

**Ascension Lutheran Church
Council Agenda
Wednesday, May 21, 2025 - 7:00pm
Bethlehem Room**

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 - Anna Woodward

Treasurer's Report - Dave Harkins

New Business

- **Congregational Meeting Planning and Agenda** - Carrie Leonard

Recurring Business

- Affirm New Members, Confirmands, and Baptisms

Old Business

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

Approval of Minutes - Carrie Leonard

- April 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
- Foundation Report
- Global Ministries Team Report
- Communications Report
- Be the Blessing Report
- Youth Director's Report

Information Items

- June 18th, Council Meeting - Bethlehem Room
 - Devotions - xxx

Closing Prayer

Adjournment

Treasurer Report for May, 2025

April numbers are still in development. Mike Marvin is flying solo this month and I do not anticipate having finished financials available in time for the Council meeting. Mike did take a look at offerings for April, and reports that they fell short. Budgeted offerings were \$141,821. Actual offerings were \$93,366.31, a miss of \$48,454.69.

We will wait until after the May offerings are in to consider any amendments to last month's developed budget for next year. At this point May receipts are in track with budget.

Respectfully submitted,

Dave Harkins

New Members & Baptisms Report

May 2025

Baptisms for April

Name	Date of Birth	Date Baptized
Charlotte Mae Hartson	10/25/2017	04/19/25
Henry Robert Hartson	09/25/2015	04/19/25
Manon Rinsma Leonard	04/28/1992	04/19/25
Olivia Taylor Rinsma Leonard	04/27/2023	04/19/25
Kaylee Rey Conrad	12/12/2024	04/27/25

New Members for April

No New Members

**Ascension Lutheran Church
Council Meeting Minutes
April 23, 2025 7:00 pm**

The Council meeting was called to order by John Rarick at 7:01 p.m.

Council Members In Attendance: Rachael Bowen, Ethan East, Dave Harkins, John Rarick, Jeannette Ruggiero, Anna Woodward

Others: Pastor Tim, Pastor Chamie, Kaylee Searway

Absent: Al Baker, Bonny Chick, Carrie Leonard

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 – John

A motion was made (Ethan), seconded (Anna) to approve the agenda.

Discussion: Under New Business, add information item regarding the church roof.

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

Devotions - Ethan

In times of trouble, worry, and uncertainty we are called to give it all to God. We often fail to do that but when we focus on our worries, we aren't focusing on God. Paul writes in Philippians 4:6, "Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything." In verse 8 he counsels us to "Fix your thoughts on what is true, honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable." Then we will have God's peace. We need to trust that God is in control.

Treasurer's Report – Dave

As of the end of March, offerings to date are .2% ahead of budget. This, combined with the fact that expenses to date are \$84,086 lower than budget, has the financials at a \$85,259 surplus.

The Be the Blessing fund balance is approximately \$15,000 after two new grants were given in April. The Be the Blessing committee would welcome additional funding to keep this ministry going. The initial funding was not in the budget. Be the Blessing funds provided the means for the Kingdom Builders project and the committee is looking to sustain the excitement and energy of this initiative as a means to jumpstart other projects and new ministries.

A while ago, Ascension submitted applications for the Employee Retention Tax Credit covering five fiscal quarters. After an extended period of time when no response was received from the IRS, a check arrived for one of those quarters. It's not known at this time if other checks will be received. These are One Ascension funds as the credit is for staff from the ECC, Ascension School, and the church.

Council reviewed the proposed 2025 – 2026 budget which was prepared in collaboration with the church staff and with program leaders. Offerings are budgeted at 3.5% higher than this year's budget amount. This takes into consideration that this year's actual giving to date is 9% above last year's actual giving. All ministry/program leaders were contacted and invited to provide input regarding the budget amounts for Programs / Committees

expenses. The proposed budget includes funds to provide a calendar year end bonus to church staff which is conditional on the church's financial status at that time.

A motion was made (Jeannette), seconded (Anna), and passed unanimously to approve presenting this proposed budget to the congregation at the June Congregational meeting.

New Business

1. Sanctuary Roof – Kaylee

A core sample of the sanctuary roof was taken and it confirmed that the roof and insulation need to be replaced. A bid was received from one vendor so far. The roof could be replaced with the same bituminous material which would have a 5-year warranty and cost around \$120,000. Another option is to put a PVC roof in place. This comes with a 20-year warranty and would cost around \$150,000. The ECC has a PVC roof. Kaylee will solicit more more bids for this project.

Resurfacing of the patio is ready to move forward. Funds for this project are provided by the One Ascension Asset Preservation fund.

Recurring Business

Affirm New Members, Confirmands and Baptisms

None at this time.

Old Business

1. Land Sale – Pastor Tim

Pastor Tim received news from the consultant working for the buyer, Robert Younkin, that the lot line adjustment plan has been completed and submitted. There had been a month-long delay to this process due to the engineer, Dax. The consultant is making progress with the city and he expects that these plans will come before the Planning Commission in the next three months. In the consultant's opinion, total approval for the project could come within the next six months.

Discussion: Is any action or review needed by the County? Pastor Tim will bring that question to the consultant.

2. Nominating Committee - Carrie

Candidates for the President-Elect, Treasurer, and Member-at-Large positions on Council have been contacted and are discerning this invitation to serve.

A candidate has been secured for the one open position on the School Board

A candidate for one open position on the Foundation has not yet been found.

Approval of Minutes

March Council meeting

March Combined School Board / Council meeting

A motion was made (Anna), seconded (Dave) to approve the March Council minutes and the March Combined School Board / Council minutes.

Discussion:

In the minutes for the Combined School Board / Council meeting, the section pertaining to the campus alcohol policy mentions the assistance of Carol Bjelland. Kaylee requested that the reference to Carol as a retired lawyer be removed from the minutes.

In the Council minutes, the discussion regarding the Children's Ministries Director position, referenced in Pastor Chamie's report to Council, should state that the recommendation is for the church budget to include funds for a permanent part-time (not full-time) position.

A motion was made (Ethan) and seconded (Jeannette) to approve the changes discussed for the March Council minutes and the March Combined School Board / Council minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

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. Kaylee Searway, Director of Operations report
5. School Board report
6. Global Ministries Team report
7. Prayer Ministries
8. Senior Adult Ministries
9. Communications report
10. Be the Blessing report
11. Youth Ministry report

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

Information Items

Next Council meeting will be Wednesday, May 21st at 7:00 pm.in the Bethlehem Room.

Devotions – Anna Woodward

Closing Prayer – Pastor Tim

Adjournment

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

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Rachael Bowen



Pastor Tim's Ministry Report- May 2025

Grace and peace my sisters and brothers in Christ,

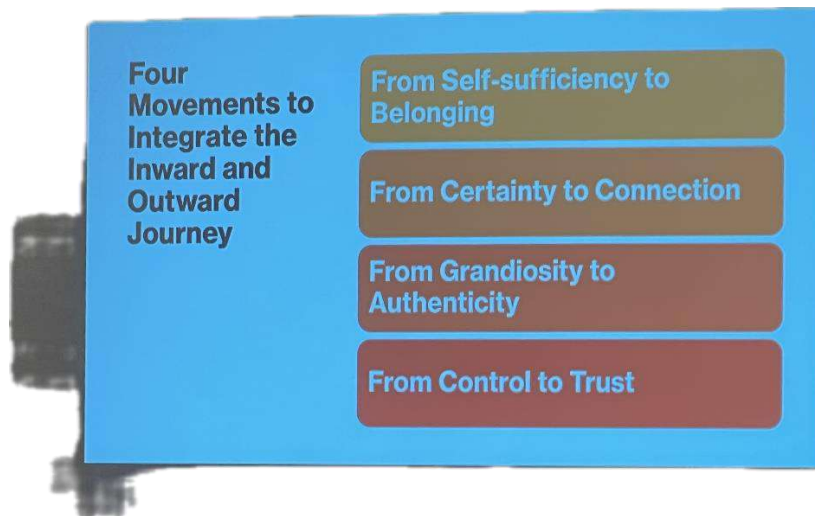
This April/May has been an excellent time of getting things done in the life of One Ascension. Right away I think of the work that Kaylee Searway has done to create space for her and Scott's 3-week vacation to Scotland to see her son Aidan. Because of this work, we are ahead of schedule when it comes to having the budget ready and we've already made some great plan for the summer workflow. It feels great. Another significant event in the life of One Ascension is that our currently longest tenured employee, Connie Angress has announced that she will be retiring at the end of this year. If you get the chance, please thank and congratulate her. She has given her heart and soul to the ministry of the school.

