

**Ascension Lutheran Church  
Council Agenda  
Monday, March 24, 2025  
Immediately following Joint Council/School Board Dinner and Meeting  
Founder's Hall**

**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** - Ethan East

**Treasurer's Report** - Dave Harkins

**New Business**

- None at time of Agenda

**Recurring Business**

- Affirm New Members, Confirmants, and Baptisms

**Old Business**

- Land Sale - report on any new transaction activity - Dave Harkins/Kaylee Searway
- Nominating Committee - Pastor Tim

**Approval of Minutes** - Carrie Leonard

- February Council 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
- Global Ministries Team Report
- Prayer Ministries
- Senior Adult Ministry
- Communications Report
- Be the Blessing Report
- Youth Ministry Report

**Information Items**

- April 16th, Council Meeting - Bethlehem Room
  - Devotions -

**Closing Prayer**

**Adjournment**

## **Treasurer Report for March, 2025**

February numbers are not yet available for church or school. The finance team was able to put together the revenue portion of the financials for February, and it showed improvement over January. The deficit position to budget diminished from 2.8% to 1.4%, or approximately \$14K. We expect that, along with the absence of any negative surprises on the expense side, the revenues will continue to provide a surplus to budget through February 28th.

The annual budget development is currently in early stages. For the first time, we have developed a request for input from all the current ministry and program leaders, whether or not they are included in the current general budget. The emphasis is on open communication, and encouraging all to engage in long-term planning for their ministry. The plan is to receive any and all input by the first week of April in order to present a preliminary budget to our Council in time for the April meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Dave Harkins

## **New Members & Baptisms Report**

February 2025

### **Baptisms for February**

No Baptisms

### **New Members for February**

Cindy Ashley  
Ioan Belovarski  
Paulina Belovarski  
Becky Duncan  
Frank Lennartz  
Linda Lennartz  
Laurie Myers  
Noelle Porter  
Brad Porter  
Dolories Pratt  
Sue Smits

**Ascension Lutheran Church  
Council Meeting Minutes  
February 19, 2025 7:00 pm**

The Council meeting was called to order by Carrie Leonard at 7:03 p.m.

**Council Members In Attendance:** Alan Baker, Rachael Bowen, Bonny Chick, Dave Harkins, Carrie Leonard, John Rarick, Anna Woodward

**Others:** Pastor Tim, Pastor Chamie, Kaylee Searway

**Absent:** Ethan East, Jeannette Ruggiero

**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**

Carrie pulled Pastor Tim's report, Pastor Chamie's report, and Kaylee Searway's report from the Consent Approval of Reports for further discussion.

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

**Devotion – Alan**

In the current preaching series, we are learning how to live wisely and well. Alan shared the inspirational story of a former neighbor who was a prisoner in the Vietnam war. This neighbor recounted that his survival was based on his absolute faith in God. Alan's pillars to living wisely and well are faith, family, friends and fun.

**Treasurer's Report – Dave**

Financial reports for January are not yet available. Offerings as of 1/31/25 are \$26,000 below budget which represents a 2.8% decrease. Overall, there is still an actual to budget surplus of \$55,000.

The audit is close to completion.

The Finance Committee is still working on an analysis of offering patterns.

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

**New Business**

**1. Pastor Evaluations – Kaylee**

Pastor evaluations forms, developed by Kaylee and Carrie, were presented to Council for review. The forms outline the ministry objectives of the congregation as defined by the senior pastor and the Council president each April. Goals and objectives specific to each pastor will also be part of the evaluations. This includes determining if the activities of the pastor are in line with the ministry objectives of the congregation. Pastor evaluations are given in June and will be reviewed by the Council. Pastor Chamie's evaluation will be forwarded to the Methodist Church in the Fall.

**2. Nominating Committee - Carrie**

Jeannette has a new position at work so Pastor Tim and Carrie are starting the search for candidates to fill the open positions for the 2025 – 2026 fiscal year. Five School Board members whose terms end this year have

volunteered to continue in their positions for one more year. Carrie encouraged Council members to be on the lookout for possible Council candidates.

### **Recurring Business**

Affirm New Members, Confirmands and Baptisms

None at this time.

### **Old Business**

#### **1. Land Sale – Kaylee**

Where are we at in the process? Creighton Van Horn is in conversation with the civil engineer on the project to ascertain what information Ascension still needs to submit so that the process can move forward. This may be the time to reach out to a City Council member. The civil engineer (Dax), our lawyer (Tom Cohen), and the buyer (Mr. Youngkin) would need to be apprised first before this action is taken.

### **Approval of Minutes**

January Council meeting

*A motion was made (John), seconded (Bonny), and passed unanimously to approve the January Council minutes.*

### **Consent Approval of Reports to Council - Carrie**

1. Pastor Tim Delkeskamp's report
2. Pastor Chamie Delkeskamp's report
3. Pastor Steve Herder's report
4. Christmas Insert 2024
5. Kaylee Searway, Director of Operations report
6. School Board report
7. Global Ministries Team report
8. Communications report
9. Youth Ministry report

*A motion was made (Alan), seconded (Bonny), and passed unanimously to approve the Reports to Council except for those pulled prior to the approval of the agenda.*

#### **1. Pastor Tim Delkeskamp's report**

Pastor Tim outlined the need for a sound system upgrade in the sanctuary. The current system works well for the 9:00 service and for spoken amplification but is not sufficient for good sound at the 10:30 service. There are three phases to the upgrade but only phases one and two are being addressed at this time.

- Phase 1 - Replace the analog microphones with digital microphones.  
Monies already donated for the project allowed for the completion of this phase prior to Christmas. The new system means that amplification when the pastors are speaking doesn't cut in and out.
- Phase 2 – Update the drum cage, soundboard, and monitoring system.  
The new system would replace the sound boxes on the floor where Praise Alive and Country Spirit lead the services, providing a more aesthetically-pleasing look along with better sound quality. This phase includes the cost for a new drum cage, with a roof, and allows for a quicker setup time for Praise Alive. It will make it easier to hear what each member is playing without overpowering each other. This could help with outreach at the 10:30 service. An enhanced sound system would benefit Ascension School and could provide for growth opportunities outside of worship. The cost to complete this phase is approximately \$68,000.

Council discussed possible ways to raise these funds without incurring additional debt while keeping in mind that there are other competing needs. As detailed in Kaylee's report, roof repairs are needed. Also, the east patio needs to be refinished. It was decided that a combination of Thrivent Choice funds, a possible contribution from the school (pending Anna's request at the next School Board meeting), reserved cash, and fundraising will be used to raise the amount needed for Phase 2. The first three will cover \$35,000 - \$45,000 of the needed funds.

*A motion was made (John), seconded (Bonny), and passed unanimously to approve fundraising efforts up to \$68,000 for completion of Phase 2 of the sound system project.*

*A motion was made (Bonny), seconded (Anna), and passed unanimously to approve the use of \$15,000 in Thrivent Choice funds for completion of Phase 2 of the sound system project.*

#### Discussion:

The Executive Team will discuss whether to use Asset Preservation funds for the roof repairs and for completing the east patio.

#### 2. Kaylee Searway, Director of Operations report

A report on the Reserve Study will be reviewed tomorrow.

#### 3. Pastor Chamie Delkeskamp's report

Council will be serving at the soup supper on April 9<sup>th</sup>. A poll of those in attendance confirmed that we'll have sufficient coverage for that evening.

Donations from those attending the soup suppers are encouraged but often don't cover the costs for these meals.

*A motion was made (Bonny), seconded (Dave), and passed unanimously to approve the use of \$1,000 in Thrivent Choice funds to cover cost overruns for the Soup Suppers.*

*A motion was made (Dave), seconded (John), and passed unanimously to approve Pastor Tim's, Pastor Chamie's and Kaylee Searway's Director of Operations Reports to Council.*

#### **Information Items**

Next Council meeting will be the bi-annual Council / School Board meeting on Monday, March 24<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm.in Founder's Hall.

#### **Closing Prayer – Pastor Tim**

#### **Adjournment**

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

The meeting was adjourned at 9:03 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Rachael Bowen



### **Pastor Tim's Ministry Report- March 2025**

Grace and peace my sisters and brothers in Christ,

The month of March has been an active one. On top of the standard duties of preaching, teaching, running staff, pastoral care I have been engaged with: Planning my sabbatical for April – June of 2026, the nominating process, putting together the activities of Lent, raising money for the sound system, and launching the “Kingdom Builders Project.” For my March Ministry report, I will reflect on these important activities.

Wednesday, March 12 at midnight was the deadline to turn in my proposal for the **Lilly Endowments pastoral sabbatical fund**. I turned it in on Monday, March 10<sup>th</sup> - 2 days and 12 hours early. The proposal itself was 22 pages long and included filling out forms of required information about the church and my ministry. The more interesting part of the proposal was the 10-page sabbatical narrative and the 4-page budget narrative. In these narratives I was required to give the vision of how I will be spending these 3 months (sabbatical narrative) and what funds (budget narrative) I need to do it. The activities include travel to France, the Holy Lands and Yosemite National Park. The proposed funding also includes \$14k for hiring interim staff while I am gone. It was a great opportunity to schedule, socialize and plan my sabbatical and to “put it on the map” so to speak. Writing it was a collaborative effort involving my executive team, Carrie Leonard and Ed Klodt. Ed is willing to serve as a sabbatical chairperson if we form a subcommittee to help make it happen. All told, I applied for \$33k. Please pray that the application is well received and that I get the grant. I will hear back from the Lilly Foundation on August 29<sup>th</sup>. If you are interested in reading my proposal, please send me an email and I will send you a copy.

I hope you witnessed our launch of the **Kingdom Assignment Project** at all 3 of our worship services on March 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>! It was a wonderful weekend. All the planning that the combined Generosity and Be the Blessing teams did all the marketing (include some very high quality “teaser” video Mark Foreman produced) and all our prayers came together. I got to give \$10k (\$100 to 100 different people) to go build the kingdom and then tell the story. At this point, we have recorded all the recipients’ contact information and are in the process of communicating with them. Last Monday we received the 1<sup>st</sup> story. Now, only 99 to go. Our strategy is that this increases awareness and encourages people to be more generous as followers of Christ.

As I write this, we are preparing for our 2<sup>nd</sup> of 6 **Wednesday Evening Lenten Soup Suppers**. It has been a while, but they are back by popular demand. We are grateful for the grant that we received from Thrivent Choice which provides a buffer between what we charge for soup and what the soup costs. I am grateful for all those who have volunteered to help. I am especially grateful to Shannon Lomeli who is leading this and has a wonderful passion for making it all happen. Not only is she committed to being here each week, but she’s also cleaned up and reorganized Peterson Hall’s kitchen to make things flow more efficiently. Moving forward the tension and stress of soup supper

will be getting people to come and matching the amount of food with the amount of people who show up. Prayers are appreciated!

As of this writing, we have about \$19k (out of \$72k) left to raise for phase 2 of our **sanctuary sound project**. I am grateful at how much we have raised and very hopeful that the other \$19k will come in soon. I believe implementing phase 2 will make a huge difference especially for the 10:30 service.

Our **Nominating Team** is officially in the “asking and discerning phase of the Nominating process. We have identified 4 open positions on church council positions (Treasure, Secretary, At Large and President Elect), 1 open School Board position and 4 open trustee positions on the Foundation. Again, your prayers for this process are very much appreciated.

