

# ANNUAL MEETING

February 21, 2021

## ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH ANNUAL REPORT

2020

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## Congregational Meeting

February 9th, 2020

Meeting called to order at 11:45am by Gus Hendrickson.

Opening Prayer by Pastor Julie Bailey

Motion made by Andy Friend and a second by Tracy Aldrich to approve the minutes of the Annual Meeting 02/17/19, motion carried.

Motion made by Dawn Dalton and second by Charleen Boland to approve the minutes of the Budget/Election Meeting 12/08/19. Kris Friend made a motion to amend and Pastor Baily second the grammar change to "an" in place of "and" on page 3: The council will appoint an additional synod representative and seek to find someone to fill the Vice President position.

Motion to receive the reports as submitted made by Andy Friend and second by Tom Bailey.

Motion to approve the constitution made by Marty Debozy and second by Kris Friend.

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:50am made by Andy Friend and seconded by Rusty VanMarter.

Dawn Earnesty

## **Vestry Election and Congregational Budget Meeting**

**December 13, 2020**

### **Zoom**

Present (40 members): Gus Hendrickson, Julie Bailey, Joyce & Kayla Berg, Dana McClure, Rita Hendrickson, Kris Friend, Andy Friend, Tom & Sue Bailey, Lisa Whelton, Waylon & Dawn Earnesty, Tracy Aldrich, Michael Clifford, Marie Stuart, Carol and John Schroeder, Melissa Albosta, Joscelyn Whelton, Lynda Goward, Ronald & Donna Fries, Barb and Dave Huston, Barb and Rusty VanMarter, Steve Salowitz, Ben Salowitz, Jennifer Salowitz, Bob Aldrich, Brittany Aldrich, Sara Gregor, Joan Ford, Connie Dutcher, Karen DeLaRosa, Kathy York, Charleen Boland, Tom & Lori Page

Meeting called to order at 11:05am.

Prayer – Rita Hendrickson

Melissa Albosta elected to vice president.

Connie Dutcher elected to Treasurer.

Karen DeLaRosa elected to Minister of Outreach.

Glen Mack elected VP of Congregational Care

Synod Delegates nominations and volunteers (adult female, adult male, youth) – appoint at council meeting

Budget Presentation:

Ron Fries has made a motion to reduce ELCA Mission Support and Rusty VanMarter has made a second to this motion. Ron has moved to withdraw the motion and second by Kris Friend. Motion carries.

Questions on back to school fair and Christian Education Coordinator

A motion was made by Kris Friend to approve the presented budget. A second was made by Sara Gregor. Motion carries.

Kris Friend made a motion to approve. Second by Tom Bailey. Meeting adjourned.

Dawn Earnesty

## ALC President's Annual Report 2020

***"You have to find a way to respect these new boundaries, but still live the version of life you're used to. That's what life is, regardless of circumstance."** - Caroline Wright*

2020 kicked off with great energy for our council. A mix of "rookies" (including myself as President) and "seasoned veteran" members met in January with high hopes of bringing exciting new ideas, additions and some changes to our Strategic Plan. We got to know each other and learn a thing or two about each other and then BAM...The COVID-19 Pandemic hit. I was not, nor were any members of council, trained for or even thought about anything like this. I want to express my gratitude to our council members, employees, ministry volunteers and members for creating, executing and continually managing the extremely fluid and difficult times of the pandemic. Zoom Council meetings (and the phone calls) amped up to bi-weekly and weekly at times as the data and science changed as well as the federal, state and local restrictions. Phone calls from a President to a Pastor. Phone calls from a rookie President to the Vice-President (and experienced past-President) were likely all-time highs for ALC and all churches of all faiths. Creative Zoom Sunday School classes kept our "little Lutherans" faith alive. Our times have changed. Our faith has not.

It is an honor be President of ALC this year in an unprecedented situation. It is an honor to sit amongst and work with the many people of ALC that calmly and boldly helped us navigate the rough waters. It is with pride and joy that I watched our church and members respond in such a positive and patient way. Tough decisions were made. Those decisions changed. Again. Again. And Again. FaceBook, YouTube and our Website were used to update our members as changes were made. On-Line worship, Drive-Thru Communion, Parking Lot worship and singing restrictions were introduced. Who would have ever thought of this in January? Our times have changed. Our faith has not.

As I look back on 2020, I am proud of everyone for not giving in to the pandemic as it relates to ALC and our ministries within the community. I am proud of the out-pouring of love and appreciation so many demonstrated through our Pastor Appreciation Drive-By. It was something I will never forget. I am grateful for the many years Cheryl served our church as Parish Administrator and grateful for Lisa stepping in and taking over. As I look back on 2020, I am grateful for our Trustee and Ministry committees and their continued commitment to making ALC shine bright in the hearts of our members the eyes of our community. I am grateful for Bob (and Jocelyn's) creative virtual teachings for our children. I am grateful for the unexpected and additional efforts given by Charleen, Judy and Dawn for keeping the council and congregation informed. I am grateful that we have the leadership and determination of Pastor Julie. She has truly been an inspiration and guiding light for us all. The changes if, how, and when affected us all, but none more than Pastor. Pastor Julie led us through the many ups and downs of 2020 and continues to shine bright in 2021 as we pray for a light at the end of the tunnel and a beginning of the new normal. Our times will change. Our faith will not.

In spite of the challenging year behind us, ALC had many highlights and positive points:

### **Spiritual Health:**

On-Line Service was born.

On-Line Sunday School was established.

Virtual Adult Bible Study was introduced.

Drive-thru Communion commenced.

Outdoor Worship began.

Restricted in-person worship was successful (and subsequently suspended)



**Congregational Care:**

Strategic Plan Workshop was created (suspended by COVID).

