



# ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

January 30, 2022

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

.....	1
SECRETARY'S REPORT.....	3
SENIOR PASTOR'S REPORT.....	8
ASSOCIATE PASTOR'S REPORT.....	10
TREASURER'S REPORT.....	12
CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILY MINISTRIES.....	15
FINANCE COMMITTEE.....	16
LATINO MINISTRY COMMITTEE.....	17
PERSONNEL COMMITTEE.....	20
PRESCHOOL.....	21
PROPERTY COMMITTEE.....	23
SOCIAL MINISTRY.....	24
STEPHEN MINISTRY.....	25
WELCA.....	26
WORSHIP AND MUSIC COMMITTEE.....	27
PROPOSED BUDGET FOR 2021.....	28
BIOGRAPHIES FOR COUNCIL POSITIONS.....	31
OFFICIAL BALLOT.....	32
DEACONS.....	33
RESOLUTIONS.....	34

# Secretary's Report

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Ascension Lutheran Church  
Annual Congregation Meeting  
June 13, 2021

Coffee hour was provided courtesy of Thrivent and we thank them for the delicious food and the care in providing it to us.

Devotions were offered by Pastor Flora.

After the devotions, Lisa Perreria, Church Council President, called the meeting to order at 12:00 PM. Lisa greeted everyone and thanked everyone for attending.

Lisa 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 36. Based on the past year, the number of actual people attending the meeting will make up the quorum this year. Since we are not doing any legal procedures this year, we are just using the gathering we have today.

## **Review of Meeting Ground Rules:** (reviewed by Heidi)

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.
1. 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. Lisa then reviewed the definition of a member in good standing.
1. 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.

1. 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 26, 2020 was presented.

A motion was made to accept the Secretary's Report by Owen Yung and seconded by Jeff Adeo. 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, 2020. We ended up with a deficit of 30,000. It was a difficult year financially for everyone but the giving was incredible. There were several ways the church experienced negative impacts. Many more people began giving electronically which really helps the church financially. We had almost no outside groups meeting here at all. Our preschool turned a profit of \$13,000 which is amazing. For expenses, we met our giving to the Benevolent. We also put in a budget line to pay ourselves back which we were able to do. We now have a \$5,000 deficit as opposed to a \$90,000 deficit. Our investment accounts had tremendous growth and we did not need to redeem any of our profits.

A motion was made by **Russ Bliss** to accept the 2020 Treasurer's Report.

**Madeline Sharrock** seconded the motion.

Motion passed unanimously.

## **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.

Children, Youth and Family Ministry- Natalie Romero  
Christian's Mothers Group – Janet L. Germann  
Finance Committee – submitted by Rich Germann  
Latino Ministry Committee – submitted by Rev. Evelyn Patricia Avila  
Personnel Committee – submitted by Lisa Perreira  
Preschool- submitted by AnnMarie Achatz  
Property Committee – submitted by John Scheid  
Social Ministry Committee- submitted by Cathy Adee  
Stephen Ministry – submitted by Deacon Vicki Elfers  
Worship and Music Committee- submitted by Tom Tresselt  
Youth Committee – submitted by Natalie Romero

A few notes from the committee reports:

Many committees were able to meet on Zoom this year.

## **2020 Proposed Budget: Submitted by Rich Germann:**

Rich Germann reviewed the proposed budget for 2021(copy attached). The budget is a balanced budget. Rich went through several of the line items included in the budget. The SYNOD recommends a cost of living increase of 1.9% which has been given to each of our employees. No praise band has been budgeted. All numbers have been factored in very conservatively. Hopefully outside groups will return. The balancing item for the budget is the PPP loan. We are utilizing the expenses covered under the PPP so there will be loan forgiveness.

Questions that were asked regarding the budget:

**No questions.**

A motion was made by **Pattie Komornik** to accept the treasurer's report. **David Johnson** 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:

Erica Barr- chair of Youth Committee

Stephanie Holdcroft -

For a second two year term:

Erin Shanley – chair of Evangelism

For a one year term:

Richard Germann – Treasurer

Rolando Soto – Latino Ministry Representative

Madeline Sharrock – WELCA Representative

A motion was made by Russ Bliss to confirm the new members of council and seconded by Own Yung. Motion was passed unanimously.

## **Old Business:**

## **New Business:**

1. 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 Madeline and seconded by Pat Massar and passed unanimously.
1. Then a ballot was done for SYNOD Assembly representatives.

## **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 Pattie Komornik and seconded by Pat Massaro. Motion was passed unanimously.