There is so much more to report, so much happening, all of which is a combination of joyful and stressful! I am grateful for the good and passionate staff, for wonderful leadership and amazing One Ascension community. I reported last month that my work has been hampered a bit by a pinched nerve in my cervical spine. I can report that I am just starting to feel a little better and I am getting back a bit more mobility. It takes a while for nerves to heal. But God is good.

In His Service,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pastor Tim". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.



## Pastor Chamie's February 2025 Council Report

### Children, Youth, & Family

- Jenni and I have had conversations about her position. Reminder: Jenni's position as Children's Ministry Director was an interim position put in place when Pastor Julie resigned. The position was allotted for 10 hours a week. It was not budgeted for this current fiscal year (her salary came from the pool of not having an associate pastor for several months). Jenni has done an excellent job in not just steadying Children's Ministry through transition, but bringing back the nursery, growing Sunday school attendance, and building relationships with families of young children. Jenni has faithfully worked the allotted 10 hours a week. She has also volunteered a lot of her time as she as she wants to see Ascension thrive and knows how important children's ministry is. Pastor Tim, Carried Leonard, Kaylee Searway, and I have had conversations about the Children's Ministry Director position. Kaylee has shared with me past job descriptions for this position. Conversations, research, visioning, and prayer have all been components of the strategic planning process. This is what I know for sure:
  - The *Director of Children's Ministry* is a needed and vital position at Ascension
  - The position needs to be more than ten hours a week
  - This position needs to be a part of the 2025-26 (and beyond) strategy and budget
- I really appreciated coffee chats I had with parents of young children as I listened to their ideas, their likes, their concerns, etc. Building relationships and growing together is of primary importance to me.
- Jenni and I did Lent planning together, including lessons and experiences for Sunday school and helping young parents connect as we work towards developing one or more new small groups of parents in similar stages/ages with their children.
- Confirmation remained steady through February.
- Senior High Luther League, when it met, averaged 2-3 students in attendance. We have lots of work to do in building senior high youth ministry.
- We had no Sunday all-youth outing as we focused that energy on winter camp. We had 26 students go to Winter Camp at El Camino Pines Feb 28-Mar 2. Jeff Hengst drove the bus and chaperoned. Jen Avalos chaperoned with her husband River. I also chaperoned. It was such a great weekend of relationship building and experiencing the love of Jesus.



## INTERFACING WITH THE SCHOOLS:

- I sent out emails and invites to ECC and school families in preparation for Lent.
- Every week, I continue to intentionally put in my schedule time to interface with the school including outside time with the ECC, drop-off and pick-up times at the gate at school, and recess time.
- I went into all school classes to do a lesson on Ash Wednesday/Lent to prepare students for the new season.
- Chapel is a very special time and preparing for it is a high priority every week. This is what I posted on social media about chapel on February 5: *"So it was hard for me to keep it together this morning and not let the tears flow before chapel began as I could feel the Spirit moving. It was an incredibly powerful, heart-filling morning. For the first time this school year, one of our students finally got to be back in chapel after going through cancer treatment. We also welcomed four new students, two of them having lost their home and school in the recent fires and they have landed with us. Two of our school parents who are professional musicians sang the song they recently released in response to the LA Fires. Look up Korbee on Spotify and "I Believe in Us" and you can purchase the song for \$1 with 100% of the proceeds going to fire relief. Today my husband told the story of Tabitha in the Bible and how the love of Jesus living in her heart inspired her to serve. One of the ways the school and church has served our community is through Harbor House which takes care of those struggling to make ends meet and to find housing and stay housed. We presented them a check with our donations totaling \$20,000. All of this on top of what happens every chapel - we sing, we pray, we remember God loves us, we gather together from our preschoolers through our 8th graders, over 200 children worshipping, along with parents and grandparents and school staff and church staff and members and community partners. It is beautiful beyond words. I feel beyond blessed to be a part of something so special. Chapel today was like the fresh rain, restorative and life-giving for wearied souls tired from the recent hardships and heartaches in the world. Today was Christian community at its truest and best."*

## Worship

- We had a worship meeting with all worship leaders - music leaders, tech, Pastor Tim, Jenelle, and me - to plan for Easter and Lent and get key post-Easter dates on our calendar.
- I spent many, many hours in February - in cooperation with Tim - working on the Lent weekend sermon series/outlines as well as the Wednesday evening series.
- I invited Tom & Jenn Korbee, school parents who are professional musicians (and Jenn grew up at Lutheran camps as her dad was a camp director) to sing the song they wrote for fire relief at the Sunday 9:00 AM service.
- Tim and I team-preached on Valentine's Day weekend.
- After continued struggle with the layout of the pastor's

## Pastoral Care

- There is much pastoral care. In addition to partnering with Pastors Steve & Tim to visit those in the hospital and rehab centers, I did a lot of pastoral care with women, young adults, and children.

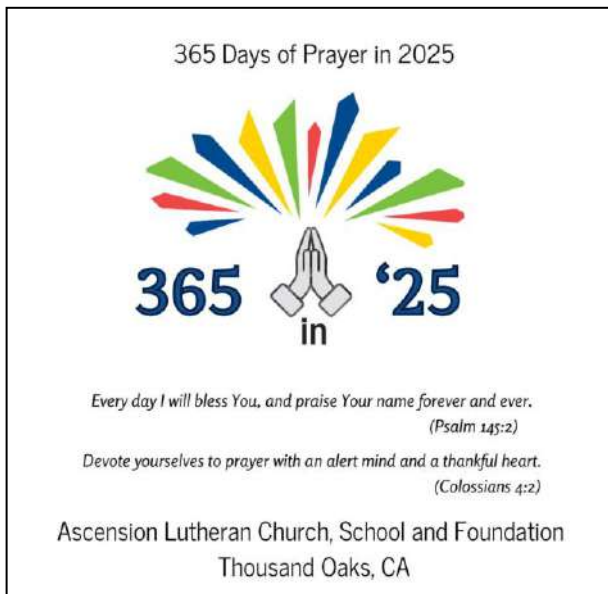
## Other

- Wednesday Work Blessings included visiting the Mark & Jacob Foster Care Agency and Anna Woodward's Tax Office. I love visiting and supporting people in their places of work.
- I was so happy to be able to join the first Lunch Bunch and want to support Pastor Larry and Chris in bringing back this wonderful ministry.
- I partnered with Charlotte Miranda who leads the outdoor classroom at the school as well as Jenni McCoy at the ECC and Jenni Klemp as we seed started all the tomato plants - Sunday school children, confirmation youth, TK-8th school kids, and ECC 4's all planted seeds. I am on the team of those tending the seedlings in the greenhouse and doing beginning preparations for the spring tomato sale (April 11 & 13). I also participated in a garden work day that was primarily at the ECC (a church and school garden work day is scheduled for March 29 to prep the garden for the tomato sale, petting zoo, and Easter sunrise service).

- I stopped in the Black History Month event that was led by an outside group, but used our space. I wanted to meet leaders and warmly welcome them to our campus.

With Gratitude,  
Pastor Chamie

## Church Council Report – Pastor Steve Herder – March 1, 2025



Our [“365 in ‘25” calendars](#) have a daily brief intercessory prayer and a Bible reading that either goes with that prayer or is a reading in prep for our weekend worship services. The readings for Thursday through Sunday are the readings for our worship services. At the top of each monthly calendar is a passage from Psalm 145 to reflect on and pray. The prayer for Feb. 4 was an unusual one: “Thank Your Mail Carrier Day.” The photo above shows that I put that calendar in our mailbox, circled Feb. 4, and our mail carrier responded back and wrote “Thanks!” Good for them to know they are appreciated and prayed for. Now you all have the [March-April prayer calendars](#).

February was a good month for me for visiting many of our senior members. One day I traveled to Encino, Los Angeles, Pasadena, Chatsworth, and Simi Valley! When visiting Dorothy Scholz, I asked her if I could take this picture of her and Bob. Later I noticed that behind her is the reflection of her that day! She sends her love to all of you (from Encino), as does Skip Brenner in Pasadena. Skip is 98 years old and does tai chi each week! You may see her here in April when her son Mike comes to visit from Georgia.

We thank our team of Eucharistic Ministers, led by Pastor Ron Cox who does the scheduling. If you’d like a home visit from them or from one of your pastors, please let us know. We love seeing you at your home. Barbara Krum is so faithful doing many visits.





February 12th was the start-up again of our beloved Lunch Bunch, thanks to Pastor Larry and Chris Wagner, Bonnie Sutton, Sue and Dave Festerling, Lisa Burns, Shelley and Bob Engle. (I apologize if I missed anyone.) We'll gather on the second Wednesday of each month at noon in Founders. Just sign up by the first Wednesday of each month for the next week's meal. We served 55 people the first time! All are welcome. Church and school staff are also welcome to sign up.



Our adult education classes (Sundays at 10:30), organized by Carol Bartell, had a great lineup of topics: Feb. 2, Dave Nonnemacher on our Ukraine partnership (more on that later in this report); Feb. 9, Dave Harkins, Louise Evenson and I shared about how Ascension gives away about 25% of our offerings; Feb. 23 Pastor Jack shared his poetry and life stories.

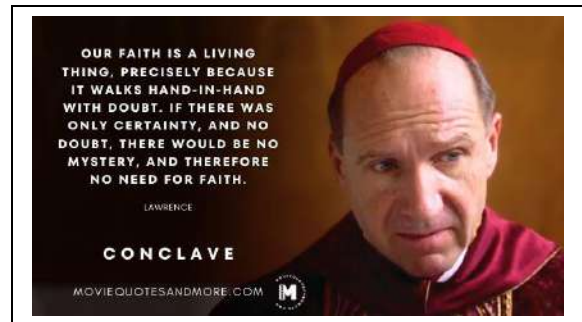


The weekend of Feb. 8-9 was Souper Sunday Food Drive. Thank you, Ascension volunteers, led by Chris Daleiden, and all donors for making this such a success!

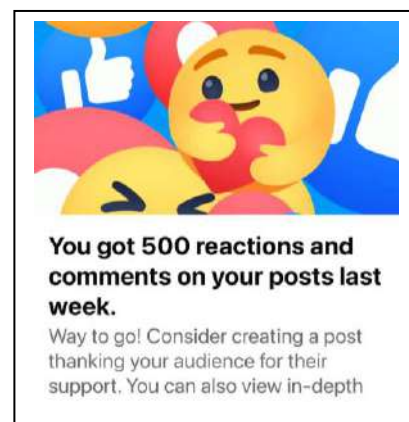
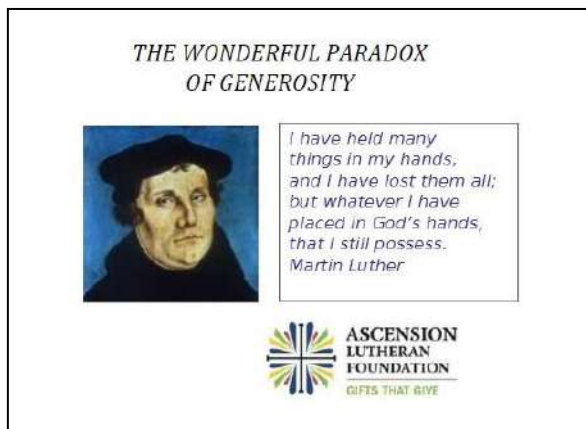
Your church and school leadership team have been talking about the great needs of our Friday Food Pantry. Here's what we'd like to propose: Whenever you are buying groceries, think of our pantry and buy a few items for it. We will work on getting large containers around campus to receive those gifts. Thank you for remembering those in need in our community and helping to provide the 40-60 bags of groceries that we give away each Friday.