We are in the active phase of the **Kingdom Assignment Project!** Stories of people creatively using the money they were given are coming in daily. And I am so amazed at how creative the congregation has been. Last Saturday I had the joy of being part of the pickleball tournament that Tom Lindros organized. I am hearing about giving gift cards to the homeless, creating share libraries, a feminine product drive, bake sales. In almost all cases, the value of the \$100 has multiplied by creativity, time, talent, getting other people involved in the effort and even extra money being contributed. Stories are appearing in the newsletter, and on social media, on a weekly basis. We have shared about some of the projects at announcement time. I even featured one in my sermon on the weekend after Easter.

I am grateful to report that **sanctuary sound project** has been fully funded. Thanks so much to the Foundation for providing that final \$7k that was needed. Our goal is to install and train our musicians and tech team on the equipment by the weekend of May 31st/June 1st our "Invite a Friend" weekend. The drum cage material has already been delivered though is yet to be installed, it is much more aesthetically pleasing than what we currently have. I look forward to seeing what it looks like installed!

The **Nominating process** is coming to a close and I am excited about next year's slate of leaders.

Last week I attended a **continuing education conference** hosted by the ECLA's Large Church network. I appreciated being with my colleagues at this meeting in Santa Fe, New Mexico. The presenter was Wes Granberg-Michaelson who presented on "The Soul of Justice." Here is an illustration of the "four movements" that he lectured on.



The best part of the conference was networking with pastors in churches that are like ours. The presiding bishop did come. A very significant moment was when she asked who in the group of over 100 pastors were elected to be voting members at this year's national assembly and zero hands were raised. It seems that the ELCA is more focused on small, inner-city congregations who's pastors are typically the ones that get elected to such positions. It was a disheartening moment.

Finally, as I formulate goals for next year, I am excited to integrate our Reserve Study into the longer-term sustainability of Ascension. I think it is very important for One Ascension to be looking at making sure we can continue the up-keep and maintenance of this wonderful place.

In His Service,

Pastor Tim

Pastor Chamie's April 2025 Council Report

April was a quite a month, full of so many wonderful things! I feel blessed to be serving at Ascension!

Children, Youth, & Family

Children

I worked with Jenni Klemp as we invited families of children to “Three Great Sundays” in April:

1. On April 6, I followed the children to a **special Sunday school** time right after the Children's Time in worship. I had told Jenni that I would like the children to have an experiential time to learn all about Holy Week and gave her a curriculum book as a guide. Jenni did an excellent job of bringing it all to life and the children seemed to really enjoy it.



2. On April 13, **Palm Sunday**, the children and youth were invited to process into worship with palms. The **children's choir** - which had a trial run in Lent to see how it went - had 17 children singing “Jesus Loves Me” at the 9:00 worship! There has not been a children's choir for quite some time at Ascension. I am so thankful for Kari Keit volunteering to direct the choir. Thank you as well to Rachel Bowen for accompanying the children on the piano. The children's choir went so well in Lent that Kari will be continuing the children's choir through spring. The children will be singing again on Pentecost Sunday. In addition to palms and singing, there were 32 children who attended Sunday school on Palm Sunday. On Palm Sunday the year prior, we only had 7 children in Sunday school. The day also included the **tomato sale** and **petting zoo**.



Sweet Athena with the baby goat on Palm Sunday



Tomato guru Tiffany Napierala helps Edith Ott pick out her tomatoes



Pastor Paul and Jean always buy tomato plants and support the kids

3. On April 20, we celebrated **Easter!** I loved that there were so many children who came up for Children's Time as we unburied the alleluia and saw how big the plant had grown (the one I seeded when we buried the alleluia). Dozens of children participated in the egg hunt which was, once again, wonderfully organized by Jenni Klemp.



We unburied the alleluia at Children's Time during Easter worship services. This photo is from the 10:30 service.

Jenni Klemp has done an amazing job as Interim Director of Children's Ministry - which she began last spring (2024) and was set at 10 hours a week. As we discussed budgets and vision for the next coming fiscal year, the finance team worked diligently to make sure that the position for Director of Children's Ministry is a budgeted permanent position. Jenni Klemp will be finishing this Sunday school year and will officially be done as Interim Director of Children's Ministry on June 1. She will be passing the baton to Jenelle Smith who will be increasing her hours to full time so that she can become our new Director of Children's Ministry while also maintaining key pieces of being our Worship Coordinator. Jenelle will be spending about half of her time as the Worship Coordinator and the other half as Children's Ministry Director. Jenelle is a beloved staff person on our campus and is familiar with both church and school, including having substitute taught at the school. The children love her. We are so blessed by all the great work Jenni has done and that she will continue on as a faithful member of the congregation with her family. Jenni says she would love to volunteer and help the church in any way she can. Give Jenni a big thank you and then give Jenelle a warm hello. I feel Jenelle is going to do an excellent job in helping us to carry children's ministry into its future.

Youth

I have been the lead for Confirmation this entire school year and April was a time to dig into our last remaining weeks before Confirmation Sunday on May 18. I also worked with our middle school and high school youth in getting them connected to the life of the church during Lent,

Holy Week, and Easter Sunday. This included encouraging them to come to Soup Suppers, waving palms on Palm Sunday, baking bread for Holy Week, and participating as leaders in the Sunrise Service. Jen Avalos coordinated the youth at the Easter breakfast.



We typically start confirmation class with a little fun sort of team game. This day was making pyramids.



Do not fear - Nolan wasn't really in pain. The boys were quite comical as their pyramid came to a crashing close.



Bread Baking!

Interfacing with the Schools

April school connections including working with every grade level, TK-8th, on the tomato sale as well as the 4-year-olds from the ECC. I loved being able to connect with every class and get to know students better through working on a project together (Sunday school children and confirmation youth also worked on this project). I partnered with Dr. Charlotte Miranda, the school's nature lab director, to run the school tomato sale on Friday, April 11. For the church sale, I was thankful to work with the long time faithful gardening church team of Tiffany Napierala (who started the tomato sale 11 years ago and is so pleased to see the garden's continued growth that she gave a generous donation to One Ascension's outdoor/garden ministries), Sandra Bean, Blanca Hoffmeier, Cory Hengst, and Jean Gravrock.

Tim and I were happy to attend the school auction. I think we have an incredible school staff and I love to encourage and support them in any way that I can (here are a few photos with some of our amazing teachers - and Tim). It was also so much fun connecting with school and church families.



During Holy Week, we didn't have our regular Wednesday chapel due to having chapel on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. However, I still led a special chapel on Wednesday for the ECC so they would not miss out on Holy Week (as their schedule didn't work with the different times). I baked them fresh bread so they could all try it as I talked about Jesus being the bread of life. Pastor Steve did music.

Then I worked with the 8th grade class in Worship Arts - along with their music teacher Ms. Kelsey - to prepare for a very special Maundy Thursday chapel which included a reenactment of the foot washing and the Last Supper and then a tenebrae service on Good Friday with a "peak" into Easter as we closed with singing "Easter Hallelujah."



Serving fresh baked bread to the 4-year-olds after talking about Jesus, the bread of life



The 8th grade class at the school reenacted the Last Supper. Two of our confirmation students - Luca and Shaya - played Jesus and Peter.

