



Ascension In Action

Ascension Lutheran Church

February 2018

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Purpose Mapping: Discerning the Why

Kristin Wiersma drew three concentric circles on the white board. Kristin, the consultant guiding Ascension in long-term discernment, was visiting our council meeting. She wrote *why* in the inner circle, *how* in the middle circle, and *what* in the outer circle. Then she asked us to start listing what we do as a congregation. Words started flying. “Worship.” “Knitting.” “Serve the homeless.” “Youth ministries.” Etc. With each *what*, Kristin put a mark in the outer circle. Next, she asked us how we do these things. Voices erupted again. “Lay leaders.” “Staff.” “Partner congregations.” Kristin put marks in the *how* circle. Finally, she asked “Why do you do all of this?” The room sat silent for a bit and the inner *why* circle was left blank.

Ascension is a healthy, thoughtful, caring, and active congregation. We do good work; we hear, sing, and taste the gospel on Sundays; and we genuinely care for one another. But, as our many *whats* have developed over the years, and as our *hows* have been fine-tuned, it can be hard to remember and explain *why* we do what we do.

Enter Kristin Wiersma from the Joshua Group. Kristin is leading Ascension in “Purpose Mapping.” This is going to be a pretty extensive process and it begins with a lot of listening. Later this month, Kristin will lead listening sessions with over 70 members of Ascension in individual 30-minute sessions. Next month, we’ll get added insights from current and past leaders of Ascension. After Easter we’ll invite community leaders into Ascension to tell us about Colorado Springs. The goal of all this listening is to understand the hopes, fears, passions,



and opportunities of many in and beyond our congregation.

And then we’ll take the wisdom of all of this collective listening and wrestle with it for a while. Try to tease out a real sense of who we are and *why* we do what we do. We’ll map our purpose. (From there, it’s on to more concrete plans and the like, but let’s not get ahead of ourselves.)

Why am I telling you all this? Well, of course, this is your congregation and you deserve to know. But, beyond that, this is your congregation, and without your input, prayer, and wrestling, the whole thing won’t matter.

So, on behalf of the Purpose Mapping Leadership Team (Donna Crump, John Hayes, Marcia Oltrogge, Sadie Hjelmstad, Jon Thompson, Nancy Albertson, and the pastors), I ask you to join us in discerning God’s *why* for Ascension.

Pastor Daniel Smith

THANK YOU!



*Ascension Lutheran Church
Endowment Fund*

...to Ascension Endowment Fund for providing financing for the shiny, new, undented, communion trays that are befitting of our Lord’s Supper.

...to **Patrick DeLoughry**, for serving as the Captain of Counters for the Board of Finance. You efficiently scheduled, trained and supported Ascension’s counting teams for over three years. May God bless your professional and spiritual growth in your new home in Seattle, Washington.



The January 9 CPC meeting included the following actions and discussions:

- Pastor Dan Holt led devotions about light in the darkness and how the darkness does not go away but how the light of Jesus Christ will guide us through the dark times in our lives.
- Board Directors gave brief updates on current activities and future plans..
- Rex Rudy reported that our offerings for 2017 will be close to 97% of budget. Details of revenues and expenses will be reported in the Annual Report.
- Pastor Daniel noted this coming week would be the pulpit exchange. Pastor Dan is going to Grace Lutheran and the Pastor from St. Paul's Methodist will be at Ascension. He will be getting the sanctuary aesthetics group together and start discussions for the new sanctuary paraments. The video camera will be active soon to record sermons and to stream those live on our website.
- Pastor Dan will be attending continuing education the first part of February. Hope the powder is good! The theme for Lenten services this year will be around the Ten Commandments.
- Donna Crump gave an update on the strategic Planning efforts and introduced Kristin who is here to begin working on our strategic planning. Kristin had some discussions with Council.
- Council discussed setting some priorities for how much operating cash to keep on hand.
- Greg Gulliksen discussed where we are with the capital campaign and how we will move towards finishing the work associated with the capital campaign. The lighting is under way and should be completed before Easter with the remaining work to be completed after Easter.
- Greg noted the Congregational Annual Meeting will be held on February 25 between services.
- Pastor Daniel Smith led closing with prayers and the Lord's Prayer.
- The approved minutes of recent meetings are posted on the kiosk in the Fellowship Hall and are available in electronic format from the church office.

