

**Ascension Lutheran Church
Council Agenda
Wednesday, November 20, 2024
Bungalow at the rear of the back Parking Lot**

Council Education - Land Sale

Welcome and Call to Order - Carrie Leonard, President

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

Motto: Invite - Grow - Serve

Approval of Agenda - Carrie Leonard

Devotion - Carrie

Treasurer's Report - Dave Harkins

New Business

- None at time of agenda distribution

Recurring Business

- Affirm New Members, Confirmants, and Baptisms

Old Business

- Land Sale - report on any new transaction activity - Dave Harkins/Kaylee Searway

Approval of Minutes - Carrie Leonard

- September Council Meeting
- October Council Meeting
- October Council/School Board Meeting

Consent Approval of Reports to Council - Carrie Leonard

- Pastor Tim Delkeskamp's Report
- Pastor Chamie Delkeskamp's Report
- Pastor Steve Herder's Report
- Kaylee Searway, Director of Operations Report
- School Board Report
- Foundation Report
- Global Ministries Team Report
- Youth Ministries Report
- Communications Report
- Be the Blessing Report

Information Items

- December 18th, Council Meeting, 7pm in the Bethlehem Room
 - Devotions -

Closing Prayer
Adjournment

New Members & Baptisms Report

November 2024

Baptisms for October

Name	Date of Birth	Date Baptized
Christian Houston	10/15/17	10/30/24

New Members for October

**Ascension Lutheran Church
Council Meeting Minutes
September 18, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.**

The council meeting was called to order by Carrie Leonard at 7:02 p.m.

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

Others: Pastor Tim, Kaylee Searway, Camryn Force, Mike Marvin

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 – Carrie

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

Devotions - Jeanette

There is a feeling of joy in the Ascension community with the youth director and associate pastor positions now filled by Jen Avalos and Pastor Chamie. Max Lucado writes that we all want joy. God wants us to be joy-filled with the kind of joy that is a resilient hope. We can lose family, home, our plans for the future, but we will never lose the courageous joy that comes from God.

Council Education – One Ascension Finance (Dave Harkins, Mike Marvin, Camryn Force)

The Finance team has refined the monthly operational statements in order to provide clear and concise displays of monthly financial activity. The report showing cash and debt positions as of each month end was presented to the council. The cash on hand amount is not the same as available cash since some of those funds are restricted for specific purposes. The church has several dedicated cash accounts, including the Mission Possible, One Ascension Asset Preservation, Be the Blessing, and Garden funds. There are also a number of benevolence and program funds maintained by various teams within the church. The school also has cash accounts set aside for contingencies, scholarships, and financial aid, as well as prepaid tuition that will be earned out as the school year progresses.

One Ascension currently has four debt obligations, with varying terms and interest rates. These four loans were displayed to show total amount, annual cost, rates, and end dates. By comparing cash available to annual costs, it was demonstrated that One Ascension is in healthy financial condition.

Council members asked several questions related to the structure of the Church/School financial organization, particularly who is responsible for specific payments and the reason that amounts are due from one entity to another within One Ascension.

Treasurer's Report – Dave

Cumulative offerings for July and August are 6% below budget. The 2023-2024 fiscal year ended with a \$46K surplus due to staffing shortages which provides a little cushion for the current year-to-date shortfall.

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

New Business

1. Credit Card, Associate Pastor Resolution - Kaylee

This resolution allows for the issuance of a credit card with a \$15,000 credit limit to our associate pastor, Chamie Delkeskamp. This will be used for discretionary expenses, as specified in the church budget, that are related to the duties of the associate pastor.

A motion was made (Dave) and seconded (Bonny) to approve the Credit Card, Associate Pastor resolution.

2. Sabbatical Calendar - Carrie

An item pertaining to the sabbatical calendar will be added to the Action Tracker so that Council is mindful of when sabbaticals are to be taken.

A motion was made (John), seconded (Ethan), and passed unanimously to approve adding the sabbatical calendar to the Action Tracker.

Recurring Business

Affirm New Members, Confirmands and Baptisms

New member Caitlyn Milkovich was affirmed. The baptisms of Ashley Nicole Ryan, Ezra Matthew Ryan, and Willow James Ryan were affirmed.

Old Business

1. Congregational Meeting – Pastor Tim

The church service prior to the meeting will conclude with the passing of the peace and all in attendance will be invited to stay for the congregational meeting. This will be followed by the church picnic. There are no changes to the budget; it just needs to be ratified by the congregation. The proposed bylaw change has been mailed out to the congregation. At the meeting it must be approved as-is. If that doesn't happen then the School Board will have to decide whether to pursue this any further. In response to the mailing of the proposed change, other bylaw change recommendations have been received from church members. A list of these is being maintained for further review so that they can all be addressed at one time.

Kaylee will give a presentation regarding the current status of the land sale.

Pastor Tim will share the ways in which One Ascension is blessed and his goals for the year. These include:

- Re-build the Children's Ministry
- Generosity
- Accountability Policy for church staff
- Identity – What is One Ascension about and what does it stand for.

Approval of Minutes – Carrie

1. August Church Council Meeting

The statement in the section of the minutes related to vacation / sabbatical time should state that the Policies & Procedures manual, not the employee handbook, was referenced regarding concurrent or overlapping sabbaticals.

A motion was made (John), seconded (Bonny), and passed unanimously to approve the minutes for the August Council meeting as amended.

2. Special Congregational Meeting - August

A motion was made (Al), seconded (Ethan), and passed unanimously to approve the minutes for the August Special Congregational meeting.

Consent Approval of Reports to Council - Carrie

1. Pastor Tim Delkeskamp's report
2. Pastor Steve Herder's report
3. School Board report
4. Global Ministries report
5. Be the Blessing report

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

Information Items

Next Council meeting - Wednesday, October 16th.

Joint meeting with the School Board at 5:00 in Founder's Hall.

Council meeting at 7:00 in the Bethlehem room.

Closing Prayer – Pastor Tim

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:37 pm.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 9:48.

Respectfully submitted by Rachael Bowen

**Ascension Lutheran Church
Council Meeting Minutes
October 16, 2024 7:30 pm**

The council meeting was called to order by Carrie Leonard at 7:30 p.m.

Council Members In Attendance: Rachael Bowen, Bonny Chick, Ethan East, Dave Harkins, Carrie Leonard

Others: Pastor Tim, Pastor Chamie, Kaylee Searway

Approval of Agenda – Carrie

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

Council Education – Accountability and Communication Pathway (Pastor Tim, Carrie)

Practices and procedures for accountability and communication pathways amongst church staff have been in place. This information is provided when someone is hired but it's not certain if all of the current staff are aware of the communication pathways. The organizational chart must be updated with the recent new hires and shared with the staff so that they know who they report to and who their supervisors report to. This would be a helpful document for all Ascension members, highlighting accountability of the church staff.

The staff has taken the Enneagram Personality test which provides insight into how their co-workers approach their jobs and the motivations behind their actions. Working Genius is another test which is 20% personality assessment and 80% efficiency tool. This was utilized by the Executive Team to help them understand each other better and to work more efficiently with each other.

The Council president will be responsible for preparing and conducting annual reviews for the pastors. Council will have the opportunity to study the results. The annual review form used by the Methodist church could provide a starting template.

Treasurer's Report – Dave

September financials are not yet available. The August financials showed that giving was 6% below budget for the first two months of the fiscal year. That did not cause a budget shortfall due to staffing shortages. Now that the positions have been filled, if giving does not come closer to budget then there will be a shortfall.

For Ascension school, tuition is lagging a bit. Expenses have been lower due to staffing shortages so the financials are still in a surplus position.

The Treasurer's report alludes to two tabs in the Church financial summary, one of them including the Cash report, but they were not in the packet. Dave will be sure to include them in next month's Council packet. They could also be added to the church website so that the information is available to the congregation.

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

New Business

None.

Recurring Business

Affirm New Members, Confirmands and Baptisms

New member Caitlyn Milkovich was affirmed again.

Consent Approval of Reports to Council - Carrie

1. Pastor Tim Delkeskamp's report
2. Pastor Steve Herder's report
3. Kaylee Searway, Director of Operations report
4. Youth Ministry report
5. School Board report
6. Communications report
7. Global Ministries report
8. Be the Blessing report

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

Information Items

Next Council meeting - Wednesday, November 20th in the Bungalow

Devotions - Carrie

Closing Prayer – Pastor Tim

Adjournment

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

The meeting was adjourned at 8:18 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Rachael Bowen

**Ascension Lutheran Church
Joint Church Council and School Board Meeting Minutes
October 16, 2024 at 5:30 p.m.**

The council meeting was called to order by Carrie Leonard at 5:50 p.m.

Council Members In Attendance: Rachael Bowen, Bonny Chick, Ethan East, Dave Harkins, Carrie Leonard

School Board Members in Attendance: Scott Bean, Kyle Jones, Jeannette McNulty, Jocelyn Myers, Chris Poveromo, Kathy Saneinia, Ashley Steere, Nelly Nassar-Trumbo, Anna Woodward

Others: Pastor Tim, Pastor Chamie, Kaylee Searway, Rich Gregory, Jenni McCoy, Connie Angress, Jen Avalos

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

Motto: Invite – Grow - Serve

Devotions – Rich Gregory

In Matthew 4:17 Jesus says “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” What Jesus is saying, according to author Dallas Willard, is that God’s kingdom is here now. We need to remember that Jesus invites us to be a part of His kingdom at this moment and to welcome others into the kingdom without condemnation.

