

ONE ASCENSION CHURCH



**Ascension Lutheran Church
Council Agenda
Wednesday, February 25, 2026 - 7:45pm
Bethlehem Room**

Welcome and Call to Order – Carrie Leonard, Past 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 – Alan Baker

Treasurer's Report – Steve Smuck

New Business

- **No new business.**

Recurring Business

- Affirm New Members, Confirmands, and Baptisms

Old Business

- No old business

Approval of Minutes -Carrie Leonard

- January 21, 2026 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
- Foundation Report
- Global Ministries Team Report

Information Items

- **Reflections on empowering and equipping, affirming and celebrating as we lead the culture of abundance at Ascension.**
- **The next Church Council meeting will be a joint meeting with the Ascension School Board on Monday, March 23, 2026 at 5:30 pm in Founders Hall, followed by the Church Council meeting.**

Closing Prayer – Steve Smuck

Executive Session – Pastor Tim Delkeskamp

Adjournment

Ascension Lutheran Church

Budget Summary

FYE26 YTD through January 31, 2026

	Church '25 - '26 Budget	Church '25 - '26 Budget YTD	Church '25 - '26 Actual YTD	Church '25 - '26 Variance	%
Revenues:					
Offerings (Church)	1,568,409	959,153	879,241	(79,912)	-8.3%
Other Revenues	47,280	27,556	34,645	7,089	25.7%
Total Revenues:	<u>1,615,689</u>	<u>986,709</u>	<u>913,886</u>	<u>(72,823)</u>	-7.4%
Expenditures:					
Salaries & Benefits	1,332,178	816,274	779,271	37,003	4.5%
Allocated Staff Expenses	(253,453)	(155,971)	(148,064)	(7,907)	5.1%
Benevolences	54,068	31,540	31,540	(0)	0.0%
Programs / Committees	64,179	35,680	27,155	8,526	23.9%
Administrative Expenses	111,899	65,730	52,645	13,085	19.9% 7.9k fav. Audit timing
Property Maintenance	100,242	68,819	64,318	4,501	6.5%
Utilities & Insurance	108,418	67,654	64,383	3,271	4.8%
Operating Expenditures	<u>1,517,531</u>	<u>929,726</u>	<u>871,247</u>	<u>58,478</u>	6.3%
Debt Service	99,675	58,144	58,144	-	0.0%
Total Expenditures	<u>1,617,206</u>	<u>987,869</u>	<u>929,391</u>	<u>58,478</u>	5.9%
Operating Surplus / (Deficit)	<u>(1,517)</u>	<u>(1,161)</u>	<u>(15,505)</u>	<u>(14,345)</u>	
Prior Year Surplus Spend *	-	-	37,966		
Reserve spend**	-	-	102,185		

*\$38k PPP for Sanctuary project overage (\$6.5k), replace other Sanctuary Air Units (\$31.5k)

**\$30k Sanctuary Air Project, \$35k Patio refurbishment

Ascension Lutheran Church

Cash & Debt Review

FYE26 YTD through January 31, 2026

Cash

	\$\$\$'s
Cash	2,386,490
Liquid Receivables (ALS/ECC/Foundation)	124,867
ALC-ECC Investment Cash	(744,129)
Total cash	1,767,228

Reserved Funds:

AGAPE	8,117
Mission Possible	225,080
Garden Fund	46,831
Be the Blessing	14,441
One Ascension Maintenance	197,460
ERTC	575,498
Benevolence and Programs Items	316,733
Total Restricted Funds	1,384,161
Available Cash related to PPP	178,135
All Other Available Cash	204,932
Total Available Cash	383,067

Debt

	Total	Annual Cost	Monthly Payments			Rate	End Date	Remaining
	\$\$\$'s	\$\$\$'s	Principal	Interest	Total			Term
Church Mortgage	955,396	98,844	4,384	3,853	8,237	4.625%	8/1/2039	13 Yr 7 Mo
ECC Mortgage	1,929,546	163,440	5,075	8,545	13,620	5.300%	8/1/2044	18 Yr 7 Mo
Construction Note	1,219,968	76,248	-	6,354	6,354	6.250%	2/1/2026	1 Yr 0 Mo
Foundation Note	18,666	831	-	69	69	4.450%	None	NA
Total Debt	4,123,576	339,363	9,459	18,821	28,280			

Ascension Lutheran Church

Budget Summary

FYE26 YTD through December 31, 2025

	Church '25 - '26 Budget	Church '25 - '26 Budget YTD	Church '25 - '26 Actual YTD	Church '25 - '26 Variance	%
Revenues:					
Offerings (Church)	1,568,409	846,646	805,704	(40,942)	-4.8%
Other Revenues	47,280	24,430	29,698	5,268	21.6%
Total Revenues:	1,615,689	871,076	835,402	(35,674)	-4.1%
Expenditures:					
Salaries & Benefits	1,332,178	713,093	683,230	29,863	4.2%
Allocated Staff Expenses	(253,453)	(136,475)	(131,268)	(5,207)	3.8%
Benevolences	54,068	27,034	27,034	(0)	0.0%
Programs / Committees	64,179	31,648	25,645	6,003	19.0%
Administrative Expenses	111,899	58,230	43,877	14,353	24.6% 7.9k fav. Audit timing
Property Maintenance	100,242	61,123	58,914	2,209	3.6%
Utilities & Insurance	108,418	58,269	55,897	2,372	4.1%
Operating Expenditures	1,517,531	812,922	763,329	49,593	6.1%
Debt Service	99,675	49,838	49,838	-	0.0%
Total Expenditures	1,617,206	862,760	813,167	49,593	5.7%
Operating Surplus / (Deficit)	(1,517)	8,317	22,235	13,918	
Prior Year Surplus Spend *	-	-	37,966		
Reserve spend**	-	-	65,000		

*\$38k PPP for Sanctuary project overage (\$6.5k), replace other Sanctuary Air Units (\$31.5k)

