

Ascension Lutheran Church

Annual Report 2024



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Ascension Lutheran Church History

On January 6, 1960, Rev. Maynard G. Halvorson was called to lead a new Lutheran Church being established in Ogden, Utah. On September 18, 1960, the congregation was formally incorporated. The first worship service of the new Ascension Lutheran Church was held in the Horace Mann School Auditorium located at 1300 9th St., Ogden, UT. There were 70 people present at that service.

December 1960 was a busy month for the new church. On December 4th the first group of charter members was received. There were 99 people in attendance at this service. On Christmas Day, Ascension Lutheran Church had its first Baptism Ceremony. There were eleven (11) received in baptism that day.

On Sunday January 29, 1961, at 12:15 p.m. the Groundbreaking Ceremony for the new Ascension Lutheran Church Building was held. Construction on the church building was started on February 1, 1961. Builders Inc. of Ogden led by Charles Peterson, SLC Architect, was responsible for designing and building the new church.

On Sunday, September 17, 1961, the Charter Membership Drive was closed and the first worship service in the new building took place. There were 116 people in attendance.

The Charter Members of Ascension Lutheran Church are:

*Mr. Cole J Amon – Jalene, Holt, Brad
Mr. & Mrs. Samuel B. Austin
Mr. & Mrs. George Balling – Kent, Barbara, Bruce
Mr. & Mrs. Hamlin Burtness - Norman
Mrs. Bernice Douglas – Marsha, Scott, Paul
Mr. & Mrs. Gerald Evertsen – Vickie, Raeanne, Gerrie
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Gessner – Pamela, Tammy, Sherry
Mr. & Mrs. Ulric Gibson
Mr. & Mrs. Leonard Holland – Lauritz, Eric
Mr. & Mrs. Tom Herem – Carol, Phyllis, Gloria
Mr. & Mrs. Jerry Hooper – Gary, Steven
Rev. & Mrs. Maynard G. Halvorson
Mr. & Mrs. Ralph Hastings
Mr. Vernon Kalvestrand
Mr. & Mrs. George Lupcho – Lance
Mr. & Mrs. Harmond McGhghy – Robert, Billy, Deanna, Joyce, Ronald
Mr. & Mrs. Victor Moen – Reginald, Francine
Mr. & Mrs. Oscar Oswald
Mr. & Mrs. Eric Olafson – Robert, Alf, Marianna, Eric, Jr.
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Pearson – Lynne Ann
Mr. & Mrs. Gus Peterson – Stephen
Mrs. Maxine Pierce – Kathleen, Jeff, Amy
Mrs. Tilly Pulver – Terry, David
Mr. & Mrs. Ervin Quale – Thomas
Miss Judy Routhstrom
Mr. & Mrs. James Rustad – Robert, Richard
Mr. & Mrs. Franz Schnitzler– Ellen, Frank
Mrs. Joyce Tedford – Michael, Gary, Kelly, Melonie
Mr. and Mrs. Floyd Thompson
Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Wormald – Wayne, Cheryl*

On December 17, 1961, the first Adult Confirmation class was completed and seven (7) were confirmed. Later, May 27, 1962, the first Youth Confirmation class was completed and seven (7) were confirmed.

The Farewell Service for Pastor Halvorson and his family was held on March 22, 1964. Ascension Lutheran Church called Rev. William Jeffs of Phoenix, AZ, to be the second pastor and he was installed on June 1, 1964. Pastor Jeffs left Ascension a little over a year later to assume duties elsewhere on August 22, 1965.



On August 10, 1965, Rev. Robert Berndt was called to be the third pastor. He was installed on October 17, 1965. He gave his farewell sermon on April 20, 1969, and then left to assume duties in Badger, SD.

On March 22, 1969, Rev. Glenn Pedder from Dubuque, IA, accepted the call to Ascension Lutheran Church. He began his ministry in Ogden on June 15, 1969. It was under his leadership that the institution of the Bethel Series Bible Study Program was approved in a congregational meeting. Pastor Pedder left Ascension to become a Chaplain in the U.S. Army on June 25, 1972.

In August of 1972, Rev. E Paul Hoefer began his service as Ascension's fifth pastor. He served in Ogden for two and a half years and left for a call to Arcadia, CA, in January of 1975.

On April 26, 1976, Rev. Garland E. Gotoski, from Manchester, MS, was called. He began his eight (8) years ministry at Ascension on July 1, 1976. Rev. Gotoski helped the congregation develop and firmly establish itself in Christian ministry in northern Utah. With God's help the congregation began to flourish and its membership grew.

Pastor Gotoski was a man of "many talents." For example, during Lenten Services in 1977, Pastor Gotoski portrayed five (5) men who played major roles in the trial and crucifixion of Jesus. Each man was portrayed in authentic costume with appropriate settings.

In July of 1977, Ascension held its first Outdoor Worship Service. This was coupled with a Camporee that was held at Monte Cristo, UT.

During the period from 1978 to 1980, several cosmetic changes at Ascension:

- New Chancel furniture was donated by the Henderson family in memory of their son Samuel Eli.
- A storage and a Youth Room was added to the church building.
- A new church organ was given by an anonymous donor.
- Excess land was sold to Mountain Church of God.
- The congregation held a successful fund-raising event that allowed for new carpet in the Sanctuary and new pews to be installed in the Sanctus.

On April 14, 1981, a United States flag was flown over the Capitol Building in Washington D.C. This flag was flown in memory of Samuel B. Austin, a member of Ascension.

Ascension's first Lutheran Lay Renewal Weekend was held on September 17 and 18, 1982. Will L. Helms was general chairman of this faith-building celebration.

Pastor Gotoski retired from the ministry on September 4, 1984. He planned to settle on a cattle ranch in Oklahoma, as soon as his wife, Frieda, was in better health.

Ascension Lutheran Church was Debt-Free in September 1984. This was a landmark for the church.

Rev. Steven Wigdahl, who graduated from Luther Northwestern Theological Seminary, was serving as an Assistant Pastor of Zion Lutheran Church in Salt Lake City when he was called on July 5, 1984, to be the pastor at Ascension. He was installed on September 9, 1984. Ascension Lutheran Church was still a small, but stable congregation. During his fifteen-year ministry, Ascension's membership grew significantly. Pastor Wigdahl brought his musical talents to enrich our lives. He sang and played the guitar.

The congregation was able to purchase more than five acres of land at 1105 North Washington Blvd. for the remarkable cost of \$36,000, with the property being in the heart of a very rapidly growing part of the greater Ogden community.

The year 1985 marked the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of Ascension Lutheran Church. The Celebration Worship Service was held in the morning on September 15, 1985, and an Open House was held from 2-4 p.m. that afternoon. The Ascension Choir and Bell Choir were active during this period in the church's history.

During 1993 and 1994, Linda Pearson interned as an Associate in Ministry and then was called to serve as the Associate in Ministry at Ascension.

In 1995, a building program was led by congregational member, Bruce Engelby, in collaboration with the architectural firm of Sanders and Hermann. The gifted and inspired artistic elements of our Sanctuary were created by Ernst Schwidder of Seattle, WA. The result is the beautiful building that we worship in today. Ascension Lutheran Church held its first worship service in its new church building on Sunday, August 13, 1995.

In 1996, Jan Krakow was called as an Associate in Ministry at Ascension.

In 1998, members of the Long-Range and Goal Implementation Committee, led by Dale Ostley, went to the Lutheran Camp in Eden to begin the process of developing long-range plans for the church. This process resulted in Mission and Vision Statements being adopted by the congregation on May 3, 1998.

Mission Statement

We are a community of Christians, saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, who calls us to spread the Word, to love and to serve one another, and to share our journey of faith.

Vision Statement

With the help of God, all members will:

- build a thriving youth program for grades pre-K to 12,
- participate in worship and local/world ministry,
- be connected in some type of fellowship,
- build strong ecumenical ties with area churches, and
- foster the spiritual growth of one another.

In 2000, Ascension called the pastoral team of Rev. M. David Kiel and Rev. Renee Kiel to lead the next phase of our ministry. Their work began among us on July 17, 2000. Not long after their arrival, Ascension witnessed significant growth, welcoming several new visiting families to the congregation every week.

During that year, a windstorm caused \$69,000 in damage to the church building. David Borchert led the reconstruction team. This was also the first year that The Great GRACE Race 5K Run and 2-Mile Walk was held.

Under the Kiels' leadership, the church became an "active" place. There were backpacking trips, canoe trips, and other outdoor activities. All the groups, Men's, Youth, Quilters, ELCW, Choirs, Bell Choirs, etc. grew and made great contributions in the church and community.

In 2001, Ascension conducted a Capital Fund Appeal Campaign, "Building a Faith-Filled Legacy," led by Executive Director, Jack Hilden. The appeal raised funds to begin work on the Campus Master Plan. The congregation was able to complete Phase 1 of the Community Life Center. This included completion of the building shell, three finished classrooms with self-contained restrooms for Sunday School use, the pre-school classroom, the pre-school director's office, a public restroom facility, and an expanded church parking lot.

In September 2004, Ascension Lutheran Church opened a Christian pre-school welcoming pre-school aged children of all faith traditions and of no faith traditions. In its fourth year, there were four teachers and four aides serving sixty students. The pre-school had operated under the direction of Laura Fuller until the 2008-09 school year. Church member, Marilyn Roberts, donated the funds to provide the pre-school with a large playground and picnic area. She donated the funds in memory of her husband, Gene Roberts.

In February 2005, Ascension's Pastor Renee Kiel, a U.S. Army Reserve Chaplain, was activated for service in our nation's military. After preparing with a unit to be mobilized to Iraq, the orders were then changed. Pastor Renee was deployed, instead, to serve in Afghanistan under the "Operation Enduring Freedom" campaign. She served troops at many FOB's (forward operating bases) and at the Kandahar Air Field in the southern part of the country during the first part of her deployment. She served a Bagram Air Base, in the later part of her deployment and returned as active Pastor of Ascension in August 2006.

October 2005 found the people of Ascension entering a 2005 Capital Fund Appeal by Kairos & Associates. Executive Director, Layne Carver, led the campaign, entitled "The Center of Our Lives." The focus of this appeal was to center the congregation spiritually as people of God, reflecting upon scripture and prayer for personal and corporate study. The six-week Bible Study, scripture and worship themes focused on what it meant to be chosen, saved, loved, called, gifted, and empowered children of God, keeping Christ as "The Center of Our Lives." This foundation and focus, with God's help, assisted the congregation as a community of individuals and as a gathered community of believers. A people seeking God's guidance in preparing to commit our gifts to our God, for His glory, through the mission and vision of ministry in His name, at Ascension.

