



# ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

February 5, 2023

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**SECRETARY'S REPORT ..... 4**

**SENIOR PASTOR'S REPORT ..... 8**

**ASSOCIATE PASTOR'S REPORT..... 10**

**MISSION DEVELOPER'S REPORT ..... 12**

**TREASURER'S REPORT ..... 14**

**CHILDREN AND FAMILY MINISTRIES ..... 17**

**FINANCE COMMITTEE..... 18**

**PERSONNEL COMMITTEE..... 19**

**PRESCHOOL ..... 20**

**PROPERTY COMMITTEE ..... 21**

**SOCIAL MINISTRY ..... 22**

**STEPHEN MINISTRY ..... 23**

**WELCA ..... 24**

**WORSHIP AND MUSIC COMMITTEE ..... 25**

**YOUTH COMMITTEE..... 26**

**PROPOSED BUDGET FOR 2023 ..... 27**

**BIOGRAPHIES FOR COUNCIL POSITIONS..... 30**

**OFFICIAL BALLOT..... 30**

**DEACONS ..... 32**

**BIOS OF SYNOD ASSEMBLY REPRESENTATIVES..... 33**

**SYNOD ASSEMBLY REPRESENTATIVES..... 35**

**RESOLUTIONS..... 36**

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# Secretary's Report

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Ascension Lutheran Church  
Annual Congregation Meeting  
February 6, 2022

Coffee hour was provided courtesy of Derek Lundquist and 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 Perreira, Church Council President, called the meeting to order at 12:03 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 Lisa)

These additional rules will be in effect for this meeting:

1. Our Parliamentarian is Russ Bliss. He will help us with any procedural questions for the meeting.
2. All confirmed members should have signed in on the attendance sheets located at each table and received two ballot forms for use during the meeting. Lisa 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 June 13, 2021 was presented.

A motion was made to accept the Secretary's Report by **Tom Tresselt** and seconded by **Madeline Sharrock**. 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, 2021. Please see attached, detailed finance reports and comments.

A motion was made by **Russ Bliss** to accept the 2021 Treasurer's Report. **Debbie DeMarchis** 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 Ministries – Natalie Romero (no longer with Ascension)

Christian Mothers Group – Janet Germann

Finance Committee – submitted by Rich Germann

Latino Ministry Committee – submitted by Pastor Patty

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

A few notes from the committee reports:

Many committees were able to meet on Zoom this year.

### **2022 Proposed Budget: Submitted by Rich Germann:**

Rich Germann reviewed the proposed budget for 2022 (detailed reports are attached). The budget is a balanced budget. Rich went through several of the line items included in the budget. The SYNOD recommended a cost of living increase of 3.7% which has been given to each of our employees. No praise band has been budgeted. All numbers have been factored in very conservatively. Hopefully more outside groups will return.

Questions that were asked regarding the budget: **No questions.**

A motion was made by **Owen Yung** to accept the treasurer's report. **Eric Bertram** seconded. Motion 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 – Chair of Evangelism

For a one year term:

Ana Rihani – Latino Ministry Representative

Madeline Sharrock – WELCA Representative

John Wern – Undecided Council Seat

Motion to extend the service term by One Year for the Council President, Lisa Perreira, Council Treasurer, Rich Germann and the Worship and Music Chair, Tom Tresselt.

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

**Old Business:**

**New Business:**

1. Parsonage Repair – A new Roof and Siding are necessary for the parsonage a 14 Mark Lane. Several estimates were provided and the cost is around \$40,000.

Motion to approve the repairs was made by Jeff Adee and seconded by Debbie DeMarchis. Motion was passed unanimously.

2. 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 **Russ Bliss** and seconded by **Eric Bertram** and passed unanimously.

3. 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 **Pastor O'Rourke** and seconded by **Pattie Komornik**. Motion was passed unanimously.

**Executive Committee Election Results:**

President: Lisa Perreira  
Vice President: Jean Belcher  
Secretary: Erica Barr

Respectfully submitted,  
Erica Barr  
Church Council Secretary

# Senior Pastor's Report

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Dear Friends in Christ,

After 2 full years of altered ministry due to pandemic, 2022 finally saw Ascension settling into it's "new normal." Some ministries were able to return exactly to their pre-pandemic form. Most, however, have found a whole new way to serve God in our community. Our pandemic ministry forced us to rethink every aspect of programming in our congregation. One silver lining has been that I feel we are now better situated to reach even more than ever before. I am so grateful for our group of forward-thinking pastors, staff and volunteers that have worked so hard to see challenges as growth opportunities. Below is a list of just some of the ministries here at Ascension.