**\$30k Sanctuary Air Project, \$35k Patio refurbishment

Ascension Lutheran Church

Cash & Debt Review

FYE26 YTD through December 31, 2025

Cash

	<u>\$\$\$'s</u>
Cash	2,418,414
Liquid Receivables (ALS/ECC/Foundation)	231,765
ALC-ECC Investment Cash	(742,016)
Total cash	1,908,163

Reserved Funds:

AGAPE	8,604
Mission Possible	224,539
Garden Fund	50,172
Be the Blessing	14,441
One Ascension Maintenance	197,460
ERTC	612,623
Benevolence and Programs Items	382,400
Total Restricted Funds	1,490,239
Available Cash related to PPP	178,135
All Other Available Cash	239,789
Total Available Cash	417,924

Debt

	Total \$\$\$'s	Annual Cost \$\$\$'s	Monthly Payments			Rate	End Date	Remaining Term
			Principal	Interest	Total			
Church Mortgage	999,780	98,844	4,367	3,870	8,237	4.625%	8/1/2039	13 Yr 8 Mo
ECC Mortgage	1,934,621	163,440	5,053	8,567	13,620	5.300%	8/1/2044	18 Yr 8 Mo
Construction Note	1,219,968	76,248	-	6,354	6,354	6.250%	2/1/2026	1 Yr 1 Mo
Foundation Note	18,666	831	-	69	69	4.450%	None	NA
Total Debt	4,173,035	339,363	9,420	18,860	28,280			

New Members & Baptisms Report

February 2026

Baptisms for January

Name	Date Baptized
Kelsie Tonette Grizard	01/18/2026
Willow Lee Weber	01/25/2026

New Members for January

No New Members

**Ascension Lutheran Church
Council Agenda
Wednesday, January 21, 2026 - 7:00pm
Bethlehem Room**

Welcome and Call to Order – John Rarick, President

7:00

Board Members present: John Rarick, Steve Smuck, Creighton Van Horn (CVH), Ethan East, Crystal Bryant, Micheal Feltner, Carrie Leonard

Absent: Al Baker, Anna Woodward

Others present: Kaylee Searway, Pastor Tim, Pastor Chamie, Scott Bean (representing Day School, sub for Anna Woodward)

Kaylee Steve CVH Ethan Carrie Crystal Michael PT, PC, Scott Bean representing School Board

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 (Carrie) with amendment - a Thrivent Choice request was added under New Business, then seconded (Steve) then unanimously approved.

Devotion – Ethan East

Treasurer's Report – Steve Smuck

Offerings have continued to be slightly under forecasts. These shortfalls in offerings have been mitigated by lower expenses. Mike Marvin has added a note that the \$7.9k audit timing favorability is included in the bottom line surplus to YTD budget of \$13,918. Adjusted for that amount, we are currently at about \$6k favorable to budget at the bottom line.

Cash positions continue to be strong. We are starting some of the approved spend from the ERTC pool, on top of the roughly \$67k spent (between PPP and ERTC) on the Sanctuary air conditioning repairs.

It was moved (Carrie) to accept the Treasurer's Report, as presented, seconded (Michael) and unanimously approved. In an email on January 31, Steve sent updated financials for December 2025. The Council agreed to vote electronically via email, and unanimously approved the updated report.

New Business

- New proposals from our IT company concerning server migration and network upgrades –Kaylee Searway and School tech rep & teacher, Ashley Babich.

Kaylee and Ashley presented a proposal to upgrade the internet network and proceed with a new server migration. This will allow staff to access wifi and files from anywhere on campus, without having to switch between three networks (ALC, Day School, ECC). Network upgrade would be completed during summer of 2026. The new IT work has a cost of about \$60,000.00 It is suggested that the costs be split, 30K from ALC 30k from Day School & ECC combined. These funds could come from “Available cash” on hand (formerly PPP).

It was moved (CVH) and seconded (Carrie), then unanimously approved to move forward with the network upgrades.

- Thrivent Choice Request (amended agenda)

Pastor Tim and Kaylee request funds from Thrivent Choice, to purchase new benches for the patio. These will be similar to the convertible benches, located at the ECC. The cost of the new benches is approximately \$700.00

It was moved (Michael) then seconded (CVH), and unanimously approved to purchase the benches.

Recurring Business

- Affirm New Members, Confirmants, and Baptisms

None

Old Business

- Update on the status of roof repairs and the patio project – Kaylee Searway
One leak in the sanctuary roof has been repaired but no recent rain has put it to the test.

The administrative team is happy with the contractor who completed the patio resurfacing and labyrinth painting.

- Land sale update – Creighton Van Horn

CVH and Bob Woodward met with the City of Thousand Oaks City Planner, who approved the sale of land by ALC, to move forward without waiting for approval of the Yonkin project.

CVH will be meeting with Dax Hoff, civil engineer, to look at options of new footprint, and review of ALCTO land maps.

Approval of Minutes -John Rarick

- December 17, 2025, Church Council Minutes

It was moved (Carrie) and seconded (Ethan), then unanimously approved to accept December 17, 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, Kaylee Searway
- School Board Report
- Global Ministries Team Report
- Communications Report

It was moved (Carrie) - qualifying that the School Board Report is missing, seconded (Ethan) and then unanimously accepted to approve the Reports to Council.

Information Items

- Reflections on empowering and equipping, affirming and celebrating as we lead the culture of abundance at Ascension.

- *CVH celebrates and affirms the work of Hot Meals. He is joyful to be a new participant - along with his wife - in this Ascension ministry.*
- *Kaylee celebrates her administrative team and affirms their success by stating that they are "ON FIRE!"*
- *Ethan celebrates the ECC's intent to create a sense of community by inviting school families to participate in church activities.*
- *PT celebrates the opportunity to empower and equip the new members of the safety team.*

- The next Church Council meeting will be held on February 25, 2026, immediately following the Lenten service (at approximately 7:45 pm).

Closing Prayer – Michael Feltner

Adjournment

It was moved (Carrie) seconded and then unanimously approved to adjourn the meeting at 8:36 PM.



