

**Ascension Lutheran Church  
Council Agenda  
Wednesday, September 17, 2025 - 7:00pm  
Bethlehem Room**

**Welcome and Call to Order** -John Rarick, 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** – John Rarick

**Devotion** – Carrie Leonard

**Treasurer's Report** – Steve Smuck

**New Business**

- **Update on the land sale – Creighton Van Horn**
- **Update on the development of a campus alcohol policy – Kaylee Searway**

**Recurring Business**

- Affirm New Members, Confirmands, and Baptisms
- 

**Old Business**

- No old business

**Approval of Minutes** -John Rarick

- August 20, 2025 Church Council Minutes

**Consent Approval of Reports to Council** – John Rarick

- Pastor Tim Delkeskamp's Report
- Pastor Chamie Delkeskamp's Report
- Pastor Steve Herder's Report
- Director of Operations Report
- School Board Report
- Global Ministries Team Report

**Information Items**

- **Reflections on empowering and equipping, affirming and celebrating as we lead the culture of abundance at Ascension.**
- **Joint Church Council / School Board Meeting—Wednesday October 15, 2025 at 5:30PM in Founders Hall.**

**Closing Prayer** – Crystal Bryant

**Adjournment**

# September 2025 CC Treasurer's Report

Please see the summary comments below for August results.

Offerings remain slightly under budgets (not surprising due to summer donation volatility) - \$190,834 actual vs budget of \$202,631, which is unfavorable by \$11,798

Considering the offering shortfall at 5.8%, the bottom line is holding well. We will need to message results to the generosity team to get them thinking about messages for the congregation.

Total Revenue - \$202,242 actual vs budget of \$211,958, which is unfavorable at \$9,716

We experienced good interest income and facilities news which helps out the total.

Bottom line - (\$91,953) actual vs (\$92,752) budget, favorable by \$799.

We had some extra payroll expenses related to the departure of Jennifer Avalos (pay out accrued vacation time and a couple other items) that added about \$3k to expenses. We expect that there will be some favorable impact going forward relative to the open position, but this month took the hit.

The Cash position is strong, and we are still expecting one more Employee Retention Tax Credit tranche from the IRS.

## Ascension Lutheran Church

### Budget Summary

FYE26 YTD through August 31, 2025

|                                      | Church<br>'25 - '26<br>Budget | Church<br>'25 - '26<br>Budget YTD | Church<br>'25 - '26<br>Actual YTD | Church<br>'25 - '26<br>Variance | %     |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------|
| <b>Revenues:</b>                     |                               |                                   |                                   |                                 |       |
| Offerings (Church)                   | 1,568,409                     | 202,632                           | 190,833                           | (11,798)                        | -5.8% |
| Other Revenues                       | 47,280                        | 9,326                             | 11,408                            | 2,082                           | 22.3% |
| <b>Total Revenues:</b>               | 1,615,689                     | 211,958                           | 202,242                           | (9,716)                         | -4.6% |
| <b>Expenditures:</b>                 |                               |                                   |                                   |                                 |       |
| Salaries & Benefits                  | 1,332,178                     | 250,241                           | 251,311                           | (1,070)                         | -0.4% |
| Allocated Staff Expenses             | (253,453)                     | (48,741)                          | (49,042)                          | 301                             | -0.6% |
| Benevolences                         | 54,068                        | 9,011                             | 9,011                             | (0)                             | 0.0%  |
| Programs / Committees                | 64,179                        | 7,863                             | 4,434                             | 3,429                           | 43.6% |
| Administrative Expenses              | 111,899                       | 13,166                            | 11,134                            | 2,032                           | 15.4% |
| Property Maintenance                 | 100,242                       | 36,458                            | 31,521                            | 4,937                           | 13.5% |
| Utilities & Insurance                | 108,418                       | 20,100                            | 19,213                            | 886                             | 4.4%  |
| <b>Operating Expenditures</b>        | 1,517,531                     | 288,097                           | 277,582                           | 10,515                          | 3.6%  |
| Debt Service                         | 99,675                        | 16,613                            | 16,613                            | -                               | 0.0%  |
| <b>Total Expenditures</b>            | 1,617,206                     | 304,710                           | 294,195                           | 10,515                          | 3.5%  |
| <b>Operating Surplus / (Deficit)</b> | (1,517)                       | (92,752)                          | (91,953)                          | 799                             |       |
| Prior Year Surplus Spend             | -                             | -                                 | -                                 |                                 |       |
| Reserve spend                        | -                             | -                                 | -                                 |                                 |       |

## Ascension Lutheran Church

### Cash & Debt Review

FYE26 YTD through August 31, 2025

#### Cash

|                                         | <u>\$\$\$'s</u>  |
|-----------------------------------------|------------------|
| Cash                                    | 1,944,248        |
| Liquid Receivables (ALS/ECC/Foundation) | 452,150          |
| ALC-ECC Investment Cash                 | (732,919)        |
| <b>Total cash</b>                       | <u>1,663,479</u> |

#### Reserved Funds:

|                                    |             |
|------------------------------------|-------------|
| AGAPE                              | 31,348      |
| Mission Possible                   | 222,285     |
| Garden Fund                        | 50,172      |
| Be the Blessing                    | 14,951      |
| One Ascension Maintenance          | 197,460     |
| ERTC                               | 677,623     |
| <br>Benevolence and Programs Items | <br>198,273 |

|                               |                  |
|-------------------------------|------------------|
| <b>Total Restricted Funds</b> | <u>1,392,112</u> |
|-------------------------------|------------------|

|                               |               |
|-------------------------------|---------------|
| Available Cash related to PPP | 216,101       |
| All Other Available Cash      | <u>55,266</u> |
| Total Available Cash          | 271,367       |

#### Debt

|                     | Total<br>\$\$\$'s | Annual Cost<br>\$\$\$'s | Monthly Payments |               |               | Rate       | End Date | Remaining<br>Term |
|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|------------------|---------------|---------------|------------|----------|-------------------|
|                     |                   |                         | Principal        | Interest      | Total         |            |          |                   |
| Church Mortgage     | 1,017,147         | 98,844                  | 4,300            | 3,937         | 8,237         | 4.625%     | 8/1/2039 | 14 Yr 0 Mo        |
| ECC Mortgage        | 1,954,701         | 163,440                 | 4,965            | 8,655         | 13,620        | 5.300%     | 8/1/2044 | 19 Yr 0 Mo        |
| Construction Note   | 1,219,968         | 76,248                  | -                | 6,354         | 6,354         | 6.250%     | 2/1/2026 | 0 Yr 5 Mo         |
| <br>Foundation Note | <br>18,666        | <br>831                 | <br>-            | <br>69        | <br>69        | <br>4.450% | <br>None | <br>NA            |
| <b>Total Debt</b>   | <u>4,210,482</u>  | <u>339,363</u>          | <u>9,265</u>     | <u>19,015</u> | <u>28,280</u> |            |          |                   |

# **ASCENSION CAMPUS ALCOHOL POLICY**

**Draft For Discussion Purposes  
(09102025)**

## **Purpose:**

This Policy has been established consistent with the laws of the State of California, the County of Ventura, California, and Ascension's Constitution, By-Laws and mission. This policy sets forth the application, approval, and implementation process for serving and consuming alcoholic beverages in conjunction with events on the campus of Ascension Evangelical Lutheran Church (hereinafter, "Ascension" unless otherwise noted). This Policy, including the required Event Application Form (Exhibit 1) sets forth minimum requirements. Additional requirements may be imposed and implemented by Ascension's Church Council. Exceptions to this Policy, the Event Application, and the requirements herein must be approved by Ascension's Church Council.