- In-Person and Online Worship
- Bible Studies
- Devotions
- Music Ministry
- Pastoral Outreach
- Milestone Ministries (Baptism, Pizza w Pastor, 3<sup>rd</sup> Gr Bibles, 1<sup>st</sup> Comm, Conf)
- Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals
- PreK Chapel & Programs
- Family/ Intergenerational Activities (Bingo, Movie Night, Rally Day, Hispanic Heritage, Advent Festival)
- Sunday School, Confirmation
- Youth Activities
- Summer Camps (Day Camp, Confirmation Camp)
- Daily Devotions
- Stephen Ministry
- Adult Fellowships
- Eucharistic Ministry

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

## Staff Transition

We had quite a bit of staff transition in 2022, welcoming a new Business Manager, Children & Family Ministry Director, and Interim Youth Director. We have also welcomed an Interim Preschool Director while our beloved Director battles health concerns. In all, we have been so fortunate to have found incredible servants who are willing to go the extra mile to make ministry great!

## National Reputation

I am proud to share that Pastor Patty and I have recently been invited to speak to a group of pastoral leaders from across the nation. Our invitation was to share the story of Latinx ministry at Ascension in order to educate and inspire other communities who feel called to do the same. It turns out that Ascension's particular model of two cultural communities in partnered ministry is quite unique. Although this model has been attempted in many locations, ours is the only that has thrived. The cooperation and partnership we experience here is an inspiration to churches across our country. That is a direct testament



to the willingness of this congregation to live out our motto: Welcoming to ALL. Growing in Faith. Serving Together.

Thank You

Most know that this has been a particularly difficult year for me personally. I thank Pastors Flora and Patty, staff, council, committees, volunteers, and members for all your prayers and support. I feel God has placed me within a blessed community; full of love and compassion. I'm looking forward to the bright future God has planned for us in our ministry together!

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 this, the longest night of the year, the Winter Solstice, my mind races to the special Blue Christmas service this evening with its table aglow with candlelight. Sorrow, loss, and even despair is met in the love of the Christ child. In three days, at our Christmas Eve services, I will share with you again the mystery and the majesty of the birth of Jesus. Christmas is a time when we look to traditions and the past. And so, it seems hard to believe that it's already been nearly ten 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 Sunday. I'm engaged in many other pastoral activities, among them are making calls and visits to those who are homebound, in rehab, or hospitalized, and for the seventh 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 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 involved with the daily Bible Story Opening for our Summer Day Camp.

As a member of all our church committees, I regularly attended, often by Zoom approximately ten 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" eight years ago. Our pre-pandemic membership peaked to 40, but now averages approximately 25. Meeting weekly, we have had guest speakers from various companies, agencies, and institutions which inform, or parties celebrating the various holidays, such as The Chinese New Year with a catered Lunch, 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. We also planned such popular events as High Tea, A Hawaiian Luau, and a Mocktail Hour. We've had instruction in making seasonal crafts with our very own Janet Germann. 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 "Cabaret," "Matilda," and "The Wizard of Oz."

I also organized Ascension night at the Long Island Ducks Baseball game at the Bethpage Park in Central Islip in July. This coming year, I will again offer group tickets to the July 12<sup>th</sup> game against the Lancaster Barnstormers.

Another aspect of my adult ministry role was to offer Bible Studies. A group of about twenty women participated in a study of the Old Testament figure, Queen Esther this fall. On April 27<sup>th</sup>, I took a group of 35 by bus to Lancaster, PA to see The Sight and Sound Production of the Biblical figure, "David."

I was also involved with organizing and teaching an Adult Retreat in the spring (May) and again in the fall (November). The topics included a study on "Grace: More Than We Deserve, Greater Than We Imagine" and one on "Jesus: The God Who Knows Your Name."

As a Stephen Ministry Leader, I've pair up care givers (Stephen Ministers) with care receivers and checked on both through phone contact.

Eucharistic Ministry falls under my purview. Developed in 2020 due to the pandemic, eight dedicated individuals bring Communion to those unable to attend services in person. I contact volunteers and monitor the process.

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 share ministry with Pastor Justin, blessed to be here at Ascension among God’s people, and blessed by the challenges, hopes, and rewards that 2023 holds.

God’s Richest Blessings,  
Pastor Flora

# Mission Developer's Report

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Dear Friends in Christ,

I am so excited to report the good news of Mission Latina de Ascension during 2022. I have been working along with the steering committee members of Mision Latina de Ascension during 2022 towards making a conscientious evaluation of the congregation's current mission, vision, and ministries as they prayerfully prepare to enter a new phase of self-sustainability and vitality.

## **Pastoral duties:**

- Lead in-person Sunday Worship Services in Spanish also transmitted by Zoom. Attendance between 55 to 65 in person and 10-20 by Zoom every Sunday.
- Identified new leaders in the congregation and re-discover and renew identity, providing opportunities for a clearly review of the congregation's history, vision, and missional purpose.
- Guided and helped leaders to identify their own gifts for ministry enabling new shifts in leadership within the congregation.
- Maintaining online ministry and programing during the week using Zoom. Prayer group, Discipleship classes, and Bible Studies.
- Leading members into a healthy relationship with MNYS and the ELCA, and the resources available for ministry.
- Provided pastoral care to members according to their needs. Visited the sick in hospitals and at people's homes.
- I have called former members of the Mission who attended church prior Covid-19 and performed private pastoral counseling sessions for some members as needed.
- Attended the needs of the community in legal and immigrations issues having office hours on Thursdays, providing legal resources and referrals to immigration attorneys and organizations.
- Provided pastoral leadership and guidance during the steering committee monthly meetings, as well as other activities.
- I have actively participated in outreach activities and special services with the Mission and Ascension such as Three Kings Day during Epiphany, Day of friendship in February, Eggstravaganza during Lent, the 14 stations of the cross retreat during lent, Holy Week services, Mother's Day lunch, Pentecost Bilingual service, Father's Day lunch, Latino Adult Summer retreat, Summer Camp Alpha, Hispanic Heritage Celebration, Thanksgiving Feast, Advent Posadas and Advent Festival.

