



# ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

January 26, 2020

**Ascension Lutheran Church  
Annual Congregational Meeting  
2020 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 2020
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, Mauricio Dominquez , Barbara Snyder and Bob Snyder
  - b) Synod Assembly Representatives
11. Resolutions
12. Council meeting to elect officers
13. Adjourn the meeting

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# Secretary's Report

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Annual Congregation Meeting  
January 27, 2019

Table grace was offered by Pastor Flora. 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, devotions were offered by Pastor Justin.

After the devotions, Heidi Manzo, Church Council President, called the meeting to order at 12:24 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:** (reviewed by Heidi)

These additional rules will be in effect for this meeting:

1. Out 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 28, 2018 was presented.

A motion was made to accept the Secretary's Report by Tom Tresselt and seconded by Linda Law. The motion passed unanimously.

## **Pastors' Reports were submitted by Pastors Lathrop, Hartford and Avila.**

### **Treasurer's Report: Submitted by Rich Germann**

Rich Germann Reviewed the Treasurer's annual report for the year ending December 31, 2018. Rich pointed out the church was looking at deficit of \$36,000 in December/January but thanks to very generous giving the church ended the year with a \$900 excess. Rich noted that the expenses were under budget and included cleaning services, mold remediation, our benevolence to Synod. There was an increase in insurance premiums and the church continues to apply money toward the reduction of the mortgage. A motion was made by Bob Synder to accept the Treasurer's Report and seconded by Owen Yung. 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 Deb Mann  
Connect Committee – submitted by Debbie DeMarchis  
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 Alguera  
Personnel Committee – submitted by Heidi Manzo  
Preschool- submitted by AnnMarie Achatz  
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

### **2019 Proposed Budget: Submitted by Rich Germann:**

Rich Germann reviewed the proposed budget for 2019 (copy attached). The budget is a deficit budget of \$9800. Pastor Lathrop did not take any increased compensation. Salaries will be increased by 1% for staff. The pension/health expenses increased 12% which is an added cost of \$6000. In addition, the Praise Band will now have a line in the budget for ½ of the year and will be reevaluated in 6 months. In administration, the sexton hours will increase from 15 hours per week to 20 hours per week. The weekend cleaning service will end at the end of February

2019 and the church will hire a new weekend sexton. Some other expenses include an increase in Benevolence by \$1000- which is the amount the church wants to increase by each year. There was an overall increase of \$18,000 in the budget from last year.

There was one question/comment made by Cathy Borg. She asked that the congregation be updated on items that affect the budget.; especially if the budget is behind. An insert in the bulletin may not be enough to keep the congregation informed. She went on to add that the problem with the solar panels was not made clear to the congregation nor was the fact that the Praise Band money was coming from Connect.

A motion was made by Russ Bliss to accept the treasurer's report. Marilyn White seconded it and it was passed unanimously.

### **Elections of Church Council**

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

#### **For a first two year term:**

Erin Shanely- chair of Stewardship

Samantha Blumke – chair of Evangelism

#### **For a second two year term:**

Jean Belcher- council secretary

Garrett Leddy – chair of Social Ministry

#### **For a third two year term:**

Heid Manzo- Council President

#### **For a one year term:**

Richard Germann – Treasurer

Rolando Soto – Latino Ministry Representative

Diana Lazarou – WELCA Representative

A motion was made by Warren Hultz to confirm the new members of council and seconded by Bob Synder. Motion was passed unanimously.

### **Old Business:**

### **New Business:**

1. Personnel is making a recommendation for Pastor Lathrop and Pastor Hartford to have a fifth Sunday off throughout the calendar year. A motion was made to accept the recommendation of personnel by Pastor O'Rourke and seconded by Rob McCarthy. The motion passed unanimously.
2. Pastor Justin spoke about a group that approached the church hoping to hold their worship at Ascension. The worship would take place from 4-7 p on Sunday evenings and the church would be paid \$500 per Sunday. The church is currently worshipping at Faith Syosset and would like to continue to expand their group.
3. There were 5 candidates to be called to positions as Synodical Deacons- Susan Bliss Vicki Elfers, Natalie Romero, Barbara Synder and Robert Synder. A hand vote was made for these positions. The motion to renew their calls was made by Cathy Borg and seconded by Laura Conlon and passed unanimously.
4. Then a ballot was done for SYNOD Assembly representatives. The following candidates were elected: Natalie Romero, Vicki Elfers, Owen Yung, Linda Law.
5. Rolando Soto was chosen by ballot as the SYNOD Assembly Representative for Iglesia Luterana Ascension.

### **Resolutions:**

Thanks to:

Members who have completed their terms on council

Members of the Church staff.

Members of the Preschool staff.

Members of the Ascension Day Camp staff.

The volunteers who serve Ascension.

To Thrivent Financial and our many members who applied for and donated Action Team cards.

Our Pastoral staff.

The resolutions were accepted with a round of applause.

A motion was made to close the meeting by Doris and seconded by Allison McCarthy. 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

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Dear Friends in Christ,

It is my joy to present this report as I look forward to 10 years of ministry as your pastor. I am amazed by all we've accomplished together in this decade. You'll see in the reports to follow just how much occurred here in 2019. I'll reflect on just a few things here.

## Continuing Education

I was fortunate to take part in the Executive Skills for clergy Workshop L2 in Carefree, AZ in January '19. It provided me with resources on evangelism, personnel, leadership development, and entrepreneurial ministry. Many of those tools led to the innovations we saw this year. I'm looking forward to 2 continuing education offerings in 2020. I'll travel to Bogota, Columbia in February and Austin TX in June. Both will focus on immigration and Latino ministry. I'm very grateful to the MNYS for fully funding these opportunities through Leadership Development Grants.

