



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
Monday, March 18th, 2024 – 7:00 PM
Location: Sunrise Conf 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

Open Forum

GMT – Ray of Life Project

Louise

Informational Items-

Nomination Committee Update

Ed

New Business –

Fundraising Request – Ray of Life Project

Jeannette

Old Business

Get/Be The Blessing

Ed

Presentation of Treasurer's Report –

Dave

Recurring Business

Affirm New Members, Confirmations & Baptisms

All

Action Items Action Tracker -

Kaylee

Approval of Minutes –

Feb 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 Report

5. GMT Report

Adjournment

Closing Prayer

Reminder -

Devotion for April meeting is Dave Harkins! Thank you!

FUND RAISING REQUEST FORM

MINISTRY: Global Ministries Team DATE: March 3, 2024

SUBMITTED BY: Louise Evenson

DESCRIPTION OF EVENT: The Global Ministries Team would like to raise funds for Ray of Life solar light kits (\$125) and VF100 water filters (\$25) to send to Ukraine for those who have neither electricity or drinking water. The solar light kits, when full charged, will provide light for 21 hours. The VF100 water filters, approved by the World Health Organization, will provide fresh drinking water for 400 liters of water. We would like your approval to invite people of the Ascension community to contribute financially to this service project. We would like to request their gifts through This Week at Ascension, a mailing, and through personal invitations in May and June.

DATE AND TIME OF EVENT: April-June, 2024

ONE TIME/ RECURRING: One time

CHURCH RESOURCES REQUIRED: Primarily we will need church facilities and staff time. For example, on April 13th, we will be assembling 10 solar light kits in Founders Hall for publicity purposes. We will be leading an adult education class on April 28th in the Library. Additionally, staff resources will include Stacy Smith who we'll work with for This Week at Ascension articles/graphics as well as Worship slides. We will also work with the finance office for on line giving through our website for this project. Our maintenance crew will also be setting up/taking down the rooms we need for this project. Of course, we couldn't do this with out the guiding hand of Pastor Steve Herder and the commitment of the Global Ministries Team.

For questions or more information, contact Louise Evenson Lpevenson@aol.com or Pastor Steve Herder pastorsteve@alcto.org

CHURCH RESOURCES CHARGE

OFFICE/ADMINISTRATOR APPROVAL:  DATE: 3/7/24

COUNCIL APPROVAL: _____ DATE: _____

SPECIAL CONDITIONS:

Treasurer's Report for March 2024

The Church financial summary and ECC/School summary through February 2024 are appended to this report.

Year to Date Church Operating Results

February reversed the revenue shortfall from the prior month. Offerings exceeded budget projection by \$58K. Our year to date contribution shortfall is \$24K, or about -2.4%, and only -2.2% when all revenues are considered. Comparing this fiscal year to the \$932,146 reported through February, contributions are up by slightly more than 3%. A point to consider in preparing next year's budget next month.

The expense side of the budget continues to be better than expectations, mostly driven by staffing shortages. The absence of a youth director and the vacant Associate Pastor position will continue to drive the variance for a while. Overall, actual to budget shows a \$45.6K favorability. The annual audit expense is still not booked but has been completed and paid for this month (published audit results are not yet available, but word of mouth indications are favorable). After accounting for audit costs, the results are still favorable by \$35.6.

School Financials

The favorable variance between budget and actual has diminished slightly from last month but is still a very favorable \$53.5K. The primary reason for the drop is advance payments for the upcoming Gala (about \$10K) and pre-payment of field trip expenses prior to parent payments being received (about \$10K as well).

Respectfully submitted,

Dave Harkins

Ascension Lutheran Church
 Budget Summary
 YTD through February 29, 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	988,128	964,020	(24,108)	-2.4%
Other Revenues	37,700	25,900	27,739	1,839	7.1%
Total Revenues:	1,480,910	1,014,028	991,759	(22,269)	-2.2%
Expenditures:					
Salaries & Benefits	1,153,170	793,754	751,250	42,504	5.4%
Allocated Staff Expenses	(183,202)	(124,709)	(131,342)	6,633	-5.3%
Benevolences	62,780	41,619	41,935	(316)	-0.8%
Programs / Committees	66,832	46,073	43,846	2,227	4.8%
Administrative Expenses	102,950	73,042	52,511	20,530	28.1% 10k Audit yet to be paid
Property Maintenance	93,750	70,833	77,069	(6,236)	-8.8%
Utilities & Insurance	94,774	63,991	61,446	2,545	4.0%
Operating Expenditures	1,391,054	964,603	896,715	67,889	7.0%
Debt Service	99,675	66,450	66,450	-	0.0%
Total Expenditures	1,490,730	1,031,054	963,165	67,889	6.6%
Operating Surplus / (Deficit)	(9,820)	(17,026)	28,594	45,619	
Prior Year Surplus Spend	-	-	-		
PPP spend	-	-	96,844		\$50k Be the Blessing

Ascension Lutheran School & Early Childhood Center

FYE24 Actual vs Budget results

Through February 29, 2024

	Consolidated				ALS				ECC			
	FY 24 Budget	YTD Budget YTD	YTD Actual YTD	YTD Variance	FY 24 Budget	YTD Budget YTD	YTD Actual YTD	YTD Variance	FY 24 Budget	YTD Budget YTD	YTD Actual YTD	YTD Variance
Revenue:												
Tuition and Fees	\$4,004,480	\$2,809,527	\$2,748,607	(\$60,920)	\$1,862,670	\$1,296,030	\$1,281,805	(\$14,225)	\$2,141,810	\$1,513,497	\$1,466,802	(\$46,695)
Extended Care	\$109,650	\$75,355	\$66,431	(\$8,924)	\$28,000	\$18,200	\$14,833	(\$3,367)	\$81,650	\$57,155	\$51,598	(\$5,558)
Summer Staycation	\$355,100	\$178,250	\$197,821	\$19,571	\$40,000	\$25,000	\$43,828	\$18,828	\$315,100	\$153,250	\$153,993	\$743
Net Fundraising Receipts	\$135,000	\$50,000	\$56,243	\$6,243	\$135,000	\$50,000	\$53,984	\$3,984	\$0	\$0	\$2,259	\$2,259
Other Income	\$24,750	\$16,792	\$24,988	\$8,197	\$5,000	\$3,000	\$4,483	\$1,483	\$19,750	\$13,792	\$20,506	\$6,714
Total Revenue	\$4,628,980	\$3,129,924	\$3,094,091	(\$35,833)	\$2,070,670	\$1,392,230	\$1,398,933	\$6,703	\$2,558,310	\$1,737,694	\$1,695,158	(\$42,536)
Expenditures:												
Salaries & Benefits	\$3,395,334	\$2,203,148	\$2,078,392	(\$124,755)	\$1,562,351	\$1,019,012	\$954,161	(\$64,851)	\$1,832,983	\$1,184,135	\$1,124,231	(\$59,904)
Allocated Staff Expenses	\$183,202	\$125,575	\$128,262	\$2,687	\$102,386	\$69,821	\$68,973	(\$848)	\$80,816	\$55,754	\$59,289	\$3,535
School Expenses	\$166,964	\$139,867	\$152,123	\$12,256	\$92,064	\$84,417	\$97,240	\$12,823	\$74,900	\$55,450	\$54,883	(\$567)
Admin & Staff Dev Expenses	\$168,592	\$123,952	\$135,372	\$11,420	\$104,157	\$76,805	\$96,037	\$19,233	\$64,435	\$47,147	\$39,334	(\$7,813)
Property Service & Maintenance	\$258,828	\$191,755	\$195,193	\$3,438	\$138,834	\$102,276	\$103,952	\$1,676	\$119,994	\$89,479	\$91,241	\$1,762
Utilities & Insurance	\$180,605	\$120,487	\$122,254	\$1,768	\$87,469	\$58,479	\$56,284	(\$2,195)	\$93,136	\$62,007	\$65,970	\$3,963
Total Expenditures	\$4,353,525	\$2,904,784	\$2,811,596	(\$93,188)	\$2,087,261	\$1,410,811	\$1,376,648	(\$34,163)	\$2,266,264	\$1,493,973	\$1,434,948	(\$59,025)
Operating Surplus (Deficit)	\$275,455	\$225,140	\$282,495	\$57,355	(\$16,591)	(\$18,581)	\$22,285	\$40,866	\$292,046	\$243,720	\$260,209	\$16,489
Less: Debt Service	\$163,440	\$108,960	\$108,960	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$163,440	\$108,960	\$108,960	\$0
Plus: Prior Year Fin Aid Temp Restricted Gifts Offset	\$30,600	\$20,400	\$16,506	(\$3,894)	\$30,600	\$20,400	\$16,506	(\$3,894)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Adjusted Operating Surplus (Deficit)	\$142,615	\$136,580	\$190,040	\$53,461	\$14,009	\$1,819	\$38,791	\$36,971	\$128,606	\$134,760	\$151,249	\$16,489
Spend from Prior Year Surplus			\$ 50,289				\$ 52,170				\$ (1,880)	
Spend from PPP Funds			\$ 43,679				\$ 43,679				\$ -	