As a faith community comprised of Church, School and Foundation, the members of the Ascension community lead and host ministry and fellowship programs and events, furthering Ascension's mission. These programs and events, occurring throughout the calendar year, use campus sites and facilities. This Policy, subject to the terms and conditions herein, shall permit the consumption of alcoholic beverages in conjunction with ministry, fellowship and School events and programs on campus. It is the expectation that alcoholic beverages are consumed responsibly, with health and safety in mind.

## **Policy:**

Alcoholic beverages are permitted on Ascension's campus, to be served and consumed in conjunction with Ascension events and programs, when specific permission is sought and granted by the Church Council in the manner set-out in this Policy. The consumption of alcoholic beverages shall not be the primary purpose of any event or program at which alcoholic beverages are served. These events and programs include, but are not limited to, ministry and fellowship meetings, gatherings and dinners; special fund-raising and celebratory events of Ascension's Church, School and Foundation. When required by applicable law or this policy, alcohol will be served by a caterer or food/beverage service provider holding required license(s) to do so. When appropriate, the Council may approve the careful service of beer or wine by a caterer or host under the provision of our joint host alcohol insurance coverage.

## **Procedure:**

Definitions:

Ascension: Ascension Evangelical Lutheran Church, School and Foundation, hereinafter “Ascension” unless otherwise noted.

Ascension Campus: The property of Ascension at 1600 E. Hillcrest Dr., Thousand Oaks, California, including: (a) indoor meeting rooms and halls, including but not limited to, the Library, Founders’ Hall, Pederson Hall, and the Bethlehem Room; and (b) outdoor spaces including, but not limited to, the garden (behind the modular buildings), the garden in front of the Early Childhood Center, the School lawn, the Patio outside the West Narthex, and Parking Lots 1-5.

Event Application: Exhibit 1 to this Policy

Event Host: A ministry, organization, department or group of Ascension Church, School or Foundation; a member(s) in good standing of Ascension Church or School.

Permitted Alcoholic Beverages: Beer, Wine (including champagne), and Hard Seltzers

Scope:

This policy applies to all individuals, groups or organizations, regardless of Ascension affiliation, on the Ascension Campus.

Application: An Event Application to serve alcoholic beverages at a location(s) on the Ascension Campus must be completed and submitted to the Ascension Church Council for review and approval. The Event Application form is included in this Policy as Exhibit 1. The completed Event Application must be submitted to Ascension’s Director of Operations not less than ten (10) business days prior to the monthly meeting of the Ascension Church Council. The completed application will be included in the agenda for the monthly Church Council meeting.

Locations Where Alcoholic Beverages May Be Served and Consumed

- a. Indoor Meeting Rooms and Halls, including but not limited to, the Library, Founders’ Hall, Pederson Hall, and the Bethlehem Room.
- b. Outdoor Spaces including, but not limited to, the garden (behind the modular buildings), the garden in front of the Early Childhood Center, the School lawn, the Patio outside the West Narthex, and Parking Lots 1-5. Outdoor spaces must be fenced, tented or staffed by security personnel to control access. (Method(s) of controlling access must be included in the Event Application.)

#### Insurance:

Specific insurance requirements will be as set out in the Event Application form. The Church Council may impose additional insurance requirements as a condition to approving the Application.

#### Security:

Security Officers must be on-site to staff any event or program where alcoholic beverages will be served and anticipated attendance is over one hundred (100) people.

One security officer per one hundred (100) anticipated attendees is required. The cost of hiring security officers will be the sole responsibility of the event sponsor. Ascension will provide a list of pre-approved, already-vetted security officers. The Event Host will use a pre-approved security officer.

All security officers used for events and programs where alcoholic beverages will be served are required to be certified and trained through the State of California Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control training. ([www.abc.ca.gov](http://www.abc.ca.gov); For Ventura County, CA, email: [Ventura@abc.ca.gov](mailto:Ventura@abc.ca.gov))

#### Food and Alcoholic Beverage Service:

Beer and wine can be served by a host in conjunction with a meal or approved event per the approved application.

Alcohol may only be sold by a caterer or food/beverage service provider having current, retail licenses, in good standing, to sell alcoholic beverages.

When alcohol is served with food sold and provided by a caterer or food/beverage service provider, that caterer or food/beverage service provider must have current retail licenses, in good standing, to sell and serve food and alcoholic beverages.

Ascension's Church Office will maintain a list of caterers/food service providers, with current contact information, insurance coverages and necessary licenses to sell and serve food and alcoholic beverages. Use of caterer(s) or food/beverage service provider(s) other than those on Ascension's list must be set-out in the Event Application and will be subject to the approval of the Ascension Church Council.

The price of alcoholic beverages sold at an event or program on Ascension's Campus shall not be at a level to encourage excessive consumption.

#### Service of Alcohol:

All Ascension groups or individuals sponsoring or hosting events at which alcoholic beverages will be served must review this policy, implementation guidelines, including any special limitations or requirements added to the Event Application by the Church Council, and are responsible for ensuring compliance.

Delivery of alcoholic beverages for events on the Ascension Campus must be coordinated through the Event Host. The manner in which the alcoholic beverages will be delivered to the Ascension Campus (date/time/location/responsible parties) must be included in the Event Application.

Alcohol storage on campus must be confined to a secure area under the control of the Event Host or their designated representative who must be more than twenty-one (21) years of age. Alcoholic beverages for the event may be brought onto campus no sooner than three (3) hours before the start of the event.

At all events where alcoholic beverages are served, suitable type and quantity of non-alcoholic beverages and food shall be available for the duration of the event. Non-alcoholic beverages shall be featured and shall be visible as prominently as the alcoholic beverages.

No event or program will include any form of drinking contest in its activities or promotion.

No person under twenty-one (21) years of age and no obviously intoxicated person shall be furnished, served or given an alcoholic beverage.

No person under twenty-one (21) years of age may serve any alcoholic beverage.

Servers and event assistants are prohibited from consuming any alcoholic beverage at events.

Serving of alcoholic beverages must be discontinued at least thirty (30) minutes prior to the scheduled ending of the event or program.

Alcoholic beverages or containers shall be removed from the event site only by the Event Host or the event's food and beverage caterer(s) or service provider(s). No one under twenty-one (21) years of age shall be involved in removing alcoholic beverages or containers. All alcoholic beverages and containers (empty or not empty) shall be immediately removed from the event site by the Event Host or the food and beverage caterer(s) or service provider(s) at the conclusion of the event.

The Event Host or designated event caterer(s) or food/beverage service provider(s) is responsible for the verification of identification and legal age of all guests consuming or being served alcohol.