During the summer of 2006, the congregation of Ascension Lutheran Church faced a time of deep loss and mourning when its beloved Director of Youth Ministry went missing in the Sawtooth Mountains of ID. Jon Francis, a 24-year-old from Stillwater, MN, and graduate of Augustana College, accepted the Youth Minister position. It was his first job out of college. While serving Ascension, he took a summer position as a counselor at Luther Heights Bible Camp (LHBC) near Ketchum, ID. On July 15, 2006, Jon, an expert hiker took advantage of a day off and left the Bible Camp for an intensive day of hiking and bouldering up Grand Mogul Mountain. He did not return from the outing. Many members of Ascension accompanied Jon's parents, family, and friends in Idaho and spent countless hours for two summers searching Grand Mogul. The search employed hundreds of volunteers along with professional search and rescue resources. On July 24, 2007, the family achieved the recovery of Jon's remains on the east face of the mountain. His death was determined to be the result of a fall. Jon was commended to God and laid to rest at home in Minnesota on October 9, 2007. The youth and community of Ascension are still grieving the loss of Jon. His position has not been filled.

Pastor David Kiel resigned his position as Senior Pastor of Ascension Lutheran Church, due to personal reasons in 2007. Since the call to the Kiels was co-terminus, the congregation voted to extend a solo call to Pastor Renee Kiel to serve the congregation.

The congregation of Ascension Lutheran Church raised funds independent of any capital campaign, with members and friends "buying squares of the gym floor" to complete the gymnasium. The gymnasium of the Community Life Center was dedicated between services in June 2008. This completed yet another phase of the Campus Master Plan of Ascension Lutheran Church.

Also, in 2008, Pastor Renee Kiel resigned her position as the congregation's solo pastor to answer a call for her and her husband from an ELCA Congregation in Iowa. Pastor Renee left the congregation on July 1, 2008. The church council held a special congregational meeting on July 12, 2008, to elect a Call Committee.

In August of 2009, Pastor Matt Muters was called to serve at Ascension Lutheran Church. He began structured Bible Studies. His musical talents gave great meaning to the service. He brought variety to the church services.

During Pastor Matt's time at Ascension, a focus on community could be seen in projects like the Christmas Bazaars, Garage Sales, the Cowboy Dinner, Community Food Drives, Baby Showers for the Ogden Pregnancy Care Center, Pancake Breakfasts, Youth Ski Trips, Trunk or Treat, Vacation Bible Schools and several other activities.

In 2010, the Mutual Ministry Team, Don Brown, Rhonda Joa, Layne Carver, Nancy Otto and Pastor Matt, met to review and revise the Mission Statement. The new Mission Statement,

Gathered and gifted to celebrate and share the love of Jesus.

This new Mission Statement was placed on the wall in the Narthex by Kelli Martin and Jeff Turner.

In April 2012, Drive-Through Prayer began. This ministry, led by Arliss Zimmerman, has reached many in the Ogden community. Each Saturday this group is involved in Bible Study and Prayer.

Later in November 2012, Elias Muters was born.

During Easter 2014, an Easter Vigil and Sunrise Service were held at the Outdoor Cross. The construction of this area was Ryan Reese's Eagle Scout project.

In November of 2014, Pastor Matt accepted a call to a church in Iowa to be closer to his dad, whose health was failing.

Pastor Eugene Zeller from Colorado became Ascension's Intentional Interim Pastor in January 2015.

Pastor Zeller guided the congregation through the Transition Process that was established by the Rocky Mountain Synod. The Transition Committee consisted of Lynn Benson, Eric Engelby, Judy Sherman, Babs Bezyack, Lillian Hughes, Mylitta Barrett, Bruce Maddox, Harold Brattland, John Williams, Sharen Kamp, and Pastor Gene Zeller. Church Historians were Sharen Kamp, Linda Allred, Paula Stuart, and Hazel Ann Linke. The historians established a visual timeline for Ascension's history that went around 3 walls in the Fellowship Hall. Each person added their name and date on the timeline for all the significant church events in their life. They were also able to fill in some important names and events. There were twenty-two (22) Team Meeting from Jan 22, 2015, Until November 2, 2015.

On March 22, 2015, we held a Meals and Memories event after church. The meal was a 1960 Sunday Dinner made by members of the congregation. The program was entitled, "This is Your Life – Ascension Lutheran Church." Our Core Values Statements were the following:

- * **Ascension Lutheran Church is a joyful liturgical and musical community nourished by Word and Sacrament. (Worship)**
- * **Ascension Lutheran Church is a welcoming community gathered to share insights, wisdom, strengths, and encouragement. (Fellowship)**
- * **Ascension Lutheran Church is a praying community conversing with God. (Prayer)**
- * **Ascension Lutheran Church believes the Bible to be the written Word of God. (Bible)**
- * **Ascension Lutheran Church believes the sermon is the proclaimed Word of God for this community at this time. (Sermon)**

Our Mission Statement was reviewed, it was determined that we would leave it as is:

Gathered and gifted to celebrate and share the love of Jesus.

Our Vision Statement was established to strengthen our sense of being the church together.

Ascension Lutheran Church is a welcoming, Bible-centered, praying congregation striving to become a thriving, multi-generational community serving all.

We completed our Ministry Site Profile in April of 2016 and sent it to the Synod. In June of 2016, we updated it. At that time, the Call Committee led by Kelly Martin began their work. On September 13, 2016, a compensation package was prepared for Pastor Susan Swanson. Eric Engelby, Kelly Martin, Don Brown, and Sharen Kamp served on that committee. Pastor Swanson came to visit. However, she took a call in another state.

It was in 2016 that Family Promise was introduced to the Ascension congregation, and it was determined that this would be an important ministry for the church. On March 11, 2017, volunteer and coordinator training was held and our first family was scheduled to come in late April of 2017.

Once again, the Call Committee reviewed the candidates and selected Pr. Rick Brenton for our church. Kelly presented his name to the Council on February 9, 2017. He came to visit the congregation. In the April 4, 2017, it was decided to Call Pr. Rick Brenton. He was installed on July 16, 2017.

In May the Council voted to have the Noah's Ark Mural on the Nursery Wall. In June of 2017, Ascension said "Farewell" to Pastor Gene Zeller.

In August, the council began to prepare for the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation. We planted a tree in Wittenberg, Germany, and a reciprocal tree at Ascension on October 29, 2017. Brigitte and Buzz Schultz traveled to Germany to plant our tree. It was planted at Luther's House on November 12, 2017.

In July 2020, Pastor Rick Brenton left Ascension.

Again, the call Committee went to work. In the fall of 2020, the Council invited Pr Debra Jimenez to visit our congregation. Because COVID was active at that time, we met for Sunday Services in the parking lot of the church. A call was extended to Pastor Debra and she and her husband, James, arrived in December of 2020. In 2020, to keep close communication with the congregation, Melinda Tolle began making Seek and Find puzzles to send in a daily email to the congregation. A picture/graphic with special meaning for the congregation and coloring pages for both adults and children were included.

In January 2021, the ALC Constitution updates were approved by the congregation. The Fill-the-Freezer ministry began. The new classroom in the CLC was dedicated. Ascension's first youth member was invited to serve on the Council. Twins, Lauren, and Ryan Gorsline shared that responsibility. On April 25th we celebrated Compassion Sunday at Ascension. Vacation Bible School was June 21 to 25. All this and much more was accomplished while COVID continued to ravage our nation.

In January 2022, the congregation Approved a Change in Call for Pastor Debra to an Open Call.

New ministries that began in 2022 included a Million Little Things Program, a Capital Campaign to replace the stucco on the church exterior, a church cookbook, and Lenten Suppers and Book discussions.

On September 2023, Family Promise officially purchased the west portion of the property for a permanent building to best serve the homeless families they service. The purchase price was \$100,000.

December 2024 was a very busy month. A new roof was placed on the church the first week of the month. Secondly, on December 16, there was the ceremonial groundbreaking for the Family Promise building.

This written history is the work of many. As creator of the Annual Report, I would like to especially like to thank Sharen Kamp and Pastor Debra Jimenez for all their help assembling this history -Nicole Shane

There is a record book that dates to 1960 in the office that has names of pastors, congregational members, baptisms, deaths of members, confirmands, and weddings. It is hand-written by the current pastor. That record book will be 65 years old this year. Feel free to ask to see this record.

Ascension Lutheran Church Ministry Staff

Presided by *Pastor Debra Jimenez*

Ascension Lutheran Church Council Members Voted in by Congregation



Your Church Council:

Debra Jimenez, Pastor
Cindy Day, President
Edith Cryts, Vice President
Nicole Shane, Secretary
David Filanda, Property Manager
Kelly Martin, Building Use and Family Promise
James Jimenez, Family Promise Liaison
Katie Young, KidzTown Liaison
Joanna Wolf
Stephanie Rhees

Leaders Appointed by Council

Sharen Kamp, Treasurer
Joanna Wolf, Assistant Treasurer
Cindy Day, Assistant Treasurer
Pat Refsdal, Financial Secretary
vacant, Assistant Financial Secretary
Jim Craig, ALC Property Manager

Ministry Staff

The Rev. Debra Jimenez, Pastor
Nancy Otto, Music Minister
Kamberlynn Washburn, Organist
Carol Jordan, Secretary
Gary Lewis, Custodian

PASTOR'S REPORT 2024

December 27, 2024



Dear Friends,

How lovely to call you friends; that is indeed the truth. You daily walk alongside me as together we embrace the blessings of our call to serve all God's people here in this place. As the year 2024 comes to a close, and we prepare to welcome a new year, I confess it seems that the time has flown by. Reflecting on this incredible year filled with so many blessings it is clear that God is present in this place, in this time, and in the life of this congregation.

Together, we have grieved the loss of loved ones and celebrated births. We walk with one another through declining health and devastating diagnoses. You cook for one another; provide transportation; send cards; lift prayers; make encouraging phone calls. We gather together in study of scripture, in worship, and of course to share meals – to break bread together – to deepen our love and care for one another. Together we have read, prayed, and talked about what it means to be a place of welcome for all people – Reconciling in Christ. This is holy work, and I pray that God will continue to be with us and guide us.

This year has seen some of you step outside your comfort zone to take on new roles in this congregation. THANK YOU! There are still opportunities for others to use the gifts God has planted within you. I ask each of you to prayerfully consider where God might be calling you. The truth is, God needs you! You may be tempted to think there is someone else more gifted or that the role you are drawn to is already filled. Know that there is always room and welcome for others to share in the ministry of this congregation.

