

**Ascension Lutheran Church
Council Agenda
Wednesday, June 17, 2026 - 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 – Crystal Bryant

Treasurer's Report – Steve Smuck

New Business

- **Approval of the Agenda for the June 28, 2026 Congregational Meeting** – John Rarick
- **Discuss having the ad hoc Safety Committee becoming a subcommittee of the property and maintenance committee** – John Rarick

Recurring Business

- Affirm New Members, Confirmands, and Baptisms

Old Business

- No old business

Approval of Minutes -John Rarick

- May 20, 2026 Church Council Minutes

Consent Approval of Reports to Council – John Rarick

- Pastor Chamie Delkeskamp's Report
- Pastor Steve Herder's Report
- Director of Operations – Kaylee Searway's Report
- School Board Report
- Global Ministries Team Report
- Communications Report

Information Items

- **Reflections on our past year of service as Church Council members.**
- **Reflections on empowering and equipping, affirming and celebrating as we lead the culture of abundance at Ascension.**
- **The next Church Council meeting will be held on July 15, 2026 at 7:00 p.m.**

Closing Prayer – Crystal Bryant

Adjournment

Treasurer's Report for June Council Report

The finance team is still working on closing out May results, so the formal reports will be provided as soon as possible. What we do know is that May Offering was budgeted to be \$112k and we received \$94k, however we continue to run under budget for Payroll and expenses. Also, preliminary Offering numbers for June are \$90k budgeted and after just two weekends we are at \$48k received. Projections for the full FY 25-26 year to be presented at the Congregational meeting will also be made available to you as soon as they are available.

Respectfully,

Steve Smuck, Treasurer

New Members & Baptisms Report

June 2026

Baptisms for May

Name	Date Baptized
Robert David Lambert IV	05/03/26
Juliet Annmarie Ochsner	05/16/26

New Members for May

Stella Lindstrom
Chaya Valenzuela

Confirmands for May

Brooklyn Brewster
Ryder Bryant
Evan Beerman
Piper D'Amore
Kellan Gallagher
Daniel Hopkins
Luke Hughes
Oliver Keit
Allison Kruse
Gianna Lisi
Sienna Grace Oberhaus
Rylan Perry
Sierra Sheremetiev
Enzo Villavicencio
Bodie Wallace

**Ascension Lutheran Church
Council Agenda
Wednesday, May 20, 2026 - 7:00pm
Bethlehem Room**

Welcome and Call to Order -John Rarick, President

Called to order at 6:56

Board Members present: Crystal Bryant, Ethan East, Michael Feltner, John Rarick, Steve Smuck, Anna Woodward, Creighton Van Horne (CVH)

Not present: Al Baker

Others preset: Kaylee Searway and Pastor Chamie

Many thanks for Carrie Leonard and her six years of service with Church Council as all positions of President, twice. Tonight is her final meeting.

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 (Ethan), seconded (CVH) and then unanimously approved to accept the agenda.

Devotion – Anna Woodward

Guest presentation of the Ascension Safety Team –Dave Festerling

Dave Festerling presented a report from the Ad-Hoc Safety Committee.

The council has decided that we will have a discussion at the next meeting to consider the procedures and considerations involved in formalizing a Safety Team Committee.

Treasurer's Report – Steve Smuck

Revenues for April were between \$9K & \$26K under budget, which puts us roughly 3 to 4% below budget for YTD (where we have been running for most of the year). On a

*YTD basis, additional interest and facilities revenue reduces this deficit by nearly \$7K.
(so the report shows only a 2.3% negative variance.*

*Expenses continue to run well below budget which currently completely erases the
current deficit in offerings and projects us to likely end the year on a near break-even
basis. (Note: \$25K (17+8) favorability items may/will reverse the majority of the shown
\$41K surplus)*

*It was moved (Carrie), the seconded (Michael) and unanimously approved to accept the
Treasurer's Report as presented.*

New Business

- No new business

Recurring Business

- Affirm New Members, Confirmations, and Baptisms

Two new members Affirmed in April

John Nunes

Monique Nunes

Old Business

- Budget presentation for 2026/2027 to consider for recommendation to the Ascension congregation –Kaylee Searway and the Finance Team.

*It was moved (Carrie), seconded (Steve) and then unanimously approved to accept
the presented budget to be proposed at the Congregational Meeting in June.*

- Nominating Committee Report – Carrie Leonard, Past President

*It was moved (Michael), seconded (Steve) and then unanimously approved to
recommend slate of leadership candidates at the Congregational Meeting in June.*

Approval of Minutes -John Rarick

- April 15, 2026 Church Council Minutes

It was moved (Steve), seconded (Michael) and then unanimously approved to accept the April 2026 meeting minutes.

Consent Approval of Reports to Council – John Rarick

- Pastor Chamie Delkeskamp's Report
- Pastor Steve Herder's Report
- Director of Operations Report – Kaylee Searway
- School Board Report
- Foundation Report
- Global Ministries Team Report
- Communications Report

Micheal commends the report from Stacy about AI. It was moved (Michael), seconded (Carrie) and then unanimously approved to accept the Reports to Council.

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 held on June 17, 2026 at 7:00 p.m.

Closing Prayer – Anna Woodward

Adjournment

It was moved (CVH), seconded (Carrie) and then unanimously approved to adjourn the meeting at 8:43 PM.

Executive Session

Pastor Chamie's May 2026 Council Report

(May 11 - June 7)

Children, Youth, & Family

Children



Whenever we have an all church event, we want to make sure that there are elements that are kid/family friendly. So at the Pentecost Fair, Jenelle created a wonderful children's station. This included a place where children could pick up maps and get stickers at each of the countries they visited. Then they could return to the station and get a prize. Jenelle also had books from around the world, puzzles, and other activities.

The past few weeks have been busy with preparations for Vacation Bible School. So much planning and prepping goes into VBS; it is a really big undertaking. Jenelle has been recruiting and equipping a fantastic team of volunteers. At this writing, we have almost 60 children signed up for VBS.

School year Sunday school ended on June 17. We have been working on summer opportunities for children and families which will include a 4 week summer Sunday school series spinning off of the VBS theme (to begin in July) and a summer reading program. We hope children and families will learn more about the wonderful books in our library, including many new Christian books that we have thanks to a generous gift! In addition, we purchased summer "Team Family" bags from the May training that Jenelle and I did. We will be passing out the bags to families starting June 14. These bags have a devotional book, prayers, a craft, and ideas of how families can live their faith at home during the summer months.