Pastor Tim's Ministry Report- February 2026

Grace and peace my sisters and brothers in Christ, here, gratefully submitted, is my report for the fast-moving month of February:

It is hard to believe Ash Wednesday is nearly here. Amid the daily work and sabbatical planning and wedding prep, it has come up quickly. But we are ready. The soup is in the refrigerator ready to be served, the Wednesday evening preachers are lined up and excited to preach. Our book has been chosen- this year it is called Pauses for Lent: 40 Words for 40 Days by Trevor Hudson. Each day we will focus on one word, a prayer and be challenged to put our thoughts and prayers into action in some small way. The books are being sold, the Life Group curriculum is being put together. Bring on the beautiful and contemplative season Lent!

Pastor Chamie and I are looking forward to leading the first couples retreat Ascension has had in a long time. It will be a 1-day retreat at Trinity Lutheran in Santa Barbara where we will host and lead couples through the Relate Strong curriculum that comes out of Pepperdine University. As of this writing we have about 11 couples who have signed up and are hoping for even more to come.

At this point my Sabbatical is coming into place. I have arranged for pastoral care (visiting the sick and elderly) coverage in my absence and I am grateful to Pastor Steve who will be the "gatekeeper" of pastoral care throughout the 3 months of my time away. He will be helped by pastors Rick Ertel and Paul Gravrock for times when he is out of town. Pastors Paul Gravrock, Audie Diggs and Beth Gallen (the campus pastor at CLU) and John Nunnes will be substitute preaching and presiding during this time as well. I am currently putting together my schedule and travel, study, homelife, visiting churches and interviewing pastors and leaders. Finally, the budget is falling into place for my travels. I am grateful for the work that the church has done to provide for me during this time.

The work of the nominating committee is coming together. At this point, we need to find one more person for school board and, I believe one more person for the Foundation. It is also a time that the boards will think about who will be nominated as officers for next

year. I am hoping that I will have the slate of candidates ready for the church council to review for March's meeting.

We are experiencing some setbacks with the formation and implementation of our Safety Team. We have volunteers. At this point figuring out how to do it legally and within the boundaries of our insurance coverage has become an issue. Recently we found out about State Bill 1454 which restricts the ability of peace officers to volunteer as security guards. We are currently working to figure how not "if" but how we can function which our team which makes up of mostly volunteer peace officers.

In his service,

 Pastor Tim

Pastor Chamie's January 2026 Council Report

(January 12-Feb 17)

Children, Youth, & Family

Children

The 6-week Bible Science series went very well. The children seemed to love it and be engaged. The teachers were dedicated to the series, giving graciously the extra time needed to prepare the experiments. Jenelle did a fantastic job of organizing the materials and testing the experiments to make sure she could equip the teachers. The series concluded with the "Fatih & Science Fair" that featured hands-on demonstrations of some of the experiments the children did as well as posters of scientists of faith, past and present, made by the youth. The posters included Bible verses and captivating quotes about belief in God and the practice of science. Because of the success of this year's Bible Science series, we plan on doing another series next year.



We had a Sunday school teacher's meeting on Feb 15 to prepare for Lent and our next Sunday school series which is called "40 Day Challenge." I feel we are getting more into the rhythm of these Sunday school volunteer meetings which means we are growing a stronger and more cohesive children's ministry program. I am thankful for the capable, trained, faithful, and love-filled teachers growing our ministry in both depth and reach.

Jenelle has been working on organizing our readers and schedule for “Fireside Story Time” that will run concurrent with the 5 weeks of Holden Evening Prayer. Something similar was done many years ago. We don’t know what the response will be, but feel called to give it a try.

One Ascension



Ms. Charlotte and I led a One Ascension Family Hike & Park Play Day on January 25 with around 40 people in attendance. The spirit of these hikes is vibrant. One participant texted the following day and said, “Thank you so much for leading such a fun hike yesterday!! These hikes make my heart so full!!” Those words encouraged both Charlotte and I to continue planning the hike and park play dates. The next family hike is Saturday, March 7, 9:30 AM at the trailhead at the Chumash Indian Museum.



We started the tomato seeds during the week of February 2. This is a One Ascension project. The 4’s at the ECC started seeds. Every class at the day school started seeds. The confirmation youth as well as the high school youth started seeds. And the Sunday school children started seeds with Tiffany Napierala - who was the one who started the tomato sale at Ascension 13 years ago and continues to be an amazing supporter. Each grade/group planted at least two varieties of tomatoes. The school sale will be on Wed, Mar 25 and then the church/community sale will be on Palm Sunday, March 29th, from 10:00 AM to noon. It will include the petting zoo with a donkey as a reminder that Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey!



Youth

Since this is the “Matthew Year” on the lectionary cycle for Bible readings, Spencer is leading a Matthew Bible Study for the high schoolers and got Matthew Filament Gospels that include the Book of Matthew as well as journaling pages to take notes, write prayers, and draw pictures.



One of the youth highlights in the last month was hearing Dave Nonnemacher share an update on his work in the Ukraine. Louise Evenson got solar “prayer lights” for all of the youth to continue to pray for the Ukraine. We circled on the floor in the gym to pray with these lights.

The high schoolers and middle schoolers had an ice skating outing in January.

We have been busy getting ready for Youth Winter Camp that will take place in February with over 30 participants!!!

I had lunch with Kaya and James to do some confirmation planning. I am thankful for our wonderful youth interns!



Interfacing with the Schools

I love watching the non-nappers flock to Jenelle on Monday afternoons when we go to the ECC to read to them. She knows all of their names and has such a good rapport with the littles.

Rich, Heather, and I are continuing to work on the framework for faith formation and “milestones ministry” at the school that is interwoven with the life of the church and with particular class sessions led by the church pastors or CYF staff.



Kelsey and I have reworked Worship Arts class a bit. She is now typically the sole teacher for Worship Arts on Tuesday as she assigns the students their leadership roles for chapel and runs through all of the music with them. Then on Thursdays, I am the primary teacher of the class teaching worship history and practice. In preparation for Ash Wednesday and having Holy Communion in chapel, I taught the Worship Arts class about how communion is prepared at Ascension. I also did a lesson on the word “sacristy” and how our sacristy is used. Jenelle did a lesson with them on the colors of the paraments. Then she had the class switch the fabric from the Epiphany green to white for Transfiguration Sunday.