The Tuesday night men's Bible study invited me to come and lead a discussion on the movie "Conclave." We had a deep hour and a half conversation on the movie, about faith, the work of the church, and the symbolism and moviemaking of this PG movie, nominated for eight Academy Awards. I was very impressed with the insights these men expressed. I would come to any group that would like to explore the meaning of this movie. (Part of my interest in this movie is because of my visits to the Vatican with [Jubilee](#), and our meetings with two of the three proposed leading candidates to be the next pope, which I hope and pray is not soon. I greatly admire the leadership and example of Pope Francis, and his care for the poor and the planet.)



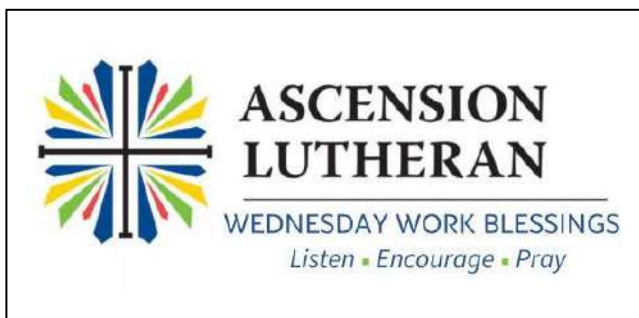
Our [Ascension Foundation](#) asked me to work with them on social media, so we chose Fridays to do a weekly post (Foundation Fridays). Each Monday we pick a photo to go with Susanne Hopkin's wonderful devotions. Stacy is now including these in the [weekly newsletter](#) so that more people can be blessed by them. The photo on the right shows a milestone from Facebook that was accomplished by [our Ascension page](#) this month! We have 2,400 people that are connected to our page.



This month we have been grieving the loss of dear friends and one great historian and teacher in the church. We are praying for the families of Robin Ertel, Barbara Attkisson, Linda Livingston, and John Ernst. We also give thank to God for the life of [Dr. Martin Marty](#) who was a prolific author and popular teacher of church history.



One of the Spirit-inspired ideas to come from our 24 in 24 prayer time is a new ministry called “Wednesday Work Blessings.” Your pastors and church staff would like to support you in your place of work. Two or three of us would enjoy visiting you at your workplace for a short visit on a Wednesday. The purpose is to listen, encourage, pray - share a blessing together - for where you use your gifts through the week to serve God and your community. We would love to get to know you better in your work context. If you’d like to schedule a short visit in the next month or two, on a Wednesday, at your work or home, simply call Carolyn in our church office to set a time for us to come. She’ll have a list of open times. 805-495-0406. Any questions, ask her or one of your pastors. These were recent visits with the [Woodwards](#) and [Iskanders](#)!



Two thank you notes for our work in the community. The one above is for our hosting of the Feb. 22<sup>nd</sup> event for Black History Month. Thanks to Debbie Kirsch for hosting that faith-filled event.



Our Senior Adult Ministries Team and our Community Concerns Team have their ongoing monthly ministries, and we thank all who lead: Christian Life Hours; Stephen Ministry (one-on-one Christian caregiving), Norm Guetschoff; Eucharistic Ministry: the Friday Food Pantry; GriefShare each Thursday, Brenda Heinrich; SAMs Tram transportation ministry, Bob Tokin; and our third-Tuesday-of-the-month food ministry with Harbor House, Tania and Barry, and each team's many volunteers. Thanks to Linda Morrow for leading the email prayers.

You can read the many terrific updates from our Global Ministries Team in their Church Council report. The February highlights were our focus on Ukraine, [Fair Trade Ministries](#), CLU's ministries with Black History month, and our GMT meeting focusing on our work with El Salvador, led by Bruce Thomas. Thanks to our GMT leader Louise Evenson, our Fair Trade leader Carol Bjelland, and our leader at [California Lutheran's Center for Global Engagement](#), Christina Sanchez. We include photo highlights from the month.







## ALONG WITH PASTOR KRISTIN

Pastor Kristin Engstrom, ELCA Global Missionary

February 2025

### Catching Up on News from 2024: On the Move (Again)

I have been serving as an ELCA global missionary since 2016. It is hard to believe it has been nine years since I first packed three suitcases to begin a new life in Senegal, West Africa. As a pastor and global missionary, I have committed to go where God and the church call me. In 2023, God and the ELCA once again called me to a new country and to be in relationship with a new church. In February 2024, I arrived in Madagascar to begin a new call as the ELCA Country Representative. I will also be the Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM) Country Coordinator when the program resumes in Madagascar. In my nine years as an ELCA global missionary, I have served in Senegal, Zambia, and now Madagascar—all in the Africa region.



Welcome reception by Malagasy church leaders and project leaders supported by the ELCA.



Pastor Kristin Engstrom

I serve as the ELCA Country Representative with the Malagasy Lutheran Church, and will also be the Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM) Country Coordinator when the program resumes in Madagascar. I have been an ELCA global missionary since 2016, serving first in Senegal and then Zambia, before coming to Madagascar.

I'm originally from the midwestern United States, and served as a parish pastor in northern New Jersey for six years prior to beginning my call with ELCA Global Mission.

Over the past year, I have travelled throughout Madagascar to get to know the people and ministries of the Malagasy Church. I have been welcomed into Church Council meetings, witnessed leadership elections at the National Church Assembly, learned from seminaries, inclusive schools, and vocational training centers, visited healthcare, development, and gender justice projects, preached sermons, and ate many shared meals.

The Malagasy Lutheran Church has five million members and is one of the fastest growing Lutheran churches in the world. Madagascar is also one of the poorest countries in the world. So, the church is focused on their mission to share the gospel holistically. Over the past year, it has been wonderful to learn from the faithful leaders in Madagascar, as we walk together in the God's gospel mission.



### Accompanying Pastor Kristin

My work as an ELCA Global Missionary is possible thanks to the generosity of many congregations and individuals in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Thank you! You can contact me at [kristin.engstrom@elca.org](mailto:kristin.engstrom@elca.org).

You are also invited to support me as an ELCA Global Missionary [here](https://alongwithpastorkristin.blogspot.com).

I have a blog at <https://alongwithpastorkristin.blogspot.com>, where you can find previous newsletters and occasional updates from Madagascar.

Here is the first page of our missionary [Pastor Engstrom's newsletter](#). Pastor Wal Reat in South Sudan finished his missionary service so now we are supporting Daudi (David) and Kellen Msseemmaa, [ELCA](#) regional reps for East Africa. They live in Tanzania.

Thank you, Ascension, for your prayers for all these ministries and ministry leaders. You are in our prayers. Have a blessed Lenten journey with Jesus, to Holy Week, April 13-20!

#### Hand Update

You may already know, but just in case you're unaware, I wanted to give a quick summary of an incident that happened to me and how I am doing since then. On February 25<sup>th</sup> I was attacked by a couple of loose pit bulls when I was walking alone in a neighborhood near my home. I sustained injuries to both hands and my right leg. I'm healing well, but there is some tendon damage to my right hand. As such, I have been limited in my ability to use my right hand. I've been adapting by using dictation with my computer and phone. Thank you for your grace in any punctuation errors you may see and any delays I might have in ongoing projects. My long term prognosis is very good. The hand specialists believes I will regain feeling in my fingers and that the tendon will heal. I will be attending occupational therapy twice a week for an extended period of time, possibly 12 weeks. Pastor Tim has been wonderful in communicating with me and helping me find accommodations that allow me to continue working. Thank you all for your prayers; please keep them coming!

#### Roof Update

Jeff has spent a considerable amount of time on the roof with the roofing contractor and a specialist from the manufacturing company of some of the roof products that we have used. The prognosis of our sanctuary roof is not good. It looks like we will need to replace the sanctuary roof. The cost is still unknown, as there are still some variables to be determined. The manufacturer will come out to do a core sample of the roof and determine whether another layer could be affixed to the current layer, or whether we would have to begin with a fresh layer.

#### Synod Conference

The 37<sup>th</sup> Annual Synod Assembly of the Southwest California Synod will be from 1:00 pm Friday, May 30<sup>th</sup> through Saturday, May 31<sup>st</sup>. It will be held at the Marriott Hotel in Burbank, California. As it states in the registration letter, "the assembly is the regular annual meeting of the Synod to receive annual reports, adopt a budget and elect persons to serve in various capacities... The Assembly will gather around the theme, "What it means to be Lutheran in Southern California."

The registration includes the Friday evening meal, Saturday breakfast and Saturday box lunch. The cost is \$650 per congregation, which includes one pastor and two lay people. Additional voting attendees are \$175 each. Our congregation was sent registration cards for 2 ministers, 2 voting lay members, and 2 youth or young adult voting members.

Pastor Steve has committed to attending, and I would appreciate the council's help in ascertaining the lay members and/or youth lay members who will attend. There is a \$50 discount for registrations received by March 31<sup>st</sup>, but the final deadline is April 15<sup>th</sup> and must be sent in via U.S. mail.

#### Attendance

Attendance from the first weekend in February averages 398, an uptick from the 364 I reported in February. Online is averaging 134 views exceeding one minute vs 142 reported last month.

#### Human Resources

Our new payroll software has amazing capacity that I would like to utilize to streamline processes for performance reviews, mandatory training and onboarding documents.

### New Payroll System

Our new payroll system is going well with hourly employees clocking in and clocking out regularly. We've submitted two payrolls with the new system and next week we will begin implementing the onboarding module, which includes unlimited posting with Indeed and Zip recruiter. These will be great tools to assist the school with finding more substitute teachers and filling some key roles for the coming summer and school year.

### Budget Season

Dave has crafted a well written letter for our ministry leaders at the church to have voices and inform our budgeting process. I have sent a letter to key leadership in the congregation utilizing the Be the Blessing ministry summary page. If you have additional budget feedback for the budgeting process, I encourage you to email it to [finance@alcto.org](mailto:finance@alcto.org). In addition to working with the program budgets, we've also been working on staffing planners for each school and the church, tuition projections, and offering trends.

Thank you,  
Kaylee Searway  
Director of Operations



**Ascension Lutheran School Board Agenda for 2/24/5 Mtg. at 6:30 pm  
On Campus (Library) & on Zoom**

**Call to Order**

**Mission Statements**

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

**ECC:** *To nurture the whole child, establishing a lifelong learner and a foundation of faith.*

**Elementary/Middle 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**

1. **Opening Devotion/Prayer** – Devotions - Jeanette
2. Approval of Agenda
3. Approval of Agenda & Consent Agenda
  - Admissions Report
  - January Meeting Minutes
  - Financials Report
  - ECC Report
  - Principal's Report
  - Church Council Rep Report
4. Open Forum
  - Rodriguez Family

**Old Business:**

1. Discussion on any reports pulled from the Consent Agenda
2. Subcommittee Updates
3. Succession Planning
4. Discount proposal discussion

**New Business:**

1. State of the schools - Rich & Jenni
2. Business Interruption Policy
3. Soup Supper
4. Church Speakers proposal

**Executive Session:**

**Closing Prayer - Pastor Chamie**

**Adjournment**

**Ascension Lutheran School Board Meeting Minutes  
February 24, 2025**

**Remembering Our Mission:**

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

***ECC:** To nurture the whole child, establishing a lifelong learner and a foundation of faith.*

***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, Jessica Placas, Jennifer Farrell

Guests: The Rodriguez Family

**Call to Order:**

Ashley called the meeting to order at 6:31pm.

