



ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

February 2, 2025

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Annual Report from Stephanie Holdcroft

Ascension Lutheran Church
Annual Congregation Meeting
February 4, 2024

Erica Barr, Church Council President, called the meeting to order at 12:20 PM. Erica welcomed everyone with special thanks to those who put lunch together. Lunch was provided, courtesy of the coffee hour fund and was hosted by Vicki Elfers, Debbie DeMarchis, Jean Belcher, Kelly Reno, Stephanie Holdcroft, and our youth members. Thank you for all hands that helped to bring together the delicious lunch and banana bread for the ELCA Youth Gathering fundraiser.

Erica announced the Business Meeting is now open and we had enough members present at the meeting and we exceeded our quorum.

Review of Meeting Ground Rules: (reviewed by Erica)

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.

Secretary's Report: Submitted by Erica Barr

The Secretary's Report of the Annual Congregational Meeting from February 5, 2023 was presented.

A motion was made to accept the Secretary's Report by **Jeff Adee** and seconded by **Owen Young**. The motion passed unanimously.

Pastors' Reports were submitted by Pastors Lathrop, and Avila

Pastor Justin reflected on his 13 years of ministry with us this past year, marking another period of transition. We bid farewell to Pastor Flora as she embarked on retirement; Don and Flora are now enjoying North Carolina and have become active members of a local church community.

In the quest to fill Pastor Flora's role, we engaged the congregation and conducted surveys, ultimately appointing Vicki Elfers as the Lay Assistant to the Pastor. This position is evolving, aiming to gradually shift administrative tasks towards more pastoral responsibilities.

Our commitment to Latino Ministry remains steadfast. Pastors Patty and Justin have been actively involved in various collaborative endeavors, bringing valuable insights back to Ascension. Recognized as a success story in bilingual ministries, Ascension has been sought after to guide other congregations in this area.

While this year posed financial challenges, we navigated through with resilience. A robust plan for the upcoming year is being finalized and will be presented shortly.

Pastor Patty provided an update on the Latino mission, emphasizing the importance of fulfilling the teaching "go and make disciples." Last year, the mission successfully assisted a total of five families, both locally and internationally. This empowerment initiative extends support to families within our community and beyond our borders. Notably, efforts are underway in El Salvador to introduce families to Jesus through a mission that will bear the name of Ascension in it.

A report was handed out with Latino Sunday worship attendance, Ministries, trainings, workshops attended, celebrations, outreach held, Special worship services held and New Ministries.

We are all so blessed to be here at Ascension Lutheran.

Treasurer's Report: Submitted by Janet Anderson

Janet Anderson Reviewed the Treasurer's annual report for the year ending December 31, 2023. Please see the attached detailed finance reports and comments.

Report is as written: Just a few things to note. Our overall income was slightly below our expected target by around \$10,000. Contributions were down by approximately \$45,000, but revenue from the preschool and external groups helped to offset much of this shortfall. Although we had an unexpected expense for the furnace, we managed to save in other areas, which helped to balance out the impact of this cost.

A motion was made by **Tom Tresselt** to accept the 2023 Treasurer's Report. **Rich Monsky** seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Committee Reports:

The Chairpersons/Leaders of the Committees were acknowledged when their respective committees were called. The congregation was invited to ask any questions they had regarding the reports presented that might be addressed by the Chairpersons/Leaders.

Children and Family Ministries – Lois Lehr
Youth Ministry – Kelly Reno
Evangelism- Stephanie Holdcroft, Secretary
Finance Committee – Janet Anderson, Treasurer
Latino Ministry Committee – Pastor Patty, Director
Ana Rihani, Chairperson
Personnel Committee – Erica Barr, President
Preschool – AnnMarie Achatz, Director
Property Committee – John Scheid
Social Ministry Committee –Cathy Adee
Stephen Ministry – Vicki Elfers
Worship and Music Committee – John Wern
Stewardship – Marie Mark
WELCA – Pat Massaro
Forever 50- Vicki Elfers

Acknowledgements and expressions of gratitude were extended for the committee reports and the dedication put into all essential ministries. The hard work and commitment of everyone involved are deeply appreciated. Additionally, committees are

continuously seeking more individuals to lend their support to the numerous events available to all members.

2024 Proposed Budget: Submitted by Janet Anderson:

Janet Anderson reviewed the proposed budget for 2024, noting a deficit of \$4,103.68. Detailed reports are attached. Janet discussed several line items included in the budget. Pastoral ministry expenses increased by about \$4,000, reflecting a 2% raise lower than the SYNOD recommended 3.2%. Latino ministry remained the same. Vicki's positional salary replaced Pastor Flora's in the budget. The praise band expenses increased by \$6,200. Administration decreased because of Vicki's position change. Most expenses, like telephones, remained consistent. Programs experienced a slight increase of 2% across the board. Significant increases in overhead costs of insurance have impacted budget. All numbers have been factored in conservatively. Property projects decreased slightly due to a reduction in fuel converted from oil to gas. Electricity decreased, and water and general maintenance also decreased slightly. Insurance increased significantly, necessitating a larger budget allocation. Preschool's budget came in under budget. Pledges are expected to bring in \$410,000. Other income and outside groups are expected to generate about \$70,000. The preschool increased tuition and plans to contribute more to Ascension in the future.

