathering yesterday, a member whose son's wedding I led recently, thanked me for everything that is going on at Ascension these days. As she did so, I immediately thought about all of the things that we need to get to, all of the things that aren't happening because we are a bit short staffed, all of the things I want to get to but can't right now- though I did not mention them to her. Then, she talked about the 7 churches that are mentioned at the beginning of the book of Revelation and we went through the list together. We talked about the church in Laodicea, the "lukewarm" church and she said, "in a world where there are a lot of "lukewarm" churches, I am glad that Ascension is not "lukewarm." I agreed and she made me realize for all the things that we are not doing, at least we continue to fight the good fight against the sinful tendency to lose sight of our mission to create opportunities for all people to become devoted followers of Christ.

We continue to work hard to find both an Associate Pastor and a Youth Director. And I believe that both of these crucially important processes are still on a good track. Having connected with Tom Lindros, the co-chairperson of the Call Committee, has said that they continue to seek qualified candidates, that they have some mobility papers to review and that they continue to meet as a team. He also expressed a bit of frustration with the Synod's communication and professionalism. It is a bit sad to hear that they must carry that extra burden in their important work. If it gets worse, I am committed to help figure out how to help.

The Youth Search Team's process is currently running at full speed. We've interviewed 9 candidates, done a 2nd interview with 3 of those candidates who we believe were qualified enough to go further in the process. Sadly, a 4th second interview candidate (one who we were excited about) took herself out of the process. In the process, the first interview was a zoom call. The second was an in-person interview and the third will be a more extensive interview where we'll invite the candidate on campus to meet with staff, students, etc. Sadly, we have not found someone we are excited enough about to invite to a 3rd interview. As we continue to look, we are branching out to connect with other youth ministry networks. We are even considering hiring a "headhunter" type of person. In the meantime, Dianne Beck, Jenni Klemp and some other parents are looking to create a schedule for summer that will include activities and bible studies for the high school (and perhaps middle school) folks. It is very important that

we provide continuity for the young people that we have so that we can give them an opportunity to form the base of a group that we can build on.

It has been a pleasure to lead our confirmation program in these last months. We will be confirming 4 wonderful 8th grade students on May 19th at our 9am service. Preparations are underway for that right now. Our last meeting is this Thursday evening and as a reward, we will be taking all 13 students on the bus to In n Out Burger to celebrate the year. I'm very grateful for the adult mentors, Don Weeks, Carlah Schneider, Camryn Force and Jeff Hengst for all the help they provide to this program.

It seems that it's been another busy pastoral care season in these last weeks. Pastor Steve has been quite busy as the pastoral care lead. I am so grateful for his saying "yes" to additional time commitment during this interim period. Pastoral care, such as attending to people at the end of life and visiting people in the hospital can come in waves but we are riding them. All are invited to attend Dick Ruwe's, Allen Leland, and Don Meyers and Jan Shaw's memorial services. We will grieve but we will grieve with hope.

Finally, I end with some of moments of fun amid ministry:

- It was an honor to speak at the Moorpark Highschool Fellowship of Christian Athletes a few Fridays ago. I was invited by Ella Festerling and I was warmly welcomed.
- In the past few months, I have started to read stories to the 4yr olds of the ECC. They are a wonderful audience!
- I got to lead a wonderful wedding for John Ernst and Gloria Benefato on a recent Saturday afternoon.
- Finally, talk about combining 2 loves: I got to take our high school youth group rock climbing at Boulderdash Gym in Westlake.

Who knew being a pastor could be so fun!

He is risen indeed!

Pastor Tim

Church Council Report – Pastor Steve Herder – May 4, 2024

Today, again, we are thanking God for the leaders, members (all ministers), and staff of Ascension church, school, ECC, and Foundation, for how God blesses us to be a blessing to one another, our community, and world, **to love with the love of Jesus!**

This morning was an outstanding quarterly meeting with our [Foundation](#) Trustees, led by Foundation president, Stefano Borzone.

From left to right: Anita Cohen, Paul Evenson, Susanne Hopkins, Alan Baker, Roy Sanchez, Stefano Borzone, and Lori Hillman. Four that could be with us are Sandra Howe, Don Weeks, Doug Morrow, and Jim Thompson. (For good reasons!)



