

Connec

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Ascension Lutheran Church

Connect...to our History



Ascension Lutheran Church held its first worship service in October 1954. Since then it has grown to be one of the largest Lutheran churches in New York. Here are some milestones and highlights of our history:

- Various building programs produced a beautiful Sanctuary that holds over 400 worshippers, a large educational facility, a gymnasium/social hall, a Prayer Chapel, multiple offices and a Community Room.
- An ample campus facilitates youth activities and many congregational activities both inside and outside.
- For nearly fifty years Ascension has had a dynamic preschool for 2-4 year-olds.
- We have an expanding Latino ministry for the growing number of Latino friends in our community.
- Always believing that it must seek to serve all of God's people, Ascension makes its facilities available to many 12 Step Groups.
- Being mission and social minded, Ascension helps many people through its emergency food pantry and other social ministries.
- Ascension serves people worldwide through its support of the Metropolitan New York Synod.

Ascension is in a season of renewal and growth. Over the past five years, we have experienced a wonderful injection of energy and enthusiasm for our ministry. Now is the time to take our next step forward. Now is the time for us to respond to the needs of our community. Now is the time to better equip our congregation to serve the world. Now is the time to Connect!



Connect...to our Identity



Our Vision

We are a church where lives are changed by connecting people to God, connecting people to one another, and connecting with our Community through ministry and outreach. Over the last four years, our congregation worked to define a clear vision for our future. One word rang clearly throughout this process - Connect. Our long-standing members find Ascension to be a central place of connection. Ascension is a key component of their social, spiritual, and servant lives. Our new members are seeking the same in their journey, but are finding new connections difficult to make. Our leadership has identified key areas of connection that will better assist our congregation to connect to one another and to Christ through service, fellowship, and care.

Our Mission

Creating opportunities for congregants to utilize their gifts serving our local, regional, and global communities and helping those in need.

- To provide meaningful Christian worship that helps people grow in faith and love for God and one another;
- To provide inspiring spiritual leadership and preaching that deepens our personal relationship with God and relates the Word of God to everyday life;
- To enhance spiritual, intellectual, and personal growth through multidimensional Christian education for all age groups;
- To offer small and large group opportunities to foster a bond among congregants through fellowship, service, and study;
- To nurture a welcoming environment that embraces all of God's diverse people;
- To encourage church members to embody discipleship by actively spreading the Word of God to others around us.



Connect...to our Future



In order to continue to grow into our mission, our congregation is developing a strategic plan for ministry. Our appeal will fulfill this plan by dedicating 55% of any funds raised to facility projects, 25% to ministry development, and 20% to debt reduction. To better serve God, we will:

Connect Through our Facility

At first glance, it would seem that projects for our physical plant would be unexciting. However, our building is a central connection point with the world. This appeal will better equip our facility to more effectively host the ministry that flows from Ascension.

Connect to our Community

Ascension is a key source of interconnection for our congregation. We will improve our relationship with the community that surrounds us by adding staff that will help to focus on several areas, as well as working on redirecting staff to help with various groups within the congregation.

Connect through Service

Our congregation serves God's people in many and various ways. We will better follow that call by listening to our members' needs and reaching out to the surrounding communities through various forums, like the recent Community meeting in Deer Park.



A church staff with callings in specific areas



The growth and development of our ministry will be enhanced by adding staff in specific areas:

- ◆ Parish Administrator – Our Church Secretary will be promoted to increased hours and responsibilities in order to manage the vast network of ministries Ascension offers. In addition to managing day-to-day operations, the Parish Administrator will serve as:
 - Communications Coordinator – Improving the communications within the church and out to the world. The aim is to better inform our congregation of the many goings-on at Ascension every day, and better tell our story outside our walls.
 - Connections Coordinator – Working with members to connect them to ministry opportunities to better live out their calling as a disciple.
- ◆ Secretary – This part-time position will be a receptionist and administrative assistant to the Parish Administrator.
- ◆ Increasing the hours of our Associate Pastor - This will help to increase programming for Empty Nesters.
- ◆ Opportunity for Senior Pastor Focus – With some administrative tasks covered by the Parish Administrator and ministry by the Associate Pastor, there will now be opportunity for the development of focused ministry toward Millennials.
- ◆ Latino Ministry – We will increase staff hours to provide more programming to the fastest growing segment of our community.
- ◆ Maintenance – It is important for us to properly clean and maintain our very well-used facility. We will dedicate funds to improve our upkeep of God's house.



Funds for ministries that will make a difference



The reach and impact of our ministry will be enhanced by funding several areas:

Growth of our Latino Ministry

The Latino population is the fastest growing in our area. We aim to better serve this community with an expansion of programs and services led by increased staff hours.