## Worship Changes

Over the last two years, we've noticed a plateau, and beginning of a decline, in our worship attendance. I felt this needed to be a primary area of adaptation and growth in 2019. We surveyed the congregation and visited dynamic, growing churches on LI. Based on lessons learned we made some changes to our worship space and services. I know some of those changes were uncomfortable to some. I thank you for the healthy and open dialog I had with many individuals and groups amid those changes. I am confident that we all are working for Ascension to continue to be a strong congregation that faithfully proclaims the Gospel in Deer Park and beyond. Our redesigned baptismal font is not only beautiful, but far more functional and provides flexibility in the front of the sanctuary. Projection enhances our 10:30 worship, provides visual aid for all services, and reduced our paper usage for bulletins. We've moved some musicians and choirs to the front to more effectively engage with worshippers. Our occasional bilingual services give us an opportunity to be ONE church together. Our new Wednesday night service now welcomes 25-45 people of all ages weekly. We brought our worship into the community as our annual Blessing of the Animals moved from our courtyard to the Deer Park Fall Festival. This is still a work in progress, but overall, I'm very pleased and confident that these changes will provide very positive growth in the worship experience.

## 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 (1<sup>st</sup> Communion, Pizza 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, Theology on Tap and New Member Classes. I think my favorite events are those that welcome all ages together. I so enjoyed the Chili Cookoff, Bingo, EGGStravaganza, Rally Day 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.

### 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

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As I sit at my computer to begin to write my Annual Report on the 4th of December, I continue to be filled with joy at the outpouring of love and support expressed this past Sunday as Ascension celebrated the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of my ordination with special prayers and a lovely luncheon reception and cake. And so, it seems hard to believe that it's already been nearly seven 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, Sunday and now on Wednesday evening, 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 fourth 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 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, supervisor of the weekly sermon notes (Worship Experience sheets) of all our confirmands, as well as my involvement with the daily Bible Story Opening for our 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" five 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. The group also enjoyed going out to our annual Christmas Luncheon at The Irish Coffee Pub, and the Spring Luncheon at The Bonwit Inn. We also planned such popular events as High Tea and a Mocktail Hour. We've had instruction in painting on glass and pallets, as well as flower arranging and creating our own Beach Glass Shadow Box. And our group loves to go on trips, so we usually plan on taking one each month. We have been "regulars" at Creative Ministries Performing Arts Center in Oakdale this past year enjoying such musical productions as "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dream Coat," "Swing," "A Christmas Story," and "All Shook Up."

I also organized Ascension night at the Long Island Ducks Baseball game at the Bethpage Park in Central Islip in July with fireworks following the game. This coming year, I will again offer group tickets to the July 28h game against the Road Warriors with fireworks following the game.

Another aspect of my adult ministry role was to offer Bible Studies. A group of about twenty women participated in a daytime study by contemporary Christian singing artist, Laura Story called, “When God Doesn’t Fix It.” This past fall, Pastor Justin and I have been engaged in presenting the Animate Series on Faith, as well as the Advent Series, “Because of Bethlehem” by pastor and author Max Lucado on Wednesday evenings.

I was also tasked with organizing and teaching the Adult Retreat. Unfortunately, due to lack of participants, the retreat was canceled in 2019. In 2020, the retreat is scheduled to take place at Camp Quinipet on Shelter Island for a Bible Study on “Grace” during the third 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 back 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 2020 holds.

Blessings,  
Pastor Flora

# TREASURER'S REPORT

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## REVENUE

	<u>2019 ACTUAL</u>	<u>2019 BUDGET</u>
Contributions	454,193.70	440,000.00
Special Offerings	22,334.95	24,000.00
Other Income	42,698.45	40,000.00
Pre-School Tution Income	227,992.81	233,000.00
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>747,219.91</b>	<b>737,000.00</b>

## EXPENSES

Pastoral Ministry	177,198.72	181,286.83
Latino Ministry	15,162.29	15,500.00
Worship	71,135.45	65,011.06
Administration	119,337.38	113,020.24
Program	50,352.20	52,433.66
Property	52,771.92	53,051.22
Benevolence (Synod)	28,600.00	29,000.00
Insurance	32,037.68	29,500.00
Lutheran High School	1,450.00	975.00
Pre-School	178,361.86	168,549.16
Debt Reduction	28,512.00	28,512.00
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>754,919.51</b>	<b>736,839.17</b>

<b>NET INCOME</b>	<b>(7,699.60)</b>	<b>160.83</b>
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## DEDICATED FUND BALANCES

	<u>12/31/2019</u>
Homeless Initiative	4,438.67
Latino Ministry Fund	9,187.69
Confirmation Camp	1,040.76
Tanzania Mission Fund	4,140.00
Ascension Day Camp	12,488.50
Seminary Fund	1,643.37
Flower Fund	1,268.46
Coffee Hour Fund	1,283.54
Haven rent	13,600.00
Mission Appeal	20,779.45
	<b>69,870.44</b>

<b><u>CASH ON HAND</u></b>	<b><u>12/31/2019</u></b>	<b>19,351.57</b>
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<b><u>INVESTMENT ACCOUNTS</u></b>	<b><u>12/31/2019</u></b>	
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**BOND FUNDS (THRIVENT)**

Money Market	20,321.32
House Fund(Thrivent)	15,278.69
LTD Thrivent Bond Fund	32,219.43

**MUTUAL FUNDS**

Victory Funds(RS Large Cap Fund)	30,995.37
Oppenheimer Main St. Grth. & Inc. Fund	38,705.23

<b>TOTAL VALUE OF INVESTMENTS</b>	<b>137,520.04</b>
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<b><u>ASCENSION FUND-MISSION APPEAL</u></b>	<b>6,459.04</b>
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<b><u>ASCENSION FUND-HAVEN RENT</u></b>	<b>3,229.93</b>
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<b><u>ASCENSION ENDOWMENT FUND</u></b>	<b>32,990.91</b>
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**MORTGAGE**

Thrivent Financial for Lutherans

Outstanding Principle:	371,157.19
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Interest Rate (Fixed): 4.50%