Worship

I enjoyed team-preaching with Tim on the weekend of “Prayers for Christian Unity.” We truly enjoy leading worship together. We also got to baptize Baby Willow together. I know that Tim will forever remind me that she was a happy, peaceful baby in his arms, but started to cry when it was my turn to hold her! Another fun thing we got to do together was a special blessing for our 10:30 worship leader Melissa and her new husband Matt.

We met with the all the worship leaders - lead musicians, lead tech, Jenelle, Pastor Tim, and me - to walk through Lent and Easter worship plans with a bit of a peak into post-Easter. Worship planning takes an immense amount of time.

I have been working in collaboration with Tim to prepare for the Wednesday night Holden Evening Prayer services as well as the preaching schedule when he is gone for sabbatical April 6 through July 6.

Other



Women making vision/prayer boards at
“Word & Wine.”

Women’s Ministry (and a brief word about Men’s Ministry). Word & Wine was the first on-campus event under the new alcohol policy. All seemed to go smoothly! Our January gathering was in Founders Hall where we reflected on Psalm 90, “Teach us, Lord, to live wisely and well.” The women made vision/prayer boards for 2026. The men met at our house. I was impressed with the set up with lights, furniture, sound. I was happy to see so many men in attendance, though I wasn’t around for much of it as I walked up the street to spend the evening with a neighbor. Pastor Tim & are thankful for Paul Trent who is letting both the monthly women’s ministry and men’s ministry meet at The Sofa Guy in March.

Couples' Retreat Planning. Pastor Tim and I have been spending time every week going through sessions for the couples' retreat that will take place at the end of February. We are thankful for Tom & Leah Lindros for helping with sign-ups after worship services. We had a lot of bloopers when we were making a reel for the retreat! I laughed so hard that I cried!

Tim & I led a weekend couples' retreat 16 years ago and we are pretty sure there hasn't been a couples' retreat since then! We opted for doing just a one day retreat and then will assess about doing a weekend retreat in 2027.



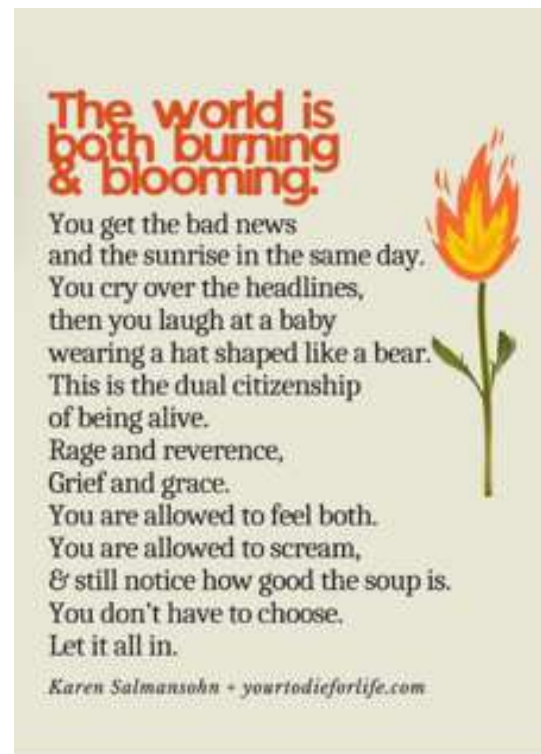
California Lutheran University. Ascension leadership attended Dr. John Nunes "State of the University" address. We are thankful to partner with Dr. Nunes and Monique.

Visit with Rev. Emily Harris. One of my former Ascension students - when I taught 8th grade homeroom and religion - came for a visit in January. She graduated this spring from Princeton Theological School and is now serving in her first pastoral position at a church in New Jersey. I pray we can inspire and equip more young people to become pastors and ministry leaders!

Trust the Whisper. I am thankful for Yvonne Zoetewey suggesting *Trust the Whisper* as a great book to read for the season of Epiphany. We had a lovely book club gathering at The Sofa Guy. I know many people were touched and inspired by the stories in the book. Suzanne Hopkins wrote a beautiful devotional about the experience. Yvonne made a fantastic spread of food for the event!

Choir Ladies Brunch. Heather Harner and Yvonne Zoetewey hosted a marvelous Epiphany brunch for the women of the choir in January. The food was delicious and the white elephant gift exchange was fun. It was such a blessing to get to spend time with this wonderful group of women!

Responding to the Heaviness. The pastoral staff felt the collective grief of the congregation and the state of the nation and world with so much news of injustice, war, death, political divisiveness, abuse... We worked together to write a pastoral letter to share with the congregation. One Sunday as we gathered for worship, I shared "the world is both burning & blooming."



Now we set our hearts on the Lent journey. I pray it is a deep and meaningful season as we "pause" each day with the devotional and feel the Spirit moving at Ascension.

Grace & Peace, *Pastor Chamie*

Church Council Report – Feb. 1, 2026 – Pastor Steve Herder

Reflecting on the month of January, as we begin a new year we often think about our priorities and what we would like to see happen in our lives. On this topic, I often think of my favorite song that I sing with the ECC children on Fridays, “Read Your Bible, Pray Everyday!” In the craziness of world events or personal crises, our lives need to be grounded in worship, prayer and Bible study. That’s one reason I love doing social media posts for Ascension each day, sharing both Scriptures and prayers for all of us, and those who read our posts, to be reminded of these priorities for our lives as followers of Jesus. Then we are set free to love God and love our neighbors. We do that in such a great variety of ways here at Ascension!