Questions/ Statements that were asked regarding the budget:

Bob Snyder made an additional pledge member for 60 years: offering \$520 to help balance the 2024 budget.

Thanks was given for Bob's generous contribution.

Owen Young - Why are we spending \$ 2,100 for deposits? Aren't there other ways without fees?

Janet Anderson- Vanco – built into the budget – yes there are other services.

Tom Tresselt said that the online donations are a way to remain with constant contribution and is a more reliable donation.

Owen Young: Why not use venmo or zelle? They are free.

Pastor Justin –Currently, we do not utilize Venmo for business purposes, but we will need to register as a business moving forward and will incur fees for this as well. Tom highlighted an advantage: while we may incur a slight loss initially, funds are deducted regardless of physical presence. Unlike other platforms, Vanco offers recurring payment options, ensuring a more consistent income stream.

Owen Young: As previously stated, there are other companies or ways to give online that we do not have to pay a fees....

Pastor: the fees are coming for all of them – there is no way around it.

Rich Monsky: you can offset the fee by giving an additional amount if you desire.

Pastor: gave examples of how this works.

Debbie DeMarchis: Can we do direct deposit from my bank account to Ascension's bank account?

Pastor: Yes. If you go directly from a bank account with routing and account number then we do not incur fees. If you put a card number (debit or credit) there are fees.

Debbie DeMarchis: Will this be the same for venmo?

Pastor Justin: not sure

Vicki Elfers: I looked into some information about Venmo: there is a 10 cent charge for each transaction – which is nominal. Most fees are from Vanco.

John Scheid: even with Vanco – the cc fee is universal. If you are using online – use your bank account.

Owen Young: to get back to what I started saying – there are other places and ways to give without the cost.

Pastor Justin: Again, only Vanco allows for a recurring payment like that. That's why we kept Vanco.

Vicki Elfers: we pay \$2,100 in fees but that is on a considerably larger amount in contributions. The number will drop next year because this year the preschool gets their tuition through Vanco as well. Preschool will be able to now use CC but will have to pay the fee.

Tom Tresselt: our church is usually behind in giving and many churches are better.

Pastor Justin: My old congregation was 60 percent online giving and it made it more predictable and more recurring payments no matter physical attendance.

Doris : question regarding the solar panels – are they functioning?

Pastor Justin: no. they are not – has been talked about extensively. Company we bought from is no longer in business and cannot find a company to work on them if they did not install. We continue to address.

Debbie Demarchis: Asking for a friend: we withdrew \$56,000 from investment account to pay bills. What are we doing to repay that money to ourselves.

Janet Anderson: not much we can do. It is on the table and we are hoping to find ways. We are looking into finding a bank that gives us interest and get some higher interest returns.. Hoping our income is higher than expenses and we can put some of that back.

Bob Snyder: Thanked the finance committee for the excellent job they did. Last year was \$14,000 and this year a lot less. He is a firm believer in a balanced budget.

A motion was made by **Russ Bliss** to accept the treasurer's report. **Pattie Komornik** seconded. Motion was passed unanimously.

Elections of Church Council

John Scheid was thanked for his service and will be retiring from the council's property committee.

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

For a first two year term:

Jeff Adee..... Property Committee

Motion was made to accept these nominations by **John Scheid** ; it was seconded by **Bob Snyder**, and it was passed unanimously.

For a one year term:

Janet Anderson –2nd 1 year term Treasurer

Pat Massaro –2nd one year term WELCA

Cathy Adee- 3rd 2-year Term Social Ministry

John Wern: 2nd 2 year term Worship and Music

Ana Rihani 2nd one year term Latino Ministry

Asked if there were any other nominations? There are none.

Motion was made to accept these nominations by **Bob Snyder**; it was seconded by **Derek Lundquist**, and it was passed unanimously.

Old Business:None

New Business:

Pastor Patty: According to the constitution Latino Ministry is allowed a steering committee: The participants who previously held positions were graciously thanked for their service. There was an election held last Sunday and Jenny will be the new President and Josephina will be the new Vice President along with a new Secretary and Treasurer. This Steering committee will be helping shape Latino ministries.

Synod Deacons: Susan Bliss and Vicki Elfers were recommended that the call to service for Susan and Vicki be extended through 2024.

Pattie Kormornik motioned and **Bob Snyder** seconded.

None opposed. So moved

No SYNOD assembly this year. Not an oversight. We do not need to elect representatives.

Pattie Kormornik : is there a reason why there is not more information for the Latino ministries included in the Annual report - more than Pastor Patty's report?

Pastor Patty: expressed her apologies and will be in a more lengthy way in the future.

Resolutions:

Thanks and much Gratefulness to God given for faithful servers who have completed their terms on council: **John Scheid** acknowledged as the exiting Property Committee Chairperson.

Special thanks given to

Members of the Church staff.

Members of the Preschool staff.

Members of the Ascension Day Camp staff.

The Multitude of Volunteers who serve Ascension.

Thrivent Financial and our many members who applied for and donated Action Team cards to assist our ministries. Particular thanks to Derek for helping with that.