Approval of Agenda – Carrie

Add to Fundraising Request: Wrapping paper fundraiser

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

State of the School

1. Ascension School – Rich Gregory

- Enrollment

The eight students in the 8th grade class met during the summer with the middle school teachers to facilitate bonding and building community.

The budget is based on enrollment of 170 students and there are currently 167 students. This is an increase from 133 students three years ago. Tours to prospective students and their families take place frequently.

- Staff

The school has 29 staff members. Many have mentioned that the campus is a place of peace for them.

- Strategic Goals

- Christ-centered
- Nature explorer
- Life-long learners
- Whole child
- Service minded

- Financial Outlook

The budget includes a slight surplus. Modest growth is anticipated for next year.

2. ECC – Jenni McCoy

- **Enrollment**
The ECC is in an excellent place with 182 children. Eight of the ten classrooms are full. The current challenge is that TK offered by the public schools is drawing away families due to cost considerations.
- **Staff**
32 people are on staff at the ECC with four subs available as well. There is a good culture among the staff who watch out for each other.
- In the spirit of the strategic goals mentioned by Rich, the 7th and 8th grade classes are buddies to the 4-year-olds. They are role models to the younger kids and new relationships have been made.
- **Parent Engagement**
The ECC staff recognizes that they have professional knowledge that can be shared with parents. As a result, a number of workshops have been presented.
- **Financials**
Teachers received raises last year. There is a modest surplus in the budget.
A 10% tuition discount is offered for children with siblings attending the day school. A 50% discount is offered for ECC staff.

Fundraising Requests

1. Christmas Program

The School Board presented a request to Council on behalf of Ascension School's music teacher who is asking permission to include a free-will offering at the Christmas program and the Spring Musical. Funds received would go to the music program. This would be an annual fundraiser. A free-will offering was part of these programs in past years.

A motion was made (Dave) and seconded (Bonny) and passed unanimously to add a free-will offering at the school's Christmas program and Spring Musical for purposes of funding the school's music program to the portfolio of annual fundraisers for the school.

2. Gift Wrap

Parents of Ascension Lutheran School (PALS) would like to hold a one-time gift-wrap fundraiser. There would be no required minimum sales amount for each student and 40% of the receipts goes to PALS to support their programs that supplement school activities.

A motion was made (Ashley) and seconded (Kathy) for the School Board to request approval from the Church Council for a one-time wrapping paper fundraiser on behalf of PALS.

Discussion:

This fundraiser shouldn't adversely affect other established school fundraisers. This type of fundraiser has taken place in past years.

The motion was unanimously approved by the School Board.

A motion was made (Ethan) and seconded (Anna) and passed unanimously to approve the School Board's request for a one-time wrapping paper fundraiser on behalf of PALS.

Visionary Faith Formation – Pastor Chamie

What gives us life in abundance? The glory of God is the human being fully alive. That is the kingdom of God. That is the goal of faith formation. It is a time for weaving together the One Ascension community.

Foundational building blocks include:

- The spiritual, emotional, and physical life of the leaders.
- Prayer – deep listening to God.
- Authentic conversations, deep listening and sharing with others.

For the next three months, Pastor Chamie will be focusing on listening, learning, relationship building, conversations with key people, and assessing the youth and family situation. At the January Council meeting she will present the next steps forward for 2025 and beyond. This will include the areas of children, youth, and family ministry as well as worship. It will also include a “big picture” assessment of all age groups.

She would like to engage ECC and School families with parenting and family-oriented workshops and studies.

For now, it’s about seizing the opportunities that present themselves at the moment. These include Milestone Ministries, monthly visits to the ECC and School, invitations to youth events, and Confirmation. The latter is held on Thursday and Sundays to accommodate family schedules.

A good start: There will be 10 baptisms between October 30th and November 27th!

New Payroll Software – Kaylee Searway

The current payroll software does not meet Ascension’s need for efficiency. Current obstacles include handwritten timesheets and vacation requests, difficulty on-boarding new staff, and the system is not intuitive.

Kaylee has been in discussions with vendor APS Payroll, a company that’s been in business since 1996. The benefits this company provides include:

- Ability to handle a 503C payroll.
- Knowledge of California payroll laws.
- A consistent group of technical support people available for help.
- The APS payroll software will integrate with Ascension’s current accounting software.
- Ability to handle multiple tax IDs.
- Good reviews from current clients.
- Has a portal to manage job postings and applications. Interfaces with recruiting apps.
- Can track action items for staff.
- Includes ACA reporting, a task which currently takes several weeks of Kaylee’s time.

Discussion:

It would be prudent to research other vendors such as Paychex and ADP which are both highly recommended. What are the sizes of their clients? Is support 24/7? What do the financials for ADP Payroll look like?

Closing Prayer – Pastor Tim

Information Item

The next joint meeting is set for Monday, March 24, 2025 and will be hosted by the School Board.

Adjournment

A motion was made (Ashley) and seconded Jocelyn) and passed unanimously to adjourn the meeting.
The meeting was adjourned at 7:24.

Respectfully submitted by Rachael Bowen



Pastor Tim's Ministry Report- November 2024

Grace and peace to you my partners in the gospel!

October was a wonderful month of ministry filled with big events, such as the Blessing of the Pets, Pastor Chamie's installation and our Reformation worship. We also had some small but important things such as Bible studies, a wedding, a funeral, staff meetings counseling, etc. November is shaping up to have the same story. With the election and the fires, Thanksgiving and the beginning of Advent on November 30th there is much to keep us busy and vigilant. It is too much to cover in my monthly report so I thought I would frame my report with the goals I let the congregation know that I would be working on this year.

My first goal was about Youth Ministry- I want to create what I call Critical Mass. What I picture in mind by that goal is a group of high school aged young people who are excited about their faith, their church and their group such that they are growing in their faith, being a part of the church and inviting their friends to be a part. Jenifer Avalos bears the primary burden for the achievement of this goal, and she is doing a good job of achieving it. It is quite a challenge. Sadly, the group had gotten to the point where only about 2 or 3 people were consistently coming. The strategy that Jenifer has developed is relational. At this point she is reaching out to High Schoolers and inviting them to coffee or going to their games/events and being a supportive presence. The hope is that she (along with her husband River so much of time) will meet the young people where they are and encouraging them to come and be a part of the youth group. Jen is tenaciously going about this task and it is working. New young people are being engaged and a wonderful variety of social events are taking place. Over the month of October, I have transitioned the supervisor role to Pastor Chamie who, according to the job description we created for her role, will continue to be her supervisor. One highly successful event happened on November 3rd. It was the campfire worship where 33 young people (middle school and Highschool were in attendance). A special thank you to the GMT team for being a part of the bonfire!

Children's Ministry: Improve our Sunday School program

As I was leading our 9am Children's message during our November 3rd All Saints worship service I was amazed to see that we had about 35 children sitting near me. Most of those kids are now going to Sunday school! I have not measured the average attendance lately but I do know that we have over 30 children registered for Sunday school (compared to the 6 that we had last year!) and the general feeling among families is a very positive one. As has happened with Jenifer Avalos, I have transitioned the supervisory role of Jenni Klemp (our interim Children's ministry director through December) to Pastor Chamie. They are meeting with Sunday School teachers and making wonderful plans to incorporate the ECC and School families into the Sunday School.

Generosity: Teaching all people the transforming power of abundance and generosity

At this point in the year, I have met with Ed Klodt and Karsten Lundring, the leaders of the generosity team. We are putting together a plan to educate and challenge the congregation to increase giving through creating a culture of abundance. The general thinking on this is that our culture with the contentious elections and the increasing anxiety that statistics say people are dealing with, we need to teach people that God has given us enough (money, time, community) to live an abundant and joyful life. I am excited to incorporate our Foundation and our Be the Blessing team into these plans as well and the target for launching this initiative is January.

Accountability: Creating Biblical Accountability in our church staff as a way to model it for the whole church community.

I have been meeting with Kaylee (Director of Operations) and Carrie (President) to create a three-pronged strategy for this:

First is to present the current “communication pathways” (Employee Handbook p.18) to our church staff to make sure that they understand there is a solid pathway to consider if they are struggling with tensions between fellow employees.

2nd is a conversation around an excellent resource called Working Genius. I had a more detailed description of this resource in my previous month’s report but to sum up it is a more proactive approach to preventing tensions between colleagues. Our executive team has been using this to very good effect.

3rd is the Enneagram which is another resource our church staff uses to get to know our communication habits, etc.

Identity: To help members and visitors understand who we are as a church

Finally, I have been reading and researching what is the vaguest of the 5 goals. I feel very convicted by the idea of helping Ascension be a big tent (inclusive) church. We want to welcome people from the whole political spectrum and appreciate the diversity of perspective that comes with it. We can be a community because we have the bond of faith, hope and love given to us by Christ. It is important in this politically polarizing time that we stand in what can be seen as a radical place and experience the pressure to place politics over relationships.