Alan is our council rep and will report more to you, but here are some of the morning highlights. Treasurer Roy Sanchez shared the very positive news that the nine-month net change in investments, that ended March 31, was up 16.6% since June 30, 2023. The fund balance is \$1,783,780. Today we gave away almost \$17k in scholarships to 16 undergrad and grad students, as well as \$10k total to two seminary students, Naomi Mbise and Regina Banks. For grant requests we gave a total of over \$21k, divided among Ray of Life Solar Lights Kits (and water filtration kits) for Ukraine, one education event to discern the call to pastoral ministry, a Soroptimist women's scholarship fund, and help to make our Bethlehem Room more welcoming to the many community groups that use it, mostly support groups. We are also excited to give \$5k to start an Endowment Fund for our school.

The recent **school Gala and Auction** was highly successful and fun, and our Foundation was well represented and recognized at it. A big shout out to our School



staff, Principal Rich Gregory, event coordinator Sara Wallace, and all who helped make the Gala such a super event on April 20th! Great job Brock and Sherith Squires telling us about your school experiences. Very proud too of our ECC Director, Jenni McCoy and her staff; all but two ECC staff were able to come.

April's monthly benevolence was for a local ministry, the [Conejo Free Clinic](#). Deborah Kahn is medical clinic operations manager and is an Ascension member. The CFC provides medical, dental, and legal services free of charge to the most vulnerable in our community. Our Monday morning women's Bible studies gave gifts for the CFC and for our ELCA missionary, Rev. Kristin Engstrom, who is now transitioning her work from Zambia to Madagascar.

Thank you, Ascension, for the 21 **welcome baskets**, \$690 in gift cards, \$400 in cash! Our Conejo Valley Refugee Team will distribute to newly arrived refugee families in Southern California. Thank you to our Global Ministries Team.

Our GMT big project for April and May is supporting **Ray of Life Solar Light Kits for Ukraine**. We hope to be able to send at least 100 of these precious gifts. [Here's the link if you'd like to help](#). Louise and Paul are leading this effort, and Andy Binsley taught



the Sunday morning class on it. Pastor Tim and Olha Isaieva (a Cal Lutheran grad student from Ukraine) presented, in worship, about our Ray of Life ministry. The photo on the right is of our GMT and friends who assembled ten of the kits. This is a one-of-a-kind solar powered light source, made in the USA, providing light up to 18 hours of 1000 lumen light for families without power. Ray of Life can also charge a cell phone to keep in touch with loved ones. Bringing hope and light to the people in Ukraine!

Here's the Tuesday group from **Community Concerns** prepping meals for the food ministry for Harbor House at Holy Trinity. If you'd like to help, talk with Tania or Barry Disselhorst, or our chairperson, Chris Daleiden. Let her know too if you'd like to help with our Friday food pantry. Donations to our food pantry are always needed.



What a joy for our [Fair Trade Ministries](#) to have some great improvements made to our FT Lane! If you'd like to learn more, or help, talk with Carol Bjelland.



On April 8 and 9 our staff was re-certified by Di Starzak in our CPR and AED, first aid, training.