Church information process was expanded to social media.

Funeral Services and Baptisms suspended and later resumed with restrictions.

Fellowship Hall rentals suspended.

New Council Members installed.

**Financial Resources & Management:**

“Raise the Roof” campaign was successful and the project was completed!

Applied for and granted the Stimulus PPP Loan for select payroll and business expenses.

Parking lot striping and repairs completed.

Successful Pandemic Pop Can Drive.

Energy Star Compliant awarded ALC again.

Stewardship remained strong! (Thank you all!)

**Outreach:**

Back to School Fair continued. (in a different fashion)

Weekend Food Bag distribution continued.

ALC substantially contributes in local Flood Relief efforts.

Mission Support percentages continued increasing.

If I have left out any people or highlights, my apologies. Know that no act that demonstrates our faith, missions and ministries goes unnoticed or unappreciated.

I look forward to worshipping in-person, fellowship, continuing our mission and a new normal in the near future! Until then... Be Safe.... Be Kind.... Be Gracious. Our times have changed. Our faith has not.

May our faith shine,

Gus Hendrickson

#ascensionstrong

## **Pastor's Annual Report – 2020**

This past year, 2020, was a year that was filled with transition, challenge, learning, and adapting. I am so thankful for the people of Ascension for their commitment to being church with the limitations that were set upon us, and the adaptations that were necessary for the love and care of each other. There are things to be thankful for, so here are some thanks.

To the council: During the early months of the pandemic, our council met every other week to check in. We didn't know what to expect and so this check in helped us stay on track. They also kept encouraging and supporting each other in our work together. Not one of these people knew this would be how they would need to lead the congregation during this time, but they all stepped forward with their gifts. A special thanks to Kris Friend, Charleen Boland, Larry Nuechterlein and Kathy York for completing their terms as members of our council.

To the staff: Thanks to Jennifer Salowitz, who helped with preparing for worship and served as a sounding board for ideas and some help with the technical aspects needed as we moved to an online format for worship. Thanks to Bob Aldrich, for finding ways to teach Sunday School when we couldn't meet in person. Thanks to Nicki Crump who served as our nursery attendant until we could no longer provide this service. Thanks to Dawn Dalton and Ruth Schomaker who learned and maintained ways to clean and disinfect our space to keep us all safe. To Cheryl Huebner for her consistent administration during this time. We said good bye to Cheryl toward the end of the year and welcome Lisa Whelton as our Parish Administrator—she is a great asset to our congregation and leadership.

To the teams of our congregation: The trustees were busy with managing our building in the varied usage, the Worship Table as we managed changes in our worship and made some changes to our video opportunities, to the outreach teams who continued to serve the community with school bags and our back to school fair, and to so many people who continued to serve.

To the congregation: We are church together, in and out of our building. We continued to stay connected through technology and through old fashioned phone calls and cards. We prayed for each other, studied together, worshiped together, served together and gave together. One of the unknowns of our year was what would happen financially; and we stepped up and continued our ministries—we even raised the final monetary needs for the roof and had that replaced!

Spiritual Health: Spiritual Health was an ultimate concern during this time. We needed to explore ways in which to worship together when we couldn't be together in person. There was a steep learning curve in our, my knowledge and execution for worship, education, and youth. We have much more to learn, yet I think we did what we could do to provide an opportunity. Our Bible studies experienced some growth in our numbers participating. What we learned this year will likely continue to be helpful when we return to worship and learning in person.

Congregational Care: I thank Larry for being proactive in making connections with people in our congregation to others. When I would talk to people it wasn't uncommon for people to tell me who they had talked to from the congregation, we just checked in with each other. Some of our youth made cards for members and those were appreciated.

As pastor, this continues to be a priority, including how we grieve and celebrate life together.

Finance and Resources: I give a big “woo hoo” to our congregation in getting our roof replaced during this time, raising the funds and getting the work done. We have also not had any issues with having resources to continue our ministries in this time. I thank all who used our online giving options, made regular contributions and stepped up when it was needed. We have continued our commitment to First Fruits giving as a congregation in our support to the larger Church and continue to grow in our trust that God does provide to the faithful. We were awarded another Energy Star, thanks for the diligence of the Trustees and many others who keep creation and care of creation at the forefront.

We continue to manage our remaining mortgage and celebrate that we are now paying more in principle than interest when we make our payments! We made it a goal a few years ago to pay our mortgage off in fewer years, however building needs have needed to be replaced and took priority. I pray we can continue to pay down this mortgage and free our financial resources to broaden our ministry even more.

Outreach: During this year, outreach has continued to be a priority and we found ways to serve. We continue to provide weekend school bags, even for some schools who needed it during the time of virtual learning. We held our Back to School Fair, organized differently and with less participation, but some did receive necessary items to begin school. We worked with the Mustard Seed Shelter in providing a room in their new expansion. Many members of our congregation helped our community during the floods and storms, including sharing quilts made by the women of Ascension.

This has been a tough year, I would not want a repeat! 2021 begins with familiar limitations out of love and concern for each other. We have hope in what will happen in this year, as we continue to be the church God has called us to be in this community, in this time, and in this place. We are beginning the distribution of the vaccine to help prevent the costly effects of Covid 19, and as our community receives this vaccine we look forward to returning to in-person worship. I have no expectation that things will return to the way they were, it will never be like it was—I believe we will be better. Paul writes in Romans 5: “Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>2</sup>through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. <sup>3</sup>And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, <sup>4</sup>and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, <sup>5</sup>and hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.”

In this past year we have suffered, endured and produced an enduring and faithful character and we have not lost hope. Hope does not disappoint. It has not been easy and it won’t be easy. It may not be what we want, what we like, or the way it was before. But we will be the church, together, because of the promise and hope in the life, death and resurrection of the one in whom we confess and profess. We can and will do all things needed with Christ as our Lord.