The Event Host or the caterer/food and beverage service provider is liable for ensuring the service of alcoholic beverages is appropriate and compliant with this Policy.

DRAFT



1600 E. Hillcrest Drive, Thousand Oaks CA 91362

1. This form must be submitted to the Director of Operations at least ten days prior to the monthly meeting of Ascension Lutheran Church Council, typically the third Wednesday of each month.
2. Nonalcoholic drinks and food must be available at the function.
3. People attending the function must not bring their own liquor. All liquor must be supplied by the requestor or approved selected caterer conducting the function.
4. Those conducting the function must take full responsibility for the proper behavior of those attending.
5. People attending the function must observe the Ascension Campus Alcohol Policy.

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Name of Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Ascension Host/Representative: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Function: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Function \_\_\_\_\_ Time of Function: From \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

How Many Attendees do you anticipate? \_\_\_\_\_

Location on Campus: \_\_\_\_\_

If Outdoors, how will access be controlled? (fencing, ect) \_\_\_\_\_

Estimated Attendance: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of food to be served: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of alcohol (check all that apply):

\_\_\_\_\_ Wine \_\_\_\_\_ Beer \_\_\_\_\_ Champagne \_\_\_\_\_ Hard Seltzer

Nonalcoholic beverages to be served: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Security Guards Required: \_\_\_\_\_ (One per 100 – per every person over 50)

Please select your intended caterer:

- ☐ Option A
- ☐ Option B
- ☐ Option C
- ☐ Please Review and Approve \_\_\_\_\_

(All caterers are required provide a Certificate of Liability form that shows General Liability limits of \$1,000,000 each occurrence and \$3,000,000 aggregate, Liquor Liability in the

amount of \$1,000,000 each incident, and must name Ascension Additional Insured. All caterers must have current licenses, in good standing, to serve food and to serve/sell alcoholic beverages. Please submit proof of insurance coverage and copies of food and alcohol licenses with your application.)

I/we agree to comply in ALL respects with Ascension Alcohol Policy. I/we understand that we are required to discuss our timing and plan to deliver/pickup alcohol and empty alcohol containers to/from the campus with our Ascension Hist/Representative.

Signature of Organizer \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Statement of Support and Approval of Selected Caterer:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Ascension Host/Representative                      Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Ascension Host/Representative                      Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Council Representative                                  Date

## **New Members & Baptisms Report**

September 2025

### **Baptisms for August**

#### **Name**

#### **Date Baptized**

Charles Bradley Mililani Toyama

08/09/25

### **New Members for August**

No New Members

**Ascension Lutheran Church  
Council Agenda  
Wednesday, August 20, 2025  
Bethlehem Room**

**Welcome and Call to Order** - John Rarick, President  
Meeting called to order at 7:03

Members present: John Rarick, Al Baker, Creighton Van Horne,  
Carrie Leonard, Anna Woodward, Ethan East, Michael Feltner, Crystal Bryant

Others: Pastor Tim, Pastor Chamie, Kaylee Searway

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

**Motto:** Invite - Grow - Serve

**Approval of Agenda** – John Rarick

*It was moved (Al) and seconded ( Michael) to approve the agenda as presented.*

**Devotion** –Creighton Van Horn

CVH presented a devotion focusing on “Forever Young.” He presented four different passages that all talk about how we should come to heaven with the mind and eyes of a child. He encourage all council leaders to support our youth ministry and attend Chapel.

Listening to stories/reflections on getting the blessing & being the blessing.

Council leaders need to engage and listen to the stories of our congregation. How are members a blessing in their neighborhood, work, etc. If we can model listening, and the retelling of stories, then members will engage by sharing and recognizing the stories amongst each other.

Talk and engage others - Creighton recognized a little girl and the acknowledgement got her excited.

CVH was inspired to help with Food Pantry expansion through Food Share, which brought about the thought - do we start a “Be the Blessing Board/Wall” (Blessings at Work)? How can we share blessing stories and begin a community of engagement. Will be revisited.

## **New Business**

- No new business

- Treasurer’s report—Steve Smuck

The Finance staff have been hard at work closing the books for ‘24-25 and starting off the new school year supporting the ALECC & ALS.

The offerings fell short by a few percent and is almost made up for by a positive variance in Administrative Expenses. Summer offerings are notoriously hard to predict and most years only balance out by the end of the year.

All entities remain in a strong cash position and are expected to remain so.

Preliminary reports were presented and final reports are expected soon.

*It was moved (Carrie) and seconded (CVH) then passed unanimously to approve the Treasurer’s Report.*

## **Recurring Business**

- Affirm New Members, Confirmands, and Baptisms

### **New Members & Baptisms Report**

August 2025

### **Baptisms for July**

Charlotte Rebecca Knapp 07/06/25

Charles David Newmark 07/13/25

### **New Members for July**

Brigitte Bell

Louis Bell

Katrina Cain

Tyler Cain

Karen Duthler

Jim Duthler

Max Fuhrmann

Kathy Gulsrud  
Paul Gulsrud  
Bill Vanderbok  
Judy Vanderbok

## **Old Business**

- No old business

## **Approval of Minutes** – John Rarick

- July Council Meeting

*It was moved (Ethan) and seconded by (Al), then unanimously passed to approved July minutes as presented.*

## **Consent Approval of Reports to Council** – John Rarick

*It was moved (Michael) and seconded (Carrie) to approve Reports to Council, with discussion about GMT*

- Pastor Tim Delkeskamp's Report
- Pastor Chamie Delkeskamp's Report
- Pastor Steve Herder's Report
- Director of Operations Report
- Foundation Report
  - Global Ministry Team Report

**Discussion on GMT report** - Through GMT, we are supporting Ukraine and Gaza, but why are we not supporting additional humanitarian groups. Council advises the GMT to have a prepared answer if a question arises - these are choices based on humanitarian needs because of war, not political ideals. Gifts of Hope are financial gifts individuals can choose to purchase, as alternative Holiday gift ideas. Neither of these GMT options are donations associated with tithes that help with daily operations or ALC benevolence. It is important to be clear that GMT funds are directed by donating individuals.

- Communications Report

*Michael moves to accept the GMT report, with the notion that he will follow up with Pastor Steve. Carrie seconds, and unanimously approved.*

## **Information Items**

### **Closing Prayer—Ethan East**

### **Adjournment**

*It was moved (Carrie), seconded (Al), and unanimously approved to adjourn the meeting.*

The meeting was adjourned at 8:21 PM

Respectfully submitted by Crystal Bryant



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

Grace and peace my sisters and brothers in Christ, here, joyfully submitted, is my brief report:

**Rally Sunday:** Call it recency biased but yesterday was Rally Sunday and I thought it went wonderfully. I was worried for a bit. Some plans to invite the school families had gotten miscommunicated but we pivoted and focused on our Kingdom Builders project as well as our "All Music Service." And it went off, as they say, without a hitch. The worship service, which included all our worship leadership groups, blessing educators and backpacks for children and youth was wonderful. After the service, the transition from worship to fellowship in Pederson Hall was smooth. The food prepared by Mike Marvin and some of the members of his Men's group was delicious. And then, the "mini movie" which told the story of our Kingdom Builders project was absolutely magnificent. A very special thank you to Mark Foreman for the many hours' worth of highly skilled work that he put into the project. I am not exaggerating when I write that there are not too many churches in the world that could produce such a high-quality project from a volunteer. Wow. It was a wonderful way to culminate the whole Kingdom Builders project.