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

**Devotion:**

Jeanette shared a devotion referencing Romans 12:4-5, which highlighted how each person has their own strengths and gifts, and each is important and compliments the whole.

**Open Forum:**

The Rodriguez Family spoke about their sons' experience at the ECC. Their son is neurodivergent, and they saw a change in tone with the staff and teachers when their sons' needs changed/increased. They decided to pull their son from the ECC in December 2024 and are requesting a 3-month tuition reimbursement.

**Approval of Agenda and Consent Agenda:**

Agenda amended to add one executive session item and removal of discount proposal discussion from old business.



Kyle moves to adjourn for executive session to discuss open forum guests. Chris seconds. Meeting adjourned 6:57pm. Regular session called back to order by Ashley at 7:48pm.

Motion to approve amended agenda initiated by Jocelyn. Anna seconded. Motion passes.

Financials and principal's report pulled for discussion.

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

### **Old Business:**

#### **Financial Reports**

- Chris would like to see the financial reports showing the relation of head count and staffing to help understand the delta(s) in teacher compensation. The current positives are mainly due to a previous teacher being salaried much higher than the teacher who replaced them.
- Jeanette questioned whether reports could be presented with a 12-month trend, to help with forecasting and budgeting.

#### **Principal's Report**

- Nelly had a question about why a Kindergarten family left. Rich reported that it was a personal choice from the family.

#### **Financial Aid Subcommittee**

- Ashley will excuse herself from participating on the subcommittee. Kyle will chair the subcommittee with Kathy, Rich and Anna also joining.

#### **Succession Planning**

- Due to familial commitments, Jocelyn reported that come June, and after 3 years on the board, she will not be returning for an additional 4<sup>th</sup> year. She expressed gratitude for the opportunity to serve the school, and would love to be considered as a member in future years and as her other commitments allow.
- Ashley reminded that there is a nomination committee in place for new board members, and the President Elect position is still vacant for the 2025-2026 year. Kyle expressed interest.
- Chamie commented that a middle school parent would be a great addition to and representative for the board. Jenni also recommended that the position be considered for a current ECC parent.

### **New Business:**

#### **State of the Schools**

- Rich spoke about some of the new families who have joined the school (there are 4 new students), one of which lost their home in the Palisades fire. They feel Ascension is their new “home”.
- Jenni hosted the Family Work last Saturday, February 22<sup>nd</sup>. 75-80 people attended including the entire ECC staff. It was a great, productive day. Her staff also stepped up when she was out sick for 3 workdays this past week. Additionally, she is starting to work on budgeting.

### **Business Interruption Policy**

- Rich would like to have several resources in place and a technology plan by next wind season. It would mainly entail having reliable wifi, so there is the ability to communicate and evacuate campus if an emergency ensues. Also updating the handbooks would be necessary, so there is language on how many days school can be closed before make-up days or tuition reimbursement would be required.
- Chris commented that having a permanent backup power source could be an important consideration.

### **Soup Supper**

- Pastor Chamie spoke about soup suppers, which will be happening again as they have in the past. In an effort to build community, the ECC staff, church council, school staff, and school board will host (set up, serve, clean up) on different Wednesday evenings during Lent. The school board is asked to host on Wednesday, March 12<sup>th</sup>.

### **Church Speakers Proposal**

- Anna reported that during the last church council meeting Pastor Tim requested funds for completion of phase one of the sanctuary sound system upgrade. Church council has moved to approve the request. In the spirit of One Ascension, church council requested that Anna make a financial request for the school’s participation in offsetting the cost of this project.
- Current ask is \$20K from the school towards this cost. Anna commented that funds would come from cash on hand if decided upon. Formal proposal is forthcoming and may be circulated via email for the board to decide upon.
- Total cost of phase one is approximately \$73,000. Foundation is participating and PPP funds are also being used.
- Pastor Tim would like a decision as soon as possible for potential completion of phase one by Easter services.
- School board will discuss again during the board retreat on March 12<sup>th</sup>.

### **Reserve Study**

- Anna will request the recently completed reserve study from Pastor Tim, so it can be added to the agenda and discussed at the March 12<sup>th</sup> board retreat.

### **Closing Prayer:**

Pastor Chamie closed the meeting with prayer.

**Adjournment:**

Jocelyn motioned to adjourn the meeting. Anna seconded. Meeting was adjourned at 9:10pm.

Spring School Board retreat is March 12<sup>th</sup>. March School Board meeting follows the joint School Board and Church Council meeting and is on March 24<sup>th</sup>. Kyle will lead devotion.

Respectfully submitted by Jocelyn Myers



Wednesday, March 5, 2025

4-5:30 PM, **Bethlehem Room**

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

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

### **AGENDA**

**WELCOME**-Louise Evenson

**OPENING PRAYER**- Beverly Selle

### **Topic: ADVOCACY**

1. 4:10-4:40 ELCA ADVOCACY Leaders, Pr Amy Reumann and Patricia Kisare (virtual)
2. 4:40-5:30 GMT - REFLECTIONS, PLANNING and REPORTS

#### **A. GMT ADVOCACY:**

- a. Update on Karen and Isaac and future opportunity (Carol Bjelland, Mary Wennes)
- b. GLOBAL REFUGE webinar (2/26) update. ADVOCACY AMBASSADOR requested.
- c. Conejo Interfaith Refugee Team (CIRT). Ascension contact requested.
- d. Invitation to participate in planning for Information Session for Lutherans on Immigration. Sharing of best practices, resources.

- B. Ascension Lenten book study on Liturgy of the Ordinary: Practices in Everyday Life, by Tish Harrison Warren. Any interest to participate at Lenten soup suppers or via zoom with other GMT friends?

C. Review/discussion of GMT Monthly Reports

Fair Trade

Be a Beacon of Light with Dave Nonnemacher

Friends of Fieldworkers- Personal Care Kit project

Lutheran World Relief-Update and Kits planning

D. Calendar Items for March, April, May

Upcoming GMT meetings:

March 5 Topic: ADVOCACY with Amy Reumann, Senior Director of ELCA Witness in Society, Washington, DC and Patricia Kisare, International Policy Advisor for ELCA (by zoom)

April 9 Topic: CREATION CARE (Earth Day, April 22)

May 7 Topic: Planning for GIFTS OF HOPE, 2025

June 4: Topic: Budget, Benevolence, Future plans for GMT.



## Meeting Notes

**WELCOME** Greetings to all present: Andy Binsley, Beverly Selle, Bonny Chick, Carol Bartell, Carol Bjelland (via zoom), Ethel Jordan, Kim Overton, Louise Evenson, Marcia Koenig, Mary Wennes, Paul Evenson, Pastor Steve Herder, and Susan Gramme.

**OPENING PRAYER** - Beverly Selle

### TOPIC: ADVOCACY

1. **ELCA ADVOCACY:** Pastor Amy Reumann - Senior Director of ELCA Witness in Society, Washington DC, and Patricia Kisare - International Policy Advisor for ELCA, joined our meeting via zoom and shared timely information about foreign aid projects and current ELCA advocacy efforts.
  - A. Pastor Amy Reumann
    1. Four main areas of ELCA advocacy
      - a. Federal policy work in Washington D.C. (12-person team; more than half of the work focuses on global concerns)
      - b. Lutheran World Federation – NY office (focuses on human rights and gender rights)
      - c. State policy offices, including CA
      - d. Corporate social responsibility program
    2. The work is done in conjunction with other faith groups.
    3. “God calls a community; we do better together.” Pr. Amy Reuman
    4. What is most effective when reaching out to a legislative office?
      - Keep in mind our rights-responsibility-role
      - Build relationships
      - Invite a legislator to our congregation and share what we are doing that aligns with the legislator’s work
  - B. Patricia Kisare
    1. The main priority of ELCA advocacy right now is focused on response to the late January executive order that re-aligned foreign assistance and implemented stop work orders.
      - It’s a very challenging time for foreign projects after the USAID shutdown. Many organizations have not been reimbursed for work they have contractually completed for the federal government.
      - It’s important to show support in American communities for foreign assistance programs
    2. What can be done?
      - Calls and emails to our representatives and senators registering our concern about freezing foreign assistance. These calls and emails are counted! Identify as a Lutheran and share a local story.
      - Write letters to local community papers to raise awareness
      - Reach out to in-district and DC offices of legislators

- Organize a community activity around concerns.
  - Reach out specifically to Lutheran legislators, even those outside of our own district. Carol Bartell has the list of Lutheran legislators.
3. Most dire foreign assistance needs at this time include
- HIV/AIDS prevention
  - Food aid; nutrition
  - Humanitarian aid in general, including food, access to clean water, prevention of gender-based violence
- C. Follow up
1. Sign up for Action Alerts at [elca.org](http://elca.org) (ELCA e-Advocacy Network)
  2. To hear Bishop Elizabeth Eaton's 2/2/2025 response on You Tube to false accusations about Lutheran organizations go to [elca.org/bishepeaton](http://elca.org/bishepeaton).

## 2. REFLECTIONS, PLANS, AND REPORTS

- A. GMT ADVOCACY
1. Mary Wennes and Carol Bjelland provided an update on Karen, an asylum seeker, and her son Isaac. Mary and Carol have been helping Karen and Isaac in various ways for 5 years. Mary and Carol suggested that our group host a picnic with Karen and Isaac in the near future.
  2. Kim Overton, Carol Bartell, Carol Bjelland, Paul Evenson and Pastor Steve volunteered to participate in planning for an Information Session for Lutherans and others on Immigration which is being organized by the social justice group at New Hope Lutheran Church, Agoura Hills and Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Thousand Oaks.
- B. Louise distributed bookmarks for Liturgy of the Ordinary, which is being studied during the Lenten season this year.
- C. GMT monthly reports on Fair Trade Ministry, Be a Beacon of Light, Friends of Fieldworkers Personal Care Kits, and Lutheran World Relief were distributed via email prior to the meeting.
1. Louise is discussing the upcoming LWR kit effort with Pastor Chamie and Vicki Weeks.
  2. Kim announced that the Ukraine-Humanitarian response, Ascension food pantry, and the Ascension agape fund will be the recipients of offerings at the upcoming Women's Monday Morning Bible Study fellowship event.
  3. Louise reminded the group that GMT is hosting the Ash Wednesday soup supper immediately following the meeting and thanked Kim for decorating the tables and providing aprons. Mary Wennes, Jill Binsley, Paul Evenson, Louise Evenson, Andy Binsley, Beverly Selle, and Ethel Jordan were thanked for assisting with serving.
  4. Louise distributed "How to Build Community" post cards.
- D. Calendar Items for March, April and May were distributed via email.
1. Additions to printed dates:
    - March 26 – Lutheran Lobby Day for CA (virtual)
    - May 28 – Lutheran Lobby Day for CA (in person)

### OTHER:

#### Upcoming GMT meetings:

April 9    Topic: CREATION CARE (Earth Day, April 22)  
 May 7    Topic: Planning for GIFTS OF HOPE, 2025  
 June 4:    Topic: Budget, Benevolence, Future plans for GMT

Submitted by Ethel Jordan



YOU ARE INVITED



## GLOBAL MINISTRIES TEAM

WEDNESDAY

MARCH

5

# INVITATION

4:00-5:30 PM

## Theme: Advocacy

GUESTS via ZOOM

REV. AMY REUMANN

PATRICIA KISARE



Senior Director, ELCA Advocacy  
Office, Washington DC



International Policy Advisor for the Episcopal Church  
and the Evangelical Church in America (ELCA).