Our Pastoral staff including Pastor Krahn and Pastor O'Rourke

The resolutions were accepted with a round of applause.

The Council left to vote for new Executive members and returned with the following results:

Executive Committee Election Results:

Returning committee for 2024 presented to Congregation

President: Erica Barr
VP: Madeline Sharrock
Sec: Stephanie Holdcroft

A motion was made to close the meeting by **Russ Bliss** and seconded by **Pattie Kormornik**. Motion was passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephanie Holdcroft

SENIOR PASTOR'S REPORT

Annual Report of Pastor Justin Lathrop

Dear Friends in Christ,

2024 was another year of excitement and growth at Ascension. This year saw increases in participation in all aspects of our ministry. I am so grateful for our staff and volunteer leadership that have worked so hard to provide excellent programming for our community. In the reports to follow, read and celebrate all of the progress and accomplishments from the last year. I'll provide a few personal highlights here.

Worship has always been a key part of our life together. Ascension continues to provide a variety of expressions in order to speak to our diverse population. We offer varying musical styles, bilingual opportunities, and incorporate projection and online streaming to better transmit the Gospel to a broad spectrum of God's children. In 2023, we adapted our summer and Christmas Eve services to best reflect our congregation. I am happy to share that in both instances, 2024 saw continued increase in attendance, energy, and quality that I'm sure was felt by all. Our overall Sunday attendance for the year has grown amid a world of declining church participation.

I enjoy being part of the milestones of faith at Ascension and am blessed to journey with people at various points of their faith life. From baptism to 1st Bibles, communion to confirmation classes and camps; at preschool chapel, children's messages "in a bucket," youth activities and a host of other activities, I so enjoy seeing the Spirit alive in our young. A particular highlight was accompanying our youth to the Gathering in New Orleans this summer. When I lead Bible study or attend regular meetings (like Forever 50) and special events (like Rally Day) I see that same Spirit alive in our adults as well. We were blessed to welcome new members into our congregation in 2024 and have returned to our weekly welcome of new visitors into our midst.

One role I fill is as a representative of Ascension within the larger Church. I continue my participation with the Synod Candidacy Cmt, serve as our Conference Secretary, and just completed my 6yr term on the Synod's Consultation Committee. In addition, Pastor Patty and I frequently participate in church-wide activities focused on multicultural ministry. We travelled to Chile in January for two weeks of advocacy training and will journey to southern California and Mexico in early 2025 for a mission developer conference. We have also been invited to share a "Mission Moment" at this year's Synod Assembly to showcase our ministry. Ascension continues to be a national model

for bilingual ministry. In addition to continuing the above-mentioned, we will be exploring partnership opportunities with Trinity Lutheran, Wyandanch in 2025.

As always, I am so grateful for your support throughout our ministry together. I am so very blessed that God has placed me at Ascension. I am so excited to see what 2025 has in store. As a community, we continue to be welcoming to all, growing in faith, and serving together.

MISSION DEVELOPER REPORT

Annual Report of Pastor Patty Avila MISION LATINA DE ASCENSION / ASCENSION LATINO MISSION

1. Sunday worship: attendance (in person) has been consistent in 2024 averaging 65 to 75 adults and children, and 10-15 attendees by ZOOM per service. There was a change in attendance from the months of June, July, August to September. New families began to join Mision Latina and we ended the year in an average of 55-60 attendees.

2. Ministries: Prayer Group Mondays at 7:00 pm led by Congregational Deacon Ana Rihani, gathered by ZOOM with an average attendance of 10-15 people.

Prayer Group: Tuesdays at 10:30 am by Zoom led by lay leader Jackeline Rojas with an average attendance of 10-15 people weekly.

In person Prayer Service: Every first Monday of the month at 7:30 pm led by Mission Developer and Congregational Deacon Ana Rihani at 7:30 pm with an average attendance of 25 people in person and about 15 on ZOOM.

Discipleship classes and Bible Study: Wednesday at 7:00 pm in person led by Mission Developer and congregational deacons Yadira Alguera and Rolando Soto with an average attendance of 12-15 people weekly.

Healing Service: Every first Sunday of the month, led by Mission Developer and Congregational Deacons.

3. Pastoral office hours for the Latino community: Tuesdays from 3pm to 8:00 pm and Thursdays from 11am to 9:00 pm.

4. Home visitation, outreach and Koinonia: Every Saturday and Sunday afternoon.

5. SAWC – Mision Latina de Ascension, ELCA trainings and workshops 2024:

Mission Developer participated in the Coaching sessions for Mission Developers in Latino ministry settings for the months of October, November and December.

Mission Developer is a member of the Metropolitan New York Synod Council and participated in their meetings throughout 2024.

Mission Developer is a member of the MNYS Candidacy Committee and participates in their meetings throughout the year.

Mission Developer is part of the Western Suffolk Conference of Pastors and participates in their monthly Ministerium, annual retreat, and other gatherings throughout the year.

Mission Developer attended the bishop's retreat in October 2024.

Mission Developer registered and is currently attending the Augsburg Lutheran Seminary in Mexico, (SEMLA) via Zoom to attain a Bachelor's Degree in Theology.