Maturity Date: 11/1/2034

## **SPECIAL NEED MONTHLY ENVELOPE 2019**

<b>January</b>	<b>The Mercy Inn Soup Kitchen, Wyandanch</b>	<b>719.00</b>
<b>February</b>	<b>Trinity Lutheran Church, Wyandanch</b>	<b>802.00</b>
<b>March</b>	<b>Pastor's Fund-Latino Ministry</b>	<b>1,286.00</b>
<b>April</b>	<b>Confirmation Camp Scholarships</b>	<b>677.00</b>
<b>May</b>	<b>Pinecrest</b>	<b>662.00</b>
<b>June</b>	<b>Synodical Benevolence</b>	<b>400.00</b>
<b>July</b>	<b>Dottie's House</b>	<b>671.00</b>
<b>August</b>	<b>Long Island Youth Mentoring</b>	<b>602.00</b>
<b>September</b>	<b>Lutheran Counseling Center</b>	<b>686.00</b>
<b>October</b>	<b>LUHI</b>	<b>410.00</b>
<b>November</b>	<b>Social Ministry/Homeless Initiative</b>	<b>1,053.00</b>
<b>December</b>	<b>Pastor's Fund</b>	<b><u>2,645.00</u></b>
<b>TOTAL SPECIAL NEED RECEIVED FOR 2019</b>		<b><u>10,613.00</u></b>

# Children's Ministry Committee

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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 - 5<sup>th</sup> grade, Kids Club for kindergarten to 5<sup>th</sup> grade, Family Advent programming, Lenten programming, First Step/Starting Sunday School, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade Bibles, and 1<sup>st</sup> 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 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> 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 115 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, Kayla Shanley, Andrea Bertram, Katie Lanzarone, Renee Garvey, Brittany Rodgers, Allyson Giles, Nick and Trisha Georghiou, Daniel Benson, Gaby Jordan, Connor Murphy, Emily Belcher, David Belcher, Erik Person, Danielle Petrizzo, Samantha Petrizzo, Stephanie DeLuca, Jennifer Murray, Danielle Toto. 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; Erin McFarland, Kayla Shanley, Jenn Lathrop, and Lisa Perreira. We offered 4 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 play of Jesus' Life, put on by our middle school and high school youth, 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 3<sup>rd</sup> graders the Bibles with classes with parents and children, and 1<sup>st</sup> communion classes with our 5<sup>th</sup> 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

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The Christian Mothers Group holds two meetings each month on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursdays. Our meetings run September thru May. We meet in the Library Lounge 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.

Together along with a Thrivent Action Team, we purchased items for women in need. This was to help with the service project "Panty Power Packs" going on within the church.

The Mothers Group ran the Bake table at the Craft Fair on November 23rd this year. This money goes into our account to help 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.

We are happy to say that three new members joined 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

# Coffee Hour

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## **1 Peter 4:9 “Be hospitable to one another...”**

Thank you to the many volunteers who lent their talents and time to enable coffee hour to continue week after week all year.

Special thanks to Josefina Soto for her unflagging dedication and support. Josefina has been serving at the coffee hour after the 10:30 service, and handling the clean up afterwards, nearly every Sunday for the past 4 years.

Special thanks to Maggie and John Kivat, Patty Maiello and Dean Lindner, who took on the task of making the coffee, setting up and serving for the 9:00 am service in June and have been faithfully serving every Sunday since.

Special thanks also to Anita Quynn for collecting and delivering donated pastries from Stanley's Bakery,

Finally thank you to all who donate funds to allow us to purchase supplies. The starting balance in the coffee hour was \$1,312.64 and the ending balance for the year was \$1,283.54 .

Respectfully submitted  
Debra Mann

# Day Camp

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## **Accomplishments in 2019**

Ascension Day Camp continued its growth during another successful summer. 93 campers attended throughout the four weeks and were supported by 5 CITs, 12 junior counselors, and 8 counselors. 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 \$37 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 2019**

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 more rubber chips for the playground. We would also like to purchase air conditioning for the community room that is used as our music room during the camp season.

Submitted By: Jillian Germann

# Deacons and Assisting Ministers

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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.

During the past year two assisting ministers have stepped down, Christine Drasser and Shaun Hantzschel. We thank them for their service and wish them happiness in their new undertakings.

Assisting Ministers are Andrea Bertram, Susan Bliss, Vicki Elfers, Liz Eppig, Warren Hults, Linda Law, Debra Mann, Rob McCarthy, Laura Owen and Owen Yung.

We are very happy to welcome five new assisting ministers; Laura Conlon, Joann Fricano, Mike Loos, Dawn Scheid and Madeline Sharrock.

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/Eucharistic Ministry

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

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The Evangelism Committee has had a very productive year! We started off by organizing the “Welcome Center” to make it more appealing to guests. We also had the church welcome statement framed and hung in several locations around Ascension.

One of our many goals this year was to have more social media presence. A temple talk was done during a Sunday in February to explain how to follow Ascension on Facebook, and how to engage in things that will be posted throughout the year such as photos, events, etc.

Funds were used to “boost” Facebook advertisements, to reach a larger crowd, for events such as the Egg-stravaganza, Rally Day, and praise band performances. I

n the Fall the Evangelism Committee attended two events: Trunk or Treat at the Deer Park FD, and the Fall Festival at Geiger Park. We handed out Ascension cards with both the preschool and church services information attached. We were able to reach out to over 500 members of the community with hopes that they would attend a service at Ascension at some point.

Letters were generated at different times throughout the year and shared with camp families, as well as pre-school families to invite them to pizza with Pastor (to learn more about Ascension), and to extend an invitation to worship with us!

Last, but not least; Sunday Greeters. Welcome signs were created to engage the congregation on Sunday mornings. Each one had a welcoming message. Several people signed up to greet others as they walked into worship, which often brought smiles to faces and created an even more welcoming environment. I hope 2020 brings many more smiles!

Members of Evangelism: Samantha Bluemke  
Heidi Manzo  
Jillian Germann  
Rob McCarthy  
Joanne Burger  
Alice Wright

# Finance Committee

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The Finance 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 approved budget. We work closely with other committees in developing budgets and monitoring them on an ongoing basis. The committee will arrange the auditing of the Church's records as well as the Pre-school on an annual basis. The Treasurer of the Congregation shall be a member of the committee.

The Finance committee meets on a monthly basis to review the financial condition of Ascension and will be in contact more frequently when necessary.

Managing a budget well over \$700,000 whereas the income comes from mainly the members of the congregation and the pre-school net income can be a difficult task and one that must be managed on an almost daily basis.

Below are some of the responsibilities and accomplishments of the Finance Committee for 2019:

- Monthly articles in bulletins and Voice and periodic temple talks to keep the Congregation aware of the financial condition of the Church.
- Arrange the annual audit of the Church and Pre-school.
- Perform periodic reviews of our investment accounts and utilize only the earnings to redeem to assist in cash flow.
- Prepare the 2020 budget.