Some very concrete places I want the messaging of this concept to come out are the webpage, the new members class and perhaps a preaching series later in the year.

To conclude my report, I want to say I am very excited about Advent. It will be Pastor Chamie and my first chance to put together a thematic preaching series that includes connecting the worship songs, preaching, scripture readings and prayers altogether in one theme- peace. I love being able to think creatively with my new Associate Pastor. Good job Call Committee!

Peace,

Pastor Tim

Pastor Chamie's November 2024 Council Report

As of this writing, I have been in the position of associate pastor for six weeks. This is my first official church council report. I am truly overjoyed to be here. I love this church family and the work to which I am called. Here is a summary of my first month.

Children, Youth, & Family

- I have enjoyed weekly meetings with Jen Avalos and Jenni Klemp as I get to know them and work together at rebuilding our children and youth ministries. I feel very blessed to work with these two dedicated, gifted women.
- We officially kicked off the confirmation year on the last Sunday of September. I preached my last sermon at North Hollywood First UMC that morning and then headed home to Thousand Oaks to lead a campus wide scavenger hunt for the confirmands as they got to know their campus. Our confirmation lessons for October focused around the theme of prayer. We have 19 students registered for confirmation with about half of them students at Ascension School and the other half from other schools. We are working hard for confirmation - and youth ministries as a whole - to be an inclusive, wholistic group. In other words, we don't want to create a feeling of division amongst those who go to school on the Ascension campus and those who don't. Jen and I are working on making sure our youth are seen, heard, and loved. Another important confirmation note: we surveyed the parents on the best day to meet and the vast majority said Sunday. This works well for getting confirmands into the rhythm of meeting on Sunday as that is also when high school youth group meets. Furthermore, it gives us an opportunity for both middle school and high school to sometimes meet together. Confirmation meets from 4:00 to 5:30 and high school youth group from 5:00 to 7:00.
- We added 6th grade to a monthly fun activity with confirmands and all middle school youth. This is a step in expanding our middle school ministry and making sure 6th graders don't fall through the cracks (as confirmation is just for 7th and 8th grade). The first event that included 6th graders was a middle school outing to the neighborhood pumpkin patch where we had 18 kids in attendance.
- On the second Sunday of October, I visited the Sunday school classrooms and the nursery to talk with teachers and get a peak of what is happening with our children on Sunday mornings.
- I met with a few parents to learn from their past experiences and their present hopes, including talking to Kari Keit who at one time led a children's church choir. This is something we may bring back in 2025.
- I very much enjoyed teaching the First Communion classes - one on a Sunday afternoon and one on late start Monday to reach out to school parents. We had ten students do First Communion.
- I worked with Jenni on our Bible milestone of giving Bibles to 2-year-olds and 2nd graders. We gave out right around 20 Bibles on Reformation Weekend.
- Jen, Jenni, and I made over 200 goodie bags to pass out at the school's Trunk or Treat. We had bags for children in grades 5th and under that included an invitation card to Sunday school and Hanging of the Greens and then goodie bags for kids 6th through 8th grade that included an invitation to the middle school bonfire and winter camp. We decorated our car with the theme "Barbie Goes to Church." Tim



was “Alan” and all of the ladies of the church staff were Barbies. Tim, Jen Avalos, and I passed out the goodie bags from our trunk.

- I had a few meetings in trying to discern the activity time for Hanging of the Greens that comes before the time in the sanctuary. We decided not to do “snow” this year, but have an Advent wreath station, the youth selling lefse and hot cocoa, campfire pits, and some sort of dinner (that still hasn’t been finalized).
- Children, youth, and family ministries includes interfacing with the schools:
 - I attended the school board fall retreat.
 - I communicated with teachers and staff to get schedules of recess, lunch, and religion class times for the day school and outdoor classroom times for ECC. I made myself lists of these times and have them posted on my office bulletin board.
 - My intent is to get into each grade at least once a month to read a Bible story or do a faith lesson. In October, I did a story time with first grade about bread and invited them all to First Communion class. I did a lesson with second graders on Martin Luther and the Bible and invited them all to come to worship to receive a Bible. I did Reformation classes for 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students. Jen joined me as an observer on one of those class times as she is new to the Lutheran tradition. In November, I hope to get into the classes that I missed: TK, K, 3rd, 4th, & 5th.
 - I have made an appearance at drop-offs, pick-ups, and sporting events at the school as I work on connecting with families.
 - I sent out a letter to parents at both the ECC and the day school introducing myself.
 - I went to the pumpkin patch with the ECC.
 - I work on chapel every week, coordinating that service, and interfacing with the chapel team of Pastor Tim, Rich Gregory, Jenelle, Aidan in tech, Kelsey as the worship music leader (sometimes we teach Worship Arts together), and Heather who is in charge of the religion curriculum at school.



Worship

- I preached Oct 6-7 and talked about John 10 when Jesus says that he has come so that we might have life and have it in abundance. I want to help Ascension be “fully alive.” Part of that will be “growing young.” Tim and I team-preached for Reformation Weekend and had fun preparing that sermon together.
- In October I did my first baptism as Ascension’s associate pastor. This was for a first grader from school. I also met with baptism families in preparation for the five baptisms I will be doing in November.
- I had a meeting with Pastor Paul to learn from him. We discussed his time as worship coordinator and his most recent assistance in picking out hymns and liturgy.
- I meet weekly with Wyant, Tim, and Jenelle to go over the 9:00 AM worship and then Tim, Jenelle, and I continue the conversation as we talk about the 6:00 and 10:30 services.
- I have really enjoyed getting to know Jenelle and working with her. She’s such a gem.
- One of the things that I learned how to do at my former congregation was weekly reels - video social media invites to worship. I attended a webinar that talked about the significance of using social media to communicate with your congregation and to grow your church. So Jenelle has been recording Tim



and I for weekly reels and then I have partnered with Stacy to get these on social media. Stacy reported that a couple of those reels have gotten over 1000 views.

- I began exploring podcast possibilities that would make the weekly sermon available via a podcast platform - as per suggested by a former Ascension Church youth who is now a young adult. This is something that Stacy, Tim, Lan, and I are discussing.
- I spent significant time reading and praying over all of the Advent and Christmas texts and coming up with a theme for Advent and Christmas that will be woven through Sunday worship, Hanging of the Greens, and Christmas Eve and Morning services - as well as the Advent devotional book.
- I had a meeting with all the worship leaders about Advent and Christmas and Hanging of the Greens.
- I had a meeting with Matt Cahill to talk about the bell choir doing a special piece at the 3:00 and 5:00 Christmas Eve services and this will include getting children and youth involved.

Pastoral Care

- Every Tuesday after staff meeting, we three pastors meet to go over pastoral care and how we divide hospital visits, phone calls, etc. I am thankful for Pastor Steve being the head organizer with this.
- I had several one-on-one meetings in office that had to do with pastoral care as well as providing care of families, students, and school staff.

OnBoarding

There is much to learn just coming on board and being new!

- I am getting to know a new computer operating system as the church is on Dell computers and I have always been an Apple user. This learning will continue and I still haven't figured out how to access all of the old files including past pastors and staff so I can see what resources and materials we might have. I am also learning how to use the church's Shelby system.
- I have gotten my office mostly organized. I have also worked on making it feel warm and hospitable, including making it kid-friendly, per the advise of a 6-year-old who told me that I really needed a coffee table with coloring books and crayons and that I also needed Legos! Mission accomplished!
- I am beginning to learn the various budgets, accounts, and financials of my areas.



Other

- On Wednesday mornings I attend executive team meetings with Kaylee, Tim, Jenni, and Rich. I find these to be very constructive as we look at the big picture of One Ascension.
- I met with church member and school mom Nellie Trumbo (who is a psychologist) as we begin exploring ways to better care for the mental and spiritual health of our One Ascension community..
- Communications... I am trying to work weekly on various pieces for the church newsletter and the school newsletter as well as emails that go out jointly from Jen and me and Jenni and me. I believe that the story-telling and the invitations are so very important. I am praying and listening as I work on discerning how God might want to use my writing skills in this position.
- During CLU's homecoming weekend, Tim and I attended a presentation about the artist who did the wood carvings in our sanctuary as well as the CLU chapel. I feel making such connections with CLU is an important thing to do as one of Ascension's pastors. During the homecoming weekend, Tim and I hosted Pastor Matt and Becky Anderson at our home. It was good to connect with them and remember the days they both served musically at Ascension. Caring for the wider Lutheran family is important.
- I was thankful for Bishop Bos' message and installation. After worship on the Sunday she was here, Bishop Bos, Tim, Pastor Steve, Carrie Leonard as council president, and I all went out to lunch.