The next session of Discover Ascension will have begun on January 28 between services. If you are interested in becoming a member of Ascension or would just like to know more about Ascension it is not too late to start attending these sessions.



What's Happening

The Annual Congregational Meeting will be held on Sunday, February 25, 2018 and will be held between services. Come and join in the fellowship and see what will be happening at Ascension in 2018.

Ash Wednesday service is February 14. We will be continuing our soup suppers and Lenten worship services the following weeks leading up to Holy Week. Has your group signed up to host one of the evenings.

At the annual meeting you will begin seeing information concerning our strategic planning process. Your participation will be important in formulating what Ascensions ministry will look like in the future. Plan on attending.

“A Community of Grace, Called to Serve.”

Peace be with you, Greg Gulliksen, President CPC
637-9313 / greg.gulliksen@gmail.com

Congregational Meeting



CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

The annual Congregational Meeting for Ascension will be held on Sunday, February 25, 2018 between services. The audited 2017 financials will be presented.

The CPC will be making a recommendation to the congregation on how to spend any additional funds from 2017 and where to utilize a portion of our cash reserves. There will be a recommendation concerning funding for the remaining sanctuary finishes. The strategic planning firm we hired will be here to discuss the visioning and strategic planning process and how you can get involved. The endowment committee will let us know how much money is available in grants to be used in 2018. All are highly encouraged to attend and see what your Congregation Planning Council is planning for 2018.

Agenda

- Call to Order
- Opening Devotions
- Roll Call of Voting Members
- Approval of Congregational Meeting Minutes
 - December 3, 2017
- Purpose Mapping Update
- Church Finances
- Endowment Presentation
- Capital Campaign Update
- Approval of Synod Assembly Delegates
- Approval of Nominating Committee
- Closing Prayer

Financial Statement of 2017 Operating Activity

Type of Activity	Through 12/31/17	Compared with Budget & Previous Year			
		2017 Budget	%	12/31/16	%
Revenues	\$799,231	\$803,960	99	\$775,353	103
Less Expenses	<u>-\$787,686</u>	<u>-\$803,960</u>	98	<u>-\$774,240</u>	102
Surplus/(Deficit)	\$11,545	\$0		\$1,112	
Operating Cash	\$110,800			\$33,033	

Church Finances

Total revenue in 2017 amounted to 99% of our budget and surpassed 2016 revenue by almost \$24,000. Approximately \$7,100 of the 2017 operating surplus will be available for unbudgeted programs the Council will ask the Congregation to approve at its annual meeting in February. A \$70,000 loan from the church operating cash to the Capital Campaign for the South End renovation in 2016 was repaid in 2017. By the end of the year giving to the Capital Campaign reached 90% of the total amount pledged, leaving the church \$128,153 for sanctuary remodeling and mortgage reduction in 2018. Thank you for continuing to support Ascension's mission and building improvements.

Thrivent Choice Dollars at Work

A word of thanks to Thrivent members who made contributions to Ascension through Thrivent Choice this past year. With your contributions we have been able to continue to support many of the missions Ascension partners with and to also help many of our youth attend the National Youth Gathering in 2018. It is our prayer that out of the Purpose Mapping we are going through, Ascension will have a dedicated focus for which your Thrivent Dollars will be able to go towards. It is not too late to designate those Thrivent Choice dollars. You have until March 31 to designate where those dollars are to go.

There are two ways you can direct your Choice Dollars:

- Online: Visit Thrivent.com/thriventchoice. If you haven't registered on Thrivent.com, you'll have to register and create a user ID, password, and security questions.
- By phone: Call 800-847-4836 and say "Thrivent Choice."