The Finance Committee meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month at 7:30. We would Gladly welcome more members to share their ideas.

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

Faithfully submitted,  
Rich Germann, Finance Chair and Treasurer

# Latino Ministry Committee

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## **Mission Statement:**

At “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.”

## **Connecting to the community:**

Ascension Latino connected to the Latino-Hispanic community of Deer Park in 2019 by the many events we offered, such as: “Three Kings Day celebration” during Epiphany, “Day of Friendship” during the month of February, Lent “Viacrusion” retreat, Holy week services, “Mother’s day lunch” in the month of May, “Father’s day lunch” during the month of June, “Summer retreat and annual picnic” during summer, ESL classes during the fall, “Hispanic Heritage Celebration” during the month of October, and “Posadas” during the month of Advent.



## **Worship Services offered in Spanish:**

One of the main focuses for 2019 was to offer a worship service “welcoming to ALL”. A worship service that will give way to a spiritual experience for Latinos of all ages, countries of origin, different denominations, different social status, and cultural backgrounds. A worship experience where Latino culture and customs are honored and respected but embracing fully the multiple changes under the influence of American culture.

We began a series of changes in worship service transitioning gently from a traditional liturgy service to a more contemporary-praise service, friendlier to a younger generation of Latinos. Music changes from traditional to praise music, adding a singing youth group and different preaching styles were the main focuses of change. All were well received by majority of the congregants.





During the months of summer, the time and location of worship changed from 11:45 am to 10:00 in the chapel. “Summer Worship services” had a duration of 30 to 45 minutes. These short services of word and sacrament gave opportunity to all members to enjoy the summer attending family and friends’ gatherings on Sundays. We were able to maintain a steady attendance (between 45-50) during the whole summer season.

During the year, every first of the month we had a “Healing and Anointing Service.” This service welcomes people from different religious backgrounds as well as non-Spanish speakers. It is well attended, usually between 85-90 people average. There are amazing testimonies and stories of faith shared during our healing services.



A special “All Saint Service” was offered the first Sunday in November, with the “day of the dead” theme which is cultural celebration in Mexico and other countries of Central America. It had an attendance of 96 people.

Baptisms and Memorial Services are offered as requested and they are celebrated only on Sundays.

Prayer services are offered every Monday night at 7:00 pm. Approximately 10-15 are regular attendees of this service.

### **Christian Education:**

Bible studies in Spanish are led by Mission Developer every Wednesday at 7:00 pm in the community room. The main subject of study in 2019 was “discipleship” and it included a variety of themes throughout the year based on our mission statement. Approximately 15-20 people regularly attend Wednesday bible study.

### **Spiritual Retreats:**

During lent we had a one-day retreat of the “14 Station of the Cross” at The Shrine of Our Lady of Long Island. We went to every station of the cross with prayer, meditation, songs and personal testimonies of those who wished to talk about their Christian journey and share what Jesus has done in their lives, as well as the lives of those around them. About 65 people attended this retreat.



During Spring we had a one-day women’s retreat with the theme of “Hagar and the God who sees me”. Two Latino Lutheran female pastors were invited as keynote speakers. There was an attendance of about 36 Latino women.

During early summer, we had a field trip with the youth of Misa participating in the singing group. We went to Splish Splash and had a blast!





During late summer, we had our annual one-day spiritual retreat for Latino Ministry. We prepared a theme of study named “Do I really know you?” and pray about the vision and mission of our church within the Latino communities of Deer Park and other neighbor cities.



### **Outreach to the community:**

In the month of October, we celebrated our “Hispanic Heritage”. We began with a worship service at 5:00 pm and our annual international dinner with music and entertainment. We had many folkloric dances and performances, as well as food from all over Latin America. This event hosted approximately 240 people. Many visitors and other non-profit organizations outside the Latino community of Deer Park attended the event.



Celebrating  
**HISPANIC  
HERITAGE**



In the month of September, we began our ESL classes “English as a Second Language” led by volunteers from Latino Ministry. These classes are held in the educational wing of the church on Thursdays at 7:00 pm and Saturdays at 9:30 am. These classes are designed to meet students’ specific needs in two separated, but equally important areas -survival skills and language skills-. The resources for these classes were donated to our church and consist in a competency-based novel named “Living in the USA” for adult students of English at the beginning and intermediate levels. These classes are mainly conversational and offer students an enjoyable way to learn and speak about the events in their own daily lives. We have about 31 students registered in both classes and regularly attending.



In the month of November, we celebrated our “Thanksgiving feast” with a potluck dinner and bible trivia games in the community room. This is a newly introduced tradition in our Latino ministry, learning about American culture and the meaning of such celebrations. In Latino Ministry we focused on the spiritual aspect of thanksgiving, we centered ourselves in Jesus’ love, mercy and grace. We had a great sense of “gratitude” talking, singing, reflecting and praying about God’s great provision for ALL his children.



### **Stewardship:**

Members of Latino Ministry pledge about \$17,000.00 for the year 2020. Their faithful giving shows a great commitment and support to all Ascension’s ministries and programing.

### **Leadership development:**

Attended the ELCA Congregational Vitality Training Event for “The Life of the World” in Las Vegas, NV on February 2019. Ascension facilitated a plenary for “Planning Resources for Latino Congregations”. (2 Congregational Deacons of Latino Ministry accompanied Mission Developer to this training event)

Attended ELCA-REDIL gathering for strategic planning, vitality and sustainability in Baltimore, MD “Does Jesus Matter?”-Journey to the Heart of the Gospel on August 2019 (with 5 Congregational Deacons and Lay Leaders of Latino Ministry) where we learned and shared about leadership, vision and strategies for Latino Ministries.

Attended the “Latino Ministries Group of the Diocese of Long Island” hosted by Pastor Miguel Gomez Acosta, Director of Evangelical Mission and Bishop’s Associate for Congregational Vitality of the Lutheran Synod of the Grand Canyon (with 7 Congregational Deacons and Lay Leaders of Latino Ministry) for a day of discernment for the Latino Ministries of Long Island “Seeking the Face of God” on September 28, 2019 at the Sisters of St. Joseph’s in Brentwood, New York.