*Pastor Julie Bailey*

## **2020 Treasurer's Report**

In May 2020, Ascension Lutheran Church received a \$27995 loan from the federal government under the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) in an effort to support operations during the Covid19 pandemic. 100% of the proceeds were used to pay payroll and related benefits. At this time, efforts are underway to have this loan forgiven under the PPP program.

It has been an honor to serve as the treasurer at Ascension for the last four years. I am particularly proud of this congregation's effort this past year to continue its financial support under particularly difficult circumstances. I am also extremely proud of the council and congregations decision to be deliberate in first fruits giving. Beginning in April 2017, the council voted to begin a commitment of giving 1% of weekly general fund donations to the synod mission support. This amount was increased by ½% each subsequent calendar quarter, except quarter 2 of 2020, with a goal of reaching 10% or tithing. Very literally, the first check that is written each week after the deposit is counted is the one to the synod. This is what God asks each of us-to return to him what he as first given us.

Thank you many times over to Joyce Berg, who filled in on the occasions that I was out of town or busy with my professional duties.

Thank you all again for the honor and to God be the glory!

Charleen Boland

Ascension Lutheran Church  
**Balance Sheet**  
As of December 31, 2020

	Dec 31, 20
<b>ASSETS</b>	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
MIF Building Savings	27,080.52
MIF Pastor Home Loan	8,642.98
The State Bank Building Fund	4,758.30
The State Bank General Fund	38,894.93
The State Bank Savings	
Altar Guild/Banners	942.36
Ascension Designated Youth	9,335.57
Christian Education	661.96
Church Life	880.17
Court Yard/Memorial Garden	93.44
Funeral Lunches	1,148.37
God's Work Our Hands	1,578.93
Library	406.50
Music Ministry	2,016.64
Outreach	9,804.12
Parking Lot Fund	7,264.28
Pastor's Discretionary Fund	2,600.00
Remaining funds	3,406.20
Sewing Group	1,290.40
Summer Program	1,763.38
Trustees	604.69
Undesignated Memorials	6,068.70
Women of Ascension	6,073.51
Youth	8,921.91
Total The State Bank Savings	64,861.13
The State Bank Scrip	565.56
Total Checking/Savings	144,803.42
Total Current Assets	144,803.42
Fixed Assets	
Church Building & Land (est)	812,103.20
Total Fixed Assets	812,103.20
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>956,906.62</b>
<b>LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	
Accounts Payable	130.42
Total Accounts Payable	130.42
Credit Cards	
The State Bank Visa	714.95
Total Credit Cards	714.95
Other Current Liabilities	
Payroll Liabilities	647.68
Total Other Current Liabilities	647.68
Total Current Liabilities	1,493.05
Long Term Liabilities	
MORTGAGE PAYABLE	482,749.99
Total Long Term Liabilities	482,749.99
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>484,243.04</b>

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**Ascension Lutheran Church**  
**Balance Sheet**  
As of December 31, 2020

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	Dec 31, 20
Equity	
Opening Balance Equity	122,047.22
Unrestricted Net Assets	274,240.38
Net Income	76,375.98
Total Equity	472,663.58
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	956,906.62

# Ascension Lutheran Church Profit & Loss Budget vs. Actual

January through December 2020

	Jan - Dec 20	Budget	\$ Over Budget
<b>Ordinary Income/Expense</b>			
<b>Income</b>			
<b>INCOME</b>			
Children's Sunday School	73.85	110.00	-36.15
Designated Benevolence	845.61		
Endowment Fund	2,158.89		
Fund Raising/Special Projects	5,232.25		
Initial Offering	206.00	250.00	-44.00
Interest	353.44	310.00	43.44
Interest Gundersen Loan	0.00	0.00	0.00
Lutheran Magazine Income	222.00	230.00	-8.00
Memorials	8,380.00		
Other Donations	1,575.00		
PPP	27,995.00		
Rent - Fellowship Hall/Pavilion	150.00	850.00	-700.00
Rent - Sign	500.00	500.00	0.00
Scrip Income	230.59	375.00	-144.41
Thrivent	859.00	426.00	433.00
Weekly - Building Fund	52,023.00	63,402.00	-11,379.00
Weekly Offerings - General Fund	180,964.35	193,600.00	-12,635.65
<b>Total INCOME</b>	<b>281,768.98</b>	<b>260,053.00</b>	<b>21,715.98</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>281,768.98</b>	<b>260,053.00</b>	<b>21,715.98</b>
<b>Gross Profit</b>	<b>281,768.98</b>	<b>260,053.00</b>	<b>21,715.98</b>
<b>Expense</b>			
<b>BENEVOLENCE</b>			
Designated Benevolence	2,878.11		
ELCA Mission Support	12,352.98	12,584.00	-231.02
Local Charities	200.00		
<b>Total BENEVOLENCE</b>	<b>15,431.09</b>	<b>12,584.00</b>	<b>2,847.09</b>
<b>CONFERENCE EXPENSES</b>			
Pastor Continuing Education	0.00	500.00	-500.00
Synod Assembly-Pastor	0.00	300.00	-300.00
Synod Assembly (lay delegates)	0.00	500.00	-500.00
Vestry Retreat	0.00	100.00	-100.00
<b>Total CONFERENCE EXPENSES</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>1,400.00</b>	<b>-1,400.00</b>
<b>ENDOWMENT GRANT</b>	<b>1,878.74</b>		
<b>GENERAL OPERATING EXPENSES</b>			
Financial Secretary	639.50	630.00	9.50
Kitchen Supplies	43.12	200.00	-156.88
Lutheran Magazine Expenses	0.00	300.00	-300.00
Miscellaneous	256.60	100.00	156.60
Office Supplies	4,516.64	6,540.00	-2,023.36
Postage	1,514.93	1,320.00	194.93
Tech/Website/Computer	1,836.13	3,965.00	-2,128.87
<b>Total GENERAL OPERATING EXPENSES</b>	<b>8,806.92</b>	<b>13,055.00</b>	<b>-4,248.08</b>
<b>MINISTRY OF CONGREGATIONAL CARE</b>			
Congregational Care	0.00	120.00	-120.00
<b>Funeral Dinners</b>			
Funeral Dinner Expense	93.97		
Funeral Dinner Reimbursement	-93.97		
<b>Total Funeral Dinners</b>	<b>0.00</b>		
Parish Nurse - Health Committee	189.39	380.00	-190.61
<b>Total MINISTRY OF CONGREGATIONAL CARE</b>	<b>189.39</b>	<b>500.00</b>	<b>-310.61</b>
<b>MINISTRY OF FINANCE &amp; RESOURCES</b>			
<b>Building Expenses</b>			
Building Insurance	4,844.00	4,900.00	-56.00
Maintenance - Trustees			
Roof	15,440.10		
Maintenance - Trustees - Other	2,785.71	4,780.00	-1,994.29
<b>Total Maintenance - Trustees</b>	<b>18,225.81</b>	<b>4,780.00</b>	<b>13,445.81</b>
Mortgage Interest	19,526.02	20,956.32	-1,430.30
Parking Lot	1,335.00	4,600.00	-3,265.00
Security	67.50	455.00	-387.50
Telephone and Internet Expense	2,188.94	1,800.00	388.94
Utilities	7,720.87	9,420.00	-1,699.13
Building Expenses - Other	-3,660.09		
<b>Total Building Expenses</b>	<b>50,248.05</b>	<b>46,911.32</b>	<b>3,336.73</b>
<b>VANCO fees</b>	<b>788.12</b>	<b>650.00</b>	<b>138.12</b>
<b>Total MINISTRY OF FINANCE &amp; RESOURCES</b>	<b>51,036.17</b>	<b>47,561.32</b>	<b>3,474.85</b>
<b>MINISTRY OF OUTREACH</b>			
Evangelism/Outreach Expenses	202.19	300.00	-97.81