Youth

Confirmation Sunday on May 17 was such a blessing as we confirmed 15 8th graders! I was inspired by their leadership that day, especially those who shared their faith statements: Allison, Rylan, and Brooklyn.

Then we celebrated the Faith Quilts Milestone on May 31 when 10 of our high school seniors received faith quilts. I give thanks to Mara Hassenbein for organizing and all of the quilters!

Mr. Gottmer has continued to lead high school Bible study during the past month and has been at work inviting the new confirmands into the high school ministry. This is a very busy time of year for teens with everything happening at school, but Mr. Gottmer tries to stay connected to them through texts and calls even when they can't make it to youth group.



Interfacing with the Schools

Jenelle read a sweet “blessings” book at the last chapel for the ECC children and then I said a blessing over the littles. Jenelle and I also attended their promotion day/last day of school as well as their big party with families - which included a taco truck and bounce houses. It was a good opportunity to sit and eat and talk with families and wander around connecting to the children.

James Halvorson and I worked the school’s Book Fair at Open House. The teacher (Ms. Charlotte) who runs the Book Fair needed to be in her classroom. This was a great One Ascension opportunity for the church to help the school, but what James and I really enjoyed was getting to connect with families. James got to see several of the confirmation students he has worked with this past year and also met some of their little siblings and other family members.

Kelsey Packman (who I enjoy partnering with as she is the music teacher at the school and we teach worship arts together) and I helped prep the school 8th graders to lead the last chapel on their own. My favorite part was having lunch with John and Brooklyn as we read the passage for the day together, discussed it, and prayed. Then they went off and worked on their message. I was so proud of both of them as they did an amazing job as the preachers at the last chapel.

For me, a highlight of the whole entire school year was baptizing 6 of the 8th graders on Beach Day the last week of school. I was approached separately by students in the late winter and early spring about their desire to be baptized and then the Holy Spirit was at work and soon we had 6 students who wanted to be baptized together at the beach. Rev. Dr. Gregory (Pastor Rich), Mr. Gottmer, and I were all a part of baptizing the kids in the ocean. Their families and classmates gathered on the beach as I shared a few words on baptism and then went through the Baptism Service in our Lutheran book of worship. Then one by one each of the students walked into the ocean with us. After each student was baptized, Rich, Spencer, and I gathered them all in a circle hug, our feet in the water, and reminded them that God calls them his own and loves them and is well pleased with them. I’m crying as I write this and remember the day! It was so special! Really beyond words.



On the last day of school, we had a special closing chapel because there is no better way to end a school year than by giving thanks to God. At the very end, we invited the school community to be a part of summer worship and activities at Ascension Church because even though school is out, church is still on!!!

Worship

Pentecost has become one of my favorite holidays of the Christian year. I loved our one combined worship service on May 24. Last year Pentecost was later in the year and fell on the day where the church had traditionally done a music appreciation Sunday. The worship team - which includes the lead musicians - liked doing the combined service on Pentecost and wants to keep it this way as all the different music and voices seem so fitting for the day. Next year's Pentecost one worship service - with all of our various musicians - will be Sunday, May 16.



After worship, I loved our fellowship time at the Pentecost International Fair. I am so thankful for Michael Adinew doing such a heartfelt job leading this event and all of the people who hosted booths. This was our second year and Michael has already heard from many people who said they will host a booth next year.

On other worship notes, when Pastor Tim was preparing for his sabbatical, he scheduled me to preach 2X a month (with 3X in May as there were 5 Sundays in May), and then a guest preacher once a month, and then Pastor Paul (who is such a blessing to have here in his retirement) once a month. The way the schedule ended up, however, was me preaching 4 out of 5 Sundays in May as Pastor Beth Gallen had a conflict with the last weekend in May. That being said, I was happy to have her preach the first weekend of June. I met with Pastor Beth the week prior to talk about worship along with all sorts of other things as we build relationships with CLU where Pastor Beth serves as campus pastor. May included a lot of sermon prep, but in June I will only be preaching one weekend.

Other

Women's Ministries

- I did a brief scripture introduction at our **May Word & Wine** and then turned it over to Carol Bjelland to share about how Fair Trade intersects with our faith - and how it was started by a woman and supports women. It was such an inspiring night.
- **Tea & Scones for Moms of Littles...** Jenelle and I hosted a tea and scones morning for Ascension moms who have had babies in the last year. We really want to encourage these moms and help tend their souls as well as help them nurture faith in their children. Each mom went home with a goodie bag that included a new moms' devotional, prayers that intersect with daily life (like a prayer for "The Changing of Diapers"), and some self-care items for moms. We also had moms complete a survey as we hope to build more opportunities for these moms - and then expand to other moms as well!



Moms of babies gathered for tea & scones.

Public Sphere (Iskander/Grossman Civil Trial) In my last report, I mentioned that I testified in the Iskander/Grossman Civil Trial. Since then, I returned to court on the day that Nancy Iskander testified, meeting her at the courthouse with another church/school mom and spending the day with her. Nancy was supported that day by both the Coptic priest from her church and by me who she described on the stand as her "Lutheran pastor" from her children's school. I talked to my clergy coach about pastoring through this case and what it means to be in the public sphere... pondering things like *how do we love and care for people through tragedy and speak the truth of Jesus?* It is so important how pastors lead through these things because so many are watching. I have spent a lot of time praying over all my words in regards to this case as thousands of people are hearing and/or seeing them.



Young Adults I attended the first young adults gathering organized by James Halvorson. I see my primary role with this group as encouraging and equipping leadership. I also can help connect young adults who don't know each other as they go to different services or are on the "fringes" of the church community - nearby, but only attending occasionally. The energy was enthusiastic as the young adults gathered at Little Calf in Thousand Oaks in May. They had many great ideas and a strong desire to grow their group and connect with God and others.

Weddings On May 16 I officiated at the wedding of Andrew Oschner and his new wife Tori. Andrew grew up at Ascension and his grandparents are long time members Brandt & Margy Oschner. It was a beautiful day in Big Bear. On June 5 I attended the wedding of Cameron Ruggiero and his new bride Gabby - another special day. The Ruggiero family is absolutely amazing and all of them are so faithful and so involved at the church. I am grateful every weekend for Cameron as he works in the tech booth. His wife Gabby was roommates with Britany who served as one of our high school mentors this year.

Church Staff Pastor Tim asked Kaylee and I to lead staff meetings while he was gone and encouraged us to try different things, noting that sabbatical isn't just about the pastor who is on leave, but for the staff to try some different rhythms as well. I have thoroughly enjoyed leading staff meetings with Kaylee. I am thankful for our staff and the unique gifts each of them brings to the table.

