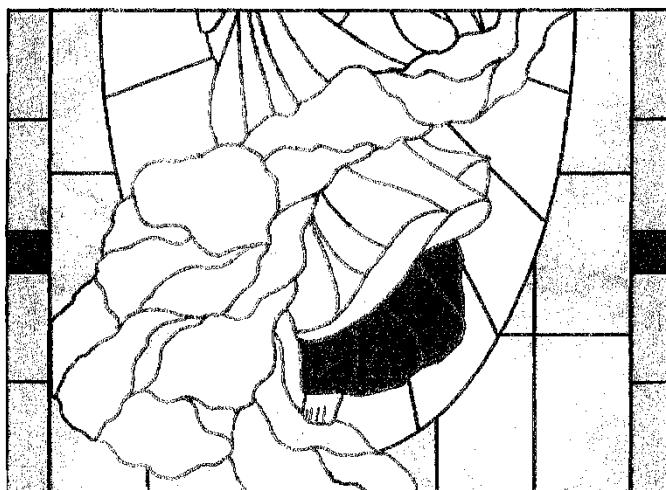
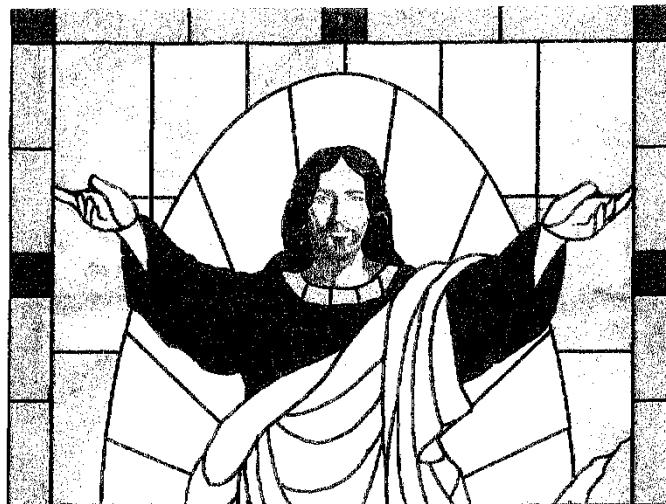


ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

January 27, 2019



Ascension Lutheran Church
Deer Park, New York

**Ascension Lutheran Church
Annual Congregational Meeting
2018 Agenda**

1. Table Grace — Doxology
2. Luncheon — courtesy WELCA members
3. Devotions
4. The Call to order
5. Review of Format for Meeting
6. Business meeting
 - a. The Secretary's report
 - b. Report of the Pastors
 - c. The Treasurer's report
 - d. Committee reports
7. The proposed Budget for 2019
8. The election of new Church Council members
9. Old Business
10. New Business:
 - a) Synodical and Congregational deacons: Susan Bliss, Vicki Elfers, Natalie Romero, Barbara Snyder and Bob Snyder
 - b) Call Mauricio Dominquez as a Synodical Deacon for Latino Ministry
 - c) Synod Assembly Representatives
11. Resolutions
12. Council meeting to elect officers
13. Adjourn the meeting

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Secretary's Report

Ascension Lutheran Church
Annual Congregation Meeting
January 28, 2018

Table grace was offered by Pastor Patty Avila. Luncheon was provided courtesy of WELCA members and we thank them for the delicious food and the care in providing it to us.

After the luncheon, Heidi Manzo, Church Council President, called the meeting to order at 12:23 PM. Heidi thanked all who assisted in setting up the meeting including WELCA for the lunch.

Heidi announced the Business Meeting is now open and we had enough members present at the meeting and we exceeded our quorum needed for the meeting which was 40.

Review of Meeting Ground Rules:

These additional rules will be in effect for this meeting:

1. Our Parliamentarian is Russ Bliss. He will help us with any procedural questions for the meeting.
2. All confirmed members should have signed in on the attendance sheets located at each table and received two ballot forms for use during the meeting. Heidi then reviewed the definition of a member in good standing.
3. When the floor is open for discussion, please wait to be recognized by the President. We will have a microphone brought over to you. Please use the microphone and state your name. Russ Bliss will be our timekeeper as a speaker has the floor for up to three minutes. If the speaker has additional comments after his/her three minutes, he/she will need to wait until all other speakers are recognized before speaking again.
4. Typically, our voting will take place by a show of hands. If there is not a clear decision by a show of hands, we may need to do a paper ballot. We will do a paper ballot for the representatives for the Synodical deacons.

Secretary's Report: Submitted by Jean Belcher

The Secretary's Report of the Annual Congregational Meeting on January 29, 2017 was presented. A motion was made to accept the Secretary's Report by Owen Yung and seconded by Joe Bellelo. The motion passed unanimously.

Pastors' Reports were submitted by Pastors Lathrop and Hartford.

Treasurer's Report: Submitted by Rich Germann

Rich Germann Reviewed the Treasurer's annual report for the year ending December 31, 2017. Rich pointed out the church was ending the year in the black! Revenue was down partly due to contributions being a little under, special offerings coming in below budget, Christmas, Advent and Easter giving also being below what was given in the past. The preschool tuition had an increase of enrollment and brought in approximately \$47,000 over budget. Some expenses increased in 2017. The Latino Ministry had an increase because of salary increases but the majority of that was paid by the SYNOD. We had a \$1,350.00 increase in programming due the need for a second van rental. We also paid down \$30,000 of our mortgage debt. In dedicated funds, the goal this year was to reduce the dedicated funds so that it was equal to our cash available. From our Mission Funds we were able to renovate bathrooms and pay down the mortgage equaling \$85,000. A motion was made by John Parkinson to accept the Treasurer's Report and seconded by Kurt Lundquist. The report was unanimously accepted.

Committee Reports:

The Chairperson/Leader of the Committees were asked to stand when their committee was called and we asked the Congregation if they had any questions on the reports provided and that the Chairperson/Leader would answer any questions.

Audit Committee – submitted by Anita Quynn

Christian Education/Children's Ministry- submitted by Lisa Perreira and Natalie Romero

Christian's Mothers Group – Janet L. Germann

Coffee Hour – submitted by Debra Mann

Day Camp – submitted by Jillian Manzo

Deacons and Assisting Ministers- submitted by Deacon Susan Bliss

Evangelism-Communications Committee – submitted by Kelly Reno

Finance Committee – submitted by Rich Germann

Latino Ministry Committee – submitted by Yadira Aguera

Personnel Committee – submitted by Heidi Manzo

Preschool- submitted by Valerie Lukens

Property Committee – submitted by John Scheid

Social Ministry Committee- submitted by Garrett Leddy

Special Events Committee – submitted by Rob McCarthy

Stephen Ministry – submitted by Pastor Justin, Pastor Flora, Deacon Vicki Elfers, Deacon Eric Faret,

Donald Hartford

Stewardship Committee- submitted by Derek Lundquist, Cathy Borg, Glenn Osterman, Kurt Lundquist,

Owen Yung

W.E.L.C.A. – submitted by WELCA Executive Board

Worship and Music Committee- submitted by Tom Tresselt

Youth Committee – submitted by Allison McCarthy and Natalie Romero

Homeless Initiative: Warren Hultz discussed the initiative. The group is in need of volunteers particularly from the 1AM – 6 AM shift and bus drivers with a CDL license. The initiative has been receiving many food donations and has been receiving quite a bit of help from St. Cyril's. The shelter will end the last Friday in March 2018.

2018 Proposed Budget: Submitted by Rich Germann:

Rich Germann reviewed the proposed budget for 2018 (copy attached). The budget is a balanced budget for 2018. Some of the expenses include a 2% increase for the staff except for the business administrator- she will be receiving a 3% increase. In addition, our Associate Pastor, Pastor Flora, will have her salary brought up to the recommended compensation level by the SYNOD. There were no questions.

Motion to accept the Budget for 2018- Pattie Komornik
Seconded by Andrew Manzo
Motion passed unanimously.

Elections of Church Council

The following members have been nominated to serve on Church Council:

For a first two year term:

Garrett Leddy- chair of Social Ministry (first two year term)
John Scheid – chair of Property (first two year term)

For a second two year term:

Allison McCarthy – chair of the Youth Committee (second two year term)
Rob McCarthy – chair of Special Events (second two year term)

A motion was made by Owen Yung to close nominations thereby electing the slate by acclamation, seconded by Janet Germann. Motion passed unanimously.

For a one year term:

Richard Germann – Treasurer

Yadira Alguera – Latino Ministry Representative

Diana Lazarou – WELCA Representative

A motion was made by Susan Bliss to close the nominations thereby electing the slate by acclamation, it was seconded by Kelly Reno. Motion passed unanimously.

Old Business:

None

New Business:

1. A motion was made by Russ Bliss to renew the one year calls for our Synodical and Congregations Deacons: Susan Bliss, Vicki Elfers, Natalie Romero, Eric Faret, Karen Turnator, Holly Hawkins, Barbara Synder and Bob Synder. It was seconded by Alice Wright and passed unanimously.
2. The congregation voted to extend a first call for Deacon Mauricio Dominguez for the 2018 year. There was a written vote and the call was approved.
3. The congregation needed four people to serve as Synodical Representatives. Originally the ballot had 5 names on it but Pattie Komornik asked that her name be removed from the ballot leaving only four names. Therefore a hand vote was now ok in this situation.