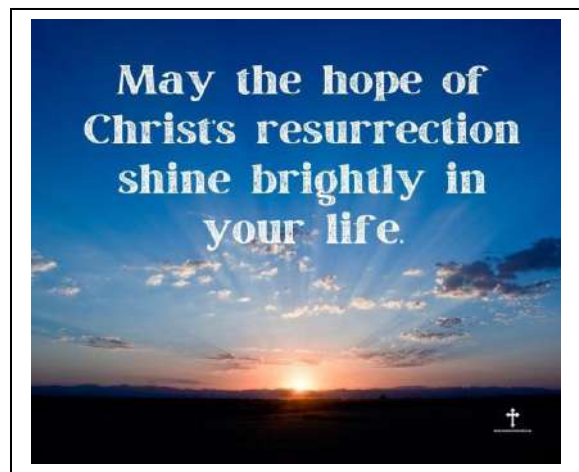
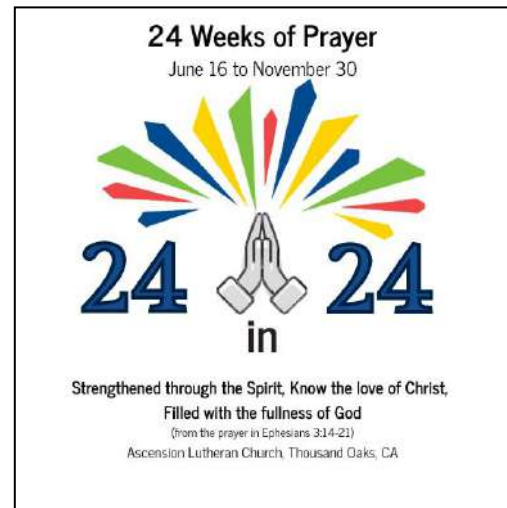
Other April highlights included: Pastor Paul's baptizing Preston James Harrison; the Call Committee update on April 14 to the group gathered in Founders Hall, and their prayer requests; Sunday classes by the Evensons on their border experience, Pastor Paul teaching on baptism, Fair Trade class and taste testing, and the Ukraine class; the Arete concert at Cal Lutheran; Earth Day; the food fellowship after worship; plus, **all our regular ministries** of prayer, Senior Adult Ministries, Christian Life Hours at senior living places, Monday Morning Women's Bible Studies, Stephen Ministries, GriefShare, a team prepping for our next Blessings of Our Pets (Sat. Oct. 5), **each ministry that happens so faithfully each month.**

Thanks to the ten who represented us at the 25th Annual **Prayer Breakfast** May 2 at Cal Lutheran. Carolyn Coleman-Grady, Carrie Leonard, Jenelle Smith, Rich Gregory, Kim Overton, Kirsten and Karsten Lundring, Kaylee Searway, Pastor Tim, and me.



Most importantly, for this past month, was pastoral care for several of you, with much time in prayer and care, at home or in the hospital. We are deeply grieving with you the deaths of three of our dear brothers in Christ, **Dr. Al Leland** who died on April 21, **Dick Ruwe** on April 25, and **Don Meyer** on April 28. We send our love to all their family and friends. Dick's service will be first, on May 11 at 2:00pm, then Don's service on June 1 at 2:30pm, and Al's service on June 8 at 11:00am. We thank God for each of these tremendous men of faith and for their love of God, family, the church, and the community. May Jesus our Good Shepherd bless them forever and hold their families closely. (The services should be livestreamed if you cannot be here in person.)

Finally, we are working on a special prayer emphasis for us, for **24 weeks in 2024!** This will be from **June 16 to November 30**. The team that has been planning this are Carolyn Coleman-Grady, Linda Morrow, Kaylee Searway, Stacy Bosco, Pastor Tim, and me. Other leaders have been adding excellent ideas, and prayers. So far, we have been brainstorming many more ideas than what we could implement, so keep us in prayer as we give more focus to what God is calling us to in these 24 weeks. Reach out to me with your ideas or if you'd like to help. pastorsteve@alcto.org



Ascension Lutheran School Board Agenda for 4/29/24 Mtg. at 6:30 p.m.

On Campus (Library) & WebEx

1. Call to Order
2. Remembering Our Mission
3. Opening Devotion/Prayer
4. Approval of Consent Agenda
 - Previous School Board Meeting Minutes
 - Principal's Report
 - ECC Director's Report
 - Church Council Rep Report
 - Finance Reports
 - Admissions Report

Old Business:

1. State of Schools – Rich and Jenni
2. Discussion on any reports pulled from Consent Agenda
3. Surplus authority for handbook

New Business:

4. ECC Parent's Handbook approval
5. Preliminary 2024-2025 budget review
6. Summer Project Planning
7. Pillars Update – Pillar 1: To Create Wise Stewards of God's Creation

Adjournment

Executive Session

1. One Topic

Closing Prayer - Rich
Adjournment

**Ascension Lutheran School Board Meeting Minutes
April 29, 2024**

Remembering Our Mission:

***Church:** We are called to create opportunities for all people to become devoted followers of Christ.*

***ECC:** In a loving Christian community that is rooted in nature, our young learners have large amounts of time to investigate, explore, and have hands-on learning experiences. Our teachers facilitate problem solving, encourage collaboration, and foster independent thinkers through play-based opportunities.*

***Elementary School:** Ascension Lutheran School is dedicated to nurturing each student, providing academic excellence and creating bold, compassionate leaders who inspire and serve others in their walk with Jesus Christ.*

ONE ASCENSION Motto: COMMUNICATION, COLLABORATION & COMMUNITY

Attendees:

Jenni McCoy, Rich Gregory, Connie, Angress, Kaylee Searway, Ashley Steere, Chris Poveromo, Kathy Roshanai, Anna Woodward, Kyle Jones, Scott Bean, Steve Smuck, Mary Bordokas, Mike Marvin

Absent: Nelly Trumbo, Jocelyn Myers

Call to Order:

Ashley called the meeting to order at 6:37pm.

The board recited together the mission statements of the church, ECC and elementary school.

Devotion:

Steve Smuck lead the devotion on thanksgiving and focusing on the goal: Philippians 4:6-7.

Approval of Agenda and Consent Agenda:

Rich presented the Principal's Report, focused on the Gala results. We are projected to hit our fundraising budget for the Gala on a net basis.

Jenny presented the ECC Director's report focused on their state licensing CCL regarding our armed guard requirements.

Chris asked to pull the finance report. Chris had a question on the finance reports specific to including headcount on the payroll budgets.

Steve asked to pull the employee handbook. He had a question on what Reproductive Leave. Kaylee commented that this was a new state requirement that this is not a paid leave, but a job protection leave.

Motion to approve agenda and consent agenda items initiated by Kyle moves to approve. Steve seconded. Motion passes.

Old Business:

Employee Handbooks

- Employee handbooks for ALS and ECC were approved within the consent agenda.

Financials

- Mike presented the preliminary 2024/ 2025 ALS ECC Consolidated budget. The final budget will be presented in May with some one-time wish list expenses.

New Business:

Summer Project Planning

- Rich commented that we do not have a comprehensive list of projects yet, but we have identified a few that are most important. There will be a comprehensive list provided with a final budget in May.
 1. Turning the business office into a classroom.
 2. Turning the former Sunday School Office into an office for Connie's new position.
 3. ECC new TUFF Shed, clearing a site for a break area, and finishing pavers.

Pillar 1 Report from Jenni & Rich – To Create Wise Stewards of God's Creation

- Two ECC team members (Jess and Jessica) lead a workshop with ALS staff on the importance of messy play, risk in the environment, loose parts, and building curriculum.

ECC Handbook

- Jenni edited the ECC Handbook from 36 pages to 19 making it as concise as possible without commentary. Jenni made one change regarding the details of the sick policy.

Chris moved to approve; Anna seconded. Motion passed with no dissenting members.

Surplus Authority in the School Board Handbook

- Ashley presented one item on the school board handbook that needs to be discussed and agreed upon regarding budget surplus policy. It was decided to keep the current wording on surplus expenses.

Executive Session:

The school board meeting moved into executive session at 8:25pm. Rich, Jenni and Kaylee were invited to stay. All other guests were excused.

Closing Prayer:

Rich closed the meeting with prayer.

Adjournment:

Ashley motioned to adjourn the meeting and reconvene for executive session. Anna seconded. Meeting was adjourned at 8:25pm.

Next school board meeting is May 20th.

The devotion schedule for the remainder of the year is as follows:

May – Anna

June – Scott

Respectfully submitted by Chris Poveromo

**ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH
FOUNDATION REPORT TO THE COUNCIL
MAY 15, 2024**

The financial markets had another very strong quarter to begin 2024, and the Foundation investment portfolio increased significantly. The total value of the investments as of March 31 was \$1,783,780 up from \$1,629,948 on December 31. The equity portion of the investment portfolio remains near the upper end of the allowable range of 75% of the total, reflecting our belief that equities currently are more attractive than fixed income investments.

At its May meeting the Foundation approved 18 scholarships totaling \$25,830. Most of the scholarships were in the \$1,000 range, but two seminary scholarships were approved at \$5,000 each.