Seminary/Ordination Anniversaries In May of 1998, Tim & I graduated from Luther Seminary, so it was the 28th anniversary of our graduation. And then in June (me) - and Tim in August - of 1998, we began ordained ministry. I always pause and reflect this time of year on all our years of ministry. The overwhelming feeling I have as I reflect is joy and gratitude. It has truly been a blessing to serve as a pastor for 28 years. I look forward to celebrating big when we hit year 30!

Grace & Peace,
Pastor Chamie

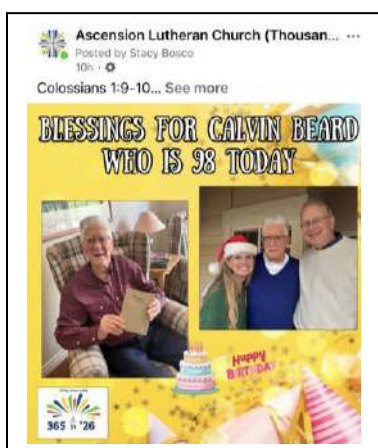
Church Council Report – Pastor Steve Herder - June 3, 2026



The month of May is filled with special spring days with Mother's Day, graduations, Confirmation, Pentecost, our Pentecost International Fair, Memorial Day, and the Southwest CA Synod Assembly. Your half-time pastor did work full-time this month, with so many great ministries going on, helping with worship often, including leading the music one Saturday evening, and preaching at it another Saturday. It was a blessing to be able to spend a few days with my parents in Appleton, WI, for Mother's Day Weekend. Then the end of the month was a delight with the International Fair and our synod assembly where we had organized the eighteen workshops.

Each month my work priority is leading our Senior Adult Ministries, working with a super team of ministers, and making as many home visits and calls as possible with our oldest members. Our oldest member, Skip Brenner at 99, now lives in Pasadena. I was able to visit her last month and this month. Thanks for your prayers for her. In May we did a Facebook post, with one of the 365 in '26 daily prayers, celebrating Cal

Beard's 98th birthday. My last visit with Pastor Larry was difficult for me with seeing the decline in his well-being, because of Parkinson's, at the board and care home on Las Flores. Thanks for your prayers for Chris and his daughters and the whole family.

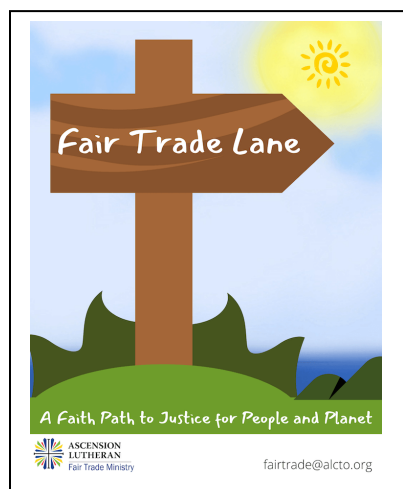


If you would like a visit from me or from one of our Eucharistic Ministers, let me know by either calling the church office (805-495-0406) or emailing me at pastorsteve@alcto.org. Did you know that you can request Communion to be brought to your home? Your pastors would ask you to let us know when you are in the hospital and when you return home. For updates on any prayer requests, please email me or our email prayer group coordinator, Linda Morrow.

Norm Guetschoff and his team lead the Christian Life Hours (simple worship services) at Royal Oaks Inn, Atria Grand Oaks, Sunrise in Westlake and at Sage Mountain. I lead one Christian Life Hour service at University Village Oak View. If you'd like to learn more about these outreach ministries, ask us. To learn more about: Eucharistic Ministry, visit with Pastor Ron Cox; GriefShare or Stephen Ministry, Norm Guetschoff; or the Tuesday food ministry for the needy, Tanya and Barry Disselhorst; or SAM's Tram, Bob Tokin; or 3M, minor maintenance ministry, Chris Daleiden. Our GriefShare group meets every Thursday at 1:00pm in the prayer chapel. Our new parish nurse is Debbie Kahn, and she will start her ministry with doing some blood pressure checks on some Sunday mornings. Thanks to Di Starzak for continuing to lead our first aid and AED training for staff and ushers. Our food pantry is open each Friday 10 to noon, and we are always in need of food donations. Thank you! Susanne writes a weekly devotion, and I post with a photo.



Our Global Ministries Team this past month dedicated our new “Fair Trade Lane” and its mission – to be “A Faith Path to Justice for People and Planet.” The location is the entryway to Founders Hall by the big upper parking lot. It was a full month for our Fair Trade ministries. See Carol’s report in this Council report. We also thank her for leading one of the workshops at our synod assembly and pray God’s blessings as she presents at the Equal Exchange national event in Boston this month.



Our GMT has decided on this fall’s Gifts of Hope: supporting our ELCA missionaries in Madagascar and Namibia, as well as health and education ministries in those countries. Pastor Kristen Engstrom from Madagascar will be with us the last weekend of July! Locally for Gifts of Hope we will support Harbor House and “Support for the Kids,” led by Ascension’s Cindy Niner. This ministry also supports the children of the Friends



of Fieldworkers. Gifts of Hope always supports ELCA World Hunger, God’s Global Barnyard. Our June monthly benevolence is for our annual work with Lutheran World Relief kits.

Quickly, here were some of the highlights unique to May:

- + On May 1 I subbed at our school, teaching three music classes. I have a renewed appreciation for all who teach!

- + That evening we hosted the CLU excellent and entertaining choral concert in our sanctuary.

- + Carol Bartell and Susie Lundeen Smuck had a very good class on planning a memorial service.

- + On May 4 I led the opening prayer for the Women's Monday Morning Bible Study gathering. Carolyn Coleman-Grady had an outstanding presentation/ Bible study.

- + Ascension sponsored a table at the National Day of Prayer breakfast at CLU, with an inspiring speech by Dr. John Nunes and a dynamic solo by Ms. Mo.

- + Attended the morning graduation at CLU and celebrated our graduating seniors!

- + On May 16 I led the memorial service at Ascension for Sherry Breitung. That evening I preached on John 17, Jesus' prayer for his disciples.

- + May 17 was a huge day for us with Confirmation service (and celebrations with families) and then the afternoon Great Music at Ascension concert where I welcomed Jens Lindemann and the UCLA Brass Ensemble.

- + My 19th anniversary of work here was celebrated in fun ways with our ECC on May 22. Thanks ECC children and staff, and director Brooke Costi, for all your gifts of artwork!