If all this sounds too complicated you can always contact Nancy Albertson at (719) 531-5900. She can guide you through the process.

Connecting Ascension Riders and Drivers (CARD) Program

A few months ago, the daughter of one of our senior members approached me to see if our church had a ride sharing program for members without cars. Her Mom could no longer drive, but she still lives at home and needs rides to doctors' appointments, grocery stores, church, etc. The daughter lives out of town. I was sorry to say that we didn't have a ride sharing program at Ascension, but that we would start one up. As a result, the Board of Lay Ministry is connecting people who need rides with drivers who have some spare time. If you are in need of rides or are interested in providing rides, please contact John Hayes at (719) 572-1052 or at blazahayes@aol.com. Drivers would need to use their own cars and have their own auto insurance. *We are now providing rides for three of our members.*

RUTH CIRCLE

All ladies of Ascension are invited to join us on the 2nd Thursday of each month at 9:30am for fellowship and casual Bible Study. We will be discussing Chapter 6 from the book *Having a Mary Heart in a Martha World*, by Joanna Weaver. You can join at any time. Hostess for the February 8, 2018 gathering will be Cheryl Johnson. If you are new to Ascension or just looking for a casual Bible Study group, we hope you will come and join us! Please see Nancy Shatto for a book, 719-426-9444 or njshatto@yahoo.com.

Ascension Book Club

Join us for Ascension's Book Club **Faith Seeking Understanding**. Our next book is "Just Mercy" by Bryan Stevenson—a book about the judicial system, racial inequality, and the death penalty. We'll discuss the book and enjoy a potluck after church on February 11. Questions? Ask Pastor Daniel.

Wells for Life!!

With your help, Ascension's Board of Social Outreach is continuing our efforts to create change in our world. Having clean water available to people is one of the most powerful ways. When a community gains access to clean water, everything changes!! Women and children don't spend hours gathering water. The community is healthier. People can work, farm and go to school. And together, they build stronger economies and a future filled with Hope.

The board will host a fellowship coffee hour and kick off on February 18. The Sunday school children will create water bottle banks to fill with change during the Lenten season for this project. They will bring them to the church on Palm Sunday, March 25, and place them in the washtub beside the water pump. At both services that Sunday, we will bring the donations to the altar in Praise and Thanksgiving.

If we can raise \$2,500 or more, as many as 500 families gain access to clean safe water with the installation of a water well or spring box. What a gift of Love! "For I was hungry and you gave me food. I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me..." Matthew 25:35

If you have any questions, please call Cindy Gaona, 598-8045 or ask anyone on the Board of Social Outreach.

Thoughts on an Abundant Life

February, the month that Hallmark waits for, well it can be more than a Valentine. How about the month to look at your heart health? It is really quite easy, get with your healthcare provider and find out your "heart health numbers", specifically your LDL and A1C. These are markers for your cholesterol and blood sugar values. Yes blood sugar and heart disease risk go hand in hand. The relationship between the two is a bit involved but to keep it simple if you run high blood sugars and high cholesterol your cardio vascular system will be effected and your blood vessels will become less healthy leading to a strain on your body. This is bad thing and for most it can be addressed in good prevention, sorry bad genetics is just that ... BAD.

Now that the lecture is over how about those Valentines. I love Valentines, I loved making that shoebox mailbox in school so that Valentines could be delivered on February 14, and everybody got lots of Valentines. None of this "just for my friends" nonsense, everybody was your friend and everybody got that little perforated paper card.

No body signed them it was a gesture of universal sharing of love. It made you feel happy and made a nice day at school. I remember my first real Valentine in high school, that was a very special day and he was a true romantic. He had a Valentine item waiting for me in each and every class throughout the day. He had several helpers and by lunch my circle of friends were following me around to see the next gift. It was a very special day indeed. [Que the violins] .