One year ago, your congregational council and many in this congregation prayed as we wondered how we would manage to replace the roof, and the dying HVAC systems. Thanks be to God; we close this year with a brand-new roof! As I write this letter, it is raining and there is not one leak.

Of course, one of the greatest gifts this year is partnering with Family Promise to provide land here on this campus for families in need. Thank you for your vision, your generosity, and investment in their lives! The ground has officially been broken and we look forward to construction being completed in the summer of 2025.

Ascension Lutheran Church is a place of sanctuary and welcome to so many in Ogden. There is continual life and activity within these buildings. The Community Life Center continues to house Kidz Town where children from the surrounding area receive safe and supportive care and education. In the evenings and on the weekends, community sport teams make use of the gymnasium.

The main building housing our sanctuary, fellowship hall, and offices, is a place of weekly welcome for AA, Alanon, COSA, and Girl Scouts. In January, Life Line Screening will hold their second community screening event within these walls.



As this year comes to a close and we look forward to the promise of the year ahead, it is my earnest prayer that each of you know how much God loves you – just as you are! To our teens and young adults, I pray you know that in the middle of your trials, your identity questions, betrayals by friends, times of loneliness, finding your way and wondering just what life holds for you, the child in the manger is with you! This message of hope and love is for those just starting out in life, those single or single once again, for newlyweds and families with children or families without children, for empty nesters, for those who are retired and those who are over-worked. For those suffering illness or grieving the death of a loved one, know the child in the manger has come to you offering comfort and love. The hope, joy, love, peace, and light we long for has been given!

This is a gift we receive and unwrap each and every day! It can't be bought or earned. It simply IS! May God bless each of you. May you know God's love every moment of your precious lives.



*In Christ's Love
Pastor Debra*

IT IS NOT OVER

*It is not over,
this birthing.*

*There are always newer skies into which
God can throw stars.*

*When we begin to think
that we can predict the Advent of God,
that we can box the Christ
in a stable in Bethlehem,*

*that's just the time
that God will be born*

in a place we can't imagine and won't believe.

*Those who wait for God
watch with their hearts and not their eyes,
listening*

*always listening
for angel words.*

Ann Weems



Council President Report

We continue to be blessed by God. So many gifts and talents shared by members. In January 2024, Kelly Martin presided her last meeting as council president. She had been president for three years. February we voted for a new presidency and I accepted the position. Edith Cryts accepted the role as vice president. Your other council members are:

- Nicole Shane council secretary
- Katie Young who serves as our KidzTown Liason,
- David Filanda who serves as our property manager,
- James Jimenez who serves as our Family Promise building liason,
- Kelly Martin who serves as our church Family Promise, and building use liason,
- Pastor Debra who serves as our spiritual guide
- Joanna Wolf our budget liason and
- Stefani Rhees who has learned so much on her first year of council.

Pastor Debra suggested that the property west of the parking lot be used by Family Promise. Family Promise purchased the property for \$100,000. We are again reminded that our church community is a ministry. The groundbreaking was in December and the building could be completed as early as August 2025.

There have been many repairs completed on our building this year. Jim Craig has been diligently getting on the phone to find people who could complete these repairs and their bids to do so. He no longer serves on the council as property manager but with David Filanda has continued to work in this position. He deserves much thanks and love for so much in our church. Here are some of the projects that can now be said to be completed this year:

- the stucco was reapplied and some drywall replaced,
- two HVACs in the CLC were replaced,
- the stain glass window was repaired,
- the ALC's roof was striped down to OSB, new OSB added, the liner and shingles all replaced. Our insurance covered most of the costs.
- the Narthex roof was repaired,
- we have signed a new contract with KidzTown,



Ongoing projects include an ASL service, and the repair of the sacristy. As president I would like to have projection screens installed to replace the paper and printer costs. Edith suggested that our parking lot needs attention including removal of dead trees and branches. One last suggestion would be to repair/replace the parquet flooring due to raised pieces that are a tripping hazard.

As you can see, your council has been working hard for our congregation. We continue to seek volunteers for the treasury, finance, communion, music, bulletin, and parish notes ministries. It is all God's work, and many hands make light work. If you have not been asked to be in any of these ministries, please be bold and ask. We need you.

One of the most beautiful moments of church is the children. They continue to make us smile with their sincerity. Every Sunday they gather our loose change with zeal while Kamberlynn plays Jesus Loves Me. The children use this money to buy gifts from the ELCA Good Gifts Program. Who would not love to sit with these kiddos and pick out chicks, pigs, and goats?

As a church community, we are blessed by our spiritual leader, Pastor Debra. Her testimony and love for our Savior and the good works of the gospel are brought forward every sermon and in all her works as pastor and friend.

Finally, our campus is home base for four 12 Step groups, basketball teams, and Girl Scout troops. This all acts as an outreach to better serve our community to support our Vision Statement:

Ascension Lutheran Church is a welcoming, Bible-centered, praying congregation striving to become a thriving multi-generational community serving all.

Much Love, Cindy Day



**There's joy in the house of the Lord
Our God is surely in this place
And we won't be quiet
We shout out Your praise**
"House of the Lord" by Phil Wickham



Parish Education Report

Faith Formation for all ages and interests remains a focus for our congregation. During Lent, we gathered on Wednesday evenings at 6 p.m. for a soup supper followed by a faith discussion using the ELCA Resource, "Why Church." We reviewed the history of this congregation and the incredible faith and stewardship of those who birthed Ascension Lutheran Church.

Our children's Sunday School takes place during worship and benefits from the leadership of Pat Refsdal, Sharon Kamp, and James Jimenez. Lessons taught follow the lectionary and the curriculum is from Sermons 4 Kids. Late this year, we made the decision to break our children into two groups; one class for older elementary aged children and one class for pre-school children. What a joy!

Our Sunday Morning Adult Bible Study is led by Edith Cryts, and is held in the Library from 8:30 – 9:30. This is a great opportunity to show up in curiosity, to ask questions, and to share from your lived experience of faith.

Tuesday Morning Lectionary Bible Study – We gather in the Fellowship Hall at 11:00 to read and discuss the scriptures for the coming Sunday. Each week we delve into the Hebrew Scriptures, a Psalm, an Epistle, and the Gospel lesson. It is a beautiful time of discovery, connection, sharing, and discerning what our scriptures have to teach us about our lives right now.



Wednesday Book Club – The Book Club meets at 1:00 in the Fellowship Hall. This year we've read Everybody Always, by Bob Goff, The Road Back to You, by Ian Cron and Suzanne Stabile, and An Altar in the World, by Barbara Brown Taylor.

In the love of Christ,
Pastor Debra



Financial Secretary Report

January 2024 - December 2024

Pledges

| Year | # Pledges | Amount Pledged | Pledge Received |
|-------------|-------------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| 2024 | Ministry Support 27 | \$ 132,480 | \$ 133,118 |
| 2024 | Debt Reduction 1 | \$ 1,500 | \$ 1,500 |
| 2024 | Total Pledges 28 | \$ 133,980 | \$ 134,618 |
| 2025 | Total Pledges 29 | \$142,500 | |

Contributions

| | | | |
|---|---|--|------------------|
| Ministry Support | | | |
| | Tithe/Offerings (pledged/unpledged) | | \$173,765 |
| | Debt Reduction (pledged/unpledged) | | \$ 15,867 |
| | Total Ministry Support | | \$189,632 |
| Additional Income | | | |
| | Kidz Town Usage | | \$ 72,000 |
| | Kidz Town Utilities | | \$ 19,939 |
| | ALC/Use of Building | | \$ 1,658 |
| | CLC/Use of Building | | \$ 2,199 |
| | Loyalty Programs (Kroger, Thrivent, etc.) | | \$ 961 |
| | Holiday Bazaar | | \$ 7224 |
| | Ascension Yard Sale | | \$ 1,870 |
| | Total Additional Income | | \$105,851 |
| Designated Contributions – earmarked for specific expenses | | | |
| | ALC Building Maintenance (Roof Insurance Money) | | \$24,987 |
| | CLC Building Maintenance (Reimbursement for Repair) | | \$ 65 |
| | Capital Campaign #2 | | \$ 9,082 |
| | Flowers | | \$ 1,515 |
| | Memorials | | \$ 2,500 |
| | Noisy Offering (4 th Qtr 2023 & 1-4 Qtr 2024) | | \$ 2,240 |
| | Community Outreach – Family Promise; FP Land Sale; FFTP | | \$ 103,571 |
| | New Printer/Copier (Refund Check at Payoff) | | \$ 203 |
| | Staff Gifts | | \$ 900 |
| | Donations to the Emergency Fund | | \$ 2,000 |
| | Total Designated Contributions | | \$147,063 |
| <u>Total Contributions</u> | | | \$442,546 |
| <u>Gifts in Kind Donations</u> | | | |
| | Fellowship Supplies, Cleaning Supplies, Music, Bazaar Expenses, Ministry Expenses, etc. | | \$ 5,212 |

Respectfully Submitted,
Patricia Refsdal, Financial Secretary

TREASURER'S REPORT 2024

| | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Treasurer: | Sharen Kamp |
| Asst. Treasurers: | Joanna Wolf, Cindy Day |
| Chairman of Finance Committee: | Paula Del Carlo |

| <u>INCOME BUDGETED AND ACTUAL</u> | | 2024 Budget | 2024 Actual |
|---|--|--------------------|--------------------|
| Ministry Support | | 157,200.00 | 173,765.00 |
| Usage/Utilities from Kidz Town | | 90,000.00 | 91,939.00 |
| Subtotal Budgeted and Actual Income | | 247,200.00 | 265,704.00 |
| Additional Income for 2024 | | | |
| ALC/CLC Building Usage | | 2,700.00 | 3,856.37 |
| Bazaar/Yard Sale, Loyalty Programs | | 900.00 | 10,054.48 |
| Subtotal Actual Additional Income for 2024 | | 3,600.00 | 13,910.85 |
| TOTAL BUDGETED AND ACTUAL INCOME FOR 2024 | | 250,800.00 | 279,614.85 |

| <u>EXPENSES BUDGETED AND ACTUAL</u> | | | |
|--|--|--------------------|-------------------|
| <u>SENIOR PASTOR'S COMPENSATION</u> | | 2024 Budget | 2024 Spent |
| Salary | | 30,451.44 | 36,867.04 |
| Housing (10%) | | 30,000.00 | 30,000.00 |
| Compensation Total | | 60,451.44 | 66,867.04 |

| <u>PENSION/BENEFITS FOR SENIOR PASTOR</u> | | 2024 Budget | 2024 Spent |
|--|--|--------------------|-------------------|
| Disability Benefit (3.0%) | | 756.00 | 595.32 |
| Health Insurance | | 11,412.00 | 9,595.68 |
| Vision Insurance **** | | 196.72 | 182.16 |
| Life Insurance | | 356.40 | 315.64 |
| Employer Paid Retirement (10%) | | 6,237.00 | 5,319.70 |
| FSA Healthcare **** | | 999.84 | 915.65 |
| Pre-tax Retirement **** | | 3,306.96 | 3,160.60 |
| Pension & Benefit Total | | 23,264.92 | 20,084.75 |