Four grants were also approved:

- \$3,000 to the Global Ministries team to help fund Ray of Life light kits and water purification filters for the Ukraine
- \$800 to sponsor Jude Klemp for a summer program at Westmont College to discern a call into the pastoral ministry
- \$2,000 to Soroptimist International to sponsor one “Live Your Dream” award
- \$13,252 to Kaylee Searway to refurbish flooring and ceilings in the Bethlehem Room and the church offices

The Foundation has scheduled presentations on legacy planning and stewardship for September 15 and November 3.

Alan Baker
Foundation Representative to the Council

As the church year nears its end, I thought it might be a good time for an update on recent data for our ALCTO.org website.

ALCTO.org does not include any data about the newsletter; TWAA was split into its own entity in January 2022.

In the last 30 days, ALCTO.org had 1,435 visits. In the last 90 days, 4,110. Here is the breakdown for top 10 page visits for 30 days/90 days:

Livestream 605/1,888

Calendar 308/693

Career Opportunities 108/281

Meet the Pastors 106/248

Be the Blessing Grants, Spiritual Gifts/Ministries 96/186

Staff Directory 82/169

Signups/Announcements 76/156

Links to Past Livestream Worship Services 59/111

About our Worship Services 39/128

Vacation Bible School 53/107

Shifts in page popularity come and go. As you can see, VBS is climbing, while Seasonal Worship, which drew 89 views at Easter time, did not make the top 25 for this past month. Welcome, Find Help, GriefShare, CYF, High School Youth, Music, and Life Groups were in the top 25 for both periods. The Map and Directions page is also reliably in the top 25.

With gratitude for your work, wisdom and dedication,

Stacy Smith Bosco



Wednesday, May 8, 2024

4-5:30 PM, Bethlehem Room

Mission Statement: With our congregation, we are "called to create opportunities for all people to become devoted followers of Christ." Together we "invite, grow, serve."

The Global Ministries Team will do this as we pray, work, partner and participate in God's mission around the world, using our ELCA global mission model of accompaniment. ("God's work. Our hands.") The scope of current ministries as well as those ministries we would like to better serve and support is reflected in our name. Inspired by the Biblical mandates to preach the Gospel and remember the poor, the Global Ministries Team will respond to God's love by sharing the good news of God's saving grace in Christ; preserving and restoring creation; and **serving others through** care, **advocacy**, education, reconciliation, solidarity with those in need, and interfaith work.

AGENDA

WELCOME

OPENING PRAYER

1. **FOCUS: ADVOCACY: God's Work. Our Voices**
 - a. **GLOBAL REFUGE (Lutheran Immigration & Refugee Service)**
 - i. Pastor Eric Shafer, pastor in resident
 - b. **ELCA -Lutheran Office of Public Policy**
 - i. Regina Banks, executive director
 - c. **Bread for the World video: Life is Fragile 4:30 min**
 - i. "Life is fragile...and that's not something that any child should experience." Jose Soto Rivera
2. **Review of GMT Monthly Reports and Volunteer Needs (5:00-5:30 PM)**

Center for Global Engagement, CLU

Fair Trade

Gifts of Hope

Ray of Life Solar Light kits

Lutheran Lobby Day

Vacation Bible School, 6/24-28, VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

- 3. SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT: Mission Trip to El Salvador, August 1-6, 2024**
Contact: Valerie Constantino at Valerie.constantino@gmail.com for application, related forms, questions.
- 4. Next meeting, June 12 2024, 4PM Bethlehem Room.**
FOCUS: Disbursements from our budget accounts for fiscal year 2023-24. Planning for 2024-25 fiscal year.