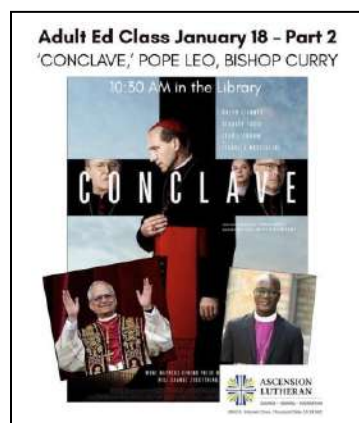
We hope that you all are following our “365 in ‘26” prayers each day, with Bible readings. If you’d like to be in our email prayer group, let Linda Morrow know. For the prayers in our newsletter, “This Week at Ascension” (TWAA), let Stacy Bosco know. Stacy does a super job with the “365 in ‘26” posts on social media. We thank Susanne Hopkins for her devotions each Monday morning that we include on social media too.

The month of January for Senior Adult Ministries included our ongoing visitation ministries, Eucharistic Ministries (home Communion visits), Christian Life Hours at senior living places in town, SAMs Tram, GriefShare, 3M (minor maintenance ministries), and Lunch Bunch! I’ll include a photo from Lunch Bunch. In memory of Norma Schillerstrom, her family provided a free meal for all of us. On the right is a photo of the Christian Life Hour that I led at University Village Oak View, with help from Janet and Joel Weber, and Jeff Specks. Eighteen people worshiped with us! This past month Chris Wagner sent a letter to the congregation about Pastor Larry’s move to a board and care home on Las Flores because of his growing dementia. If you’d like a copy of that letter, email me. I brought him Holy Communion this past week. He loves visitors. Chris’ letter gives good advice on how best to do that.



If you or a loved one is ever in a hospital, your pastors and other caring friends in Christ from Ascension would like to visit you, pray with you, encourage you, and support your family. We will keep the visit short, unless you'd like to visit more. Call the church office or your pastors anytime to let us know how we can support you and pray for you. This includes if you'd like us to visit you at your home or place of work (remember, we can do a "Wednesday Work Blessing").

The first Sunday of January, I filled in for Pastor Amanda Berg at her congregation, Shepherd of the Valley in Simi Valley. What a beautiful community of faith that she is leading. It was fun to see Carl Dietrich. He worships there because it is so much closer to his home. I posted this photo on Facebook and people loved seeing him again. The post reached over 2,600 people.



On January 18, the first day of the Week of Christian Unity, I led our adult education class, finishing the class that I started last fall, on the movie Conclave, and then talking about this past May's real conclave in electing Pope Leo, after the death of Pope Francis. I finished the hour with talking about our new ELCA Presiding Bishop Yehiel Curry and our new ELCA Secretary, Rev. Lucille "CeCee" Mills.

Our Community Concerns Team, led by Chris Daleiden focuses on the weekly food pantry ministry, the monthly Hot Meal Ministry with Harbor House, and Chris' leadership of 3M (minor maintenance ministries). Thanks to Don Weeks for doing a home project this month for a senior. Thanks to all our volunteers!



Our Global Ministries Team met in January to do a zoom meeting with friend and ministry partner Dave Nonnemacher from Minnesota to plan for February's special benevolence, our support for humanitarian aid for the people and churches in Ukraine. Our Fair Trade ministries, led by Carol Bjelland and team, has a new logo, with help from Stacy Bosco. This year is the 25th anniversary of Fair Trade ministries at Ascension.



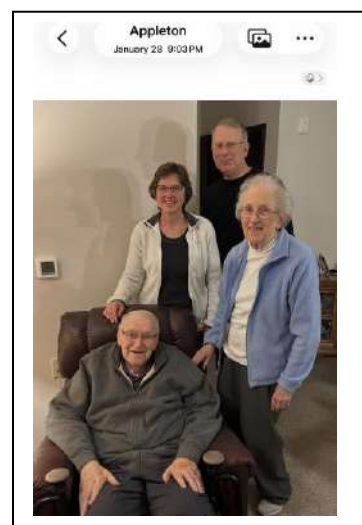
What a joy to present both Friends of Fieldworkers and Harbor House their gifts of checks for almost \$23,000 each, from our Gifts of Hope. Thank you, Ascension, for caring for our neighbors in such wonderful ways.



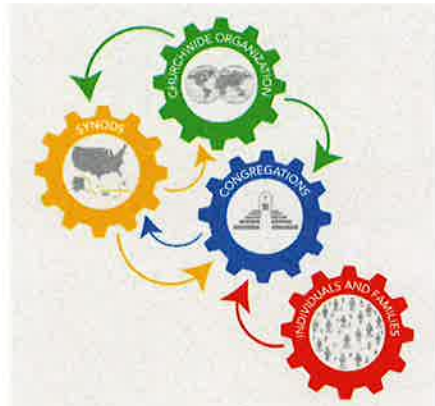
If you'd like to help me plan our Southwest CA Synod's workshops at our synod assembly May 29 and 30 in Pasadena, let me know. Bishop Brenda Bos has chosen our theme from Psalm 46, "God is our refuge and strength!" Appropriately with this theme, we have been praying for the people of Minnesota in these trying days.



Finally, two family photos to share with you: Natalie was home from her work in NYC for a week this past month (we enjoy hiking our local trails), and then for a few days at the end of the month I was in Appleton, WI, helping my parents move from their home to a wonderful senior living place just two miles away. My sister Ann is in the photo. She and her husband Jeff live nearby and did much of the packing for the move. One of the great blessings of this new place is that a friend of theirs is the ELCA full-time chaplain there.



Thanks for your prayers. You and your family are in our prayers!



ELCA members in more than 9,300 congregations in the United States and Caribbean give approximately \$1.75 billion in regular offering to support ELCA ministries in their local communities and worldwide. When members give through their **congregations**, a percentage of that money is then shared with the local **synod** and the national **churchwide organization**.

This unrestricted giving, called Mission Support, gives us both the foundation and the fuel to do God's work in the world and a portion of the gifts circle back to support ministries in synods and local congregations. Of these unrestricted gifts, the churchwide organization receives around 2.6 percent. This represents the largest portion of the ELCA churchwide organization's operating budget.

Your Mission Support helps fund the following churchwide ministries:

Grow the ELCA in the United States



Plant and support
357 new congregations.