A motion was made to approve the people on the slate: Garrett Leddy, Yadira Alguera, Deacon Susan Bliss and Linda Law minus Pattie Komornik as our Synodical Representatives by Sara Neidig. It was seconded by Jim Mueller and passed unanimously.

Resolutions:

Thanks to:

Members who have completed their terms on council

Members of the Church staff.

Members of the Preschool staff.

The volunteers who serve Ascension.

Our Pastoral staff.

Ascension Day Camp staff.

Thrivent Financial and the many volunteers for all the Action Team card monies that were received.

The resolutions were accepted with a round of applause.

A motion was made to close the meeting by Russ Bliss and seconded by Andrew Manzo. Motion was passed unanimously.

Executive Committee Election Results:

President: Heidi Manzo

Vice President: Rob McCarthy

Secretary: Jean Belcher

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Belcher

Church Council Secretary

Senior Pastor's Report

Dear Friends in Christ,

It is a blessing to greet you after another successful year at Ascension. Upon reflecting, I'm reminded of just how much ministry was accomplished in 2018. As you read through this year's reports, notice just how many people are working hard to make Ascension a place where ALL are welcome to grow in faith and serve together.

Mission Appeal

We completed our mission appeal with the close of 2018. I'm happy to report that it was a resounding success. We have refurbished just about every part of our facility between this and the prior "3-R" Campaign. Ascension has a building that is well-suited for the full ministry we provide.

Ministry with all Ages

I am blessed to have the opportunity to minister to virtually every demographic at Ascension. I spend time with our little ones in Preschool (in daily morning greeting and monthly Chapel), Day Camp, and Milestone Ministry Classes (1st. Communion, Happy Meals with Pastors, etc). I'm with our teens for Confirmation, Youth Group, and special trips like Confirmation Camp and the National Youth Gathering. I'm with our adults in Men's Bible study, Lenten Studies, and New Member Classes. I think my favorite events are those that welcome all ages together. I so enjoyed the Chili Cook-off, EGGStravaganza, Rally Day (slightly re-imagined) and other events throughout the year. There have been so many more events than I am able to list here. In all, I see an amazing family of believers that enjoys working and spending time together.

Homeless Initiative

Although it is already highlighted in other reports, I just want to take a moment to gush on how proud I continue to be of Ascension. We enter into a third season of this profoundly impactful ministry. Opening our doors to our homeless brothers and sisters is a bold (and scary) thing. I am so enthused that our congregation made a step beyond fear to do the ministry Jesus calls us to.

Representing Ascension

I am honored to represent Ascension at many events and activities. I've attended sign dedications and 9/11 memorials in our town. My regular meetings with local churches and social service agencies produced BIHI (homeless shelter) and continues to oversee it. I meet regularly with an interfaith group and our state legislator (which led to our community prayer service in July), as well as a monthly gathering of ELCA pastors from our area conference. I've worked with Deer Park and Bohemia Fire Departments in many ways. On the Synodical level, I am blessed to be a team called the Center for Evangelical Mission and was elected to serve on the Synod Consultation Committee. I also consult with the "claimed" team as part of our Synod's Strategic Plan. I also served on a group that interviewed and made recommendations to LuHi for their new Head of School. This is an important task which connects our congregation to the world. These connections have also led to a great amount of support. In my 7 years at Ascension, we've received over \$300,000 in grant money and mission support. All of that comes at the cost of many hours of writing applications and meeting with boards.

Worship

We are continuing to evaluate our worship, always striving to improve the experience for our parishioners. We conducted numerous surveys in 2018 to learn what styles most inspire people. The results led to the formation of our Praise Band, which has positively energized our 10:30 service. In 2019 we will be tweaking that music and introducing projection to even further grow the ministry.

On a very positive note we continued our streak of at least one first time visitor every weekend for all of 2017 and 2018. This is a place that draws God's people together!

Mission Statement and Strategic Planning

I was fortunate enough to attend a workshop in 2017 focused on Executive Skills for Church leaders. This course on marketing, financial management, leadership development, and strategic planning greatly benefitted my ministry at ascension. I am happy to share that I am attending a Level 2 workshop this January, which I anticipate will further my ability to lead our ministry.

Thanksgiving

In all, I am so grateful for the opportunity to serve Ascension. I feel so blessed to work with an amazingly dedicated staff that constantly goes over and above the call of duty. I am equally amazed by an incredible network of volunteers that graciously give of themselves to make all of this ministry happen. I hope you share in my grateful appreciation for the blessings God has bestowed on Ascension and her ministry. I would be remiss if I missed the most important people in my life – my family. My wife is constantly called to shoulder the load when the rigors of a busy ministry keep me from home. Part of her ministry is to allow for me to be at Ascension for all we do. Thank you for making my family part of Ascension' family.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Justin

Associate Pastor's Report

As I sit at my computer to begin to write my Annual Report on the 12th of December, I am reminded that this is a special day for me: the ninth anniversary of my ordination. And so, it seems hard to believe that it's already been nearly six years since you welcomed me into the ministry here at Ascension as your Associate Pastor. It is such a blessing to be among you.

Aside from my obvious tasks of preaching and presiding at the Lord's Table, and administering the sacraments on Saturday and Sunday, I'm engaged in many other pastoral activities, among them: is making calls and visits to those who are homebound, in rehab, or hospitalized, and for the third year, offering a "Blue Christmas" service of hope and healing for those experiencing any type of loss.

I've been involved with the Pre-School children, especially in teaching the bi-monthly Chapel lessons.

When it comes to the various Milestones in the lives of our children, I was a teller of bible stories to the 3-year-olds entering Sunday School this past September in "Pizza with the Pastors," an instructor to the 3rd graders as they received and learned to use their new Bibles in "Bagels and Bibles," and a teacher of First Holy Communion instruction for our 5th graders.

With our youth, I was a teacher of the 6th grade Confirmation class as needed and have accompanied our 8th graders on their various service projects, as well as involvement with the daily Opening for Summer Day Camp.

As a member of all our church committees, I regularly attended approximately twelve evening meetings each month.

My ministry focus is on the adult population of this congregation, and as such, I created the group known as "Forever 50" four years ago. Our membership has grown from fifteen to over forty. Meeting weekly, we have had guest speakers from various companies, agencies, and institutions which inform, or parties celebrating the various holidays, such as our costumed Halloween Party, on site Thanksgiving Feast, or Corned Beef, Cabbage, and Potato Luncheon celebrating St. Patty's Day. We also planned events such as High Tea and a Mocktail Hour. We've had instruction in painting on glass, canvas, and pallets, as well as flower arranging. And our group loves to go on trips, so we usually plan on taking one each month. We have seen "Phantom" at the Westchester Dinner Theatre, "An American Trilogy" at the Theatre at Westbury, the "Christmas Spectacular" at Radio City Music Hall, and "Jesus Christ" at the Millennium Theatre in Lancaster, PA among others.

I also organized Ascension night at the Long Island Ducks Baseball game at the Bethpage Park in Central Islip July 11th with fireworks following the All-Star game. This coming year, I will again offer group tickets to the July 24th game against the New Britain Bees with fireworks following the game.

Another aspect of my adult ministry role was to offer Bible Studies. A group of twenty-five women completed a study on Philippians 4: 4-7 in the Fall. This spring I look forward to presenting a study called, "When God Doesn't Fix It."

I was also tasked with organizing and teaching the Adult Retreat offered this past May to thirty participants. The topic was: "Anxious for Nothing." In 2019, the retreat will again take place at Camp Quinipet on Shelter Island for a Bible Study on "Grace" during the first weekend in May.

As a Stephen Ministry Leader, I've helped to teach our new class of trainees this past Fall/Winter, as well as pair up care givers (Stephen Ministers) with care receivers.

As I reflect on this past year and all that has been accomplished, I feel so very blessed—blessed by the love and support of my husband Don, blessed to be here at Ascension among God's people, and blessed by the challenges, hopes, and rewards that 2019 holds.