+ Special thanks to Michael Adinew, CLU, the maintenance team, Aidan Delkeskamp for the music, and all the people who hosted a table at our second annual Pentecost International Fair! It was an amazing event with 19 countries represented and so much delicious food! Mark your calendars for the next one, May 16, 2027.



+ Our synod assembly was May 29-30 in Pasadena, and we thank Deb Papageorge, Mary Wennes, Kim Overton, Kaylee Searway, and Carol Bjelland for representing Ascension. Pastors Scott and Melissa also had large parts in leading our assembly. Our guest speakers were Pastor Khader El-Yateem who leads our ELCA global ministries, and Krish O'Mara Vignarajah who leads Global Refuge. I'm happy to report that all 18 workshops that I coordinated happened without a hitch.



+ The month finished in good ways on May 31 with the faith quilts to high school seniors and that afternoon a major fundraiser event in Beverly Hills for Global Refuge.



A personal note: Julie and I will be on vacation June 27 to July 6 to Alaska with long-time friends. My next report may be the combination of June and July. Have a blessed summer, everyone! Thanks for your prayers, and you are in our prayers and love.

The family photo (from May 13) is from my parents' senior living residence dining room in Appleton, WI, with my sister and her husband. Julie's mom, Mardie, moves to University Village in June!

June 2026

God bless you in your daily Bible reading and prayers
 The Thursday to Sunday readings are to prepare you for weekend worship.
 The Monday - Wednesday readings are for our meditation as we
 pray through the book of Colossians. Take time to contemplate the meaning
 of each phrase. Share your faith with others.



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
Prayers for Pastor Tim on his sabbatical through July 5th	1 Today is Pastor Tim's 23 rd work anniversary here! <i>Colossians 2:1-3</i>	2 June monthly benevolence: LWR Kits <i>Colossians 2:4-5</i>	3 God bless all celebrating birthdays this month! <i>Colossians 2:6-7</i>	4 Blessing to all students & teachers & staff as they finish <i>Hosea 5:15-6:6</i>	5 Last Day of School! <i>Psalms 50:7-15</i>	6 10 am Teas & Scones for moms of littles <i>Romans 4:13-25</i>
7 Adult Ed class by our Foundation 10:30 am <i>Matthew 9:9-13, 18-26</i>	8 Prayers of thanksgiving for all our music ministries & Tech Team <i>Colossians 2:8</i>	9 Thankful for Kaylee Searway's many ministries <i>Colossians 2:9-10</i>	10 God bless our school and ECC leaders, Rich Gregory & Brooke Costi <i>Colossians 2:11-12</i>	11 Prayers for Carol Bjelland and our Fair Trade ministries <i>Exodus 19:2-8a</i>	12 Prayers for Friends of Fieldworkers ministries <i>Psalms 100</i>	13 Prayers of comfort for family & friends of Pastor Willis Moerer <i>Romans 5:1-8</i>
14 <i>Flag Day</i> Prayers for our children and youth ministries <i>Matthew 9:35-10:8</i>	15 Pray for our Youth Leadership Camp this week <i>Colossians 2:13-14</i>	16 Food ministry with Harbor House <i>Colossians 2:15-17</i>	17 God bless our Youth Leadership Team <i>Colossians 2:18-19</i>	18 Thankful for our finance staff, Mike Marvin & Camryn Lomeli <i>Jeremiah 20:7-13</i>	19 <i>Juneteenth</i> Pray for all who are treated unjustly <i>Psalms 69:7-18</i>	20 World Refugee Day www.globalrefugee.org <i>Romans 6:1b-11</i>
21 <i>Father's Day</i> Rev. Dr. John Nunes preaching <i>Matthew 10:24-39</i>	22 Prayers for all our support groups that meet on campus <i>Colossians 2:20-23</i>	23 Thankful for our quilters for LWR <i>Colossians 3:1</i>	24 We thank Linda Morrow for leading our email prayer group <i>Colossians 3:2-3</i>	25 Thankful for Stacy Bosco, Diane Kusnierek & Carolyn Bahr <i>Jeremiah 28:5-9</i>	26 Prayers for our Friday Food Pantry for our neighbors <i>Psalms 89:1-4, 15-18</i>	27 Prayers for all on summer vacations <i>Romans 6:12-23</i>
28 Grandparents Sunday Prayers for our congregational meeting today <i>Matthew 10:40-42</i>	29 Prayers for Vacation Bible School "Adventures in Rome" <i>Colossians 3:4-6</i>	30 Prayers for Mesa Farm in Ojai <i>Colossians 3:7-10</i>	alcto.org (805) 495-0406	alecc.org	alschool.org	ascensionfoundation.org 16-30

Attendance

We had a special worship service at 10:00 am on May 24, 2026 for Pentecost! We had 384 people in the worship service, and then an amazing Pentecost Fair! There were many countries represented, with delicious food and decorations everywhere. Very special thanks to Michael Adinew for coordinating the event and for all of the volunteers that shared their culture with us. Our wonderful youth participated by passing around trays of food. It was very kind of CLU to lend us flags to display booth at the tables and along the entrance. It was a very joyful event!

Last month I reported a decline in 6-week average attendance: we had decreased from 433 to 396. I pleased to report for the last six weeks, excluding the Pentecost celebration, we have returned to 422 average worship attendees per weekend. Let's keep inviting and sharing the Good News!

Maintenance

Students completed the academic year at the day school on Friday, June 5th, and our wonderful school admin team was already packing up their offices and getting prepared for construction to start Monday, June 8th. It's now June 10th, and much of the demo is complete! It's amazing how much of the campus has transformed in just a couple of days. By the time council meets there will be more progress made to the new reception area, new classroom, copier room conversion to offices, and exterior restroom renovations. Our maintenance team has moved their supplies out of the maintenance closet next to fourth grade and moved it into a new maintenance shed near the garden.

Tech Upgrade

We've migrated away from the church's on premise server and we are accessing our documents through One Drive and Share Point. It's improved our ability to work remotely on documents we could previously only access while on the network. The next phase for the church improves our cyber security by increasing security measures and limiting work on non-company devices. The school's migration away from their on premise server is still planned for this summer. I've worked with Ashley Babich to secure the necessary devices for the coming academic year and plan for the mass device updates this summer.

Finance

I am happy to say that our 2024-2025 audit is complete and available to be viewed at the church office if you are interested. We have signed the engagement letter for the 2025-2026 audit to commence as soon as the fiscal year ends.