- **Enable congregations to renew their ministries** and reach out to their surrounding communities.
- **Work together** with our African Descent, American Indian and Alaska Native, Arab and Middle Eastern, Asian and Pacific Islander, and Latino/Latina members to develop networks and resources for ministry.
- **Develop and share resources** for faith, discipleship, prayer and worship.

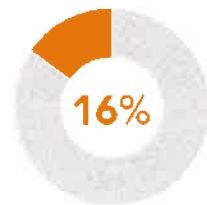
Grow the Lutheran church around the world



Send 230 missionaries
in more than 48 countries, and more than 84 Young Adults in Global Mission in 11 country programs.

- **As a member of The Lutheran World Federation, we're in communion with 145 member churches** and directly connected to 85 companion churches in other countries.
- **Accompany new Lutheran churches**, expand ministries, and train leaders and evangelists.

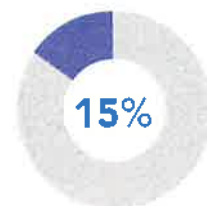
Provide coordination and support for churchwide ministries



Maintain constituent database, including 1.1 million records of rostered and lay leaders, members, donors and congregations.

- **Preserve and maintain archives and historic records** of the ELCA and its predecessor bodies.
- **Provide office space, equipment and human resources** for staff and operations.
- **Process 150,000 gifts** to ELCA ministries.
- **Equip congregations and synods** with resources to assist in risk management and legal matters.

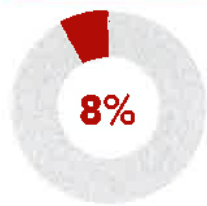
Support and develop current and future leaders in the ELCA



Recruit, prepare and implement a system for the assignment of 9,900 rostered ministers.

- **Support the work** of seven ELCA seminaries and 26 colleges and universities.
- **Identify, connect and provide** ministry resources and opportunities for networking for lay leaders.
- **Offer events and leadership opportunities** for youth and young adults.

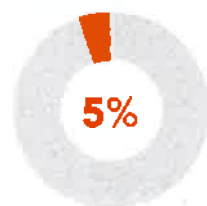
Invest in **technology** and **communications**



Design and maintain communications tools to strengthen our Lutheran identity and grow awareness of our church and its mission and ministries.

- **Connect members with one another** through new technology and systems.

Provide **governance** and **leadership**



65
Coordinate meetings and support for 65 synodical bishops.

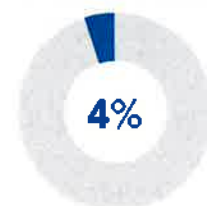
- **Organize lay and clergy leaders from across the church to serve** on the governance boards and committees that provide guidance and oversight for ELCA ministries.

Grow and sustain financial resources



Develop and promote efforts related to stewardship education, financial literacy, mission interpretation and growth in giving to all church ministries.

Address social issues and **work for justice**



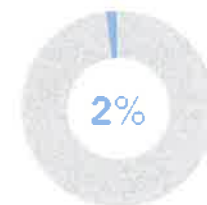
1 in 50

Support social ministry organizations, such as Lutheran Services in America, to impact the lives of **1 in 50** Americans.

- **Engage** in churchwide study and deliberation to create social statements and resources that address social, political, environmental and other public issues.
- **Equip** members and leaders to advocate with lawmakers in order to support policies that promote justice and peace.

Your designated gifts to ELCA World Hunger and Lutheran Disaster Response provide additional funds annually to address hunger, poverty and suffering around the world.

Engage in **research** and **strategic planning**



Research and analyze trends that impact the ELCA and develop innovative strategies to improve mission and ministry in the 21st century.

Sustain **ecumenical** and **interfaith relationships**



Facilitate dialogue and common action among communities of other faiths, including the development of resources and communications for ELCA congregations.

- **Seek unity in faith and life** with all Lutherans and six full communion partners.

February 2026

First Timothy 2:1-5

"First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, for kings and all who are in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in godliness and dignity.

This is right and is acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God; there is also one mediator between God and humankind, Christ Jesus, himself human,"



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
1 Prayers for our Feb. monthly benevolence, aid for Ukraine with Dave Nonnemacher <i>Matthew 5:1-12</i>	2 We remember the story of the "Presentation of our Lord" <i>Luke 2:22-40</i>	3 Blessings on the tomato seed planting Feb. 1-6 <i>1st Corinthians 3:7-9</i>	4 Prayers for our Men's Bibles & Brews <i>Galatians 6:9-10</i>	5 Prayers for Principal Rich Gregory & our school <i>Numbers 6:24-26</i>	6 Love for guests & visitors who come to our worship services <i>1st Corinthians 13:13</i>	7 Spotting God in Good Deeds <i>Isaiah 58:1-12</i>
8 Let our faith in Jesus shine brightly <i>Matthew 5:13-20</i>	9 Prayers for our school board <i>Philippians 4:4-9</i>	10 Prayers for our ministries with our youngest & our oldest <i>1st Timothy 4:12</i>	11 Prayers for our Lunch Bunch @ noon <i>Lamentations 3:21-24</i>	12 Our ELCA missionary in Madagascar, Rev. Kristin Engstrom <i>Isaiah 6:1-8</i>	13 Prayers for our church staff <i>Ephesians 4:11-13</i>	14 <i>Valentine's Day</i> Spotting God in the Intersections <i>Exodus 24:12-18</i>
15 Happy Birthday, Pastor Larry Wagner <i>Matthew 17:1-9</i>	16 <i>President's Day</i> Prayers for our country & all our leaders <i>1st Samuel 12:23-24</i>	17 Prayers for the quilters and Lutheran World Relief <i>Acts 9:36</i>	18 <i>Ash Wednesday</i> Soup Supper & Ash Wednesday Service <i>Psalms 51:1-17</i>	19 Fair Trade Lane <i>Psalms 32</i>	20 Prayers for our Winter Youth Camp Feb. 20-22 <i>Romans 5:12-19</i>	21 One Ascension Work Day on campus <i>Joshua 24:15</i>
22 Prayers for the UCLA Brass concert here @ 4 pm <i>Matthew 4:1-11</i>	23 Prayers for our Foundation Trustees <i>1st Thessalonians 5:11</i>	24 Give thanks for our tech team <i>Joshua 1:9</i>	25 Holden Evening service & "Fireside Story Time" for children <i>Genesis 12:1-4</i>	26 Prayers for our synod, Bishop Brenda Bos <i>Psalms 121</i>	27 Prayers for our neighbors north in Canada & south in Mexico <i>Acts 1:8</i>	28 Prayers for other houses of faith in our community <i>1st Timothy 2:1</i>
		www.alcto.org				23-29