## **Mission and Vision:**

I'm extremely happy and proud to report that Mision Latina de Ascension has been consequential and intentionally serving this community as stated in our Mission Statement: *"Welcoming to ALL, growing in faith, serving together"*.

Mision Latina de Ascension actively participates and shares valuable information with the community in both English and Spanish languages on social media, such as their official Facebook page, You Tube channel, ZOOM, and WhatsApp chats.

Special thanks to ALL volunteers who faithfully seek for the life and growth of this ministry. In all, I am so grateful for the opportunity to serve as a Mission Developer at Ascension and feel so blessed to work alone with a group of amazingly dedicated disciples of Christ.

Every Sunday after worship service before the sending, the Latino congregation recites in unison the Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ as a reminder of what he has commanded us to do:

*“Therefore, go 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 I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” **Mathew 28:19-20***

In Christ love,  
Pastor Patty Avila

# TREASURER'S REPORT

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<u>REVENUE</u>	2022 ACTUAL	2022 BUDGET
Contributions	388,307.10	442,068.00
Special Offerings	22,294.50	27,000.00
Other Income	48,667.94	45,000.00
Pre-School Tution Income	246,242.62	227,114.25
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>705,512.16</b>	<b>741,182.25</b>

## EXPENSES

Pastoral Ministry	195,631.48	195,574.40
Latino Ministry	15,000.00	15,300.00
Worship	47,986.94	48,836.22
Administration	125,617.70	119,658.77
Program	32,207.57	48,133.34
Property	66,056.93	54,711.00
Benevolence (Synod)	28,964.96	29,500.00
Insurance	38,733.73	28,000.00
Lutheran High School	927.51	0.00
Pre-School	196,139.15	173,275.64
Debt Reduction	28,512.00	28,512.00
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>775,777.97</b>	<b>741,501.37</b>
<b>NET INCOME</b>	<b>(70,265.81)</b>	<b>(319.12)</b>

## DEDICATED FUND BALANCES

12/31/2022

Homeless Initiative	6,216.44
Latino Pastor's Fund	4,596.67
Latino Ministry Fund	3,464.93
Confirmation Camp	4,969.95
Tanzania Mission Fund	4,105.00
Ascension Day Camp	5,000.00
Seminary Fund	1,228.03
Flower Fund	2,140.46
Coffee Hour Fund	1,937.09

Mission Appeal		6,424.45
Remembrance		4,459.42
Hunger Outreach		6,326.08
Others		3,200.00
		54,068.52
<b><u>CASH ON HAND</u></b>	<b><u>12/31/2022</u></b>	<b>11,949.79</b>
<b><u>INVESTMENT ACCOUNTS</u></b>	<b><u>12/31/2022</u></b>	
<b><u>BOND FUNDS (THRIVENT)</u></b>		
Money Market		54,170.45
House Fund(Thrivent)		14,382.09
LTD Thrivent Bond Fund		32,004.39
<b><u>MUTUAL FUNDS</u></b>		
Victory Funds(RS Large Cap Fund)		31,227.02
Invesco		45,088.48
<b>TOTAL VALUE OF INVESTMENTS</b>		<b>176,872.43</b>
<b><u>ASCENSION FUND-MISSION APPEAL</u></b>		<b>6,555.13</b>
<b><u>ASCENSION ENDOWMENT FUND</u></b>		<b>33,480.07</b>
<b><u>MORTGAGE</u></b>		
Thrivent Financial for Lutherans		
Outstanding Principle:		320,000.60
Interest Rate (Fixed): 4.50%		
Maturity Date: 11/1/2034		

## SPECIAL NEED MONTHLY ENVELOPE 2022

<b>January</b>	<b>The Mercy Inn , Wyandanch</b>	<b>519.00</b>
<b>February</b>	<b>Trinity Lutheran Church, Wyandanch</b>	<b>518.00</b>
<b>March</b>	<b>Lutheran Disaster Response to Ukraine</b>	<b>2,241.00</b>
<b>April</b>	<b>Momma's House</b>	<b>388.00</b>
<b>May</b>	<b>LI Youth Mentoring</b>	<b>513.00</b>
<b>June</b>	<b>Confirmation Camp</b>	<b>514.00</b>
<b>July</b>	<b>Synodical Benevolence</b>	<b>535.00</b>
<b>August</b>	<b>Lutheran Counseling Center</b>	<b>775.00</b>
<b>September</b>	<b>National Youth Gathering</b>	<b>594.00</b>
<b>October</b>	<b>Ukranian Family Support</b>	<b>1,397.55</b>
<b>November</b>	<b>LUHI</b>	<b>502.00</b>
<b>December</b>	<b>Pastor's Fund</b>	<b><u>1,635.00</u></b>
<b>TOTAL SPECIAL NEED RECEIVED FOR 2022</b>		<b><u>10,131.55</u></b>



# Children and Family Ministries

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On March 15, 2022, Erin Shanley was hired part time to be the new Director of Children and Family ministry. Below are some of the highlights of the ministry this year.