MAY

May 8	Global Ministries Team meeting, 4-5:30 PM, Bethlehem Room
May 9	Fair Trade Lane open, 2:30-4:00 PM
May 10	CLU Graduation Day
May 15	Lutheran Lobby Day, Sacramento. Register by May 7.
May 18-19	50 th Anniversary of Scandinavian Festival, Kingsmen Park, CLU noon-7PM
May 18	Fair Trade Snack & Tasting Event, 2PM, Beverly Selle's home. RSVP by 5/16.
May 19	Fair Trade Lane open, 10:00-11:30 AM

JUNE

June 9	Fair Trade Lane open, 10-11:30 AM Adult Class 10:30-11:15 AM Founders Hall
June 12	Global Ministries Team meeting, 4-5:30 PM, Bethlehem Room
June 20	United Nations designated international World Refugee Day
June 22-23	World Refugee Day worship emphasis
June 24-28	Vacation Bible School, God's Creation, VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

OTHER DATES to NOTE

July 14 & August 18	Fair Trade Lane open, 10:00-11:30 AM
September 8	GOD'S WORK. OUR HANDS. ELCA annual day of service.

ELCA EL SALVADOR MISSION TRIP, 2024 August 1-6, 2024. jjjacks7651@aol.com

GMT MEETINGS with Proposed focus presentations, 4 pm BETHLEHEM ROOM

May 8	FOCUS: ADVOCACY: GOD'S WORK. OUR VOICES LIRS (Global Refuge), ELCA Lutheran Office of Public Policy
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June 12 FOCUS: Budget decisions for 2023-24 Fiscal Year. (ALC's budget year is July 1-June 30.) Designated accounts for GMT projects. Determinations for budget priorities in 2024-25.

There will be no Global Ministry Team meetings in July and August.

May 4, 2024

FAIR TRADE MINISTRY

DATE: May 1, 2024

SUBMITTED BY: Carol Bjelland

1. WHAT'S COMING UP? (What? When? Where?)

Fair Trade Lane is open Thursday, May 9th (2:30-4 PM).

Fair Trade Lane is open Sunday, May 19th (10-11:30 AM). This is Confirmation Sunday. We'll be giving each of the Confirmands a little package of Fair Trade chocolate along with a note inviting them to join us. (FYI: a student in the 7th grade Confirmation Class joined us Sunday April 21st in setting up and helping people on Fair Trade Lane. We look forward to having her join us in May.)

Fair Trade Wine & Snack Tasting Event is Saturday, May 18th at 2 PM. Beverly has graciously offered to open her home in Camarillo for the event. We'll be learning about & tasting a line of Organic, Fair Trade & Sustainably produced wines from Argentina as well as learning about & tasting Items from Fair Trade Lane including cheese, crackers/pita chips, nuts, dried fruit & chocolate. There will be a few surprise treats too. \$25/per person participation fee. No ministry or church funds will be used for this event – costs covered by the participation fee. Participants must be over 21 yrs old. RSVP sign-up by May 16th by email to fairtrade@alcto.org with contact information and number attending. We'll keep a waitlist when sign-up list is filled.

2. VOLUNTEERS NEEDED (What? When? Where?)

Volunteers invited to help with Fair Trade Lane May 9th and May 19th.

It would be great to have 1 or 2 Wine Tasting attendees help with transporting materials & setting up on the 18th.

3. LOOKING AHEAD (Important calendar dates)

Fair Trade Lane Open Dates/Times:

Sunday, June 9: (10-11:30AM)

Sunday, July 14: (10-11:30AM)

Sunday, August 18: (10-11:30AM)

Sunday June 9th -Adult Ed Class in Founders Hall from 10:30-11:15 AM. Alternative Trade Embracing Fair Trade Fundamentals and More! Fabiola & Sabith will share with class attendees the story of Tlali- Pani and their very special work with women in Mexico. Their chocolate and textile products will be available for purchase. *(We thank Dr. Christina Sanchez for connecting us with Tlali-Pani via the CLU Earth Day celebrations in 2023 and 2024.)*

4. OTHER INFORMATION

The new doors for Fair Trade Lane have been installed and they are wonderful! We thank Kim & Jim Overton and Ascension's Foundation for their generous gifts that added the new outside awning & the new doors to Fair Trade Lane, making it a welcoming and joyful space. We'll be working with Jeff in the coming weeks to update the Fair Trade Lane art wall to accommodate beautiful images celebrating Fair Trade and Justice for People & Planet. Thank you to all who have donated the baskets lining Fair Trade Lane's top shelf providing a fun and helpful way to shop Fair Trade at Ascension!