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



By far, there are about 10-15 leaders actively working in their specific ministries within Latino Ministry at “Mision Latina de Ascension” ELCA-SAWC\*:

- Mauricio Domínguez, Synodical Deacon
- Sandra Romero, Congregational Deacon, leading women’s bible studies and women’s annual retreat.
- Ana Rihani, Congregational Deacon and Stephen Minister, leading prayer group and visitation.
- Rolando Soto, Congregational Deacon, President of “Misión Latina de Ascension” ELCA-SAWC\* and ESL volunteer teacher.
- Yadira Alguera, Congregational Deacon, working in Social Ministry along with Mission Developer.

- Cristina Parim, Congregational Deacon and Stephen Minister, liaison for Christian Ed.
- Evelyn Argueta, Lay leader and Vice-President of “Mision Latina de Ascension” ELCA-SAWC. \*
- Adrian Argueta, Lay leader, Assisting Minister and ESL volunteer teacher.
- Jeff Marrero, Lay Leader, Diakonia student and ESL volunteer teacher.
- Josefina Soto, Lay leader, Usher and Coffee Hour volunteer.
- Isabel Hernandez, Lay leader and head of Ushers.
- Luis Pintor, Conchita Domínguez, Elena Norambuena, Ushers.
- Nancy Polo, Nelly Duran and July Juarez, Altar guild.

### **Leadership Development of Latino Pastor/Mission Developer:**

In conversation with the Metropolitan New York Synod, I applied to obtain a Leadership Development Grant in 2019 to take a one-on-one class with a personal communication coach on an interactive live communication class. I was given a grant of \$2,500.00 to commit to this class which I completed in January 2019 at Union Theological Seminary.

In the middle of January 2019, I attended an “Executive Skills for Clergy” class Level I, January 14<sup>th</sup> to January 18<sup>th</sup> at Spirit in the Desert, in Carefree, AZ. This class helped me to learn more about finances for non-profit organizations, the business of evangelism and leadership in a church.

In addition to continuing education, I also had the collegial support from weekly periscope study, monthly ministerium, regular communications with DEM, Mission Developers’ annual retreat, as well as yearly Bishop retreat.

### **Outreach opportunities:**

We have a great outreach to the Latino community not only through our ESL program and other social events and services, but also, we have helped the community with immigration issues and legal assistance. We have been able to assist them to file petitions to the Homeland Security (ICE) and U.S. Citizenship and Naturalization Service to apply for work authorization documents, permanent resident status and naturalization. We have been able to help many members of Latino Ministry to become legalized in the United States through different legal reliefs. Some have started their process of asylum in the United States, others are now “permanent residents” through family petitions, we have been able to renew work permits under “DACA” for the dreamers, TPS for people from El Salvador and Honduras, and to apply for Naturalization and Citizenship for legal permanent residents.

### **Organic life of the ministry:**

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

### **Do we still have a viable ministry field?**

Statistics showed in the year 2019 that Latino population in Deer Park forecast a growth of about 3% to 4% per year. By the statistic reports we can determine that there will be in the future a legitimate need for a place of worship in Deer Park, and a religious organization that provides programing for families and children in the Spanish language.

We are extremely grateful to Ascension Lutheran Church who continues their commitment and support to Latino Ministry/ “Mision Latina de Ascension” ELCA-SAWC\*. In addition to financial support Ascension provides administrative support and programing for Latino members such as Sunday School program, Confirmation program, Confirmation Camp, First Communion Classes, Youth retreats and the National Youth Gathering.

### **What defines our Mision?**

“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. Amid uncertainty and fear for immigrant families, it is with great gratitude that we share stories of victory and success all granted by the love and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The great commission according to **Mathew 28:19-20** is reminded to each one of us every Sunday at the end of our worship service. It is printed in Spanish in the back of our bulletins and it is read out loud before we exit the door. This reading reminds us that we are part of something bigger than us, that we are the body of Christ, and each one of us is a part of it, that we are ALL called as a whole church to continue his ministry on earth.

“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”

Report given by: Rev. Evelyn Patricia Avila

Mission Developer of the ELCA

Mision Latina de Ascension - \*Synodically Authorized Worshipping Community



THANK YOU!



# Personnel Committee

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*“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, 3 Teachers, 3 teacher assistants, night security for BIHI, as well as 2 new camp counselors and 6 new junior counselors
2. Hired a sexton to take over duties of the outside cleaning company
3. All staff were reviewed and given written feedback in 2019
4. Background checks were completed for all staff members as part of an established review for all staff.
5. Reviewed the Staff Guidelines that have been in place and we made some updates to them for 2020. In 2020 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
6. Continued to manage the vacation/time off tracking process for all staff members.
7. Clarified and documented roles for the Wedding Coordinator and Wedding Sexton
8. Updated renters agreement to account for pets
9. Worked with office to ensure the completion of anti-sexual harassment training.
10. Made recommendation for severance for Eric Pape when his job was eliminated.
11. Made recommendation for staff pay increase for 2020 in line with Synod guidelines.
12. Recommended an additional Sunday off (5 total) for Pastor Justin and Pastor Flora

The committee also 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
Lisa Perreira			

# Preschool

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We had a great end to the 2019 school year. We continue our commitment to offer a quality program. We offer a safe and loving learning environment with hands-on experiences for the children. Ascension Preschool is a caring place for all of God's children.

Under the guidance of Ascensions' talented group of teachers, aides, and supportive staff we currently have 114 children enrolled in our various classes. Some of our classes are almost full for the 2020/2021 school year with enrollment that started early January. We offer 2, 3, and 4-year-old classes as a ½ day program with options to extend the day with our "Afternoon Adventure Program". Our current staff members are: Kathy Fifield, Karen Fox, Christianna DeLuca, Nancy Labady, Katie Attard, Carol Marx, Terry DeBlasi, Angela Pilewski, Sonja Milankovic, Dawn Scheid, Meredith Colapietro, Jeanette Nenejian, Susan Quinn and Tina Pisano. We had an overwhelming demand for our 3-year-old program so we opened another class.