Worship - and Soup Suppers



Pastor Jen Witten & me

On the first week of April, my long-time friend Pastor Jen Witten (a Presbyterian pastor who currently serves as a Hospice chaplain) preached at the Holden Evening Prayer Service. In all the years that we have known each other, we have never put on our clergy robes and led a service together. On the way home that night, I realized that that particular night of Holden Evening Prayer had been completely led by women - Pastor Jen, Margaret on organ, Maia Berg and Heather Harner as our cantors, Yvonne Zoetewey on flute, and me. I think it was a special experience for all of us. I loved every Holden Evening Prayer, all of our amazing preachers, and all of our Soup Suppers. I loved all the generations coming together. And I must say thank you again to Shannon Lomeli for doing such an amazing job in coordinating the suppers. Not only did she do Soup Suppers, but she also ended up leading the shopping and cooking for the youth Easter breakfast.



Two of our youth - Paige and Jude - played chess during Soup Supper. Jude is our amazing coffee maker and hospitality person every Sunday morning.



One of our confirmation youth invited two of her friends to come to Soup Supper. As we see our youth get more connected and excited, I hope they invite more and more friends.

To be a part of creating a special and meaningful Holy Week and Easter was such a blessing. We had some glitches, but made notes for next year as we learn from our mistakes and mishaps. I tripped over the fish line of the veil on Good Friday (oops) and Tim and I did a very amateur mistake - something we actually haven't done in 26 years of ministry - we forgot to wear white stoles on Easter Sunday and wore our purple Lent ones instead. How we both missed that, I have no idea except that it may have been that we were just so filled with joy on Easter morning and so excited about the day that we didn't even think about the stoles.



Cake & ice cream in the bungalow after the 6:00 Easter Saturday service - courtesy of Nancy Lee.



Sunrise service - 8th grader Shaya and 6th grader Santi led the opening liturgy. 8th grader Paige played guitar.

Nancy Lee did a great job with the Holy Saturday service. We started that service in the sanctuary, but ended in the garden. Then we had cake and ice cream in the bungalow after service and so many people participated. Easter sunrise service was beautiful and well attended and I loved all the youth leadership - and that youth parents Becca and Darin Kruse organized and led the music. Tim and I team-preached on Easter Sunday as we reflected on the “dayenu” - it would have been enough. With Jesus, it is even more than enough. All of the services were filled with amazing music. We are so blessed at Ascension with so many gifted musicians.



Tim & I team-preaching on Easter Sunday. He gets the award for the most animated!

Prior to Holy Week, Tim and I were grateful to have gone to all three installments of *The Chosen* in the theaters with church members Steve and Susie Smuck. That is where we were inspired by the “dayenu” and then studied and worked together to prepare the Easter sermon.

A couple days after Easter Sunday, I sent out the worship thematic outline to the worship team (Wyant Morton, Nancy Lee, Melissa Berg, Matt Cahill, Lan Merrill, Jenelle Smith, Pastor Tim, and Pastor Chamie) for the 50-day season of Easter. We all met via zoom to discuss the next season in worship and to begin preparations for the one worship service on June 8 - Pentecost Sunday.

Other

We had another “power hike” in April and I got to hike with this lovely group of church members. I love the hikes as they are a great opportunity to get to know each other better and enjoy the beautiful area where we live.



I am thankful to work with great church staff. It took a lot of team work and communication to make all the special events of Holy Week and Easter happen. One day, Tim and I met in my office with Jenelle and the facilities crew to go over all the details of set up needed for all the various worship services. We work hard and we also laugh hard.



After Easter Sunday, Tim and I took a couple of days for rest. For the third year in a row, we stayed in a cute little cottage on a farm in Paso Robles across from a vineyard. Tim played disc golf in a vineyard while I walked alongside. We went wine tasting. We read books, watched movies, drank tea, relaxed, and enjoyed one another's company. I thoroughly enjoy working together with Tim at church and I thoroughly enjoy vacationing with him. We are grateful that our adult children love the church family and all contributed in some way on Easter weekend... Jude was setting up and taking down chairs and tables. He was also the one in the lift preparing the black veil to go over the cross. Aidan was the lead on sound for the Holy Week chapels and the Easter egg hunt. Hannah worked in the nursery on Easter Sunday morning.



My favorite workshop was this one with Dr. Tim Elmore: "The Future Begins with Z." He talked about Generation Z - today's youth. I plan on incorporating some of his work into our Youth Leadership Camp this June.

April 28 through May 1, I was in Atlanta, GA for the Orange Conference - a conference on children, youth, and family ministries. Jen Avalos chose to stay in Thousand Oaks and do the online version of the Orange Conference. There is so much to share from the conference. But to keep it brief, I would say that it came at a perfect time for me. Having served in the associate pastor position for 7 months, I have had time to get a good feel of our current situation in children, youth, and family ministries. The conference gave me tools - and networking - to now take Ascension forward in building our children, youth, and family ministries. The large group sessions at the conference were so invigorating as thousands of people from all across the country, from all denominations, came together for powerful worship music and inspiring speakers. I attended some excellent workshops. I also took a 5-hour "pre-course" to the conference on calendaring your next school year and strategizing for the year ahead in children, youth, and family ministries.

Grace & Peace,

Pastor Chamie



Church Council Report – Pastor Steve Herder May 1, 2025 (for the month of April)

Christ is risen! He is risen, indeed! Alleluia! Our lives as followers of Jesus Christ are filled with hope and purpose, joy and compassion, because Jesus conquered death and gave us the gift of life now and life eternal! In the midst of difficult days in our country and our world, we hold on to that hope and proclaim God's love and mercy for all people, and care for God's beloved creation.

In our congregation and in every congregation around the world, we give thanks for the preachers, teachers, leaders, musicians, and staff who make our weekend worship services so meaningful, especially during Holy Week, and the Wednesdays in Lent.

Thank you to each of you who are following the 365 in '25 daily prayers and Bible readings. Stacy does a great job with the daily social media posts for this. Pastors Tim and Chamie add so much with the video "reels" that they post. I share another two to six posts each day as well. Now we have 2,415 people connected to our outreach ministry on Facebook. Each Monday Susanne Hopkins writes a devotion that is very greatly appreciated. Our Foundation has been sharing good messages each Friday as well.

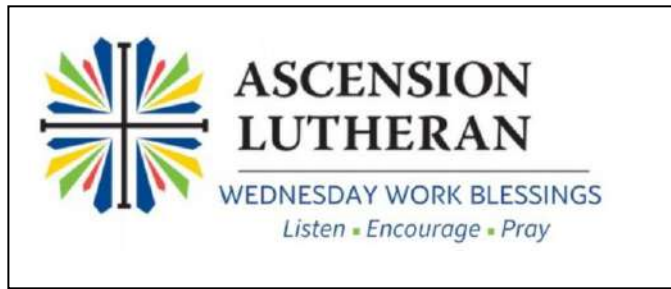


April ministry highlights for me included:

Learning from Dr. Carol Bartell at the April 6 class on Pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and the excellent class from Pastor Paul on Palm Sunday;

Giving tours to church members of the Dead Sea Scrolls at the Reagan Library;

Getting a fascinating walking tour of Amgen on April 1;



Doing a Wednesday Work Blessing at the Conejo Free Clinic, with Debbie and Sarah;

Delivering Easter baskets (from our school) and potted flowers (from our ECC) to some of our oldest members (thanks to Barbara Krum for many deliveries too);

Enjoying another Lunch Bunch with many friends (thanks Pastor Larry and Chris!);



Learning from Dave Nonnemacher about the amazing work he is doing to care for the people of Ukraine, and delivering our gifts to them (thanks Louise and Paul Evenson!);

Praying the opening prayer for the Jubilee nation-wide congregational call, and being at the Conejo Valley Interfaith meeting;

Hearing from Pastor Chamie who led our Global Ministries Team meeting as we celebrated Earth Day;

Leading the memorial service for D'Anita Gamlyn, one of our friends from our Christian Life Hours (thanks to Norm

Guetschoff and team) and the graveside service for our beloved friend Skip Craig;

Message from Ukraine

Dave Nonnemacher, who is currently in Ukraine, sent us these photos showing what funds from the Ascension Lutheran Church Foundation and other generous donors made possible for the Mariupol Chaplains Battalion.