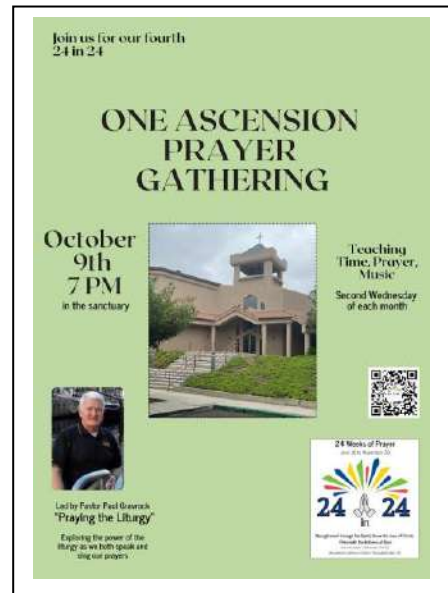
With Gratitude,
Pastor Chamie

Church Council Report – Pastor Steve Herder – November 1, 2024

On this All Saints' Day, Nov. 1st, to paraphrase the Apostle Paul, "Grace and peace to you dear saints at Ascension Lutheran Church in Thousand Oaks." As we were reminded last weekend – Reformation Sunday - as followers of



Christ, we are both saints and sinners, paradoxically at the same time. As we enter November, we have many reasons to give thanks to God, including our [24 weeks of prayer in '24](#) and our new staff members, and to pray for our country during and after all the elections this month. This report of October ministries for the November 20th Council meeting will tell many



stories through the photos shared. Pastor Paul Gravrock and Margaret Ricci led an excellent prayer gathering on Oct. 9th. Pastor Chamie and some children and youth will lead our Nov. 13th prayer gathering at 6:30pm. Invite a friend.

In last month's report I promised you photos of our Blessing of the Animals, led so wonderfully by Church Council member Bonny Chick. She put a great team together and we planned for a year for this new and expanded event, with a special emphasis on reaching out to our [neighbors and community](#) through this prayer event. It was a grand time with hundreds of people and a great variety of animals in attendance. Special thanks to the Be the Blessing team for providing the financial resources we needed to reach out to our community. And thanks to everyone who joined in the fun, fellowship and prayers of the day!



ASCENSION LUTHERAN
CHURCH • MINISTRIES • COMMUNITY
3000 E. Hillcrest Drive, Thousand Oaks, CA 91320

Blessing of the Animals & Family Fun Pet Fair

Saturday, October 5, 12-3 PM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: (It is dogs, cats, birds, or reptiles, you just might find it at Ascension Lutheran Church in Thousand Oaks Oct. 5. Our annual Blessing of the Animals outdoor event this year will be accompanied by a fair celebrating our local business, and we're inviting the community to join us!

The fair will include:

- K-9 demonstrations by the Ventura County Sheriff's Department
- Pet adoptions
- A petting zoo
- Doggy agility demos
- Pet vendor booths
- Food trucks (for the humans)

"We know that God calls on us to take care of all of creation, including the animals," notes Ascension Associate Pastor Steve Herder. "Each year in October we remember this as a traditional time to bless pets and other animals, creatures Friends of Ascension called his brothers and sisters. Our pets are very important parts of our families. This outdoor event gives thanks to God for our pets and asks God's blessings on all of us, pets and people alike!"

Event chair Bonny Chick adds, "We want to create an opportunity for the entire community to come together and celebrate their pets on this special day. We also hope that the sheltered pets will be blessed with new fur-ever homes."

In addition to the Noon – 3 PM Blessings by our Pastors of each individual animal in attendance, there will also be accommodation for In-Car Drive Through Pet Blessings available from 3-3:30 PM. This will allow for sick, disabled and socially challenged pets to also receive their personal blessing!

For more information about this doggone good time in the making, it would be perfect if you email us or give us a call.

WHERE: Ascension Lutheran Church campus, 3000 E. Hillcrest Drive, Thousand Oaks, 91320
WHEN: Saturday, October 5, 12-3 PM



Two of the Sunday morning adult education classes are pictured here: the [Be the Blessing team](#) gave a super update on their ministry and we encourage more people to apply for a grant to start a new ministry or service project! Paul Evenson had an excellent class on Public Faith, Private Faith as we consider our role in civic society. Carol Bartell coordinates our Sunday classes.



YOU ARE INVITED

GLOBAL MINISTRIES TEAM

OCTOBER 9 MEETING 4 - 5:30 PM

Focus: Faith & Fair Trade

Join us in person or via Zoom to learn more about what Fair Trade is all about and the faith foundations of Fair Trade going back to the beginning. Learn more about Fair Trade at Ascension and the many ways we can promote justice for people and planet through Fair Trade.

Presenter: Carol Bjelland.

ASCENSION LUTHERAN Fair Trade Ministry Justice for People & Planet

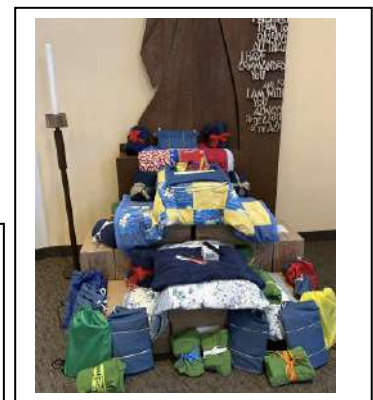
Also, updates about Gifts of Hope and tourniquets to Ukraine.

BETHLEHEM ROOM
ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH

1600 E. HILLCREST DRIVE,
THOUSAND OAKS, CA 91362

ASCENSION LUTHERAN Global Ministries Team

Our [Global Ministries Team](#) meeting in October focused on our [Fair Trade Ministries](#) which are led by Carol Bjelland and a growing list of leaders. The “ladybug” photo was from a fun afternoon at our Fair Trade Lane for our ECC and school families. Each October we celebrate and dedicate all the Lutheran World Relief quilts and [kits](#) that we made, “God’s Work Our Hands.” We appreciate all those who led and served, for the quilts, leader Anita Cohen, for the kits, leaders Louise Evenson and Vicki Weeks.



Chris Daleiden, leader of our Community Concerns Team, and I attended the 45th anniversary celebration of [Many Mansions](#). Ascension was one of the founding members of this community work! We were reminded that the name comes from John 14:2, KJV.



Ascension Lutheran Church (Thousand Oaks, CA)

Posted by Steve Herder
2d · 🌐

Yesterday was the graveside service for our friend and sister in Christ, Irene Sansam, our oldest member at 101. She and her husband John, who died eleven years ago, had been members of Ascension since 1981.

Irene served during World War Two as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Army Nurse Corps. Since 2015 she was a resident of University Village.

Our prayers are with her daughter Lyn Olson and her family.

Thanks be to God through our Lord Jesus Christ for the gift of eternal life.



In the last month I have led three memorial services, for Karin Frey (who had been part of our Women's Monday Morning Bible Studies), Neal Scribner (the architect for our sanctuary), and for our oldest member, Irene Sansam, 101. Our love and prayers for comfort are with each of these loved ones' family and friends. Now here at the end of October we were saddened to hear that our long-time friend, Bill Swiontkowski, died. Watch for the info on his memorial service. May Jesus our Good Shepherd comfort all who are grieving.

The photo below is from our Christian Life Hour at Hillcrest Royale. Dennis Gray and I led this worship service. Norm Guetschoff leads these services at four other places in town. Let us know if you'd like to join in these outreach ministries of worship and care for the [oldest members of our community](#). In this photo are three Ascension members: John Burgert, Dennis Gray, and Dwight Lofgren. We missed Bonnie Braaten and Rachel Adamske that day, who are also at Hillcrest Royale!

This month was a time of hospitalization for a long list of Ascension members. We are praying God's strength and healing for each of you.

October was a blessed month with much happening at [Cal Lutheran's Samuelson Chapel](#): Thursdays' chapel at 11:25; Founders Day Christus Award given to Randy and Carolyn Foster; the lecture that afternoon about the wood carvings there and in our sanctuary; the Homecoming Concert led by Dr. Wyant Morton, with the added 140+ alumni singers!



The second and third weekends of November, since 2002, we have lifted up our ["Gifts of Hope"](#) and we this year again we encourage all of you to consider giving to either a local ministry ([Harbor House](#) or [Friends of Fieldworkers](#)) or a global ministry ([Kafika House](#) in Tanzania, tree planting in Rwanda, or InfoHut computer labs in Zimbabwe) or both! Thanks, Ascension, for your amazing heart for generosity through this alternative Christmas giving ministry, Gifts of Hope!

God's blessings to each of you, as you experience the joy of being a blessing in serving God, one another, and God's beloved world, in Jesus' name and with His love and grace! Keep up your prayers in this "24 in 24" prayer focus, praying Ephesians 3:14-21 each day, that you may be "filled with the fullness of God!"

Attendance

Our six week average attendance has risen from 320 to 378, with the weekend of November 3rd and November 10th having more than 400 in worship! Our online viewership is also increased over the calendar year from a six-week average of 139 in January and February to 155 in October and the first half of November.

Maintenance

By our council meeting I plan to have three current proposals and the August 2021 proposal for reference. The company from 2021 is no longer in business, but provides a framework from which future decisions were made. The 2021 proposals indicated \$29,700 - \$36,000 in tile removal and surface grinding before beginning \$54,000 - \$60,000 in concrete stain. Our amazing maintenance team took care of that demolition work for us this summer. We currently have two estimates for concrete staining at \$56,200 and \$61,780. The third estimate is expected Friday, November 15th. None of the estimates currently include a labyrinth. Pastor Chamie would like a 7-circuit classical labyrinth on the concrete in front of the prayer chapel. We will attain from each vendor what the order of applications would be to complete that and what the additional cost may be. This item is currently informational; I would like the council to be aware of the ballpark of costs that are possible to complete the patio around the sanctuary.