Blessings,
Pastor Flora

TREASURER'S REPORT

<u>REVENUE</u>	2018 ACTUAL	2018 BUDGET
Contributions	434,208.86	430,000.00
Special Offerings	22,317.00	20,000.00
Other Income	39,763.30	36,000.00
Pre-School Tuition Income	233,543.41	268,650.07
TOTAL REVENUE	729,832.57	754,650.07
 <u>EXPENSES</u>		
Pastoral Ministry	174,890.78	174,930.84
Pastoral Assistance	0.00	0.00
Latino Ministry	15,563.16	15,500.00
Worship	54,227.27	56,245.98
Administration	130,954.58	122,295.40
Program	49,535.40	56,677.72
Property	47,581.26	47,770.00
Benevolence (Synod)	27,274.08	28,000.00
Insurance	26,836.69	29,523.81
Lutheran High School	1,590.00	975.00
Pre-School	171,906.59	193,587.26
Debt Reduction	28,512.00	28,512.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	728,871.82	754,018.01
NET INCOME	960.75	632.06

DEDICATED FUND BALANCES

12/31/2018

Homeless Initiative	2,776.42
Latino Ministry Fund	8,333.15
Confirmation Camp	3,234.87
Tanzania Mission Fund	6,290.00
Ascension Day Camp	3,257.11
Seminary Fund	5,621.81
Flower Fund	1,010.76
Coffee Hour Fund	1,182.53
Boiler Conversion Fund	6,000.00

Projection Grant from Synod	7,500.00
Pre-school Grant from Synod	1,500.00
Mission Appeal	21,914.15
	68,620.80
 <u>CASH ON HAND</u>	 <u>12/31/2018</u>
	43,046.06
 <u>INVESTMENT ACCOUNTS</u>	 <u>12/31/2018</u>
 <u>BOND FUNDS (THRIVENT)</u>	
Money Market	24,907.56
House Fund(Thrivent)	14,234.72
LTD Thrivent Bond Fund	30,847.06
 <u>MUTUAL FUNDS</u>	
Victory Funds(RS Large Cap Fund)	27,903.53
Oppenheimer Main St. Grth. & Inc. Fund	33,439.52
 <u>TOTAL VALUE OF INVESTMENTS</u>	 131,332.39
 <u>ASCENSION FUND-MISSION APPEAL</u>	 6,345.66
 <u>ASCENSION ENDOWMENT FUND</u>	 32,409.52
 <u>MORTGAGE</u>	
Thrivent Financial for Lutherans	386,852.62
Outstanding Principle: \$ 403,253.74	
Interest Rate (Fixed): 4.50%	
Maturity Date: 11/1/2034	

The Special Need Monthly Envelopes 2018

January	The Mercy Inn Soup Kitchen, Wyandanch	\$852.75
February	Trinity Lutheran Church, Wyandanch	\$915.00
March	National Youth Gathering	\$768.41
April	Confirmation Camp	\$799.00
May	Pinecrest	\$1,235.55
June	LuHi	\$685.00
July	Dottie's House	\$652.00
August	Long Island Mentoring	\$656.00
September	Seminary Fund	\$582.00
October	Synodical Fund	\$726.00
November	Social Ministry: Homeless Initiative	\$1,37.00
December	Pastor's Fund	\$3,323.00

Audit Committee Report

January 9, 2019
Ascension Evangelical Lutheran Church Council
Mrs. Heidi Manzo, President

Dear Heidi,
We have conducted our audit of the financial records of Ascension Evangelical Lutheran Church. We focused primarily on the two month period beginning July 1, 2018 and ending August 31, 2018. We conducted several tests to the system of internal controls and found no exceptions.

We find that the church records are in order and found no other material errors or omissions.
Accomplished in 2018.

We found that the use personal credit cards has been discontinued.

List of Council Members has been published in the Voice and on our website.
Goals for 2019

Publish Committee Chairpersons in Voice and on Website.

At this time the committee did not audit the Preschool records due to the short time that our Preschool director has been in place. We will be conducting a general audit of all Preschool records in July of 2019.

Respectfully submitted by,

The Audit Committee
Russell Bliss Chair
Owen Yung
Philip Krauss

Children's Ministry Committee

The Christian Education Ministry was involved with the following programs this year: Baptismal Classes, Play & Praise classes for parents and students birth to 2 yrs old, Sunday school for 3 yrs old - 5th grade, Kids Club for kindergarten to 5th grade, Family Advent programming, Lenten programming, First Step/Starting Sunday School, 3rd grade Bibles, and 1st Communion.

Children's Ministry the Christian Education Committee continues to focus on children birth through fifth grade and their families. We continue to focus on relational ministry. At Ascension we believe that Children and Youth are the church today – full members of the community of faith, actively engaged in worship, education, service and fellowship. We strive for current and future programs for us to allow our children, youth and families to be fully engaged in this community of Christ.

Bridge Breakfast is our newest Children's Ministry Program. We are working with 5th and 6th graders to meet once a month to have more in-depth Bible study. So far, it's been a success. We look forward to continuing that program and grow it. Thank you to Nick and Trisha Georghiou for leading these Bible studies and helping us get this program off the ground.

Play & Praise is our monthly, parent & child classes on Sundays and is open to all children 24 months and younger. It's a great time for parents to share the joys and struggles of parenting and find support within each other. There is a story shared, with songs, play time, and prayers.

Sunday school's current enrollment is 90 children. We have continued with last years' format of having the children's sermon in church with Pastor and the music ministry following before breaking up into classrooms. We have a dedicated group of Sunday school teachers whom deserve recognition; they are, Kim Person, Ianina Wentinck, Kelly Wysocki, Kristine Ostermann, Robyn Meyers, Maggie Kivat, Sandra Krauss, Allyson Giles, Nick and Trisha Georghiou, Daniel, Benson, Connor Murphy, Emily Belcher, David Belcher, Erik Person, Danielle Petrizzo, Samantha Petrizzo, Erin Pellicano, Stephanie DeLuca, Elizabeth Falicki, Dannielle Toto; as well as office staff Marie Marck and Gaby Jordan. A huge thank you to our music director David Johnson whose dedication is invaluable, and we thank him greatly. We would also like to thank Erin Shanley for offering unique art projects and taking the lead with Summer Sunday School. We offered 3 sessions this summer. We have also a nursery for children birth – 2 years old. There are currently 10 children attending regularly. Mary Murphy is doing a fantastic job running this program.

Lenten Programs We continue to build up and grow our Holy Week with service projects offered on Palm Sunday, a chocolate Seder on Maundy Thursday, Children's worship and Children's Interactive prayer stations on Good Friday, Eggstravaganza on Holy Saturday, and Family worship on Easter Sunday.

Advent Programs We hosted our third Advent Festival—Christmas Around the World. We adjusted the timing of the event and had a huge success. We offered brunch with carols along with interactive stations that represented Ascension's Cultures. We had a Santa Lucia story book and craft, Santa telling the story of Jesus' birth and posing for pictures, and reenactment of Las Posadas, hosted by our Latino Ministry Committee.

Stepping Stone Ministry we continue to host our Sunday school orientation in the fall, giving our 3rd graders the Bibles with classes with parents and children, and 1st communion classes with our 5th graders. We continue to offer our pre-baptismal classes for families seeking to baptize their child. Classes include an introduction of our Stepping Stone Ministry, Children and Family ministry, and instruction of Baptismal promises for both families and the congregation. We would like to thank the congregation for the support and trust that they give to this committee in doing God's work. We would also like to thank Danielle Toto and Jean Belcher for your service to the committee. We would also like to thank Elizabeth Falicki and Trisha Georghiou for continuing to serve and support Children's committee and Ministry at Ascension.

We would like to thank and praise God for all the blessings he has bestowed on this ministry. We are so grateful that God has sent us so many volunteers who give of their time and talents to share the Good News with all of God's children.

Respectfully Submitted,

Natalie Romero
Director of Children, Youth and Family Ministry

Lisa Perreira
Committee Chairperson

Christian Mothers Group

Christian Mothers Group Report 2018

The Christian Mothers Group holds two meetings each month on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays. Our meetings run September thru May. We meet in the Dragelin Social Hall of Ascension from 9:30-11:30 AM Our activities include, speakers on topic of interest to our group, crafts, inspirational thoughts and sharing, and community service projects.

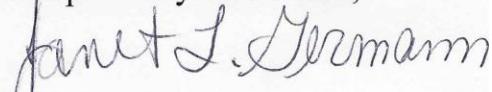
This past year we worked on Valentine's Day Cards for Cohens Children's Hospital. We have done this for several years and the hospital looks for our donations of cards to give out to the children each year to brighten their holiday. In the past, we had created enough cards that the children were able to give cards to their parents when they came to visit. We received a special thank you from the staff for all of our efforts and hard work.

Together as a Thrivent Action Team, under Janet Germann and Carol Tresselt, we put together 100 backpack for Threads for Life to hand deliver last summer to Ghana. We included notebooks, pencils, erasers, sharpeners, stickers and the backpack so 100 children would have school supplies to enhance their learning. We enjoyed being able to supply the children with these backpacks and thank Thrivent Financial for helping to make it possible.

The Mothers Group ran the Bake table at the Craft Fair on November 17th this year. This money goes into our account to pay the cost of speakers and also to fund any supplies needed to carry out our service projects. Thank you for supporting the Fair and our Bake table each year.

Although we did not add any new members to our group this year, we continue to work hard as a group to support each other and those in need. We are always ready and willing to welcome new members to our group. We look forward to continued growth and support in the coming year.

Respectfully Submitted,


Janet L. Germann

Facilitator

Day Camp

Accomplishments in 2018

Ascension Day Camp continued its growth during another successful summer. 95 campers attended throughout the four weeks and were supported by 5 CITs, 14 junior counselors, and 9 counselors. This summer we added an additional position, sports counselor, who provided another opportunity for structured play during the camp day. Ascension Day Camp was also able to purchase an ice maker that was used throughout the summer to keep refreshments cold and provide ice for first aide. The ice maker cut costs from purchasing ice daily, solved the problem of needed to store large amounts of ice and is available for future ministries at Ascension to use. Another way the campers camp experience was improved was through a new carpet floor in the gaga pit to control dust and for safety while playing. The campers engaged in many different activities including, arts and crafts, music, outdoor and indoor play, and Bible time. The campers at Ascension Day Camp also learned the value of helping other by raising \$45 dollars for the Ascension Food Pantry at our Penny Carnival. Overall, Ascension Day Camp provided a safe and engaging environment for 100 of Ascension and the community's youth to play and work at for four weeks of the summer.