"The utility truck. Imported from Germany, currently in Vinnytsia. Paperwork is being prepared. Hearty appreciation sent ALC's way. They are very grateful."







"Here's what \$1,500 of Ascension Lutheran Church Donations buys. At the Metro in Dnipro, we're about 45 minutes out from Zaporizhzhia. We'll pack 200 packets tonight, 120 will be delivered tomorrow." – D.N.

Participating in our Channel Islands Spring Conference as we learned about the ministry of Lutheran Disaster Response, especially as it relates to the recent fires in our area (prayers for our Bishop Brenda Bos who lost her home in the Altadena fire);

Singing with our ECC children each Friday morning, and at a special service for the four-year-olds on Maundy Thursday;

Coordinating the Buen Vecino voter registration event here on April 26 (hosted by Debbie Kirsch), and the Blood Drive on April 27;

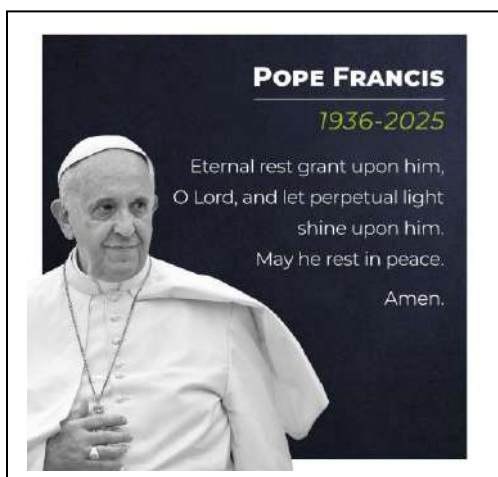
Helping one of our unhoused friends (who comes to our food pantry each Friday, led by Chris Daleiden) get into a Section 8 low-income apartment, after six years of being homeless! (our Agape Fund paid for a bed for her);

Praying, sharing, and laughing with our staff each Tuesday morning at 10:30, and sharing in the joy of our school's auction on April 12th.



The personal highlight for April was our family time in Chicago after Easter and then taking my parents back to Wartburg Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa, for my dad's 70th class reunion. I had not been back there since the 1980s! It was a joy to visit with alums and faculty. I was blessed to have meaningful conversations with eight of the sixteen faculty. With my working half-time (I do average 30 hours of work each week; that is half-time for a pastor!), I appreciate then opportunities for me to spend more time with family, near and far, and more travel with them. We also enjoyed some time in Appleton with the Morrow family while they were there, visiting their family.

My “low” for the month was the death of Pope Francis, who died on the day after Easter and before Earth Day. We pray for our siblings in Christ in the Roman Catholic Church. I am preparing to preach on May 3-4 and will talk about his legacy of mercy. The cartoon below is by my childhood friend, Joe Heller, from Green Bay. His “popemobile” artwork of Pope Francis was part of a gift that we gave to Pope Francis in 2014 during our Jubilee meetings at the Vatican. www.jubileeusa.org



Thank you for your prayers for your pastors and staff. We hold you in our love and prayers as well. Pray about who you will be inviting to worship the first weekend in June and then join us all for the Pentecost Festival worship on June 8 at 10am, followed by the International Festival, as we celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit.

One more invitation: On Tuesday, June 10th, we'll have a Hospital Visitation class led by a few of us. Of course, your pastors will always be doing hospital visits, but because we want to use your gifts as well, we invite you to come to this information class to discern if God is calling you to hospital visitation ministry. Many of our Eucharistic ministers, Stephen Ministers, maybe some retired pastors (?) will be there, and all are welcome to come to this one-hour orientation meeting! This idea was inspired during our “24 Weeks of Prayer in 2024.”

May 2025

Praying this prayer each day, from Psalm 145: 8-9

“The Lord is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.
The Lord is good to all,
and his compassion is over all that he has made.”



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				1 <i>National Prayer Day</i> Pray for our Country's Leaders <i>Acts 9:1-6</i>	2 Happy Work Anniversary, Mike Marvin (5/2/22) School Talent Show 6pm <i>Psalm 30</i>	3 May Monthly benevolence: Agape Fund for the Needy <i>Revelation 5:11-14</i>
4 Pray for Kingdom Builders <i>John 21:1-19</i>	5 Teacher Appreciation Week <i>Proverbs 3:5-6</i>	6 National Nurses Day <i>Matthew 25:35-40</i>	7 Global Ministries Team plans Gifts of Hope 4pm <i>Proverbs 22:9</i>	8 Pray for peace in Palestine and Israel <i>Acts 9:36-43</i>	9 How does Jesus shepherd your life? <i>Psalm 23</i>	10 <i>Fair Trade Day</i> God bless our staff and their families. <i>Revelation 7:9-17</i>
11 <i>Mother's Day</i> Thanking God for Mothers <i>John 10:22-30</i>	12 Women's Monday Morning Bible Studies <i>Ephesians 6:10-24</i>	13 Pray for CLU's graduation this Friday <i>Philippians 1:3-6</i>	14 Lunch Bunch @ 12pm <i>Psalm 133</i>	15 Fair Trade Lane 2:30 - 4:00pm <i>Acts 11:1-18</i>	16 School Musical @ 6pm "Moana Jr." <i>Psalm 148</i>	17 Thanking God for our Church Council <i>Revelation 21:1-6</i>
18 Pray for all Confirmation Students <i>John 13:31-35</i>	19 Mesa Farm Ojai <i>Philippians 4:8-9</i>	20 World Bee Day Thank God for pollinators <i>Proverbs 24:13-14</i>	21 Wednesday Work Blessings <i>Proverbs 14:21-24</i>	22 Happy Work Anniversary, Pastor Steve (5/22/07) <i>Acts 16:9-15</i>	23 Pray for our ELCA Missionary in Madagascar, Rev. Kristin Engstrom <i>Psalm 67</i>	24 Pray for other houses of faith in our community <i>Revelation 21:10,22-22:5</i>
25 Pray for our food ministries <i>John 14:23-29</i>	26 <i>Memorial Day</i> Honoring those who died while serving our country <i>1 John 3:16-18</i>	27 Pray for our ELCA seminaries <i>Philippians 4:10-13</i>	28 School Open House 6pm <i>Joshua 1:7-9</i>	29 <i>Ascension Day</i> Bless Ascension in our witnessing <i>Acts 1:1-11</i>	30 Happy Work Anniversary, Stacy Smith Bosco (5/30/12) <i>Psalm 97</i>	31 Pray for our synod Bishop Brenda Bos <i>Revelation 21:12-21</i>

**Ascension Lutheran School Board Agenda for 4/28/25 Mtg. at 6:30 pm
On Campus (Library)**

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** – Kyle Jones
2. **Approval of Agenda**
3. **Approval of Agenda & Consent Agenda**
 - Financial Report (February)
 - March Meeting Minutes
 - ECC Report
 - Principal's Report
 - Church Council Report

Old Business:

1. Discussion on any reports pulled from the Consent Agenda
2. Subcommittee Updates
3. Business Interruption Policy (Possible deferral to May)

New Business:

1. Budget Approval
2. Handbook Revisions
3. Staff discounts summer camp

Executive Session:

1- 2 items

Closing Prayer - Pastor Chamie

Adjournment

**Ascension Lutheran School Board Meeting Minutes
April 28, 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, Jenni McCoy, Jocelyn Myers, Chris Poveromo, Kyle Jones, Jeanette McNulty, Scott Bean, Rich Gregory, Kathy Roshanai, Anna Woodward, Connie Angress

Guests: Mike Marvin, Cameryn Force, Kaylee Searway, Lindsey Robinson, Jennifer Farrell

Absent: Nelly Trumbo

Call to Order:

Ashley called the meeting to order at 6:36pm.