As senior director for Witness in Society with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), Rev. Reumann leads advocacy on a wide range of issues around migration, peace, human rights, poverty and climate justice, as well as the corporate social responsibility program.

Patricia Kisare manages advocacy work on a variety of international policy areas, including development and humanitarian programs, food security, gender justice, global health, conflict prevention and peacebuilding, and human rights.

**BETHLEHEM ROOM**  
**ASCENSION LUTHERAN**  
**CHURCH**

**1600 E. HILLCREST DRIVE,**  
**THOUSAND OAKS, CA 91362**



**MARCH**

- March 3 An Update on the Fight to End Hunger with Rick Steves and Eugene Cho, Bread for the World, ZOOM, 6pm. Registration required. Check with Pr Steve or Louise for registration information.
- March 5 ASH WEDNESDAY. GMT helps at Soup Supper. Peterson Hall. 6-7 pm.
- March 5 GMT Meeting: Topic: ELCA ADVOCACY: Amy Reumann, Patricia Kisare, via Zoom, 4-5:30 PM, Bethlehem Room.
- March 6 International Women's Day Recognition Gathering, CLU, Ullman Conference Center, 5:30 PM. Sponsored by the Center for Global Engagement
- March 12 Lunch Bunch, Founders Hall. Fair Trade open 1:30-2:00 PM.
- March 13 Fair Trade Lane open, 2:30-4:00 PM.
- March 16 Fair Trade Lane open, 8:30-9:00 AM and 10-10:30 AM  
Assembly of PCKs with children and youth for Fields of Fieldworkers (See report)
- March 23 Crop Walk, CLU, 1 PM
- March 25 Fair Trade Field Trip to Ten Thousand Villages in Pasadena. Registration required.
- March 30 Fair Trade & UN Sustainable Development Goals, Adult Education, 10:30-11:30 AM, Church library, presenters, Carol Bjelland and Pastor Steve Herder.

**APRIL**

- April 5-6 Scandinavian Days, CLU.
- April 9 Fair Trade Lane open. 1:30-2:00PM
- April 9 GMT Meeting: Topic: CREATION CARE, 4-5:30 PM Bethlehem Room
- April 10 Fair Trade Lane open, 2:30-4:00 PM
- April 12 Ascension Lutheran School Legacy Gala and Auction
- April 13 Palm Sunday and Tomato plant sale.  
Fair Trade Lane open, 8:30-9:00 AM and 10:00-10:30 AM.
- April 20 EASTER

April 22            Earth Day. CLU Earth Day/Sustainability Fair. Details to follow.

## **MAY**

May 7            GMT Meeting: TOPIC: Gifts of Hope planning

### **OTHER UPCOMING DATES:**

May 21-June 3, 2025 ELCA WORLD HUNGER Donor trip to Indonesia. Contact Pr Steve for details.

### **UPCOMING GMT MEETING DATES, 2025**

Most all GMT meetings are at 4:00-5:30 PM in the BETHLEHEM ROOM, unless otherwise stated.

|         |                                                                     |
|---------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| March 5 | Global Ministries Team Meeting TOPIC: ELCA ADVOCACY                 |
| April 9 | Global Ministries Team Meeting TOPIC: CREATION CARE                 |
| May 7   | Global Ministries Team Meeting TOPIC: GIFTS OF HOPE planning        |
| June 4  | Global Ministries Team Meeting TOPIC: BUDGET, BENEVOLENCE, PLANNING |

As of March 1, 2025



## **FAIR TRADE MINISTRY**

**DATE: February 28, 2025 for March 2025**

**SUBMITTED BY: Carol Bjelland**

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

Fair Trade Lane Schedule Feb-April 2025 is included below. Schedule for May- Dec TBD

Fair Trade Wednesday Chapel Messages for March & April will focus on pollinators in the context of the Chapel Scripture & message focus for that week.

Fair Trade Lane will be “popping” open at the close of Lunch Bunch. We thank Chris & Pastor Larry for this opportunity. An Ascension Fair Trader provided Fair Trade chocolate mini’s for all the Lunch Bunch tables March 12<sup>th</sup>.

Fair Trade Field Trip to Ten Thousand Villages/Pasadena – Tuesday, March 25<sup>th</sup> (9 AM – 3/3:30 PM)

CLU Earth Day/Sustainability Fair – April 22, 2025. Ascension Fair Trade has again been invited to participate. Thank You CGE!

Equal Exchange Summit – June 13, 2025 (Wheaton College/Norton, MA)

Fair Trade Federation Conference/Expo – September 8-11, 2025 (St. Louis, MO)

Ascension Fair Trade 24<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration – October 2025 (currently in prelim planning)

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

Volunteers invited to help with Fair Trade Lane Thursdays & Sundays and with special events & opportunities.

Volunteers invited to help with our participation in the CLU Earth Day Celebration 4/22.

### **3. LOOKING AHEAD (Important calendar dates)**

#### **Fair Trade Lane Open Dates/Times January & February 2025:**

Wednesday, March 12<sup>th</sup> (1:30/1:45-2 PM)

Thursday, March 13<sup>th</sup> (2:30 4 PM)

Sunday, March 16<sup>th</sup> (8:30-9AM & 10-10:30 AM)

Wednesday, April 9<sup>th</sup> (1:30/1:45-2 PM)

Thursday, April 10<sup>th</sup> (2:30-4 PM)

Sunday, April 13<sup>th</sup> (8:30-9 AM & 10-10:30 AM)

### **4. OTHER INFORMATION**

We very much enjoy opportunities to *connect* & share a Fair Trade message with students, staff & families at Ascension; students, staff & faculty at CLU; friends & partners at HTLC & SVLCSV & everyone visiting Fair Trade Lane for the first or their “most recent” time. We love that those coming to FTL know just what to do — take a basket (or use one they bring), find their favorites, ask questions, enjoy some samples & share smiles & laughter & friendship. We look forward to meeting & greeting everyone on Fair Trade.

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





## **GMT Fieldworker Personal Care Kits**

**DATE: February 28, 2025 for March 2025**

**SUBMITTED BY: Carol Bjelland**

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

Connecting with Friends of Fieldworkers, making & sharing 150 Personal Care Kits for Fieldworkers in Ventura County. Kits will be distributed by Friends of Fieldworkers – date/time/location in March TBD

Each Kit will include: 2 pr socks, 2 granola bars, 1 bar of soap, 1 toothbrush, 1 tube of toothpaste, 1 shampoo & 1 deodorant (regular, not travel or XL size) Kit items will be assembled & placed in large-size reusable clear ziplock plastic bags.

Ascension's Children's Ministry will assemble kits Sunday, March 16<sup>th</sup> (in conjunction with Sunday School & from 10-10:30 AM). Ascension's Youth will assemble kits Sunday March 16<sup>th</sup> after the 10:30 worship service.

We'll share a message with all groups before/as they are assembling the kits. We'll share a snack of strawberries from local fields with the children & Youth. We've invited FOF to share a message with the Youth (11:30 AM) – FOF advised that they have another group commitment that date/time but we're working to put together a Zoom meeting (will project on FH screen).

Flier is attached. Be The Blessing grant funds have been used to purchase 300 prs of socks & 150 bars of soap. Gifts of 150 toothbrushes & 150 tubes of toothpaste have been received.

*Still needed: 140 bottles of shampoo & 150 sticks of deodorant (regular, not travel or XL size) & 300 granola bars.*

Gifts of gift cards (Walmart or Target) will be given to FOF to distribute as needed in conjunction with their emergency assistance program.

Gifts received exceeding amounts needed to complete 150 kits will all be given to Friends of Fieldworkers to distribute to fieldworker families.

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

Volunteers invited to help with assembly activities 3/16/25: Set-Up at 8 AM/FH; Helping with Assembly @ 11:30 AM. Packing up completed kits after Noon. Volunteers also invited to help deliver completed kits to FOF – date/time after 3/16 TBD

### **3. LOOKING AHEAD (Important calendar dates)**

When/as circumstances permit, Ascension is invited again to come to a Laundry Love event (Feb/2024, Ascension shared craft projects, books, snacks & friendship for/with children while adult family members did the family's laundry.)

### **4. OTHER INFORMATION**

**5. FOR FURTHER INFORMATION.** Contact: Carol Bjelland ([carolb@netscape.com](mailto:carolb@netscape.com)); 805-657-3731



**MINISTRY OF Global Ministries Team BE A BEACON OF LIGHT**

**DATE March 1, 2025**

**SUBMITTED BY Louise Evenson**

**1. WHAT'S COMING UP? (What? When? Where?) and What's been happening?**

On February 8<sup>th</sup>, the **Ascension Lutheran Foundation** approved our grant request for **\$3,000** to support our humanitarian efforts in Ukraine.

As of February 25, **individual benevolence offerings** for the Ukrainian Humanitarian Response total **\$23,330**. The final accounting will be available in mid-March.

United Church of Christ in Simi Valley is also contributing a special offering for this response.

On February 19, **\$20,000 was successfully wired** to the "Good Change", the NGO officially recognized by Ukraine that handles finances for the Mariupol Chaplain's Battalion. A replacement utility vehicle will be purchased later this month when the MCB leader returns from being with his family in Germany.

Dave Nonnemacher has purchased his plane/transportation tickets for his sixth trip to Ukraine **April 2-17**.

The thirteen **(13) Ray of Life solar light kits** that were assembled by our confirmation and youth group on February 2, have been delivered to Hand in Hand Logistics in Isanti, MN to be shipped to Ukraine in late February/early March. Funds from the Be the Blessing grant and individuals funded these kits (\$1,625).

Using ALC benevolence offering funds, **30 Ray of Life solar light kits** (\$3,750) will be assembled by eleven middle school students in Alton, IA on March 7. Their teacher is Drew Nonnemacher, Dave's son. Through a special program called Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS), these students have been awarded "tickets" for doing the "right thing." In addition to prizes for doing the "right thing", the students chose to participate in this service activity. Dave's 6<sup>th</sup> grade grandson will be participating in this event.

The remainder amount of benevolence offerings will be used as Dave assesses the greatest needs. Potentially, the funds will be used for fuel for the MCB replacement utility vehicle and food parcels in Ukraine while Dave is there.

We anticipate receiving photos from our offerings for our humanitarian response later in March and April.

On February 23, Christina Sanchez, Beverly Selle, Paul and Louise Evenson attended a service at the Ukrainian Christian Church in Agoura Hills. A VC STAR article on 2/21 informed us of this event and worshipping community. This group of Ukrainians have gathered in prior years on the eve of the invasion of their country to stand together as they remember the losses of lives, infrastructure, and culture. We are connecting with one of the Ukrainian organizers of this event to see if there are ways to collaborate in the future.

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

**DAILY** prayers for peace and justice for Ukraine.

Prayers for safe travel for Dave Nonnemacher to Ukraine and while in Ukraine with the MCB in April.

If you wish to send moral support to President Zelensky, his email is [Presidentpressoffice@pu.gove.ua](mailto:Presidentpressoffice@pu.gove.ua). His address is President V Zelensky, 11 Bankova St. 01220 Kyiv, Ukraine. ( Postage for a 1 oz letter to UA is \$1.65.)

### **3. LOOKING AHEAD (Important calendar dates and events)**

Assembly of 30 ROL solar light kits in Iowa on March 7 funded by Ascension Lutheran Church.

Purchase of replacement utility vehicle.

Safe travels for Dave Nonnemacher as he returns to Ukraine in April.

Disbursement of final offerings for humanitarian aid.