## **Executive Committee Election Results:**

President: Lisa Perreira

Vice President: Jean Belcher

Secretary: Erica Barr

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Belcher

Church Council Secretary

# Senior Pastor's Report

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Dear Friends in Christ,

Well, 2021 was supposed to be the year of the comeback. It was going to be our return to “normal.” But what we experienced was a year of ups and downs. We would make forward progress but then find we had to scale back at times. I am very proud to say that we not only weathered the continued storm, but continued to thrive in another difficult year. In the reports to follow, you’ll see that much of our programming continued or returned in 2021, albeit often in altered form. Here’s just a short list of some of the ministries this year:

## Continued

- In-Person and Online Worship
- Bible Studies
- Devotions
- Pastoral Outreach

## Returning (to in-person or hybrid)

- Milestone Ministries (Baptism, Pizza w Pastor, 3<sup>rd</sup> Gr Bibles, 1<sup>st</sup> Comm, Conf)
- Weddings and Funerals
- PreK Chapel
- Family Activities (Bingo, Movie Night, Rally Day, Pumpkin Decorating, Christmas Caroling)
- Summer Camps (Day Camp, Confirmation Camp)

## New

- Lenten Packs
- Eucharistic Ministry

You’ll have an opportunity to learn more about the above in the reports to follow.

## Staff Transition

We said a sad goodbye to the Romero family at the end of 2021. Ascension was blessed with Natalie’s strong presence as our Director of Children, Youth, and Family Ministry for 10 years. As we say goodbye, we are determined to use this transition as an opportunity to grow our ministry in new and exciting ways. We are in the final stages of hiring a new Youth Director, and I look forward to giving an introduction at the congregational meeting.



### Financial Management

You'll see much more on our finances in other reports, but I wanted to take a moment to laud our leadership. The past 2 years have provided a challenge never before seen by our congregation. The financial strain of the pandemic has threatened the survival of a large percentage of churches. However, because of careful financial management, Ascension is on very firm financial ground to enter this new year.

### Synod Relationship

One final note, based on a conversation I recently had with a member who wanted to know more about our relationship with the Synod. Specifically, she wanted to know the benefit of our \$45,000/yr Benevolence given by Ascension to the larger church. Aside from following the call to support fellow Christians far and wide, we enjoy quite a bit of financial support in return. Every time a pastor or staff attends a continuing education event (to be equipped with skills that benefit our church), the cost is covered by Synod grants. We've received matching funds for several building projects over the years. Largest of all has been the financial support of our Latino Ministry. We have benefited from quite a bit of support over the years, including Pastor Patty's salary, benefits, and pension currently fully covered by the ELCA and MNYS. We may give \$45,000/yr, but we receive the equivalent of over \$100,000/yr from the larger church. This relationship has been a true blessing to our congregation.

# Associate Pastor's Report

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It's been almost two years now that we've lived under the cloud of the Covid 19 Pandemic with all of its variants. Needless to say, this time has been fraught with disappointments, frustrations, sadness, and fear. This pandemic has touched every corner and aspect of our lives. Some of us have lost jobs or been adversely affected economically. Some have lost friends and loved ones to the virus. Others are moaning the loss of the ability to visit and gather with friends and family especially during the holidays. Confusion and frustration abound over vaccine and mask mandates dividing communities and towns, cities and even states.

We longed for "normalcy," and for a brief time this past spring and summer, we did experience it to a degree. We moved from many "virtual" worship services to in-person worship in our sanctuary having two seating areas designated vaccinated (no mask required) and non-vaccinated (mask required). Holy Communion was first offered in pre-filled sealed bread and grape juice kits. In time, we moved to distributing the bread once again by the Pastors, and the wine in disposable plastic cups using two new pouring chalices. With the spike in Covid cases in December, we had to return to the pre-filled Communion kits for Christmas Eve Services, as well as enforce a "must wear mask" mandate by the governor.

Because we were able to offer both of our Sunday services through live streaming, our viewership greatly increased, and we were able to reach many more people. Many of our viewers are elderly, homebound or unable to get to church. To accommodate their spiritual need for Holy Communion, I worked on getting volunteers to become Eucharistic Ministers who would bring a consecrated sealed Communion Kit to them at home. I made it contactless whereby the kit with instructions, prayers, and a bulletin would be placed in a plastic bag to be left on their doorknob. We began this ministry in May as twelve Eucharistic Ministers delivered Holy Communion to over thirty individuals on a weekly basis.

Continuing along those lines of deepening our congregants' spirituality, I offered several Bible Studies for Women on Tuesdays in the sanctuary. Sitting every other row, masked and socially distanced participants studied the lives and impact of Sarah: Life in the Kingdom of the Absurd, and Rehab: Where a Checkered Past Meets God's Grace. I had approximately twelve faithful participants weekly. After the new year, I will once again offer a Bible Study for Women focusing on Esther: Touching the King's Heart.