Ways Ascension Day Camp controlled expenses in 2018

In order to keep cost down when seeking new equipment, Ascension Day Camp utilized two Action Team Cards. This allowed us to add to the program without raising tuition significantly or overspending. Ascension Day Camp also controlled expenses by ensuring we collected all tuition from all camp families and by raising tuition appropriately to cover the cost of salaries, scholarships, and supplies. Prior to camp starting, Ascension Day Camp also created a projected budget based on the previous year's expenses and did not spend out of the budget.

Future Innovations

As our program is growing there are some additions we would like to make to the program. One change to improve the outdoor experience for our campers is to purchase play houses to provide another activity for our younger campers to do while outside.

Submitted By: Jillian Manzo

Deacons and Assisting Ministers

The Deacons and Assisting Ministers currently meet quarterly to support and encourage each other, review scheduling, and discuss ways in which we can enhance our ministry.

Synodical Deacons are Susan Bliss, Vicki Elfers, Natalie Romero and Eric Faret.

Congregational Deacons are Bob Snyder and Barbara Snyder.

Dcn. Holly Hawkins will be missed as she begins a new chapter in her life. We pray she finds happiness, fulfillment and peace. We thank her for many years of service here at Ascension.

Assisting Ministers are: Andrea Bertram, Susan Bliss, Christine Drasser, Vicki Elfers, Liz Eppig, Shaun Hantzschel, Warren Hults, Linda Law, Debra Mann, Rob McCarthy, Laura Owen, Jaymie Watson, and Owen Yung.

In addition to serving on the altar our Deacons and Assisting Ministers are involved in many ministries in our congregation and the community. Some of those ministries are:

Visiting the homebound, those in nursing homes or hospitals and administering communion.

Youth Ministry

Prayer Shawl Ministry

Signing for the deaf

Serve on Council; Finance, Stewardship & Special Events Committees

Counters, Social Ministry, Soup Kitchen, Welca

Healing Services, Altar Guild, Homeless Initiative

Our Deacons and Assisting Ministers are dedicated to serving God in our congregation and in our community. May all that we do be pleasing in His sight.

Respectfully submitted,
Deacon Susan Bliss

Evangelism

This past year we focused on creating a welcome center. We cleaned up the Narthex by relocating the display box and adding two organizational slots (all materials were donated). The vision is to use this for church publications that visitors can take home with them; program information, the voice and various newsletters. Once we have agreed on a new logo a welcome sign will be added in between so that visitors will know where to pick up more information. It is a work in progress and there will be a learning curve as to how to best utilize this area.

As the chair of the Evangelism committee I will be completing my term. This can be a great committee if the right dedicated person is put into place. I wish that I would have been able to dedicate more time in planning, reaching out to visitors and utilizing all of our current committees to grow evangelism within. Towards the end of my term I was able to team up with the youth committee and I will continue as a member working with the youth and their fundraising. I feel this is where I will be of most value and look forward to working with them into the New Year!

Thank you,

Kelly Reno

Finance Committee

The Finance and Budget Committee is responsible for managing and overseeing the financial affairs of the congregation in accordance with the by-laws and constitution of the congregation and the approved budget. They will work closely with the other committees in developing program budgets. They will prepare the annual budget for the submittal to the Congregation Council, they will work closely with the Stewardship Committee to coordinate the pledges and budgeting of income and this committee will supervise the financial affairs of the Congregation throughout the year. This committee will arrange for the auditing of the financial records each year in conjunction with the Audit Committee. The Treasurer of the congregation will be a member of this committee.

This has been a challenging year as our expenses are at a very high level on a monthly basis but our income is not, especially in the summer months. But this year we have not seen the improvement in the Fall months that we normally expect. The committee attributes this to the loss of some of our most generous financial contributors and the need for more continuous Stewardship education.

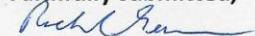
The Finance committee meets monthly to review the financial condition of Ascension and to devise ways of reducing expenses and making the best use of our financial resources. The committee will also address specific financing issues as they occur. Here are some of the highlights of 2018:

- Monthly articles in bulletin and Voice and temple talks to keep Congregation aware of financial condition of Our Church.
- The annual audit of church records was arranged by the committee.
- Performed periodic review of our investment accounts. This year we needed to redeem \$15,000 from our mutual funds earnings in order to replenish our low cash balance in checking account.
- Prepared the 2019 budget.

The Finance Committee meets at 7:30 on the 2nd Tuesday of the month. We always welcome the insight and ideas of new members. Please consider attending a meeting.

Our committee members are Pastor Lathrop, Pastor Krahm, Pastor Hartford, Pastor Avila, Heidi Manzo, Russ Bliss, Linda Law and myself.

Faithfully submitted,


Richard Germann

Finance Chair and Church Treasurer

Latino Ministry Committee



Photo by Leo

ESL classes during summer and fall, “Hispanic Heritage Celebration” during the month of October, and “Posadas” during the month of Advent.

One of the main focuses in 2018 was to portrait our church to the community as a “bilingual” church, offering services in **English and Spanish**.

Around October 2018 we fundraised the necessary funds to invest in new signage outside and inside our church. We invested about \$2,500.00 to change all the signs inside and outside of the church. All signs are now in two different languages (English and Spanish). The results of these efforts are showed by the increment of new visitors in our Sunday services guided only the signs outside.

1. Connecting to the Context:

In “Misión Latina de Ascensión” we are called by Christ to be a community where “ALL are welcome to grow in faith and serve the world together.”

Our tag line is printed in Spanish in our Sunday bulletins, different areas of our building and in big red banners around our social hall where all gatherings and coffee hour take place: **Welcome to ALL. Growing in faith. Serving together.**

Ascension Latino connects to the Latino-Hispanic community of Deer Park in the many events we have throughout the year, such as: “Three Kings Day celebration” during Epiphany, “Day of Friendship” during the month of February, Lent and Holy week services and retreats, “Mother’s day lunch” in the month of May, “Father’s day lunch” during the month of June, “Summer retreat and picnic” during summer,



by

1. Outreach to the community and partnerships:

Ascension Latino has developed a great partnership with **EL CENTRO** a non-profit organization that provides free ESL classes in the summer, as well as citizenship classes and computer classes. They also provide child care for all adult students with small children. This program has successfully accommodated about 70 students during summer season and has provided a great opportunity for outreach to our ministry.

Another great partnership has been with **Thrivent Financial**. Thanks to the initiative of “Action Team Projects” we have been able to fund most of our outreach events throughout the year. The action team projects available to all members of Thrivent have help us to meet our budget expenses for this past two years of ministry.

Thanks to this partnership last year we were able to obtain over \$3,000.00 towards outreach projects involving our Latino members and inviting all to gather in faith and strengthen our community.

2. Leadership development:

Visitors are our priority at Mision Latina de Ascension. For our visitors to feel welcomed our Ushers play a big part. Ushers at Ascension Latino take part of a very important ministry. They are the first ones to get in contact with new visitors. Our Ushers are leaders that have taken a serious commitment of serving God in this ministry of hospitality and have taken a leadership program that gives them enough biblical education to handle a conversation saturated with questions such as: What is the difference between this church and the Roman Catholic Church? Can I baptize my child here? Can I take communion?

Ushers also are the ones to take new visitors’ information, provide it to the Latino Pastor/Mission Developer for a follow up call or visit, do sign-up sheets for events and take count of membership and attendance every worship service.

Each Usher has an insignia with their own name to identify their ministry on Sunday.

Ushers are also in charge of welcoming when there is a new event or gathering in our church. They hand out trifolds with information about our church services, programs and community to all new visitors.

Every time we have new visitors in Misa (worship service), we acknowledge them by asking their names, place of origin, and singing a special “welcome to our church family” song. In 2018 we welcomed new visitors almost every Sunday.



second language. I have restricted myself to preach only in my first language (Spanish).

3. Leadership Development of Mission Developer/Latino Pastor:

One area of great strength I found in my pastoral ministry is preaching. I love to share the good news of Jesus Christ -not only on Sunday sermons-but every time I can with everyone I come across with.

One of the obstacles I have been facing is the lack of ability to preach in my

In conversation with my Synod, I reach out for help to obtain a grant that will allow me to take a one-on-one class with a communication coach on an interactive live communication class. I was given a grant of \$2,500.00 to commit to this class in December 2018 – January 2019. I am currently attending this class at Union Theological Seminary on Thursdays. What I hope to obtain from this class is the confidence I need to bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ to congregations other than my own Latino congregation.

In the middle of January 2019, I will be attending a “Executive Skills for Clergy” class from 1/14 to 1/18 in Carefree, AZ. This class will help me to learn more about finances for non-profit organizations, the business of evangelism and leadership.

In addition to classes, I also have collegial support from weekly periscope study, monthly ministerium, regular meetings with DEM and other Mission Developers, as well as the yearly Bishop retreat.

4. Development of Ministry Leaders

As a leader is important to discern and recognize the gifts of others and utilize those gifts for the growth of the Kingdom of God.

The resources given by the ELCA, such as DISC Classic – Personal Profile System have helped the Mission Developer to identify specific strengths and gifts for each individual member. These results have been sustained by biblical affirmations and nurtured by prayer.

By far, there are about 15 leaders actively working in their specific ministries.