Photos of all with messages of thanks to the Ascension community in TWAA and Worship Slides.

Meeting with Iryna Shifman, Globe4Ukraine, Agoura Hills, to find ways to collaborate.

As a result of Dave's visit to ALC in February, two other local faith communities have asked for more information about the ROL solar light kit project. Both have received information and will be contacted for questions/follow up.

### **4. FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT Louise Evenson [lpevenson@gmail.com](mailto:lpevenson@gmail.com), 925-518-5795**



# YOUR 2024 IMPACT



## Global Refuge

Every single day, through your support of Global Refuge, you are welcoming refugees and immigrants. Thank you for making a difference in their lives, last year and for years to come.

### 18,600

REFUGEES AND  
IMMIGRANTS  
WELCOMED



#### 18,600 refugees and immigrants welcomed

You greet refugees at the airport and welcome them into homes prepared for them in advance and stocked with basic comforts, continuing to serve them as they learn to navigate their new community, enroll in school or English language classes, and connect to essential resources. These services are especially crucial for children and youth who journey to the United States alone, as they face incredible dangers and challenges. Your support provides trauma-informed programs that protect young people, help them heal, and allow them to thrive.



### \$1.6 M

AFFORDABLE LOANS  
PROVIDED TO 130+ CLIENTS

#### \$1.6 Million in affordable loans provided to 130+ clients

New Americans can face financial barriers to creating and sustaining small businesses — opportunities that empower individuals and families for long-term success and strengthen immigrant communities. Through the New American Lending program, you open doors through affordable personal and business loans and resources like financial coaching.

#### 395 legal screenings and consultations offered

You help newcomers and their families navigate the U.S. immigration system and understand their options and legal rights. Our new immigration legal services launched in 2023 and have already supported hundreds of clients in cases involving humanitarian forms of relief, family-based immigration, and citizenship/naturalization.

### 395

LEGAL SCREENINGS AND  
CONSULTATIONS

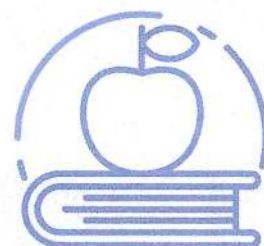


#### 981 individuals supported and educated

Camino a Casa serves repatriated youth and their families through comprehensive case management and clinical services and provides training to professionals who support youth returning to Guatemala from the U.S. Through individualized service plans and partnerships with local organizations, youth received crucial assistance including mental health counseling, educational support, vocational training, financial literacy education, and family reunification services, helping them overcome the significant challenges they faced upon return—such as trauma, a lack of resources, and limited economic and educational opportunities. Training was also provided to individuals by Global Refuge staff about the needs and vulnerabilities of repatriated youth to better prepare professionals for engaging youth returning to Guatemala.

### 981

INDIVIDUALS SUPPORTED  
AND EDUCATED





# 2024 ANNUAL REPORT FOR CONGREGATIONS



## 80 YEARS.

That's how long congregations like yours have shined Christ's light in the world through Lutheran World Relief. What started as a response to World War II has grown into an outpouring of love for every neighbor in need, everywhere in the world.

Wherever there is war, disaster or poverty, your compassion is there to offer help and hope. And in 2024, our ministry together has expanded to reach our neighbors here in the United States. Thank you for making history with us!

Watch the **80th anniversary**  
video at [lwr.org/80](https://lwr.org/80)



## IN TIMES OF CRISIS: TÜRKİYE 📍

**SITUATION:** In February 2023, massive earthquakes **destroyed 90% of the buildings** in the city of Antakya. More than **50,000 people died**, and nearly **2 million became homeless** in what survivors called an “apocalyptic” disaster.

**IMPACT:** Your congregation's generosity meant emergency supplies reached the epicenter in record time. Since the quakes, you have provided **hot meals, clean water, LWR Quilts & Kits, temporary shelter** and even longer-term container homes to help families get back on their feet.

For a tragedy of this magnitude, the scars of emotional trauma run deep. In a matter of minutes, our neighbors lost their homes, jobs and loved ones. Schools were destroyed, and playgrounds were filled with rubble and broken glass. As families work to rebuild their lives, you are helping them heal.

Seventeen-year-old Dilan Cabiroğlu's family was grateful to move into their new container home, built with your support, after losing everything. But she soon grew bored and listless. She watched her father fall into depression. Dilan still attends school online, because hers is too damaged to open in person.

Everything changed when she started hanging out at a **youth-friendly community center** that — through your generosity — offers **games, sports, activities, classes and counseling** for teens. The goal is to help youth process the disaster and find hope for the future. Today, Dilan has a new outlook. She's attending counseling to address her trauma and, inspired by the opportunities you've provided, is dreaming of being a nurse.

“Here, I learn new things and meet new people, my head is cleared, and I become more energetic,” she said. “If it wasn't for this place, I would probably still be experiencing the shock of the earthquake.”



Dilan Cabiroğlu working on a robotics project at the youth center.

## QUILTS & KITS: UNITED STATES 📍

**SITUATION:** In September, Lutheran World Relief announced that the Quilt & Kit Ministry was expanding to reach our neighbors in the U.S. Unexpectedly, hurricanes Helene and Milton ravaged communities in North Carolina, Florida and beyond just days later.

**IMPACT:** Thanks to the quilters and kit makers who faithfully fill our shelves, LWR began packing trucks before the storms reached land. An initial shipment of **10 truckloads of Quilts & Kits** were distributed in hard-hit communities in North Carolina, Florida, Mississippi and Louisiana. Immediately after the storms, your generosity also made it possible to rush bottled water and other essentials to western North Carolina and Florida. Then we provided cash grants to our local partners to **distribute food, water and other urgently needed supplies** to provide comfort and dignity to families in their time of need.



Edward Lynch lives at a shelter for homeless veterans in Asheville, North Carolina. After Helene flooded their home, all 165 residents were moved to a hotel until the shelter can be rebuilt. Edward was excited to pick out his LWR quilt. “I’d just like to say thank you to the people that put their time and love and patience in making these beautiful blankets for everybody,” he said. “It is going to remind me where I’ve been and where I’m going. **I can say I got this when I lost everything, and this is one of the first, nicest things I got.** And it gave me something to hold on to in the midst of a crisis.”



Gabriel Gatluak, who is disabled, and his family received seeds and support when they arrived at the camp. Today, Gabriel works for LWR to support other new arrivals to the camp. Watch a video about him at [lwr.org/gabriel](https://lwr.org/gabriel)

## FOR THE LONG TERM: SOUTH SUDAN 📍

**SITUATION:** Violence, grinding poverty and four years of extreme flooding have uprooted over 4 million people. While this is an urgent crisis, you are helping families learn skills to thrive in difficult circumstances.

**IMPACT:** Your compassion has traveled to the hardest-to-reach displacement camps, where exhausted families arrive starving, traumatized and empty-handed after walking for days.

When they arrive, your love greets them with a medical screening to check for malnutrition. Parents with malnourished children receive nutrition counseling and support, along with seeds and training on how to grow a variety of nourishing foods in their home gardens.

Congregations like yours have also made it possible for 10,000 people — primarily widows and single mothers — to receive **livelihoods training** in fishing, raising poultry or vegetable farming. They also learn the basic business and financial skills needed to launch small businesses to sell their products. Thanks to your enduring compassion, food security has increased by 50% among camp residents. Malnutrition has significantly decreased, and thousands of people have lifelong skills and stable ways to feed and support their families.

**Your compassion makes all of this possible. THANK YOU!**

**Until your love reaches every neighbor.**

# Ascension's Partners Prayer Page

*"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."*

*Acts 1:8*

*"Moreover as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by failing to pray for you...." First Samuel 12:23a*

*"Finally, brothers and sisters, pray for us, so that the word of the Lord may spread rapidly and be glorified everywhere, just as it is among you." Second Thessalonians 3:1*

## Our "Jerusalem"

### THOUSAND OAKS & CONEJO VALLEY

Our sister houses of faith in our community

California Lutheran University, staff & students, etc.

Harbor House

Women's Interfaith Network

Conejo Valley Interfaith Association

Conejo Interfaith Refugee Team

Cal Lutheran Center for Global Engagement

Conejo Free Clinic

Mark and Jacob Foster

Care Agency (Iskanders)

Many Mansions

Manna Food Bank

Jail Ministries

CASA of Ventura County

Blood drives (Vitalant)

Ohana Health

Mesa Farm, Ojai

## Our "Judea & Samaria"

### REGIONAL, CA, STATE & NATIONAL

Bishop Brenda Bos and staff at our Southwest CA Synod  
Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton and staff, ELCA

Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary in Berkeley, and the Center for Climate Justice and Faith

Each of our ELCA colleges, universities & seminaries  
Lutheran Retreats, Camps & Conferences: El Camino Pines & Luther Glen Farm

Fair Trade Ministries

Equal Exchange

Friends of Fieldworkers of Ventura County

Habitat for Humanity

New City Parish, Los Angeles

African Descent Lutheran Association (ADLA)

Echo Park Immigration Center  
Lutheran Office of Public Policy in Sacramento, Regina Banks  
Lutheran Disaster Response

## Our "ends of the earth"

### GLOBAL PARTNERS

Our sister congregation in El Salvador, Iglesia Luterana Fe y Esperanza and Pastor David Medrano

Mark and Jacob Foundation  
Orphanage, Egypt

Pastor David Covera family Peru

Our Gifts of Hope partners

Our missionaries:

Kristen Engstrom, Madagascar  
Daudi and Kellen Msseemmaa, Tanzania

John Rutsindintwarane, Rwanda  
ELCA Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM)

ELCA World Hunger / Advocacy  
Corus/Lutheran World Relief

Bread for the World

Jubilee USA Network

Global Refuge (was LIRS)

ELCA Sumud

Kafika House, Tanzania

AMMPARO Migrant Children

Lutherans Restoring Creation

Lutheran World Federation

National Council of Churches

World Council of Churches

Each country & people group!