In April, I was able to resume "Forever 50" meeting on a weekly rather than by-weekly basis. We socialized while playing games of BINGO, "Left, Center, Right," and Trivia,

making a spring floral arrangement with Ellie from “Family Florist,” enjoying a luncheon out at “The Irish Coffee Pub” in East Islip, and a Welcome to Summer BBQ in June. The early fall found “Forever 50” once again able to meet on a regular basis. Don Hartford took over the leadership of the group, as I was recuperating from knee replacement surgery. We’ve enjoyed Oakdale’s Creative Ministries’ productions of “Cinderella,” “Beauty and the Beast,” and “Holiday Inn,” an Ice Cream Sundae Social, a Halloween Costume Party, Acrylic painting with “Canvas Creations,” a catered Thanksgiving Luncheon, making a Christmas Craft with Janet Germann, Denise Miller, and Carole Tresselt, and ending our year with our annual Christmas Luncheon at “The Irish Coffee Pub” in East Islip.

Keeping our fingers crossed that the Pandemic does not continue to raise its ugly head in 2022, we look forward to continuing our “Forever 50” meetings with an Epiphany Gifts Party on January 5<sup>th</sup>, making an 8x10 Beach Shells Shadow Box on the 12<sup>th</sup>, enjoying Creative Ministries’ production of the 1960’s musical, “Beehive,” and closing out the first month of 2022 with a Mocktail Hour of punch and hot and cold hors d’oeuvres. As I reflect back on this past year and all that has been accomplished in this very challenging and difficult time, I feel so very blessed—blessed by the love and support of my husband Don, blessed to be working with Pastor Justin and our wonderful staff and volunteers, blessed to be here at Ascension among God’s faithful people, and blessed by the challenges, hopes, and rewards that 2022 holds.

God’s richest Blessings,  
Pastor Flora M. Hartford

# TREASURER'S REPORT

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## Ascension Lutheran Church Treasurer's Annual Report Year Ending 2021

<u>REVENUE</u>	<u>2021 ACTUAL</u>	<u>2021 BUDGET</u>
Contributions	420,544.46	404,368.00
Special Offerings	22,289.00	20,000.00
Other Income	11,633.00	30,000.00
PPP Grant	80,702.00	80,702.00
Pre-School Tution Income	<u>211,052.51</u>	<u>182,752.00</u>
TOTAL REVENUE	746,220.97	717,822.00

### EXPENSES

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Pastoral Ministry	182,740.99	187,807.29
Latino Ministry	15,054.38	15,500.00
Worship	48,301.57	47,609.42
Administration	113,765.38	113,580.46
Program	46,585.64	50,524.17
Property	47,852.84	54,600.00
Benevolence (Synod)	29,037.99	29,500.00
Insurance	27,613.94	30,000.00
Lutheran High School	2,636.00	1,000.00
Pre-School	156,524.81	143,862.12
Debt Reduction	28,512.00	28,512.00
Repayment of Dedicated Funds	<u>15,000.00</u>	<u>15,000.00</u>
TOTAL EXPENSES	713,625.54	717,495.46
NET INCOME	32,595.43	326.54

### DEDICATED FUND BALANCES

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Homeless Initiative	
Latino Pastor's Fund	4,596.67
Latino Ministry Fund	2,965.68
Confirmation Camp	3,142.29
Tanzania Mission Fund	1,605.00
Ascension Day Camp	12,765.69
Seminary Fund	1,310.77
Flower Fund	1,547.74

Coffee Hour Fund		1,379.83
Mission Appeal		12,124.45
Remembrance		4,327.73
Homeless Initiative		6,216.64
Hunger Outreach		6,519.81
Others		<u>3,963.37</u>
		62,465.67
<b><u>CASH ON HAND</u></b>	<b><u>12/31/2021</u></b>	95,122.66
<b><u>INVESTMENT ACCOUNTS</u></b>	<b><u>12/31/2021</u></b>	
<b><u>BOND FUNDS (THRIVENT)</u></b>		
Money Market		63,991.68
House Fund(Thrivent)		16,082.47
LTD Thrivent Bond Fund		33,491.19
<b><u>MUTUAL FUNDS</u></b>		
Victory Funds(RS Large Cap Fund)		37,731.54
Invesco		56,482.06
<b>TOTAL VALUE OF INVESTMENTS</b>		<b>207,778.94</b>
<b><u>ASCENSION FUND-MISSION APPEAL</u></b>		<b>6,477.91</b>
<b><u>ASCENSION FUND-HAVEN RENT</u></b>		<b>6,441.53</b>
<b><u>ASCENSION ENDOWMENT FUND</u></b>		<b>33,085.89</b>
<b><u>MORTGAGE</u></b>		
Thrivent Financial for Lutherans		
Outstanding Principle:		<b>337,759.49</b>
Interest Rate (Fixed): 4.50%		
Maturity Date: 11/1/2034		