# Ascension Lutheran Church Profit & Loss Budget vs. Actual

January through December 2020

	Jan - Dec 20	Budget	\$ Over Budget
God's Work Our Hands Expenses			
God's Work Our Hands Income	-3,660.00		
God's Work Our Hands Expenses - Other	6,167.97		
Total God's Work Our Hands Expenses	2,507.97		
Weekend/48 Hour Bags Expense			
Weekend/48 Hour Bags Income	-8,247.00		
Weekend/48 Hour Bags Expense - Other	6,444.52	700.00	5,744.52
Total Weekend/48 Hour Bags Expense	-1,802.48	700.00	-2,502.48
Total MINISTRY OF OUTREACH	907.68	1,000.00	-92.32
MINISTRY OF SPIRITUAL HEALTH			
Altar Guild Expenses			
Altar Guild Income	-656.50		
Altar Guild Expenses - Other	1,520.83	300.00	1,220.83
Total Altar Guild Expenses	864.33	300.00	564.33
Christian Education Expense			
Christian Education Income	-91.00		
Christian Education Expense - Other	1,258.26	1,715.00	-456.74
Total Christian Education Expense	1,167.26	1,715.00	-547.74
Confirmation Camp	0.00	700.00	-700.00
Summer Program Expenses	0.00	500.00	-500.00
Worship Planning and Music			
Worship & Planning Income	-1,000.00		
Worship Planning and Music - Other	3,512.00	3,755.00	-243.00
Total Worship Planning and Music	2,512.00	3,755.00	-1,243.00
Youth Designated Income	-51.30		
Youth Expenses	0.00	3,630.00	-3,630.00
Total MINISTRY OF SPIRITUAL HEALTH	4,492.29	10,600.00	-6,107.71
PAYROLL EXPENSES			
Christian Education Coordinator	2,344.71	7,000.00	-4,655.29
Custodial Services	2,961.12	8,600.00	-5,638.88
Membership Assimilation	0.00	0.00	0.00
Music Supply	75.00	450.00	-375.00
Musician/Choir Director	8,619.00	17,850.00	-9,231.00
Nursery	596.70	2,115.00	-1,518.30
Pastor Auto Reimbursement	212.22	1,300.00	-1,087.78
Pastor Housing	19,200.00	19,200.00	0.00
Pastor Pension - Benefits	25,224.46	23,300.28	1,924.18
Pastor Salary	52,344.96	52,345.00	-0.04
Pastor Supply	450.00	2,000.00	-1,550.00
Payroll Taxes	1,775.47	3,980.00	-2,204.53
Secretary	8,782.75	15,450.00	-6,667.25
Secretary Supply	64.33	830.00	-765.67
Youth Ministry Coordinator	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total PAYROLL EXPENSES	122,650.72	154,420.28	-31,769.56
Total Expense	205,393.00	241,120.60	-35,727.60
Net Ordinary Income	76,375.98	18,932.40	57,443.58
Net Income	76,375.98	18,932.40	57,443.58

mortgage principal (3641.98)  
parking lot (1600.00)  
National Gathering (750.00)  
37884.00

(34711.68)  
(15760.08)



# ENDOWMENT FUND ANNUAL REPORT

2020

During 2020 the Endowment Committee disbursed \$5158.89 which were as follows:

- (2) School Scholarships	\$1000.00
- Worship Software and Computer	\$1000.00
- Back to School Fair	\$1000.00
- Weekend Food Backpack Program	\$1000.00
- Eastside Soup Kitchen	\$ 158.89
- Pastor Discretionary Fund	\$1000.00