New Members & Baptisms Report

March 2024

Baptisms for February

Name	Date of Birth	Date Baptized
No Baptisms		

New Members for February

Marie Dayal

Rakesh Dayal

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		Fred needs some initial financial and project information before we schedule an onsite visit. Kaylee and Jeff are compiling proposals; the completed audit will inform the finance aspect.
13	Budget for new fiscal year	Kaylee, Mike, Camryn	Feb	June	Tuition increases and a salary matrix for homeroom teachers has been approved by the School Board. February results are in; Kaylee, Mike, Camryn, Jenni McCoy, and Rich Gregory are crunching numbers!
14	Employee Engagement Survey	Kaylee	March	each April/May	Kaylee will confer with Ashley Steere to obtain updated objectives from the School Board for metrics they are interested in obtaining from teachers and staff.
15	Senior Pastor's Review	Jeannette		May	
16	Names to Nominating Committee	council		Spring	

**Ascension Lutheran Church
Council Meeting Minutes
February 21, 2024 at 7:30 p.m.**

The council meeting was called to order by Jeannette Ruggiero at 7:51 p.m.

Council Members In Attendance: Al Baker, Rachael Bowen, Dave Harkins, Carrie Leonard, John Rarick, Jeannette Ruggiero, Anna Woodward

Others: Pastor Tim, Kaylee Searway

Absent: Bonny Chick, Ed Klodt

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

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

New Business

1. Employee Handbook Update Approval - Kaylee

Changes to the employee handbook include an increase in the number of sick hours allowed for new employees from 24 to 40 in the first year of employment per the new California law. This could have a financial impact.

A motion was made (Carrie), seconded (Anna), and passed unanimously to approve the changes to the Employee Handbook as presented.

2. Bank Resolution Update - Kaylee

Pastor Julie is removed as a signer for the Agape fund account.

A motion was made (Al), seconded (Dave), and passed unanimously to approve the Bank Resolution as presented.

3. March Council Meeting proposed for March 18th - Jeannette

This will be a joint meeting with the School Board starting with dinner at 5:00 pm, the joint meeting at 5:30, and the Council meeting at 7:00.

A motion was made (Al), seconded (John), to approve the change for the date and time of the March Council meeting.

Informational Items

1. Transitional Plan – Pastor Tim

Both the Call committee and the Youth Director Search committee have started meeting. The Ministry Site Profile has been accepted and posted by the Synod, thanks to the excellent work by Kaylee and Carrie. Pastor Tim and Carrie met with the Call committee for their first couple of meetings to facilitate the start of the process, sharing foundational and organizational guidelines. Carrie was instrumental in helping the members of the committee get better acquainted.

Four applications have been received for the Youth Director position and there is hope that more will come in. At the next Youth Group meeting this Sunday, the youth will be asked to share what they are looking for in a youth director. ALS principal Rich Gregory will also be a participant in the search process. The recent School Board retreat included a discussion of the role of the youth director in reaching out to school children, getting them involved in church activities.

Old Business

1. Get/Be the Blessing Update – Kaylee

- The Be the Blessing committee is ready to receive applications. The form is on-line at Ascension's website.
- Another grant has been approved. It is a request from the Global Ministries Team for funds to make welcome baskets for refugee families. The plan is to involve many of Ascension's ministry groups in this project.
- The process to request / process / remit funds has been streamlined.
- Feedback and pictures from Be the Blessing projects can be shared with the congregation to energize this service effort.
- None of the projects so far have led to on-going ministries. The hope is that these projects will lead to the implementation of new on-going ministries.

2. Land Sale – Kaylee

There is a meeting with the City of T.O. on Friday. The parking study requested by the City is in progress.

3. Reserve Study – Kaylee

The check for the company we've engaged, Reserve Studies, has been sent. Now on to the consuming task of gathering the details needed for the report.

Treasurer's Report – Dave Harkins

Giving for January was approximately 9% below budget. An analysis shows that, in some cases, families will have a gap in giving and then give a large donation. On-line giving is popular with younger members. On-line giving makes it harder to tie receipts to the number of people in attendance each weekend. Both scenarios present challenges in trying to forecast revenue from month to month. Fortunately, February looks to be a stronger month of giving. Overall, expenses continue to be under budget, primarily due to staffing shortages.

Financials for the ECC and school are strong, approximately \$60,000 in the black.

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

Recurring Business

Affirm New Members, Confirmations and Baptisms – 13 new members were received in January and affirmed by the Council.

Action Items Action Tracker – Budget amounts for the School Tuition Compensation have been worked out.

Approval of Minutes – Jeannette

1. January Church Council Meeting

A motion was made (Carrie), seconded (Anna), and passed unanimously to approve the minutes for the January Council meeting.

2. February 4th Special Congregational Meeting

A motion was made (Anna), seconded (John) to approve the minutes for the February 4th Special Congregational meeting.

Discussion: It was confirmed that 21 names, versus the original list of 60, were presented to Council at the December Council meeting as potential nominees for the Call Committee.

The motion passed unanimously.

Consent Approval of Reports to Council

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

A motion was made (Al), seconded (Anna) to approve the Reports to Council.

Discussion:

The GMT report includes information about this committee's Lenten Service project – the welcome baskets mentioned as part of the Be the Blessing update. A flyer was distributed to Council members.

The Call committee and Youth Director Search committee should be added to the Prayers for One Ascension Leadership page.

The Reports to Council were approved unanimously.

Reminder

Next Council meeting - Monday, March 18th at 5:00.

Closing Prayer – Pastor Tim

The meeting was adjourned at 8:49

Respectfully submitted by Rachael Bowen

Attendance

Our six week average is 333, slightly down from the 338 reported last month. Our online views of 1 minute or greater down slightly from 140 to 135. Ash Wednesday's 7:00 pm service brought 190 people to worship, and consequent Lenten services have averaged 79 people.

Maintenance

Cam, Jeff, and Jude have freshened up the paint on the large concrete staircase in the middle of campus and added some reflective strips to each stair to assist with visibility at night. Jeff has been painstakingly dissecting and reconstructing each of the four doors from the narthexes into sanctuary. He's reinforcing the structure so that the doors and frames can support the hinges.

One of the fun process improvements we are working on at the moment is a maintenance request form with tracking in Google Sheets. We hope it will allow anyone with a concern to communicate it effectively to the team, and that will help our team track and follow up on items of concern. We've tested the process with a couple of key individuals and we are planning to make adjustments before we broaden the test group. Stay tuned for more to come!