**SPECIAL NEED MONTHLY ENVELOPE 2021**

<b>January</b>	<b>Homeless Initiative</b>	<b>964.00</b>
<b>February</b>	<b>Good Shepherd Levittown</b>	<b>426.00</b>
<b>March</b>	<b>The Mercy Inn Soup Kitchen, Wyandanch</b>	<b>530.00</b>
<b>April</b>	<b>Trinity Lutheran Church, Wyandanch</b>	<b>649.00</b>
<b>May</b>	<b>Confirmation Camp Scholarships</b>	<b>450.00</b>
<b>June</b>	<b>Synodical Benevolence</b>	<b>462.00</b>
<b>July</b>	<b>Lutheran Counseling Center</b>	<b>430.00</b>
<b>August</b>	<b>LI Youth Mentoring</b>	<b>945.00</b>
<b>September</b>	<b>Haiti Relief</b>	<b>1,348.00</b>
<b>October</b>	<b>Gloria Dei Homeless Initiative</b>	<b>656.00</b>
<b>November</b>	<b>LUHI</b>	<b>550.00</b>
<b>December</b>	<b>Pastor's Fund</b>	<b>1,271.00</b>
<b>TOTAL SPECIAL NEED RECEIVED FOR 2021</b>		<b>8,681.00</b>

# Children, Youth and Family Ministries

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## Highlights for 2021:

- On June 6<sup>th</sup> 12 children received their First Communion after attending classes during the spring.
- We were able to provide Summer Sunday School during four times during the months of July and August.
- On October 31<sup>st</sup> 4 children received their Confirmation.
- 29 children were baptized during 2021.
- Sunday School Registration was done during the Rally Day Picnic and Sunday School has been provided during the 10:30 am service every Sunday.
- Nursery for children ages 6 months through 2 years old has been provided on most Sunday Mornings during the worship services.
- Confirmation Camp was held at Ascension in August with a modified schedule due to Covid.
- Hosted several family night activities.
- Day Camp was held for 4 weeks during the month of July.

# Finance Committee

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Well, this has been another difficult year as we all know. It has continued to be a challenge to manage Our Church's finances.

But Our Congregation really stepped up!

Our giving exceeding our budget and more people are now giving electronically, which helps our cash flow tremendously.

The Finance committee continued to meet on a monthly basis to review the financial condition of Ascension and discuss the best way to manage our resources.

There were different events this year that impacted our finances one way or another:

- We applied and were approved for a second PPP grant (\$80,702). This greatly helped our cash flow and kept us from needing to liquidate our investments to generate cash.
- We received forgiveness for the PPP money we received in 2020 and 2021.
- As mentioned above we have a number of members change to electronic giving.

Our committee members are Pastor Lathrop, Pastor Krahn, Pastor Hartford, Russ Bliss, Heidi Manzo, Cathy Borg, Pattie Komornik and myself.

Although not an "official" member of the committee our Business Administrator, Chrissy Brooks did all the research on PP grants and prepared all the applications for the grants and also the forgiveness.

Faithfully submitted,  
Rich Germann, Finance Chair and Treasurer



# Latino Ministry Committee

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## **2021 Report from MISION LATINA DE ASCENSION - SAWC**

### **Ascension Lutheran Church Latino Mission**

**By Rev. Evelyn P. Avila, Mission Developer of the ELCA**

#### **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.”

#### **How is Mision Latina de Ascension reflecting the diversity of the community?**

“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. During January to May 2021, we held all our gatherings online by ZOOM only with an attendance of about 30-35 and from May 2021 to December 2021 we gather in person with 60-65 people attending. We continue to provide ZOOM during our in-person services giving opportunity for people to gather from other parts of the United States and other Countries. We have many worshipers connecting from California, Florida, and Colorado, as well as Mexico, Guatemala, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, Peru and Spain during our prayer nights, special classes, and bible studies.

#### **How is Mision Latina de Ascension connecting to the community?**

Ascension Latino connected to the Latino-Hispanic community of Deer Park in 2021 by been present and offer a place of community in times of struggle and uncertainty during times of COVID19 and COVID variants. We continued offering on-line services in Spanish by ZOOM three times a week and on Sundays. We offered a variety of on-line ministry opportunities such as “assisting minister classes” and “new membership classes”. We conducted 10 different bible studies on Wednesday nights by ZOOM. We provided informative health forums in connection with Stonybrook Health Clinic entirely in Spanish. We continued to provide services such as fresh produce and non-perishable food from a food back located in the garage of the Mission Developer’s parsonage home in Freeport with distribution in three different counties. We organized “safe” fundraisings to provide financial aid to families in financial struggle due to unemployment.