**Sabbatical Update:** It is hard to believe that starting April 6<sup>th</sup> will begin 3 months of time away from my role as Senior Pastor. It still feels like an abstract thing. I started thinking about it more seriously last April when I went through the process of applying for the Lilly Foundation grant. I finally heard back and unfortunately, I did not receive the grant that would have both funded my activities and paid for interim support staff while I was away. It is still my intention to try and fund these things as much as possible. Fortunately, there are a couple of funding sources here at Ascension. We have a dedicated fund in our church budget and there is small endowment in the Foundation that will help pay for personal expenses. In addition, I have written a grant request to the Foundation to pay for interim staff support. It would be wonderful if this funding came through!

**Annual Report:** Carolyn is doing an excellent job of rounding up the various reports that will come together to make the Annual Report. We will have it done in a timely fashion. This congregation appreciates the wonderful transparency that comes with the reports on the ministry and finances. At the annual meeting I am planning to present a more advanced version of my vision for the year.

#### **Miscellaneous:**

- I am looking forward to serving as an **assistant Spiritual Director on a woman's Cursillo weekend** that is coming up October 2<sup>nd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup>. This will involve several people from Ascension.
- Our Executive team conversation about **The Five Dysfunctions of a Team** is going well. This month we will be focused on Conflict Resolution.

- Our **Summer sermon series** called “Walk this Way” is now concluded. We received good feedback from folks and are encouraged to continue to preach in series.
- I seem to have had an uptick in **weddings and funerals** which add to my time and keeps me working 7 days a week.

In conclusion, I continue to be energized and take joy in being the senior pastor of such a wonderful church community. Truly we are a place where people love our Lord and serve with passion and joy.

In his service,

*Pastor Tim*



# Pastor Chamie's August 2025 Council Report

## Children, Youth, & Family

### Children

August included a significant amount of time reviewing curriculum and making plans for Sunday school and children's ministry as a whole for the 2025-26 school year. I enjoyed the extended planning meetings with Jenelle Smith.

On Sun, Aug 17, I visited the church our daughter attends as she is at college in San Luis Obispo. She had told me that a lot of college students went to her church and young people in general. She said a few hundred were in each worship service. I asked her if there were children. She told me she hadn't really seen many children. I asked her if there was a children's program. She said she didn't think so because she hadn't really seen any kids. Then I looked online and it said there was a children's program. When I went to church with her, I learned there were 150 kids in their Sunday school! I was blown away. It was a learning experience to see that church in action. A couple of take aways I had from the experience were these:

- We have something special at Ascension in that our children always experience part of the worship service. Sunday school doesn't start until after the children's time in the worship service. Older children return for communion. I want to live into this more fully and communicate how important this is in who we are. Data after data shows that children who are a part of an intergenerational worship service (versus going off to a separate "children's church") are more likely to worship as adults. I also feel that seeing the children in worship feeds the souls of our older adults. Though I thoroughly enjoyed Hannah's church, I was happy that we don't separate children like I saw at her church.
- I loved the amazing hospitality as Hannah's church and how they engaged members in the sermon series. It made me realize that I think all of us pastors should go to a different church perhaps once a quarter to learn from other churches, but to also experience what it feels like to be the visitor. I am a very "churchy" person yet I was still nervous about going to a new church! I think the experience has helped me be more sensitive to when we have visitors.

### Youth



We welcomed Spencer Gottmer as our interim High School Youth Director, thus August included time onboarding Spencer to this position. Spencer and I had some long meetings and I loved hearing his ideas and enthusiasm.

August included a significant amount of time reviewing curriculum and making plans for confirmation and high school youth ministry for the 2025-26 school year. Per Spencer's request, I ordered *Knowing God* books for the high schoolers as Spencer thought it would be a good study for him to start his time off with the youth.

The newly formed Youth Council had their first meeting on August 10. President Ella Festerling led a get-to-know-you activity. The group of middle schoolers, high schoolers, parent reps, Mr. Gottmer, and I spent important time brainstorming and calendaring around the table in our backyard. Pastor Tim grilled burgers for dinner for the

Youth Council. The middle schoolers on the council left and then other high schoolers arrived for Sunday night Bible study in our backyard. Some of them enjoyed using our climbing wall which was built by congregation member Greg Hillman.

In the short month in which Spencer came on board, high school Bible study grew exponentially, from averaging 2 people all last school year, to having 10 to 17 high schoolers in attendance each week. The buzz is palpable and youth were talking about friends they want to invite to high school Bible study.

In August we also worked through the steps to bring on our paid middle school youth ministry interns Kaya Anderson and James Halvorson. They will be key leaders with me in our confirmation program which will now include 6th graders as well as 7th and 8th graders. This is what I shared in the church newsletter about our Children, Youth, & Family Ministries Team:

I am thankful for our CYF staff who will be leading ministry together for the 2025-26 school year. We will be "better together" as we are young and old (well, I am the only "old" one), male and female, each with our own gifts that we bring to the table. Let me share a brief word about each member of our CYF staff that I get the privilege to work with:

1. Jenelle Smith, Children's Ministry Director. Jenelle loves children and it shows. And they love her! She is a natural teacher and helps bring Bible stories alive for kids. She has eyes that see kids deeply. She gets to know them - and their families - well.
2. Spencer Gottmer, High School Youth Director. Spencer has a charisma about him that draws people in. He was an active participant in youth ministry when he was a youth. Now as a teacher and dad with many years of experience under his belt, he is energized to help our high schoolers grow in faith.
3. Kaya Anderson, Middle School Youth Ministry Intern. Kaya has a humble confidence and laid back spirit. She is studying Christian Leadership at CLU. She will be singing in the choir at CLU



and has sung in a worship band. She's a former camp counselor. Kaya is from Baxter, MN where her dad is a Lutheran pastor and her mom is a Presbyterian camp director.

4. James Halvorson, Middle School Youth Ministry Intern. James has a steady center and great big compassionate heart. He relates to middle schoolers with a presence that is both strong and gentle. He is studying to be an EMT at Moorpark College. James grew up in the Ascension youth ministry and is now ready to be a leader for the next generation.

### ***Interfacing with the Schools***



It was a great One Ascension week when the church staff joined with the ECC and school staffs for worship, get-to-know-you's, and trainings.

Pastor Tim, Jenelle, and I loved greeting families at the ECC and the school on their first days!

I had a table at the Back to School Fair where I passed out information about Children's Ministry and Confirmation. I had several middle schoolers come seek me out because they want to do Confirmation this year - which I found very exciting!

I said a brief word at both the TK-4th Grade Parent Orientation and the 5th-8th Grade Parent Orientation.

I met with Kelsey Packman, the school music teacher and worship leader for chapel, as we planned the chapel worship calendar for the fall. There was so much wonderful energy as we gathered for the first chapel of the school year on August 27.

Rich Gregory, Heather Hartson, Jenelle Smith, and I are working together on "milestones" for each grade of students at school and church.