**** These amounts are paid by Ascension's Budget to Portico Benefits and then are reimbursed by the Pastor to Ascension's Budget through salary deductions.

| <u>REIMBURSABLE EXPENSES FOR SENIOR PASTOR</u> | | 2024 Budget | 2024 Spent |
|---|--|--------------------|-------------------|
| Cell Phone | | 600.00 | 329.99 |
| Continuing Education | | 100.00 | 20.00 |
| Mileage Expense | | 200.00 | 0.00 |
| Professional Expenses (Books, etc.) | | 100.00 | 33.59 |
| Reimbursable Expenses Total | | 1,000.00 | 383.58 |

| CHURCH STAFF | | | | 2024 Budget | 2024 Spent |
|--|---|--|--|--------------------|-------------------|
| | Musician | | | 13,000.00 | 11,525.00 |
| | Secretary (Part-Time) | | | 7,000.00 | 2,004.09 |
| | Nursery Attendant | | | 100.00 | 0.00 |
| | Custodian | | | 4,000.00 | 3,808.00 |
| | Staff Compensation Total | | | 24,100.00 | 17,337.09 |
| OFFICE EXPENSES | | | | 2024 Budget | 2024 Spent |
| | Advertising | | | 100.00 | 0.00 |
| | Copier Lease/Maintenance | | | 0.00 | 4,098.05 |
| | Office Supplies | | | 200.00 | 41.80 |
| | Paper | | | 700.00 | 363.07 |
| | Postage | | | 100.00 | 14.80 |
| | Telephone/Internet | | | 17,000.00 | 2,407.16 |
| | Printing Ser/Prof Serv/Staff Training & Materials | | | 1,080.00 | 81.00 |
| | Office Expense Total | | | 19,180.00 | 7,005.88 |
| BUILDINGS & GROUNDS | | | | 2024 Budget | 2024 Spent |
| | Ace Disposal | | | 50.00 | 0.00 |
| | Bona Vista Water (Primary) | | | 7,000.00 | 6,989.13 |
| | Building/Equipment Maintenance | | | 2,000.00 | 36,461.50 |
| | Custodial Supplies | | | 300.00 | 0.00 |
| | Grounds Maint. (Sprinkler Supplies, Lawn Service, Snow Removal) | | | 8,600.00 | 7,286.01 |
| | Insurance State Farm | | | 5,700.00 | 5,965.95 |
| | Pineview Water (Secondary) | | | 600.00 | 671.79 |
| | Dominion Energy | | | 11,000.00 | 10,462.58 |
| | Rocky Mountain Power | | | 20,000.00 | 18,794.56 |
| | Security (AAA - Fire and Ring) | | | 2,500.00 | 2,649.23 |
| | Building & Grounds Total | | | 57,750.00 | 89,280.75 |
| MORTGAGE | | | | 2024 Budget | 2024 Spent |
| | CLC (Mission Investment Fund, ELCA) Principle | | | 21,600.00 | 55,461.66 |
| | CIC (Mission Investment Fund, ELCA) Interest | | | 14,400.00 | 11,805.32 |
| | Mortgage Expense Total | | | 36,000.00 | 67,266.98 |
| CONFERENCES (includes Pastor Registration, Mileage & Lodging) | | | | 2024 Budget | 2024 Spent |
| | Rocky Mountain Synod Assembly | | | 1,500.00 | 1,424.03 |
| | Theological Conference | | | 1,000.00 | 0.00 |
| | Conference Total | | | 2,500.00 | 1,424.03 |

| CHRISTIAN EDUCATION | | 2024 Budget | 2024 Spent |
|---|--|---------------------|-------------------|
| Congregation/AOB/Sunday School/ VBS | | 500.00 | 310.00 |
| Parish Education Total | | 500.00 | 310.00 |
| MUSIC MINISTRY | | 2024 Budget | 2024 Spent |
| Music Supplies | | 400.00 | 0.00 |
| Music Copyright Licensing | | 700.00 | 464.00 |
| Audio-Visual/Music Equipment ***** | | 700.00 | 0.00 |
| Music Ministry Total | | 1,800.00 | 464.00 |
| EVANGELISM/OUTREACH | | 2024 Budget | 2024 Spent |
| Speaker Expense | | 200.00 | 0.00 |
| Family Promise | | 1,000.00 | 0.00 |
| Ogden Rescue Mission | | 200.00 | 0.00 |
| Cops for Kids (Shop with a Cop) | | 2,000.00 | 2,000.00 |
| Community Outreach Projects | | 200.00 | 0.00 |
| Pastor's Discretionary Acct | | 800.00 | *** |
| Evangelism/Outreach Total | | 4,400.00 | 2,000.00 |
| *** Audited by Chairman of Audit Committee. | | | |
| WORSHIP MINISTRY EXPENSE | | 2024 Budget | 2024 Spent |
| Flowers/Gifts/Supplies | | 500.00 | 1,572.54 |
| Visitors Materials | | 100.00 | 0.00 |
| Worship Materials and Supplies | | 600.00 | 535.00 |
| Books and Literature | | 600.00 | 210.68 |
| Pulpit Supply and Mileage | | 1,000.00 | 1,580.00 |
| Other Licensing | | 800.00 | 589.00 |
| Altar Guild | | 250.00 | 290.04 |
| Worship Ministry Total | | 3,850.00 | 4,777.26 |
| BENEVOLENCE | | 2024 Budget | 2024 Spent |
| Synod Benevolence (10%) | | 15,000.00 | 19,035.40 |
| Benevolence Total | | 15,000.00 | 19,035.40 |
| Totals for 2024 Budgeted and Actual Expenses | | 249,796.36 | 296,236.76 |
| As of 12/29/2024: | | | |
| Zion's Bank Account Checking Total | | \$13,729.32 | |
| Zion's Bank Account Ultimate Saving Total | | \$136,268.91 | |
| Mission Investment Fund Demand Account Total | | \$100,411.45 | |
| Mission Investment Fund Loan Balance (CLC) | | \$355,962.70 | |

| Donor Restricted Accounts & Balances | | Total Cumulative Amt in account on 12/31/2024 | | |
|---|---|--|--|--|
| | CLC Debt Reduction | \$160.00 | | |
| | CLC Building | \$65.00 | | |
| | ALC Building (Roof Insurance in this account) | \$25,686.61 | | |
| | Capital Cpgn Phase 1 2022-23 | \$18,059.64 | | |
| | Capital Cpgn Phase II | \$9,082.19 | | |
| | Memorials | \$4,982.27 | | |
| | Vacation Bible School | \$369.02 | | |
| | New Ministry | \$34,636.89 | | |
| | Flowers | \$1,231.77 | | |
| | Copier/Printer | \$4,839.70 | | |
| | Staff Gifts | \$0.00 | | |
| | Emergency Fund | \$13,000.00 | | |
| | Youth Fund Raiser | \$873.00 | | |
| | Donor-Restricted Funds Total | \$112,986.09 | | |



Faithfully submitted, Sharen Kamp



Sharen Kamp, Treasurer
 Joanna Wolf, Assistant Treasurer
 Cindy Day, Assistant Treasurer
 Pat Refsdal, Financial Secretary
vacant, Assistant Financial Secretary

Annual Congregation Meeting

Feb 4, 2024

Called to order at 10:58am by Kelly Martin

Opening Prayer by Pastor Debra

Annual reports given out along with Church Directory

- 1) Election of new Council Members. 1st we thank Jim Craig and Mylitta Barrett for their time on council. Edith Cryts took over for Connie Larson's position last year and has agreed to continue serving on the council. David Filanda and Stefani Rhees have agreed to be on council starting this year. Motion to accept new council members was made by Nancy Otto and 2nd by Patti Hall.
- 2) Election of Nominating Committee Members. Jim Craig will be on committee because leaving council members are required to be. Since Mylitta left the state we need 2 volunteers. Babbs and Renee Hart volunteered. Motion to accept nominating committee members was made by Edith and 2nd by Stefani.
- 3) Election of Rocky Mountain Synod Assembly Attendees, scheduled for April 25-27th in Colorado. Patti and Stefani volunteered with a motion to accept by Cindy Day and 2nd by Dorothy Harmon.
- 4) 2024 Budget – Motion to accept Jim C and 2nd by Cindy.
 - a. Discussion: Eric Engelby asked about the line "Business License" under Admin expenses. Weber county requires businesses to pay a license. It has been \$25 and expected to go up this year so that is the reason for the \$70 amount for 2024. Eric also asked about the "Security" line under Building, grounds & utilities. The broken special glass that cost \$3000 to replace caused us to buy a ring doorbell and some outside cameras to help with outside security. Other expenses were related to the fire sensors that were not working.
 - b. Kelly talked about the setting up of an emergency fund by putting in \$1000 a month to help cover expenses toward the buildings that are not a normal funded item.
 - c. Pat R. talked about the not balanced budget mentioning that we have pledges of \$132,000, about \$38,000 unpledged expected. We also have gotten around \$8500 from the Christmas Bazaar and can expect about \$2000+ from garage sale this year.
 - d. Renee asked about the "Pineview Water" also under the building expenses group. the 2023 amount was budgeted at \$600 but we spent \$1200 due to Pineview changing their due date so we ended up having to pay twice in 2023.
 - e. Motion to accept after discussion made by Patti H and 2nd by Jim C.
- 5) Vote to pay for a new HVAC system in the CLC, Kidztown area. The HVAC unit went out in January. It was an old enough unit that it was not worth trying to do a temporary repair. The council decided that it needed to be replaced. Susie, the CEO of Kidztown, told us they could not wait to replace the unit until after this meeting so it was decided that they would pay for it then give us the invoice for it. Headstart agreed to pay \$3500 of the approx. \$40000 bill. So the church will pay the remaining \$36,000 to Kidztown. Motion to pay the balance made by Nancy O and 2nd by Eric E.
- 6) Family Promise Construction – Kelly said there was some trouble with some paperwork to be able to sell the land in the back to Family Promise. She said Pastor Debra will take the paperwork to the Synod Assembly to see if they could help. The plan is to sell Family Promise the land from that parcel for \$100,000 which is the approximate value of the land.
- 7) Open questions – Comments
 - a. Sharen announced that the new Church directory is available and was handed out to members who attended this meeting.
 - b. Pastor Debra told us that Melinda Tolle donated some items, a griddle and pancake mix, crockpot, popcorn cooker and a few other things.
 - c. Nancy wanted to recognize Kelly for all her hard work and dedication to the church as the church president the last 3 years.
- 8) Closing Prayer
Ruler of All Things, You have been with us during our meeting, and we know that you will be with us as we go our separate ways. May we take great joy and comfort in knowing that God of the Universe knows us and loves us and is present with us all the time. Thank you for giving us so much to celebrate, forgiveness, fellowship with Christ, and our journey together as the body of Christ. May we never stop expressing our abundant joy that is a gift from you. Amen
- 9) Call the meeting closed at 11:50am