\*Holy week: Resurrection egg hunt took place on Good Friday and Eggstravaganza was back on the Sat before Easter with excellent attendance.

\*In person, First Communion Classes started up again with a total of 13 students. First Holy Communion was celebrated on Sunday, June 5th.

\*Summer Sunday school ran through August 28th.

\*Sunday school registration opened up the last week of Aug. Sunday school flyers were distributed to preschool families. Also, mailed invites were sent out to Ascension families for our Sunday school meet and greet which was held on Saturday, September 16th. Follow up phone calls were made to families.

\*Sunday school 2022/2023 has 28 kids signed up and attending. Music has been brought back at the beginning of Sunday school time as well as the Sunday school offering.

\*Sunday school children's offering raised almost \$150 for TOYS for TOTS at Christmas. The Sunday school students will vote on the next worthy focus of their offering for the Spring.

\*Third grade Bible event was Sunday, October 9th. Prior to this, Erin and the Pastors each taught the Bible sessions to the students and the students were able to decorate their brand-new Bible "covers".

\*Parents Night out event was held Friday, October 21st. This event was a success with 15 kids in attendance. A number of our older youth group kids also helped with the event, which included pizza, games and a movie.

\*Advent Festival: Sunday, December 11. This family event was revived, and it included brunch, meet with Santa and a trip around the world to see how other cultures celebrate Christmas.

In 2022 we had 12 children brought into the congregation by baptism.

A tremendous thank you to all the Sunday school teachers and helpers who worked hard to keep Sunday school going during the first part of 2022 and who are currently teaching and helping with this very important and vital ministry. They are:

Alison Johnson  
Lois Leher  
Stephanie Holdcroft  
Nicole Abrams

# 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.

Income did not meet budgeted expectations and expenses also exceeded our anticipated budget lines, specifically in fuel, gas, water and insurance. In addition, we had major repairs needed on the roof and siding of our parsonage at a cost of \$55,000, of which \$44,000 was offset by the generosity of the congregation but still left us with over \$11,000 in parsonage repair costs in the budget.

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

Below are some items worth highlighting for 2022:

- We had much of our 2<sup>nd</sup> PP grant at the beginning of the year, which helped our cash a great deal.
- The Pre-school was back close to pre-covid enrollment and contributed net income of \$ 50,104
- Some outside groups returned so that helped the Other Income line in our budget after having almost no income received for the prior two year.
- We sent out monthly financial reports to the Congregation.

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

It has been my Great honor and privilege to serve as your Finance Chair and Treasurer for the past 27 years.

Faithfully submitted,  
Rich Germann, Finance Chair and Treasurer

# 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 for 2022:

- 1). Advertised, interviewed and hired individuals for the Youth Director Position, Office Manager, and Director of Children and Family Ministry.
- 2). Reviewed and updated the Staff Guidelines for 2022.
- 3). Updated the employment contracts for the two-part positions of Youth Director and Children and Family Ministry Director.
- 4). Coordinated with Parish Administrator, Vicki Elfers, to review and keep track of all full and part time staff vacation time in 2022.
- 5). Oversaw all staff reviews. By the end of July 2022, all main staff were reviewed and given written feedback for their work performance in 2022. All preschool staff reviews were completed in May 2022.
- 6.) The committee also oversaw the process to hire a summer Camp Director, wedding coordinator/sexton and interim Preschool Director (while the current director is out on disability).

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

Many thanks to all the members on the Personnel Committee for their time and insight while serving on this committee. It is very much appreciated. They are:

Pastor Justin Lathrop  
Pastor Flora Hartford  
Pastor Patty Avila  
Heidi Manzo  
Pattie Komornik  
Rich Germann  
Jean Belcher  
Erica Barr

Respectfully,  
Lisa Perreira  
Council Chairperson

# Preschool

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Our school year started back up normal prior to Covid restrictions. It felt great having everything normal again. 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.

At the start of the 2022 school year, Ascension Preschool had 94 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 Ascension's talented group of teachers, aides, and supportive staff who help make the preschool successful. Our current staff members are: Kathy Fifield, Kelly Levy, Meredith Colapietro, Jennie Weaver, Dawn Scheid, Susan Quinn, Carol Marx, Terry DeBlasi, Sonja Milankovic, Katie Attard, Tina Pisano, Tara Colucci and Denise Walker. We also had a few great subs in this year who helped tremendously especially during our time of need, Mrs. Jen Murray, Mrs. Suzanne Smith, and Mrs. Cathy Novack.