- Bible Studies
- Stewardship
- Evangelism
- Prayer
- Visitation
- Hospitality

5.a Leadership Training: Ascension is also a location for the **Diakonia** program. In the past year 4 members of Latino Ministry at Ascension completed the Diakonia program in Spanish and 2 more members are graduating in 2019.

Diakonia is a two-year program that emphasizes the baptismal vocation of all Christians to serve as did our Lord Jesus. Although this course of study is required for those wishing to

continue to become a Rostered Deacon in the church, it is not a requirement of the classes to go on to serve in this way. Among the Latino graduates there has been a high interest in continuing a path of service in the diaconate ministry.



5.b New membership class:

These classes are given two times in the year for all those who wish to become members of Ascension Latino. Classes are based on the small catechism of Martin Luther utilizing the Bible as the main resource of study. A bible is given as a gift at the end of the class.

5.c Spiritual Retreats:

During lent we have a one-day retreat of the “14 Station of the Cross” at The Shrine of Our Lady of Long Island. We do every station of the cross with meditation, songs and personal testimonies of those who wish to share what Jesus has done in their lives and the lives of those around them.

During late spring or early summer, we have a second one-day spiritual retreat for Deacons and leaders of our ministry. We prepare a theme of study, talk and pray about the vision of our ministry and involvement in our Latino community.

During late Spring, we have our annual adult retreat, led by Pastor Flora Hartford where both communities convey in bible reading, bible study, sharing personal stories and prayer.

Adult confirmation retreat: This retreat is focus on discernment and meditation to all adults seeking to confirm their baptismal vows in the Lutheran Church.

5.d Leadership opportunities: Leadership have been created for many members of Latino Ministry according to their gifts and abilities, these are as follows:

- **Ana Rihani** leads Prayer Group every Monday night at 7:00 pm and serves as assisting minister.
- **Sandra Romero** leads the women's bible studies every first Saturday of the month and serves as assisting minister. Sandra is currently attending the New York Theological Seminary for her master's in divinity under a specific program in Spanish.
- **Mauricio Dominguez** leads the men's bible studies every last Saturday of the month and serves as Synodical Deacon.
- **Yadira Alguera** is our Chair of Council. She serves as a liaison between our Latino Committee, our Latino Mission and the rest of Ascension.
- **Rolando Soto** is taking his second year as a Diakonia student, leads prayers on healing services and serves as Usher.
- **Adrian Argueta** is taking his second year as a Diakonia student, leads prayers on healing services and serves as Usher when needed.
- **Evelyn Argueta** Usher
- **Luis Pintor** Usher
- **Isabel Hernandez** Usher
- **Conchita Dominguez** Usher
- **Myriam Contreras** Usher
- **Josefina Soto** Usher

5. **Other growing ministries:** One of the growing ministries in our church among Latino members is our **bible studies**.



6.a “Biblia y Café” (Bible and Coffee) lead by Mission Developer. These bible studies are held in people's homes and are usually held Saturday nights throughout the year. The subject of study is usually at the request of the family hosting. Some of the topics have been “divorce”, “family unity”, “addiction” and “discrimination”. Bible and Coffee are by invitation according to the family hosting it and usually gathers around 15-20 people.



Testament. These bible studies have an attendance of about 25-35 people. New visitors are rewarded with a free bible, stickers, highlighters and a daily devotional.

6.c Women’s bible study – Every first Saturday of the month. This bible study is led by Sandra Romero and the Theme of this year has been “The War Room” – (El Cuarto de Guerra). This bible study has been directed towards women facing the dissolution of their marriages/relationships and women facing domestic violence and abuse.

6.d Men’s bible study – Every last Saturday of the month. This bible study is led by Deacon Mauricio Dominguez and talks about “Be a Hero at home” based on the stories of the Old Testament and the patriarchs.

6. Organic Life of the Ministry:

We are experiencing a vibrant and live ministry, where all members are getting fed by the word of God and blessed by the means of Grace.

Ascension Latino Ministry had a growth in attendance of about 50% from the year 2017-2018. This growth had been possible mainly due to the sponsorship of the ELCA and our strong partnership with Ascension Lutheran Church.

In our website www.ascensionlutheran.org I have a section in Spanish explaining what a church is, what do we expect of a church and how can we part of it.

Participants and members of Latino Ministry are aware of the overall direction of this ministry investing all their gifts of stewardship, their time, their talents and their treasures in every single areas of the ministry.

In the past year we were able to secure a special “**Healing and Praise Service**” that brings a vivid spiritual experience to all members. This Healing and Praise service takes place every first

Sunday of the month and has the highest attendance among all services. About 100-150 Latinos gather around the table of the Lord and get anointed with oil by the deacons and prayer leaders of the church.

During the service we have special praise music. We hired a group of musicians that play along with our Latino Musician (Nestor Milanes) different musical instruments: Piano, acoustic guitars, base, tumbaos, drums, and a trumpet. The cost of the music for our healing services is \$250.00 per service and is covered 100% by Latino Ministry.

Do we still have a viable ministry field?

Statistics: Latino population in Deer Park forecast a growth of about 3% per year whether Anglo population is set to decline by 5% per year.

As the statistics speak, there will be in the future a legitimate need for a place of worship in Deer Park and the Suffolk County area that offers a worship service and programing for families and children in Spanish.



Contact with the community: We have a relationship with local Latino business around such as: Taco Grill, Honduras Deli, Pollos Mario Colombian Restaurant, Los Andes, employees of Boston Market, El Guanaco Salvadorian Restaurant, employees of McDonalds, employees of One Guy carwash, employees of Texas Roadhouse and other local Hispanic business.

Outreach opportunities: We have a great outreach to the Latino community not only through our ESL programs, but also assistance with immigration issues and petitions. We have been able to help many members to become “permanent residents” through family petitions, to renew work permits under “DACA” for the dreamers, and to apply for Naturalization and Citizenship, (9 members became USA citizens in the past two years).

Resources available for growth: Regarding resources available for the coming year, we have been able to balance a rather small expense budget due to the many fundraising events sponsored by Thrivent Financial. We have 12 members of Thrivent in Latino Ministry. We have the great and generous support of other members of Ascension. We received a gift of \$5,000.00 at the beginning of 2018 as seed money for the growth of the ministry. These funds are a foundation for future events of evangelism and outreach to the community.

Stewardship: At the beginning of 2018 we had a stewardship education program for self-sustaining approach directed by Pastor John Krahn. For the coming year Latino members have pledged to a percentage of increment in their offering. Also, we have received donations that have been allocated into a dedicated fund.

Ascension Lutheran Church continues their commitment of support to Latino Ministry. In addition to their financial support they also provide administrative support and programming

for Latino members such as Sunday School program, Confirmation program, Confirmation Camp, First Communion Classes, Youth retreats and the National Youth Gathering.

“Mision Latina de Ascension” is a group of Christians from different countries and Latin-American cultures gathering around the Lord’s word and sacraments. Mision Latina de Ascension reflects the great cultural diversity in which all converged with different expression of worship. We have been called by God to this place, as such time like this, to support one another, to pray for one another, and to proclaim the good news of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ in the language of our hearts.

Our great mission as the church of Christ is reminded to us every Sunday service, as we read it out loud at the end of every worship gathering:

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age”

Mathew 28:19-20

By: Rev. Evelyn Patricia Avila
Mission Developer of the ELCA
Latino Pastor at Ascension Lutheran Church

Personnel Committee

"So then, whenever we have an opportunity, let us work for the good of all, and especially for those of the family of faith." (Galatians 6:10)

The Personnel Committee is responsible for the employment process of the congregation, and will write and oversee the contracts and duties of all church employees.

The Personnel committee assisted with many issues this year:

1. Led the process to hire 4 Teachers, 3 teacher assistants, a new Wedding Coordinator as well as 2 new camp counselors and 6 new junior counselors
2. Developed a new job description for our weekly Sexton and hired a new one in November
3. Led the process and completed all tasks needed to hire a new Preschool Director with short notice. This was done in time to begin the new school year.
4. All staff were reviewed and given written feedback in 2018
5. Background checks were completed for all staff members as part of an established review for all staff.
6. New job descriptions were written for our Parish Admin and Business Admin as we continue to refine and expand their responsibilities when appropriate.
7. Recommended hiring musicians for the Latino service and also to additional musicians to enhance the music at the 10:30 am Sunday service.
8. Reviewed the Staff Guidelines that have been in place and we made some updates to them for 2019. In 2019 will have some Holidays available as floating holidays and allow the staff to take them when they want to instead of the designated day (example – Martin Luther King Day). In addition, the policy regarding sick days was clarified.
9. Continued to manage the vacation/time off tracking process for all staff members.
10. Established a policy for payment of Mobile phone usage for staff members that require that functionality.

The committee assisted as needed when staff questions and issues arose.

Many thanks to all of the members on the Personnel committee – they are:

Rich Germann	Jean Belcher	Pastor Lathrop	Pastor Avila
Pastor Hartford	Pattie Komornik	Heidi Manzo	Rob McCarthy

Respectfully Submitted,

Heidi Manzo
Chairperson

PROPERTY COMMITTEE

"By wisdom a house is built, And by understanding it is established" (Proverbs 24:3)
Ascension is God's house. It is the place where we come to worship, study, serve and interact with God and with each other. We have a beautiful sanctuary, and grounds, offices, classrooms, community room, gym (social hall) two parsonages. The property committee has been tasked with overseeing it all. The responsibility consists of maintenance, repair and capital improvements.