6. 2024 celebrations and outreach:

- Three kings' day celebration in January 2024
- Day of Friendship in February 2024
- Lenten retreat and "Viacrucis" (14 Stations of the Cross)
- Mother's Day celebration in May 2024
- Father's Day celebration in June 2024
- Rally Day celebration in September 2024
- Hispanic Heritage Celebration in October 2024
- Thanksgiving worship service and potluck dinner November 2024

7. Special worship services:

Preschool Chapel every other month throughout the year.

- 4 children's Baptisms on Sunday services
- 1 First Communion service and celebration
- Two Quinceañeras "affirmation of faith" service and celebration.

8. New Ministries:

- EL CENTRO – Sirviendo Juntos/Serving together Community Center summer semester offered ESL classes for adults and Art classes for all ages. Fall semester offered ESL classes for adults. Services were free of charge. The center was a great opportunity for outreach to the Latino community and volunteer hours for high school students.
- Partnership with "Fundación Caricatura" a non-profit organization dedicated to the accompaniment and empowerment of artists with disabilities. (Especially immigrant's artists). With our partnership throughout the year we were able to provide financial help, moral and spiritual support to immigrant families in need residing in Long Island, NY and El Salvador, Central America.

LAY ASSISTANT TO THE PASTOR

Annual Report from Vicki Elfers

2024 has truly been an amazing year for me at Ascension. I can't even begin to describe what it means to me to be in the position I am and how blessed I feel to be serving God and the faithful people of Ascension. In addition to my regular tasks of producing the leader copies, participant copies and announcement page each week for Sunday worship, below is a list of highlights for 2024:

- Putting together and sending our Weekly Email to the congregation
- Preaching once a month and assisting on the altar once a month
- Leading Saturday morning Bible Studies along with Pastor Justin
- Leading weekly Wednesday Night Zoom Bible study
- Attending Weekly Staff Meetings
- Planning Forever 50 meetings along with committee
- Attending Church Council Meetings
- Co-leading Adult Spring and Fall Retreats with Pastor Justin and Pastor Patty
- Attending Worship & Music Committee Meetings
- Co-leading Stephen Ministry twice monthly Peer Supervision and Continuing Education with Pattie Komornik
- Co-leading Lenten Bible Study with Pastor Justin
- Assisting Pastor Justin with funerals
- Attending the Chrism Mass
- Assisting at Holy Week services
- Attending the ordination of Pastor Jean Dougherty and Sarah Humphries
- Organizing and attending Ascension Night at the Ducks
- Attending the Growing in Faith Graduation
- Leading Alpha 4 times during Summer Camp
- Attending an ELCA SAM Meeting on Zoom
- Taking a six-week course "Dare to Lead" provided by the Luther Seminary's Faith+Lead program

- Being part of a podcast from the Luther Seminary's Faith+Lead
- Attending the Bishop's Retreat for Synodical Deacons
- Assisting Pastor Just with the New Member Orientation
- Being the chairperson of the Reconciling in Christ Committee
- Attending the Thanksgiving Luncheon at Trinity Lutheran Church in Wyandanch
- Marching with Ascension members in the Deer Park Holiday Parade
- Co-leading the Blue Christmas service with Past Justin, Pastor Patty and S.Dcn Susan Bliss
- Assisting with the Christmas Eve services

TREASURER'S REPORT

Annual Report from Janet Anderson

**ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH
TREASURER'S ANNUAL REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2024**

<u>REVENUE</u>	<u>2024 ACTUAL</u>	<u>2024 BUDGET</u>
Contributions	425,780.89	410,520.00
Special Offerings	17,035.33	20,000.00
Other Income	102,706.97	70,000.00
Pre-School Tuition Income	<u>259,378.52</u>	<u>270,000.00</u>
TOTAL REVENUE	804,901.71	770,520.00

EXPENSES

Pastoral Ministry	208,650.47	212,220.84
Latino Ministry	13,813.68	15,000.00
Worship	48,377.17	55,604.44
Administration	79,711.21	91,727.40
Program	50,688.95	53,371.00
Property	46,867.67	51,780.00
Benevolence (Synod)	22,447.63	25,000.00
Insurance	52,863.27	40,000.00
Lutheran High School	4,014.00	900.00
Pre-School	224,963.05	200,000.00
Debt Reduction	<u>34,212.00</u>	<u>28,500.00</u>
TOTAL EXPENSES	786,609.10	774,103.68
NET INCOME	18,292.91	(3,583.68)

DEDICATED FUND BALANCES

Confirmation Robes	917.25
Latino Pastor's Fund	4,582.68
Latino Ministry Fund	1,386.48
Confirmation Camp	8,518.50
Tanzania Mission Fund	1,605.00
Ascension Day Camp	5,300.00
Flower Fund	2,256.01