Here is another task for Heart Month, send out a big batch of Valentines and make a memory for someone, do they still make perforated paper Valentines?

Sara Petz

Easter Lilies Available

Congregants have the opportunity to decorate the sanctuary for Easter and honor a loved one by purchasing Easter lilies. The sign-up sheet is on the kiosk in Fellowship Hall.

Notes from the Music Room

Sometimes referred to as "the other Lutheran composer," Felix Mendelssohn was born on February 3, 1809. He was born into a prominent Jewish family in Hamburg, but was baptized, along with the rest of his family, when he was seven years old and the family added the "Bartholdy" to their Jewish surname. Mendelssohn's great aunt had studied music under Wilhelm Friedemann Bach, and through her and others he received a great deal of exposure to the music of J.S. Bach. Indeed, Mendelssohn went on to bring Bach's Music back to the light of day after decades in obscurity, notably, with his 1829 performance conducting Bach's St. Matthew Passion in Berlin. Mendelssohn's first public performance was at age 9 at the piano, but he received more attention for his composing and conducting. He spent most of his adult life working in Leipzig, again following in Bach's footsteps, where he conducted the orchestra, and even Bach's own Thomanerchor boys choir. Our hymnal features one beloved tune by Mendelssohn: "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing," a tune Mendelssohn wrote for a Leipzig festival honoring the printer Gutenberg. However, Mendelssohn also wrote two oratorios (think of these as religious operas performed in concert instead of acted on a stage): St. Paul and Elijah. And he had begun a third one, Christus, when he died in 1847. These works, his choral settings of the Psalms, and his Fifth Symphony "The Reformation" are powerful testaments to his faith.

Soli Deo Gloria,
Megan Miller

STEW CREW NEWS

EXTRA EXTRA: Meet the Boards

Did you know that Ascension Lutheran Church has nine different boards? These groups support the planning, management, and operation of all aspects within our congregation. In March of 2018, the Nominating Committee will convene to recommend new Board members. Those individuals who accept their nominations will be installed onto their boards in June. It would be beneficial to identify persons interested in board service as soon as possible! So, are you ready to Meet the Boards?

Church Properties

Director – Jeff Courtright

This board is responsible for the proper maintenance and repair of church property, the representation of the congregation in all legal matters, and the general protection of the congregation against loss or damage of whatever nature.

Desired attributes: general handyman skills, ability to oversee projects, roll-up-your-sleeves attitude, negotiating experience, oversight skills, and a sense of mission.

Evangelism

Director – Dennis Bagenstos

The Board of Evangelism is charged with bringing the Gospel to the unchurched, enlisting all of God's people in the work of spreading the Gospel, and providing various opportunities that deepen the faith and activity of Ascension Lutheran Church Members.

Desired attributes: interest in teaching for new members, strong communications skills, exposure to multimedia and social media, comfortable sharing the Gospel within and outside of the congregation.

Lay Ministry

Director – John Hayes

The Board of Lay Ministry enhances the spiritual welfare of the Pastors and congregational members, individually and together. We take care of our Congregation and our Pastors; Care Deacon Program, Senior Ministries programs, following up with non-attending members, providing rides to those congregants who can no longer drive themselves, Funeral Reception Committee, and oversight of Small Group ministries.

Attributes desired: compassion, willingness to serve, enjoyment working special projects, and a commitment to spiritual welfare.

Finance

Director – Rex Rudy

The functions of the Finance Board are to account for all financial revenue and expenses for the Church and Children's Learning Center and to produce an annual budget and periodic financial reports, based on the expressed needs of the other boards and committees.

Attributes Desired: interest in training others, integrity and good attention to detail, familiarity with accounting or bookkeeping, analytic capability, and experience with computers and spreadsheets..

We do have a near-term need for a Captain of the Counters. Please contact Rex if interested. Thank you!