The following are the 2020 Endowment Fund financial activities with Tri-Star Trust Bank:

- Beginning Market Value January 1, 2020	\$ 181,959.46
- Dividends	\$ 3,958.21
- Other Receipts	\$ 178.51
- Sales/Maturities	\$ 162,764.78
- Disbursements	(\$ 5,337.40)
- Fees	(\$ 885.96)
- Purchases	(\$160,678.14)
- Unrealized Gains/Losses	\$ 17,236.30
- Ending Market Value December 31, 2020	\$ 199,195.76

Andy Friend

Endowment Fund Committee Chair

**ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
**FINANCIAL SECRETARY**  
**2020 ANNUAL REPORT**

We continue to use Breeze software to record individual/household financial envelope contributions to Ascension Lutheran Church. A chart listing fund comparisons for 2020 and 2019 appears below:

<b>FUND NAME</b>	<b>Total Amount Posted for 2020</b>	<b>Total Amount Posted for 2019</b>
<b>Sunday/midweek General Fund</b>	<b>\$175,466.05</b>	<b>\$183,454.00</b>
<b>Mortgage Fund</b>	<b>\$52,023.00</b>	<b>\$60,454.00</b>
<b>Special Envelopes</b>	<b>\$ 4,370.00</b>	<b>\$15,521.00</b>
<b>TOTAL FOR ALL FUNDS</b>	<b>\$231,859.05</b>	<b>\$259,532.00</b>

Contributions to the above funds by individuals/households are entered into the computer using the assigned envelopes. When using non-numbered envelopes, including a name and envelope number insures the funds donated will be credited to the proper accounts.

At the end of 2020, records indicate 217 current envelope assignments to church members with 71 showing no contributions to either the general fund or mortgage fund during the calendar year.

<b>Amount Contributed</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2019</b>
<b>\$0</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>\$1 - 500</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>\$501 - 1,000</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>\$1,001 - 2,000</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>\$2,001 - \$5,000</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>\$5,000 +</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>7</b>

As in the past, we plan to order envelopes for 2022 before March 31, 2021 to take advantage of early order discounts.

Respectfully submitted,

Judi Minster  
Financial Secretary

## Statistical Report for 2020

	<u>Baptized</u> (Total membership)	<u>Confirmed</u>
<b>Membership end of 2019</b>	<b>604</b>	<b>434</b>
Membership received in 2020		
By baptism: children	3	0
By baptism: adults	1	1
By affirmation of faith	2	2
By transfer	4	4
Total members received in 2020	10	7
Baptized youth confirmed in 2020		7
<b>Total baptized and confirmed</b>	<b>614</b>	<b>448</b>
Members removed in 2020		
By death	13	13
By transfer to ELCA churches	0	0
To other Lutheran churches	4	2
No record/statistical adjustment	0	0
Total members removed in 2020	17	15
<b>TOTAL MEMBERSHIP 12/31/2020</b>	<b>597</b>	<b>433</b>

Respectfully Submitted,

Lisa J. Whelton  
Parish Administrator

## Annual Report of the Christian Education Director

January 2020 - December 2020

Last January we kicked off the year with high hopes, we were cruising along with our new Sunday school format, I had a solid team taking over the Soccer Camp and Pastor and I began looking into new options for confirmation. However, as with everything, Friday March 13<sup>th</sup> and the COVID Pandemic pulled us to a screeching halt. It took a little tweaking and some use of technology but we were able to at the very least continue the weekly education of our Sunday School group, but that was about all we were able to keep running long term. I remain hopeful that 2021 we will begin to see a new normal and in-person learning on Sunday mornings will return and continue to thrive

### 2020 Ministries:

- ✚ **Sunday School** – With the onset of the Pandemic, Sunday school switched to weekly 30 minute zoom classes. These became a weekly checkup and social connection for our kids along with a guided scripture study through the key stories of our faith. I augmented the lessons with the occasional road trip to drop off supplies and treats to the students. The method may not be what we would like, but the results are, the children are hearing Gods word and I am sure that they will remember much of the content going forward.
  - I cannot thank Joscelyn Whelton enough. She has continued to join me in the Zoom class every week to lead the kids in song, sharing her gift and enthusiasm
  - We had a good teaching crew and I hope to reconnect them with the program as soon as we get a chance to be back in person
- ✚ **Confirmation** - This year we decided that all of our current students achieved the requirements we were asking of them and that we would confirm the entire class. We were on track for a great Celebration in May, until the Pandemic sidelined that worship service as well. It took Pastor and I a little time to come up with an idea that followed all our safety guidelines, but we were able to have a safe and socially distanced Confirmation Service in June. We confirmed 7 Young men and Women in a nice service and each was able to have their families present.
- ✚ **Confirmation Camp** Unfortunately camp was cancelled this year, I was disappointed because it is such a rejuvenating week, but fully understand the need to do so.
- ✚ **Celebrating Graduates** This too underwent a small change and became a virtual event. Although we were not able to meet in person, the video and service was an awesome way to celebrate and recognize their accomplishments.
- ✚ **Soccer Camp** Unfortunately the 5<sup>th</sup> annual Rise Up Soccer Camp had to be cancelled for this year because there was just no safe way to have all those kids and volunteers together. Hoping for a return of some type of Summer program in the future.
- ✚ **Future Vision and Goals:** This is usually where I share my ideas for the future, however, I am not sure what the future has in store for Ascension, myself or the education program. What I am 100% sure of is that God has a plan and I trust that he will guide us where He wants us to go. I will highlight some ideas running in my head
  - Summer Sunday Funday to continue social connections with our youth
  - Field trip to local park or nature area to discuss God's awesome creations
  - Guest speakers to share their faith journeys