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

Devotion:

Kyle shared a devotion quoting Romans 5:3-5 and after reflecting on the news that Rich had previously shared that Oaks Christian has plans to open an elementary school in the next several years, which will be in direct competition with our own elementary school.

Approval of Agenda and Consent Agenda:

Agenda amended to remove Church Council report. Business Interruption Policy discussion moved to May's meeting.

Motion to approve amended agenda initiated by Jocelyn. Anna seconded. Motion passes.
Ashley amends motion to add Admission's report to consent agenda items. Jocelyn seconded.
Motion passes.

Principal's report pulled for discussion.

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

Old Business:

Principal's Report

- Chris wanted to clarify whether the \$70K reported as profit from the Gala was gross or net. Rich and Mike Marvin verified it was Net profit (not gross).

Subcommittee Updates

- Ashley will have more guidance and structure for the developing subcommittees in the May meeting. Kathy will join the arts and sciences subcommittee.
- Ashley would also like to have the Teacher Compensation subcommittee meet over the summer to explore short-term goals.

State of the Schools

- Rich reported that 2 full-time teaching staff have left over the last 3 weeks, Devin Milligan in Makerspace and Senora Lopez in Spanish. A very qualified replacement Spanish candidate has just suddenly dropped because of personal reasons. Anita Cohen was able to recommend a replacement Makerspace/PE instructor who has started.
- Rich also reported that Matt Hurdle has accepted the open School Board position.
- Jenni reported that things are busy with details, as the ECC school year closes in less than 4 weeks.

New Business:

Budget Approval

- Mike started the discussion. After tuition decisions were made in the Fall, and considerations were made for labor, these preliminary budgets were developed.
- They include a projection of 190 students at the day school (with 23 in 7/8th grade and 10 in 6th grade at the middle school rates).
- Much of the expenditures are allocated to staff, which mirrors the investments we've been making in staff (2.5% increases in salaries as well as potential bonuses based on school-wide, performance benchmarks.)
- Other expenses that are included in the budget are summer maintenance projects (renovation of 2nd Kindergarten classroom, blinds in 1st-4th grade classrooms, railing by gym, lockers for Middle School.)
- Although there is a budgeted 5% increase for liability/property insurance, Chris recommends increasing this amount up to 15-20%.
- Consideration should also be made to increase the projected expense for security.
- Mike also noted that the funds in the Middle School Activation fund, which were used last year, have now been exhausted.

- Jeannette recommends adding the contingency spend comparison (year over year) into the budget spreadsheet (which includes the \$ spent on church sound system, emergency food and similar one-time requests/expenses). This is an important item in order to track trends.
- Budget also includes allocation to the Site Wide Maintenance fund (which is a \$50K expense).
- Scott recommends breaking out a handful of items from their larger umbrella expense lines (like bonuses from salaries & benefits, etc.) in order to study the financial trends.
- Kaylee commented that the insurance numbers for the June renewal should be available at week end.

Scott makes a motion to approve the budget as proposed with flexibly to adjust the numbers when insurance information becomes available. Anna seconds. Discussion includes understanding the expenditures in salaries and benefits. One opposes. Motion passes.

Handbook Revisions

- Ashley is requesting help to look through handbooks and present revisions at either May or June Board Meetings. Handbooks needing updates include School Board Handbook, PALS Handbook, Parent Handbook, and Employee Handbook.
- Kaylee will be able to review Employee Handbook and present to the board by August (for circulation to staff by September).
- Jocelyn volunteers to work on updating the PALS Handbook.
- Ashley and Kyle will work on the School Board Handbook.
- Per Connie, Parent/Student Handbook will need to be updated July 1st. Chris, Ashley and Nelly will work on Parent/Student Handbook.

Staff Discounts Summer Camp

- Last summer, ECC staff with students at the school were granted admission to Summer Staycation without incurring expense for their children in the program as a one-time consideration. This year, Rich has told ECC staff that they will pay the same monthly rate they pay normally (during the school year) at the ECC or Day School, for the Summer Staycation program.
- Jenni estimates about 4-5 students would benefit from this.
- Scott recommends adding to the School Board Handbook calendar the timing for when a go/no-go decision on Summer Staycation should be made by the board.

Kyle makes a motion to support Rich's proposal that ECC staff will pay the same monthly rate they pay normally (during the school year) at the ECC or Day School, for the Summer Staycation program. Jeannette seconds. Motion passes.

Closing Prayer:

Rich closed the meeting with prayer.

Adjournment:

Chris motioned to adjourn the meeting and reconvene for executive session. Scott seconded. Meeting was adjourned at 8:29pm.

Next School Board meeting is scheduled for May 19th. Anna will lead devotion.

Respectfully submitted by Jocelyn Myers

**ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH
FOUNDATION REPORT TO THE COUNCIL
May 21, 2025**

At its May meeting the Foundation approved eight grants for One Ascension programs totaling \$24,140:

- \$2,400 to the Pastor Chamie to supplement the summer Sunday school program.
- \$1,800 to Mark Foreman to assist in producing videos that showcase the Kingdom Builders activities.
- \$7,000 to Pastor Tim to fund the remaining balance needed to complete the upgrade to the church's sound system.
- \$4,475 to Ashley Babich to purchase 3-D printers for each Ascension Lutheran Day School classroom.
- \$6,065 to Jennifer Farrell to replace some student Chromebooks for the Ascension Lutheran Day School.
- \$800 to Charlotte Miranda to purchase gardening supplies and activity kits for the Nature Watch program.
- \$1,000 to Rich Gregory to purchase bibles for the Ascension Lutheran Day School 5th grade students.
- \$600 to Jennifer Avalos to supplement the cost of faith quilts made for graduating seniors.

The Foundation also approved scholarships totaling \$29, 520 for 19 students.

The Foundation is putting significant emphasis this year on legacy and estate planning. The effort will extend to all age groups within One Ascension, not just the seniors. Planning is underway to develop classes/programs for presentation in the latter part of the year.

The Foundation's total assets currently are about \$1,800,000. The investment portfolio has declined in value recently due to the uncertainties around the economy, inflation, and the effects of announced and proposed governmental actions. In light of these events the Investments Committee has reviewed the Foundation holdings. We have concluded that the investments are still reasonably diversified, and we have no reason

to make any drastic changes at this point. There are no indications that any industry sector or type of investment has suddenly become more attractive. We will continue to monitor the investments closely.

At the end of 2024 we sold off \$120,000 of our equity holdings and placed the proceeds in a money market fund earning nearly 4%. It was noted at the time that some or all of these funds might be reinvested in equities if an attractive opportunity presented itself. We do not see such an opportunity currently, and a steady, safe return of 4% continues to be our best option for now.

Alan Baker

Foundation Representative to the Council



Wednesday, May 7, 2025

4-5:30 PM, the 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-Bonny Chick

Topic: Planning for Gifts of Hope, 2025

PLEASE BRING YOUR ITEMS FOR OUR KITCHEN WELCOME BASKETS FOR THE CONEJO INTERFAITH REFUGEE TEAM.

1. 4:00-4:10 pm **WELCOME AND OPENING PRAYER**
2. 4:10-5:00 **Presentations/discussion of various opportunities for Gifts of Hope emphasis**
 - a. Pr Carmen Retzlaff, ELCA, via zoom
 - b. Pr Lisa Kipp, ELCA, via zoom
 - c. Friends of Fieldworkers, Work boot project, video

3. 5:00-5:30 GMT - **REFLECTIONS, PLANNING and REPORTS**

Information/Discussion Items:

- 1)**Action Items: GMT Travel Fund disbursements for (11) ALC members who will participate in Habitat for Humanity, Zambia, July, 2025**
- 2)**GMT Travel Fund disbursement for Carol Bjelland to attend Fair Trade events**
- 3)**Graduation recognition for Julia Raska, ELCA International Women's Leader, CLU**
- 4)**Informed & Engaged Support for Local Immigrant Families, Holy Trinity, 5/18, 3:30-5PM.**
- 5)**June 8th Pentecost Sunday-Worship and Fair GMT BOOTH?**

REPORTS:

Fair Trade

Jubilee

Lutheran World Relief-Update: Kits planning

Next Meeting: June 4: Topic: Planning and budgeting for GMT 2025-26

Meeting Notes

WELCOME

Louise Evenson extended greetings to all present: Andy Binsley, Beverly Selle, Bonny Chick, Carol Bjelland, Christina Sanchez, Dave Harkins, Debra Papageorge, Ethel Jordan, Jen Avalos, Jill Binsley, Louise Evenson, Marcia Koenig, Mary Wennes, Bruce Thomas, Paul Evenson, Pastor Steve Herder, and Pastor Chamie Delkeskamp.