# Prayers for One Ascension Leadership

*“Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with thanksgiving.”  
Colossians 4:2*

*“In our prayers for you we always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love that you have for all the saints.” Colossians 1:3-4*

## LEADERSHIP

### Church Council

Alan Baker  
Rachael Bowen  
Bonny Chick  
Ethan East  
Dave Harkins  
Carrie Leonard  
John Rarick  
Jeannette Ruggiero  
Anna Woodward

### School Board

Scott Bean  
Kyle Jones  
Jeanette McNulty  
Jocelyn Myers  
Chris Poveromo  
Kathy Saneinia  
Ashley Steere  
Nelly Nassar-Trumbo  
Anna Woodward

### Foundation

Alan Baker  
Stefano Borzone  
Anita Cohen  
Paul Evenson  
Susanne Hopkins  
Sandra Howe  
Lori Hillman  
Greg Korshavn  
Doug Morrow  
Roy Sanchez  
Jim Thompson  
Don Weeks

## ECC STAFF

Christina Alfaro  
Stacy Andrews  
Micaela Bavaro  
Jessica Bunting  
McKyla Byrd  
Victoria Chavez  
Brittani Childers  
Tiffany Chivaroli  
Brooke Costi  
Esperanza Flores  
Laurie D'Alonzo  
Kayla Fromberg  
Lauren Gunson  
Liz Hoskinson  
Arelly Kendall  
Jen Ledesma  
Nicole Lewis  
Karen Martinez  
Tanya Mathews  
Jenni McCoy  
DeAnna Means  
Amanda Munoz  
Jessica Placas  
Kelsi Ramirez  
Vanessa Reyes  
Karyn Ring  
Lindsey Robinson  
Marissa Saldivar  
Mariela Sanchez  
Nasha Sobieski  
Elizabeth Van  
Mourik  
Greta Weinstein

## CHURCH STAFF

Jen Avalos  
Carolyn Bahr  
Melissa Berg  
Stacy Bosco  
Matt Cahill  
Cayla Campbell  
Anthony Carrillo  
Jude Delkeskamp  
Pastor Chamie Delkeskamp  
Pastor Tim Delkeskamp  
Maddie Feltner  
Camryn Force  
Nathan Halvorson  
Tyler Hassenbein  
Ella Hengst  
Jeff Hengst  
Pastor Steve Herder  
Charlie Hulse  
Jenni Klemp  
Jude Klemp  
Diane Kusnieriek  
Nancy Lee  
Camden Lorentson  
Mike Marvin  
Lan Merrill  
Wyant Morton  
Margaret Ricci  
Cameron Ruggiero  
Kaylee Searway  
Jenelle Smith  
**Custodians:**  
Christian, Jessenia,  
& Noe Gonzalez

## TK- 7 ELEMENTARY STAFF

Connie Angress  
Vanessa Arias  
Ashley Babich  
Michielle Beckley  
Brian Bishop  
Ethan Bishop  
Elizabeth Bonilla  
Caitlin Burditt  
Mike Burditt  
Cindy Cina  
Anita Cohen  
Aidan Delkeskamp  
Jennifer Farrell  
Spencer Gottmer  
Corrine Gregory  
Pastor Rich Gregory  
Camille Harrington  
Heather Hartson  
Natalie Heyman  
Carolina Lopez  
Karen Manion  
Joy Marrs  
Christy Martino  
Zach Martino  
Devin Milligan  
Charlotte Miranda  
Tina Mohler  
Kelsey Packman  
Stephanie Pagano  
Erika Quiroga  
Kendra Saunders  
Robert Steere  
Sara Wallace  
Michael Woodward  
Stephanie Yates



# March 2025

Praying this prayer each day, from Psalm 145:4-5

“One generation shall laud your  
works to another,  
and shall declare your mighty acts.  
On the glorious splendor of your majesty,  
and on your wondrous works, I will meditate.”

365 Days of Prayer in 2025



Every day I will bless You, and praise Your name forever and ever.  
(Psalm 145:2)

Devote yourselves to prayer with an alert mind and a thankful heart.  
(Colossians 4:2)

Ascension Lutheran Church, School and Foundation  
Thousand Oaks, CA

| Sunday                                                                                                     | Monday                                                                                                             | Tuesday                                                                              | Wednesday                                                                                                                   | Thursday                                                                                                          | Friday                                                                                                               | Saturday                                                                                                  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Our Prayer Chapel is open before and after worship services                                                |                                                                                                                    |                                                                                      | Each Wednesday<br>8:45am School Chapel<br>6:00pm Soup Supper<br>7:00pm Worship                                              | Our book for Lent:<br>“Liturgy of the Ordinary”                                                                   |                                                                                                                      | <b>1</b> The Kingdom Builder surprise reveal in worship this weekend<br><br><i>Matthew 25:14-30</i>       |
| <b>2</b><br>Youth at Winter Camp<br>El Camino Pines<br><br><i>Luke 9:28-36</i>                             | <b>3</b><br>Read across America Week! Our library team Dolores L., Dan L. Charlotte M.<br><br><i>Psalm 119:105</i> | <b>4</b><br>Friends of Fieldworkers, Ventura County<br><br><i>Psalm 117</i>          | <b>5</b> <i>Ash Wednesday</i><br>Giving thanks for Shannon Lomeli and our Lenten soup suppers 6:00pm<br><i>Acts 2:46-47</i> | <b>6</b><br>Our Southwest CA Synod Bishop Brenda Bos<br><br><i>Deuteronomy 26:1-11</i>                            | <b>7</b><br>Our Food Pantry open every Friday, 10am-Noon<br><br><i>Psalm 91</i>                                      | <b>8</b><br>Happy Birthday Jeff Hengst! Power Hike, 8:00am Los Padres Trail<br><br><i>Romans 10:8b-13</i> |
| <b>9</b> <i>Daylight Saving Time</i><br>Happy Birthday Carolyn Bahr!<br><br><i>Luke 4:1-13</i>             | <b>10</b><br>Lutheran Schools' Week<br>Our School & ECC staff & students<br><br><i>Mark 10:13-16</i>               | <b>11</b><br>Happy Birthday Kaylee Searway!<br><br><i>Psalm 118:24</i>               | <b>12</b><br>Lunch Bunch & Holden Evening Prayer begins<br><br><i>Romans 12:12</i>                                          | <b>13</b><br>Give thanks for the wonder of creation. Full Moon Hike 6:30 pm @ CLU<br><i>Genesis 15:1-2, 17-18</i> | <b>14</b><br>School Talent Show 6pm, Gym<br><br><i>Psalm 27</i>                                                      | <b>15</b><br>National Quilting Day<br>Thanks to our LWR Quilters!<br><i>Philippians 3:17-4:1</i>          |
| <b>16</b><br>Happy Birthday Chris Dalaiden, leader of Community Concerns Team!<br><br><i>Luke 13:31-35</i> | <b>17</b> <i>St. Patrick's Day</i><br>Women's Monday Morning Bible Studies<br><br><i>Ephesians 3:14-21</i>         | <b>18</b><br>Feeding those unhoused today, Harbor House<br><br><i>Isaiah 58:6-9a</i> | <b>19</b><br>Pray for our School Chapel each Wednesday 8:45am<br><br><i>Zephaniah 3:17</i>                                  | <b>20</b><br>Spring begins. Prayers for our country's leaders<br><br><i>Isaiah 55:1-9</i>                         | <b>21</b><br>Grandparents' Day at School<br><br><i>Psalm 63:1-8</i>                                                  | <b>22</b><br>World Water Day<br><br><i>1 Corinthians 10:1-13</i>                                          |
| <b>23</b><br>Our new ELCA Missionaries in Tanzania, Daudi & Kellen Msseemmaa<br><br><i>Luke 13:1-9</i>     | <b>24</b><br>The People of Ukraine & Dave Nonnemacher<br><br><i>John 16:33</i>                                     | <b>25</b><br>Tuesday & Thursday Men's Bible Studies<br><br><i>Romans 15:4</i>        | <b>26</b><br>Prayers for our Wednesday Work Blessings<br><br><i>1 Thessalonians 5:16-18</i>                                 | <b>27</b><br>Our Grief Share group, every Thursday, 1:00pm<br><br><i>Joshua 5:9-12</i>                            | <b>28</b> Happy Birthday Norm Guetschaff, leader of Stephen Ministry and Christian Life Hours<br><br><i>Psalm 32</i> | <b>29</b><br>Prayer walk on campus every Saturday, 4:45-5:15pm<br><br><i>2 Corinthians 5:16-21</i>        |
| <b>30</b><br>For all who feel distant from God<br><br><i>Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32</i>                           | <b>31</b><br>For all recovering from the early year fires<br><br><i>Romans 15:2</i>                                | alcto.org                                                                            | alecc.org<br>alschool.org                                                                                                   | asensionfoundation.org                                                                                            | elca.org                                                                                                             | lutheranworld.org<br><br>41-50                                                                            |

# Ascension Lutheran Church – Senior Adult Ministries (SAM) Team

“We are called to create opportunities for all senior adults and caregivers to become devoted followers of Christ, with our congregation and community.”



Active  
Seniors

Transitional  
Seniors

Frail Seniors

Caregivers

| Spiritual<br>Development                                                                                                                                                        | Continued<br>Learning                                                                                                                              | Opportunities to<br>Serve                                                                                                                                                                | Opportunities to<br>Be Served                                                                                                                    | Community<br>Building                                                                                                                 | Physical<br>Well-being                                                                                                                | Financial<br>Well-being                                                                                                     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Prayer Team<br>Healing services<br>Life Groups<br>Bible studies<br>Cursillo/Via de Cristo<br>Eucharistic Ministers<br>Sermons website<br>Chr. Life Hours<br>Facebook livestream | Adult education<br>Life Groups<br>Bible studies<br>Women's Monday<br>Morning Bible Study<br>Men's Bible Studies<br>Stephen Ministry<br>(SAM Trips) | Most ALC ministries<br>Stephen Ministry<br>Teach S.S., V.B.S.<br>Christian Life Hours<br>Prayer shawl<br>SAM'sTram Lunch B.<br>Quilts for LWR<br>3M Food Pantry<br>Eucharistic Ministers | Birthday callers<br>Church/School<br>volunteer<br>GriefShare groups<br>Stephen Ministry<br>SAM's Tram<br>(transportation)<br>Card Ministry       | Life Groups<br>Bible studies<br>Lunch Bunch<br>GriefShare<br>(SAM Trips)<br>Chr. Life Hour<br>Ascension's social<br>media<br>Caroling | (Parish Nurse)<br>American Red Cross<br>Health and Safety<br>Services<br>CPR/AED training<br>SAM Trips, hikes<br>Earth Day sauntering | ALC Foundation<br>Thrivent<br>workshops<br>Generosity<br>ministries<br>Financial Peace<br>University<br>Legacy Giving class |
| Prayer Team<br>Prayer Shawls<br>Healing services<br>Life Groups<br>Bible studies<br>Christian Life Hours<br>Eucharistic Ministry<br>Sermons website<br>Facebook livestream      | Adult education<br>Life Groups<br>Bible studies<br>Women's Monday<br>Morning Bible Study<br>Men's Bible Studies<br>(SAM Trips)                     | Many ALC ministries<br>Prayer shawl<br>Lunch Bunch<br>Food Pantry<br>volunteer<br>Quilts for LWR                                                                                         | Birthday callers<br>Prayer shawl<br>GriefShare groups<br>Stephen Ministry<br>SAM's Tram<br>3M – minor<br>maintenance ministries<br>Card Ministry | Life Groups<br>Bible studies<br>Lunch Bunch<br>GriefShare<br>(SAM trips)<br>SAM's Tram<br>Christian Life Hours<br>Caroling            | (Parish Nurse)<br>American Red Cross<br>Health and Safety<br>Services<br>SAM Trips<br>Earth Day sauntering                            | ALC Foundation<br>Thrivent<br>workshops<br>Generosity<br>ministries<br>Legacy Giving class                                  |
| Prayer Team<br>Prayer Shawls<br>Eucharistic Ministry<br>Life Groups<br>Christian Life Hours<br>Sermons website<br>Facebook livestream                                           | Visitation – with the<br>home visits, a<br>devotion, and “Christ<br>In Our Home”<br>Life Groups, zoom                                              | Food pantry<br>donations<br>Prayer shawl<br>Prayer                                                                                                                                       | Birthday callers<br>SAM'sTram<br>Eucharistic Ministry<br>Stephen Ministry<br>3M – minor<br>maintenance ministries<br>Card Ministry               | Life Groups<br>Monthly visits by<br>pastoral care team<br>SAM's Tram<br>Christian Life Hours<br>Eucharistic Ministry<br>Caroling      | (Parish Nurse)<br>American Red Cross<br>Health and Safety<br>Services                                                                 | ALC Foundation<br>Thrivent<br>workshops<br>Generosity<br>ministries<br>Legacy Giving<br>resources                           |
| Prayer Team<br>Healing services<br>Life Groups<br>Bible studies<br>Cursillo/Via de Cristo<br>Adult education<br>Facebook livestream                                             | Adult education<br>Life Groups<br>Bible studies<br>Stephen Ministry<br>(SAM Trips)                                                                 | Most ALC ministries<br>Stephen Ministry<br>Food Pantry<br>donations<br>Lunch Bunch<br>Prayer shawl                                                                                       | Birthday callers<br>GriefShare groups<br>Stephen Ministry<br>Card Ministry                                                                       | Life groups<br>Bible studies<br>Lunch Bunch<br>GriefShare<br>(SAM Trips)<br>Caroling                                                  | (Parish Nurse)<br>American Red Cross<br>Health and Safety<br>Services<br>CPR/AED training                                             | ALC Foundation<br>Thrivent<br>workshops<br>Generosity<br>ministries<br>Financial Peace U.<br>Legacy Giving class            |

Grace

Wisdom

Service

Compassion

Hospitality

Healing

Provision

**Core values: Christ-like values to which we are committed!**





**Our vision:** "We are called to create opportunities for all senior adults and caregivers to become devoted followers of Christ, with our congregation and community." [www.alcto.org](http://www.alcto.org)



**Our ministry is to, with, and for seniors!** We work with four groups: active seniors, transitional seniors, frail seniors, and caregivers. At Ascension we have 458 people who are above 65 years old (268 women; 190 men). There are 32 who are in their 90s! We always emphasize intergenerational ministries with our Church, School, and Foundation. Our seniors are involved in almost every ministry of Ascension, in worship, education, and with our community and global ministries.