5. FOR FURTHER INFORMATION. Contact: Carol Bjelland (carolb@netscape.com; fairtrade@alcto.org); 805-657-3731



MINISTRY OF Global Ministries Team-Ray of Life Solar Light Kits

DATE May 5, 2024

SUBMITTED BY Louise Evenson

1. WHAT'S COMING UP? (What? When? Where?)

Short videos about the progress of this project will be prepared for mid-May and through June to be used during worship service announcement time.

On going messages, including videos, in This Week at Ascension (TWAA) and worship slides will be prepared throughout May and June to encourage further donations. There will be an emphasis to give to this project in memory/honor of people such as for confirmation, graduation, Mother's Day, Father's Day, birthdays and celebration of life occasions. (Gift to Ascension, designated to Ray of Life project, in honor/memory of someone.)

A THANK YOU video will be prepared when the fundraising effort is complete.

A display of the number of lights we will be sending to Ukraine will be in the West Narthex in mid-May.

Thank you notes to each donor will be sent, written on a Words of Encouragement card.

An invitation to Ascension School has been sent asking them to designate their chapel offerings in May or June to this One Ascension service project.

2. VOLUNTEERS NEEDED (What? When? Where?)

Volunteers needed in mid-May and June after 9 and 10:30 worship services when display of lights is in narthex to share how many lights we are sending to Ukraine, and to give people giving cards if they would like to contribute.

Consider personally making a donation to this project in any amount and invite others to contribute also.

Provide ideas and personal contacts to any team member on how we can further promote this program in our church community and within the wider community.

3. SPECIAL THANKS

Please extend your thanks to Pastor Tim for his public support of this project through his participation in assembling a solar light kit, for the ROL children's message with Olha on April 28th, and in his conversations with individuals. Pastor Steve as our GMT advisor is also the pastoral advisor to the ALC Foundation and the Women's Monday Morning Bible Study. Our thanks to Pr Steve for involving both groups and others to respond to this service project in substantial ways.

Additional thanks to our ROL team: Christina Sanchez, Mary Wennes, Edith Ott, Paul Evenson, Pastor Steve Herder, Beverly Selle, Andy Binsley and Louise Evenson.

We are also grateful for the ALC Foundation doubling the amount of our grant request for this project.

Additional thanks to Andy Binsley for leading the Adult Education Class on April 28th and for submitting the grant proposal to the ALC Foundation, to Beverly Selle for inviting students to the kit assembly on April 13th and for making homemade borscht for the fellowship time between services on April 28th, to Christina Sanchez who brought Olha to/from our worship services on April 28th, to Paul Evenson who ordered a sample water purification kit to show ALC foundation members and for creating the "invitation to give to ROL" form (see attached), to Sara Wallace for making the worship video, to Stacy Smith for her graphic work for TWAA, to Emiliee for printing encouragement cards and ordering pew envelopes, to Jenelle for preparing worship slides, and to the financial team of Diane, Mike and Camryn for processing the donations and providing the financial statements for the project. Of course, we also send our thanks to Dave Nonnemacher who is our guide and inspiration for this meaningful project and who connects us to the Ukrainian people who deliver these kits within Ukraine.

4. FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT Louise Evenson or Pastor Steve Herder AT lpevenson@aol.com and/or pastorsteve@alcto.org.



Wednesday, April 10 2024

4-5:30 PM, Bethlehem Room

Meeting Notes

Meeting Notes

WELCOME Greetings to all Edith, Marcia, Andy, Paul, Louise, Mary, Christina, & Pastor Steve

OPENING PRAYER Louise Evenson

1. FOCUS: CREATION CARE

Paul Evenson shared highlights from ELCA SOCIAL STATEMENT on the Climate Crisis, 2023

"We of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America believe God's intention revealed through the Scriptures is that all people have life abundantly and flourish.

"We believe God yearns and strives for Earth's ecological well-being, and we trust that "God's faithfulness alone sustains the Church and renews our faith, hope, and love. As God's people we address the climate crisis with active hope rather than paralyzing despair. Captured by hope, we proclaim that God has made peace with all things through the blood of the cross (Colossians 1:15-20), and that the Spirit of God, 'the giver of life,' renews the face of the earth. May the Holy Spirit renew this church's sense of emergency and empower us to faithful and fervent action in this Kairos moment."