OPENING PRAYER - Bonny Chick, quotes from Pope Francis

TOPIC: Planning for Gifts of Hope, 2025

Presentations/ discussion of various opportunities for Gifts of Hope emphasis

- A. Pastor Steve introduced Pastor Carmen Retzlaff, ELCA, and Pastor Lisa Kipp, Lutheran World Relief, who joined the meeting via zoom. GMT members introduced themselves to the pastors. Pastors Retzlaff and Kipp thanked Ascension for its work locally and world-wide and discussed the following opportunities for consideration for Ascension's 2025 Gifts of Hope emphasis:
 - 1. God's Global Barnyard-ELCA World Hunger
 - Gifts of Hope has focused on financial support for S Sudan in 2009, 2012 and 2017.
 - 2. South Sudan-ELCA
 - a. Safe Births project
 - b. Fistula surgeries
 - c. Missionary support, Administrative Assistant at Reconciliation LC, S Sudan
 - d. Vocational training at Juba
 - e. Food for refugees in refugee camps
 - f. Support for unaccompanied minors in refugee camps
 - 3. South Sudan-LWR
 - g. Handwashing stations, latrines, and solar panels for mobile clinics in S Sudan
 - h. Vaccinations/Medications at refugee camps.
 - 4. Sierra Leone-LWR
 - i. Keep Girls in School project
- B. Local projects for consideration
 - 1. Friends of Fieldworkers including the work boot project.

C. Questions/discussion/comments

1. Are there programs that provide vaccinations? The clinic at Juba and the safe birth project both provide vaccinations.
2. Is there an opportunity to support Ukraine? Some support is being provided in underground schools by LWR.
3. Primary health care provided by USAID through LWR in Haiti has been discontinued.
4. Support was voiced by some GMT members for the Safe Birth project, Keep Girls in School project, and vaccinations.
5. Pastor Steve invited the GMT members to email comments about the proposed Gifts of Hope projects to him. He also asked any GMT member interested in serving on a Gifts of Hope sub-group to contact him. GOH planning meetings have been tentatively set from 3-4 PM prior to GMT meetings. The next meeting will be June 4th.

Reflections, Planning and Reports

A. Action items

1. Louise reported that the GMT Travel Fund has a balance of \$4,800 and proposed using a portion of the funds to support the 11 Ascension members who are participating in the July 2025 Habitat for Humanity trip to Zambia. The committee agreed to provide \$200 to each participant.
2. Financial support from the GMT Travel Fund for Carol Bjelland's attendance at a Fair Trade conference in the fall in MA was tabled until the September meeting.
3. Louise proposed giving Julia Raszka a gift from the GMT in recognition of her graduation from CLU this year. Julia is an ELCA International Women's Leader. The committee agreed and Louise will follow up. Christina announced that GMT members are invited to a brunch in Julia's honor on Tuesday, May 13 at 10 AM.

B. Planning/Opportunities:

4. GMT members are encouraged to attend the Informed & Engaged Support for Local Immigrant Families meeting at Holy Trinity Church on 5/18, 3:30-5 PM. A freewill offering will be taken which will be used for materials for hygiene kits for fieldworkers. Contact Paul Evenson or Carol Bjelland for details.
5. Carol Bjelland will share the link to the Friends of Fieldworkers work boot project. Anyone can support that project through the link.
6. Pastor Chamie provided information about Pentecost Sunday on June 8th. There will be one worship service that weekend at 10 AM, followed by an international fair. GMT members agreed to have a table at the fair for Fair Trade and Lutheran World Relief kits. Marcia, Carol Bjelland, Ethel, Louise and Pastor Steve will assist.

C. Reports-All reports were distributed via email prior to the meeting.

1. FAIR TRADE. Carol Bjelland announced that Fair Trade has been invited to participate in the Youth Leadership camp which will be held on the Ascension campus in June.
2. LWR KITS: Louise announced that there is a planning meeting on 5/14 from 2-3 PM in Pastor Chamie's office. Anyone is invited to attend. Ascension's June benevolence offering is designated for LWR kits materials. The ECC will be participating in

assembling baby kits this year. School kits will be assembled by Ascension School students, and the congregation will assemble personal care kits.

3. JUBILEE: Pr Steve announced the G7 Jubilee People's Forum is being held in Calgary, Canada June 12-15, 2025.

D. Calendar items for May, June and July were distributed via email prior to the meeting.

OTHER: Upcoming GMT meetings:

June 4: Topic: Planning and Budgeting, 2025-2026

Submitted by Ethel Jordan

MAY

May 7	GMT Meeting: TOPIC: Gifts of Hope planning
May 13	Graduation brunch for Julia Raszka, 10 AM, Ficelli's, Thousand Oaks
May 14	Fair Trade Lane open: 12:45-1:15 PM
May 15	Fair Trade Lane open: 2:30-4:00 PM
May 18	Fair Trade open: 8:30-9:00 and 10:00-10:30 AM
May 18	Informed & Engaged Support for Local Immigrant Families , Holy Trinity LC, 3:30-5PM
May 19	CLU Graduation
May 28	Lobby Day, Sacramento
May 31	Friends of Fieldworkers Fundraiser, Camarillo, 2-5PM

JUNE

June 4	Gifts of Hope planning meeting, 3:00-4:00 PM
June 4	GMT Meeting: TOPIC: Planning and Budgeting for GMT 2025-26, 4:00-5:00 PM
June 8	PENTECOST SUNDAY AND FAIR 10 AM Worship. Fair following.
June 11	Fair Trade Lane open 12:45-1:15 PM
June 11	Center for Global Engagement welcomes representatives from Uganda 10:30-12:30.
June 12-15	G7 Jubilee People's Forum, Calgary, Canada.
June 12	Fair Trade Lane open 2:30-4:00 PM
June 22	Fair Trade Lane open 8:30-9:00 & 10:00-10:30 AM

JULY

July 1-6	Habitat for Humanity build in Zambia
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UPCOMING GMT MEETING DATES, 2025

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

May 7	Global Ministries Team Meeting TOPIC: GIFTS OF HOPE planning
June 4	Global Ministries Team Meeting TOPIC: Planning and Budgeting, 2025-26

Here is the link from ELCA World Hunger and Lutheran Disaster Response, Spring 2025 newsletter, including the 2024 annual report

https://elcamediaresources.blob.core.windows.net/cdn/wp-content/uploads/Lifelines_Spring_2025.pdf

One of the highlighted stories is about two Sudanese brothers who received assistance at St Andrew's Refugee Services (StARS) in Egypt. Gifts of Hope supported this ministry previously.

GMT DEVOTIONS, May, 2025- Quotes of Pope Francis

Selected and read by Bonny Chick

“When we give help to the poor, we are not doing the work of aid agencies “in a Christian way”. Those are good, it is a decent thing to do-aid work is good and quite human-but it is not Christian poverty, which St Paul desires of us and preaches to us. Christian poverty is that I give of my own, and not of that which is left over-I give even that, which I need for myself, to the poor person, because I know that he enriches me. Why does the poor person enrich me? Because Jesus Himself told us that He is in the poor person.

“There is another important point: encountering the poor. If we step outside ourselves we find poverty. Today-it sickens the heart to say so-the discovery of a tramp who has died of the cold is not news. Today what counts as news is, maybe, a scandal. A scandal, ah, that is news! Today, the thought that a great many children do not have food to eat is not news. This is serious, this is serious! We cannot put up with this! Yet that is how things are. We cannot become starched Christians, those over-educated Christians who speak of theological matters as they calmly sip their tea.