Expansion of our Food Pantry

Every night, people in our community go to bed with empty stomachs. By expanding our Food Pantry into the renovated Community Room, we can better feed the hungry in our neighborhood.

Donation to Lutheran Social Services, NY

This wonderful organization serves the needy of New York through many programs. In support of their mission, and in thanks for their consultation in our visioning process, we will focus a portion of our appeal to their ministry. We are planning on donating \$10,000.



A Facility That Accommodates and Enables Ministry



We will focus our resources to enhance our facility:

- Roof – Over recent years, tens of thousands of dollars have been spent on residual damage from our failing roofs. Our project began last fall to replace leaky roofs over our Education Wing. That completed project is the first phase of our appeal. We will now look to replace the roof over our Sanctuary before its pending failure and damage to our recently renovated sanctuary.
- Bathrooms – A key component to welcoming people into God's house is to provide comfortable amenities. Our bathrooms are long outdated and in desperate need of complete renovation.
- Offices – A residual benefit of bathroom remodeling is the opportunity to redesign office space to better suit our dynamic staff and volunteers.
- Education Wing – With the roof project completed, we can now focus on redesign of the interior to greatly improve our Nursery, Preschool, Sunday School, Youth, ESL, and Camp programming. The introduction of technology and air conditioning will attract even more to our growing young demographic.
- Sanctuary and Chapel – Our weekend worship opportunities are key connection points to our people and God through one another. We recognize that different people experience the Spirit in different ways. We will make slight modifications to our sanctuary to allow for greater flexibility, provide space for our growing music program, and introduce technology into our contemporary worship service.
- Community Room - We have many groups that use our facility to host meetings to help support their members. People would be better served with an update of that room to make it more comfortable for all the people who are using that space. We will also design the room so that it can host our Food Pantry to feed our local brothers and sisters in need.
- Debt Reduction – Though not a physical project, reducing our mortgage will allow us to use more of your offering for ministry projects that directly impact lives.

All of the work that we are planning will support our vision of Connecting us to God, to each other and to the community.



Our Appeal



As we Connect to this next phase of our church life, we recognize that we are being called to love and serve our community. To enhance our journey to Connect to God's mission we have a goal to raise \$750,000 over the next three years. Pledged dollars will be designated as follows:

- Mission fund and ministry development – 25% of the pledged dollars
- Maintenance and renovation of space for ministry - 55% of the pledged dollars
- Debt reduction– 20% of the pledged dollars

We Pray

Gracious and generous God, we praise the work of the Holy Spirit among us. May you give us glad and generous hearts, ready to praise you and to respond to those in need, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. AMEN



Giving Guide



This three-year appeal will include contributions over and above what is currently being given in order to secure the financial resources required to meet our goals. Please study carefully this Giving Guide. Place yourself within the scale of gifts, then study your devotional booklet, pray and reflect on how much you will grow from that point. This giving guide is designed to help us to meet or exceed our three-year goal. We're inviting you to lift your sights and stretch your vision.

Prayerfully consider what you can and will give as a faith-filled response to God's grace as a part of your personal growth.

NUMBER OF GIFTS NEEDED	3 YEAR TOTAL
1	\$100,000
2	\$50,000 or greater
4	\$25,000-\$49,999
8	\$15,000-\$24,999
17	\$9,000-\$14,999

NUMBER OF GIFTS NEEDED	WEEKLY AMOUNT	3 YEAR TOTAL
20	\$50.00	\$7,800
20	\$40.00	\$6,240
25	\$30.00	\$4,680
30	\$20.00	\$3,120
Many	Up to \$20.00	

Let your giving be with joy & celebration!

"...and God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance so that you may always have enough of everything and may provide in abundance for every good work." (2 CORINTHIANS 9:8)



Frequently Asked Questions



Why 'CONNECT'?

The CONNECT theme has been a part of our mission statement for many years. It represents that Christ has sent us to CONNECT — CONNECT to God's world, CONNECT to God's mission, CONNECT to our community.

What is the timeline for the Ascension Ministry Appeal?

The Ascension Ministry Appeal was initiated in January, 2014 at the annual meeting with the approval to hire KAIROS as our consultant. Various planning activities have been going on since February. The official kick-off will be October 11, 2015, with Commitment Sunday on November 15, 2015. The appeal will run for three years, through 2018.

What options are available to me to participate in this appeal?

Your pledge can be met in several ways:

You can give a lump sum or give regularly throughout the three years designated for the appeal.

You can change your Simply Giving amount to meet the pledge. Donations of stocks are also an option.

Will the funds be separated from the general funds of the church?

Yes. Funds for improvements and mission will be established.

Should I move money from my annual pledge to the appeal?