#### **What growth edges are we facing?**

One of the most difficult challenges at the beginning of 2021 were to continue ministry online only. After many of our Latino members contracted Covid in the beginning of 2021, we decided to continue with on-line services only until May 2021. We waited until

the celebration of “Pentecost” to return in person, giving plenty of time for people to get fully vaccinated. By May 2021 50% of members were fully vaccinated.

### **How is the organic life of the ministry?**

We are experiencing a vibrant and live ministry despite the adjustments and changes in ministry due to Covid19. At Ascension Latino 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 area of the ministry.

### **Does Mision Latina de Ascension still have a viable ministry field?**

Statistics showed in the year 2021 that Latino population in Deer Park forecast a steady 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 for Latino families in Deer Park, and a religious organization that provides programing for families and children in the Spanish language.

### **What has Mision Latina de Ascension learned (especially during this pandemic)?**

Adaptability. We had to quickly adapt to changes due to the restrictions of the pandemic and continue our mission with the available resources. We learned to be flexible and teach others new ways to do ministry. Examples are: We mailed devotionals and bulletins to most members to continue our services online for most part of 2021. We celebrated Lent and Holy Week online using Zoom. The weeks before Holy Week we distributed bags to each Latino family of the Mission with items to celebrate each day of the Holy Week including Easter from the safety of their homes.

We held a new membership class on ZOOM and received 8 new members on Reformation Sunday.

We celebrated birthdays, anniversaries, and other important events of the community by ZOOM and using social media such as WhatsApp, and Facebook.

We adapted. We availed. We continued by the grace and love of God with an attendance between 35-45 members by ZOOM for the first semester of 2021 and about 65-70 for the in-person services held the second semester of 2021. Our last in-person service of December 2021, we celebrated a Christmas pageant and the youth choir performed in our Advent Posada. We had an attendance of 115 people. Unfortunately due to COVID19 positive cases we closed our in-person services for the last weeks of 2021 and continued online service only.

Trust God for real. Yes, we learned to close our eyes and trust God.

In our context as immigrants is not an easy thing to do. When someone lives as a foreigner in a strange land, as most members of Mision Latina de Ascension live, we tend to “not” trust others easily. We tend to count in our own abilities for survival. It is hard to make friends and open our hearts to others. But, during these times we learned to do the

opposite. We learned to open our hearts and talk about our weaknesses, our pain, and our losses. We learned that the Holy Spirit of God is present at the heart of those who suffer, in the same way, too, the Holy Spirit comes alongside and help us in our weakness. We realized that we don't know to pray for as we ought to; but that the same Spirit pleads on our behalf. (Romans 8:22-27) We learned to trust God's will and to trust each other in God's love.

### **How would we compare the current health of the ministry to last year?**

For Latino families, especially undocumented members, 2021 was a year of a lot of changes. Some members moved out of New York seeking better housing arrangements or job opportunities. Others went back to their countries in Latin America due to illnesses, and lack of good medical care in the United States. The pandemic showed more in detail the needs and weakness of the community and how the church can be there to provide love, understanding, support and accompaniment in the name of the triune God. (Micha 6:8)

### **How do we feel about our 2022 vision?**

We are extremely positive and hopeful for 2022. We are indeed grateful to Ascension Lutheran Church for their continuous commitment and support to "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.

### **Our mission:**

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 during times of Covid19, 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 all 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"***

# Personnel Committee

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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 various issues this year:

- 1). Led the process, along with Vicki Elfers, to replace our part time cleaning staff when Vinny, our part time weekday sexton resigned in September and Jerry Romero, our part time weekend cleaner resigned in December. Council approved the hiring of Leo Avila's cleaning company to replace these two cleaning positions.
- 2). Reviewed and updated the Staff Guidelines for 2021. Due to the challenges of taking time off during 2020, both Pastors were allowed to carry over two weeks and two Sundays of vacation time from 2021.
- 3). An updated paid sick leave/family leave coverage policy as it pertains to the NY State Laws and Mandates and COVID, was written up and given to all staff as an addendum to the regular Ascension Staff Guideline booklet.
- 4). By the end of January 2021, all main staff were reviewed and given written feedback for their work performance in 2020. All preschool staff reviews were completed in June 2021
- 5). Continued to oversee and be updated on the vacation/time off for all staff members.
- 6.) The committee oversaw the process to fill the vacancies of summer Camp Director and wedding sexton as well as the rehiring of Praise Band members and church nursery aide.
- 7). It also assisted with the formation of a task force that would help with the hiring process for our children and youth ministries when Natalie Romero resigned in October 2021.