Parish Education

Director – Elisa Thompson

Parish Education has oversight of all the education programs at Ascension Lutheran Church. This includes: Providing in-home faith formation materials for children under 3 years-old, weekly Sunday school classes for children 3 years-old through 8th grade, weekly confirmation classes for middle school students, adult education hour, an annual intergenerational Sunday school event, Vacation Bible School (VBS), Blessing of the Backpacks, Rally Day, Focus Bags, and an annual Christmas program.

Attributes desired: a desire to share the love of God with His children, availability to plan and attend various events, and a can-do attitude.

Social Outreach

Director – Sharla Saunders

The Board of Social Outreach (BOSO) supports a variety of causes and organizations throughout Colorado Springs, the U.S., and the world. BOSO believes firmly in the need to not just provide financial support, but also to provide the church family as a whole with opportunities to become actively and physically involved in the lives of those in need.

Attributes desired: a heart for "the least of these," a concern for those in need, a desire to make a difference in our world and community, and a keen interest in social issues.

Stewardship

Director – Jerry Dollar

The objectives of the Board of Stewardship are to ensure the financial stability of the congregation and its work through a well-developed program of dedicated, proportionate, first-fruits giving. We are charged with the management of treasure through the “God’s Grace in Action Estimate of Giving” program. We shepherd time and talent via the “Spiritual Gifts in Motion Time and Talent” program.

Desired attributes: a commitment to the health of the congregation, a strong sense of purpose, a team-focused approach to problem solving, a willingness to lead, and a good sense of humor.

Youth

Director – Kim Knoche

The objectives of the board are to involve the young people of the congregation in the work of Christ, to provide for the spiritual growth and nurture, and to promote genuine Christian fellowship for the young people of the congregation.

Desired attributes: planning skills, a commitment to youth, chaperone experience, interest in spiritual education, enthusiasm, patience, coordination of groups, and an interest in social fellowship.

Worship

Director – Sue Trinko

The mission of the Board of Worship is to provide the opportunity for a meaningful worship experience for the congregation; to plan, coordinate, administer the total worship activities of the congregation; to make provision for the preaching of the Word and the administration of the Sacraments; and to direct and supervise the worship activities of the congregation.

Attributes desired: interest in all aspects of the worship service, enjoy working behind the scenes, and a strong sense of teamwork.

BECOME INVOLVED...

****Coffee Fellowship Hour – Smell the Aroma!** Please help keep the coffee hours going by signing up to host a Sunday morning Fellowship Hour! All directions for coffee making are in the coffee station, or just ask for assistance. One or two people is all it takes, and you are so appreciated! See the sign-up sheet on the Kiosk in Fellowship Hall.

****Prayer Ministry** – as we pray for people it helps us to have updates to keep us connected to the person and situation. If you have a prayer concern or would like to become a member of our Prayer Chain, contact the office, 634-1694 or office@ascensionlutheranelca.org.

****Quilts for New Beginnings** – meets every Wednesday from 9-1 in the Fellowship Hall. They spread out quilts in all phases of creation, and if you’d like to help put together quilts for a good cause, come and join us. No experience necessary, just a good heart willing to learn and participate.

****Mercy’s Gate – formerly Northern Churches Care** – Pantry items and toiletries are collected in the cupboard in the Fellowship Hall. Ongoing needs: crackers, mac & cheese, oatmeal, spaghetti, corn, green beans, spaghetti sauce, tomato products, tuna, gravy toothpaste, tooth brushes, face soap.

****Knotty Kneedlers** – We continue to make small blankets and hats and now baby burial bunting for the Indian reservations, as well as prayer shawls. If you would like to become involved in this ministry, or just want to join us for fellowship and work on your own project, we meet every Wednesday at 1pm, in Fellowship Hall. Contact Bonnie Vawter, 579-6707, with any questions.