Respectfully Submitted,

Bob Aldrich

**ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
**Ministry of Congregational Care**  
**Annual Report**  
**January 22, 2021**

The ministries that are under the umbrella of Congregational Care are listed below. Except for the Prayer Chain, each ministry found itself in at least a partially dormant status in 2020 as a result of our individual, local, state and national reaction to Covid-19. Ironically, our reduced ministry came at a time when members in various circumstances most needed fellowship and spiritual support, particularly the elderly. During the first half of 2020, contact was made with those deemed most in need during the shutdown. A few individuals (and groups) made regular contact with some thirty-plus individuals. That process, however, broke down during the summer and fall as the shutdown was eased. Maintaining contact and unity within the membership remains an issue at this time. On the positive side, Pastor Julie recently reported that in her contacting of several members, she frequently heard that others within the congregation had also reached out to them. **I ENCOURAGE ALL OF YOU TO PRAY FOR ALL MEMBERS OF THE CONGREGATION, AND IN DOING SO, WHEN SPECIFIC INDIVIDUALS REGULARLY COME TO MIND, INTENTIONALLY MAKE PHONE, EMAIL, OR VIRTUAL CONTACT WITH THOSE MEMBERS.**

I also ask you to support the new Minister of Congregational Care, Glen Mack, through prayer and personal involvement in one or more of these ministries.

Ministries of Congregational Care  
Eucharistic Ministers Funeral Dinner Team  
Hospital Callers Parish Health\*\*  
Prayer Chain Care Team  
Christmas Baskets

\*\*I would be remiss if I did not inform you that Sara Gregor has served as Ascension's Parish Nurse for many years but decided during 2020 that it is time for her to hand the baton to another in 2021. The Parish Nurse position and ministry was created with the support of Pastor Scott Sessler and the council shortly after Sara and Bill became members of the congregation and asked how they could best serve the congregation. Sara and members of the Parish Health Committee have served very well through the use of their time and talents. While it is premature to announce a formal vacancy or replacement at this time, it is certainly time to express our appreciation for the services this ministry has provided over the years. **THANK YOU FOR YOUR FAITHFUL LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE SARA!!**

What will we reap in 2021?

What we plant and nurture in 2021 will be reaped later. In 2021 we will reap more of what we have sown in previous days, even decades. What have we been planting and what, therefore, should we expect to reap in 2021?

All of us spent a lot of time and energy last year following Covid-19 and trying to reasonably minimize our exposure to it. The airways were filled with Covid related data with emphasis on the number of new cases, the number hospitalized, and the number of dead. States were forced to determine how to address Covid-19, with many states deciding to fully or significantly shut down the public square. Planting was minimal in 2020.

Since the early part of the year, we've added masks to our wardrobe, hand sanitizer to our shopping list, kept our eye on the toilet paper rack, followed the development and initial distribution of the Covid vaccine, and watched President Trump campaign openly without a mask while Joe Biden ran for President wearing a mask and from his basement. This was followed with a contentious election in which we heard of written statements, testimonies and legal challenges regarding election fraud, and at the same time, outright denial of any election fraud, and then perhaps some election fraud but not of any significance. We reaped distasteful and disheartening produce.



The list of other conflicts and difficulties seems endless and growing. At the time this paragraph is being written (January 8, 2021), we are all reflecting on the news of our nation's capital being accessed by force and by its own citizens. This, after consecutive months of protests and property destruction in several of our cities. Each of the major political parties have their opposite, and end-of-the spectrum, stances on seemingly every major issue. In this environment, nobody can be right if everybody is wrong. We sense, and we fear, for our country. What will these plantings produce?

I seriously wonder if it is possible our country is living a parallel experience with Israel prior to its exile to Babylon? Israel was repeatedly warned through the prophets but the nation would not turn back to God and his instruction. While it is hard to look honestly at yourself in the mirror, Israel's failure to give critical self analysis with respect to their obedience to God's Word prevented them from seeing the need to repent and ask for forgiveness. On the other hand, maybe they knew but dared not look. Regardless, after years of warning Israel became a defeated and broken nation, with a remnant taken into exile for 70 years.

By now you must be wondering what this writing has to do with Ascension and the church at large. My response is, "Everything." During this pandemic, churches throughout the country have physically closed the doors to worship while abortion clinics, liquor stores and casinos remained open or were allowed to reopen. While we hope online services will suffice, we are wondering what the long term impact will be if they continue for another extended period. I am wondering if the need to replace in-person worship with online services is more than a mere reaction to a problem, but whether the problem itself is yet another warning that we are being called to look honestly at God's word and see our shortcomings, repent and turn back to a narrower road. Believers in Christ desire, and need, to worship with other believers; yet, here we are with limited capacity to do so. Coincidence or another form of reaping?

Repent? Turn back from what? Does God not have reason to be dissatisfied with "the holy catholic (Christian) church" for its luke-warm approach to witness, and its growing tolerance and acceptance of behaviors and "rights" that were once taught and understood as direct disobedience to his word? Hasn't our culture, and in some cases, the church moved further and further from God's word, selectively choosing the parts it likes, ignoring the parts deemed no longer relevant, or tweaking the meaning of scripture to suit its own desires?

Is it possible, if not probable, that God has elected to remove his hand of protection from this nation until it returns to Him through repentance, and that until then, we will continue reaping the results of "the church" not being "the church?" In other words, has the salt lost its saltiness as Jesus referenced in Matthew 5:13? And if *our* natural, sinful nature is to live in darkness because "*our* deeds are evil" (John 3: 19-20), should we be surprised at the current state of *our* nation while it continues to drift under the influence of humanism, where man places himself at the center of attention? Democrat vs Republican, liberal vs conservative - these are symptoms; they are not the disease that needs to be addressed.