Sonrise Room Equipment

A new combination of camera, microphone and speaker has been ordered, and will; hopefully be installed in the next week. We see greater need for conference calls and zoom in our near future with so much work being done by the Call Committee and Youth Director Search Committee; this tech will be helpful when several groups need to meet at the same time.

Human Resources

I have distributed the updated Church Employee Handbook to the staff. They are currently reviewing it and sending me the signature pages, with a deadline of March 25th to have all the signature pages returned.

I've drafted the TK-8 Employee Handbook and asked some key individuals to confirm a couple of policies before it is ready for the School Board. The ECC will be next!

Pastor Tim has been recruiting, and Camryn has been following up with a crew of nursery attendants to offer child care during Sunday morning services. As soon as we have a couple of individuals hired and through their Safe Church training we'll be ready to roll out nursery care on Sunday mornings.

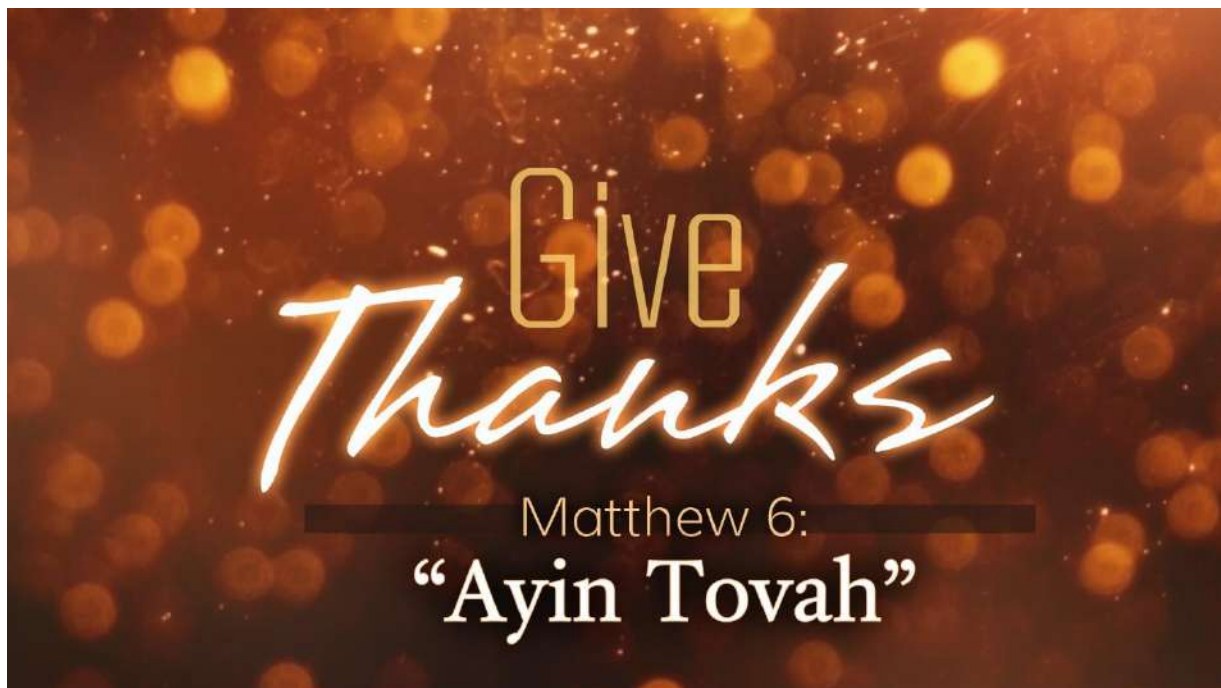
Camryn and I both served on the compensation committee for the School, and we recently got a significant pay raise into the salary matrix for homeroom teachers. We've both put in a fair amount of work validating and updating data. Staci Hammerschmidt and Rich Gregory are helping me confirm and verify how many university semester credits each teacher has obtained in addition to their degree so that we can make sure they are in the correct column of the salary matrix. It's important pre-work to preparing work agreements for the next academic year, a task I hope to have completed in late March and early April. Having very accurate tuition forecasts and salary projections is the first step toward a "rediculously accurate" budget.

Finance

As we round out completing the TK-8 compensation for next year I'm working to validate and then update the ECC's salary worksheet in a similar manner. Jenni, Brittani, and Karyn Ring have done an amazing job registering families for fall, filling in scheduling opportunities, and providing my team with very accurate tuition forecasts. As I alluded one paragraph ago and many times before, when we nail the revenue and largest expense on each entity (our people, as they should be), everything else becomes small potatoes on very detailed budgets...

I am going to keep this short as I have spreadsheets to update and budgets to create... thank you for allowing me and my team to serve.

Kaylee Searway





Church Council Report

Pastor Steve Herder

March 4, 2024

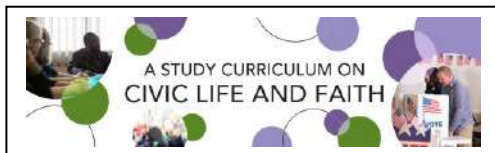
In this Lenten season we appreciate our worship leaders, and those who work behind the scenes, to make our worship services so meaningful. Pastor Tim, Principal Pastor Rich Gregory, Pastor Paul, and our Wednesday preachers have given



us outstanding sermons, and our music groups are each a huge blessing. Our sanctuary cross (on the left) and my purple stole (on the right) each show the "Jerusalem Cross," with the four smaller crosses around the larger cross, most widely interpreted as representing the five wounds of Christ.

On Sunday, March 3, was the sixth and final class in the ELCA series "Civic Life and Faith." My topic to lead was on how each of the parts of our worship services impacts our life of discipleship through each week, that is, how does it influence our civic engagement. Below is the link to each of the six sessions and the videos. We thank each of our teachers: Carol Bartell, Paul Evenson, Paul Gravrock, Ron Cox, and Karsten Lundring! The library was packed each week with eager participants.

[Studies for Civic Life and Faith - Evangelical Lutheran Church in America \(elca.org\)](https://www.elca.org/studies-for-civic-life-and-faith)



You see from the graphic above that our Ascension Facebook outreach is now up to 2,331 people. We do two to six posts every day. Each Monday Susanne Hopkins shares a devotion. May the written word of God, with a passage or a prayer that we post each day, keep pointing us to the Living Word of God, Jesus our Savior! We seek to use it as a good outreach ministry for our congregation, school, and foundation, and for our local and global ministries. The more that you like, "love," comment, or share, the more your friends and family can participate in the Ascension ministries, and have their faith strengthened. Thanks, Stacy, for our Instagram presence!

This past Sunday evening, we hosted the Conejo Interfaith Refugee Team and 88 people from various houses of faith, for a dessert potluck and for hearing the stories of refugees and those who work to help them settle here. (Eleven of us represented Ascension.) In 2023 our CIRT helped 50 families from 10 countries including Afghanistan, Ukraine, Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Thailand. Some of you help donate or move furniture! Our Matthew 25:35 Outreach Ministry Fund contributes to these needs as well.

Our Global Ministries Team is in the midst of promoting the assembly of Welcome Baskets for these refugees. Thank you to each ministry team, each family, each person that is working on assembling them. More updates will come from our GMT on this. Please see the GMT report in this council packet related to our [Fair Trade Ministries](#), the February focus on our missionaries, Pastor Kristin Engstrom in Zambia and Pastor Wal Reat in South Sudan, our new project Ray of Life for solar kits for the people in Ukraine, along with a water filter with each kit. A group also did Laundry Love with Friends of Fieldworkers! Louise Evenson is leading our team in amazing ways and we appreciate each person on our GMT. Thank you to our Church Council for the [Be the Blessing grant! We encourage all of you to brainstorm a ministry grant and to apply!](#)

Once every 18 months our ELCA holds a [national gathering for Hunger Leaders](#). Five of us from Thousand Oaks represented our Synod in Houston for this, Feb. 1-4. Mary Wennes and I were so pleased with how well our three friends from Cal Lutheran engaged in the whole gathering. They were CLU staff member Dulce, and students Angela and Freya. The five of us will report at our GMT meeting on March 6. The gathering honored the Wennes family for creating an [endowment that funds this national gathering](#)! It was a good time to remember with love and gratitude, Howie Wennes. (The photo on the right is with Rev. Dr. Haemin Lee, the new director of ELCA World Hunger.)