2018 Property Committee Highlights

- Finished Capital Program which included, but not limited to:
 - Bathroom renovations
 - Roof Replacements
 - Ed Wing refurbishment
 - Community Room refurbishment
 - Parish House renovation and re-purposing
- Resurfaced four entry doors to Sanctuary
- Resurfaced Education Wing Floors
- Mold remediation at 97 Bay Shore Rd.
- Coordinated snow removal throughout winter – completely done by volunteers.
- Fall cleanup of Church Property
- Completely cleaned out bathroom waste pipes to prevent future problems.
- Installed in all bathrooms green and cost-saving hand air dryers

Looking ahead to 2016

- Install new security alarm system
- Coordinate snow removal volunteers.
- Coordinate volunteers for spring and fall property cleanup.

With the congregations continued support, our facilities will continue to serve God, our members and our community.

I would like to personally thank all the committee members for all their support and help over the past year as chairperson of the property committee.

Committee Members: Ron Berbert, Eric Bertrum, Pete Clasper, Sara Neidig, Pastor Justin, Pastor Flora, John Parkinson
Property Chairman John Scheid

Respectfully Submitted
John Scheid

Social Ministry Committee

The Babylon Homeless Initiative continued during 2018. We thank the many volunteers who help make this ministry happen.

Ascension continues to be a member congregation of the Lutheran Counseling Center. This is an organization that provides counseling to our members who would benefit from seeing a professional counselor to help them with whatever they are going through.

During the month of November Social Ministry collected food for the Thanksgiving Baskets and Christmas Baskets. We thank our own congregation, the preschool families, the Masonic Lodge in Babylon, and the Social Workers in the Deer Park School District for their generous donations. We would like to thank Anitia Quynn and her many volunteers who coordinated the collection of food and the making of all the baskets for both Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Special Events Committee

The Special Events Committee is responsible for coordinating events which result in fun and fellowship for the congregation of Ascension Lutheran Church.

The committee is truly blessed to have members who use their time and talents, as they plan and set up some truly awesome events. In 2018, we started the new year with our 7th Annual Chili Cook off.

Back for its 6th year was the Egg-Stravaganza, at which we hosted over 400 people with many volunteers helping with the event. This event is a great evangelism tool for the church as it brings in so many families from the nearby community who would normally not visit our church and this year generated a profit which was donated to social ministry.

In September, Rally Day kicked off the Church year and those who attended enjoyed great food and fellowship. Once again a big thank you to all those who helped make this event a huge success.

The committee would like give a Special Thanks to the many volunteers who help make all the events a huge success.

Stephen Ministry

The mission of Stephen Ministry at Ascension is to:

- 1. connect people to God by providing distinctively Christian care to all people experiencing life's challenges and difficulties*
- 2. develop one on one relationships where mutual caring becomes a way of congregational life.*

This past year has been very exciting for everyone involved with Stephen Ministry at Ascension. In January, we began the year by sending Pattie Komornik, who had been a Stephen Minister for 3 years, for Leader Training. Pattie has been a wonderful addition to our Leadership Team.

Our next task was recruitment for our next class of Stephen Ministers. We began the awareness and interview process and were blessed to have 8 people join our new class which started in September. We have been meeting each Monday night for their 50 hours of training and we look forward to their Commissioning by the end of February 2019.

These 8 Stephen Ministers will join our 2 remaining Stephen Ministers from our original class which was commissioned in May of 2015.

We are very grateful for all the prayers and support that this ministry has received during 2018.

Respectfully submitted,
Pastor Justin, Pastor Flora, Deacon Vicki Elfers, Donald Hartford and Pattie Komornik
Stephen Ministry Leaders

Stewardship Committee

The Special Need Monthly Envelopes 2018

January: The Mercy Inn Soup Kitchen, Wyandanch

February: Trinity Lutheran Church, Wyandanch

March: National Youth Gathering

April: Confirmation Camp

May: Pinecrest

June: LuHi

July: Dottie's House

August: Long Island Mentoring

September: Seminary Fund

October: Synodical Fund

November: Social Ministry: Homeless Initiative

December: Pastor's Fund

If you have a suggestion for a special need monthly envelope or would like to be part of the stewardship team, contact the stewardship committee or the church office.

The committee usually meets the second Tuesday of the month to discuss stewardship matters.

Each quarter the giving statements are prepared for mailing.

The committee also sent out the commitment cards and letters during the annual pledge drive.

Respectfully submitted

The Stewardship Committee

Derek Lundquist, Cathy Borg, Kurt Lundquist, Owen Yung

W.E.L.C.A.

The ladies of Elizabeth, Martha, Phoebe, and Priscilla circles have been very productive within the congregation. Studied God's word in our monthly meetings. Hosted numerous coffee hours.

Elizabeth Circle: Made and sold prayer beads. The money went to Heifer Project \$250.00 and \$30.00 to our WELCA.

Martha Circle: Along with the other circles had bible studies at their monthly meeting.

Phoebe Circle: Made 12 Easter baskets for the family shelter on Bayshore Rd. and 6 Health Care boxes for the mothers at the shelter.

Priscilla Circle: Made 40 activity kits for Cohen's Childrens Hospital and delivered them to the hospital.

All circles donated toward the purchase of hearing aids for our oldest member Ethel Nilsen. She will be 102 years old on February 25th.

Welca donated \$250.00 toward the personnel power packs the youth are assembling along with \$40.00 from the hats that were sold.

For the year 2018 our Welca donated \$252.50 to our Welca Synod.

In January our circles hosted the Congregational Meeting.

Prayer Shawls, baby blankets, hats, lap robes, were made and given to those in need.

Our bun runners continue to pick up at Stanley Bakery and deliver goodies to adult homes, shelters, and our own coffee hour.

In June we had our yearly luncheon at Ruby Tuesday's with 29 ladies attending.

Welca mourns loss of friend and long time member Marie Wascher. God has another angel in heaven and we will miss you.

The WELCA Board would like to extend a special thank you to the following people for their assistance with our ministry.

Our bun runners, the congregation for their socks, yarn, toiletries, etc. Vicki Elfers and Sara Neidig for their thoughtfulness and assistance throughout the year.

Most importantly to God for our many blessings and gifts He has given to us.

Respectfully submitted WELCA Executive Board.

Worship and Music Committee

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God." – Colossians 3:16

Gathering together to worship and praise God is a central part of our life as a community of faith here at Ascension. Our services are planned by the Pastors and the Director of Music Ministries, along with the Worship and Music Committee. Many additional members are involved in the planning, preparation and leadership of our services each week. These include the Church office staff, bulletin folders, altar guild, assisting ministers, communion assistants, ushers and musicians.

Highlights from this past year include:

- A new Children's Handchime Choir of 7 kids was created and performed in May and December as well as for the Children's Xmas Eve service. This group of kids will graduate to a Children's Bell Choir in the near future and we already have more young children ready to start another Children's Handchime Choir.
- A \$7500 grant was received for projection TV in the sanctuary. We are currently reviewing proposals from various consultants.
- Attendance for the year has declined and we are working with the new Evangelism Committee for ways to increase attendance.
- MISA has moved the service into the Church and has seen an increase in attendance.
- A new Praise Band was hired to lead worship at the 10:30 service twice a month. This band is led by our Director of Music and also includes a percussionist, guitarist, bassist and female vocalist. Having been well received by the congregation, this band will continue to lead worship twice a month at the 10:30 service in 2019!
- Drew Neidig was ordained in September.
- Christmas Services included a 4:00pm Children's Service (led by our Children's Choir and Children's Handchime Choir), 5:30pm Contemporary service (led by our Praise Band, Adult Praise Choir and Youth Choir) as well as 8:30pm and 10:30pm Traditional services (led by our Traditional Choir, 2 Bell Choirs, Brass Ensemble and String Ensemble).

Music is an important and vital part of our worship services. Our services are supported by a strong music ministry including a traditional adult choir, a praise adult choir, youth choir, children's choir, children's handchime choir, brass ensemble, string ensemble, praise band and 2 bell choirs, which amounts to over 100 members who dedicate their time and talent to make beautiful music. Rehearsals for our music groups are as follows:

Monday:	Praise Choir	7:15-7:55 pm
	Bell Choir	8:00-8:45 pm
Thursday:	Youth Choir	6:30-7:20 pm
	Traditional Choir	7:30-8:25 pm
	Strings	8:30-9:10 pm
Saturday	Bell Choir	8:30-10:30 am (once a month)
Saturday	Children's Handchime Choir	Times/Weeks vary
Sunday	Children's Choir	11:45 am – 12:30 pm
Varies	Praise Band	Varies
Seasonal	Brass Ensemble	Varies

We would like to thank the many volunteers that are involved in planning, preparation and leadership of our services each week.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Tresselt – Committee Chair

Committee Members:

Pastor Justin, Pastor Flora, Pastor Patty, David Johnson, Heidi Manzo, Nick Georghiou

Youth Committee

Ascension's youth have had an exciting and busy year. We started off the year with 25 middle school and high school students and 5 adults on our Annual Trip to Wilbur Herrlich.

There were many fellowship activities for the kids that were held this year – trips to Escape Room, Game Day, and Spookywalk were some of them.