I suspect that among the next rounds of disintegration, there will be increasing attempts to silence the church and redirect our focus on issues such as climate change (formerly known as global warming), racism, or some other form of phobia. I suggest to you that it is time to reflect on what we are doing as a congregation. Is it not true that a church that stands still is really a church that is falling behind? We need to get back to the basics and do our homework, me included. Worship, pray, baptize, teach (learn, study), fellowship, and be light and salt to those around us.

For those of you who think I have gone over the edge, sometimes I feel that I have. Still, I ask that in addition to reading at least the first few chapters of Romans, read one or more of three books by Jonathan Cahn, a Messianic Jew: *The Harbinger*, *The Harbinger II*, and *The Oracle*. I believe there is evidence here that indicates we have been warned many times over the years and we have not heeded those warnings. Please read, take notes and let me know where I have been misled. At least then we can better dialogue to determine whether we should remain closed for worship and assess how Ascension can best be salt and light in this bland and dark time.

Respectfully submitted,  
Larry Nuechterlein  
Past Minister of Congregational Care

**MINISTER OF FINANCE AND RESOURCES  
ANNUAL REPORT  
2020**

The responsibility of the Minister of Finance and Resources is to monitor and encourage committees concerning our time, talents, and treasures for sustainability of our church and mission.

This year we were able to replace the roof on the class room, fellowship hall, gathering area, library and Portico. It was a committee effort to secure the funds, request bids, review them and monitor the installation and necessary repairs to complete the project. A big THANK YOU to all who donated to the "Raise the Roof" fund and worked to get the project completed.

Due to Covid-19 putting a strain on our finances, all spending was closely monitored and with our grateful members continuing with their giving, we were able to pay all our bills and maintain the church. Another big THANK YOU to those that use VANCO that gave us a steady income and to the many members that mailed or dropped off their giving envelopes. The trustees kept a close eye on our church property and buildings and with the help of dedicated volunteers; they were able to maintain all the necessary upkeep.

When the church services had to be stopped, the thermostats were set at a lower temperature for summer and winter which lowered our utility consumption giving us a lower monthly bill. The commitment of converting to LED light fixtures also reduced our electrical usage by over 50% in the last couple years. The technical committee also cut some spending cost for computer replacements and sound booth equipment by having our existing equipment internally upgraded to allow for new programs and a more efficient system.

The parking lot will only be plowed when we have a snow event that warrants the snow removal so it doesn't accumulate and become ice. The dumpster service has been temporarily stopped during this time.

A second administrator has been added to the Vanco giving account for anyone who may have a problem with their account. This should help with any communication with Vanco to solve your problem.

When you come into the Church, please give a warm smile and welcome to Lisa Whelton our new Administrative Assistant (secretary). It take a lot of work by many members to keep our church organized and working so we have a wonderful place to worship.

Yours in Christ  
Mike Clifford

**Outreach Ministry**  
**Annual Report 2020**

Our Outreach ministry has carried on with the ups and downs and uncertainty that 2020 brought to us. We have been able to continue our ministry to serve the members of our congregation and neighboring communities. It has been exciting to see how people came together to take over when others were unable to in order to help our programs carry on. We are looking for 2021 to be better. We will also be looking for new ways to serve in the new year.

Our **school backpack food program** has continued to grow. With this said, it has been an everchanging distribution due to school closings and reopenings due to COVID. We continue to provide weekly backpacks of non-perishable food items to help end hunger in local elementary age school children. We provide a weekly backpack filled with non-perishable food items to each child identified by the schools as not having access to regular meals on the weekends. Each pack includes 2 entrees each for breakfast, lunch and dinner along with healthy snacks and milk/juice. We currently support 50+ children in the St. Charles and Swan Valley school districts on a weekly basis. We have sustained this program thus far with grants from the Fordney Club, Bertha Wilson, ELCA and the Ascension and Grace Endowment funds. In addition, we receive contributions both financial and of food items from members of the congregation and community at large. We are hoping to build a more secure level of funds in the future in order to keep this program going. To date we have given out over 5,800 bags.

Outreach also supports the **Back to School program**, the **Food Pantry** and other programs that are ongoing. We are excited to see where 2021 brings us.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy York, Outreach Minister



## Spiritual Health

### 2020 Annual Report

The year began with the Council planning to review and update our goals. Before this could happen we were given a new challenge, how to worship together during a pandemic that required social distancing.

Pastor reminded us that WE are the church, not the building, but us, all the people who worship together. The goal was to continue providing worship and education opportunities while following the needed restrictions imposed by the Corona virus.

We were able to worship together for a time using masks and making changes such as using no paper, no singing, no social gathering, increased sanitizing and no use of the fellowship hall. Soon the Bishop recommended that there be no in person worship. Using online worship became a way to continue. During the Summer we used drive-in worship with either sitting in your car or bringing lawn chairs, wearing masks and distancing. For a time we were able to return to the building by marking off areas to provide distancing and having people sign up for services. During these times it was possible to offer communion. But there was a surge in the virus and again it was necessary to end any in-person worship. The use of the internet allowed us to continue with online services.

To accomplish this Pastor gives the regular 8:00 service and it is recorded and made available on face book and You Tube for viewing. During the Advent season special Wednesday services were recorded . A very special Christmas Eve service was presented featuring the performances and musical talents of several members.

Arrangements for providing Communion continue to be made available.

Sunday school for the kids was continued with some inventive and fun interactive projects via the internet. The use of zoom allowed us to continue council meetings and the Tuesday Bible Study. The Monday evening study was brought back.