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

Many thanks to all the members on the Personnel Committee who are:  
Jean Belcher, Pastor Hartford, Pastor Lathrop, Pastor Avila, Heidi Manzo, Pattie Komornik, Rich Germann, Lisa Perreira

# Preschool

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Due to the Covid pandemic we had to change many things during 2020 and we had to keep a lot of those policy changes in place for 2021. But our commitment to providing a safe and loving learning environment with hands-on experiences for the children never changed. Ascension Preschool will always be a caring place for all of God's children.

We continued to follow the guidelines put forth by the CDC and Department of Health. The changes that took place were: smaller class sizes, mask mandates for all staff, encouraging the children to wear masks, having the children use hand sanitizer prior to coming in the building, and having the parents stay outside the building for drop-off and pick-up. Although it was a lot of work to make these changes at first; the staff, parents and students have all adjusted very nicely.

At the start of the 2021 school year, Ascension Preschool had 92 students enrolled. We offer 2-year-old, 3-year-old, and 4-year-old classes as a half day program both in the morning and afternoon. I would like to thank Ascensions' talented group of teachers, aides, and supportive staff who help make the preschool successful. Our current staff members are: Kathy Fifield, Karen Fox, Dawn Scheid, Susan Quinn, Carol Marx, Terry DeBlasi, Sonja Milankovic, Katie Attard, Tina Pisano and Denise Walker.

Chapel looked a little different again this past year. Instead of the children going into the Chapel, Pastor Justin met with the children in the big church once a month to talk about different bible stories with them. The children enjoyed listening to the stories and they enjoyed saying the Lord's Prayer.

Our annual events looked different again, but I am excited to say that we were still able to provide fun experiences for the children. In September, we held our Meet & Greet for the parents to meet the teacher before school began. In October, we had our annual Harvest Day where the children picked pumpkins in our "pumpkin patch". In November, we could not have a school wide Thanksgiving Feast, but the children still had a feast in their classrooms. They also sang songs about being thankful and we posted them to our private Facebook page so that the parents could see. In December, instead of the Christmas Pageant, the children sang songs about the birth of Jesus and we posted that on our Facebook page as well. We also held Polar Express days where the children and teachers dressed in pajamas and they boarded our "magical" Polar Express Train. The teachers did an amazing job recreating the scenes from the story and movie, from singing the songs, providing hot chocolate and cookies, to handing out special Christmas bells to everyone. Our Polar Express Days were so much fun that it may become a new tradition, in addition to having our Christmas Pageant!

I would like to thank Pastor Justin, Pastor Flora, Pastor Patricia, the church and preschool staff for all their help throughout this past year. I am blessed to work with everyone at Ascension.

Thank you,  
AnneMarie Achatz  
Preschool Director

# Property Committee

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“For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in;” (Matthew 25:35)

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 with the continual help of the entire Church community. This responsibility consists of maintenance, repair and capital improvements.

## **2021 Property Committee Highlights**

- Repair frozen pipes during early winter 2021 preventing damage to pre-school plumbing
- Maintenance, start-up, winterizing of sprinkler systems (done by Eric Bertram)
- Temporary siding repair at parsonage – Full replacement required
- Replaced damaged outdoor lighting
- Replaced failing stove and dishwasher at parsonage
- Temporary repairs to Sanctuary Air Conditioners
- Coordinated snow removal throughout winter – completely done by volunteers – a savings of about \$500/inch of snow

## **Looking ahead to 2022**

- Initiate new volunteer process to allow for project based volunteerism.
- Continue coordination of snow removal volunteers – a potential savings in the \$1000's
- Continue replacing older lighting with LED where possible.
- New Exit signs to be installed (replacement bulbs no longer available for existing ones).
- Coordinate volunteers for spring and fall property cleanup.
- Replace/upgrade Thermostats at all properties.
- Plan for near-term replacement/upgrade of Sanctuary Air Conditioners
- 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, Church Staff and other volunteers for their support and help over the past year as chairperson of the property committee.

Committee Members: Jeff Ade, Debbie DeMarchis, Eric Bertram, James Griesmeyer, Rich Brown, Pastor Justin, Pastor Flora and Property Chairman John Scheid.

Respectfully Submitted  
John Scheid

# Social Ministry

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Once again, this year, Covid has restricted our contact with the public.

Our committee activities included the following:

- Year-round stocking and sorting of food pantry
- Distribution of holiday meals at Easter
- September collection and distribution of over 35 school backpacks to needy members, homeless shelter in Brentwood, Trinity Lutheran, Wyandanch and Helping Hands Mission in Huntington Station.
- Over 20 Thanksgiving and Christmas baskets to local people
- Collected 66 Shoeboxes for distribution through Samaritans Purse (A big thank you to Stephanie Holdcroft for making this happen)

There has been no Homeless Sheltering this past year due to Covid.