Church Council Report
Kaylee Searway

February 25, 2026
Director of Operations

Attendance

In January I reported that the last six weeks of the 2025 showed an uptick in the 6-week average attendance number from 422 to 438. We have now had seven weekends of services in 2026, and the average is back to 427. As I write we have had a lovely Ash Wednesday chapel service this morning and the sanctuary looks great for our evening service. Volunteers will be here over the next couple of hours decorating tables, heating up soup, dropping off cookies, and preparing for our fellowship time before and after our Ash Wednesday service.

Maintenance

The rain Monday February 16th showed us that all three of our sanctuary leaks have returned. Channel Islands Roofing is coming on Friday, February 20th to take a core sample of the roof. This will help them make a recommendation to move forward as we have already attempted several rounds of repairs. You might remember that the sanctuary roof was last replaced in 2015 with a seven year warranty. Although beyond the 7 year warranty point, Channel Islands Roofing has made several attempts to repair the leaks.

The church nursery roof is leaking, or might be leaking from the Founders Hall Roof. The roof over the church nursery and restroom has recently been replaced by Local Roofs, but the adjacent roof over Founders Hall is much older. Greg from Local Roofs is coming to investigate and find out more about the source of the leak.

The nap room in the ECC is leaking. EPI Construction is coming for an extensive repair over spring break.

The maintenance team has been working in the balcony to finish drywalling and painting over the recently installed HVAC duct work.

We removed a large tree and stump over the Presidents Day holiday. An orange tree will be installed Friday, February 20th.



Directory

Carolyn Bahr did a great deal of editing on the photo portion of the directory. Several eagle-eyed editors are combing through the final draft before we start printing.

Thank you,

Kaylee Searway

Director of Operations

**Ascension Lutheran School Board Meeting Minutes
December 15, 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, Anna Woodward, Kathy Roshanai, Chris Poveromo, Kyle Jones, Jeanette McNulty, Rich Gregory, Nelly Trumbo, Matt Hurdle, Pastor Chamie, Scott Bean

Guests: Brooke Costi, Kaylee Searway, Cameron Lomeli, Mike Marvin

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:

Rich shared a devotion on Jesus' coming to earth and the correlation to Rome's` declaration as Caesar as a god.

Approval of Agenda and Consent Agenda:

Motion to approve the agenda initiated by Nelly. Cathy seconded. Motion passes.

Kyle requested that the Financials be pulled from the consent agenda.

Approval of consent agenda items initiated by Cathy. Nelly seconded. Motion passes.

Old Business:

- **2026/27 Tuition**
 - Nelly proposed Option 2 as laid out by the Finance Team, Kyle seconded, after discussion the proposal failed unanimously.
 - Nelly proposed a 5% increase to TK - 5 tuition, \$400 nominal increase to 6th grade, and 0 increase to 7th and 8th, Kyle seconded, motion passed with a 5 aye and 2 nay vote.
- Chris moves to approve the financials, Jeanette seconded, and the motion passes.

New Business:

- Rich made a request for \$1,200 requisition for plans for a new play structure.
- Cathy moved to approve to go forward with a budget of up to \$1,500 for new plans for a play structure coming out of available cash, Scott seconded, motion passed unanimously.
- Rich provided an update on the Gala

Closing Prayer:

Pastor Chamie closed the meeting with prayer.

Adjournment:

Kyle motioned to adjourn the meeting and reconvene for executive session. Cathy seconded. Meeting was adjourned at 8:42pm.

Respectfully submitted by Chris Poveromo

**ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH
FOUNDATION REPORT TO THE COUNCIL
FEBRUARY 25, 2026**

At its February meeting the Foundation approved four new grants and ten standing grants totaling \$19,230:

- 5,000 to Global Ministries Team to purchase 10 generators for distribution in Ukraine through Dave Nonnebacher's New Horizons – USA organization.
- \$4,000 to Global Ministries Team to be used through the Global Ministries Trip Fund to help with visa applications and flights to bring members of Angela Abalo's and Nina Dube's families to their CLU graduation. Nina's father is a bishop in Zimbabwe.
- \$900 to Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary Center for Climate Justice and Faith to provide scholarships for Spanish language certificates in climate justice and faith.
- \$500 to Lutherans Restoring Creation to support their program "Actions Speak Loudly", which strives to educate churches to make environmental stewardship a natural part of church life.
- \$8,830 for ten standing grants supporting Ascension Lutheran School scholarships, the General Fund, ALC Vacation Bible School, Lutheran World Relief, Momentum (support for people with disabilities), Wartburg Seminary, Friedreich's Alexia Research Alliance, Ventura County Social Services, and Harbor House.

The Foundation also approved creation of a standing annual grant to be used for future pastor sabbaticals. No grant was made at this time.

An adult education class will be held on Sunday, March 15. The class will focus on creating a legacy. Possible title: "How Do You Want to Be Remembered?"

The Foundation's total assets were \$2,064,552 as of December 31, 2025. The investment portfolio has performed extremely well during the 2025. All but two of our equity investment mutual funds had returns in excess of 11% in the past year, and our bond funds had returns of 7-9%. Equity holdings now comprise 62 percent of the investment portfolio. The Foundation also has over \$300,000 in money market accounts, which are currently earning just under 4%.