Special Congregational Meeting June 2, 2024
Agenda with Minutes

- I Call to order – Cindy Day **10:39**
- II Opening Prayer – Pastor Debra
- III Determine if a Quorum is Present – Nicole Shane
ALC Constitution: C10.04 Forty percent (40%) of the voting members shall constitute a quorum. **37 is a quorum. We had 44 attending . Quorum met.**
- IV New Business – Cindy Day
- A. Motion: To accept Option 3 of the bid received from Mountain Air.
Additional information. Sharen Kamp
1. Daikin DFG180 15-ton Roof Top Unit with Economizer, Smoke Detector, Installation, and Crane Service. \$40,323.00.
 2. The present pad will need to be enlarged to accommodate the larger unit. Approximately \$2000.00.
 3. Plan for Paying for Unit:
 - a. Thrivent Mutual Fund – 36,505.00 (NOTE: \$5000 will be left in the account to keep it open.
 - b. Emergency Fund - \$4000.00 (NOTE: This Designated Account Fund was established by ALC Council to help cover Emergencies. \$1000.00/month is placed in this designated fund. This was started in Feb. 2004.)
 - c. There is a CLC Maintenance and Repair Budget line item that has a little more than \$2500 in it to pay for the enlargement of the pad.
- B. Discussion – Sharen Kamp **discussed items 1-3.**
 - a. **Question: Eric Engelby asked about savings and why we are not using those funds. Response: The council is looking at those funds for the future.**
- C. Vote – Cindy Day **44 voted to To accept Option 3 of the bid received from Mountain Air with no one opposing.**
- V. New Business – Cindy Day/Sharen Kamp
- A. **Resolution:** The Ascension Lutheran Church Council moves the adoption of the following resolution related to the need for Emergency Repairs and/or Replacements on the Community Life Center (CLC) Building which houses our partner, Kidztown
Whereas, The CLC Building is twenty plus years old;
Whereas, The children housed in KidzTown cannot be without heat, air conditioning or other vital services for 3 weeks or longer;
Whereas, It takes three weeks to hold a Congregational Meeting, once the Council learns of the problem; and
Whereas, The Ascension Constitution requires a Congregational Meeting
Each time there is an expenditure over \$6000.00;
Be it Therefore Resolved, That only when expenditures of more than \$6000.00 are related to Emergency Repairs and/or Replacements in the CLC Building, the Church Council may move forward with needed decisions without holding a Congregational meeting.
Motion for discussion: Kelly Seconded by council.
Sharen moves the following amendment to be added to the resolution:
Whereas, when the expenditures are to be made, the ALC congregation members will be notified within one week.
- B. Discussion: - Sharen Kamp
 - a. There was a discussion point for future constitutional amendments is to put in a financial ceiling for such expenditures.
- C. Vote - Cindy Day **Vote by the congregation was 43/44 members with no one voting against the resolution. Vote for the amendment was 44/44 members with no one opposing.**
- VI Other Discussion – Cindy Day
- V. Closing Prayer – Kelly Martin

Ruler of All Things, You have been with us during our meeting, and we know that you will be with us as we go our separate ways. May we take great joy and comfort in knowing that the God of the Universe knows us and loves us and is present with us all the time. Thank You for giving us so much to celebrate, forgiveness, fellowship with Christ, and our journey together as the body of Christ. May we never stop expressing our abundant joy that is a gift from you. Amen.

The meeting adjourned at 10:47.

A Million Little Things - 2024

"We must not, in trying to think about how we can make a big difference, ignore the small daily differences we can make which, over time, add up to big differences that we often cannot foresee."

Marian Wright Edelman

Ascension is in its third year of the "A Million Little Things Project." This year we asked each member of the Ascension family to think about the "Little Things" they accomplished this year. Examples were:

- Well known things like:
 - Serving on the Council,
 - Putting together the Sunday Worship Bulletin,
 - Furnishing flowers for the altar or treats for Fellowship,
 - Making things for the bazaar and working both the bazaar and yard sale,
 - Quilting,
 - And so many other areas of service.
- Quiet things that you do for others that show your love and kindness
 - Preparing meals for neighbors and friends who need some help,
 - Donations to organizations, food banks, food for the poor,
 - Driving someone to the doctor, dentist, bank, or other places,
 - Calling someone when they miss church or you hear they are sick or lonely,
 - Sharing your time with other community service organizations, like United Way, the Pregnancy Medical Center, volunteering at hospitals, schools, the VA home, etc.,
 - And so many other areas of service.

As each person thought how they had been joyful givers of service to others, we asked them to try to count the number of "Little Things" they accomplished. I am sorry to say that I requested this information much too late in the year for this report. However, I would like to share the following:

**In two days, I received numbers from 8 people.
Those numbers total to 4322 deeds of kindness and caring.**

I will continue to tally any numbers received and report to you in 2025.

Faithfully yours,
Sharen Kamp



Altar Guild 2023

Co-chairpersons:

Kim Engelby – duties: overseer, orders regular and gluten-free wafers, wine cups, purchases the wine and grape juice.

Kelly Martin – duties: bakes communion bread, changes out paraments, helps with decorations.

Members: Linda Corey



I would like to thank the following individuals for helping with Altar Guild at other times as well: Pat Refsdal, Kelly Martin, Nancy Otto, Carol Jordan, Judy Sherman, Arliss Zimmerman, Renee Hart, and Patti Hall.

Respectfully submitted in His name,
Kim Engelby



Audit Committee Annual Report 2024

The current Committee consists of three members, Linda Corey, Carol Jordan and Paula Del Carlo. Dorothy Harman resigned her position as Chairperson and assisted with the transition at January's quarterly meeting. The Committee is also supported by the Treasurer and Financial Secretary who prepare records and answer questions during the audit.

The Committee is required to meet yearly but we choose to meet quarterly. The last quarter of 2023 was audited in January 2024. The remaining quarters were audited in April, August and October 2024.

Besides our standard audit of checks and balances of all our accounts this year we have added focused spot audits on specific areas that have included documentation for online bill payment, correct usage of expense vouchers and designated account documentation.

The Committee Chair and the Pastor met to set up a procedure for auditing the Pastor's Benevolence account that allows for privacy for those helped by this account.

This past year the financial records were reconciled to the best of our ability and found to be in good order.

The Committee asks the Congregation and Council to keep us informed of any concerns related to the finances of the church. We support open dialogue and transparency.



Respectfully submitted,
Paula Del Carlo, Chairperson

BUILDING USE – 2024

We have really increased the use of our buildings this year.

AA & AI Anon meet in the Fellowship Hall and Cry Room every Friday. When Family Promise is in the building, they meet in the CLC.

The quilters are meeting on 1st and 3rd Mondays, Book Club meets on Wednesday, and Bible Study on Tuesday.

The gym is in use every night. We have three basketball teams and one soccer team that use the space. One of the basketball teams uses the gym occasionally on Saturday mornings as well.



We have three recovery groups that use the church on Monday, Thursday, and Friday,

Two Girl Scout troops use the building alternating on Tuesday night.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kelly Martin

Blessing of the Animals Service

October 19, 2024 10:00 AM

In Honor of the Feast Day of St. Francis

Patron Saint of Animals and Environment



This year, we gathered under a brilliant blue sky to bless our animal companions. We do this not only because we love them and receive their love and devotion, but because they are God's beloved creatures! We sang, shared scriptures and celebrated the joy animals bring to our lives!





2024 Annual Capital Campaign Report

During 2023, we paid off the final contractor expenses associated with Capital Campaign #1 to repair the southeast block window and stucco on the church building and have \$18,059.64 remaining which has been put towards "All Things NEW Again" # 2. Phase 2 was slated to remove and replace shingles on the church roof and replace-as-needed Oriented Strand Board (OSB) plywood to correct the bowing in the roof plane. Council decided to create Phase 2, but would not solicit donations for the work as funds were eventually on-hand to complete the project.

An ALC church member donated an additional \$9093.68 making a total of \$27,153.32 available to complete the roof project.

During the fall of 2024, through the efforts of James Jimenez, Jim Craig, and Infinity Roofing & Siding, our State Farm Insurance policy had agreed to replace the shingles on the church roof due to wind/storm damage. Ascension received \$24,587.39 in insurance money to replace the shingles. The church council decided to add additional work to that effort and agreed to cover the cost of new OSB plywood and repair the portico roof over our church main entrance. That work was completed just before Christmas Eve. After the rain and snow during the last part of December, there has been no sign of leakage on the interior of the building. PRAISE THE LORD!!

Thank you to everyone for your generosity and support!! And a big thank you to James Jimenez and Jim Craig who provided the oversight for those roofing projects.

"All Things NEW Again" Phase 3 is: to be determined (TBD).

Pat Refsdal
Capital Campaign Oversight

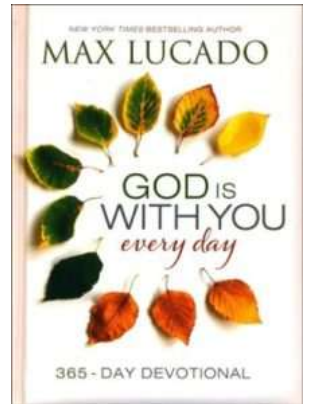


Care Bear/Card Ministry

This ministry is completed by various people who see and fill a need. If you are interested in leading this ministry, please contact Pastor Debra. This is from Max Lucado's book God is With You Everyday.