We also had Ms. Erin Shanley in as a temp for the 4-year-old program, until early December, Mrs. Karen Fox retired over summer. We hired Mrs. Jennie Weaver as our 4-year-old teacher for the remainder of this school year.

Instead of the children going into the Chapel, Pastor Justin, or Pastor Flora, 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 normal this year. 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 had our school wide Thanksgiving Feast, which went perfectly. The children sang songs about being thankful & we had our feast where each class made something different to eat and we all got to enjoy it. In December, we were so happy & excited to have the Christmas pageant. The social hall was decorated by each class, food and drinks were donated by our preschool families. 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 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.

~Tina Pisano ~

On behalf of AnneMarie Achatz-Preschool Director

# Property Committee

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“For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them;” (Matthew 18:20)

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.

## **2022 Property Committee Highlights**

- Parsonage roof and siding replacement (part of capital program)
- Installed Big Fan in Sanctuary to improve air flow and help reduce heating/cooling costs (Jeff Ade)
- Continued managing of outdoor water pipes to prevent winter freeze
- Maintenance, start-up, winterizing of sprinkler systems (done by Eric Bertram)
- Replaced some outdoor lighting
- Removed commercial stove in the Social Hall kitchen
- New Exit signs installed (replacement bulbs no longer available for existing ones)
- Coordinated snow removal throughout winter – completely done by volunteers – a savings of about \$500/inch of snow

## **Looking ahead to 2023**

- Continue coordination of snow removal volunteers – a potential savings in the \$1000's
- Continue replacing older lighting with LED where possible.
- Replace/upgrade Thermostats at all properties (part of capital program).
- Plan for near-term replacement/upgrade of Sanctuary Air Conditioners
- Develop volunteer process to allow for project based volunteerism

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

I would like to personally thank all of the committee members, Church Staff and all volunteers for their support and help over the past year.

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

Respectfully Submitted

John Scheid

# Social Ministry

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The committee is always open to having new volunteers join.

Main projects include keeping track of food pantry. Currently we give out between 4-6 food bags each week. Food and money for the pantry is donated by parishioners and collected in the narthex. On occasion we need to purchase foodstuff with money from our fund.

Each holiday (Easter, Thanksgiving and Christmas) people call in advance to request a Holiday meal bag. Easter and Thanksgiving we gave out approx 20 bags of food which included a gift card of \$20, or \$30 to purchase a turkey. This past Christmas the office received 25 requests for meals. Target Gift cards were included for children and Shoprite cards were included to buy turkeys or other meat.

In the past we have put together backpacks for school children, packed with supplies. This year I did not request any donations in September as we had bags left from previous years. In 2021 it was difficult to find local places to donate them. It seems many schools and other organizations are supplying school supplies. A decision will be made for Sept 2023 if need is found.

Trinity Wyandanch is no longer serving Saturday meals. Possibly only 1 Saturday a month. I will look into the new administration there to see what they intend to do in the future. If we return to doing “Pasta and the Word” we will need to recruit volunteers to staff it. Possible, the youth could help out?

BIHI Homeless Shelter is no longer operating since 2020 and COVID. I looked into HIHI (Huntington area) at Gloria Dei and found that they are no longer operating the homeless shelter. Family Service League is placing the homeless in motels within the area. The supplies for the shelter initiative included blankets, sheets and personal supplies kept in the closet or outdoor shed. The shed was cleaned and supplies were donated to PRONTO in N. Bayshore and Helping Hands Mission in Huntington Station.

Samaritan Purse donations were collected by Stephanie Holdcroft and the youth. We are open to suggestions for any local missions we can serve. Three local women’s shelters in Deer Park have been defunded this year and are no longer in existence as far as I know.

Submitted by; Catherine 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.*

Our Stephen Ministry program still continue to provide a listening ear to many in our congregation who are experiencing loss, change of life and various other life situations.

In the spring of 2022, we provided a class called Caring for Inactive Members: How to Make God's House a Home. In this course the participants leaned how to reach out in love to those members of our church who we hadn't seen in a while and how to prevent members from becoming inactive by making them feel listened to and heard.

Since most of our dedicated Stephen Ministers have gone well beyond their 2-year commitment we are trying to plan a new class in 2023. So far, we have 4 people interested in being trained as Stephen Ministers and we are looking to hold a class for at least 8 – 10 people. If you are interested in finding out what Stephen Ministry is all about, please contact one of the leaders listed below.

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.”*

2022 saw the return of in-person meetings for the women of WELCA. Approximately 20 women came together to enjoy fellowship after a 2-year COVID hiatus. The WELCA Circles of Ascension began to meet in person in May of 2022 with an Afternoon Tea. Bringing a community of women together strengthens each member, builds up their spiritual growth and helps raise the hopes and joys of each member.

There are currently 2 circles of WELCA women meeting:

Priscilla meets on the 1<sup>st</sup> Monday of the month

Lydia meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month

The WELCA Circles have resumed their support of the churchwide expression of **Women of the ELCA** through regular offerings. Whenever the Circles meet it is customary for those in attendance to make a free-will offering.