****Terrace Gardens Bingo** – Prizes and Volunteers are needed. Our church has been supporting bingo at the Terrace Garden Healthcare Center for about 35 years. We call three games of bingo from 10:00-11:00AM on the third Wednesday of each month for the residents. We normally have about 15 players. We call out numbers until every player wins in each game. After they win, we help them (if needed) to the prize table where they can pick out a prize of their choice. The prizes are all donated by members of the Ascension family. We could use some of the following prizes: our #1 need is for gently used men’s clothing (sizes Large and higher), then we also have a need for women’s clothing (large and Plus sizes), hygiene products (body washes, lotions, tooth paste, shampoo, etc), playing cards, some small containers of ladies’ perfumes, adult coloring books/crayons, and lady’s jewelry. Please mark items as "Bingo Prizes" and place them in the Terrace Garden Bingo box located on the counter behind the Welcome Center. The residents really look forward to our bingo each month and it is rewarding to help them. Please contact John Hayes at 572-1052 or at blazehayes@aol.com if you’d like to help or learn more about this Outreach program. *Thank you for your continued support of this program.*

****Campbell’s Soup Labels:** Please just cut the UPC bar code and the picture of the “point value boy” from the following products: Campbells - soups, chunky soups, Healthy Request, Supper Bakes; Pepperidge Farm, Spaghetti-Os, Swanson, V-8 beverage caps and Prego Spaghetti Sauce. Thanks for continuing to collect these to help the people with disabilities.

****Pop can tabs** help the Ronald McDonald House. They may be placed in the container in the cupboard in the Welcome Center.

Bridge Group

Our Bridge Group will meet at 5:30PM on February 24th at Ascension. If your card playing skills are a little rusty or you would like to learn how to play this great game, we have help sheets and bridge instructors available to help. Feel free to contact John or Kathy Hayes at [\(719\) 572-1052](tel:7195721052) or at kittypawz@aol.com if you have any questions about this group.



This June, 17 youth and adults from Ascension will be traveling to Houston for the National Lutheran Youth Gathering for a week where they can grow in their faith and encounter God in new ways. The theme - "This Changes Everything" is based on the passage from Ephesians 2:8 - For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God."

While we have known since 2015 we were planning on going to Houston, and have been designated fundraisers for this trip, we still have a ways to go to fund our youth and adults to go! How can you help? We have several opportunities coming up in the next several months.

- monthly donut Sundays - donations for the donuts appreciated
- Garage Sale - end of April - will start collecting items after Easter
- Texas Roadhouse rolls - in time for Easter, we will be selling these frozen rolls. Sales begin in early March.
- "This CHANGES Everything" change buckets. Bring in your spare change to place in the buckets the youth decorate. This will kick off at Easter!
- We still have red t-shirts and tumblers available!!
- Faith Shares - are you interested in just donating? We will have faith shares available in early March. This is an opportunity to donate towards individuals - or the whole group - as we prepare to explore our faith!
- Prayer partners - we will be looking for individuals who would be willing to write up prayers and notes of encouragement for each of the individuals going on this trip.

Questions? Please see Kim Knoche, Kirsten Johnson or Mary Stonebeck

Thank you for your continued support of our youth!



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CHURCH STAFF

Normal Office Hours: 9-12 Mon-Fri (719) 634-1694

Pastor Dan Holt – off on Friday

Pastor Daniel Smith

Music Director – Megan Miller

Diaconal Minister of Faith Formation – Mary Stoneback

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March newsletter deadline: Feb. 18



Beth Ayen (Daughter-in-law of Darcy & Bill Ayen), Dorothy Brown, Sharon Budd (Sister of Darcy Ayen), Brad Buhler, Grace Buhler, Jerri Butschky, Kate Campbell, Michelle Courtright (Daughter of Jeff & Renee Courtright), Susan Curtis, Libby Dollar, Jacquelyn Ellison (Granddaughter of Marilyn & Troy Goodenough), Tom & Sandy George, Steve Hahn (Grandson of Joan Magee), Richard Ingalls, Jeff Sebben, Kenneth Shodeen, Jerry Smith, Virginia Stanley, and all of our men and women serving overseas.