Additional data to be considered is the reserve study: the on-campus visit is November 14th. I hope to have the completed study available for you in December.

The church choir has inquired about a handrail to the sanctuary from the choir loft. I have spoken to two contractors, and I expect to have proposals on two levels of options by Friday, November 15th. Again, no current decision is needed; just information about projects on the horizon to be considered.

Caroyln Bahr and Jenelle Smith are my office carpet replacement heroes! They have borne a great deal of the work of packing up the office, holding down the fort during multiple days of installation, and always being friendly faces to accept our mail, packages, and campus guests with grace. We'll have the vinyl installed in the Bethlehem Room on Tuesday, November 19th, but we are having a slight hiccup with the carpet. There is a defect in the carpet that needs to be worked out with the manufacturer. They are coming by in the next couple of days to discuss options with us. Please pray for our team to have patience and perseverance!

Possible New Payroll System

Thank you for your feedback at the joint meeting regarding the possibility of a switch to APS Payroll Systems. We have looked into some options, called some references, and hope to arrive at a decision point soon.

Christmas Celebration

We will be closing our church office at noon on Friday, December 6th to spend some time together reflecting on the joy of the season. It's "early" to celebrate Christmas, but late December is a busy time in the life of the church as we prepare many worship services and experiences for members and guests.

Finance

The School Board is scheduled to meet on Monday, November 18th. At that meeting they plan to discuss and vote on staff increases and tuition increases for the 2025-2026 school year. My team has been working to prepare tuition history, competition surveys about the surrounding early childhood centers and private schools in the area, CAPSO information regarding salary guidelines for the day school, proposed revisions to the ECC Salary Matrix, and a three-year financial lookback to provide perspective for newer Board members. While a good amount of work, having these decisions locked in before the end of the calendar year makes for an easier budget season February through May: tuition numbers drive the revenue lines and salaries make up one of our largest expenses, so a skeleton of the budget will essentially already be in place when we begin in the new calendar year.

Human Resources

Carrie Leonard has been working hard on the pastor review form, incorporating feedback required by the Methodists for Pastor Chamie into the general form the council can use for all pastors. She has been thoughtful in seeking my input on the form, and Carolyn is working on a fillable PDF version for you.

As we reach the end of the calendar year some of my focus moves back toward detailed payroll reports to ensure that our W-2's and ACA reporting are accurate. I've learned that earlier review on key items can save on a headache in January before the filing deadline.

Jenni Klemp has been working hard to maintain coverage for our church nursery each Sunday morning. She and Camryn Force have spent a disproportionate number of hours in the interviewing, background checks, and hire process for employees who will work approximately three hours per week. Jenni has taken on the difficult role of scheduling the nursery team, while I have been struggling to maintain coverage for the coffee hospitality role. We started the fall with Jude Klemp as the main coordinator and several backups, but the backups have not been available to help on critical dates. We could use several interested individuals to be cross trained on the coffee cart and substitute every 1-2 months.

Jenelle led an amazing discussion on the Enneagram at one of our staff meetings, which has led to more individualized and nuanced discussions about each of our styles and how we interact with each other. It's fun to have both the Enneagram and Work Genius concepts to reflect on as we continue the dynamic work of working together as individuals and as a team.

Mesa Farms

One of my particularly fulfilling tasks this month has been to continue dialoguing with Rebecca and Dan at Mesa Farms about how we might involve Ascension members in service with Mesa. One area I am looking into currently is assessing the quantity of consumables they need for their 12 residents, and if Ascension's Food Pantry and friends could help with those needs. We are thinking about a weekly or biweekly delivery of consumables to the property in Ojai. I will share more as I learn more. Creighton Van Horn and I are both serving on a fund-raising cabinet for Mesa that will meet in early December.

Thank you,
Kaylee Searway
Director of Operations

**Ascension Lutheran School Board Meeting Minutes
October 16, 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.

Day 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:

Ashley Steere, Scott Bean, Rich Gregory, Jenni McCoy, Connie Angress, Jocelyn Myers, Nelly Trumbo, Chris Poveromo, Kyle Jones, Kathy Roshanai, Jeanette McNulty, Anna Woodward, Pastor Chamie

Guests: Wes Myers

Call to Order:

Ashley called the meeting to order at 7:36pm.

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

Devotion:

Devotion was shared by Principal Gregory at the joint church council and school board meeting prior.

Approval of Agenda and Consent Agenda:

Motion to approve agenda initiated by Jocelyn. Nelly seconded. Motion passes.

Approval of consent agenda items initiated by Jocelyn. Anna seconded. Motion passes.

Open Forum:

Wes Myers presented to shed light on a gap in policy regarding alcohol use on campus. He gave examples from the expenditures from the Gala over the last two years to illuminate where an updated policy could allow for on campus fundraising that includes alcohol consumption. He recommends that school board develop and approve a specific policy regarding alcohol use on campus to include in the School Board Handbook.

Old Business:

Subcommittee Updates

- Subcommittee for Discount Standardization still needs to meet, but Jeanette's preliminary research shows that schools in the area give a 10% discount for siblings etc.
- Ashley suggests the subcommittees meet in the next 2-3 weeks to have recommendations to consider when making budget decisions. Tuition for the 2025-2026 will have to be decided in November.
- Jenni shared the discount policy which is currently in effect at the ECC. It includes a staff discount of 50% (ECC, school, and church), 10% church discount, and a 10% sibling discount (only if the sibling is at the ECC.) Only one discount per child.

New Business:

Tuition & Budget Preparation

- Kaylee gave a brief presentation to kick start the budget decision making process for the upcoming year.
 - What did we accomplish with 7% increase last year:
 - Covered \$150,000 security guard gap in previous budgets (marketed as 4% security and 3% increase)
 - We needed large dollars to correct the TK-8 Matrix
 - We wanted to grant ECC teachers 5 paid days in August
 - We were realizing a bigger sub pool than previously anticipated
 - What else were we hoping for last year:
 - Improve makerspace
 - More maintenance personnel
 - 2025-2026 Wish List – Priorities
 - Follow TK-8 Matrix with 2.5% employee increases
 - 2.5% increase for ECC Matrix
 - More maintenance support
 - Financial backing to five strategic goals (improve Makerspace)
 - Market Conditions for ECC
 - ECC rates are top of market
 - We are experiencing price resistance at the ECC

- There are families currently dropping or opting out of extended ECC care
- Market Conditions for TK-8 School
 - 164 students versus 170 budgeted
 - Retention rate has fallen significantly (95% retention 2 years ago and now 80%)
 - Vulnerability in upper grades due to student dynamics
 - Ventura County student population declined 13% over four years
- Staff Recommendations
 - Follow TK-8 Matrix with 2.5% employee increases
 - Increase TK-8 Tuition 3-5%
 - Increase ECC Matrix 2.5%
 - Increase ECC Tuition 3%
 - Ask compensation committee to work on 2026 health care options
- Necessary Details Needed
 - Forecast of 2024-2025 tuition
 - Tables/rates
 - Info from competitors
 - Cash reserve details
 - Public school salary rates and CAPSO information
- Ashley requested materials be (in lieu of additional meeting) emailed to board members before November. Request to see consolidated financials from over the last 3 years when sending materials, actuals of health costs, all students with discounts (siblings, teacher children, etc).

State of the Schools

- Rich and Jenni presented during the joint session, so no additional updates.

TK/K Classroom Accommodations

- Rich spoke about the tension between the ECC 4's classes and TK who compete for the limited Kindergarten enrollment spots. He does not believe the current approach (with TK having priority over ECC students) is in align with our One Ascension approach. There are 18 TK students and only 22 K spots, so only a handful available to interested ECC families. He is interested in creating a proposal which includes telling ECC families that you are all welcome to the day school. May have budget shortfall due to hiring an additional teacher. Then have flexibility to increase 1st grade enrollment cap if 2 Ks merge into one. More administratively burdensome but falls in line with the One Ascension model.
- Jenni wants parents to make the right decision for their child and not move them based on availability in K.

Ashley makes a motion to remove the top end of the class size restriction and empower the executive team to increase class sizes as necessary for the 2025-2026 school year, and add to the school board handbook that the school board has oversight of class sizes. Scott seconds.

Discussion included that the information relayed to families should be very clear about what class sizes they can expect for each grade level. It was also discussed that there will be additional expenses incurred to furnish an additional TK or K classroom.

Motion passes.

Middle School Teacher Training

- Rich spoke on the Leadership Development Proposal for Heather Hartson and Spencer Gottmer that was circulated to the board via email. Heather and Spencer are currently the Deans of the Middle School. He supports the proposal with the caveat that the teachers who receive the training agree to a 2-year teaching commitment or a reimbursement of training costs.
- Kaylee recommends speaking with legal before putting in a stipulation about employment commitment.
- Kathy has taken courses with Dr. Delbar Niroushak (the instructor from the proposal) for her own professional development. She has seen a need in the middle school for education and teacher training in the areas presented in the proposal, as she has a middle school student herself.
- Several comments were offered by various board members including: need to do market research and find the best person not the first person; don't let the salesperson decide whether you need to services; how much experience does she have with kids; and can these social, emotional focus areas be studied for less cost.
- Nelly commented that social, emotional growth and learning is a cornerstone of middle school.