One other seed to plant, from the GMT, is that if you are interested in a synod trip to El Salvador in early August, see our chairperson, Louise Evenson, or me.

Your pastors would ask you to let us know when you are in the hospital and when you return home. Sometimes it's a short interim at a physical rehab place, and we appreciate visiting you there too. Our love and prayers are with each of you who are healing and those who are still hurting. Here's a photo of a home visit with Marilyn Castan. Also at this great place are Norma Schillerstrom and Dr. Allen Leland who just turned 99! We thank our high school youth for making some Scripture cards and encouragement cards for us to give to our oldest members!



Here's another example of our love and care for our seniors. Barbara Krum reports this for the month of February: she visited 12 members for a total of 20 visits, 9 with Holy Communion, as a Eucharistic Minister. She had seven non-member visits at senior places, and three with Holy Communion. Thank you, Barbara!

Norm Guetschoff, Barbara Krum, Jeff and Jan Specks, Dennis Gray and Marilyn Reeve lead the Christian Life Hours at Royal Oaks Inn, Atria Grand Oaks, Sage Mountain, and Sunrise Westlake. I lead them at University Village Oak View and Hillcrest Royale. If you'd like to learn more about this fabulous outreach ministry, talk with anyone of us. To learn more about: Eucharistic Ministry, visit with Pastor Ron Cox, GriefShare with Brenda Heinrich; or Stephen Ministry, Norm Guetschoff. We thank each person in each of these caring ministries.

We grieve the loss of some of our beloved ones recently: Patricia Beatie, Bill Munn, Verlon Meyer, Mickey Johnson (she and Les were married for 78 years!), and Joann Beard. May Jesus our Good Shepherd comfort their families, and us, with the good news of life eternal.

If you'd like to join our email prayer group, let Linda Morrow know. She sends out two or three emails a week to keep us updated on prayer requests from individuals, ministries, and ELCA Prayer Ventures.

Our Community Concerns Team, led so well by Chris Daleiden, has been very active with our food pantry ministries. Thank you for responding generously when asked to contribute this past month. It was a tremendous response! Thanks to Tania and Barry Disselhorst and other families who help with the monthly hot meals program on the third Tuesday of the month. Our neighbors appreciate all your gifts for Caring Ones and the Agape Fund.



Most Thursday mornings I attend the Cal Lutheran chapel service at 11:25. I highly recommend it if you can get away at that time. Rev. Scott Hamilton Adams is an inspiring worship leader, preacher, and led some powerful prayers for students last week.

Our congregation's Green Faith Team is working, with leader Kristine Werner, on a project to make our congregation "greener!" Stay tuned. Our Synod Green Faith Team is planning a Zoom event at noon on World Water Day, March 22 at noon.

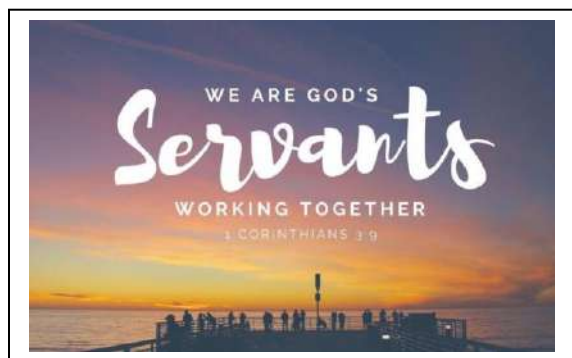
We have a new team, led by Council member Bonny Chick. She has gathered a great group of people to plan our next blessing of the animals. The reason we are starting already is because we are planning a much bigger event. It will be on Saturday, Oct. 5, from noon to 4pm, with several vendors, food trucks, games for children, and opportunities for our animals to be blessed! If you'd like to help us plan, join us on the fourth Wednesday of each month at 4pm in the Bethlehem Room.

In the early 1990s when my father was in El Salvador with our ELCA bishops, he received the cross on the left from Bishop Gomez (who is still the bishop there!). When I told this story to Pastor Cruz Calles (from El Salvador) at the ELCA hunger gathering in Houston, he then gave me his cross (the photo on the right). Notice that after all these years, they still paint the same scenes: Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter, Christian community, and Luther's rose in the middle!



***Blessings on your
Lenten journey to the cross and empty tomb!***

***Thank you for your prayers as the Spirit leads us in calling our second
associate pastor and hiring a youth director.***



**Ascension Lutheran School Board Meeting Minutes
February 26, 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:

Scott Bean, Jenni McCoy, Jocelyn Myers, Nelly Trumbo, Rich Gregory, Chris Poveromo, Kathy Roshanai, Anna Woodward, Kyle Jones, Ashley Steere, Steve Smuck, Kaylee Searway

Absent: Connie Angress

Call to Order:

Scott called the meeting to order at 6:35pm.

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

Devotion:

Kathy lead the devotion from Romans 8:31 - "What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us?" Despite suffering, even in the case of Mark and Jacob Iskander, God always is working in our lives for his glory.

Approval of Agenda and Consent Agenda:

Ashley asked to add School Board Handbooks to the agenda for this meeting and March's meeting.

Motion to approve agenda and consent agenda items initiated by Jocelyn. Ashley seconded. Motion passes. Jocelyn rescinds the motion and Ashley seconds the rescinded motion.

Rich asked to amend the Admissions Report to update Connie's estimated enrollment number to 175. This is her estimate for next school year's enrollment.

Jocelyn makes a motion to approve the consent agenda as amended. Ashley seconds. Motion passes.

Old Business:

Financial Aid Subcommittee

- Kyle, Anna, Rich, Jenni, Kathy and Stacey met as the financial aid subcommittee and reviewed the financial aid applications which were received. They voted and came in under budget what they had projected. If additional requests come in, they should be able to handle the applications within the budget.
- Scott clarified that the board as a whole does not vote on financial aid allocations, but it is left up to the financial aid subcommittee.
- Scott also noted that financial aid and contracts were sent out before the board met and officially approved the financial aid budget amount.
- Anna commented the financial aid budget was less than what was "recommended" by the school board to fund financial aid, and there was no official vote to approve the recommended amount as a budget line item. Mike Marvin and Anna recommend a budget of \$103K for financial aid, which is in line with what was recommended last year. Traditionally 10% has been the initial budget for financial aid.

Ashley makes a motion to approve the financial aid amount already budgeted of \$103K, and empowers the financial aid subcommittee to reconvene as needed with future applications and allot an additional \$17K in financial aid as needed. Steve seconds.

It was discussed whether this was an appropriate additional amount for the financial aid subcommittee. Anna commented that she believes it is, but it will depend on additional applications.

Motion passes.

School Board Handbook

- Ashley previewed the two versions of the updated school board handbook which she will circulate: one updated and one red-lined with the updates. She noted that highlighted sections will require the school board's thoughtful consideration when updating, and highlighted+Bold items are bylaws which will require Church Council's approval when updating/changing.

Executive Session:

The school board meeting moved into executive session at 7:30pm. Rich, Jenni and Kaylee were invited to stay. All other guests were excused.

Closing Prayer:

Rich closed the meeting with prayer.

Adjournment:

Nelly motioned to adjourn the meeting and reconvene for executive session. Steve seconded. Meeting was adjourned at 7:30pm.