Thank you for your grace and understanding regarding the change in plans from enrolling into State Disability Insurance (SDI) alone and approving for us to enroll in both SDI and Unemployment Insurance (UI), as the Employment Development Department does not allow us to enroll in one without the other. We try to plan ahead and avoid needing council votes by email, but we appreciate your quick response. Camryn has worked tirelessly today on the submittal process with the EDD's online portal. There have been illogical loops within the multifactor authentication that did not allow us to log in, phone calls to support with long wait times, opposing advice on which forms are required...Camryn is persistent and brave!

While Camryn has been working with the EDD Mike has been diligently trying to close May. We're not quite there yet: some school personnel changes and year end activities have taken all three of us on "side quests" we did not plan for. In very positive news: Camp Discovery has so many signups that Jessica Placas needed to find

additional staff to support the program. The team is here training this week, and the students will start on Monday. It will be an amazing summer!

Human Resources Matters

As I mentioned in the SDI enrollment update, summer comes with wage changes for about 122 employees across the TK-8, ECC, and Church. I've completed most of the TK-8 and church ones; the ECC remains. I've prepared performance reviews for almost all of my eight full-time direct reports. I hope to meet with each one over the next two weeks. Employee Handbooks will likely need to wait until I finish reviews and present the budgets at the Congregational Meeting at the end of June.

Thank you,

Kaylee Searway.

Director of Operations





Brooke Costi, Director
School Board Report
June 2026

Enrollment

We have 146 students currently enrolled at ALECC for our eight-week summer program. We have 14 Caterpillar 1s, 14 Caterpillar 2s, 15 Butterflies, 15 Honeybees, 14 Ladybugs, 16 Bumblebees, 14 Hummingbirds, 15 Dragonflies, 19 Fireflies, and 10 Praying Mantises. Our Parent & Me class does not meet during summer.

The families can sign up by week for summer. After week 3, we drop in the Praying Mantis classroom to about 3-4 children a day; We will combine this room with Fireflies. We have many of these children attending Camp Discovery at the Day School.

Staff

We have 30 staff members at ALECC, and 6 subs. We have hired two new teachers who start this month. We are excited to welcome them to ALECC! They will be joining our infant team and 2's team. We are finalizing our hiring for the Fall in the upcoming weeks.

Ongoing Work at ALECC

Summer School

Summer school is off to a wonderful start! The children are so excited to spend their days outside doing water play. Each week has a theme for the week – Camping Week, Under the Sea, Music Week, Safari Week, Building & Construction Week, Western Week, Transportation & Travel, & Luau Week! Each week has a fun dress up opportunity such as Pajama Day, Hat Day, Band Tee, Hawaiian Attire, & more. We will also have many hands-on experiences for the children with Captain Carl, Beat Buds, Tawni's Petting Zoo, and our annual 4th of July parade. We are excited for the next 8 weeks!

Registration

We've had a very successful registration season, with strong enrollment numbers, and we're looking forward to an excellent 2026–2027 school year. We are continuing to tour and add people to our waitlist. We have a few Cat 1, Cat 2, Two's spots available. Currently, most of our 2's, 3's, and 4's classrooms are full. Our Parent & Me program has a lot of interest for the next year.

End of the Year Party for Families & Staff

For Families:

On Wednesday, May 27th, we hosted our ALECC families in the back parking lot to celebrate and thank them for

an amazing year. The event was a huge success! Families enjoyed delicious tacos, face painting, fruit pops, and bounce houses, all while embracing the fun summer theme.

Everything ran smoothly, and it was wonderful to see so many families come together to celebrate. A special thank you goes to Brittani for making this event possible and for all the hard work, planning, and coordination that brought it to life.

For Staff:

On Friday, May 29th, we took our ALECC teachers to celebrate the end of the school year by going to Dave & Busters! We had our own room, lots of yummy food, and unlimited games. Throughout the event, teachers were laughing, connecting, and enjoying time together outside of the classroom. It was a joy to witness them. We are so grateful for the dedication, hard work, and heart our teachers bring to ALECC every day, and it was wonderful to celebrate them as another successful school year!



May In-Service Days

We have had a very successful two May in-service days. We had an important staff meeting to discuss the school year. I was able to share the parent survey results with them. It was nice for them to be appreciated and hear feedback. We were able to have great discussions regarding some improvements.

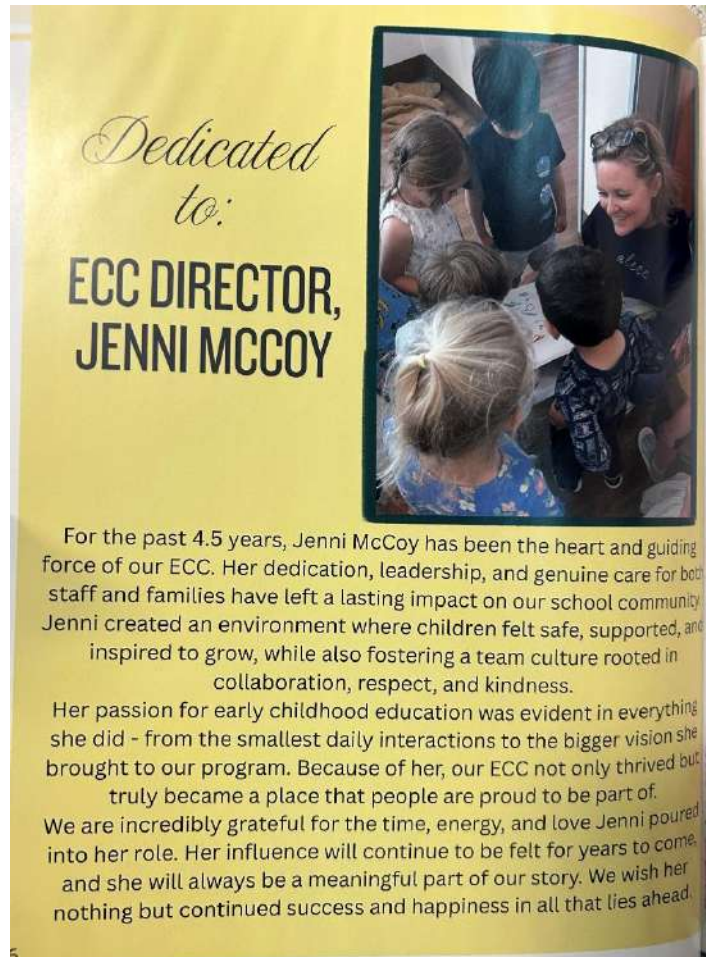


On Friday, we presented our teachers with special superlative awards to recognize their unique contributions and personalities. The excitement in the room was contagious as each teacher heard their name called. It was wonderful to see how much the awards meant to them. Many teachers immediately laminated their certificates and proudly displayed them in their classrooms or on their classroom windows, making them a fun and meaningful addition to their classroom décor.