When disaster strikes, the human spirit responds by reaching out to help those afflicted. People stand in line to give blood. Rescue teams work for endless hours. But the most essential effort is accomplished by another valiant team. Their task? To gird the world with prayer. For the most part, we don't even know their names.

Such is the case of someone who prayed on a day long ago. He went to Jesus on behalf of a friend who was sick. No one was more vital than the one who went to Jesus. John writes, "So Mary and Martha sent someone to tell Jesus, "Lord, the one you love is sick" (John 11:3 NCV). Someone went to Jesus on behalf of Lazarus. And because someone went, Jesus responded! Would you be someone for someone else?



You are Loved,
Nicole Shane

Shut-In Ministry 2024

Several of our Shut-ins have passed away or moved. But Pastor Debra and I still visit with some of our seniors who live alone and also bring occasional meals.

We have called on Lynn and Carol Benson who get to worship occasionally when they are able, but it is difficult for Carol to get around.

There are other Ascension members that receive meals, delivered groceries, and receive communion in their homes. If you know of others that would like a home visit, please let myself or Pastor know. This ministry is an honor and blessing for us.

Thank you for all the care, meals and love that other members of our congregation provide to Ascension members; neighbors and others in need of a card, visit or phone call. Continue to pray for those who spent many of their days alone. Our Elderly are brave and courageous Souls. I am also thankful for Pastor Debra, whose love and light has made such a difference to our Shut-ins.



Submitted in Love,
Arliss Zimmerman

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

Now in its fifth year, the Communications Committee has continued to keep all Ascension members informed and connected. We are a loose-knit group and have never met as a formal Committee. Members of the committee are:

| | | |
|--------------|---------------|---------------|
| Pat Refsdal | Nancy Otto | James Jimenez |
| Kelly Martin | Melinda Tolle | David Stuart |
| Eric Refsdal | Sharen Kamp | Katie Young |

If you were to ask each committee member you would probably hear a common goal and then one specific to their role.

Our Common Goal: To make sure that the members and friends of Ascension Lutheran Church stay connected to each other and the church.

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Pat Refsdal: | -To determine the need, then write the messages sent to the members/friends -To be Eric's first assistant! |
| Eric Refsdal: | -To videotape worship services and other events such as receptions, etc. -To expand our technical savvy with YouTube, Zoom & new equipment, and software. |
| David Stuart Nancy Otto | -To create "Paper Flowers" that contain messages of Love, Hope and Joy! -To create our Bulletins each week and insure they are sent to those who get them out to the Ascension family and friends. |
| Kelly Martin: | -To create and post links for Church and Children's Bulletins and Parish Notes. -To update information & to better understand the capabilities of our website and Facebook sites -To broadcast the worship service on Facebook Live. -To ensure timely emails for those who need prayer. |
| James Jimenez Katie Young | -To serve as liaison between Family Promise and the council and congregation. -To serve as liaison between KidzTown and the council and congregation. |
| Melinda Tolle: Sharen Kamp: | -To create Seek & Find puzzles that so many enjoyed with their morning coffee. -To get all messages out in a timely manner, in both email and text format. |

How We Accomplished Our Goal:

- Over 94,054 emails related to Ascension Worship Services, Seek and Find Puzzles, Coloring Pages, Special Events and Activities and reminders.
- Over 13,912 texts related to Ascension Church Worship Services, Special Events and Activities.
- Over 365-word search puzzles and 100 hours of labor to create them.
- Changing the YouTube settings to allow for all to search for and participate in our worship.
- 51 Parish Notes
- 52 Sunday Church Services' Announcements

What the Goal Taught Us: Communication is vital, and we need to continue these activities because they have become a vital part of life as a member or friends of the Ascension family.

Faithfully yours,
Sharen Kamp

Family Promise of Ogden (FPO)

Ascension hosted families four weeks during 2024 We hosted families 11-18 February, 7-14 April, 3-11 August, and 8-15 December.

Thank you so much to everyone that volunteers as part of this ministry. We have a faithful group of people that come together every host week so that the families we are hosting are well cared for. In addition to our own congregation, we are blessed to have members from Elim, Our Saviors', and St. Paul Lutheran churches that faithfully provide meals, and hosting for our families.

In addition to our volunteer weeks. Ascension continues to participate in the fund raising done for FPOO. This year Ascension again hosted two tables at the Rise & Shine Breakfast. Together with the other supporters of FP, the fund raiser made more than \$100,000 that will be used to continue to provide ongoing services for the organization.

This year we completed the sale of the back portion of our property to Family Promise. On December 16, members of the community gathered for the Groundbreaking Ceremony for the new building that will serve as both the Day Center and the overnight housing for Family Promise. The estimated completion date for the building is August 2024

Respectfully submitted,
Kelly Martin



Family Promise of Ogden Building

By way of history, Family Promise of Ogden, with Ascension representation by Kelly Martin, had long sought a building to convert or land on which to build a facility for administration of the program and temporary housing of homeless families. Despite years of fund raising and trying to identify such a property by Nolan Karras and others, no suitable opportunity had been identified.

Approximately 3 years ago, I was accepted onto the Family Promise board and shared this issue with Pastor Debra. As I understand it, as she was taking a walk around the Ascension parking lot, viewing our property and it occurred to her that Ascension had more property than needed. She discussed this with Kelly Martin who supported approaching Nolan Karras at Family Promise to propose use of part of our property to build the Family Promise facility. Pastor Debra contacted Nolan Karras, walked the property and determined that this could be possible. A price of \$100,000.00 was established for the property by Kelly Martin and agreed to Family Promise, contingent upon obtaining all necessary approvals.

What followed was extensive work with Harrisville City Manager, Jenny Knight, who was convinced to support the project. Nolan and I attended a meeting with Harrisville to ensure that the process would move forward. Jenny Knight was extremely helpful and assigned the City's consultant, Jim Flint to work with us on establishing the suitability of the land and establishing what steps would need to be taken to make this work. In the meantime, Nolan also sought financial support from many sources to ensure Family Promise could build a 5,000 plus square foot facility.

Nolan and Flint worked closely together to assure the proper steps were taken. Nolan and I also met Sean Wilkinson at Weber County Development to ensure we were compliant on the County level. (It turns out that

he and his family are Family Promise volunteers, and he was totally supportive – God was running interference for us)!

At the same time, Nolan began working with State Sen. Gregg Buxton to gain funding support by the State of Utah. I was working with State Sen. John Johnson from Harrisville for the same. With their and other support in the Senate, Family Promise was able to secure the funds necessary to fully fund the project. Agreement was reached for Ascension to provide access and parking for the facility.

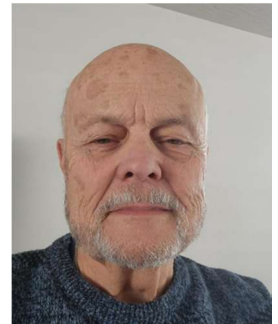
Worth noting is that KidzTown was notified of the proposed project and was not initially supportive of it. A meeting was arranged between KidzTown ownership/management, Family Promise Executive Director, Raquel DaSilva, myself, Pastor Debra, and I think Kelly to see what the program has accomplished for homeless families, and they became avid supporters, even offering to provide playground equipment to Family Promise when the facility is completed.

Too many details large and small to go into (including essential Water Shares) but suffice it to say that the \$100,000.00 was paid by Family Promise to Ascension and will be applied to various projects needed for the remaining church property.

A ground-breaking ceremony was held on December 16 with attendance overflowing Ascension's Fellowship Area. It was announced at groundbreaking that a contractor has been identified, pending contract signature and target date for completion is August 2025. Thanks were given to all involved in this project, including God, for doing some fine work in front of and behind the scenes.

Respectfully submitted,

James Jimenez





Fill-the-Freezer

Ascension is in its fourth year of our "Fill-the-Freezer" project. The freezer is in the kitchen at Ascension. Church members and friends place home-cooked meals for families of four, couples and singles. These meals are available for all who need them. People are encouraged to

- take a meal if they need it,
- take a meal to a neighbor who needs it,
- take a meal to someone they are told needs help, or
- offer meals to those who might come to the church door needing food.

The freezer has been restored three times this year using the Sign-up Genius Program. An email is sent to notify church members what is needed, and they sign up to furnish that meal.

A special thank you who took it upon themselves to make special meals for diabetics and those with heart conditions.

Faithfully yours,

Your Fill-the-Freezer Team



Food Donations

Food donations are always appreciated. There are baskets by the front entry in the Narthex for donating at any time. The food in these baskets go directly to the Ogden Rescue Mission. If you are interested in what donations are needed the most, you can go to their website for more information. Kim takes these goods once a month. If there are perishables, let her know and she can put them away until they are brought to the mission.

"A Million Little Things" add up to greatness,
Nicole Shane

More Holiday Bazaar Photos



Flower Ministry

Congregational members have been donating altar flowers throughout the year via a flower chart hanging in the Fellowship Hall. When seeking additional donations for flowers, the flower chart, at times, is on the table in the narthex. The cost is \$30 dollars and covers both arrangements, which are obtained by the ALC Flower Ministry. Payment envelopes are available by the chart, which can be placed in the offering plate.

This year, Easter and Christmas flowers were purchased for weekly services using donated funds and funds from the Designated Flower Account. These flowers are usually purchased from Trader Joe's in SLC, Lowes, Ensign Wholesale Flowers, Smiths, and J&J Nursery in Layton.

Flowers for special occasions such as funerals, get well or pastor visits are provided via a Flower/Gift budget line under Worship Ministry in our 2024 Budget.

The Linden Tree, planted at Ascension on Reformation Sunday, October 29, 2017 continues to do well. In memory of Buzz and Brigitte Schultz, here is a recap of the planting of the linden trees to celebrate the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation. Excerpt from the Luthergarten website:

Ascension Lutheran Church in Ogden, Utah, USA



Tree # 456

Planted by: Brigitte & Buzz Schultz (both now deceased) ON behalf of the church

Biblical Quote: 1 Chronicles 16,33: "Then shall the trees of the forest sing for joy before the Lord, for he comes to judge the earth."

Tree species: Tilia cordata 'Rancho' - Small Leaf Linden

Planting in the Luthergarten: On November 12th, 2017, Brigitte and Buzz Schultz (photo) planted a small leaved linden tree for their congregation on behalf of the Ascension Lutheran Church in Ogden, Utah, USA.