Next school board meeting is a joint meeting with Church Council on March 18th at 5:00pm.

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

March – Nelly

April – Steve

May – Anna

June – Scott

Respectfully submitted by Jocelyn Myers

Ascension Lutheran School Board Spring Retreat Minutes February 20, 2023

Attendees: Rich Gregory, Jenni McCoy, Scott Bean, Connie Angress, Anna Woodward, Nelly Trumbo, Steve Smuck, Kyle Jones, Jocelyn Myers, Ashley Steere, Chris Poveromo, Jennifer Farrell

Absent: Kathy Roshanai

Opening

Scott opened the retreat by presenting the agenda:

Welcome – Opening Prayer / Devotion – State of the Schools – GOST Overview – Break – GOST Discussion – Lunch & Logistics – Introduction to Big Questions – Break – Big Questions & GOST Next Steps – Prayer for the School & Meeting Close

Rich led the devotion. Topic of vision and pedagogue (study of great teaching). Jesus was single greatest teacher who ever lived. Luke 15: “Jesus welcomes sinners and eats with them” in response he tells three parables. Lost sheep, lost coin, lost son. Lost son – what the kingdom of God is all about. Father welcomes son back. That’s what Jesus is all about and the God we believe in. Put together a vision for our school that is so compelling, people line up and can’t wait to be a part of this community. To be a non-angry, thoughtful, Christian community.

Ashley spoke about Iskander trail. Maybe one week left. Jury with instructions late Thursday or Friday.

State of the Schools

Jenni presented her state of the school updates:

- 2024-2025 registration is complete. Nearly full for Fall.
- Teacher assignments will happen in the coming months for next year, but she is not looking to make big changes.
- Tours are happening and the wait list is growing.
- Budget work is forthcoming.
- She is looking to give her teachers a 5% raise.
- 3 outdoor teacher leads led a workshop at the January teacher conference.
- Lost 3 teachers during the end of January beginning of February. All other teachers have given their intent to return.
- Parent surveys will go out in early Spring.

Rich presented his state of the school updates:

- ALS has a new website due to Jenni’s daughter Ashley and Nicole Cook.
- La Reina 6-7 applications in for middle school.

- Ashley did grief counseling for Le Reina faculty. Faculty will lose insurance in July and will only receive 1 paycheck's worth of severance. Private company took over school from Sisters of Notre Dame 6-7 years ago and has been the one to decide on school closure.
- Website now has link to swag shop and Mary Bordokas designed all the gear. Continuity between ECC and ALS websites.
- Ella Boyajian is a ECC parent who is looking to bring others in her neighborhood into the Ascension community and also has background in raising money for non-profits.
- 163 students at beginning of school year, but now down to 158. Despite this, budget is looking good and in the positive for both ALS and ECC.
- Projected enrollment is 180 per Connie for 2024-2025. They will budget for 173.
- 16 opt-out forms received so far which is about 10%. The grade levels opting out are across the board, although majority is from transitioning to TK/K and 5th/6th.
- Enrollment fees due March 1st, and first tuition due May 1st.
- One ALS teacher may be leaving next school year.

GOST Overview: Goals, Objectives, Strategy & Tactics

Retreat goals: create official strategy and establish regular cadence for review.

Board's role:

- Set the strategic direction for the schools.
- Prepare the schools to react to strategic changes in the environment.
- Grow and steward the assets of the schools.
- Provide appropriate oversight.
- Set goals and measure progress.
- Build coalitions, communicate with stakeholders and champion change.
- Provide advice to the implementation when sought by the executive team.

Scott presented the work Rich in Jenni developed for each goal (as follows.)

To Create Wise Stewards of God's Creation

- Facilities support our emphasis on learning through studying and exploring creation
 - ➔ Ensure that budget reflects nature-centered priorities and continued growth
 - Create, maintain, and update a budget category for NE staffing, supplies (particularly NE leads), training, and curriculum
 - Complete certification process annually
 - Admin will semi-annually seek input from teachers and nature explore leads
 - Create, maintain, and update a budget
- External certifications are maintained and celebrated
 - ➔ Complete certification process annually
 - Consistently use outdoor spaces

- Involve Parents
 - Utilize facilities for service
 - Students have authentic experiences in nature that are integrated into curriculum requirements
 - ➔ Administration ensures that nature-based experiences and standards are consistently incorporated into curriculum
 - Teachers are intentionally and enthusiastically leading their students in curricular “nature explore” activities
 - Teachers intentionally get their students outside on a regular basis
 - Outdoor classroom leads communicate with classroom teachers on a regular basis so that the “outdoor” and the “indoor” aspects of the curriculum are connected
 - Ascension is known in the community as the premier school for “nature-centered” learning
 - ➔ Nature Explore certifications are prominent in all marketing materials and tours
 - Signs of certifications are prominently displayed throughout the campus
 - Regular social media posts will feature students utilizing our outdoor classroom spaces
-

To Develop a Heart For Service in Every Student

- Students develop a moral, ethical, and theological framework in which service is seen as essential to a meaningful life
 - ➔ Intentionally plan service opportunities for students
 - Equip teachers with budget and the necessary information they need to plan service opportunities for their classes
 - Intentionally plan opportunities for the 7th Grade Service Academy to lead in service across the campus
 - ➔ Service should be an integral component of religion curriculum and woven into chapel
 - Ensure that bible curriculum includes lessons regarding service
 - Highlight local and global service opportunities in chapel
 - Recognizing and celebrating “One Ascension” acts of service in chapel
 - Intentionally follow up with students after they engage in acts of service
 - Partner with the congregation on local and global service opportunities
- Students are engaged regularly in service opportunities
 - ➔ ECC and TK-8 staff look for mutually beneficial opportunities for collaboration between sites
 - Partner together for joint “serve days” at least once per year

- Students are confident and empowered to lead others in service
 - ➔ Service opportunities are emergent
 - Train teachers to respond to the needs of the local community (fires, floods etc.)
 - Families have regular opportunities to serve
 - ➔ Families have regular opportunities to serve
 - Intentionally plan and market the family friendly nature of joint “serve days” at least once per year
 - Wherever possible and beneficial incorporate service into campus events
 - (SOUPER Bowl Food Drive)
 - Wherever possible create service opportunities that support the congregation and the One Ascension community
-

To Inspire Life-Long Learners

- All students master reading, laying a foundation for intellectual curiosity
 - ➔ ECC: Intentionally integrate literacy into ECC curriculum
 - ECC: Host an annual literacy workshop for parents.
 - ECC: Explore professional development on current literacy best practices in early childhood annually
 - ECC: Teachers emphasize cross-curricular literacy practices (Including books, paper, pencils, printed words in science, play, and math wherever appropriate)
 - ➔ Day School: Frequent curriculum review (frequency determined by ELA lead) to ensure best practices in ELA
 - Day School: Purchase new curriculum and train staff as appropriate
 - ➔ Day School: Encourage literacy based events including speech meet and spelling bee
 - Day School: Continue to assign these events to teachers who are excited to see them thrive
 - ➔ Both sites: Wherever possible, intentionally make books and literacy FUN!
 - Day School: Provide at least one annual book fair
 - Day School: Wherever possible, include important children’s literature in theatrical productions
 - (Jungle Book)
 - ➔ ECC: Maintain the expectation that books are read daily in classrooms and lesson plans are intentionally written to incorporate activities that bring the books to life in the eyes of our young learners.
 - ➔ ECC: Continue to expand our ECC library, establish a budget line to this support growth, and encourage teachers’ voices in book choices.