Afternoon Adventures finished for the 2018-2019 school year at the end of May and started up again in October. Ms. Angela and Mrs. Scheid teach our Mon/Wed/Fri classes and Mrs. DeLuca, Ms. Sonja and Ms. Meredith teach our Tues/Thurs classes. They do a fantastic job keeping the students actively engaged. The Afternoon Adventures Program are enrichment classes designed to enhance the child's fascination of learning through hands on activities presented in fun creative ways. This year we added Animals Around the World and Dino Discovery to the program. The program is currently running five days in the afternoon.

This year we had a visit from the dentist, the fire department, hosted a wear your Pajamas/Pancake Breakfast Day where we had guest readers come to read to the children, Spring Fun Day with a petting zoo, and Friendship Fruit Salad Day. We learned about apples, pumpkins, and fall during our fall harvest celebration. Along with those activities we had our big Thanksgiving Feast and Christmas Pageant. These activities really bring the school and families together. The parents and students both enjoy them equally. We shared a feast for Thanksgiving where the children all participated in "sharing" what they made in class. We concluded the year with the wonderful Christmas Pageant that told the story of Jesus' birth through songs by our "shepherd's", "Angels", "Lambs," and the Holy Family. The preschool would like to thank Anita Quynn for her continued assistance with playing the piano for our children to sing along to during the pageant.

Chapel with Pastor Justin, Pastor Flora, Pastor Patricia and Natalie started in October with the stories of Creation and Noah's Ark. Depending on the month, the children go to chapel once or twice a month. The children have continued to enjoy chapel and anticipate whose turn it will be to light the candles.

We have had a very busy year so far and look forward to 2020 and the activities we have planned. We are excited for another visit from the dentist, a Valentine's Day party, an Easter Egg Hunt, Pajama Day, Spring Fun Day and our Stepping Up, Moving Up and Graduation ceremonies in June.

I'd like to thank Pastor Justin, Pastor Flora, Pastor Patricia, and the church staff for all their help through the year so far. I can't wait to see even more of the positive changes that will continue for the 2020 year.

Thank you,  
AnneMarie Achatz  
Preschool Director

# Property Committee

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"By wisdom a house is built, and by understanding it is established; through knowledge its rooms are filled with rare and beautiful treasures." (Proverbs 24:3-4)

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 is been tasked with overseeing it all with the continual help of the entire Church community. This responsibility consists of maintenance, repair and capital improvements.

## **2019 Property Committee Highlights**

- Volunteer used to fix Kitchen exhaust fan – a savings of \$3400.
- Replaced Parish House Chimney liner (required due to age/fire hazard) - \$2500.
- Major repair on Church Air Conditioning system.
- Pre-School wall removal to create additional classroom space done by volunteers – a savings of \$1500
- Electrical and lighting run into the BIHI Shed by volunteer – a savings of \$1000
- Baptismal font removed to allow space for praise band by volunteers – a savings of \$1000
- New oversight and tracking software for solar panels to help monitor efficiency.
- Repurposing of Music Office to create an updated office space for Pastor Patty.
- Coordinated snow removal throughout winter – completely done by volunteers.
- Fall clean-up of Church property and gardens
- Replaced Parsonage boiler utilizing special grant money
- Replaced kitchen flooring at 97 Bay Shore Rd utilizing wholesale pricing – a savings of \$1800.

## **Looking ahead to 2020**

- Initiate new volunteer process to allow for project based volunteerism.
- Continue coordination of snow removal volunteers – a potential savings in the \$1000's
- Renovate/paint community room.
- Coordinate volunteers for spring and fall property cleanup.
- Plan for near-term replacement/upgrade of Sanctuary Air Conditioners – Potential cost of \$20,000
- Plan for near-term replacement of Parsonage Air Conditioner – Potential cost of \$7000
- Paint and lighting improvements at both the Parsonage and 97 Bay Shore Rd.

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 and volunteers for their support and help over the past year as chairperson of the property committee.

Committee Members: Debbie DeMarchis, James Griesmeyer, Pastor Justin, Pastor Flora and Property Chairman John Scheid.

Respectfully Submitted, John Scheid

# Stephen Ministry

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*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.*

Stephen Ministry continues to work “behind the scenes” providing confidential Christian care giving to people who have experienced life changing situations.

In February we commissioned 8 new Stephen Ministers: Jeff Adee, Joanne Burger, Laura Conlon, Marge Kroutil, Mike Loos, Marie Marck, Pat Massaro and Jen Stevens. We are grateful for their faithful service of meeting with their care receivers weekly and attending Peer Supervision and Continuing Education every 2 weeks. It has been a blessing to know that their care receiver's lives are being transformed as well as the lives of our Stephen Ministers.

In November we hosted a Stephen Ministry Introductory Workshop where churches from around the area could attend to learn more about how to bring Stephen Ministry to their congregations.

We are very grateful for all the prayers and support that this ministry has received during 2019 which will carry us through 2020 with this vital ministry of Christian Care Giving.

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

# Stewardship Committee

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## Special Needs Summary 2019

January :The Mercy Inn Soup Kitchen, Wyandanch

February: Trinity Lutheran Church, Wyandanch

March: Pastor's Fund, Latino Ministry

April: Confirmation Camp Scholarships

May: Pinecrest

June: Synodical Benevolence

July: Dottie's House

August: Long Island Youth Mentoring

September : Lutheran Counseling Center

October: LUHI

November: Homeless Initiative

December: Pastor's Fund

## Stewardship Events:

May: Informational Breakfast on Electronic Giving

September: Ministry Fair

# W.E.L.C.A.

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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 our donation to the West. End Pantry, Salorburg, PA.

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 and delivered 40 activity kits for Cohen's Children's Hospital.

Welca donated \$150.00 for the West End Pantry Salorburg, PA. They serve 315 families every 2 weeks.

For the year 2019 our Welca donated \$427.00 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.

Welca mourns loss of friend and long time Ethel Nilsen, Muriel Zipser, Doris Kaplan. 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. To Vicki Elfers 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

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*“Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs.” - Psalm 100:2*

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.

Our services are supported by a strong music ministry including an adult choir, a praise band & choir, youth choir, children's choir, brass, strings and bell choirs, which amounts to over 100 members who dedicate their time and talent to make beautiful music.