A pledge to the Ascension Ministry Appeal should be considered in addition to your regular giving. Ascension Lutheran Church still needs regular gifts to the operating budget in order to maintain on-going operations.

How much are we spending for KAIROS, promotion and the events planned?

We expect to invest 5-7% of the gross proceeds to pay for the services of KAIROS and other expenses related to the appeal.

How much should I pledge?

We ask you to prayerfully consider making a pledge to the support the Ascension Ministry Appeal; the amount and method of giving are your choice. Any pledge will help us meet the fund-raising goal and further the mission of Ascension Lutheran Church.

Is there someone specific I can talk to about my pledge?

You may speak with anyone from the Appeal Committees, Church Council or the Pastors. Your pledge will be held in the strictest of confidence.

Who prioritizes the projects we will do and when?

The Church Council will be working with the property committee to prioritize the projects. If immediate needs arise, they will, of course, be prioritized for earlier implementation.

How do CONNECT renovations help us grow in discipleship and service?

The planned renovations and remodeling will provide a more welcoming as well as more functional facility to host and prepare our existing members, as well as those who will become members, to engage in God's mission in the community.

Who prioritizes the mission efforts we will do?

The Executive Committee (Pastors and Officers) will be recommending the priorities, with council oversight and approval, for the distribution of Mission Fund monies.

How do the new positions fit in with the emphasis on mission?

The new recommended staff positions will help us to focus in on the areas of ministry that were defined in the congregation surveys which gave us clarity on where the congregation wants to focus our mission work.

Will we pay off the mortgage earlier than is currently planned?

At our current rate, the mortgage will be paid off in early 2034 at the latest. Additional mortgage reduction contributions continue to move this date up. Proceeds from the appeal will provide for salaries for new staff through 2018, with the anticipation that in 2019, once the mortgage is paid off, the money usually spent on mortgage will be available to pay the salaries of the staff persons we anticipate adding.

If we pay off the mortgage, will we reduce the operating budget for the church?

When the mortgage is paid off, the funds in the budget that are presently paying the mortgage will then be used to pay for the new staff positions and on-going missional activities.

Tell The Story Events



Tell the story events are opportunities for everyone to become familiar with the vision and goals of the "Connect" Appeal.

Every person in our community of faith is being invited to at least one of these events (you may fit into the demographic of more than one if you have an elementary child and a child in confirmation, for instance). We invite you to consider attending one or more of the larger events and/or choose one of the space-limited events. Please join the fun and learn more about and endeavor to respond faithfully to God's call to connect to God's mission. Connect to God's community. Connect to our growth as disciples of Jesus.

Youth Kick-off

Sunday, September 27, 2015 3:00 pm-5:00 pm. Families with youth group aged children will meet for an ice cream truck social Tell the Story event at the conclusion of the 2015-2016 youth kick off.

Hispanic Heritage Festival

Saturday, October 10, 2015 3:00 pm-9:00 pm. We gather for our annual celebration of Latino culture with worship, food, dancing, and performance. This year we will also Tell the Story of our bilingual congregation's bright future.

Wine Tasting

Sunday, October 11, 2015 2:00 pm-4:30 pm. Please join us at the home of Debbie Demarchis for this Tell the Story event. This event is by reservation and is limited by space, so please make your reservation by signing up on the Tell the Story reservation board.

Confirmation Families

Wednesday, October 14, 2015 7:30 pm. Families with children in confirmation will meet for this Tell the Story event during confirmation class.

Football Game Day

Sunday, October 18, 2015 1:00 pm-4:00 pm. Come and enjoy a Sunday of football at the home of Heidi and Andrew Manzo. This adult event is by reservation and is limited by space, so please make your reservation by signing up on the Tell the Story reservation board.

Scavenger Hunt

Wednesday, October 21, 2015 6:30 pm-9:00 pm. We will meet at Ascension at 6:30 hand out the hunt and then meet back at Applebee's for the results of the game. It will be an evening of fun and laughs for young adults both single and married.

Fall Festival

Saturday, October 24, 2015 Time TBD. This is a family event focusing on those with elementary school-aged children. There will be games, crafts, food, and fun. Join us for this at Ascension.

Adult Gathering

November 7, 2015 7:00 pm-9:00 pm. Our regular gathering of music, fellowship and study will also feature an opportunity to Tell the Story of our ministry.

Congregational Breakfast

Sunday, November 8, 2015 after worship services. You are all invited to attend a special coffee hour hosted by the Tell the Story team. Come by for some special treats and learn about Ascension's vision as we Connect to the future.

50-Plus Brunch

Wednesday, November 11, 2015 12:00 pm-2:00 pm. As an extra bonus to this regular 50 plus meeting, we will be serving a brunch for those who attend and Telling the Story. This event is not space limited however; there will be reservation sheet so we know how many to plan for.

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