This was another incredible idea from Brittani! Seeing the teachers' reactions made all the late-night preparation worthwhile.

Yearbook Dedication

Each year the ECC picks an individual to dedicate the yearbook. This year's choice was a no-brainer that we dedicated the yearbook to Jenni McCoy. We are so grateful for her leadership and everything that she has done for us at ALECC. This was a special way to end her time at Ascension. We wrote her a note inside the yearbook and shipped it off to Texas to Jenni. She sent us the sweetest text when it came and said it made her whole week.



One Ascension at Work

On Friday, May 29th, was the Bridging Ceremony for our children transitioning from the ECC to the Day School. It was a wonderful event, and Amanda worked incredibly hard to make it so special.

Families from the ECC shared very positive feedback, and the children were excited to see their ECC teachers and meet their new Day School TK/K teacher. Rich sang with the children, and the children enjoyed making bracelets in the classroom.

Following the event, the Day School teachers met with the ECC teachers to learn more about the incoming students. They discussed each child's interests and favorite activities. This will help ensure a smooth transition and build strong connections before the start of the school year. I especially enjoyed getting to know the Day School Teachers and learning more about their teaching approaches. This will be very helpful for me when parents ask what the best place for their child between ALECC is & The Day School.



We celebrated 19 years of Pastor Steve at Ascension! The teachers made posters and signs to decorate the yard as he came to sign to us on Friday.



Upcoming ALECC Events:

July 3rd – Fourth of July (School Closed)

July 24th – Last Day of Summer School

Ascension Lutheran School Board Agenda for 05.18.26. Our School Board Meeting will begin in the Multipurpose room of the ECC at 6:30 pm.

Call to Order by Ashley Steere at 1829
Mission Statements and School Motto read aloud

1. **Opening Devotion/Prayer** – by Anna Woodard: Focused on practicing gratitude> “Gratitude helps us to slow down and notice God’s blessings”.
2. Approval of Agenda – Approved as written
3. Approval of Agenda & Consent Agenda
 - Financial Report- deferred till June as April Finance Meeting occurs next week
 - Church Council Report- deferred till June as April Finance Meeting occurs next week
 - April Meeting Minutes - Approved
 - ECC Report - Approved
 - Principal’s Report – pulled: discussed enrollment numbers, will have a more exact number/final count at the June meeting. Currently estimating 187 with several applications pending. Last year we added 15 students during summer. Will get an updated number at the June meeting and plug into our matrix. Report Approved.
 - Admissions Report – Approved

Motion to approve consent agenda by Nelly second by Scott, no further discussion unanimously approved by board.

Old Business:

1. Discussion on any reports pulled from the Consent Agenda (see above)
2. Construction Update: Maintenance team has cleaned out the office and will be moving into shed upon Jeff’s return from vacation. Showed visual mock up of new admin office to board. Classroom construction set to start within first week or two of summer break. Rich will email updates to school during last week of school. Teacher’s lounge looking like it will most likely be in the dugout.
3. Bank of America Resolution- Board met virtually and was not given sheet for signatures, plan to follow up with Kaylee and meet next month 6/8/26 to complete form.

New Business:

1. Tuition Contracts: Board had a lengthy discussion on pros and cons, and chose not to update any verbiage or policy on tuition contracts.
2. Board Succession Plans: In need of secretary, president-elect, and church council rep for next year. Some board members asked questions about responsibilities and expectations. Will contact Ashley later in the month to discuss. The board encouraged Rich to move forward with working with an architect so that we can get more accurate projections and design renderings.
3. Hybrid Homeschool/Ascension Options: Gathered feedback on board interest in extending into hybrid homeschool options. Discussed pros and cons. Heather and Rich presented benefits and ideas to control it and balance time, finances, school resources etc. The board would like Heather and Christy Martino to move forward with the plan and then revisit it for a vote at the next meeting.

4. Strategic Plan- Rich presented on the strategic plan and then sought board feedback on the best way to present it to the church council, and then discussed summer plans and drafting up documents to strategic plan phases.
5. Parent Surveys- Brooke: Great feedback from parents with high satisfaction rates in all categories. Some good feedback was given from parents on programs they would like to see grow. Lesson Plans and curriculum were highly rated. Some great staff shoutouts were given, and big highlights and positive feedback were given on the outdoor space. Rich led and board followed in a big congratulations to Brooke, Brittany, Karen and the whole ECC team on an amazing job well done this school year during transitional periods.

Closing Prayer - Pastor Chamie

Adjournment at 2044



Wednesday, June 3, 2026

4-5:30 PM, Bethlehem Room

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

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

MEETING NOTES

WELCOME

Pastor Steve, meeting leader, welcomed all present: Andy Binsley, Beverly Selle, Carol Bjelland, Debra Papageorge, Ethel Jordan, Marcia Koenig, Michael Adinew, and Pastor Chamie Delkeskamp.

OPENING PRAYER – the prayer "Bread for the World" by Pastor Eugene Cho.

PENTECOST INTERNATIONAL FAIR

- The group applauded the "fantastic" international fair held on May 24 and thanked Michael Adinew for his leadership in the event, with 19 countries represented. 44 are in One Ascension!
- Ten "countries" are already booked for next year's event on May 16; it is anticipated that CLU will be even more involved next.
- Michael Adinew will be representing Ascension at CLU's World Fair in November.

SOUTHWEST CA SYNOD ASSEMBLY – May 29-30

- Ascension had 6 representatives in attendance; 5 are members of the GMT.
- Scott Maxwell-Doherty's outstanding leadership in planning the assembly was noted.
- Kim Overton gave a reading at the Saturday service.
- Pastor Steve led the workshop team for the assembly.
- Carol Bjelland was thanked for her workshop on Fair Trade at the assembly.
- Pastor Steve noted that assembly speakers Pastor Khader El-Yateem and Krish O'Mara Vignarajah were excellent.

GLOBAL REFUGE FUNDRAISER

- Ascension members Mary Wennes, Louise and Paul Evenson, Pastor Melissa Maxwell-Doherty, and Pastor Steve attended a Global Refuge fundraiser on May 31 in Beverly Hills.