Highlights from this past year include:

- Projection TV's were installed in the sanctuary and are utilized at the 10:30am Praise Service.
- The Saturday Evening Service was discontinued and replaced with a Wednesday Service at 6pm followed by Bible Study at 7pm.
- The Baptismal Font was removed and replaced with a new movable font created by a church member.
- We added some service elements back into our 9:00 traditional service which was well received by the congregation. We continue to utilize 5-6 different liturgies throughout the course of the year.
- We have introduced many new songs this past year at our Praise Service. In fact, we have utilized over 60 different songs just from September through December of this past year. The new worship layout for this service has received positive feedback after being adjusted slightly after the initial introduction in the early fall!
- Children's Choir grew again and has a total membership of 20 children.
- The children's hand chime choir (8 children) continued again this year and will be switching to bells in January.
- We currently have 4 children interested in beginning a new hand chime choir but we need a few more to make it happen
- Our String Ensemble continued this year and maintained its membership
- Our Brass Ensemble continued this year and added 1 new member!
- We started a new children's string ensemble which has 4 children in it (they debuted this past Christmas Eve at the family service).
- Our praise choir has continued this year and maintained its membership (they are now singing and leading worship from the front of the church which has been very well received by the congregation).
- Our traditional choir continued this year and added 2 new members. It looks as though we may be adding another new member in the near future as well.
- Our once a month bell choir has continued this year and performed for Christmas Eve, Good Friday, Easter as well as 4 other times throughout the year.
- Our Monday night bell choir has continued this year and added 2 new members.

- Our Praise Band has continued this year and is now a permanent fixture in the front of the church when leading worship.
- The Children's Choir and Handchime choir debuted T-Shirts this fall that were very well received by the Congregation. A huge thank you to Marie Marck for her hard work towards making this happen. Also, a big thank you to Ken Drasser for designing the designs for us.
- We had our annual Sunday School Christmas Performance and it was a huge success once again.
- Our weekly Sunday School music program continued again this year.
- The 5 members of the Praise Band graciously agreed to lower their pay by \$25/service when the band plays during this coming year. This will save the congregation \$3000 in terms of the cost of the Praise Band.
- 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).

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 & Russ Bliss



# Youth Committee

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Ascension's youth have had an exciting and busy year. We started off the year with 20 middle school and high school students and 4 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. 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 also had great opportunities of fellowship. We worked together with the Special Events committee on the Chili cook off. We hosted many fundraisers such as cornhole tournaments, pie sale, and Bingo/Spaghetti dinner. A huge thanks for Rob & Allison McCarthy for hosting the cornhole tournaments; Robyn Meyers, Evelyn Mundhenk and Allison McCarthy for hosting the Bingo/Spaghetti dinner; Jean Belcher and Jenn Lathrop for hosting the pallet painting fundraiser. 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: 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. 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade students have weekly class. We thank Jean Belcher, Andrew Germann, Kelly Wysocki, 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 Rob McCarthy, Tom Lanzarone, 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.

Thank you to our hardworking committee members, Jean Belcher, Dawn Scheid, 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

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**Catherine Adee** and husband Jeff became members of Ascension in March 2019. We were previously members at St Luke Lutheran of Dix Hill, NY for 30 years. After many years of service to that church we began visiting other Lutheran churches in the area and found our new home here at Ascension in January 2018.

While at St Luke I was a member of the Missions and Social Concerns committee. I volunteered at the HIHI (Huntington Area Homeless; contributed to the Angel Tree program, Thanksgiving Baskets and School Back Pack programs. I coordinated a Christmas Sale of hand crafted items from under developed countries through SERVE. I played in the Bell Choir for several years and taught Middle School Confirmation Class for 2 years. Jeff and I also hosted a Christmas Wreath making activity for our members during our annual "Sights and Sounds of Christmas" event.

When raising my children I was fortunate enough to not have to work for 10 years. During this time I volunteered at the Huntington Women's Center where I was trained in group dynamics, and lead workshops for women on various topics. I eventually became Program Co-Ordinator there. I brought those skills with me to run a New Mothers group at St. Luke and several other workshops and study groups. As my children grew older I returned to school and obtained my master's degree in Secondary Education at the age of 42.

As a teacher for over 22 years at a Title 1 school in Nassau County, I became aware of the many issues faced by families that struggle financially, and those of other races and ethnic groups. Now that I am retired I have more time to serve in our community.

Once arriving at Ascension, I immediately became involved in Pasta and the Word at Trinity. I am now, along with Debra Mann, in charge of our monthly mission there. Last winter I helped out at the BIHI by helping with set-up and hosting the overnight shift with my husband. This year we both continue as both coordinators for the overnight shift as well as host/hostess for these hours. At the beginning of this season I solicited funds for the program by going to local businesses. I also joined the bell choir last winter. During the holidays Jeff and I hosted a wreath making workshop for our members during the greening of the tree hours. We provided all materials and Wyandanch members paid \$15.00 to make a wreath. All proceeds from this went to the youth.

I seek the council position for Social Ministries because serving others is my way of serving the Lord. I look forward to finding new ways to serve as well as working to recruit others to share the joy of giving.

# OFFICIAL BALLOT

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## Nominations to the Congregational Council 2020

The following persons are nominated to serve on the Congregational Council for 2020:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Cathy Adee (first two year term)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ John Scheid (second two year term)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Allison McCarthy (third two year term)
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The following persons are nominated to serve a one year term on the Congregational Council for 2020:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Richard Germann (Treasurer)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Rolando Soto (Latino Ministry Representative)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Diana Lazarou (WELCA Representative)

# Deacons

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Recommendation: that Susan Bliss be called as a Synodical Deacon of Ascension Lutheran Church, Deer Park, N.Y. for one year beginning February 1, 2020

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. Preparing weekly Prayers of Intercession
4. Provide training for new Assisting Ministers

Recommendation: that **Mauricio Dominguez** be called as a Synodical Deacon of Ascension Lutheran Church, Deer Park, N.Y. for one year beginning February 1, 2020

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

Serving as a Synodical Deacon at Ascension since 2/1/2019

Responsibilities for ministry include the following:

1. Assisting Pastor Patricia Avila
2. Leading family retreats,
3. Prayer and Healing services
4. Serving as an assisting minister and communion assistant in Misa.