Submitted by Cathy Adee, Chair



# 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.*

In 2021, I am proud to say that our Stephen Ministers continued to meet and provide God's healing touch to people who were experiencing many different types of life struggles. With the easing of some restrictions some Stephen Ministers were able to meet in-person with their care receivers while others utilized their training in providing telecare over the phone. We continued our bi-monthly Peer Supervision via Zoom which has provided a valuable connection between Stephen Ministers and their Supervision Leaders.

As we look to the future, we plan on training a new class of Stephen Ministers sometime in 2022. We however will need to wait until in-person meetings are possible. The leaders have discussed how difficult the training would be on Zoom and so we await a time when 50 hours of contiguous training could be accomplished over a 5-month period.

In Christ,  
Vicki Elfers, Stephen Ministry Leader  
Don Hartford, Stephen Ministry Leader  
Pattie Komornik, Stephen Ministry Leader  
Pastor Justin, Stephen Ministry Leader  
Pastor Flora, Stephen Ministry Leader

# WELCA

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## OUR PURPOSE STATEMENT

*“As a community of women created in the image of God, called to discipleship in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to grow in faith, affirm our gifts, support one another in our callings, engage in ministry and action, and promote healing and wholeness in the church, the society, and the world.”*

The WELCA Circles of Ascension were still in COVID pause for 2021. However, there is light at the end of the tunnel. Bringing a community of women together strengthens each member, builds up their spiritual growth and helps raise the hopes and joys of each member.

To this end, the members of WELCA will gather in May for a Friendship Tea on Sunday afternoon, May 15<sup>th</sup>. All the women of Ascension are welcome to grab their favorite tea mug or cherished heirloom teacup set and join in an afternoon of storytelling and fellowship. Our community will celebrate the ability to come together to laugh, share and chat in person. What a celebration that will be.

# 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.

2021 began with us continuing in-person services and streaming simultaneously on both Facebook and YouTube. Our services are supported by a strong music ministry even during this trying time. Dave Johnson was able to keep most of our music ministries involved through remote recording. In the Fall, we began having some of our choirs perform in-person at the services, including the Praise Band, and having volunteers read the lessons. Through generous donations, we were able to purchase pouring chalices and offer tradition communion.

Even as the Covid-19 virus began to spike again, on Christmas Eve we were able to hold 4 in-person services which were all streamed live on the internet. The children’s choir, youth bell choir, youth string ensemble, praise choir and traditional choirs were all able to perform live, with the remainder of the choirs virtual.

We would like to thank the many volunteers that are involved in planning, preparation and leadership of our services each week, with special thanks to Derek Lundquist, Owen Yung, Don Hartford, Glenn and Charlotte Perreira, Eric and Lisa Faret, and Nick Georghiou for all the help with keeping live stream going.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Tresselt – Committee Chair

Committee Members:

Pastor Justin, Pastor Flora, Pastor Patty, David Johnson, Lisa Perreira, Heidi Manzo, Nick Georghiou & Russ Bliss

# PROPOSED BUDGET FOR 2021

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<u>EXPENSE</u>	<u>2022 PROPOSED BUDGET</u>
<b>PASTORAL MINISTRY</b>	
Defined Compensation	94,549.49
Payroll Taxes	5,000.00
Pension and Health	<u>49,495.92</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>149,045.41</b>
<b>ASSOCIATE PASTOR</b>	
Defined Compensation	46,528.99
<b>LATINO MINISTRY</b>	
Mission Developer	15,000.00
Expenses	300.00
Less Grant Funding	0.00
<b>NET TOTAL</b>	<u><b>15,300.00</b></u>
<b>TOTAL PASTORAL MINISTRY</b>	<b>210,874.40</b>

<u>EXPENSES</u>	<u>2022 PROPOSED BUDGET</u>
<b>WORSHIP</b>	
Director of Music Ministry Salary	35,505.78
Music Ministry	1,750.00
Latino Musician	7,200.00
Praise Band	0.00
Nursery Aide	1,680.44
Payroll Taxes	<u>2,700.00</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>48,836.22</b>
<b>ADMINISTRATION</b>	
Office Manager	30,662.61
Business Administrator	20,762.16
Maintenance Salary	6,800.00
Cleaning Service	30,940.00
Payroll Taxes	8,220.00

Payroll Service	4,270.00
Office Supplies	1,850.00
Copy Machines	4,704.00
Telephone/Internet	7,500.00
Postage	1,950.00
Miscellaneous	<u>2,000.00</u>
TOTAL	119,658.77