This tree is located in the: Luthergarten at Luther House -



Tree # 456

Planting the partner tree: On October 29th, 2017, a few days before the planting of their tree in the Luthergarten, Pastor Rick Brenton together with Ms. Pat Refsdal; the congregation; members of the Church Council; and confirmands, planted a small leaved linden tree as the partner tree for Ascension Lutheran Church in Ogden, Utah, USA.



Faithfully yours,
Pat Refsdal and
Arliss Zimmerman



Friendly Tie Quilters



On Sunday, December 8, 2024, Pastor Debra blessed the quilts. Our members: Linda Corey, Paula DelCarlo, Anne Engelby, Kim Engelby, C.J. Jordan, Hazel Ann Linke, Holly McCaffrey, Sylvia Moffet, and Joanna Wolf created 64 beautiful quilts this year.

On Monday, December 9, 2024, five of our quilters delivered the quilts to three organizations in the area. The North Ogden Police Department received 20 quilts. This year they are sponsoring 6 families for their Sub for Santa program. They also use quilts to provide comfort in emergencies. Your Community Connection (YCC) received 30

quilts for their program. Family Promise of Ogden received 12 quilts to give to their families. All our donations were gladly received with many thanks. Two of the quilts were asked for by members of Ascension.

Our group meets on the first and third Mondays in January through May from 9:00 a.m. to noon in the church fellowship hall. We take the summer months off and begin meeting again on the third Monday in September through November.

We thank Thrivent Financial for their annual support of \$250 to purchase the batting for the quilts. Most of the other supplies are donated to us.



We are always open to welcome new members.

Respectfully submitted,
Holly McCaffrey



If you can tie
a knot, you
can tie a quilt.





GOD'S WORK OUR HANDS

Coordinators: Sharen Kemp and Nicole Shane

This year it was all about caring for others.

Sharen coordinated materials and building of the Blessing Bags with our neighboring LDS ward. The gallon sized bags were filled with the very basic of needs like shampoo, combs, clippers, small snacks, water bottle, wet wipes, etc. This group made **256** bags to be shared with those who needed very basic provisions.

KidzTown staff were the recipients of homemade jam and bread. Nicole asked for volunteers to make or buy bread, and 13 loaves were donated. Cindy and Nicole purchased 13 pints of jam from a local gal. The bread and jam were set up on a table that they would see as they walked into the building on Monday morning. Our KidzTown liaison Katie Young said that the ladies were super excited and appreciated the gift.



What cannot be forgotten was the lite luncheon after the service. This was the time we took to take care of each other.

Thank you all for your generosity,
Nicole Shane



Holiday Bazaar

Holiday Bazaar – Our Holiday Bazaar was held on December 2, 2024. This was the 17th year that we've been blessed to have the help of so many members and friends of Ascension make crafts, baked goods, and other wonderful things to sell to the community.

Our bazaar was extremely successful this year. We advertised on Facebook and with our sign. We raised over \$7000.00. The money will support the ministries of the church as needed.

There's no way we could put this event on without the help of everyone in the church and it's impossible to name everyone that helps. Thank you all so very much for your continued support of this event.

God Bless Your Generous Hearts!

Your Sister in Christ,

Kelly Martin



To one he gave five talents, to another, two, and to another, one, each according to his own ability; and he went on his journey.

Matthew 25:15



KidzTown Report 2024

As the church council liaison to KidzTown, I meet up with key adults there to encourage open communication. The following is a summary of what transpired with the monthly meetings.

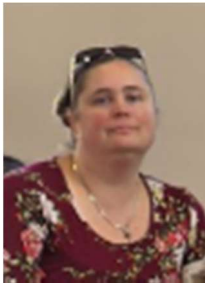
The dumpster is of a big concern due to the amount of garbage being put in by the community. The solution has been to find a way to use locks on the bin. There is an ongoing mystery of why KidzTown has their furniture and toys being moved. We asked them to get access to their cameras to find out who is doing the moving. Repairs are needed: cooling, landscaping, men's bathroom fan, kitchen oven, locks on doors that are difficult to use, gymnasium ceiling tiles falling and more. I would like to commend Jim Craig on his constant willingness to stay on top of these repairs as they come to light. He, and KidzTown liaison Rodney, are busy keeping up on all this maintenance so that the children are safe and comfortable.

This last September I was informed that KidzTown decided to split into two separate businesses. Our KidzTown along with four other facilities will be run by Suzie. She is quite aware that her facilities are not as new and eye-catching as the other group now called Awesome Kids. She requested that we address lawn care, dead tree removal, grass growing in the asphalt in order for this facility to thrive. We let her know that our volunteers at church will do what they can, when they can. If the repair is more costly, there is a long protocol that needs to be followed for our congregation to decide on how to move forward.

Suzie and her staff would like to thank us for our ongoing support. They loved the GWOH bread and jam gifts in September. They enjoyed the Trunk-or-Treat in October.

Finally, I sat in a meeting with some members of our council, Rodney, Shae, and Suzie to meet and greet each other so we could begin to work with each other as problem solvers. We discussed sprinklers, snow plowing, and other grounds keeping maintenance. Pastor explained my role as liaison to KidzTown and we all exchanged phone numbers.

Katie Young



LWR Personal Care Kit Ministry

This year, during the Lenten and Easter Season, our congregation donated money, collected supplies and assembled over 90 Lutheran World Relief (LWR) Personal Care Kits to be shipped to the LWR Warehouse. The assembled kits include one bath towel; three bars of soap; one tooth brush; one comb and metal nail clippers - these simple items included in a Personal Care Kit provide much-needed self-care and critical germ fighting supplies. LWR Kits are specifically designed to help people coping with poverty, disaster, conflict and more - and provide dignity and hope in the direst situations throughout the world.

The kits were collected throughout Lent and Easter and were blessed the Sunday after Easter by Pastor Debra Jimenez. During the blessing, we prayed to "God who has called us to go and do likewise as we reach out to our neighbors around the world. Send forth your Spirit today as we call upon you to bless our work and make it whole."



During a family trip to Minnesota, Eric and Pat Refsdal were able to hand-deliver the kits directly to the LWR Warehouse in St Paul, Minnesota which saved \$145 in shipping fees. The pictures reveal the impact of churches donating kits to just this one regional warehouse.

Many Blessings,
Pat & Eric Refsdal



Memorials

This year, we memorialized two beautiful women.



Janet Louise Kilhefner
December 13, 1931 – January 19, 2024



Carol Janice Nelson Reopelle
August 15, 1933 - July 9, 2024

He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.

Revelation 21:4

Lord, we pray for those who mourn, for parents and children, friends and neighbors. Be gentle with them in their grief. Show them the depths of your love, a glimpse of the kingdom of heaven. Spare them the torment of guilt and despair. Be with them as they weep beside the empty tomb of our risen savior, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

-The Prayerist

NOISY OFFERING 2024



Two years ago, Pastor Debra and the congregation began a new ministry to collect pocket change during the worship services and direct that money to various national and international humanitarian efforts. This new ministry, called the Noisy Offering, is conducted and collected during the worship service, usually by the children of

the congregation passing around a container to collect loose change and small bills.

In 2022, we collected \$774.36 which was donated to Food for the Poor. In all of 2023, the congregation contributed \$1430.73 in loose change that was paid to the ELCA Good Gifts Program, in which we had the Sunday School children select gifts to be purchased for countries in need.

For our year ending Dec 2024, the congregation donated \$1609.22 in loose change. For the last quarter of 2024, the Sunday School children selected the following gifts for purchase from the ELCA Good Gifts Program: two goats; three fruit tree farm for communities in need. Thank you so much to our congregational members and the attendees at the Christmas Eve Service for your continued contributions to this very worthwhile cause!!



Pat Refsdal

Financial Secretary



Pastor's Discretionary Fund

During 2024, this fund was used seven times to provide support within our congregational family and in the greater Ogden community. The funds used were shared in keeping with the intent of the fund. Because of your generosity, this congregation helped provide transportation for people needing medical care and for those in need of a tank of gas so they could work. You provided funds for household needs and for acquiring a driver's license. Your gifts help others to have food and shelter. This is just one of the many ways you share God's love and care with our neighbors.

Before funds are released, I meet directly with the person(s) in need of assistance. Funds are disbursed by check. This fund isn't intended to provide long-term financial assistance for individuals. It does allow us to respond quickly to emergency needs. When appropriate, referral to other community resources takes place. Thank you for being a beacon of hope for those who need to know they are seen, their lives matter, they are not alone.

In Christ,
Pastor Debra

Then the King will say to those on his right, "Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger, and you invited me in. I needed clothes and you clothed me. I was sick and you looked after me. I was in prison, and you came to visit me."

Mt. 25:34-36



Property Management

Last year was another eventful year for the Ascension church buildings. In early January, the furnace for the southwest side of the CLC failed. We had Mountain Home install a new HVAC unit on January 16th. The installation had issues and took three days, but Kidz Town had heat again. During the spring semi-annual check of all the ALC and CLC HVAC units, it was found that the air conditioner for the Northeast side of the CLC was broken beyond repair. That unit was replaced on June 27th.

The last significant event of Ascension Was the replacement of the ALC roof. We had structural issues with the sanctuary roof and had been working to fund fixing that. Some shingles had blown off during one of the Spring windstorms. Infinity Roofing contacted us and indicated they specialized in filing claims with insurance companies. We signed a contract with them to file these claims, and they got insurance to pay most of the costs of replacing the roof for the whole building. Thank you, James, for doing most of the work with Infinity Roofing during the insurance claims process.

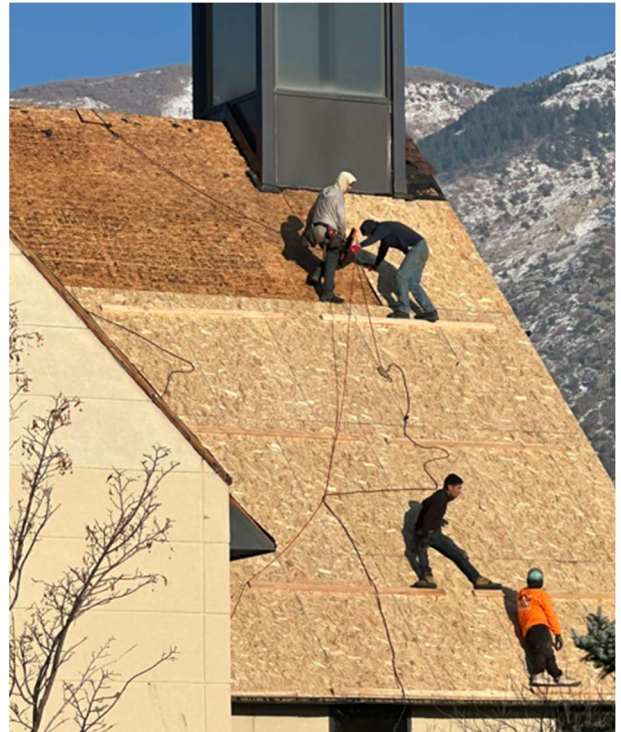
The roof was finally installed in December. There were a few issues with the installation process, but Pete Gallego of Infinity Roofing responded quickly and fixed every problem to our satisfaction. We now have a great-looking new roof on the whole building.