Nelly makes a motion to approve the Ascension middle school teacher training proposal from Dr. Delbar Niroushak from unrestricted cash. Jeanette seconds.

Discussion included a request for reporting back to the board after the course starts to hear teacher feedback. It was also noted that it should be clear who the curriculum belongs to (the school versus the individual teachers.)

Nelly amends her original motion to include that Ascension retains all intellectual material from this training. Jeanette seconds.

Two oppose. Motion passes.

Closing Prayer:

Pastor Chamie closed the meeting with prayer.

Adjournment:

Jocelyn motioned to adjourn the meeting. Nelly seconded. Meeting was adjourned at 10:01pm.

Next school board meeting is November 18th. Kathy will lead devotion.

Respectfully submitted by Jocelyn Myers

**ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH
FOUNDATION REPORT TO THE COUNCIL
AUGUST 20, 2024**

Stefano Borzone has presented The Next Chapter Vision he has for the Foundation. The key elements of the vision, strategy and roadmap for growth are shown in the attached two charts. An important element in moving forward with this vision is changing the way the Foundation operates. In addition to the quarterly meetings of all the trustees, a smaller team consisting of the officers and the committee chairs will meet monthly to provide continuing momentum on all initiatives. This will free up the quarterly meetings to spend more time on the overall strategies.

At its November meeting the Foundation approved grants totaling \$14,020:

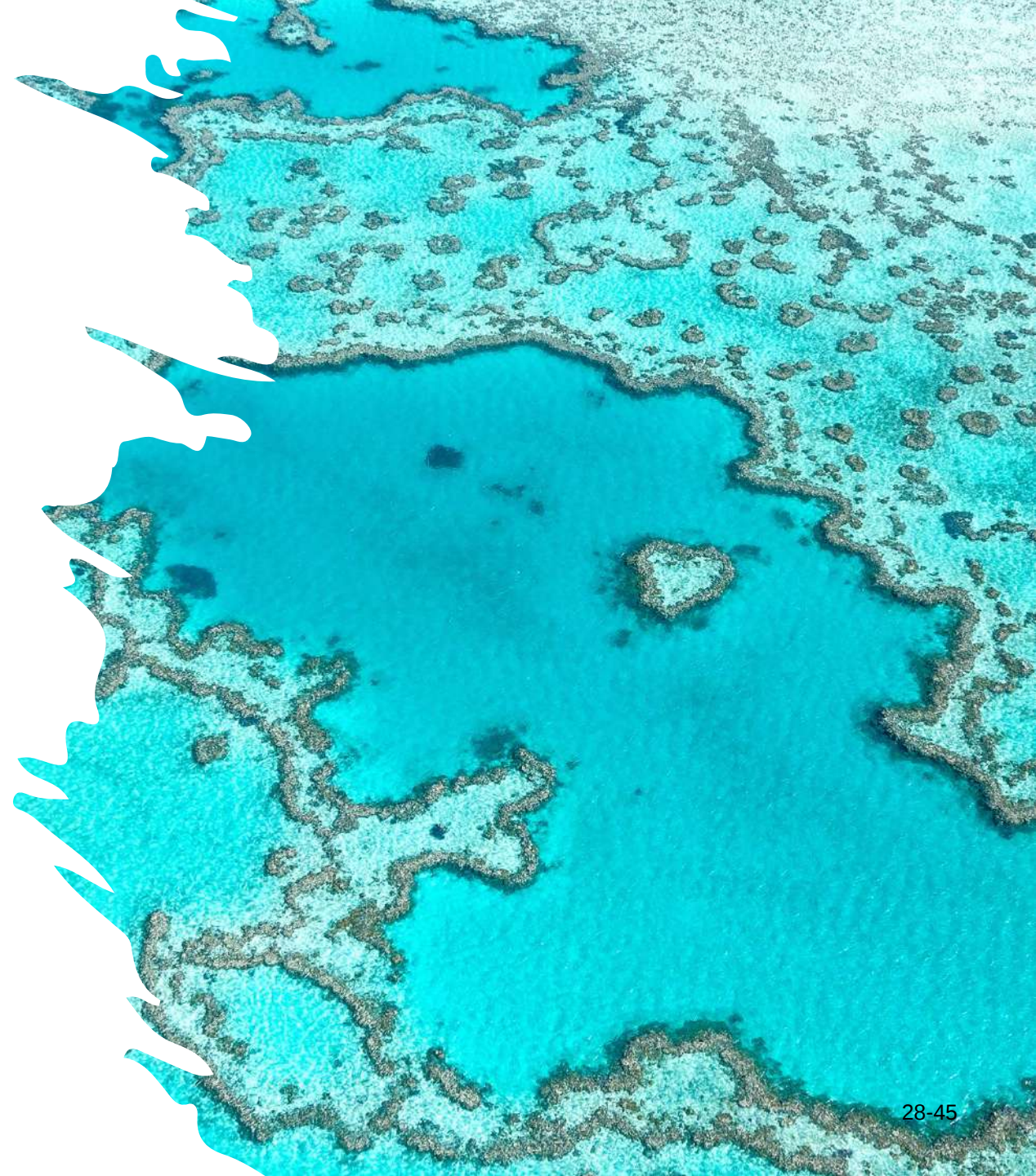
- \$1,000 to the Global Ministries Team for shipping of LWR kits
- \$6,000 to Pastor Steve for Gifts of Hope
- \$1,220 to Jen Avalos for youth programs
- \$1,000 to Carlah Schneider for help fund confirmation benevolence fund
- \$800 to PLTS Center for Climate Change Justice and Faith for scholarships
- \$4,000 to CLU Center for Global Engagement for assistance/support for international students and study abroad students

The Foundation's total assets totaled \$1,827,498 as of September 30, 2024. The equity markets have been very strong this year, resulting in the equity portion of the total portfolio slightly exceeding the allowable maximum of 75 percent. Consideration is being given to selling some equity funds and transferring the cash to a money market fund to get back below the allowable maximum.

Alan Baker
Foundation Representative to the Council

ALC Foundation The Next Chapter Vision

- Build on the success and financial strength of the Foundation to establish a new and fresh identity through a broader and more diverse reach.
- Set ambitious goals for growth driven by innovative programs and new audiences.
- Introduce active management of the Foundation with an operating board mentality
- Bring third party resources to the mix to advance strategic initiatives as needed.



ALC FOUNDATION STRATEGY AND ROAD MAP FOR GROWTH

Strategic Focus Areas	Advancement and Partnerships	Outreach and Social Media	Scholarship Programs	Investment Strategies
Strategic Initiatives	- Identify Partners and potential large donors that can help us advance our vision. - Establish a special partnership with our school based on added value, shared vision with dedicated strategies, annual event.	- Go Big mentality. - Enter new markets/audiences in the broader community - Social media comprehensive strategy and messaging (third party). - Business community/chamber of commerce engagement. - Church Membership events.	- Assess scholarship program and its impact, scale. - Introduce ALC school dedicated scholarships to bring diversity and academic quality to the school. - Create pathways to college from ECC to school to higher education through Foundation.	- Assess in-house investment vs big-firm investment strategy. - Communication Plan with donors. - Estate Planning engagement.
Enablers	- Monthly meetings to review progress on strategic initiatives and identified new business. - Church collateral and educational classes. - Guest speaker events and sponsorships of school gala. - Church special programs and project funding.			



Wednesday, November 6, 2024

4-5:30 PM, Founders Hall

Meeting Notes

Meeting Notes

WELCOME Greetings to all present: Beverly Selle, Andy Binsley, and Ethel Jordan (via zoom); Kim Overton, Edith Ott, Mary Wennes, Paul Evenson, Christina Sanchez, Marcia Koenig, Carol Bjelland, Pr Chamie Delkeskamp, Pr Steve Herder and Louise Evenson.

OPENING PRAYER Louise Evenson

1. FOCUS: JUBILEE, USA – Presented by Pastor Steve Herder

Jubilee USA Network is an alliance of more than 75 US organizations, 450 faith communities and 50 Jubilee global partners. Jubilee is advocating for an economy that serves, protects and promotes participation of the most vulnerable. Jubilee has won critical global financial reforms and more than \$130 billion in debt relief for the world's poorest people. Source:

www.jubileeusa.org

Pastor Steve shared an informative presentation on Jubilee USA:

- Biblical foundations for Jubilee are found in both the Old and New Testaments
- Jubilee today is focused on the following core issues:
Debt and Lending; Tax, Corruption, Transparency; Banks and Financial Institutions; Trade; Bankruptcy and Financial Crisis; Puerto Rico Debt and Disaster Response [with all of these responding to the impact of the climate crisis]

Ascension is a Jubilee USA Network congregation, and our Southwest CA ELCA Synod is a Jubilee USA synod. We are part of a group of over 750 national and local faith groups that work with Jubilee USA to address the root causes of poverty and inequality.