The WELCA circles join together to work on service projects as well. In the fall, both Circles collected baby items for the Lutheran Social Services New Mothers Layettes program. The volunteers of LSS assemble beautifully boxed layettes for new mothers who do not have anything to bring their babies home from the hospital with. This group of LSS volunteers work out of Grace Lutheran Church in Uniondale. Our WELCA Circles contributed 4 large bags of lovely baby items, some of which were handmade with love.

The WELCA Circles mourn the loss of Barbara Synder, a longtime friend and member of WELCA. We thank God for our many blessings and the gifts he has given us. As a reminder all women of Ascension Lutheran Church are welcome to join us as we continue to meet and celebrate every opportunity to join together to laugh, share fellowship and chat in person.

Respectfully submitted,  
Anita Quynn and Madeline Sharrock



# Worship and Music Committee

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

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

2022 began with us continuing in-person services and streaming simultaneously on both Facebook and YouTube. In the Fall, our choirs performing on a regular basis in-person at the services, including the Praise Choir/Band, and having volunteers read the lessons. We also started distributing communion at the communion rail at our 9am service and having ushers collect the offering. In addition, Mark Eisemann began recording background tracks for our Praise Service in order to enhance the music.

The children’s choir, bell choirs, string ensembles, praise choir, traditional choirs and brass ensemble were all able to perform live at our Christmas Eve Services.

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, Matthew and Michael Johnson, Peyton Barr and Nick Georghiou for all the help with keeping our 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 & John Wern

# Youth Committee

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The year 2022 saw lots of change and growth in our youth ministry. At the beginning of the year, we said goodbye to Natalie Romero and her family as they moved to Minnesota to begin another chapter in their lives. Natalie and her family are doing well, all settled in and enjoying their lives in Minnesota.

Francisco Avila took over as Youth Director in February 2022. Francisco jumped right in and began working with our youth and making connections. We had several youth events during that time such as a Game Night, bowling and our Summer Stretch program throughout July. Unfortunately, Francisco was not able to continue in the position and resigned in October 2022. Right now, Jean Belcher is the interim Youth Director for Ascension.

We held an “at home” Confirmation Camp this summer with about 20 youth attending. The group participated in a variety of activities including a canoe trip out of Nissequogue, rope obstacle course at Adventure Park, a night at the Beach and so much more. There was fellowship and fun and relationship building all week long. Many thanks to the Confirmation Camp director David Johnson for all his planning, music and hard work. Thanks to Pastor Justin for all his ministry during the week and a very special thank you to all the parent volunteers throughout the week who drove the kids places and supported our leaders any way they could! You are all very much appreciated!

In the fall, we had 18 youth who received their Confirmation. What a blessing! We also began weekly Confirmation classes for those students in 6th and 7th grade. Many thanks to Stephanie Holdcroft for teaching class each week! Our 8th graders are participating in a variety of volunteering activities including spending time at FREE working with clients on a Thanksgiving craft and helping to make some delicious cookie dough!

Breakfast Bunch has also returned for our 8-12 graders. They meet one Sunday a month for some breakfast, fellowship, and Bible study. Many thanks to Kelly Reno for overseeing this important ministry for our older youth.

Our youth has had the opportunity to have some fun by participating in the Spooky Walk in October, an Escape Room and Roller Skating in December. We have also had several volunteering opportunities for our youth and their families such as our White Post Farms Fundraiser, our Craft Fair Fundraiser and our Advent Festival. Many thanks to Janet Germann for organizing and overseeing the Craft Fair - what a tremendous amount of work and time and we really appreciate everything!

We can't thank everyone enough who has supported this ministry through a time of transition and change. We are looking forward to 2023 and lots of growth and fellowship for our Youth!

Respectfully submitted,  
Jean Belcher  
Interim Youth Director  
jeanbelcheralc@gmail.com

# Proposed Budget for 2023

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## EXPENSE

## 2023 PROPOSED BUDGET

### PASTORAL MINISTRY

Defined Compensation	97,385.93
Payroll Taxes	5,885.00
Pension and Health	50,000.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>153,270.93</b>

### ASSOCIATE PASTOR

Defined Compensation	47,924.91
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### LATINO MINISTRY

Mission Developer	15,000.00
Expenses	300.00
Less Grant Funding	0.00
<b>NET TOTAL</b>	<b>15,300.00</b>

<b>TOTAL PASTORAL MINISTRY</b>	<b>216,495.84</b>
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## EXPENSES

### WORSHIP

Director of Music Ministry Salary	36,571.02
Music Ministry	800.00
Latino Musician	7,200.00
Praise Band	0.00
Nursery Aide	1,000.00
Payroll Taxes	2,900.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>48,471.02</b>

### ADMINISTRATION

Office Manager	31,582.50
Business Administrator	20,762.16
Maintenance Salary	8,000.00
Cleaning Service	30,940.00
Payroll Taxes	10,000.00