### ***Worship***

Pastor Tim and I wanted to give thanks to so many key people who lead all of our worship services... from lead musicians to tech to ushers to worship planners. Dave and Cathi Peterson graciously offered their home for the event. Dave grilled twi-tip which was excellent. We had an opportunity for people to share things that they love about worship as well as ideas, hopes, changes, etc for this next year.

August included a lot of fall planning for worship!

The Season of Creation isn't something that Ascension has formally acknowledged in the past. Yet it is a season in the Christian year that many churches observe in some way, shape, or form. Considering that we have "Nature Explore" schools on our campus and care deeply about God's good earth, I thought it might be fitting to change our paraments and flowers for Sept 1 to Oct 5. Kim Overton did a great job in designing the new ocean blues and sand paraments as well as the living green altar plants. I preached on standing in awe of creation, and caring for it, on the concluding weekend of our summer sermon series.

I preached twice in August (which included 5 weekends). Pastor Tim also preached twice. Pastor Paul preached once as Pastor Tim & I - and Pastor Steve - were all at weddings. Earlier in August, I preached about caring for our “bookends” - our youngest and oldest members.

## ***Other***



**University Village.** I preached at University Village on August 3. It was lovely seeing several Ascension people in attendance

**Women’s Ministry.** I sat in on the planning meeting for the fall kick off of the Monday Morning Women’s Bible Study. It is so exciting that 80 women are participating! We did not have Word & Wine in August due to so many back-to-school events, but will resume in September. I have yet to comb through all the response to the Women’s Ministry survey that I posted toward the end of this summer. But I look forward to prayerfully and carefully reading people’s responses.

**Brown Wedding.** Long time church member Rachel Brown got married in August. Pastor Tim officiated. This is one of those weddings that I couldn’t miss. Rachel’s mom, Jennifer, and I have been in a Life Group together for about 15 years. One of the things all of us moms did in that group was prayer for our children through the years. Rachel’s

wedding seemed to be an answer to some of those prayers. Tim and I were both incredibly moved by the whole Brown family and how they shared at the wedding dinner about the significance of their faith and the love of their church. It moved me to tears and was an affirmation of why church family is so important.

Grace & Peace,

***Pastor Chamie***

## Church Council Report – September 3, 2025 – Pastor Steve Herder

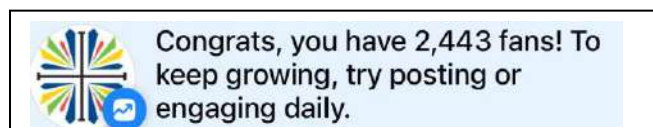
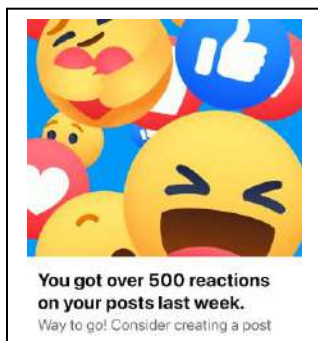
Welcome to the new council members, and thanks to the whole Church Council for your leadership for our congregation! Ascension is blessed with Christ-centered, faithful, and talented people leading our church, school and foundation. In the ministries that I oversee we are blessed with an amazing group of leaders: Linda Morrow with our prayer ministries; Norm Guetschoff, Barbara Krum (and many others) with our Senior Adult Ministries Team; Chris Daleiden and our Community Concerns Team; Bev Selle and our Global Ministries Team. Each of these teams has a dozen plus people who are doing wonderful work each week/month. Besides working with these teams, I also enjoy the ministries of singing with our ECC on Fridays, daily Facebook posts for ministry outreach and communication, working with Carol Bartell on our Sunday adult education classes, and occasionally helping Pastors Tim and Chamie with worship leadership.

In this report for you for the month of August, here are some of the highlights of what I experienced this past month.

The very beginning of August was the conclusion of our ELCA Churchwide Assembly in Phoenix. I participated in some of it via the livestreaming. Most importantly were the elections of our new presiding bishop, Rev. Yehiel Curry, and our new secretary, Rev. Lucille “CeeCee” Mills. I’m excited for our ELCA with these two leaders. We thank Bishop Elizabeth Eaton for her faithful years of service. Both she and her predecessor, Bishop Mark Hanson, have preached here at Ascension, and now we hope that some day Bishop Curry will bless us with his presence and preaching. Here’s a photo of Bishops Curry, Eaton and Hanson.



Stacy, Pastor Chamie and I post daily on our Facebook page, with some of that going to Instagram as well. We are now connected with 2,443 people on Facebook. Stacy is the one who posts our prayers and Scripture for the 365 in '25. After this report I'll include the prayer calendar for September.



Julie and I had a fun evening with Pastor Chamie and friends doing the full moon hike on August 8. As you are able, we encourage all to participate in getting out in God's creation. We thank her for lifting up the Season of Creation, Sept. 1 to Oct. 4. We look forward to the Blessing of the Animals which will be part of the Saturday evening worship service – outside! – on October 4<sup>th</sup>.

We appreciate Carol Bjelland and our Fair Trade team for their outstanding and creative work each month. This month they led a delicious event with s'mores for our Sunday School children on August 10.

Louise Evenson, Vicki Weeks, and a great group of volunteers led our first of-the-season assembly of Lutheran World Relief kits. More to come in September....

From last year's Gifts of Hope, one of our projects was providing three InfoHuts for helping children and youth learn at Lutheran congregations in Zimbabwe. So when you ever in the rural parts of that country, you may see Ascension's logo on this sign!



Speaking of Zimbabwe, this month I received the Mixtiles photobook from our July trip to Zimbabwe and the Habitat for Humanity build in Zambia. Stop by my office if you'd like to see it. It turned out great.



For our Gifts of Hope this fall we will focus on these ministries: partnering with our ELCA and LWR to help the church in South Sudan; ELCA World Hunger God's Global Barnyard; and locally, Harbor House and Friends of Fieldworkers!

Our food ministries both with Harbor House and every Friday with our Food Pantry never stop, so we appreciate all the leaders who have a heart for serving the least of these, our neighbors who are in so much need each day. We also help many people each week through your gifts to Caring Ones and the Agape Fund. In August we helped people through the Agape Fund with \$4,300 total given away, in a great variety of circumstances.

God bless all of you who donated blood on Sunday, August 24, and all who receive your life-giving gift. This is a ministry sponsored by our Community Concerns Team.

This summer I gave many tours of the Dead Sea Scrolls exhibit at the Reagan Library on my “days off,” Mondays and Thursdays. You would not believe how much joy I had in doing that. My guess why is because it was a tiny fulfillment of one career path that I did not choose, to be a professor of the Hebrew Scriptures. (I’ve been a student member of the National Association of Professors of Hebrew since 1980.) On August 28<sup>th</sup> I had the largest number of people on tour, with 45! Sadly, the exhibit closed yesterday.