Social media connections include: Facebook: Jubilee USA Network, Eric LeCompte @jubileeusa Instagram: @ericlecomptejubilee Website: jubileeusa.org

- Pastor Steve shared inspiring photos and stories about his personal 42-year Jubilee Journey, which started in rural Iowa 42 years ago when he was the pastor at Zion Lutheran – Jubilee.
- Pope Francis has proclaimed 2025 as the Year of Jubilee.

2. Approval of Mission Enrichment fund disbursement

The GMT will use Mission Enrichment funds to help offset the costs of the Global Refuge reception and dinner with CEO Krish O'Mara Vignarajah which the GMT co-hosted at CLU on November 2, 2024. A report will be forthcoming next month after Louise receives the receipts from the events.

3. Updates on Gifts of Hope

The Adult Education class on Nov. 10 will focus on local projects. The Adult Education class on Nov. 17 will focus on global projects. Details are on the GMT Nov./Dec. calendar. A lunch with Pastor Carmen Retzlaff, ELCA Mission Funding Director, will follow the Adult Education class on Nov. 17. Those interested in attending the lunch should contact Pastor Steve.

4. Planning for December 4th meeting with Pastor Lisa Kipp, Lutheran World Relief

Louise announced that area churches will be invited to join the GMT meeting on Dec. 4 when Pastor Lisa Kipp from Lutheran World Relief is our guest presenter from 4-5:30 PM. Louise proposed that we have a light cookie/coffee reception for our invited guests and members from 3:30-4. Contact Louise if you can assist with the reception.

5. Review of calendar items for November/December

Calendar dates for November and December were distributed via email and reviewed at the meeting. Additional dates were mentioned:

- International Potluck on Nov. 20 at 6:30 on the CLU campus. RSVP by Nov. 14. Louise will email the details.
- An opportunity led by Dianne Beck to create Zeke Bags of Love for foster children will be available on Nov. 24 between and after the church services.
- Sunday School families will be invited to participate in a service project to make "Holiday Sock Care Kits" for Harbor House on Dec. 8. Volunteers are welcome to help.

6. Review/discussion of GMT Monthly Reports

Fair Trade: Empty gift boxes will be available for purchase (\$2 each) at Fair Trade Lane with the goal of raising \$75 to fund a scholarship for a farmer in the Meru Region of Tanzania. See the full monthly report submitted by Carol Bjelland via email.

LWR Kits – Summary Report: See the full project report submitted by Louise Evenson via email.

Center for Global Engagement – CLU: See the email flyer on International Education Week, Nov. 18-22.

7. Next Meeting: December 4, 2024, 3:30-5:30 PM Founders Hall

FOCUS: Lutheran World Relief's Humanitarian Response

Presenter: Pastor Lisa Kipp

Submitted by Ethel Jordan

WOMEN AND CHILDREN DEPARTMENT

NARRATIVE REPORT: SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF NKOAKYARIKO WOMEN
IN ARUMERU DISTRICT COUNCIL, TANZANIA.

Short information about the Project.

Diocese of Meru through Women's and Children Department implemented Nkoakyariko project using an elaborate Church and Government structure to implement the project. The Department enjoys good relations with government's representatives and is highly regarded by the local communities. These good attributes were instrumental in successful implementation of the project.

Purpose.

The purpose of the project was to build gender equality and equity, psychologically sound and socio-economic empowered to 10 Widows and 22 Orphans in Nkoakyariko community.

Main Activities

1. Ten (10) Widows are supported to build living houses
2. Purchase and distribution of 10 dairy goats to 10 Widows
3. To identify schools and needs of 22 Orphans in order for them to start pursuing their education career
4. Monitor the implementation process of all activities.
5. To transfer materials from the sources to the Widows houses.

Expected Results:

- Reduced poverty income among the Widows
- Promotion of good health among the Widows and Orphans through better immunity, nutrition and reduced incidences of diseases.
- Reduced human rights violation
- Improved standard of life among the target group (Widows and Orphans)

Output/ deliverables of the Project

- Ten Widows supported to build one bed room House
- Ten Widows were facilitated in dairy goat Keeping for income generating
- Twenty two (22) student were facilitated to enroll in primary school (11), nine (9) secondary schools and two (2) in collage to to pursuing their education career.

Outcome of the Project

Formation of a free gender violence community.

Challenges

Funds to support more Widows and orphans.

Prepared by: Magdalena John (Implementer) Sign 

Approved by:
Planner, Name, Seth Mungure Sign  Date 25/10/2024

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN TANZANIA
DIOCESES OF MERU.

CONSTRUCTION OF 10 HOUSES TO 10 WIDOWS IN NKOAKYARIKOSUB- PARISH
SUPPORTED BY USA GENEROUS DONORS THROUGH ELCT DIOCESE OF MERU

There were tears of joy and appreciation, smiles, many words of challenge to the Widows to do well by their living and much outpouring of thanks to all generous donors of 10 beautiful houses. We are quite delighted to report that all 10 beautiful houses constructed and handed to 10 recipient families. I attach a few photos which I hope share somewhat the wonder and joy we experienced from recipient Widows. Please forgive if in the report we have not given names to all the individuals involved in this wonderful collaboration - everyone did an important part and no slight was intended, but to keep the report short and impactful.

	Situation before	Situation after	During field visit.
			
			
			

**EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN TANZANIAN
DIOCESE OF MERU
NKOAKYARIKO WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PROJECT
FINANCIAL REPORT FOR NKOAKYARIKO WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PROJECT.**

	INCOME	EURO	RATE	TSHS
10/7/2024	Euro	28000	2550	71,400,000.00
	Less charges 2% Euro	560	2550	1,428,000.00
	Remain for Nkoakyariko women's project	27440	2550	69,972,000.00
8/9/2024	Euro	8378	2720	22,788,160.00
	Less charges 2% Euro	168	2720	456,960.00
	Remain for Nkoakyariko women's project	8210	2720	22,331,200.00
	TOTAL INCOME FOR NKOANKYARIKO WOMEN'S PROJECT			92,303,200.00
	EXPENDITURE		@	TSHS
1	Build 10 houses for widows	10	7,000,000.00	70,000,000.00
2	Buying 10 dairy goats	10	120,000.00	1,200,000.00
	Transport	10	25,000.00	250,000.00
3	Paid school fee for 2 students (Secondary school)	2	1,700,000.00	3,400,000.00
	Stationaries for Secondary students	2	100,000.00	200,000.00
4	Paid school fee for 20 students (Primary school)	20	300,000.00	6,000,000.00
	Stationaries for Primary students	20	100,000.00	2,000,000.00
5	Painting 10 houses for widows	10	500,000.00	5,000,000.00
6	Tranfeer materials from the source to the widows houses	10	425,320.00	4,253,200.00
	TOTAL EXPENDITURE			92,303,200.00

Church Council Report
Youth Director: Jennifer Avalos
Date: November 13, 2024

Confirmation Program Update

I am excited to share some wonderful news regarding our Confirmation program! Since my last report, we've seen a significant increase in the number of students participating. We began with 16 students, and now we are up to 20! It's truly inspiring to witness this growth and to see how God is working through this program.

This year, we've incorporated the **24/24 Prayer initiative** into our curriculum, which has been a powerful tool in encouraging our students to deepen their understanding of prayer and strengthen their connection with God. This initiative has been a real blessing, and it's wonderful to see our youth actively engaging with their faith in such a meaningful way.

From **October 6th to November 3rd**, our students have focused on the **24/24 Prayer initiative**, and starting from **November 3rd to December 22nd**, we will be participating in **Acts of Hope service projects**. These projects will allow our confirmation students to be a light of Christ in the community as they spread joy and hope during the holiday season. Each month, we will continue to explore new themes, enriching our faith journey together and empowering our youth.

Truck or Treat: October 31st

On October 31st, Pastor Chamie and I had the privilege of participating in the school's annual Truck or Treat event. We put together treat bags for the Ascension School students, which included information about upcoming events like our Lefse-making fundraiser, Winter Camp for 6th-12th graders, and the Bonfire Night on November 3rd. This event gave us the opportunity to promote these important events while showing our support for Ascension School. It was a joy to witness the excitement and enthusiasm of the children as they dressed up and participated. This event was a beautiful reminder of how our school and church communities can come together as one—lifting each other up and sharing in the joy of the season.

Senior Luther League Update

I am thrilled to report on the continued growth of the Senior Luther League. At the beginning of the school year, I had just four students attending regularly, but now I am seeing nearly nine students consistently participating. This growth has been a true blessing, and it's been amazing to witness how these students are beginning to form stronger connections with one another and with God. One of the key elements that has helped foster this growth has been my intentional efforts to meet students where they are. I've made it a priority to attend their sports games, performances, and other events to show my support. I've also spent time with students at local coffee shops, getting to know them better and offering a safe space for them to share what's going on in their lives. These moments of connection have opened doors for meaningful conversations about faith,

life, and everything in between. It's been encouraging to see how God is working through this program, and I am looking forward to continuing to walk alongside these students as they grow in their faith. Their testimonies of God's work in their lives are a true source of joy, and I am excited to see how He continues to move in their hearts.