**Visitation ministries** – This is a central ministry as we visit people in their homes, at the hospitals, in retirement centers, nursing homes, and board and care homes. We listen, care, pray, read Scripture, bring Holy Communion, and thank them for their ministries, especially prayer. If you know of someone who would like a visit, let Pastor Steve know. Barbara Krum has done much visitation ministry. **Eucharistic Ministers** – Trained leaders bring Communion to those who are not able to come to a worship service. Pastor Ron Cox coordinates. **Hospital ministry training** will start this year.



**Christian Life Hours** – Norm Guetschoff (and his team of seven plus) now lead these worship services at Royal Oaks on Erbes, Atria Grand Oaks on T.O. Blvd, Sage Mountain in N.P., Sunrise in Westlake. Pastor Steve leads at University Village Oak View and Hillcrest Royale. Join us!



**Lunch Bunch** is back, thanks to Pastor Larry and Chris Wagner (and friends) on the second Wednesday noon of each month. \$5 for a delicious lunch. 75 friends gathered for LB on 3-12-25!



**3M (Minor Maintenance Ministries)** – connects volunteers with those who need help with their yard or home projects. Chris Daleiden is coordinating this ministry. We welcome volunteers.

**GriefShare Group** – We have one each week on Thursdays at 1:00pm, in the prayer chapel. This 13-week video-based and faith-based discussion continually repeats. Brenda Heinrich leads, [www.griefshare.org](http://www.griefshare.org). **All Saints Sunday** – the first weekend in November, we remember our loved ones who have died.



**SAM's Tram** – This is our transportation ministry for seniors who need a ride to worship or to a doctor/dentist or to a store. Led by Bob Tokin and his team of drivers.



**SAM Trips** – Half-day trips to local sites around us; looking for a new leader. **Prayer Shawls** – Members knit prayer shawls or scarves for those in need. **Greeting Cards** – a wonderful caring ministry with sending cards to people. Valerie Krum leads. **Christmas Caroling** – this is one of our favorite ministries of the year, with our youth, to bring the joy of Jesus. **Valentines** – Our school and our youth make cards for our oldest! **Health and wellness.** Di Starzak leads our CPR/AED ministries.

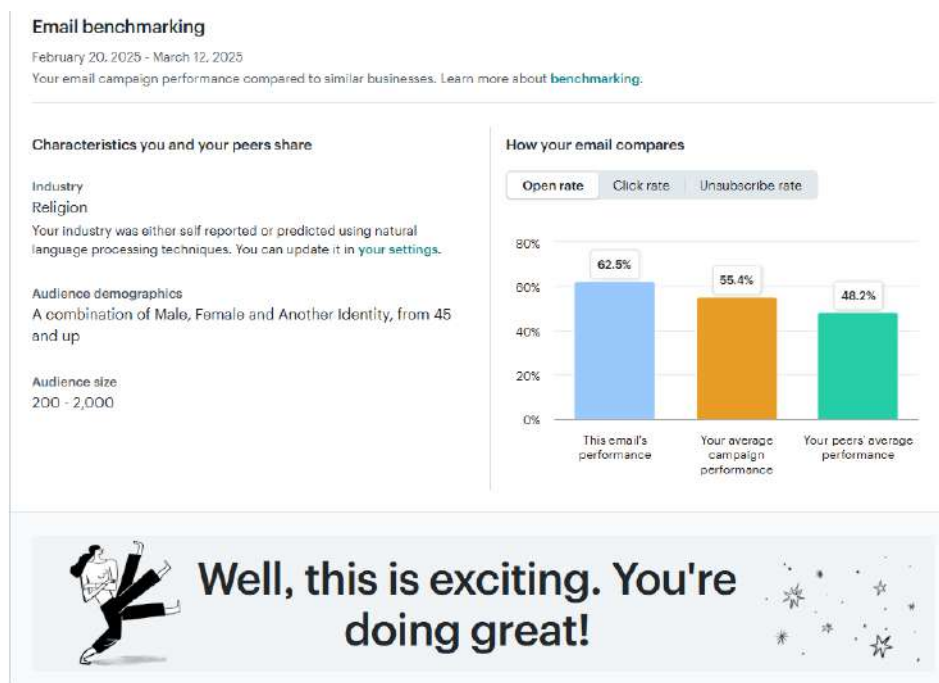


It is a joy to be in service to, with and for our seniors of our congregation and in our community. (Our story was published in a past issue of the journal "Generations" by the American Society on Aging.) In 2021 Ascension's SAM Team was featured in Pastor Don Koepke's new online book, "Growing an Older Adult Ministry." For more info: [pastorsteve@alcto.org](mailto:pastorsteve@alcto.org). Page updated 3.12.25





Along with the good traffic I've been talking about in regard to our social media, I'm seeing a slight uptick in our newsletter open rate over the past few months – from a reliable rate in the mid-50 percent range, to now frequently more than 60 percent. We've added 10 subscribers in this past month also. We have 1,131 total contacts for the TWAA email.



In case you missed it, we now have a podcast of the pastors' sermons: *SOLID FOOD – Ascension Sermon Podcast*. After several people mentioned that they'd listen to sermons if they weren't so hard to fast forward to in worship videos, it was clear the time was right to launch a sermon podcast. So now we have one, and people can subscribe to it on Spotify or Apple Podcasts, or find it on our website, [ALCTO.org/Solid-Food](https://ALCTO.org/Solid-Food). Checking this week, I find we have had *44 downloads* already. That's intentional listeners. This is great for people who have Sunday work schedules, or listen in their cars, for example. Go ahead – leave a review. [Spotify](#). [Apple](#).

Signs of Ascension's liveliness and health are all around – so many excellent ministries, drives (Kingdom Builders!) and events are going on. I have to keep my track shoes on to keep up with it all!

With gratitude for your generous gifts of time, talent, and treasure,

*Stacy Smith Bosco*

Communication Coordinator



## **Be the Blessing Report for March 2025**

The launch of the Kingdom Builders project has absorbed the Be the Blessing team this year, in addition to the review of occasional grant requests. A combined meeting of the Generosity Team and Be the Blessing committee is scheduled for March 17<sup>th</sup>; I will share any significant items arising from this meeting during the Council meeting.

The obvious BIG DEAL that occurred this month was the distribution of the \$100 Kingdom Builder funds to members of One Ascension on March 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup>. Next steps, including follow-up, will be discussed at the March 17<sup>th</sup> meeting. The \$10,000 seed money for the project was provided from Be the Blessing funds, but over \$20K still exists in the account for future allocation.

Respectfully submitted for the committee,

Dave Harkins

## Church Council Report

Youth Director: Jennifer Avalos

Date: March 11, 2025

**Confirmation Program Update:**

As we journey through the season of Lent this month, it's a time for deep spiritual reflection. For our students, Lent provides a unique opportunity to remove distractions and create space for God. It's a season that calls us to step away from the noise of everyday life and focus on what truly matters. During this time, the Confirmation curriculum will focus on deepening our students' faith by exploring Scripture more deeply, helping them to understand and grow in their relationship with Jesus as they reflect on His teachings and the power of faith in their lives.

**Senior Luther League Update:**

Our Senior Luther League is diving into the Book of Romans, and it's been incredible to see how our high school students are growing in their faith. Each week, they bring notes on what has resonated with them or impacted their hearts as they read the chapters. On Sundays, we discuss these passages in-depth, reflecting on their personal insights and understanding. It's inspiring to see how engaged they are in Scripture, with each student challenging and encouraging one another to grow in faith through thoughtful discussions.

As part of this Lenten season, we'll be incorporating moments of reflection to help students identify distractions in their lives. We'll explore ways to grow spiritually through Scripture, with reflections that tie directly into the themes of Lent. These discussions will guide our Senior Luther League group and support each student in deepening their walk with God during this meaningful season.

### **The 25/25 Prayer Initiative:**

Our 25/25 Prayer Initiative will continue after our study of Romans Chapters 1-12 ends in April, as the students have really embraced it and have really loved diving into Romans. This Prayer initiative encourages our youth to commit to spending time in prayer and Scripture each day, helping them build a deeper relationship with God. We're excited to see how it continues to impact their faith journey, and we're thrilled to witness the growth that's already taking place!

### **Youth Events Update:**

- **6th-12th Grade Moorpark Zoo Trip – March 16th:**

We're excited for our upcoming trip to the Moorpark Zoo with all our 6th-12th graders! It will be a fantastic opportunity to witness and appreciate God's creation up close. The schedule for the day includes a worship service, a service project, lunch, and time for students to explore the zoo. We're looking forward to spending the day with the students, learning and growing together.

- **9th-12th Grade Senior Luther Coffee Shop Gathering – March 12th & 19th:**

I will have two coffee shop gatherings this month for our Senior Luther League students. On March 12th and March 19th, we'll be heading to local coffee shops (Moorpark Starbucks & 507 Thousand Oaks Shop) after school. These gatherings are a great way for students to connect outside of Sunday Bible study or monthly youth events. It's a relaxed space for our high schoolers to chat about faith, life, and even work on homework while supporting one another. These locations were chosen by the high schoolers, and we can't wait to spend

**Supporting Senior Luther League Students at Events:**

One of the most rewarding parts of being a youth director is supporting our Senior Luther League students in their extracurricular activities, especially sports. Watching their faces light up when they score a goal or cheer on their team is such a blessing. It's important for them to know that I'm here to support them, whether in their spiritual journey or their personal pursuits. I'll be attending two sporting events this month to cheer on our students .

**Service Projects and Outreach – March 16th:**

This month, our service project will focus on assembling kits for field workers with our 6th-12th grade students. We're grateful to have a guest speaker, Carolina Guillen, who will share her experiences as a field worker growing up in California. This will give our students valuable insight into the importance of this project and why it matters. We're excited to collaborate with Carol Bjelland on this meaningful service project, and it's wonderful to be able to give back to our community in such a positive way.

Thank you for your continued support! I'm looking forward to all the exciting events and growth opportunities we have planned for our youth this month.

Sincerely,

**Jennifer Avalos**

**Youth Director**