August was a very important family month for my family and me. On Aug. 9<sup>th</sup>, Julie and I loved being at a family reunion in Fullerton with her side of our family. Then Julie, Natalie and I were in Milwaukee on my birthday, the day that I led the wedding ceremony for my nephew Ben and Reilly. I was able to stay another week and enjoy family time on Walsh Lake and in Appleton, WI, special days with my parents, and with my sister Ann and her husband Jeff. Thanking God for many blessings this month while at the same time constantly praying for our neighbors who are suffering in our country and world.



#### August 9

Pray for local, state and national leaders, that they will respect and respond to our neighbors on the fringes of society, including people who suffer poverty and hunger, who need shelter, who live with illnesses and conditions requiring constant care, and whose rights and protections have diminished. Pray for compassion, strength and persistent courage to advocate and care for our neighbors in need.

#### August 17

Ask the Spirit how we might align ourselves with the commandments, desires and priorities of God, the very things Jesus made clear to us through his life, suffering, death and resurrection.



# September 2025



Praying this prayer each day, from Psalm 145: 15-16

The eyes of all look to you,  
and you give them their food in due season.  
You open your hand,  
satisfying the desire of every living thing.

Season of Creation  
September 1<sup>st</sup> - October 4<sup>th</sup>

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                                 | <b>1</b> <i>Labor Day</i><br>Pray for the safety and well-being of all who labor<br><i>Colossians 3:23-24</i>                | <b>2</b><br>Pray for our church staff who meet every Tuesday at 10:30 am<br><i>Ephesians 4:11-13</i>                                    | <b>3</b><br>Pray for our ECC and School staff, children, and families<br><i>Deuteronomy 30:15-20</i>   | <b>4</b><br>Pray for our new ELCA secretary Reverend Lucille ("Cecee") Mills<br><i>Psalm 1</i> | <b>5</b><br>Happy Birthday on Sunday to our Altar Guild leader, Lory Breitzman<br><i>Philemon 1-21</i> | <b>6</b> Happy 3 <sup>rd</sup> work Anniversary, Jenelle Smith!<br>No Saturday Service Today<br><i>Luke 14:25-33</i> |
| <b>7</b><br>Rally Sunday, one service 10 am lunch in the gym<br><i>1 Corinthians 12:4-7</i> | <b>8</b><br>Pray for our Women's Monday Morning Bible Study Groups<br><i>Matthew 13:51-53</i>                                | <b>9</b><br>Prayers of thanks to God for Rev. Robert & Mildred Herder's 70 <sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary<br><i>1 Corinthians 13</i> | <b>10</b><br>Pray for our global Ministries Team, 4 pm<br><i>Exodus 32:7-14</i>                        | <b>11</b><br>Thank God for forgiveness through our Savior Jesus<br><i>Psalm 51:1-10</i>        | <b>12</b><br>Thank God for our Lutheran World Relief Kits assembly<br><i>1 Timothy 2:1-7</i>           | <b>13</b><br>Ascension School & ECC Picnic 11:00 am<br><i>Luke 15:1-10</i>                                           |
| <b>14</b><br>Blessings on Confirmation Orientation<br><i>1 Timothy 4:12</i>                 | <b>15</b><br>Pray and support our monthly benevolence Canine Adoption & Rescue League (Ventura County)<br><i>Job 12:7-10</i> | <b>16</b><br>Pray for our food ministry with Harbor House<br><i>Proverbs 19:17</i>                                                      | <b>17</b><br>Pray for all who live in poverty<br><i>Amos 8:4-7</i>                                     | <b>18</b><br>Pray for Pastor Tim's Coffee Talk Bible Study group<br><i>Psalm 113</i>           | <b>19</b><br>Pray for our local, state, and federal government<br><i>1 Timothy 2:1-7</i>               | <b>20</b><br>Pray for our Fair Trade Lane sales this weekend<br><i>Luke 16:1-13</i>                                  |
| <b>21</b><br>Pray for our Senior High Lutheran League Life group<br><i>Jeremiah 1:4-8</i>   | <b>22</b><br>Happy 23 <sup>rd</sup> work anniversary, Cam Lorentson!<br><i>Ephesians 3:14-21</i>                             | <b>23</b> <i>Rosh Hashanah</i><br>Happy Rosh Hashanah to our Jewish siblings<br><i>Genesis 21:1-7</i>                                   | <b>24</b><br>Happy Birthday tomorrow to our Council President, John Rarick<br><i>1 Samuel 12:23-24</i> | <b>25</b><br>Pray for our Thursday 1 pm Grief Share group<br><i>Psalm 146</i>                  | <b>26</b><br>Pray for the people we can invite to worship<br><i>1 Timothy 6:6-19</i>                   | <b>27</b><br>Pray for our Sunday School classes 9:00 & 10:30 am<br><i>Luke 16:19-31</i>                              |
| <b>28</b><br>Annual Meeting 12:00 pm<br><i>Colossians 3:12-17</i>                           | <b>29</b><br>Happy 1 year anniversary tomorrow, Carolyn Bahr!<br><i>Philippians 1:3-5</i>                                    | <b>30</b><br>Happy 1 year anniversary tomorrow, Pastor Chamie!<br><i>1 Thessalonians 5:23-24</i>                                        |                                                                                                        |                                                                                                |                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                      |

Rally Day was amazing. I had the misfortune of being a little under the weather, so I attended alone in a mask while my husband made tacos. It is always fun to see the sanctuary so full and brimming with excitement. I was particularly touched that school leadership and their families served communion at each of the stations. It was a wonderful service. I didn't stay for lunch as I was ill, but I popped through and it looked like a success. I am very excited to see the Kingdom Builders video; I have heard amazing things.

#### Attendance

One Ascension services are great for attendance: for Rally Day we had 477 in the 10:00 am worship service. In comparison, the 6-week average proceeding September 7<sup>th</sup> was 356 worshipping per weekend. Our attendance is increasing, perhaps more tacos is the answer? I jest, but I know and appreciate how much work went into coordinating the music groups, ushers and communion servers, having the school staff all attend...I think it was a wonderful service and a credit to the worship coordinating team!

| <b>Usher Count Sheet 2025</b> |                         |             |             |              |             |              |                              |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|------------------------------|
| <b>Date:</b>                  |                         | <b>Sat.</b> | <b>9:00</b> | <b>10:30</b> | <b>MISC</b> | <b>Total</b> |                              |
| 7/27/2025                     |                         | 51          | 221         | 107          |             | 379          |                              |
| 8/3/2025                      |                         | 37          | 219         | 85           |             | 341          |                              |
| 8/10/2025                     |                         | <b>45</b>   | 229         | 103          |             | 377          | <b>Missing, used Average</b> |
| 8/17/2025                     |                         | 29          | 189         | 76           |             | 294          |                              |
| 8/24/2025                     |                         | 36          | 242         | 96           |             | 374          |                              |
| 8/31/2025                     |                         | <b>42</b>   | 242         | 87           |             | 371          | <b>Missing, used Average</b> |
| 9/7/2025                      | Rally Day 10 am service |             |             |              | 477         | 477          |                              |

#### Annual Meeting

The meeting is an important part of the life of the church, but it's not something I am particularly stressed about this year. Carolyn has done an amazing job collecting ministry reports for the annual report and her eye for detail and editing is top notch – I haven't seen the finished product yet, but I know it will be admirable. John has already worked on the agenda for the meeting. I personally will give a very quick presentation in our upcoming directory efforts. Our first couple of months of financial reports are adhering to the budget, so I don't have any qualms about ratifying the budgets we approved in June. All is well!