Coffee Hour Fund	1,529.52
Remembrance Fund	1,804.15
Hunger Outreach	2,000.69
Others	2,344.92
TOTAL DEDICATED FUNDS	32,245.20
<u>CASH ON HAND</u>	23,298.38
<u>INVESTMENT ACCOUNTS</u>	
<u>BOND FUNDS(THRIVENT)</u>	
Money Market	0.00
House Fund(Thrivent)	0.00
LTD Thrivent Bond Fund	15,501.63
<u>MUTUAL FUNDS</u>	
Victory Funds(RS Large Cap Fund)	33,871.40
Invesco	68,608.16
TOTAL VALUE OF INVESTMENTS	117,981.19
<u>ASCENSION ENDOWMENT FUND</u>	36,859.10
<u>MORTGAGE</u>	
Thrivent Financial for Lutherans	
Outstanding Principle:	276,813.77
Interest Rate (Fixed): 4.5%	
Maturity Date: 11/1/2034	

SPECIAL NEED MONTHLY ENVELOPE 2024

January	Mercy Inn, Wyandanch	349.00
February	Trinity Lutheran church, Wyandanch	854.00
March	National Gathering	696.00
April	Lutheran Disaster Relief – Chili	456.00
May	Amani Children’s Choir	510.00
June	Confirmation Camp	609.00
July	Long Island Youth Mentoring	804.00
August	Lutheran Counseling Center	600.00
September	Synodical Benevolence	1,494.00
October	Latino Family in Need	691.00
November	LUHI	598.00
December	Emergency Assistance Fund	<u>655.00</u>
	TOTAL SPECIAL NEED RECEIVED FOR 2024	8316.00

CHILDREN AND FAMILY MINISTRY

Annual Report from Lois Lehr

“I believe that children are our future. Teach them well and let them lead the way. Show them all the beauty they possess inside. Give them a sense of pride to make it easier, Let the children’s laughter remind us how it used to be.” – Whitney Houston, The Greatest Love of All

Our ministry has been growing in faith with a wonderful team. The Eggstravaganza and Advent Festival have been very successful and improving every year. We have added another event this past year, Trunk or Treat for October in our education wing. We hope this event will be more successful in the future. The committee as a whole came together as our Sunday School Superintendent left at the end of October. As we pulled together, we found our strengths as individuals and as a team. We are very thankful and appreciative towards our very organized and talented member, Trisha Georghiou for her organizational skills sorting out the attic for all committees as well as the Pre-School. I also want to take this opportunity to thank all committee members, Ali Johnson, Jillian Germann, Trisha Georghiou, Laura Auciello and new member and Sunday School teacher, Danielle Petrizzo. We welcome anyone who wants to join us in making this ministry grow. Our meetings are the first Tuesday of the month @ 7:45 p.m. via Zoom or Google Meet.

I am also very excited for this year as Ali Johnson takes over the role as Sunday School Superintendent. We are looking forward to changing the curriculum not just for Sunday School, but for Communion classes for the 2025/2026 year. We are also looking forward to bringing back the Pray & Praise during Sunday School hours and not between services.

This has been my second year as Council Chairperson for this ministry and look forward to continuing in this ministry.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Annual Report from Janet Anderson

2024 Finance Committee Annual Report

2024 was another challenging year managing our Church's finances.

Income exceeded budgeted expectations by approximately \$34,000. However, we did have to withdraw \$50,000 from the investment accounts again to cover bills due to periodic problems with cash flow. Expenses were over budget by a little more than \$12,000 but we did end the year with a net income of just over \$18,000, primarily due to the investment withdrawals.

Below are some items worth highlighting for 2024:

-The property committee has been able to continue to maintain Ascension and thanks to several donations provided by our generous congregation the majority of the costs were covered in full.

-Preschool contributed \$34,400 toward expenses and other outside groups contributed \$8,350.

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 resources. Our committee members are Pastor Lathrop, Pastor Krahn, Erica Barr, Rich Germann, Russel Bliss, Heidi Manzo, Cathy Borg, Pattie Komornik, John Howard and myself.

Respectfully submitted,

Janet Anderson, Finance Chair and Treasurer

EVANGELISM

Annual Report from Stephanie Holdcroft

The Evangelism Committee had an inspiring and impactful year, staying committed to sharing the love of Christ both within our congregation and throughout our community. Evangelism is the act of spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ, fostering connections that bring others closer to God. This year, we were blessed with opportunities to engage meaningfully with both our members and the wider world. From handing out Bible verse jars on Father's Day to participating in the Deer Park Holiday Parade in December, we sought to bring messages of hope, faith, and joy to all those we encountered.

We also joined hands with Trinity Wyandanch Church in November for a special luncheon, strengthening fellowship and unity with our neighbors in faith. Additionally, we were honored to take part in Operation Christmas Child, packing shoeboxes filled with gifts and prayers to share Jesus' love with children around the world. These efforts reflect our mission to be a beacon of Christ's light, and we look forward to continuing this important work in the year ahead. Thank you to everyone who supported and participated in these initiatives—your faith in action makes all the difference. Anyone interested in becoming part of this committee should contact Stephanie Holdcroft - 516-946-9145.

FOREVER 50

Annual Report from Vicki Elfers

Our faithful seniors gather weekly on Wednesdays at 12 noon for our Forever 50 meetings. Each week the group gathers for fellowship, food, games, parties and going to plays.