**2023 PROPOSED BUDGET**

Payroll Service	3,600.00
Office Supplies	1,400.00
Copy Machines	5,500.00
Telephone/Internet	6,500.00
Postage	1,200.00
Miscellaneous	2,000.00
TOTAL	121,484.66

**EXPENSE**

**PROGRAM**

Youth Director	20,000.00
Family Ministry Director	15,000.00
Payroll Taxes	3,060.00
Christian Education	1,500.00
Youth Ministry	1,000.00
Confirmation Ministries	2,000.00
Communications(IT)	1,500.00
Evangelism	600.00
Stewardship	1,100.00
Vanco Direct Deposit Fees	2,800.00
Special Events	200.00
Adult Ministry	600.00
Synod Assembly	1,500.00
TOTAL	50,860.00

**EXPENSE**

**PROPERTY**

Fuel	10,000.00
Heating and A/C Maintenance Contracts	900.00
Gas	7,500.00
Electric	12,000.00
Sanitation	2,000.00
Grounds Contract	9,000.00
Snow Removal	0.00
Water	2,000.00
Janitorial Supplies	1,500.00
Equipment	500.00
General Maintenance	5,000.00
Property Projects	3,000.00
Town Taxes	0.00
TOTAL	53,400.00

<b>OTHER EXPENSES</b>	<b><u>2023 PROPOSED BUDGET</u></b>
Benevolence (Synod and other Outreach)	29,000.00
Insurance	32,500.00
Mortgage Expense	21,232.42
Lutheran Hi School	900.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>83,632.42</b>
 <b>PRE-SCHOOL</b>	
Expenses	200,000.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>200,000.00</b>
 <b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	 <b>774,343.94</b>
 <b>INCOME</b>	
<b>PLEDGES</b>	<b>400,000.00</b>
(Envelope Offerings, loose offerings and Sunday School)	
<b>SPECIAL OFFERINGS</b>	<b>25,000.00</b>
(Lent, Easter, Thanksgiving, Advent, Christmas)	
<b>OTHER INCOME</b>	<b>75,216.00</b>
(Rentals, Hall use, other donations) and Thrivent Choice dollars)	
 <b>PRE-SCHOOL Income</b>	 <b>260,000.00</b>
 <b>TOTAL PROJECTED INCOME</b>	 <b>760,216.00</b>
 <b>SURPLUS(DEFICIT)</b>	 <b>(14,127.94)</b>
% of Income to Expenses	<b>-0.0182%</b>

# BIOGRAPHIES FOR COUNCIL POSITIONS

## OFFICIAL BALLOT

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**My name is Madeline Sharrock.** I, along with my husband, Peter and son, Matthew, have been members of Ascension 2019. My faith journey began in Brooklyn where I was baptized at St. Jacobi Lutheran Church. My early faith journey took place in the congregations of Trinity, Wyandanch and St. Luke's, Farmingdale. I was a camper at Camp Ma-He-Tu, a Lutheran Girls' Camp in Bear Mountain, during the summers and grew up to be a counselor and currently serve on their Board of Directors as Vice President. I am a 1978 graduate of Long Island Lutheran High School. I met my husband through camp and we married and were active members in Our Saviour Lutheran in Mineola until we moved east to Central Islip to raise our family. We joined Christ Lutheran in Islip Terrace and were an active family within that faith community, so much so that I even served that congregation for 10 years as their Parish Coordinator. A shift in leadership and worship times caused our family to search for a new church home which became Ascension. Members of my extended family and my godmother called Ascension home and now I am an active participant in the ministries of Ascension as an Assistant Minister, Eucharistic Minister and Lay Reader for Sunday Services. I am also part of the Priscilla Circle of WELCA where I often lead programming at our monthly meetings and currently serve as the WELCA representative to the Church Council. Professionally, I am the Executive Director of Keep Islip Clean, a not-for-profit company that coordinates thousands of volunteers to clean up the streets, parks and shorelines within the Town of Islip, beautify the common areas within the town and continually provide education opportunities to educate the public on the benefits of recycling and caring for the environment. My free time is often spent knitting and hiking trails across Long Island. There is nothing like experiencing the handiwork of God when watching a beautiful sunrise or sunset on the shores of Long Island.

**Hi, my name is Lois Lehr** and I've been a member at Ascension for 10 years going on 11 years. I am married 13 years to my husband, Rich. We have two beautiful children, Wyatt and Layla. I have been a member of bell choir for the ten years and recently Sunday School teacher for grades 1 to 5. I was a member of Grace Lutheran in Malverne for 27 years where I was baptized and confirmed and taught Sunday School and assisted my sister in Youth ministries. A member of Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, Rocky Point for 11 years before coming to Ascension. While at Trinity, I taught 5th grade Sunday school and communion classes and assisted with first year confirmands and also married there. I attended and graduated Long Island Lutheran Jr/Sr High School from 7th grade to 12th grade.