#### Human Resources

One of the training courses required for California employees every two years is Workplace Harassment Prevention. There is a one hour version for the majority of employees, and a two-hour version for supervisors. At Ascension we have gotten into the cadence of leading live one-hour trainings in the "odd" years, so I lead 57

of our 81 non-supervisor employees through the training during Professional Development Week August 11<sup>th</sup> through 15th. Employees who are unable to attend or hired after the training must take an online version and submit their certificate of completion. There are 11 supervisors that require two hour training, about half of which are completed. As I had 57 of the 81 attend the live training on 8/12/2025, I was able to complete 70% of the training compliance in one day. Our attorney firm offers live training at \$45 a person for the one hour training and \$75 for the two hour training. I avoided a cost of \$2565 in one day!

A newer training required in California is annual training on Workplace Violence Prevention. I wrote and implemented the policy in 2024 as the new law required, and taught a refresher during Professional Development Week. All employees have access to the latest version of the Plan through our payroll system. I had some fun this time and planted an “easter egg” into the policy, asking the team to find it and point it out to me for a sweet treat. No takers so far!

Camryn and I have been learning how to upload certificates and training courses into our payroll system. It has taken us a moment to configure the system well, but we can now track TB tests, CPR training, and harassment training through the system, and push out reminders and training instructions through the system. I am also inputting keys and equipment distributed to employees. The initial input will take a couple of hours, but maintaining the system once we upload the data should be minimal. Being able to quickly locate an item like a laptop serial number will be helpful.

#### Finance

We are socializing the language of work blocks and working into how many business days our team needs to close the books for a month and complete the financial reporting. There are new signs on the finance office and my office with options for Work Block: Please do not Disturb. Having some work blocks, particular in the first business days of the month, are helping our team stay on schedule. We are running a lean team here, so our finance team is also our payroll and human resources departments: every other week requires 1.5 to 2 days for payroll processing. It's September now, so we are working into the cadence of monthly meetings with Steve Smuck to review church finances and Ana Woodward, Rich Gregory, and Jenni McCoy for school results.

Our former treasurer Dave Harkins and current Council President John have been really flexible and grace oriented as we completed the transition with the bank for new signers. The paperwork is complete, and proper signers are in place for the 2025-2026 fiscal year. Thank you to all of you that visited the bank to complete your portion.

Thank you,

*Kaylee Searway*

Director of Operations



**Ascension Lutheran School Board Meeting Minutes**  
**August 25, 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:**

Rich Gregory, Jenni McCoy, Chris Poveromo, Kyle Jones, Jeanette McNulty, Scott Bean, Anna Woodward, Nelly Trumbo, Matt Hurdle, Kathy Roshanai, Pastor Chamie

Guests: Jocelyn Meyers, Jen Farrell

Absent:

**Call to Order:**

Ashley called the meeting to order at 6:40 pm.

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

**Devotion:**

Ashley shared a devotion from the books of Esther and Jerimiah, discussing the idea of being born and made in a specific time by God's ordination and knowing that God's plan is perfect and he will put the right people in the right places.

**Approval of Agenda and Consent Agenda:**

Anna moved the approval of the agenda and seconded it to Nelly. Motion passes.

Nelly moved to approve the consent agenda and seconded it to Jeannette. Motion Passed

Reports pulled were the July Financials.

## **Old Business:**

### **Financial Reports**

- July Financials—The team reviewed revenue deltas for ALS summer staycation YTD actuals versus budget. Rich noted underperformance in Summer Staycation this year due to a transition, but early signs suggest the 26/27 program will be on track with strong interest. Jenni added that revenue exceeded budget because the summer program reached full enrollment.
- Kyle made a motion to approve the July Financials, which was seconded by Kathy and passed.

## **New Business:**

### **Board Minutes Summary**

- **New Member Introduction:** Matt Hurdle, parent of two students (K & 2), teacher at Oaks Christian, and leader of the Global Leadership Institute, joined the board.
- **Meeting Norms:** Reviewed board governance structure—authority from church council, focus on policy (not daily management), monthly meetings (except July), two annual retreats, two joint meetings, financial oversight, open forum/executive session, Robert's Rules, and consent agenda format.
- **Farewell to Jocelyn Meyers:** Recognized for four years of service as secretary, retreat host, and key contributor. She will continue serving through PALS.
- **ALS Updates:** Significant staffing changes (extended care, staycation, PALS leadership, Connie's retirement, Heather Hartson promoted to VP, new Mrs. K). Added credentialed teachers in Spanish, Maker Space, and PE. Campus upgrades include 3D printers, an improved middle school locker area, new shade structures, banners, outdoor classroom enhancements, and the completion of the Iskander memorial walkway.
- **ECC Updates:** Campus improvements included new trees, sod, painted markings, shade repairs, mud kitchen, and safety upgrades to fences.
- **ECC Parent Survey:** 25% response rate (46 parents). Overwhelmingly positive results: 100% very satisfied with the outdoor classroom, 98% with the teachers, and 98% with communication.

## **Board Calendar - 25/26 Meeting Schedule**

**September 22, 2025 - Chris Devotion**

**October 15, 2025 - Joint w/Church Council Meeting 5:30 Jenni Devotion**

**November 17, 2025 - Matt Devotion**

**December 15, 2025 - Scott Devotion**

**January 26, 2026 - Jeanette Devotion**

**February 23, 2026 - Kathy Devotion**

**March 23, 2026 - Kyle Devotion**

**April 27, 2026 - Joint w/ Church Council Nelly Devotion**

**May 18, 2026 - Anna Devotion**

**June 8, 2026 - Rich Devotion**

### **Closing Prayer:**

Pastor Chamie closed the meeting with prayer.

### **Adjournment:**

Anna motioned to adjourn the meeting and reconvene for an executive session. Kyle seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 8:47 p.m.

The next School Board meeting is scheduled for September 22nd. Chris will lead the devotion.

Respectfully submitted by Chris Poveromo.

## **Global Ministry Team Report September 2025 for Ascension Church Council Meeting** (submitted by Beverly Selle)

The GMT was on a summer meeting hiatus in July and August. Our first meeting of the Fall is scheduled for September 10th, after our monthly report is due to the Church Council. This is a brief synopsis of some of our happenings in August, as well as what we are working on at our September meeting:

### **August:**

Ascension's Fair Trade Ministry shared Fair Trade S'mores with Sunday School friends in the final gathering of **Happy Campers Summer Sunday School** on August 10th. While the children ate their tasty treat, they learned a bit about Fair Trade, and justice for people and planet. Fair Trade returned from a brief summer hiatus by opening their "stand" in August after the **Lunch Bunch** and **church services**. The Fair Trade Ministry Team looks forward to the monthly Fair Trade minute at the close of Wednesday morning Chapel and offering Fair Trade products once monthly on a select Thursday after school, now that the school year is again underway. Some special art projects are planned for Fair Trade Lane and Founders Hall with the children & youth of Ascension Church, School, & ECC in October.