- Students experience an environment in which it is safe to fail safely
 - ➔ Educate parents in the importance and benefits of building resilience in young people
 - Host evening and other events to educate parents in what “failing safely” looks like and its benefits
 - Educate students in what “failing safely” looks like and its benefits
 - ➔ All young learners are given time and space to problem solve without unrequested adult intervention
 - ➔ Train teachers to allow students to “fail safely” without preemptive intervention
 - Multiple learning pathways meet students’ individual learning needs
 - ➔ Research and provide professional development opportunities that equip teachers to identify diverse styles of learning
 - Collaboratively identify strategies for addressing individual learning needs across ages and grade levels
 - ECC: Establish opportunities for teachers to collaborate (with co-teachers, parents, or other professionals) when challenging behaviors require accommodations that meet a child’s differing needs.
 - Day school: Align schedules wherever possible in upper grades for advanced students to “move up” a grade per subject as needed
 - Students develop strong academic discipline but also have fun learning
 - ➔ ECC: Maintain a hands-on, play-based environment with developmentally appropriate practices.
 - ➔ ECC: Teachers respond to the interests of their students and actively support an emergent environment.
 - ➔ Day School: Maintain and grow specialties programs
 - Ensure specialties meet grade level goals but also retain a fun edge to them
-

To Foster a Welcoming Christ-Centered Community

- Students and staff feel they are known & well-loved
 - ➔ Admin prioritizes healthy culture including positive feedback and encouragement
 - Observations and reviews are held at least annually
 - Casual check-ins to make sure the staff have what they need are prioritized
 - Admin intentionally gets to know each staff member and their families as appropriate
 - Admin prays for staff regularly
 - Students are known by name and are “caught being good” as often as possible
 - ➔ Board demonstrates care for faculty and staff

- New bylaw is put in place initiating a standing compensation committee
 - All new board members are screened so that they must demonstrate deep connection to the school and care for its staff
 - Students know what it means to love and follow Jesus
 - ➔ Religion curriculum is engaging and teaches the major elements of the Christian story
 - Ensure curriculum is purchased annually and reviewed frequently
 - ➔ Continue to invest in and highlight student-led Chapel
 - Partner with the congregation to pool resources and to garner “One Ascension” benefits
 - Principal maintains open and friendly relationship with congregation key leadership
 - ➔ Hire dynamic, faithful, and committed music and worship leading staff
 - Ensure a robust hiring process is in place and that compensation is reasonable
 - Families are welcomed into the broader community of Ascension
 - ➔ Build “onboarding teams” at each site to ensure new families feel welcome
 - ➔ Admin maintains positive relationships with parent groups, PALS and CFOs through frequent check ins, “thank you’s”, and offers to help
 - All staff and students are encouraged, disciplined, and mentored in the Christian faith
 - ➔ Ensure that all employees are supportive of and willing to grow in the Christian faith
 - Ask “faith” questions in interviews
 - ➔ Seek out opportunities for devotions and prayer times as often as possible
 - Pray and do devotions at staff meetings and before school as schedules allow
 - ➔ Develop a “basics of the faith” list that should be emphasized in chapel and religion curriculum
 - Our chapel emphasis on the Lord’s Prayer is the first endeavor into this tactic
-

To Nurture the Whole Child

- Students & staff feel safe on campus
 - ➔ Physical security features of our campus are well maintained (fencing, security cameras, landscaping)
 - One Ascension community prioritizes security maintenance in annual budgets
 - Administration and maintenance teams respond promptly to teacher and parent concerns as they are reported
 - ➔ Executive security officer on site during school operating hours
 - ECC and Ascension Lutheran School fund executive security officer expense in annual budgets

- Students develop the self-awareness, self-control, and interpersonal skills that are vital for success
 - ➔ Curriculums are purchased that focus on students social and emotional growth and well-being
 - Both sites support these new social emotional curriculums with professional development opportunities, expert guest speakers, and parent education workshops that include families in this aspect of their child's education

 - Students approach others with love and demonstrate respect for their differences
 - ➔ Adults of the One Ascension community model daily what it looks like to approach others with love and demonstrate respect for their differences
 - ➔ Create opportunities to celebrate differences within our One Ascension community
 - Host a One Ascension event to celebrate the people who make up our community
 - Day School: Create opportunities for students to share their family's culture and traditions within their classrooms
 - ECC: Invite parents and family members to share their time and talents with our young learners (reading to our students, cooking with our students, parents share occupations, families share cultures and traditions)

 - Students thrive academically, socially, physically and psychologically
 - ➔ Academic and social successes are celebrated in classrooms and in the greater school community
 - ECC: Classroom families feature successes and celebrate victories together; teachers communicate these moments with families
 - Day School: Awards assemblies and Chapel feature opportunities to celebrate student growth and successes; feature students in Chatter
 - ➔ Teachers and administration continually seek opportunities to better meet students' physical activity, health, and well-being needs
 - Day School: Continue to provide PE and athletics with a focus on learning skills, character formation, and physical fitness (not a "win at all costs" mentality)
 - Day School: Work with choice lunch to ensure there are healthy offerings; encourage some healthy snacks in class parties
 - ECC: Students spend large amounts of time actively playing outdoors and exploring different areas of our One Ascension campus
 - ECC: Students are offered healthy snack options that feature fresh fruit and vegetables daily

 - Mental health of students, staff, and family units remains a One Ascension priority
 - ➔ Both sites build a referral network for local professionals for students or families who may need additional support
-

Goals

Board's role in conversation is do tactics achieve the objective (not whether these are the right tactics). Several topics were discussed.

To Create Wise Stewards of God's Creation

- Are there actual facilities?

To Develop a Heart For Service in Every Student

- Highlight the annual ones that are known and loved (Linus Blankets)
- Seminal 7th Grade service project
- 8th grade capstone project is centered around service and presented to the wider Ascension community "Make the world a better place".

To Inspire Life-Long Learners

To Foster a Welcoming Christ-Centered Community

- Consider new objective to get kid to engage in church related youth activities.
- Integration of students into the youth programs of the Church.
- Consider how we request the church to lean in to provide youth services to the school.
- "Kids of the Kingdom" was a 4th-6th program run by the Church but promoted in the school. Naturally led into confirmation program which started in 7th grade.

To Nurture the Whole Child

- Developing clear expectations about acceptable behaviors; specialty classes may have different expectations.
- How do we encourage behaviors we want to create in Middle School.
- Do we consider adding "Profile of an Ascension Student".
- Consider investigate as a board, literature to describe character formation as branding.
- Consider elevation the roles of the athletics in our strategy and marketing materials.
- Losing gracefully.
- Oaks's model has paid professionals to coach teams or financially incentivize teachers.
- Is there an opportunity to budget for non-parent non-volunteer coaches for the afterschool athletics programs.

Naming the culture will solidify it. We currently have it, but naming and aiming at it with intention will make it stick. Rich – how do we market this information well? Maybe feature a tactic and then walk through the levels.

Big Questions

There are questions which are covered in the goals and objectives work. There are things vital to the success of both schools.

Big Question #1

There are not as many available enrollments for ECC students in ALS classrooms (TK and K). The ECC's fours program is in competition with ALS's TK program. The fours are not guaranteed a spot in K like a TK student is.

- Does Ascension have the facilities, administration, etc to support a 2 class per grade level elementary school (TK-4th)?
- How do we prioritize the facilities for the long term ambitions of the school?
- Is there a market to serve with these 2 class grade levels? Is the aging demographic as big as a headwind as forecasted – do we have the demographics to drive this?
- Expanded enrollment with more classes would create larger margins. This would also create larger administrative pressure/burden.
- Potentially create an escrow account for Kindergarten for TK or ECC 4's students to secure their spot.
- Would have to come up with a business plan, a viable business plan, and present this to the Church.
- Rich and Jenni should decide whether they would like a board subcommittee to further investigate/brainstorm this topic.

Big Question #2

Middle school. Is that an offering we should continue in coming years?