FAIR TRADE

- Eighth grade students at Ascension School received gift bags of Fair Trade fruit and chocolate at their final Wednesday Morning Chapel.
- Carol Bjelland will be attending the Equal Exchange Annual Summit on June 2 in Norton MA and will be conducting a workshop about Ascension's Fair Trade Ministry.

- Recognition of Fair Trade's 25th anniversary year is continuing with special events planned for October. Articles highlighting the history of Ascension's Fair Trade Ministry continue in "This Week at Ascension." More details can be found in the June Fair Trade Report.

LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF

- LWR will be the recipient of the June special benevolence offering. Working on plans for the kits!
- The ALCTO Foundation gave a \$2,750 LWR Emergency Donation for the Middle East.

BRING KIDS BACK

- From Louise Evenson: "Bring Kids Back," an installation of 20,000 teddy bears representing the Ukrainian children that have been abducted by Russia. This is taking place on June 20, 12PM-4PM, 200 N. Grand Ave, LA.

GIFTS OF HOPE

- Possibly plan a trip related to one of the missions supported by GOH?
- Focus on one missionary for maximum impact
- Include a gift item like a bible whenever possible (model after ELCA Good Gifts?)
- Support the Missionary in Namibia
- Support Paster Kristin with supplies (ask her in July what she needs)
- Bibles are purchased locally in local languages
- **CONCLUSION** – Support the 6 projects on the handout from Pastor Carmen Retzlaff from the ELCA, 3 in Namibia, 3 in Madagascar
- Friends of Field Worker is now well established. Consider newer organization to focus on. Support for the Kids would be a local alternative with overlap in the community served. They serve the children in Friends of Fieldworkers. Ascension's Cindy Niner leads "Support for the Kids" <https://www.supportforthekids.net/>
- **CONCLUSION** – Replace Friends of Fieldworkers with Support for the Kids. Connect both organizations through our contacts.
- Christmas Gifts for Kids/Families was a popular in-kind giving project. Possibly list on Gifts of Hope form to document commitment for Christmas Gifts
- **CONCLUSION** -- Harbor House should continue to be supported.

ANNOUNCEMENTS and OTHER

- Pastors Kristin Engstrom and Carmen Retzlaff will be at Ascension the last weekend of July.
- There will be an upcoming Jubilee USA advocacy work in Orange County with Rep. Young Kim. The Jubilee Annual Report was circulated at the meeting.
- Healing to Hope, a US-based organization dedicated to promoting the emotional and psychological healing of Palestinian children and caregivers. HealingtoHope.org This ministry comes recommended to us by former presiding bishop Mark Hanson.
- El Salvador and Peru partner updates were given by Pastor Steve.

Upcoming Meetings

No GMT meeting in July. Let's focus on the last weekend of July with Pastors Engstrom and Retzlaff. **August 5, Sept 2, Oct. 7, Nov. 4 and Dec. 2 are the meeting dates for GMT.**

Submitted by Ethel Jordan

Ascension Fair Trade Report

June 2026



Let's Be The Change We Wish to See!

Fair Trade Fruit for Ascension's 8th Grade Class

Continuing the "tradition" started last year, Fair Trade fruit was given to Ascension's 8th Grade Class in their final Wednesday Morning Chapel. This year, Fair Trade pears and chocolate were added to Fair Trade bananas. We congratulate the graduates!



Equal Exchange Annual Summit, June 12th, Wheaton College, Norton MA

Equal Exchange staff, customers, partners & friends will have the opportunity to learn about Ascension's Fair Trade Ministry. Carol Bjelland will be conducting a workshop, sharing the history and faith background of Ascension's Fair Trade Ministry, the growth of the Ministry over 25 years and the many ways the Ministry connects with the children, youth & adults of Ascension's Congregation, School and ECC. (Note: Equal Exchange is the oldest (1986) & the largest Fair Trade provider group)

Fair Trade Lane – June 2026

Fair Trade Lane will be open June 20th & 21st. Fair Trade Lane will not be open in July.



FAIR TRADE LANE
WILL BE OPEN

Saturday, June 20th
5:45 - 6 PM & 7-7:15 PM

Sunday, June 21st
8:30 - 9 AM, 10 - 10:30 AM & 11:30 - 11:45 AM

EVERYONE'S INVITED!
The double doors to the lobby will be open

Ascension Fair Trade's 25th Anniversary

The history of Ascension's Fair Trade Ministry continues to be shared in articles in ***This Week At Ascension***.

A special wine & food event will be held October 17th (3-5 PM) & special celebrations October 15th and October 18th.

Ascension Fair Trade will lead an Adult Ed Class on October 11th.

Everyone is invited to volunteer to help with Anniversary & other events. Contact Carol; fairtrade@alcto.org.



EE2026 SUMMIT

Schedule of Events

Thursday, June 11

Dorm Check-in

3:00pm–10:00pm, Pine Hall

Please let us know if you cannot arrive in time. We will have staff available until 10:30pm for late check-in upon request.

Welcome Dinner & Drinks

6:00pm–7:00pm, Chase Dining Hall

Drinks until 9:30pm

Interfaith Social Hour

6:45pm–7:45pm, Chase Dining Hall Square

“American Agitators” Film Showing

8:00pm–9:15pm, Watson Art Center, Experimental Theater

Friday, June 12

Dorm Check-in

7:30am–8:45am, Pine Hall

Breakfast

7:30am–8:45am, Chase Dining Hall

Welcome

9:00am–9:30am, Chase Dining Hall

Keynote Address: Santiago Paz López

9:30am–10:45am, Chase Dining Hall

Need help?

Call Frankie: 508-427-5225 or email: organizing@equalexchange.coop

Thursday, 5pm–11pm
Friday, 7am–7pm
Saturday, 7am–9:30am

equalexchange.coop/summit



Sign onto WiFi:
WheatonGuest

Workshop Session 1

11:00am–12:00pm, Meneely Classrooms

- Independence Matters with The Cornucopia Institute (*Meneely 102*)
- Industry Consolidation: A Closer Look at Your Options in the Grocery Aisle (*Meneely 105*)
- Small Farmer Tea: Building an Alternative Model From Crop to Cup (*Meneely 207*)
- From the U.S. to Canada, Equal Exchange and La Siembra Forge a New Co-op Model (*Meneely 209*)
- Ascension's Lutheran Fair Trade Ministry: 25 Years of Faith and Justice (*Meneely 307*)
- 40 Years of Fair Trade: Reflections and Lessons (*Meneely 301*)