Many of our members worked to make these difficult transitions possible. The recording, the music, the planning, the care of the building, the altar guild, the office staff and especially, Pastor Julie. So many work to provide services that are part of worship and education and the need for volunteers is always a part of our mission. We have teachers, ushers, readers, sound board and video operators, prayer readers, the ABI program, youth programs, the altar guild and so much more. We welcome help in all these areas and thank those who were so generous with their time and talents through this year.

Yes, we missed pot luck lunches and coffee hour. We missed handshakes, hugs and children in the halls. We missed each other singing together and praying together. But we continued to worship together in new ways because WE ARE THE CHURCH.

As we end the year we remember those who left us due to the virus. We pray for their families.

Respectfully,  
Lynda Goward

## Ascension Lutheran Church

### Trustee's Annual Report

2020

The trustees are the caretakers of the Church and all church property.

WE:

Oversee the maintenance to all of the Church buildings and property.

Additions or modifications must be reviewed and approved by the Trustee committee.

Are responsible for the various usages of the Church and the policies for such usages and rentals.

Annually review our insurance protection and possible liabilities.

Monitor and review our utilities and the cost of each of these for possible cost savings.

This is a brief list of what the trustees do on an annual basis to maintain the Church property.

WE:

Monitor and maintain all lighting.

Conduct and supervise an annual spring cleanup.

Repair any plumbing problems or leaks that occur.

Fix door seals and locks.

Strip and wax all tiled floors. Fellowship Hall and kitchen floors as needed.

Maintain/change the furnace filters and smoke alarm batteries.

Schedule and maintain grass cutting, shrubbery and tree trimming and weed control.

**Note:** Gasoline of the lawnmowers cost over \$ 200.00 for the 2020 mowing season.

Maintain the lawn mowers and all other indoor and outdoor equipment.

Schedule inspections of the fire extinguishers and the facility with the Thomas Twp. Fire Dept.

Perform all minor building repairs, and arrange for any major repairs.

Have all Church carpeting cleaned as needed.

Schedule work days as needed.

Work with the Church council and committees to assist with their facility needs, i.e. set up Fellowship Hall for funeral dinners, classes, special events. Place and remove the sign trailer as requested.

The trustees had some special projects in 2020.

WE:

Organized set-up and tear-down of the "Back to School Fair".

The impact of LED lighting shows savings on electricity of \$ 8,988.30 over last 41 month period.

Planted and harvested garden watermelons for Hidden Harvest.

Insurance claim was received for the damage to library roof and interior drywall and ceiling.

Scheduled and overseen the shingling over of the existing roof of the fellowship hall, portico, gathering area and education wing roof.

Analyzed the problem with the piers, for the pavilion roof heaving each year due to frost.

Scheduled and overseen the installation of eave troughs on the pavilion.

Getting estimates for removing existing damaged asphalt in front of dumpster and replace with concrete.

Windows and trim were wrapped with aluminum coil and caulked on east side of building.

ENERGY STAR certification was approved for 2020.

Various other smaller projects were also completed.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Bailey, Chairman

Ron Fries, Secretary

## Parish Nurse/Parish Health Committee Report - 2020

***“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind...and love your neighbor as yourself.” Luke 10:27***

Ascension Lutheran Church's Congregational Council approved the role of Parish Nurse in 2006 with Sara Gregor assuming the position. A Parish Health Committee was established. Those willing to serve were from varied health care backgrounds, including nurses, doctors, physical and occupational therapists, psychologists, nutritionists, etc. We praise God for blessing the ministry.

This year, 2020, has been difficult and challenging due to COVID-19. I thank Pastor Julie, Council and the congregation for their continued support. Sincerest thanks to members of the Parish Health Committee: Sharon Boyd, Traci Collier, Jennifer Deaton, Joan Ford, Kris Friend, Steve Haupt and Marie Stuart for their faithful service. During the year, resignations of Jennifer (2/2020) and Traci (8/2020) were accepted.

**Parish Health Committee Activities:** (Covid-19 pandemic restrictions limited many activities.)

- Blood Pressure screenings only in February-March: 13
- Monthly Messenger articles were submitted. Thanks, Marie.
- Continued shut-in card ministry: 10-12 every other month. Thank you, Joan.
- A “Stop Covid-19” handout was created and given to families attending the drive-through Back to School Fair
- First Aid kits and AED were routinely checked, thanks to Traci and Kris

In August, Sara shared with the Parish Health Committee, Pastor Julie and Larry Nuechterlein that she would not be renewing her RN license and officially would no longer be able to serve as Parish Nurse. Pastor Julie, Larry, (Congregational Care) and Sara will look for an RN in the congregation willing to serve in this role and ministry.

**Who is my neighbor?** As we think of the recent election and this great country, “...don't be surprised if another voice whispers reminders of His advice, as Lord of heaven and earth, to disciples like me and you:

- Blessed are the poor (Luke 6:20)
- Love your enemies (Matt 5:44)
- You cannot serve God and wealth (Matt. 6:24)
- I was a stranger and you welcomed me (Matt. 25:35)”

By Frank Honeycutt, Living Lutheran, November 2020

Sara Gregor, MSN, RN Parish Nurse, Parish Health Committee 1/22/2021

## **Altar Guild 2020 Annual Report**

Altar Guild is responsible for cleaning and maintaining the altar (chancel) area. They dust, vacuum, clean and change the altar linens. They maintain the banners and change them regularly to match service themes. They are responsible for preparing communion and cleaning up after the services. They maintain the candles and order candle supplies. In addition, they order the supplies for communion, baptisms and various other worship items. They are responsible for Sanctuary decorations for various church holidays. A flower chart is provided and payment letters are sent to those who sign up for flowers. They flowers are purchased from Faber's Greenhouse.

Any confirmed member is invited to join the Altar Guild. It is a satisfying and rewarding way to serve the Lord.

Respectfully submitted,

Ruth Schomaker  
Altar Guild