**EXPENSE**

**2022 PROPOSED BUDGET**

**PROGRAM**

Youth Director	16,666.67
Family Ministry Director	16,666.67
Payroll Taxes	2,500.00
Christian Education	2,500.00
Youth Ministry	1,500.00
Confirmation Ministries	2,000.00
Communications(IT)	1,000.00
Evangelism	600.00
Stewardship	1,100.00
Vanco Direct Deposit Fees	1,800.00
Special Events	200.00
Adult Ministry	600.00
Synod Assembly	<u>1,000.00</u>
TOTAL	48,133.34

**EXPENSE**

**2022 PROPOSED BUDGET**

**PROPERTY**

Fuel	6,000.00
Heating and A/C Maintenance Contracts	1,311.00
Gas	6,700.00
Electric	11,000.00
Sanitation	1,800.00
Grounds Contract	9,000.00
Snow Removal	0.00
Water	1,900.00
Janitorial Supplies	1,000.00
General Maintenance	8,000.00
Property Projects	8,000.00
Town Taxes	<u>0.00</u>
TOTAL	54,711.00

**OTHER EXPENSES**

Benevolence (Synod and other Outreach)	29,500.00
Insurance	28,000.00
Mortgage Expense	28,512.00
Repayment of Dedicated Funds	0.00
Lutheran Hi School	<u>0.00</u>
TOTAL	86,012.00

**PRE-SCHOOL**

Expenses	173,275.64
TOTAL	173,275.64

GRAND TOTAL	741,501.37
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**INCOME****2022 PROPOSED BUDGET**

PLEDGES	442,068.00
(Envelope Offerings, loose offerings and Sunday School)	
SPECIAL OFFERINGS	27,000.00
(Lent, Easter, Thanksgiving, Advent, Christmas)	
OTHER INCOME	45,000.00
(Rentals, Hall use, other donations) and Thrivent Choice dollars)	
PRE-SCHOOL Income	227,114.25
TOTAL PROJECTED INCOME	741,182.25
SURPLUS(DEFICIT)	(319.12)
% of Income to Expenses	-0.0004%

# BIOGRAPHIES FOR COUNCIL POSITIONS

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**John Wern:** John has been a member of Ascension for 20 years. Both of his children were confirmed at Ascension. John has been attending the Saturday morning Bible Study for 5 years and most recently started singing in the Adult Praise Choir. John is looking forward to serving the congregation of Ascension by being a part of Council.

# OFFICIAL BALLOT

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## Nominations to the Congregational Council 2022

The following persons are nominated to serve on the Congregational Council for 2022:

\_\_\_\_\_ John Wern (1<sup>st</sup> 2-year term)

\_\_\_\_\_ Cathy Adee (2<sup>nd</sup> 2-year term)

\_\_\_\_\_ John Scheid (3<sup>rd</sup> 2-year term)

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The following persons are nominated to serve a one-year term on the Congregational Council for 2022:

\_\_\_\_\_ Richard Germann (Treasurer)

\_\_\_\_\_ Madeline Sharrock (WELCA Representative)



# Deacons

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Recommendation: that **Susan Bliss'** call as a Synodical Deacon of Ascension Lutheran Church, Deer Park, N.Y. be extended for 2022

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 April 2, 2016

Responsibilities for ministry include the following:

1. Prayer Group/Healing Ministry: leading group twice monthly, healing services and educational activities on prayer.
2. Assisting on the Altar

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Recommendation: that **Vicki Elfers'** call as a Synodical Deacon of Ascension Lutheran Church, Deer Park, N.Y. be extended for 2022.

Vicki 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 since April 2, 2016.

Responsibilities for ministry include the following:

1. Serving as one of the leaders in Ascension's Stephen Ministry program and as a Stephen Minister.
2. Assisting on the Altar.

Responsibilities outside of Ascension:

1. Leading worship services at Lutheran Churches with pastoral vacancies.
2. A certified Spiritual Director

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Recommendation: that **Bob Snyder's** call as a Congregational Deacon of Ascension Lutheran Church, Deer Park, N.Y. be extended for 2021.

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

# 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:

**Erin Shanley**

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:

**Leonel Avila      Rich Brown      Chrissy Brooks      Vicki Elfers**  
**David Johnson      Mary Murphy**

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 2021:

**Pastor John Krahn**

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

**AnnMarie Achatz      Kathy Fifield      Karen Fox      Dawn Scheid**  
**Susan Quinn      Katie Attard      Meredith Colapietro      Theresa DeBlasi**  
**Carol Marx      Sonja Milankovic      Tina Pisano      Denise Walker**

4. Be it further resolved that we express our thanks to God for the many **volunteers** who serve Ascension. They make our congregation so vital.

5. 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.

6. Finally, be it resolved that we thank God for our pastors:  
**Pastor Justin, Pastor Flora and Pastor Patty.**