Lunch

12:15pm–1:15pm, Chase Dining Hall

Workshop Session 2

1:30pm–2:30pm, Meneely Classrooms

- Civil Rights and Land Ownership: A Story of New Communities (*Meneely 102*)
- P6: Cooperation among Cooperatives (*Meneely 105*)
- Small Farmer Tea: Building an Alternative Model From Crop to Cup (*Meneely 207*)
- From the U.S. to Canada, Equal Exchange and La Siembra Forge a New Co-op Model (*Meneely 209*)
- The Small Farmer Fund: Investing Beyond Trade (*Meneely 307*)
- 40 Years of Fair Trade: Reflections and Lessons (*Meneely 301*)

Workshop Session 3

3:00pm–4:00pm, Meneely Classrooms

- From Crisis to Care: How We Can Support Survivors of Sexual Violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo (*Meneely 102*)
- P6: Cooperation among Cooperatives (*Meneely 105*)
- The Work of Generations: A Cooperative Story of Banana Growing
**Presented in Spanish with translation* (*Meneely 209*)
- The Small Farmer Fund: Investing Beyond Trade (*Meneely 307*)
- Equal Exchange and the Midterm Elections (*Meneely 301*)

State of Equal Exchange

4:15pm–5:15pm, Chase Dining Hall

Dinner

6:00pm–7:00pm, Chase Dining Hall

Party

7:00pm–11:00pm, Chase Dining Hall

Saturday, June 13

Check-out

7:30am–8:45am, Pine Hall

Breakfast

7:30am–8:45am, Chase Dining Hall

Roastery Tour Optional

8:30am, Equal Exchange HQ
50 United Drive, West Bridgewater, MA

Due to the high level of interest in the roaster tour, we have added three timeslots with 30 spaces per slot. If you would like to sign up for a roaster tour, please do so at the check-in desk on Thursday or Friday. It will be first-come, first-served.

- Slot 1: 8:30am Shuttle leaves 8am, Wheaton parking lot 2
- Slot 2: 9:30am Shuttle leaves 9am, Wheaton parking lot 2
- Slot 3: 10:30am Shuttle leaves 10am, Wheaton parking lot 2

WORKSHOP DESCRIPTIONS

Ascension's Lutheran Fair Trade Ministry: 25 Years of Faith and Justice

MENEELY 307 | WORKSHOP SESSION 1

Presented by Carol Bjelland, Ascension Fair Trade Ministry Leader

The seeds of an idea to bring Fair Trade to Ascension Lutheran Church, Thousand Oaks, CA, were planted in the Fall of 2001. Those seeds have grown and flourished. In this workshop, Carol Bjelland will share the history of Fair Trade at Ascension and current highlights of the Ministry as it celebrates its 25th Anniversary this year, including the many ways the Ministry connects and engages with the children, youth & adults of Ascension Congregation as well as the students, families, and staff of its School and Early Childhood Center. Ascension's Fair Trade Ministry "resides" on Fair Trade Lane, home to shelves filled with chocolate, tea, coffee, nuts, dried fruit, and olive oil from Equal Exchange and other Ministry Fair Trade partners, and colorful art welcoming all to this little place at the intersection of Faith and Fair Trade.

40 Years of Fair Trade: Reflections and Lessons

MENEELY 301 | WORKSHOP SESSION 1 & 2

Presented by Rink Dickinson, Co-Founder & Co-Director, and Rob Everts, Co-Director Emeritus

On May 1, Equal Exchange celebrated 40 years of building an alternative to the prevailing practices of international trade, a model steeped in inequity. With inspiration from European alternative trade organizations (ATO's), we began purchasing coffee, and later many other commodities on recognized "fair trade" terms with cooperatives of small scale farmers.

In this workshop, we will look closely at the role cooperatives have played in building alternative trade, what we have achieved, where we have failed, and we will try to identify the key elements and decisions that have enabled Equal Exchange to maintain independence and prevail on our own terms in an often hostile capitalist market.

Civil Rights and Land Ownership: A Story of New Communities

MENEELY 102 | WORKSHOP SESSION 2

Presented by Paul Jones, Vice Chair of New Communities at Cypress Pond

When you own the land you farm, you decide what to plant, when to harvest, and which maintenance methods to use. More importantly, you're the one who controls your own livelihood. For Black farmers in the United States, land ownership is tied to freedom. But systematic racial discrimination has pushed many out of agriculture. Equal Exchange's partners at New Communities, who supply our fair trade pecans, know the power of land—and these challenges—firsthand. Learn about the rich and storied history of the movement to secure land rights and agricultural livelihoods for Black farmers in Southwest Georgia since the 1960s.

Come hear about New Communities from Paul and get a chance to ask questions and reflect on the ongoing work to sell these pecans under the Equal Exchange brand.

The Small Farmer Fund: Investing Beyond Trade

MENEELY 301 | WORKSHOP SESSION 2 & 3

Presented by: Dary Goodrich, Chocolate Supply Chain Manager, Equal Exchange, and Paola Coronado, Value Chain and Project Specialist, Equal Exchange

Since Equal Exchange started, we have always been so much more than a trade partner. We have directed additional project funds to farmer co-ops that we trade with to build stronger co-op institutions, increase productivity and quality, and build resiliency. These projects have had a deep impact on farmers. Last year, when USAID funding was abruptly cut, millions of dollars in planned co-op and community-led work disappeared overnight. Like many organizations, we were left asking, what now? Our answer was to keep finding ways to do this work through the Small Farmer Fund. These are smaller and more targeted farmer-driven projects. Join us for a behind-the-scenes look at what this next chapter looks like on the ground. In this workshop, we'll share updates from our partners and their projects and the ways you can help sustain this work.



COMMUNICATION UPDATE FOR JUNE

While the Ascension campus undergoes changes this summer, our online world will be undergoing a bit of construction as well. Our websites were created using the Divi Builder for WordPress. This has been a stable and reliable format for years, with relatively small updates. However, this year Divi has totally rewritten the Builder to keep up with changing technology in WordPress. So our websites must be changed over to the new version and now is the best time to do it.

My husband, Dominick, will be doing virtual heavy lifting. We don't know how hard this will be or how much change it will entail. We will rely on our trusty Claude account to survey the internet and see what kinds of problems people may be having with this transition and how to avoid them, and other tips to make the process as seamless as possible.

We plan to begin with the Ascension Foundation website, then probably the archive site, then ALCTO.org and ThisWeekatAscension.org.

If all goes according to plan, users won't notice anything going on. This is separate and apart from content considerations – but it will provide an excellent opportunity to make notes of needed content updates and other changes that should be taken care of as well.

Wishing everyone a good summer,

Stacy Smith Bosco