“Men and women are sacrificed to the idols of profit and consumption; it is the ‘culture of waste’. If a computer breaks it is a tragedy, but poverty, the needs and dramas of so many people end up being considered normal. When the stock market drops 10 points in some cities, it constitutes a tragedy. Someone who dies is not news, but lowering income by 10 points is a tragedy! In this way people are thrown aside as if they were trash.

“The proclamation of the Gospel is destined primarily to the poor, to those who often lack the essentials for a decent life. The good news is first announced to them, that God loves them before all others and comes to visit them through the acts of charity that the disciples of Christ carry out in his name.

“Rivers do not drink their own water; trees do not eat their own fruit; the sun does not shine on itself and flowers do not spread their fragrance for themselves. Living for others is a rule of nature. We are all born to help each other. No matter how difficult it is...life is good when you are happy’ but much better when others are happy because of you.” Pope Francis



FAIR TRADE MINISTRY

DATE: April 26, 2025 for May 2025

SUBMITTED BY: Carol Bjelland

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

Fair Trade Wednesday Chapel Message for May will focus on creation & God's Great Recipe in the context of the Chapel Scripture & message focus for that week. A special balloon & slides will be used to highlight the message.

Equal Exchange Summit – June 13, 2025 (Wheaton College/Norton, MA) - Carol has been invited to participate.

Fair Trade Federation Conference/Expo – September 8-11, 2025 (St. Louis, MO) – Carol has been invited to participate

Fair Trade Lane prices will be updated July 2025.

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

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

Volunteers invited to help update the Fair Trade webpage with new photos, text & Images – May/June 2025

3. LOOKING AHEAD (Important calendar dates)

Fair Trade Lane Open Dates/Times May & June 2025:

Wednesday, May 14th (12:45-1:15 PM)

Thursday, May 15th (2:30-4 PM)

Sunday, May 18th (8:30-9 AM & 10-10:30 AM)

Wednesday, June 11, 2025 (12:45-1:15 PM)

Thursday, June 12, 2025 (2:30-4 PM)

Sunday, June 22, 2025 (8:30-9AM & 10-10:30 AM)

4. OTHER INFORMATION

The Earth Day/Sustainability Fair at CLU was wonderful. We thank the Center for Global Engagement for inviting us to join them again this year. Their Fair Trade brochure is terrific. Chocolate & tea samples were enjoyed by many. Lisa & Carol spoke with students, staff & faculty throughout the event. Of special note - we connected with Erin Sommers (Library) about offering Fair Trade tea & snacks for future Library-hosted student events & we spoke at length with Prof. Vik Thasiah's Environmental Studies class & offered to join them in future discussions. We had the opportunity to meet & talk with Karen Mowder, founder of Plant Fruit (plantfruit.org). A wall-hanging made by Ugandan women artisans was purchased from a participating vendor – it will be displayed on the Fair Trade Lane art wall. It is always fun connecting with the students leading the CLU Farm program – they brought Gumby, the chicken, who was the star of the day!

We participated in several Fair Trade Zoom meetings on a variety of topics: Congo Coffee/Panzi Foundation/DCR, Sindyanna of Galilee, PARC, Professional Coffee Tasting & the Worlds Biggest Fair Trade Dinner Party. Notes & detailed information about the meetings/discussions/opportunities shared with Ascension's Fair Trade email group.

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



Report to the Global Ministries Team for the May 7, 2025 Meeting, by Pastor Steve Herder

For the last 12 years Pope Francis has been the biggest influence for the work and advocacy of Jubilee, and last year he declared the year of 2025 to be a Year of Jubilee, the second one since the year 2000 when the world saw over \$130 billion of odious debts cancelled for the world's most vulnerable countries.

So now [we are grieving the death of Pope Francis](#) and pray for the 133 Cardinal electors who are seeking the Spirit's leading as they choose a new pope in the Conclave beginning on May 7. We are hopeful that Pope Francis' legacy of caring for God's creation and for those who are the poorest will continue with the new pope, since Francis chose 80% of the Cardinals who will be part of this election.

On April 8, [a letter from the Jubilee USA Network and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops](#) was sent to President Trump that reiterated how "debt relief and restructuring make effective economic and security policies, strengthening [the US's] global moral leadership" and calling for "strong American leadership on debt relief and financial architecture reform."

Read Jubilee USA's statement on Pope Francis' views of IMF, World Bank and G20 spring meetings [here](#).

Read Pope Francis' Jubilee 2025 debt focus speech [here](#).

On April 8 I led the opening prayer for the nation-wide Congregations Call for Jubilee, and referenced the quote below from Dietrich Bonhoeffer who was martyred on April 9, 1945. Much of that meeting was to discuss [the Jubilee meetings near Calgary, Canada](#), June 13-15 when the G7 meets there. I will not be able to attend because of the Habitat trip to Zambia, June 18 – July 6. Thank you for your prayers for both events!

"Your yes to God requires your no to all injustice, to all evil, to all lies, to all oppression and violation of the weak and the poor."

[For you to take an action step: Sign this petition. Jubilee 2025: Individual petition to G7, G20, UN, IMF, and World Bank.](#)



MINISTRY OF Global Ministries Team-Lutheran World Relief Kits Project, 2025

DATE May 1, 2025 SUBMITTED BY Louise Evenson

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

A flyer has been prepared, reviewed and edited to be used in the month of June to encourage financial gifts for the LWR Kits Project at Ascension. The announcement will be in TWAA each week and included as a worship slide for each service. LWR offering envelopes will be in the pews in June for this designated benevolence offering.

In the planning meeting on April 23rd, we calculated the cost of each baby care kit to be about \$60. Pr Chamie will discuss with Jenni McCoy how to coordinate fundraising and making baby care kits with parents at the ECC. The goal is to make 40 baby care kits.

We have received cost estimates for the costs of the bars of soap and towels for the personal care/hygiene kits from our supplier. Currently, they are about the same cost as in 2024, however, we are considering ordering materials now for 400 PCKs before international tariffs could increase costs. We have been assured that a storage place will be found for these items since they are the bulkiest. New Hope Lutheran Church has also indicated they would like to add their supplies for 200 kits to our orders. They reimburse us for their costs.

We have not explored the costs for school kits yet since most supplies are on sale in the late summer/early fall. It is impossible to anticipate how tariffs will affect the prices of the items in the school kits. Our intention is to make at least 360 school kits to round out our goal of sending 800 kits to LWR.

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

Volunteer to join one of the kit teams---baby care kits, school kits, personal care kits.

Indicate if you have a **Thrivent Action Team** grant (s) available for the LWR Kits project.

Since most of the **boxes** that were given to us for shipping kits have been used, if you have contacts with any manufacturing or retail group that may have boxes appropriate for shipping kits, please let us know. Please save any copy paper size boxes for packing/shipping kits. Bankers boxes are also a good size for kits.

3. LOOKING AHEAD (Important calendar dates) Next planning meeting May 14, 2-3 PM, Pastor Chamie's office. Anyone is welcome to join us.

4. FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT Louise Evenson lpevenson@gmail.com , Vicki Weeks 3weeksboys@gmail.com or Pastor Chamie Delkeskamp pastorchamie@alcto.org

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

3. LOOKING AHEAD (Important calendar dates)

4. FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

CONTACT _____ **AT** _____

INFORMED AND ENGAGED SUPPORT FOR LOCAL IMMIGRANT FAMILIES

Sunday, May 18

3:30pm - 5:00pm

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church

1 W Avenida de Los Arboles

Thousand Oaks, CA 91360

PANELISTS INCLUDE REPRESENTATIVES FROM



**BUEN
VECINO**



A Freewill Offering will be
collected to provide
Hygiene Kits for Field workers



sponsored by



Ascension Lutheran Church



HOLY TRINITY



Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran



Lutheran Church

COMMUNICATION UPDATE

Here is data on our Easter advertising. As I've mentioned before, we are leaning more heavily on boosted reels on Meta and You Tube hyper local ads than past years. These are getting seen *a lot!* They also serve to lift up the church in general. Viewers who might not attend an Easter service could remember and visit Ascension because of having been introduced at this time.