In 2024 they chose Epiphany Gifts by taking one, grabbing one or stealing one; had a Hawaiian Luau; celebrated Chinese New Year and St Patrick's Day with a catered luncheons; saw plays at CMPAC which included "Footloose", "Evita", "Joseph & The Amazing Technicolor Dream Coat", "Saturday Night Fever"; played games like Bingo, Left, Right, Center and introduced UNO which has become a favorite game.; had a Spring Luncheon at the Irish Coffee Pub; had a pizza party. We finished in June before our Summer break by having hot dogs, peanuts and cracker jack, while we listened to a great rendition of "Who's on First" by Joan and Pat.

As we began again in September, after taking the summer off, we started with an Ice Cream Social, played Mad-libs, Bingo, and Uno. The group continues to look forward to the wonderful productions at CMPAC where they went to see "Jekyll & Hyde" and "Beauty and the Beast". We had fun dressing up for our Annual Halloween Costume Party and enjoyed a catered luncheon for Thanksgiving. We are grateful to Thrivent for the Action team cards which help provide our food as we serve the community by bringing non-perishable food items for Ascension's Food Pantry. As tradition, we ended the year with 43 people attending our Christmas Luncheon at the Irish Coffee Pub

As we look back at 2024, I am grateful for the leadership provided by the Forever 50 committee, Pat Massaro, Joan Lopardo, Jack & Janice Pellicano, who run all the meetings and help plan all the activities. I am forever grateful to Derek Lundquist who is our faithful coffee maker and our wonderful Bingo caller.

Come join us! We have a lot of fun events planned for 2025!

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Annual Report from Erica Barr

Personnel met regularly through the 2024 year. We reviewed and updated a number of employee policies and church policies. We interviewed many candidates for a variety of open positions that came up this year. We hired a number of employees for both the preschool and the church, as well as counselors and administrative positions for summer camp. We were met with a few separations as well. Special thanks to Pattie Komornik, the Personnel Administrator, for all of her diligent work to help keep Ascension's personnel needs tended to and up to date. Her contributions carried the committee this year. Thank you Pattie!

PRESCHOOL

Annual Report from AnneMarie Achatz

We had a great school year in 2024. As we look forward to 2025, we will continue our commitment to offer a quality program. We offer a safe and loving learning environment with hands-on experiences for the children. Ascension Preschool is a caring place for all of God's children.

Under the guidance of Ascensions' talented group of teachers, aides, and supportive staff we currently have 104 children enrolled in our various classes. We had an overwhelming demand for our 3-year-old program, so we opened another class in September. Just this month we are excited to announce a new 2-year-old separation class "Someone Special & Me". This class is meant to help with the transition to school while nourishing the parent-child bond. We've already received positive feedback; the parents love this new class. We also offer 2 year, 3 year, and 4-year-old classes as a half day program. Our current staff members are: Dawn Scheid, Pat Harty, Kathy Fifield, Susan Quinn, Denise Walker, Carol Marx, Terry DeBlasi, Sonja Milankovic, Kelly Levy, Jo-Ann Hegerman, Jill Jensen, Samantha Glibbery, Jaime Nemeth and Tara Fazio. Some of our classes are already filling up for the 2025/2026 school year with enrollment that started early January.

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

Chapel with Pastor Justin, and Pastor Patty started in October with the stories of Creation and Noah's Ark. The children have continued to enjoy chapel by listening to the bible stories and they anticipate whose turn it will be to help light the candles.

We have had a very busy year so far and look forward to 2025 and the activities we have planned. We are excited for another visit from the dentist, a Valentine's Day party, an Easter Egg Hunt, Pajama Day, Spring Fun Day and our Stepping Up, Moving Up and Graduation ceremonies in June.

I'd like to thank Pastor Justin, Pastor Patty, and the church staff for all their help through the year so far. I can't wait to see even more of the positive changes that will continue for the 2025 year.

Thank you,

AnneMarie Achatz

Preschool Director

PROPERTY COMMITTEE

Annual Report From Jeff Adee

This was my first term as property chair. I'd like to thank all the people who chipped in on the labor side to accomplish the projects.

- installed a new gas furnace in the education wing along with running a gas line from the church side down the hall into the basement below the preschool office. The oil tanks for the old oil furnace were pumped and we were credited oil going forward for the oil for the youth building.
- Both oil tanks in the shed on the north side of the church were replaced with new tanks. They had potential for leaking and had to be replaced.
- Both of the air conditioning units for the sanctuary were rebuilt and recharged. They are now functioning well.
- new thermostats were installed for the church sanctuary and the education wing.
- A major rework of the church offices was accomplished. Closets were removed in the old copy room, ceilings and walls painted after resheet rocking the end walls. A new carpet was installed. This became pastor's new office. Pastor's old office was repainted, doors refinished and it became Vicki Elfers new office. The office desk and cabinets that were in pastor Flora's office were moved into Vicki's office. Pastor Flora's old office became the new copy room and the file cabinets and shelves were reinstalled there.
- Pumped out septic tank and cesspool for the bathrooms in the office area.
- Ice machine was relocated and installed in the social hall kitchen
- Hired a new landscaping company for less money who has been doing more work and we are all pleased with the grounds appearance
- Charlie Filippazzo was hired as the new maintenance man. I would like to say he has been outstanding at handling any of our maintenance work. He is a pleasure to work with.
- Jesus statue in the courtyard was repaired and the lower section was remade. The statue was then refinished and reinstalled.