Bible Study and 24/24 Prayer Initiative 9th-12 grade

Our Bible Study sessions on Sundays have been a powerful time of spiritual growth. It has been a joy to witness our youth's enthusiasm for the 24/24 Prayer initiative, which we have integrated into our Bible study discussions. This initiative has given our students an opportunity to dive deeper into Scripture, learn from each other's perspectives, and encourage one another as they grow in their faith.

It's been amazing to watch students ask insightful questions and support one another in their spiritual journeys. I am so proud of the way they are growing in their faith, and it's a privilege to be part of their lives during this transformative time.

6th-12th Grade Activities

Our Bonfire Worship Night on November 3rd was a great success, with nearly 33 students in attendance from both our Confirmation program, Senior Luther League, and 6th graders. It was a night of fun, fellowship, and worship under the stars. We had a fair trade station offering delicious chocolate, and thanks to generous donations from our fair trade, we were able to enjoy s'mores as we gathered together.

During the event, the Senior Luther League played an essential role in helping organize and prepare Thanksgiving food boxes for our food pantry. They guided the middle school students through the process of assembling the boxes, which was a wonderful way for our youth to serve others in the community. Pastor Chamie also shared her testimony and spoke powerfully about Romans 12, reminding all of us of the importance of offering our lives to God in service and worship.

Looking Ahead: Lefse Funrasiser 6th-12th grade

I'm excited to share some upcoming events that provide great opportunities for our youth to get involved, serve, and grow in the community. **Special Dates for Lefse** November 29th:

Lefse/Friendsgiving Prep Day, November 30th: Lefse Making Day, December 1st: Lefse Sale.

Incentive for Participation: Parents and students who volunteer their time and efforts during these events will be able to apply those hours toward reducing the cost of Winter Camp. This is a wonderful opportunity to help make camp more affordable for everyone while also contributing to the life of our youth program and church community.

Winter Camp Updates

I am excited to announce that we are preparing for **Winter Camp**, which is just around the corner! This event promises to be an unforgettable weekend filled with faith, fun, and fellowship, and we are planning to attend together as a church community. The camp is open to all **6th-12th graders**, and the **deadline to register is February 3, 2025**. The cost for each student is **\$225**, but we are offering opportunities to reduce this cost through participation in events like the

Lefse-making fundraiser. We are excited to provide this opportunity for our youth to grow in faith and community.

It is a blessing to be able to focus on the great things happening here at Ascension. Our social media stats over the last month underscore what we already knew, which is the excitement and engagement that has come with the arrival of Pastor Chamie and the new spate of activities – youth bonfire, Bibles & Brew, All Saints Garden time and more! -- in recent weeks.

For example, on Facebook, our reach between Oct. 15-Nov. 11 was 8,800, with 3,400 in content interactions. In the preceding 28-day span (Sept. 11-Oct. 14) the reach was 4,200 and 2,900 interactions. For the sake of comparison, May, which is generally a high-volume month, saw 6,000 reach and 2,000 interactions.

Reels made a difference, with video capturing interest outside our following. A few of note:

The Delkeskamps' video invite for November 9-10 services got 1,310 plays on Facebook (234 watched for more than one minute) and another 323 plays on Instagram (80 % by Ascension followers, 19.1 % non-followers).

The "Just a little hello" video from Confirmation got 1,016 plays on Facebook and 322 on Instagram (87.4% followers, 12.6% non-followers).

Pastor Chamie's pre-service video invite November 2 had 379 plays on Facebook and another 340 plays on Instagram, 43.4% followers and 56.6% non-followers.

The youth at the Pumpkin Patch got 312 plays on Instagram (50.9 % followers and 49.1% non-followers).

There were also noteworthy attention-getters among the posts. The Eve of Elections prayer, posted by Pastor Steve, was the top content among all for this period, with 1,400 interactions on Facebook including 123 likes. "I Sing Because I'm Happy," a post about the Cal Lutheran choral concert, got 1,400 with 215 likes, and a post called We joyfully welcome Pastor Chamie got just under 1,400 with 158 likes on Facebook and 38 more on Instagram.

This Week at Ascension has averaged a 60% open rate over the latest month, up just slightly from the prior period (average open rate in Religion category is 47.76%) on 1113 contacts.

As I have written a few times about my frustrations with local news outlets over the last couple of years, it's nice to have had a good interaction again with the Acorn (as long as we advertise), including a photo story on the Blessing of the Animals event, and then the following week, a very nice article and photo about the Delkeskamps, which I will include following this report.

Looking ahead to Advent and Christmas now, we will be doing some traditional advertising and some brand new: Thanks to Ascension Lutheran School leading the way, we will be represented in a mall poster at The Oaks.

Thanking you for your ongoing generous gifts of time and energy,

Stacy Smith Bosco

Communication Coordinator

Match made in heaven

Married couple will guide flock together
October 25, 2024

By Makena Huey
makena@theacorn.com



TOGETHER THEY'RE BETTER—Pastors Chamie and Tim Delkeskamp pose for a portrait at Ascension Lutheran Church on Oct. 16 in Thousand Oaks. Chaime was installed as associate pastor Oct. 20 and will serve alongside her husband, the church's lead pastor, MICHAEL COONS/Acorn Newspapers

Chamie and Tim Delkeskamp have been married for 25 years, but this month, they celebrate a new milestone.

For the first time, the two Thousand Oaks residents will both serve as pastors at the same place of worship: Ascension Lutheran Church in Thousand Oaks.

Tim Delkeskamp became associate pastor at Ascension in 2004 and lead pastor in 2017; during an Oct. 20 installation ceremony at 1600 Hillcrest Drive, Chamie Delkeskamp was officially named the church's associate pastor. She previously served as lead pastor of First United Methodist Church of North Hollywood.

"In this new phase of life, I feel like in a way we will minister that this is our big family," Chamie Delkeskamp said. "When people gather for worship on a Sunday, we all get to be together, and how great is that to be able to love the same group of people?"

Chamie Delkeskamp submitted her name to Ascension's call committee primarily because of its flourishing children and youth ministry programs and school for TK through eighth grade students. Years ago, she served as the church's school chaplain and religion teacher.

"That is an area I definitely feel called to," she said. "It is so important for children to know the anchor for their souls and to know the love of God."

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"That is an area I definitely feel called to," she said. "It is so important for children to know the anchor for their souls and to know the love of God."

Chamie Delkeskamp holds a bachelor's degree in English writing and broadcast communications from Concordia College, a master's degree in theology from Luther Seminary and a certificate in spiritual direction.

The parents of three said being a clergy couple at the same church isn't something they had planned.

They were initially worried it would be too difficult to have their marriage so involved in their vocation and their vocation so involved in their marriage, but then they began praying about all the various aspects.

"Marriage is a gift that provides a foundation of peace for life and no, it's not always easy," Tim Delkeskamp said. "I hope that as we work together, we can model healthy communication and even conflict management. What we have in our marriage . . . is hopefully a blessing in terms of being able to lead the church."

Chamie Delkeskamp agreed, adding that her own marriage has given her valuable perspective as she officiates weddings and provides premarital counseling to other couples.

"The most important thing that I've learned and lived with my husband is that God has to be the center because to have something bigger than yourselves is huge and makes for a strong marriage."

As associate pastor, Chamie Delkeskamp said she will prioritize caring for her parishioners' souls, especially during times of anxiety or fear.

"Whether I'm working with a 5-year old or a 90-year old, I want to help people feel more fully alive—whatever that might mean for them," she said. "That's a guiding vision for me in my ministry."

Tim Delkeskamp said he looks forward to seeing how his wife brings her creative energy to worship services and uses her horticulture expertise to expand Ascension's garden as a place for prayer.

"We're super excited about what's going to happen here as a result of her being in the role of associate pastor for our school for our church," the husband said.

Blessing of the animals

October 18, 2024



REA

Incumbent
The council race
has close to call
...
Irwin leads in
Assembly race
...
The council race is expected to be a close one, with the incumbent, Councilman John Irwin, facing a challenge from Councilman John Irwin. The race is expected to be a close one, with the incumbent, Councilman John Irwin, facing a challenge from Councilman John Irwin.

View

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FURRY CONGREGATION—Above, the Rev. Jack Ledbetter, left, blesses bloodhounds Rusty and Piper while owner Tim O'Shea of Newbury Park observes during an Oct. 5 Blessing of the Animals fair at Ascension Lutheran School.



4-week-old kitten Barrymore reclines while Ella Steere, 11, a sixth-grader at Ascension Lutheran School, looks on.

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Emma Storey, 4, tries her hand at the canine agility course during the event. Emma brought her Holland lop rabbit to be blessed. Photos by KAREN QUINCY LOBERG/Acorn Newspapers

Be the Blessing Report for November 2024

After a very big September/October, the Be the Blessing team had a bit of a hiatus in the last 30 days. Only one project request was submitted; actually, a resubmission of a previously rejected request that the originator reformed to better meet the program criteria. Due to a member's inability to attend, the team decided not to meet physically, and approved the resubmission electronically. The grant approved was \$200, for a fundraiser for Valor Service Dogs, an organization benefiting wounded Veterans and First Responders, via specially trained canine companions.

The team will meet the first week of December to consider new requests and to determine marketing activities for the new year.

Respectfully submitted for the committee,

Dave Harkins