We also had great opportunities of fellowship. We worked together with the Special Events committee on the Chili cook off. We hosted the Annual Golf outing that is always a lot of fun for all who participate as golfers or joining us for a dinner. Thanks to all the adults who support the youth in helping with those events. The kids are always the most important assistants for these events.

We continue to focus on relational ministry. We believe Children and Youth are the church today – full members of the community of faith, actively engaged in worship, education, service and fellowship. We have outlined future current and future programs for us to allow our children, youth and families to be fully engaged in this community of Christ.

College students and young adults are continued to be connected to our congregation. Many that are still in the area help in areas of Sunday school and Day Camp. High School students meet twice a month as "Breakfast Club" where they have time for fellowship, Bible studies, and relationship building and leadership activities. Middle School students continue to participate in our confirmation program. Eighth graders meet twice a month; once for either a service, educational or experience-based trip. These trips have included: The Bowery Mission, Inter-faith visitors and conversations, helping hands ministry, Berkshire Nursing Home, Faith Statements and the cleaning of beaches. They meet again each Wednesday after these trips to discuss and connect this experience to God's word. 6th and 7th grade students have weekly class, with a fellowship/youth group component twice a month. High school students also participate in the fellowship activities at Junior Counselors. We thank Jean Belcher, Andrew Germann, Mike Loos, Natalie Romero, Pastor Flora and Pastor Justin for their support and time given to help shape the faith lives of these young students. We also confirmed 19 students in June and look forward to seeing these young adults involved in the various ministries here at Ascension.

Confirmation Camp was held in August in Massachusetts and had a great trip! Thank you to our amazing camp staff which included Andrew Germann, Tom Lanzerone, Jean Belcher, Natalie Romero, Dawn Scheid, and of course David Johnson. A special thank you to Jean Belcher for all your help prior to camp.

This summer we had many of our middle school, high school, and college students volunteering and working at Day camp. We also had a "Flick N Float" this summer, where students got to swim and watch a movie. Thank you to Dave and Jean Belcher for hosting.

We attended the 2018 ELCA Youth Gathering in Houston, TX this June. We had 22 students and adults attend. It was an amazing experience. We are already fundraising for the 2021 ELCA Youth Gathering in Minneapolis, MN! We appreciate the continued support of Ascension.

Thank you to our hardworking committee members, Ken Dookram, Jean Belcher, Dawn Scheid, Jodi Gunther, Pastor Flora Hartford, and Pastor Justin Lathrop. We always welcome new members of the Youth Committee. We meet the first Tuesday of the month at 7pm.

We have been able to have of these exciting activities due to the many, many volunteers that help with all of the various activities that we need help with. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts to the people who have helped us along the way!

Thank you to the congregation for your continued support of the youth of Ascension; it is because of your prayers and support that we can nurture the faith lives of these young people.
Respectfully submitted,

Natalie Romero
Director of Children, Youth, and Family Ministry

Allison McCarthy
Chairperson

BIOGRAPHIES FOR COUNCIL POSITIONS

Samantha Bluemke

Has been a member of Ascension since the 1980's. She was baptized, made her First Holy Communion and was confirmed at Ascension. Samantha along with her 13 year old daughter, Madison, live in Dix Hills. Madison is currently attending Confirmation Classes and will be confirmed this year. Samantha and her daughter have been involved with the BIHI ministry last year and this year and she looks forward to becoming more involved in the life and ministry of Ascension.

Erin Shanley

Erin has been an active member of Ascension since becoming a member in 2009. She has taken part in Vacation Bible School, Kids Club, Ascension Lutheran Preschool, Sunday School, and Stephen Ministry. She is the mother of 5 children, all of whom have celebrated sacraments at Ascension. She resides in West Islip with her family and is looking forward to continuing to be a part of this diverse and vibrant church community.

OFFICIAL BALLOT

Nominations to the Congregational Council 2019

The following persons are nominated to serve a three year term on the Congregational Council for 2019:

- Samantha Bluemke (first two year term)
 - Erin Shanley (first two year term)
 - Heidi Manzo (third two year term)
 - Tom Tresselt (second three year term)
 - Lisa Perreira (second three year term)
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The following persons are nominated to serve a one year term on the Congregational Council for 2019:

- Richard Germann (Treasurer)
- TBD (Latino Ministry Representative)
- Diana Lazarou (WELCA Representative)

Deacons

Recommendation: that Susan Bliss be called as a SYNODICAL DEACON of Ascension Lutheran Church, Deer Park, N.Y. for one year beginning February 1, 2019

Susan will serve Ascension Church on a non-stipendiary basis. She will be accountable to and work under the supervision of the Senior Pastor

Serving as a Synodical Deacon at Ascension since 4/2/2016

Responsibilities for ministry include the following:

1. Assisting at services of worship including;
Praying the Prayer of the Church
Preparing the table during the offering
Distributing the Sacrament
Assisting the Presiding Minister with Holy Baptism
Praying the post-communion prayer
Dismissal
2. Prayer Group/Healing Ministry: leading group twice monthly, healing services and educational activities on prayer
3. Stephen Ministry: Currently meeting with a care receiver and attending supervision meetings
4. Preparing weekly Prayers of Intercession

Recommendation: that **Vicki Elfers'** call as a SYNODICAL DEACON of Ascension Lutheran Church, Deer Park, N.Y. be extended for one year beginning February 1, 2019

I have been serving Ascension Lutheran Church as a Synocial Deacon since April 2, 2016. During this past year, I have been serving as one of the leaders in Ascension's Stephen Ministry program.

Stephen Ministry Highlights and Events:

1. Facilitating Peer Supervision for Stephen Ministers.
2. Recruiting members for a new Stephen Ministry Class.
3. Teaching modules along with other Stephen Leaders.
4. Blessed to be able to witness spiritual and personal growth in Ascension's Stephen Ministers and their Care Receivers.

Additional Responsibilities at Ascension:

1. Assisting on the Altar by leading prayers and distributing Holy Communion.
2. Scheduling and training of Communion Assistants and serving as a communion assistant

Responsibilities outside of Ascension:

1. Serving as a Spiritual Advisor and as a member of the Secretariat to the LI Tres Dias community
2. Serving as a Spiritual Advisor to the LI Credo community

Spiritual Development:

1. Completed my 3rd year of the Spiritual Direction program run by the Sisters of St. Joseph at the St. Joseph's Renewal Center.
2. Commissioned as Spiritual Director in May 2018.

Synodical Event:

1. Was present at the Setting Apart Service in April, where I stood in place of Pastor Frank Nelson of St Peter's Lutheran Church, Huntington Station to present 2 candidates for Setting Apart and was able to present them with their deacon stoles.

Recommendation: that **Natalie Romero's** call as a SYNODICAL DEACON of Ascension Lutheran Church, Deer Park, N.Y. be extended for one year beginning February 1, 2019

My work as a synodical deacon in the past year has been very rewarding. I continue to feel called to serve families with infants and toddlers, ending at 2 years of age. I hold monthly meetings with parents and their children. Each meeting is a time to pass on faith practices to our children, but also to support and love each other during difficult and celebratory milestones. In 2018, we continue our pre-baptismal classes. This is a great addition for the ministry. I'm able to connect with families prior to their baptisms which helps outline my role at Ascension and gives me a platform for inviting them to Play & Praise

I continue to send news letter to all families with children 2 years old and younger that have been baptized or visited Ascension, to provide faith formation resources beyond the parent/child classes. A great accomplishment of this group is the relationships we have built as a community of parents raising their children in the Christian faith. We continue to meet in 2019 and look forward to the growth of this ministry.

God's Peace,
Natalie Romero

Recommendation: that **Barbara Snyder** be called as a DEACON of Ascension Lutheran Church, Deer Park, N.Y. for one year beginning February 1, 2019

Barbara will serve Ascension Church on a non-stipendiary basis. She will be accountable to and work under the supervision and direction of the Senior Pastor.

Responsibilities for ministry include the following.

1. Assisting at services of worship include the following.

Praying The Prayer of the Church

Distributing the Sacrament

Preparing the font for Holy Baptism

Assisting the Presiding Minister with Holy Baptism

Praying the Post Communion Prayer

Dismissal

2. Eucharist Minister.

3. To serve as co-leader of Ascension's Prayer Group.

4. To assist with the Prayer Chain.

5. To send cards and notes to those being prayed for, wishing them God's blessings.

6. Knitting and crocheting group.

7. Distribute prayer shawls and baby blankets when needed.

8. Vice President of WELCA

9. Christian Care

10. Counting Committee

Recommendation that **Robert Snyder** be called as a DEACON of Ascension Lutheran Church, Deer Park, N.Y. for one year beginning February 1, 2019

Robert will serve Ascension Church on a non-stipendiary basis. He will be accountable to and work under the supervision and direction of the Senior Pastor.

Responsibilities for ministry include the following.

1. Assisting at services of worship include the following

Praying The Prayer of the Church.

Preparing the table during the offering.

Distributing the Sacrament.

Assisting the Presiding Minister with Holy Baptism.

Praying The Post Communion Prayer.

Dismissal.

2. Eucharist Minister.

3. To assist with the Prayer Chain.

4. Counting Committee.

DEACON MAURICIO DOMINGUEZ

I am currently seeking a call as a Synodical Deacon from the Latino Ministry of Ascension Lutheran Church.