GOST Next Steps

Prioritizing: which ones need to be addressed immediately, which ones have a 3 year timeline, and which ones are on the 2030 timeline.

Immediately:

- Lifelong learner: educate student in what “failing safely looks like and it’s benefits; ensure specialties meet grade level goals (would like to understand how we compare to other schools? Are we competitive and do we offer quality programs?); develop academic excellence oversight program.
- Steward of God’s creation: facilities support our emphasis on learning though studying and exploring creation; explore what nature/outdoor program is most appropriate for elementary and middle school; create, maintain an update budget category NE staffing, supplies, training, curriculum (Identify Gala items to ask)
- Heart of Service: 8th grade capstone project.
- Whole child: helping students find their passions/cultivating their interests; mental health of students staff and family remains a One Ascension priority; students develop the self-awareness, self-control and interpersonal skills that are vital for success.
- Christ centered: building “onboarding teams” at each site to ensure new families feel welcome; relationship with PALS, CFOs, rooms (longer description from slides)

2 Year:

- Heart of Service: families have opportunities to serve

3 Year:

- Steward of God's creation: outdoor classroom facilities multi-year plan

Closing

Rich closed the retreat in prayer.

Respectfully submitted by Jocelyn Myers

**ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH
FOUNDATION REPORT TO THE COUNCIL
MARCH 18, 2024**

The financial markets had a very strong fourth quarter 2023, and the Foundation investment portfolio increased significantly. The total value of the investments as of December 31 was \$1,629,948 up from \$1,483,728 on September 30. The equity portion of the investment portfolio remains near the upper end of the allowable range at 72% of the total, reflecting our belief that equities currently are more attractive than fixed income investments.

At its February meeting the Foundation approved two grants for the Ascension Lutheran Day School:

- \$1,200 as a one-time grant for the purchase of bibles for 5th, 6th and 7th graders
- \$1,000 in an outright grant and a \$5,000 matching grant for the school to create an endowment for the purpose of providing needed financial support to students

Alan Baker
Foundation Representative to the Council



Wednesday, March 6, 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.

On March 6 at 4 PM, the GMT will assemble a Bathroom Kit and a Cleaning Kit prior to our meeting. Please bring the items you signed up to purchase for these kits at this time. If you are not going to be at the GMT meeting, please bring your items and give them to Pastor Steve anytime before March 24th.

AGENDA

WELCOME

OPENING PRAYER Carol Bartell

1. **FOCUS: ELCA WORLD HUNGER-Embracing hope. Taking action. Moving forward.**
 - a. **Presentation by attendees to the 50th ELCA World Hunger Leadership gathering (Pr Steve, Mary Wennes, Dulce, Freya and Angela)**
 - b. **Update from Sharon Magnuson, ELCA Major Gifts Officer for World Hunger and Disaster Response via zoom.**

2. Review of GMT Monthly Reports and Volunteer Needs (5:00-5:45 PM)

WELCOME BASKETS for Refugees

Center for Global Engagement, CLU

Fair Trade Lane dates

Ray of Life Solar Light kits

3. SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT: Mission Trip to El Salvador, August 1-6, 2024

- a. **Contact: Valerie Constantino at Valerie.constantino@gmail.com for application, related forms, questions. See attached brochure for more information**

4. Next meeting, April 10, 2024, 4PM Bethlehem Room.

FOCUS: Creation Care

I don't know what your destiny will be, but one thing I know: the only ones among you who will be truly happy are those who have sought and found how to serve. - Albert Schweitzer

PEOPLE OF GOD, as you leave this place, you go into a weary world, so speak tenderly. Do good that is yours to do. Choose connection. Hold onto hope. And remember that Christ took on flesh for you. You are God's beloved. So go rejoicing. The world needs it. Amen.

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed individuals can change the world. In fact, it's the only thing that ever has." Margaret Mead

Our moral compass compels us to act — Jesus compels us to act and to extend our hands in compassion to those who are hungry. Inaction is simply not an option for us. Let us proceed with purpose, always bearing in mind the imperative: "Whenever you did one of these things to someone overlooked or ignored, that was me — you did it to me." Eugene Cho, Bread for the World

MARCH

March 3	Conejo Interfaith Refugee Team REFUGEE AWARENESS event and Potluck Dessert Reception, Founders Hall, 6:30 PM.
March 6	Ray of Life team meeting 3PM Bethlehem Room
March 6	Global Ministries Team meeting 4-5:30 PM Bethlehem Room
March 12	International Women's Day Community Celebration Dinner, 5:30-7 PM, CLU, Lundrington Center. Reservations preferred at global@Callutheran.edu by 3/1.
March 13	Women's Interfaith Network, Welcome Basket assembly, 6-7 PM AND
March 14	WIN, Welcome Basket assembly, 6-8 PM. Both at Jesus Christ of Latter Day Sanits, 1600 Erbes, Thousand Oaks, CA
March 17	CROP Hunger Walk, noon, CLU
March 21	Fair Trade Lane open, 2:30-4:00 PM
March 24	Fair Trade Lane open, 10-11 AM (No Adult Education) Bowls of Hope (Many Mansions), Hyatt Regency, 11-2PM
March 31	Easter Sunday

APRIL

April 4	Global Café, Jack's Corner, CLU, 12-2PM Earth/Sustainability
April 10	Global Ministries Team meeting, 4-5:30, Bethlehem Room
April 18	Fair Trade Lane open, 2:30-4:00 PM
April 19	Earth Day Sustainability Fair, CLU Kingsmen Park, noon
April 20	Ascension School GALA, Four Seasons, 6-10PM
April 21	Fair Trade Lane open, 10:00-11:00 AM with Adult Education Class.
April 28	Ray of Life solar light kits introduction, Adult Education Class 10:30 AM, Library

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 50th Anniversary of Scandinavian Festival, Kingsmen Park, CLU noon-7PM

May 19 Fair Trade Lane open, 10:00-11:00 AM

Fair Trade Wine Tasting Event, afternoon, Details TBD

June 9, July 14 and August 18 Fair Trade Lane open, 10:00-11:00 AM

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

GMT MEETINGS with Proposed focus presentations, 4 pm BETHLEHEM ROOM

March 6 FOCUS: ELCA WORLD HUNGER, Speakers from Leadership Gathering
(Led by attendees to the Gathering, Mary Wennes and Pr Steve)

April 10 FOCUS: CREATION CARE

May 8 FOCUS: ADVOCACY including FAIR TRADE, LIRS (Global Refuge), BREAD FOR THE
WORLD

March 3, 2024



MINISTRY OF GMT-Ray of Life Solar Light Kits DATE March, 2024
SUBMITTED BY Louise Evenson

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

After the GMT affirmed the Ray of Life solar light kit project at our Feb, 2024 meeting, a zoom call was initiated by the team with Dave Nonnemacher on 2/21. Dave is our contact for this project and lives in Duluth, MN. The ROL team is Andy Binsley, Christina Sanchez, Edith Ott, Mary Wennes, Paul Evenson, Beverly Selle, Pastor Steve Herder and Louise Evenson.

On April 13, via zoom Dave will lead us through the process of assembling 10 solar light kits in Founders Hall. We will invite Ascension Lutheran Church college students and Foundation scholarship recipients to help us with the assembly. (Beverly) We will have people taking photos and videos while we assemble the kits, hopefully, including someone from the ACORN and/or VENTURA CO STAR. (Mary) We will use these photos, videos in TWAA and newspapers with participant approval.

Pending the approval of a fundraising request to the church council, the GMT will begin inviting congregational members, friends, and others to contribute financially to the Ray of Life solar light project. In addition to the solar lights (\$125), we will also include VF100 water filters (\$25) in our request for financial gifts. Inviting and receiving funds for ROL solar lights will be in May and June. Project will be completed July 1, 2024.