Google and You Tube April totals

1,789 You Tube impressions on 1 ½ minute hyper local ad

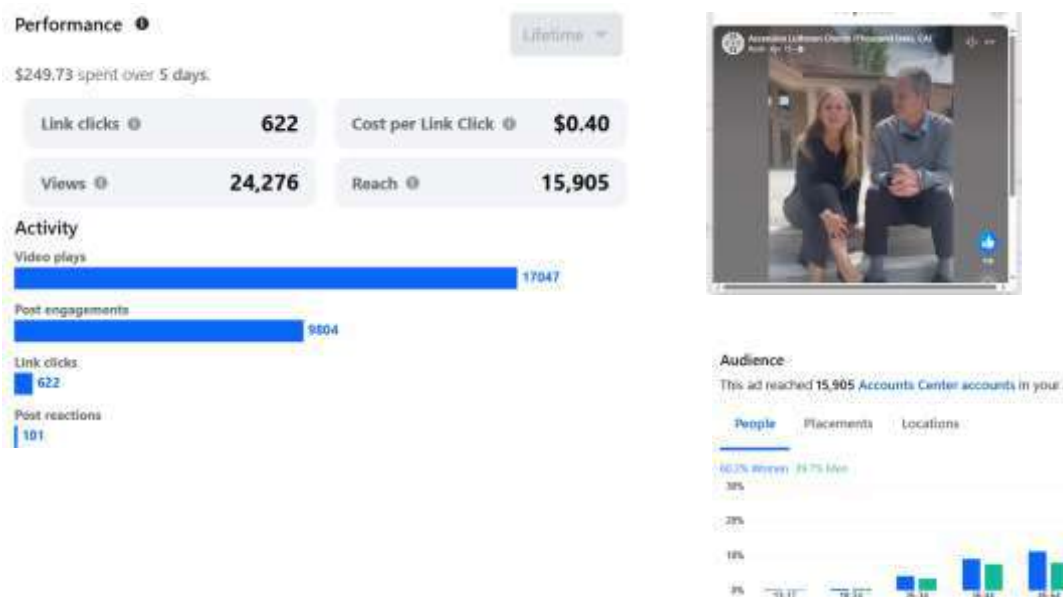
2,592 impressions on Google Search-based ad (10 mile radius, 11 different iterations)



Meta

"Join Us This Easter" reel with Pastors Tim and Chamie, boosted for both Facebook and Instagram. (Budgeted at \$50 per day)

24, 276 views (17,047 plays) * and **622 link clicks** in 5 days, cost per click \$0.40



*I read several explanations for this. The one that made sense says that Views means the number of times the content was displayed and Plays means when it was actually played.

(Continued)

2. Communication update

Meta continued

Sunday Schoolers Holy Week reel, boosted on FB and Instagram, budgeted at \$30 per day

18, 927 views (13, 581 plays), 487 clicks in 5 days, cost per click \$0.31

Palm Sunday invite, boosted on FB and Instagram, budgeted at \$34 per day

15, 894 views (10,812 plays), 391 clicks in 5 days, cost per click \$0.43

Boosted Facebook Event (\$10 in full)

752 views (Low! I need to explore this more as I have never had great results with these.)

Print

Quarter page color ads in the Acorn and Thousand Oaks Acorn, April 11 and 18

Distribution 64,509 each week

Postcard Invitation

One Ascension distribution

Plus free posts and TWAA items

Notes: The reels with pastors looking into the camera, and reels showing activity (e.g. Sunday schoolers) attract much more sustained attention than anything else – whether they're boosted or not.

Print ads have an impact on how much coverage we get in the paper.

On a different note, keeping up with all the Kingdom Builders activities is very rewarding work! I can't get over the energy and creativity going into this drive, and the variety of

(continued)

3. Communication update

projects is great to see! In addition to TWAA stories (Thank you, Ed Klodt!) and social media, I'm continually updating the Kingdom Builders webpage, at ALCTO.org/KB. The terrific videos from Mark Foreman and Karsten Lundring are there, in addition to flyers for some of the projects past and present. There is a great storehouse of graphics thanks to Mark.

Knowing some of the awesome results, I look forward to more stories coming from the Kingdom Builders team.

With deep gratitude for all you do,

Stacy Smith Bosco

<https://www.toacorn.com/articles/church-to-host-community-bike-ride/>



Be the Blessing Report for May 2025

The Be the Blessing team did not meet in May. A single grant request was handled electronically.

The Kingdom Builders projects are due to be completed, or at least chosen and underway, by the end of May. It is anticipated that follow-up activity will be scheduled for June.

The approved BtB grant was from Fair Trade (GMT) for \$250. It complements the larger approved request from April for a Youth Leadership Retreat in June, for 7th-12th graders at school or in the congregation. Youth will be educated on the Fair Trade mission and given an opportunity to select it as part of the service ministry component of their retreat.

As discussed last month, there is a need to decide on refunding the Be the Blessing ministry for next year.

Respectfully submitted for the committee,

Dave Harkins

Church Council Report

Youth Director: Jennifer Avalos

Date: May 14, 2025

Confirmation Program Update:

May 4th was our last confirmation session. We have come to the end of the confirmation school year. May 9th, we had our overnight 7th–8th grade with a total of 14 students that attended, as we were wrapping up our confirmation year with a special event for the confirmation program to end the school year as a group. We have 9 students that are being confirmed on May 18th, which is in a few days. Excited for the students to experience a special milestone in their lives.

Senior Luther League Update

Romans 1–12 has already been wrapped up. It was an amazing opportunity for the youth to dive into Romans. We will be doing *The Chosen* series book that we will be getting into in the next weeks: “Finding Your Identity in Jesus.” We are excited to be welcoming our 9 incoming freshmen from the confirmation program to Senior Luther League. May 30th will be the Senior Luther League welcoming them as an event. We are excited to have them join.

Youth Events Update:

Confirmation Overnight 7th–8th Grade May 9th – It was an absolute blast being with the youth and hosting this overnight event for them. The evening included a craft area, board games, and delicious snacks that they got to enjoy as part of the experience. We had a fun capture-the-flag glow-in-the-dark game, and it was so special to see the youth smiling and laughing as they wrapped up the school year together.

They built long-lasting bonds through the confirmation program, and it was heartwarming to witness the growth they've made in their faith while growing together as a group. We also had a fun treasure scavenger hunt. There was a special moment when we took time to pray in the sanctuary, expressing our gratitude to our Heavenly Father for His work in our lives and in this youth program.

In the morning, we served breakfast to help the youth recharge and get their energy up in preparation for the fun pickleball exhibition that followed.

Pickleball Youth Exhibition – May 10th

It was an amazing time with the youth, watching them get excited and get their energy on the pickleball court, cheering them on. What a blessing that the youth took part in this amazing Kingdom-building opportunity with Tom Lindros. We are so thankful for Tom for the work put in, and the youth were able to be part of it in a way. The youth had a blast playing and helping when they could for this special moment.

9th–12th Grade BBQ – May 30th

We will be having a BBQ to welcome our upcoming freshmen to the Senior Luther League.

We will be having a special activity for our freshmen to welcome them in and something fun that they will remember. It will also be a time for our Senior Luther League to get to know our freshmen, to build those connections, and better create a safe environment through

community-building opportunities to grow together with a special event to welcome our freshmen in.

May Senior Luther League Coffee Shop Gatherings

We will be having two coffee shop gatherings: May 15th, which will be in our local Coffee Bean, and May 29th at 507 Coffee Shop. This time is to continue building those connections with the youth and a time for them to build those connections as a group. They can come, bring their homework, catch up, or just take time to hang out—building in one's faith and coming together in community outside of just Bible study.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Avalos

Youth Director