All this was done because of generous contributions from our congregation and as I said before, help from the volunteers especially the office renovation.

RECONCILING IN CHRIST

Annual Report from Vicki Elfers

The purpose of the Reconciling in Christ (RIC) Committee is to ensure the welcome, inclusion, celebration, and advocacy for people of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions and to work for racial equity and commit to anti-racist work and support the national program.

The Reconciling in Christ Committee (RIC) began meeting in September after unanimously being approved by Ascension's Church Council. This committee previously met during 2019 and stopped meeting during Covid.

As stated in the purpose statement above the committee will be leading the congregation in a time of discernment to see if the future of Ascension will include all the requirements set by the organization Reconciling Works which works with Lutheran churches to develop and implement a mission statement, and a church culture where all people are truly welcome. The requirements include:

1. Clearly state a welcome to people of "all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions" or "LGBTQIA+" and name its commitment to "racial equity" or "anti-racism" in its welcome statement.
2. Be open to calling an LGBTQIA+ and Black, Brown, Indigenous, Person of Color (BIPOC) Rostered Leader.
3. Allow sanctuary/community space/ to be used for LGBTQIA+ weddings and blessings.
4. Make a meaningful contribution annually to support the national RIC program.

The committee members are excited to share information to assist in this process through temple talks, printed resources and Bible studies.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact any committee member: Vicki Elfers, Pastor Justin, Pastor Patty, Pastor O'Rourke, Elizabeth O'Rourke, Russ Bliss, Pattie Komornik, Tom Tresselt, Carol Tresselt, Alice Wright, Jeff Marrero

SOCIAL MINISTRY

Annual Report from Cathy Adee

Our food pantry continues to provide 6-8 bags weekly to people that come and pick them up. In addition we were able to give out 20+ Holiday bags for Thanksgiving and Christmas. There has been some discussion and interest in starting up Pasta and The Word again at Trinity Wyandanch. Jeanne Fagan has voiced interest and is looking into it.

STEPHEN MINISTRY

Annual Report from Vicki Elfers & Pattie Komornik

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.*

The Stephen Ministry program continued in 2024 to try and provide a listening ear to anyone who was experiencing loss, change of life or various other life situations, but it has become increasingly difficult to find people willing to have a Stephen Minister.

During 2024 our faithful group of Stephen Ministers continued meeting twice monthly where we did continuing education which included studying two new books written by Stephen Ministries in St Louis.

In November the decision was made to put Stephen Ministry on "hold" for now and to revisit the ministry in the near future.

We want to thank all of the people who have participated in this ministry either as a Stephen Minister or as a care receiver. We pray that your participation has helped you grow in your faith and in your relationship with God.

STEWARDSHIP

Annual Report from Marie Marck

The Stewardship Committee members continue to be dedicated and responsive to help meet the needs of life at Ascension.

The largest undertaking for 2024 was the planning and completion of a new Church Directory. A special thanks to Dawn Sheid for her participation in the photography part of the project.

Stewardship worked with Thrivent and continued to sponsor fundraisers to assist the Property Committee, as well as provide opportunities for fellowship. We held the annual Corn Hole tournament and a Paint Night event.

Each month members of our church were asked to do a temple talk in order to highlight a ministry or activity they are involved with in the life of Ascension. We will be continuing this in 2025

To help members connect with supporting the monthly Special Needs donations, we invited special speakers to talk about the organization or ministry. Speakers were from our congregation and a special guest from our Synod. This will also continue in 2025.

To end the year, Christmas gift bags were assembled and distributed to 15 homebound members. A special thank you to the Eucharistic Ministers for delivering the bags to their assigned members.

WELCA

Annual Report from Pat Massaro & Anita Quynn

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.”

In 2024, we continued our monthly meetings for the women of WELCA. About 20 women came together each month. Sharing in community, strengthened each member, helping raise the hopes and joys of each other and building up their spiritual growth.

There are currently 2 circles of WELCA women meeting: Priscilla meets on the 1st Monday of the month at 7 pm. Lydia meets on the 2nd Thursday of the month at 11am.

The WELCA circles continue 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 women join together to work on service projects.

The WELCA Circles have donated: \$ 360.00 to WELCA Synod, \$50.00 to Vicki for Christmas, as a thank you for all she does.

Both circles are committed to bringing in donations for the food pantry.

The Priscilla Circle hosted 2 coffee hours.

The WELCA Circles reminds all women of Ascension Lutheran Church are welcome to join us as we continue to meet for fellowship, a chat and laughter, sharing Gods love for each other at Ascension Lutheran Church and the world around us.

The WELCA Circles mourn the loss of Phyllis Bartels and Grace Schumacher longtime friends and members of WELCA

WORSHIP AND MUSIC

Annual Report from John Wern

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit”. - Romans 15:13

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 guides, assisting ministers, communion assistants, ushers and musicians.