I was set apart for the office of Deacon by the Metropolitan New York Synod, ELCA and became a member of the Synodical Diaconate after a year of internship at "Iglesia Luterana Resurreccion" on September 2000 by Bishop Stephen Paul Bouman. I served as a Synodical Deacon at "Iglesia Luterana Resurreccion" from 2000 through 2014. My ministry there consisted in assisting Pastor Heriberto Prudencio lead Spanish services on Saturdays and Sundays. Assisted in the preparation of bulletins and other written materials, Men's bible studies and served as a volunteer for our music ministry. The Latino Mission of "Iglesia Lutherana Resurreccion" was moved from Epiphany Lutheran Church in Hempstead to St. John's Episcopal Church in West Hempstead in 2004. Pastor David Anglada was called to serve as the Pastor for the Latino Mission of Resurreccion. Consequently, Pastor Emilce Erato took the lead of this mission and was then transferred to Grace Lutheran Church in Uniondale sometime in 2010. The Latino mission of "Iglesia Luterana Resurreccion" was ultimately dissolved by the MNYS in 2014.

I have been without a call since. I began to attend Ascension Lutheran Church with my wife and reunited with Pastor Avila whom we know since 1993. We met Pastor Avila at Resurreccion Lutheran Church while she served as Youth Director of the Latino Ministry.

I recently had a conversation with Pastor Patricia Avila regarding the needs and expectations of the Latino Ministry at Ascension Lutheran Church and I felt called to serve God and his people at Ascension. We spoke about starting a Spanish man's bible study and ministry. I successfully lead men's bible studies and family retreats while serving at Resurreccion.

I am a native Salvadorian. I was born in El Salvador, Central America. I am fluent in Spanish and English and I understand the sensitivities of the Latino culture. I am very familiar serving different Latino communities within the church. I am married and have been married for 26 years. My wife and I reside in West Babylon. We have two beautiful adult children, one still in college.

I feel that part of my call at Ascension will be assisting Pastor Patricia Avila leading men's bible studies in Spanish, family retreats, Prayer and Healing services, and serving as an assisting minister and communion assistant in Misa.

I am eager and extremely excited to serve as a Synodical Deacon in this church and serve God in any way I can, and I am called to.

In Christ love,
Deacon Mauricio Dominguez

Bios of Synod Assembly Representatives

Name: Natalie Romero

How long have you been a member?: 8 years

What ministries are you currently involved in?: Synodical deacon, Children, Youth and Family Ministries

Why would you like to attend the assembly? Attending the 2019 Metro New York Synod Assembly is extremely important to me. As a synodical deacon and as Ascension's Director of Children, Youth and Family ministry, I want to be actively involved in the election of our new Bishop. As a synod, we have not had many youth events for students or connections between other churches' ministries. I would like to see a Bishop that would be focused or have a staff member focus on Youth and Family Ministry. In my 15 years of youth ministry, (almost 8 of them being at Ascension), I have seen great models from other synods in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Illinois, that actively involve our children and family and put them as a priority. Ascension does a great job, in house, but I would like to see more networking between the synod and the congregations. Also coming from a multicultural family, I would like to see a Bishop that is focused on embracing and empowering the diversity of our area.

Ascension's mission is that we are called by Christ to be a community, where ALL are welcome, to grow in faith and serve the world together. I want to be sure the next elected bishop values our communities, willing to serve the communities with their faith journeys and welcome all. Along with the new bishop election, I look forward to networking with others in our synod to help better serve Ascension and the Metro New York Synod.

Thank you for considering me as one of Ascension's representatives at our synod assembly.

Name: Vicki Elfers

How long have you been a member? 29 years

What ministries are you currently involved in? Synodical deacon, Stephen Ministry, Altar Guild, Communion Assistant, and Assisting Minister

Why would you like to attend the assembly? I have attended 3 Synod Assemblies and I thoroughly enjoy being part of the process. I look forward hearing the messages from the candidates for Bishop and I hope to help elect the best possible person for the ministry.

Name: Owen Yung

How long have you been a member? 40 years

What ministries are you currently involved in? Stewardship Committee, Counting Team, Bulletin Folders, Men's Bible Study, Food Pantry Volunteer

Why would you like to attend the assembly? I haven't attended in about 30 years but would love to be part of the process again. It would be an honor to represent Ascension at the Assembly.

Name: Linda Law

How long have you been a member? 3 years

What ministries are you currently involved in?: Praise Choir, Strings Ensemble, Forever 50, Finance Committee, Diakonia student, cook for the Homeless Shelter, Assisting Minister, Lay Reader, and Communion Assistant

Why would you like to attend the assembly? I love this church and all the friends I have made. I would like to represent Ascension so that I can learn how to help grow the congregation and how to do more good. I am retired and want to be more involved with the church.

Name: Debbie Fritzen

How long have you been a member? 3 months

What ministries are you currently involved in? Forever 50, Altar Guild, Prayer Group, WELCA, and also I do the from 1:30 am to 7 am for the homeless

Why would you like to attend the assembly? I would love to represent Ascension a church I've come to love. If I go I will bring back to the church anything I learned at the assembly.

Name: Madeline Sharrock

How long have you been a member? 1 month

Why would you like to attend the assembly? My husband, Peter and I are fairly new members at Ascension and we look forward to serving in Ministry with this congregation. We had been members at Christ Lutheran Church in Islip Terrace for over 20 years where I currently serve professionally as their Parish Administrator. As a member of the congregation I served as Chairperson of the Stewardship Committee and the Director of Vacation Bible School for many summers. and I also was a delegate to the Synod Assembly. In addition, I am the Vice President of the Board of Directors for Camp Ma-He-Tu, a Lutheran Girls Camp located in Bear Mountain, NY and the Director of their Women-in-the-Woods program, a multi-generational

outdoor camping experience for women and their daughters of all ages. On a daily basis I am a mother to 2 sons, who are Eagle Scouts, one a middle school band director in Northern Virginia and my youngest, a senior at Susquehanna University. In my spare time I am an avid knitter with a severe yarn stash addiction.

Being an integral part of a congregation and sharing the ministry of Christ has been part of my life for as long as I can remember. I have attended the Town Hall Meetings held by our Interim Bishop this past fall and I would love the opportunity to be a part of the election and calling of a new Bishop for our Synod at this upcoming assembly. The Holy Spirit has guided me and my family here to Ascension and I am excited to see where the Spirit will continue to lead me.

Name: Rolando Soto

How long have you been a member? 3 years

What ministries are you currently involved in?: Latino ministry, usher, diaconia student

Why would you like to attend the assembly? I would gladly represent Ascension's Latino population at our Synod Assembly. I would carefully listen for the best candidate for Bishop who would be sensitive to the needs of our Latino brothers and sisters in Christ.

Synod Assembly Representatives

Ballot for Synod Assembly Representatives for Ascension Lutheran Church: (Please vote for four)

Natalie Romero

Vicki Elfers

Owen Yung

Linda Law

Debbie Fritzen

Madeline Sharrock

Other _____

Ballot for Synod Assembly Representative for Iglesia Luterana Ascensión:

(Please vote for one)

Rolando Soto

Other _____

RESOLUTIONS

1. Be it resolved that we express our gratitude to God for the faithful service of those who have completed their terms on our Congregation Council and ask God to bless them in the days ahead:

Kelly Reno Derek Lundquist

We also lift up the current members of council for all their hard work and focus in helping to keep all our ministries working for the Glory of God.

2. Be it further resolved that we express our deepest appreciation to the current members of the church staff:

Rich Brown	Chrissy Brooks	Vicki Elfers
David Johnson	Nestor Milanes	Mary Murphy
Eric Pape	Natalie Romero	Vincent Sferrazza

During this year we benefitted from additional staff members that we also want to express our gratitude to God for their work they provided during 2018:

Pastor John Krahm

3. Be it further resolved that we express our deepest gratitude to the staff of Ascension Preschool:

AnnMarie Achatz	Mary Cabusas	Christiana DeLuca	Kathy Fifield
Karen Fox	Katherine Attard	Theresa DeBlasi	Meredith Colapietro
Carol Marx	Sonja Milankovic	Susan Quinn	Dawn Scheid
Jessica D'Amato	Jeanette Nenjian	Tina Pisano	

4. Be it further resolved that we express our deepest gratitude to the staff of Ascension Day Camp:

Jillian Manzo – Director			
Valerie Lukens - Director			
Jean Belcher	Francisco Avila	Ava Shanley	Theresa Constantine
Brittany Rodgers	Amanda Parkinson	Lillian Dookram	Connor Murphy
Kayla Shanley	Sandra Krauss	Katelyn Crisera	David Belcher
Joe Randazza	Julie DeBiase	Matthew Scheid	
Aubrey Gunther	Joseph Pilewski	Heather Scheid	
Angela Pilewski	Myles Jackson	Antonia LaFemina	
Brett Manzo	Nico Rivera	Francesca LaFemina	

5. Be it further resolved that we express our thanks to God for the many **volunteers** who serve Ascension. They make our congregation so vital.
6. Be it further resolved that we express our thanks to **Thrivent Financial and to our many members** for all the Action Team Card monies that were received that provided funds for various ministries at Ascension.
7. Finally, be it resolved that we thank God for our pastors:
Pastor Justin, Pastor Flora and Pastor Patty.