The Ministry of Lutheran World Relief - LWR Kits was very busy in August. Our goal is to celebrate LWR's 80th anniversary of responding to humanitarian crises with the gift of 400 Personal Care Kits, 400 School Kits, and 40 Baby Care Kits - we anticipate exceeding the 800+ kit goal. With the generosity of the **Ascension Community, Thrivent Action Team Grants, and Ascension School children**, all of the materials for the Personal Care Kits and School Kits and some Baby Care Kits were purchased prior to price increases from our vendors in August. Shipping expenses for kits and quilts were granted by **the Ascension Foundation**. Many members of the Ascension Community have given their time to start preparing kits. As part of the **Ascension Youth Leadership Camp**, the high school youth and confirmation-aged participants bundled pens & pencils for the school kits. **Families and members of the GMT** who attended the final session of **Vacation Bible School** assembled 200 Personal Care Kits. School Kits will be assembled Sept. 30-Oct. 2 by the **GMT** and **other volunteers**.

## **GMT Meeting - September 10, 2025 4-5:30pm**

1. 4:00-4:10 pm **WELCOME AND OPENING PRAYER**
2. 4:10-4:30 pm Ali and Sarah from **Kafika House** will share an update of their ministry providing a loving home for children receiving pre- and post-operative care and rehabilitation for a surgically correctable disability. Kafika House was one of the beneficiaries of Ascension's 2024 Gifts of Hope.
3. 4:30-4:45 pm **Pastor Chamie – Creation Care**, Pastor Chamie preached on Creation Care August 30-31, Canine Adoption & Rescue League (Ventura County) is our September 2025 Monthly Benevolence, and the Blessing of the Animals is scheduled at 6pm on Saturday October 4<sup>th</sup> in an outside worship service.
4. 4:45-5:05 **Gifts of Hope 2025**. Further planning – the selected beneficiaries this year are:
  - \* Reconciliation Lutheran Church, Juba South Sudan (partnering with ELCA Global Mission and Lutheran World Relief)
  - \* Friends of Fieldworkers (in addition to our historical gifts, this year we added the gift "Emergency Relief" to support new and unique challenges these neighbors have experienced this year)
  - \* Harbor House, Thousand Oaks (we believe this is our most effective way to help neighbors in our community who are unhoused)
  - \* ELCA World Hunger, God's Global Barnyard
5. 5:05-5:10 pm **Pastor Steve – Update from the Synod-wide assembly and the Churchwide assembly**, Summer 2025. Vote results.
6. 5:10-5:20 pm **Carol Bjelland - Fair Trade Lane**
7. 5:20-5:25 pm **LWR Kits** (Personal Care, Baby, School) assembly events will be scheduled in the Fall.
8. 5:25-5:30 pm **GMT – Reflections, Planning** (send Bev any calendar updates you would like her to post)

## FAIR TRADE MINISTRY

**DATE: August 19, 2025 for September 2025**

**SUBMITTED BY: Carol Bjelland**

Ascension's Fair Trade Ministry shared Fair Trade S' Mores with Sunday School friends in the final gathering of Happy Campers Summer Sunday School Sunday, August 10<sup>th</sup>. Sunday, August 10<sup>th</sup> was also National S' Mores Day! A wonderful surprise! We shared a bit about Fair Trade, and justice for people & planet. We thank Pastor Chamie, Jenelle and everyone at Happy Campers Summer Sunday School for the opportunity to be a part of their special Sunday Fun-Day at camp. We thank Jill, Andy & Kim for being great Fair Trade ambassadors with us.

We look forward to our monthly Fair Trade minute at the close of Wednesday morning Chapel for the school year.

We'll be opening Fair Trade Lane 4 times each month for the remainder of the year: at the close of the monthly Lunch Bunch gathering; Saturday night/Sunday morning combination & the monthly Fair Trade Lane Thursday afternoon. Volunteers are always needed & welcome.

We're working on some special Fair Trade treats to celebrate Fair Trade Month in October.

We're working on some special art projects for Fair Trade Lane & Founders Hall. The children & youth of Ascension Church, School & ECC will be invited to help make these special pieces of art. Implementation in October 2025.

The Fair Trade Lane Schedule for the remaining months of 2025 is set out below. The times are 12:45-1:15 pm on Wednesdays, 2:30-4 pm on Thursdays, 5:45-6 pm & 7-7:15 pm on Saturdays & 8:30-9 am & 10-10:30 am on Sundays.

### September:

9/10 - Wed w/Lunch Bunch  
9/18 - Thursday afternoon  
9/20 - Sat night  
9/21 - Sunday AM

### October:

10/8 - Wed w/Lunch Bunch  
10/9 - Thursday afternoon  
10/11 - Sat night  
10/12 - Sunday AM

### November:

11/12 - Wed w/Lunch Bunch  
11/20 - Thursday afternoon  
11/22 - Sat night  
11/23 - Sunday AM

### December:

12/6 - Sat PM  
12/7 - Sunday AM  
12/10 - Wed w/Lunch Bunch  
12/11 - Thursday.

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



## **MINISTRY OF LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF-LWR KITS, AUGUST, 2025**

**SUBMITTED BY Louise Evenson**

### **1. UPDATE ON LWR KITS MINISTRY**

With the generosity of the Ascension community and Thrivent Action Team Grants, we have purchased all the materials for the personal care kits and school kits prior to prices increasing from our vendors in August. Some of the materials for the baby care kits have also been purchased. The Ascension School children are providing 400 boxes of 24 crayons for the school kits.

Our goal to celebrate LWR's 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of responding to humanitarian crisis, domestic and international, is to assemble 400 personal care kits (200 by VBS families), 400 school kits (Ascension School children) and 40 baby care kits (ECC families) or over 800 kits. We anticipate exceeding our goal.

The Ascension Foundation has approved a grant for the shipping quilts and kits to the LWR warehouse.

As part of the Youth Leadership Camp program, the high school youth and confirmation age participants, bundled pens and pencils for the school kits.

On August 6, 2025, two hundred (200) personal care kits were assembled by the families who attended the final session of Vacation Bible School. Volunteers from the GMT set up the materials, assisted the children with the assembly and packing boxes for shipping. We ordered personal care kit materials for New Hope LC again this year. They have reimbursed us for those materials.

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

We will be needing volunteers to assist in the set up/assembly/packing of the school kits. A sign up request will be sent to GMT members and others in mid-September.

We thank Barb Spear for bundling pencils, Marcia Koenig for opening packages of pencil sharpeners, and Phyllis Wilker for opening packages of erasers.

**Please pencil in Monday, September 29<sup>th</sup> from 2-4 PM to set up for the school kits assembly.**

**We will need 6-8 volunteers when we assemble school kits Sept 30-Oct 2. Schedule TBD.**

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** Louise Evenson [Lpevenson@gmail.com](mailto:Lpevenson@gmail.com), 925-518-5795 or Vicki Weeks [3weeksboys@gmail.com](mailto:3weeksboys@gmail.com) or 805-559-3926 or Pastor Chamie at [pastorchamie@alcto.org](mailto:pastorchamie@alcto.org)