Faithfully His,
Jim Craig



David Filanda is the council's property management representative. David and Jim communicate what needs to be repaired on the two ALC buildings and then gets that information to the council.





Shepherding Group

The Shepherding Group meets on the third Thursday of each month. We ended our 2023-2024 with a study on the “Fruits of the Spirit”. During the summer months we meet at various places for lunch and fellowship. In September, we started to study “Anxious for Nothing” by Max Lucado. It is always a pleasure to lead this group, and I am blessed by each member.

In His service,
Arliiss Zimmerman

Songs that Get Stuck into Your Head

What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to
bear! What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer!
O what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear
All because we do not carry everything to God in prayer.
-“What a Friend We Have in Jesus” by Joseph M. Scriven (1855)

O Lord my God, When I in awesome wonder
Consider all the worlds Thy Hands have made
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder
Thy power throughout the universe displayed.
-“How Great Thou Art” by Carl Gustav Boberg (1885)

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!
Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God
Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood.
-“Blessed Assurance” by Fanny Crosby (1873)

Turn your eyes upon Jesus
Look full in His wonderful face
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim
In the light of His glory and grace.
-“Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus” -by Helen Lemmel (1922)

“I was there to hear your borning cry,
I’ll be there when you are old.
I rejoiced the day you were baptized,
to see your life unfold.”
-“Borning Cry” – by John Ylvisaker (1985)

Christmas Photos



STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN – 2024

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law" (Galatians 5:22-23)

The Ascension Lutheran Church Stewardship Campaign theme for 2025 was "Multiplying God's Fruits of the Spirit" and was conducted during October culminating with Commitment Sunday on November 10, 2024.

Every individual who passes through the doors of Ascension Lutheran Church possesses gifts from God. We are called to SHARE the gifts God has provided, our time, talents, and treasure. Stewardship in all seasons includes spiritual practices of abundantly sharing these gifts within our congregation and our outside community.

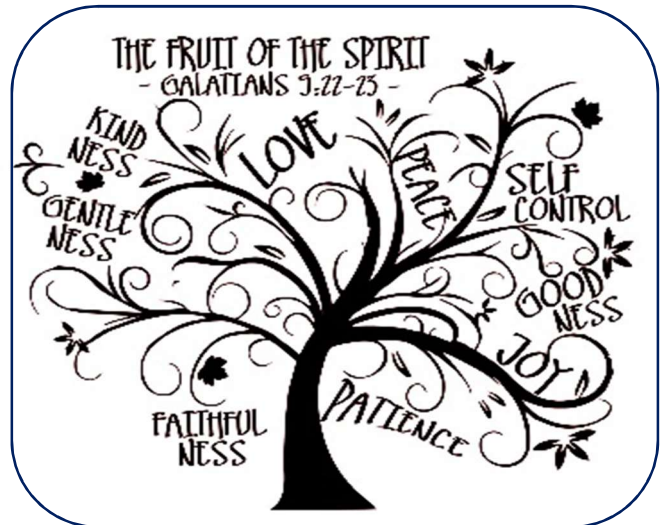
This past year, the children played an important role in our stewardship campaign reminding individuals of the important role they will play as the future of the church.

In the coming year you will be hearing more about our exciting mission plans for 2025 through newsletter articles, bulletin inserts, temple talks, and letters.

We received 29 pledges that totaled \$141,000. Your financial support means more NOW than ever to keep our church, building, grounds, and ministries alive and thriving in the coming year.

Thank you for being part of this vibrant congregation. Please pray for our common work together as we continue to teach the Gospel to Ascension members and visitors. Because of your commitment, Ascension will have an impact in the community, across the nation, and around the globe in 2025.

Sincerely in Christ,
Christie Denniston,
Stewardship Liaison



Worship and Music Ministry Annual Report

“Next to the Word of God, music deserves the highest praise. The gift of language combined with the gift of song was given to man that he should proclaim the Word of God through Music.”

Martin Luther

Indeed, worship and music go hand in hand. We continue to center our worship on the gospel of Jesus Christ, blending traditional and contemporary worship styles that glorify God and is meaningful to our community.

God continues to invite us into his work in the world, centering us always as HIS children, HIS church as we come to him in worship and praise.



As Kamberlynn and Eric have continued to “gel” as a musical juggernaut, our own Dana Gray on violin has added so much character and depth to our music.

We continue with a Noisy Offering each week of pocket change collected into jars, by the children present, shaken to make a wonderful noise of generosity and thankfulness, emptied into a larger bowl exclaiming, “thanks be to God!” When tallied every quarter, a new ministry is chosen by the children. This offering is a visible and tangible sign of what our collective small gifts in the moment can become.

It’s become a favorite element of our worship each week as the congregation dips into their pockets and all join in singing “Jesus Loves Me.”

Our usual liturgical year events:

- We began our Lenten journey on Ash Wednesday using the series “what r u up 2?”, a worship series from Worship Design Studio.
- We clothed the sanctuary with the torn purple cloth reminding us of the sackcloth used to symbolize our brokenness before God.
- We offered “Ashes to Go” from our parking lot for those who wanted to celebrate the Ash Wednesday tradition of the “Imposition of Ashes” but were not able to join in-person worship. (Thanks Pastor Debra!)
- Holy Week began with the traditional procession of palms followed by the Maundy Thursday service of Holy Communion and Foot Washing.
- Easter Sunday Service with special music by Kamberlynn and her beautiful mother, Catherine, brought us all rejoicing in worship and praise.
- We dressed the Sanctuary in white, representing the castoff graveclothes found in the empty tomb that became the banners of Christ’s victory over death. The swags came together at the back of the church in the form of a dove (representing the Holy Spirit) hovering just above the baptismal font.
- Other notable events:
 - Remembering and praying for victims of natural disasters, gun violence and for peace in Ukraine, Israel, and all victims of war.
 - Receiving New Members
 - Blessing of the Lutheran World Relief Kits
 - Reformation Luncheon
 - God’s Work. Our Hands. – Worship followed by service projects throughout the community.



- All Saints Sunday candle-lighting remembrance of the saints who have entered the Church Triumphant.
- Blessing of the Quilts
- Advent – We began a new church year with the Advent Series, “On the Way to Bethlehem” a worship series from Worship Design Studio.



• In this series we paid attention not just to the destination of Christmas, but also to the places where events occurred that led to a starry night on which a child was born who would change the world. And we have pondered our own milestones—the progress and the potholes “on the way.”

• We welcomed our Guide, Andee Engelby, and Donkey (James Jimenez & Todd Hart) to delight the children and help us all examine our growth in understanding and faith on our journey to Bethlehem.

• And a wonderful highlight to our Advent season was the offerings of TWO...yes TWO CHOIRS!



• First our young people, Anders, Callie Jo, Noah, Ellie, Norah, and Colin blessed us with THREE musical offerings on HANDBELLS! It was such a beautiful offering, and the kids worked so hard. We can't wait to see what they do next.

• Second, Our Holiday Choir came together rather quickly to offer a Christmas Cantata, “Hope Has Hands”. The offering was led by Kamberlynnne on keyboard, Eric on Guitar and Directed by Kamberlynnne’s mom, Catherine. We were also joined by Kamberlynnne’s brother, Josiah and sister, Rebekah as narrators.



• December 24th – Christmas Eve Candlelight Service capped off our year with the children present leading a beautiful procession of light into worship.

• Again, we were blessed with the talents of Kamberlynnne’s family as her younger brother, Josiah, played prelude music with his flute and joined the rest of our musicians in the music accompanying the Passing of the Light.

• Our Children’s Bell Choir offered a lovely song of Away in a Manger.

• Many thanks to all who participated in the readings, singing and processing. It was a blessing to all.

Our Worship/Music Ministry team works together to bring new songs as well as old favorites to Ascension’s corporate worship. Though our numbers are small, our team is great in faith knowing that God will provide all we need as we need it. We continue to be amazed and give God all the glory and praise through Jesus Christ!



With a joyful heart,
Nancy Otto
Worship/Music
Team Minister

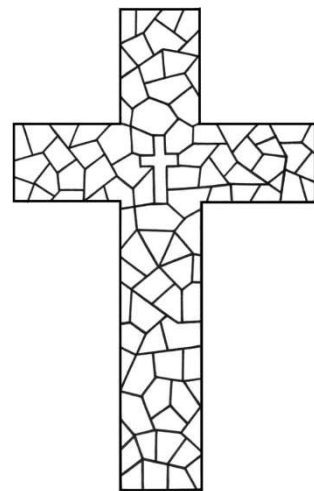


WELCA

Our women's group has been meeting every month at the Golden Corral at 10:00am on the 4th Saturday of the month. We generally have 7 to 12 ladies. We have a devotion or a discussion about something we have interest in whether it is current or something from earlier times. Sometimes it is something that happens to one of us. It could be tragic, unusual or funny. Our last meeting this year was at Pat Refsdal's house. We had a potluck and since it was November we shared what we were thankful for. A lot of us were thankful for our church family. We had 14 people present, that would be nice all the time. I am hoping to interest more ladies, so if you have suggestions, please contact me or see me in person.



Edith Cryts
WELCA Leader



Yard Sale Ministry

The Yard Sale was held on August 23 & 24th in the gym. The sale was a two-day event this year with the doors opening at 3:00 PM on Friday and again on Saturday at 8:00 AM. We had a great crew of set-up volunteers this year, and things went quite smoothly. The proceeds of the yard sale went into the general ministry fund. Our total was just over \$1870.00.

Thanks so very much to so many members of the congregation that gave their time and “stuff” to make the event such a success. This was truly an Ascension ministry that serves the community in so many ways. The stories of grateful families purchasing yard sale items at minimum cost – items that they never thought was possible – were numerous and heart-warming.

In Love of Community,
Pastor Debra