**Kelly Reno:** I am originally from Minnesota and a lifelong Lutheran. I have been a member of Ascension Lutheran for about 10 years. My husband, Chris and I started attending shortly after moving to Deer Park. Ascension was recommended to us by our dear friend Paul Wenger who was the former principal at Long Island Lutheran High School. He described Ascension as a vibrant friendly church and encouraged us to attend. I am so very glad we did. Over the last 10 years I have been involved on church council, serve as a communion assistant, currently I am a member of the youth committee and enjoy singing in the Praise Choir. When I am not at church, I work as a school counselor at Locust Valley High School. I love my job and working with young people. I look forward to serving as the youth group chairperson while growing in faith and serving together.

## Nominations to the Congregational Council 2023

The following persons are nominated to serve on the Congregational Council for 2023:

\_\_\_\_\_ Madeline Sharrock (1<sup>st</sup> 2-year term)

\_\_\_\_\_ Lois Lehr (1<sup>st</sup> 2-year term)

\_\_\_\_\_ Kelly Reno (1<sup>st</sup> 2-year term)

\_\_\_\_\_ Erica Barr (2<sup>nd</sup> 2-year term)

\_\_\_\_\_ Stephanie Holdcroft (2<sup>nd</sup> 2-year term)

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The following persons are nominated to serve a one-year term on the Congregational Council for 2023:

\_\_\_\_\_ Janet Anderson (Treasurer)

\_\_\_\_\_ Ana Rihani (Latino Ministry Representative)

\_\_\_\_\_ (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 2023

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 2023.

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 churches when no Supply Pastor is available.
2. A certified Spiritual Director



# Bios of Synod Assembly Representatives

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Name: Janet Anderson

How long have you been a member?: I have been attending Ascension Lutheran Church for approximately five years and became a member last year.

What ministries have you been involved in?: I took part in the Caring for Inactive members' course in April 2021 and am currently a student in the Growing in Faith program. I regularly attend Bible Study.

Why would you like to attend the assembly?: I would like to attend the Synod Assembly in May because I am very interested in expanding my knowledge of the Lutheran Church and how it operates.

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Name: Susan Bliss

How long have you been a member?: I have been a member of Ascension for 20 years.

What ministries have you been involved in?: I have been involved with WELCA, Communion assistant, Assistant Minister, attended Diakonia and became a Synodical Deacon. I worked in Domestic Violence Awareness and lead a support group for the abused and am currently leading the Prayer Group of which I've been a member for many years.

Why would you like to attend the assembly?:

I would like to attend the Assembly to reconnect with our larger church and see where we stand today and how we play our part in our communities. Many things have changed in the world around us, and I want to see where we fit in that new dynamic.

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Name: Vicki Elfers

How long have you been a member?: 33 years

What ministries have you been involved in?: Currently I am a Synodical Deacon, a member of Altar Guild, a Communion Assistant, an Assisting Minister, and a Stephen Ministry Leader.

Why would you like to attend the assembly?: I have attended many Synod Assemblies both in person and on-line and I thoroughly enjoy being part of the process. I find the time at the assembly to be a valuable way to share ideas and to learn from other congregations.

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Name: Madeline Sharrock

How long have you been a member?: I, along with my husband, Peter and son, Matthew, have been members of Ascension 2019.

What ministries have you been involved in?: I am so blessed to call Ascension my church home and I am pleased to serve as an Assistant Minister, Eucharistic Minister and Lay Reader for Sunday Services. I am also part of the Priscilla Circle of WELCA where I often lead programming at our monthly meetings and currently serve as the WELCA representative to the Church Council.

Why would you like to attend the Synod assembly? The Metro Synod Assembly is a time to worship and gather with lay leaders and clergy throughout our Synod. It is a gathering that has inspired me, strengthened and enhanced my faith. Watching and experiencing the work of the Holy Spirit during this gathering energizes my own faith journey. I look forward to the opportunity to represent the congregation of Ascension at the 2023 Metro Synod Assembly.

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Name: Pattie Komornik

How long have you been a member?: Married at Ascension back in 1976 (46 years ago) Officially became a member 21 years ago.

What ministries have you been involved in?: Currently Member of Council committees - Personnel and Finance. Stephen Ministry Leader. In the past, President and Secretary of Council and committee chairperson for the Youth Committee.

Why would you like to attend the assembly? I have participated in several local Synod Assembly Meetings in the past. I have been a voting member as well as a non-voting member. I am interested to learn the plans that the Synod has for us in the future. The presentation of issues and reports from the various committees are fascinating to hear and to be part of the voting process allows me to have a small voice in the future.

# Synod Assembly Representatives

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

\_\_\_\_ Janet Anderson

\_\_\_\_ Susan Bliss

\_\_\_\_ Vicki Elfers

\_\_\_\_ Madeline Sharrock

\_\_\_\_ Pattie Komornik

\_\_\_\_ 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:

**Tom Tresselt      Lisa Perreira      Jean Belcher      Rich Germann**

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      Jessica DeCostanzo      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 2022:

**Pastor John Krahn**

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

**AnnMarie Achatz      Kathy Fifield      Dawn Scheid      Susan Quinn**  
**Jennie Weaver      Katie Attard      Tara Casucci      Meredith Colapietro**  
**Theresa DeBlasi      Kelly Levy      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.**