Alan Baker, Foundation Representative to the Council

Fair Trade Report – February 2026

Fair Trade Lane (FTL) Schedule February - June 2026

Fair Trade Lane is open 4 times monthly; a Lunch Bunch Wednesday, a Thursday afternoon, and before & after Sat/Sunday worship. We share a monthly Fair Trade message at Wednesday Morning Chapel. We generally have 3-4 volunteers for Thursdays & weekends. Everyone is invited to volunteer. We are very happy to be able to greet those new to FTL and a growing number of regular visitors every time FTL is open. We love the “beautiful noise” – all of the great conversations happening on FTL.

FTL: Feb 7, 8, 11 & 12, March 11, 19, 28 & 29, April 8, 16, 18 & 19, May 13, 14, 16 & 17, and June 4, 10, 20 & 21

This is the 25th Anniversary Year for Ascension's Fair Trade Ministry – Let's Celebrate!

Pastor Howie & Mary Wennes planted the seed of Ascension's Fair Trade Ministry in September 2001, sharing the idea at a meeting of Ascension's Missions Committee (n/k/a Global Ministries Team). Ascension became a Fair Trade Congregation (via Fair Trade USA) in 2017. The ministry is multi-faceted – justice, service, environment & stewardship. The ministry connects with Ascension's School and Early Childhood Center. FT Leaders have been Arlene Eiler, Lori & Mark von Kronemann, Marcia Koenig, & Carol Bjelland. The ministry has sustained and grown in its 25 years. The ministry has helped another congregation launch their own Fair Trade ministry. The ministry is a means of sharing Ascension's hospitality, as well as a means of engaging people of all ages in ministry, service and fellowship.

A wooden signpost with a cross-shaped top and an arrow pointing right. The arrow has the text "Fair Trade Lane" written on it. The sign is set against a background of a blue sky with a yellow sun and green hills. Below the sign, there is a small text that reads "A Faith Path to Justice for People and Planet".

FAIR TRADE LANE
WILL BE OPEN
Wednesday, March 11th
12:45 – 1 PM
Thursday, March 19th
2:30 – 4 PM
Saturday, March 28th
5:45 – 6 PM & 7-7:15 PM
Sunday, March 29th
8:30 - 9 AM, 10 - 10:30 AM & 11:30 - 11:45 AM
EVERYONE'S INVITED!
The double doors to Founders Hall will be open

How Might We Want To Celebrate the 25th Anniversary of Ascension's Fair Trade Ministry? Some ideas to get things started...

1. Create a comprehensive timeline of Ascension's Fair Trade Ministry from inception to current. How to creatively present & preserve?
2. A Blessing of the Fair Trade Art in FH (explanatory "plaque" completed, 2/26)
3. A video &/or a series of short video clips (who, what does FT mean to them, what makes them smile about FT, etc.). Involve youth of church & school. Involve others from church w/experience. Maybe show short clips in months leading up to Oct 2026? Maybe edit into one longer video? A team of students & adults is needed to organize, provide leadership, take it forward.
4. Connection & Fellowship Opportunities – Adults & Youth & Children
Ideas include FT wine tasting event (s) in the ECC garden, bonfire/S'mores, etc. Open to ideas etc. from Church, Ministry & School leaders. Something special each month would be great.
5. Adult Ed Class - Possibilities incl. Red Barn Farms (Zoom), The Tote Project (maybe in-person), Cypress Pond Farms (Zoom), Burroughs Farms (Zoom), Mt Meru Coffee Project (Zoom).
6. Inviting vendors to let us promote/make their FT & ethically-produced non-perishable items available for purchase on FT Lane with special monthly focus (an alternative to a gift fair). February was 10K Village & Downtown Women's Center (very well received). March/April, The Tote Project. Looking for ideas for the remaining months of the year.

7. Ascension Fair Trade has been invited to share Fair Trade S'Mores at bonfire events; already scheduled events incl May 8th (Youth) & August 8th (Family Weekend).
8. Ascension Fair Trade has been invited to share a presentation about Fair Trade at the 2026 Synod Assembly workshop, May 29 & 30, 2026, in Pasadena.
9. Ascension has been invited to conduct a workshop at the Equal Exchange Annual Summit June 12th/Wheaton College, Norton, MA. The workshop will be for the Interfaith segment of the Summit. Help requested to create a new presentation (content & format). (EE is the largest FT product vendor (coffee, tea, choc, olive oil, nuts, dried fruit) & one of the oldest in the US).
10. Special monthly communication focus on an aspect of Fair Trade and/or as aspect of the history of Fair Trade at Ascension
11. Grow the Ascension Fair Trade email group.
12. Update Ascension's Fair Trade webpage with high quality photos (also videos) of Fair Trade Lane (doors open) and the Fair Trade art along with updated information.
13. Hospitality Celebration on the patio – October (Fair Trade Month). Coffee, tea, iced tea (& other FT beverages if available) along with FT treats and/or treats made with FT products.
14. A celebration with the students of Ascension's School
15. Ordering specially-branded coffee mugs (Daneen Pottery/St Paul, MN) or custom candles (brand & scent) from Downtown Women's Center, or chocolate bars (Tony's Chocolonely) Material factors to consider – quantity, cost, timing.

Resources Needed: People of all ages from church and school sharing time and talents, including a cross-functional leadership team. If an idea, or ideas, speak to you, let us know. To the extent possible, events such as wine tastings will self-fund with participation fees to cover costs. We will look to ministry groups to contribute to funding events (e.g. May 8th & Aug 8th bonfire s'mores). Funds will be needed for some activities such as hospitality or group receptions. Ascension Fair Trade is a dedicated-fund ministry.

Ascension Fair Trade Ministry Goals:

1. Grow in numbers across church, school & community and across all ages
2. Grow education – dig deeper
3. Grow in connections with Church & School – Youth, Staff, Families, Ministries (maybe “internship” or self-study research opportunities)
4. Help other congregations /faith groups start or grow their Fair Trade ministries
5. Might Ascension Lutheran School consider becoming a Fair Trade School?
6. Help to re-establish, support & grow a Fair Trade program at CLU

Thank You.

Let's Be The Change We Wish To See!

For Additional Information, Please Contact: Pastor Steve Herder or Carol Bjelland for Ascension Fair Trade Ministry; fairtrade@alcto.org