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

In the 10 solar light kits we assemble on April 13th, we will include a note with a Bible verse written in English and Ukrainian. Please submit appropriate Bible verses for these kits by April 1. (Ukrainian student, Ohla Isaieva, will be asked to translate the Bible verse to Ukrainian.)

3. LOOKING AHEAD (Important calendar dates)

March 6 ROL team meeting-3 PM (Prior to GMT meeting) Bethlehem Room

March 13-28 Dave Nonnemacher in Ukraine

April 13 Assembly of 10 solar light kits, Founders Hall 10-noon

April 28-Adult Class to introduce the project to congregation

May TBD-Children's sermon at worship services using ROL solar light kit

4. FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT any ROL team member or Louise Evenson at Lpevenson@aol.com



MINISTRY OF GMT-Welcome Kits/Baskets for Refugees

DATE March, 2024

SUBMITTED BY Louise Evenson

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

On March 6 at 4 PM, the GMT will assemble a Bathroom Kit and a Cleaning Kit prior to our meeting. Please bring the items you signed up to purchase for these kits at this time. If you are not going to be at the GMT meeting, please bring your items and give them to Pastor Steve any time before March 24th.

ESTIMATED SCHEDULE FOR WELCOME BASKET PROJECT

- 1) **Now until March 3**--Invite groups to participate in Welcome Basket service project (Carol Bjelland, Carol Bartell, Louise Evenson)
- 2) **March 4**--Provide a list of groups and what they are making to Louise for ordering containers, labels, etc.
- 3) Announcement in TWAA and worship slide inviting congregation to contribute \$25 Target Gift Cards to Welcome Baskets **March 9-10, March 16-17, and March 23-24. (Louise will work with Stacy/Emily on this)**
- 4) **March 8**--Order/pick up containers needed based on what groups have told us they will be making. (We received an \$800 Be the Blessing grant to purchase containers for this project. Any money not needed for containers will be used to purchase any missing items and/or Target Gift Cards.)
- 5) **March 8**--Ask Emily to make labels for containers.
- 6) **March 16-17** Containers (labeled) available for leaders to pick up in Founders Hall. Make sign-up sheet for groups so they can check off their group name when they pick up a container. If it is more convenient, each of us will make arrangements to give groups their container prior to March 16-17. Reminders sent/Calls made to ministry leaders to pick up container.

- 7) **March 23-24** (Palm Sunday weekend) Filled containers dropped off in Founders Hall. Reminders sent/calls made to ministry leaders. Sunday School children put art notes in containers.
- 8) **March 25, 1 PM**—Go through containers and look for any missing items. Shop, if needed, for items to complete baskets.
- 9) Cam Lorentzen will deliver Welcome Baskets to Conejo Interfaith Refugee Team designated storage place. Target Gift Cards will be delivered separately to CIRT.

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

March 6-GMT members bring items and assemble Bathroom and Cleaning kits prior at 4PM meeting.

March 25, 1PM-Assist in going through containers in Founders Hall to make sure welcome baskets are complete with needed items.

3. LOOKING AHEAD (Important calendar dates)

Project Completion-Holy Week, 2024

Completion of project form to Be the Blessing grant committee. (Carol Bartell)

4. FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT Carol Bartell,
bartell@callutheran.edu, Carol Bjelland, carolb@netscape.com, or Louise
Evenson Lpevenson@aol.com.



FAIR TRADE LANE WILL BE OPEN

Thursday, March 21	2:30 - 4 PM
Sunday, March 24	10-11 AM
Thursday, April 18	2:30 - 4 PM
Sunday, April 21	10-11 AM
Thursday, May 9	2:30-4 PM
Sunday, May 19	10-11AM

EVERYONE'S INVITED!

The double doors to Founders Hall will be open



Wednesday, February 7, 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.

NOTES FROM FEBRUARY MEETING

WELCOME

OPENING PRAYER Kim Overton

1. Ray of Life Solar Light Kit Project

(Due to members of the team needing to leave before 5 PM, we will discuss this item first.)

The Global Ministries Team affirmed this project to move forward.

2. FOCUS: ELCA GLOBAL MISSIONARIES, YOUNG ADULTS IN GLOBAL MISSION AND WOMEN LEADERS

a. Introduce ELCA partners, Sharon Magnason, Tess Tait and Ben Hogue via zoom

i. Our ELCA partners were introduced via zoom.

b. Video of Pr Kristin Engstrom in Zambia

c. Summary of Pr Engstrom's ministry-Marcia Koenig

- i. *Using Pr Engstrom's recent newsletters, Marcia reviewed and provided an update of her ministry in Zambia in 2023. We learned from our ELCA partners that Pr Engstrom is moving to Madagascar and will continue to be one of the ELCA missionaries we support at Ascension.*
- d. **Update from S Sudan, Tess Tait**
 - i. *Recently, Rev Wal returned to Ethiopia with his family for the first time since 2015. His work in S Sudan includes working with refugees in camps. He is hoping to create some new church buildings, supplied with Bibles and hymnals. Ascension supports Rev Wal financially through the ELCA missionary effort.*
- e. **Video of Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM)**
 - i. *We learned that currently there are 29 young adults (ages 21-35) serving in Uruguay, Mexico, Central Europe, Argentina, and Senegal. With the war in Israel/Gaza, the YAGM program is paused in the West Bank for now. Each young adult who serves is asked to raise 1/3 of the overall cost for the program or \$6,000. Currently there are no YAGM participants from our Synod.*
- f. **Christina Sanchez will share about Women Leaders at CLU and what this means for them and CLU.**
 - i. *Dr. Sanchez shared that CLU has hosted four women through the ELCA's International Women Leaders program. CLU shares 50% of tuition cost with the ELCA for participants to attend CLU. Current participants at CLU are from Poland and Zimbabwe, selected by the Lutheran community in their home country. Two recent graduates of CLU were from the West Bank and Tanzania.*

3. Review of GMT Monthly Reports and Volunteer Needs (5:00-5:45 PM)

WELCOME BASKETS for Refugees

This Lenten service project has applied for a BE THE BLESSING grant for containers, materials and gift cards. Ministry groups of ALC will be invited to participate in this service project. The GMT will bring items to make a bathroom kit and a cleaning kit at the March meeting. The Welcome Baskets will be delivered to the Conejo Interfaith Refugee Team during Holy Week to be delivered to refugee families in SOCA in the coming weeks.

SUMUD for justice in Palestine and Israel, Lenten series

This Lenten series is a call to justice in Israel and Palestine.

Friends of Fieldworkers, Laundry Love and Children's event

Using funds raised through Gifts of Hope, on February 13, members of the GMT will go to a laundromat in Oxnard and provide money for 5 loads of laundry for each family. While the parents are doing laundry, children will be given books with a bookmark and a snack bag.

Great Music at Ascension

A concert on February 18th will feature Christoph Bull on our organ.

Center for Global Engagement, CLU

We were reminded of the International Women's Day Community Celebration Dinner at CLU on March 12.

Fair Trade

Upcoming dates that Fair Trade Lane is open were reviewed.

The meeting closed in prayer.

Notes of the meeting submitted by Christina Sanchez

- 4. Next meeting, March 4, 2024, 4PM Bethlehem Room.**
We will hear from the attendees of the ELCA World Hunger Leaders Gathering. "Embracing HOPE. Taking ACTION. Moving Forward."

I don't know what your destiny will be, but one thing I know: the only ones among you who will be truly happy are those who have sought and found how to serve. - Albert Schweitzer

PEOPLE OF GOD, as you leave this place, you go into a weary world, so speak tenderly. Do good that is yours to do. Choose connection. Hold onto hope. And remember that Christ took on flesh for you. You are God's beloved. So go rejoicing. The world needs it. Amen.

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed individuals can change the world. In fact, it's the only thing that ever has." Margaret Mead