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, 2020

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

Vicki has been serving Ascension Lutheran Church as a Synodical 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. Completion of the 50 hours of training of Stephen Ministers along with other Stephen Leaders.
2. Commissioning of 8 people as Stephen Ministers
3. Blessed to be able to witness the spiritual and personal growth in Ascension's Stephen Ministers and their Care Receivers as a facilitator of a Peer Supervision Group.

Additional Responsibilities at Ascension:

1. Assisting on the Altar by leading prayers and serving Holy Communion.
2. Scheduling and training of Communion Assistants.
3. Serving on the Altar Guild.

Blessings Outside of Ascension:

1. Leading worship services at Lutheran Churches with pastoral vacancies.

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
3. Seeing directees as a certified Spiritual Director

Spiritual Development:

1. Continuing to attend Spiritual Formation classes as part of a Spiritual Direction program

Synodical Event:

1. Attended the Synod Assembly along with other voting members from Ascension to be part of the business of our Synod and to elect a new Bishop.

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, 2020

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 2019, we continued 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.

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, 2020

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. Ascension's Prayer Group.
4. To assist with the Prayer Chain.
5. Distribute prayer shawls and baby blankets.
6. To send cards and notes to those being prayed for, wishing them God's blessings.
7. Vice President of WELCA
8. Christian Care
9. 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, 2020

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.

# Bios of Synod Assembly Representatives

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**Name:** Madeline Sharrock

**How long have you been a member?** 1 year

**Why would you like to attend the assembly?** My name is Madeline Sharrock. I, along with my husband, Peter and son, Matthew, have been members of Ascension for a little over a year. I am so blessed to call Ascension my new church home and I have been pleased to serve as an Assistant Minister, Eucharistic Minister and Lay Reader for the last few months. Names and faces are slowly coming together, and I have enjoyed meeting the wonderful members of this church. I am also part of the Priscilla Circle of WELCA which has enabled me to put more names and faces together. Professionally, I am the Parish Coordinator at a nearby Lutheran Church and a marketing consultant for a local yarn shop. My free time is often spent knitting and I serve as the Vice President of Camp Ma-He-Tu, a Lutheran Girls' Camp in Bear Mountain. I look forward to the opportunity to represent the congregation of Ascension at the 2020 Metro Synod Assembly.

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**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 2020 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 decision making that will help guide our Synod to a place where we continue to accept diversity of all kinds.

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

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**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, Internship for Synodical Deacon, 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.

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**Name:** Pattie Komornik

**How long have you been a member?** I believe officially about 20 years. I was married at the church in 1976 as a non-member and my husband was a member. We have stayed connected with the pre-school and the youth activities for my 2 daughters and it was when I saw how much fun my daughters were having at the church, I finally decided to become a member.

**What ministries are you currently involved in?:** Stephen Ministry, Personnel Committee, Reconciling in Christ committee, Babylon Interfaith Homeless Initiative, Music Ministry, Communion Assistant

**Why would you like to attend the assembly?** Why would you like to attend the assembly? I have attended several assemblies in the past – some as a participant with voting rights and once, as a participant with no voting right. I find this opportunity to be part of the assembly to help me grow in my faith as I hear all the actions that the Synod is taking to Share Christ with all. It is very uplifting.

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**Name:** Vicki Elfers

**How long have you been a member?** 30 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 4 Synod Assemblies and I thoroughly enjoy being part of the process and hearing the reports of all of the activities going on in our Metropolitan New York Synod. I find the experience of the Assembly and Worship service to be very meaningful.

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**Name:** Rolando Soto

**How long have you been a member?** 4 years

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

**Why would you like to attend the assembly?** I would gladly represent Ascension's Latino population at our Synod Assembly. I would like to hear about the many ministries in our Synod.

# Synod Assembly Representatives

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

\_\_\_\_\_ Madeline Sharrock

\_\_\_\_\_ Natalie Romero

\_\_\_\_\_ Linda Law

\_\_\_\_\_ Pattie Komornik

\_\_\_\_\_ Vicki Elfers

\_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

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**Ballot for Synod Assembly Representative  
for Iglesia Luterana Ascensión:**

**(Please vote for one)**

\_\_\_\_\_ Rolando Soto

\_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

# RESOLUTIONS

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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:

**Robert McCarthy and Garret Leddy**

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:

<b>Rich Brown</b>	<b>Chrissy Brooks</b>	<b>Vicki Elfers</b>	<b>David Johnson</b>
<b>Nestor Milanes</b>	<b>Mary Murphy</b>	<b>Jerry Romero</b>	<b>Natalie Romero</b>
<b>Vincent Sferrazza</b>			

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 2019:

**Pastor John Krahn**

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

<b>AnnMarie Achatz</b>	<b>Christiana DeLuca</b>	<b>Kathy Fifield</b>	<b>Karen Fox</b>
<b>Nancy Labady</b>	<b>Katherine Attard</b>	<b>Theresa DeBlasi</b>	<b>Meredith Colapietro</b>
<b>Carol Marx</b>	<b>Sonja Milankovic</b>	<b>Susan Quinn</b>	<b>Dawn Scheid</b>
<b>Angela Pilewski</b>	<b>Jeanette Nenjian</b>	<b>Tina Pisano</b>	

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

**Jillian Manzo – Director**

<b>Jean Belcher</b>	<b>Brett Manzo</b>	<b>Aubrey Gunther</b>	<b>Brittany Rodgers</b>
<b>Emily Belcher</b>	<b>Kayla Shanley</b>	<b>Francesca LaFemina</b>	<b>Heather Scheid</b>
<b>Sandra Krauss</b>	<b>Ashley Banaciski</b>	<b>Aaron Glass</b>	<b>Conner Howell</b>
<b>Ariana Jordan</b>	<b>Brianna Senior</b>	<b>Lillian Dookram</b>	<b>Christian Ramos</b>
<b>Matthew Scheid</b>	<b>Ariana Rivera</b>	<b>Antonia LaFemina</b>	<b>Theresa Constantine</b>
<b>Connor Murphy</b>	<b>David Belcher</b>	<b>Ava Shanley</b>	<b>Diana Gorman</b>
<b>Amanda Parkinson</b>			

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.**