The ELCA has focused on creation care for 30+ years. Paul shared some reflections and referenced areas addressed in the ELCA's Earth's Climate Crisis booklet. A copy was given to everyone in attendance. Other copies are available and online at [ELCA.org/social statements](https://elca.org/social-statements). The ongoing challenge is in identifying agreement on the best strategy to address climate change, often due to disagreement regarding the foundational causes/problems. The Earth's Climate Crisis booklet aligns the responsibility of humans to care for God's work, links climate work to faith, and addresses concerns for the poor, such as food insecurity. Too often the individuals most impacted by climate change are the poor.

A video was shared of Katharine Hayhoe, Climate Scientist (ASPEN IDEAS, March 2024) speaking about climate change.

"HOPE is the best weapon against climate change. When we realize that the future is in our hands, that means we can make a difference. That is what hope is based on." Katharine Hayhoe
Katharine Hayhoe. (2021). *Saving Us: A Climate Scientist's Case for Hope and Healing in a Divided World*.

Reiterated that climate change affects us all but not equally. The problem is here, the impact now. She promoted a focus on adaptation and resilience. Hayhoe also emphasized a need to take action immediately, not waiting for the youth to fix the problem. She framed the charge as an act of practicing hope. Hayhoe encouraged everyone to be vocal about the need to speak out

since only 1/3 of the population speaks up while 2/3 are concerned about the effects of climate change.

DISCUSSION: The group discussed ways in which we are upholding God's creation work, in professional and personal capacities. Some examples included: 2nd prayer petition every Sunday is provided as a reminder of our need to take care of God's Earth; use hybrid or electric cars and/or electric bicycles; recycle (Did you know that USPS will take the packaging peanuts and bubble wrap to reuse?); compost; stop burning wood; take your own "to go" container and /or coffee mug/thermos when going out; drop off used batteries/old electronics to Best Buy.

RESOURCES: Louise will send a list of websites/newsletters/resources to the group.

Call to Action: We are seeking a champion to lift up this work to support Creation Care. Contact Louise or speak with Pastor Steve if interested or share a referral for someone who may be interested.

- ALC's Green Faith team might be a connector for the Creation Care effort and could assist us to identify a champion for ALC.

2. Review of GMT Monthly Reports and Volunteer Needs (5:00-5:30 PM)

WELCOME BASKETS for Refugees: The group noted that it was good to have this for a Lenten project and recommended we consider doing this again in the future.

Center for Global Engagement: ALC's Fair Trade team will join CLU's April Earth Day/Sustainability Fair on April 19th. Programming at the CGE will pause until the fall.

Fair Trade: For 2023, Ascension Fair Trade was a top ten leader nationally in congregation sales of Equal Exchange items.

Ray of Life Solar Light kits: All of the worship services on April 27-28 will feature the ROL project. Olha will attend to share about Ukraine and interact with others. Andy Binsley will lead the Adult Education class on this project.

Lutheran Lobby Day: May 15 in Sacramento. Regina Banks leads the ELCA Lutheran Office of Public Policy in CA and will be presenting at our May 8th GMT meeting via zoom.

Announcements:

- Jenny Klemp is leading VBS at ALC, June 24-28 with the theme of ELCA World Hunger. A service project with children on June 27th will prepare snack bags for Many Mansions. Volunteers are needed to help.
- Eric LeCompte of Jubilee-USA Network is receiving an honorary doctorate in ministry from Catholic Theological Union. A future session with LeCompte is being planned for the GMT for the fall, 2024.
- Bread of World meeting: Join the group for insights on humanitarian crisis from Gaza + other hot spots on Thursday, April 18 at 5pm.
- Mission Trip to El Salvador, August 1-6, 2024
Contact: Valerie Constantino at Valerie.constantino@gmail.com for application, related forms, questions.

3. **Next Meeting**, May 8 2024, 4PM Bethlehem Room. FOCUS: Advocacy

Submitted by Christina Sanchez