We have continued in-person services and streaming simultaneously on both Facebook and YouTube. Our choirs perform on a regular basis in-person at the services, including the Praise Choir/Band, and having volunteers read the lessons. We distribute communion at the communion rail at our 9am and 10:30 am services and have ushers collect the offering. In addition, we have recorded 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 performed live at our Christmas Eve Services. Our decision to offer two services on Christmas Eve was a success with both services almost full and the total number of parishioners exceeding last year’s.

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 all who help with keeping our live stream going.

Respectfully submitted,

John Wern – Committee Chair

Committee Members:

Pastor Justin, Pastor Patty, David Johnson, Thomas Tresselt, Vicky Elfers, Lisa Perreira, Heidi Manzo, Debra Mann, Nick Georghiou, Russ Bliss, Susan Bliss, Ken Drasser

YOUTH COMMITTEE

Annual Report from Kelly Reno and Jean Belcher

The year 2024 was filled with so many amazing events and opportunities to bring our youth together. I have been thrilled to work with everyone at Ascension to help build this important ministry.

During the winter months last year, we held several youth fundraisers such as BINGO Night, Trivia Night and the famous Chili Cook- Off. All were so much fun and great events to bring our youth and congregation together!

We held an “at home” Confirmation Camp this summer with about 15 youth attending. The group participated in a variety of activities including a day spent at Splish Splash, Belmont Park in the rain and exploring and enjoying a wonderful new spot called Scott’s Pointe. 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 addition, this summer, eight youth, Pastor Justin and I were so blessed to be able to attend the ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans. The experience was life changing for all involved. Many thanks to our amazing congregation for all the support through fundraising and other opportunities. We grew in faith through thoughtful speakers, danced to amazing music, made friends from all over and explored New Orleans.

In the fall, we had 6 youth who received their Confirmation. What a blessing! We also began weekly Confirmation classes for those students in 6th and 7th grade. Our 8th graders are participating in a variety of volunteering activities including participating at the League of Yes baseball organization helping youngsters with special needs play the game and collecting coats for the Long Island Coalition for the Homeless.

Breakfast Bunch continued for the 24-25 year. Kelly Reno continues to oversee this important ministry and we have opened this to include all our youth in 6 - 12 grades. They meet one Sunday a month for some breakfast, fellowship and Bible study.

Our youth has had the opportunity to have some fun by participating in an overnight Lock-In in January, a bowling night, Firepit Fridays over the summer months, Spooky Walk in October and an Escape Room 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, decorating greenery 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 this year of growth. I would like to especially thank Kelly Reno, our Chairperson, Erica Barr, Stephanie Holdcroft, Dawn Scheid, Deb DeMarchis and of course Pastor Justin for all

their support and guidance throughout the year! We are looking forward to 2025 and lots of growth and fellowship for our Youth!

PROPOSED BUDGET FOR 2025

By Janet Anderson and Finance Committee

ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH 2025 PROPOSED BUDGET

EXPENSES

PASTORAL MINISTRY

Defined Compensation	101,320.36
Payroll Taxes	6,241.33
Pension and Health	<u>59,859.84</u>
TOTAL	167,421.53

LAY ASSISTANT TO THE PASTOR

Defined Compensation	56,100.00
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LATINO MINISTRY

Mission Developer	25,000.00
Expenses	0.00
Less Grant Funding	<u>0.00</u>
TOTAL	25,000.00

TOTAL PASTORAL MINISTRY	248,521.53
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WORSHIP

Director of Music Ministry	38,048.00
Music Ministry	800.00
Latino Musician	7,490.88
Praise Band	0.00
Nursery Aide	1,000.00
Payroll Taxes	<u>2,910.58</u>
TOTAL	50,249.46

ADMINISTRATION

Business Administrator	25,000.00
Maintenance Salary	8,500.00
Cleaning Service	30,000.00
Payroll Taxes	10,000.00
Payroll Service	4,500.00

Office Supplies	2,500.00
Copy Machines	5,500.00
Telephone/Internet	5,000.00
Postage	1,000.00
Miscellaneous	<u>1,500.00</u>
TOTAL	93,500.00

PROGRAM

Youth Director	25,500.00
Family Ministry Director	5,000.00
Payroll Taxes	2,500.00
Continuing Education	1,000.00
Christian Education	2,000.00
Youth Ministry	1,000.00
Confirmation Ministries	1,000.00
Communications(IT)	2,000.00
Evangelism	250.00
Stewardship	500.00
Vanco Direct Deposit Fees	2,000.00
Special Events	500.00
Adult Ministry	250.00
Synod Assembly	<u>2,000.00</u>
TOTAL	45,500.00

PROPERTY

Fuel	6,500.00
Heating and A/C Maintenance Contracts	500.00
Gas	10,000.00
Electric	14,500.00
Sanitation	5,000.00
Grounds Contract	9,000.00
Snow Removal	0.00
Water	2,500.00
Janitorial Supplies	1,500.00
Equipment	500.00
General Maintenance	4,000.00
Property Projects	3,000.00
Town Taxes	<u>900.00</u>
TOTAL	57,900.00

OTHER EXPENSES

Benevolence (Synod and other Outreach)	23,500.00
Insurance	55,000.00
Mortgage Expense	34,212.00

Lutheran High School	<u>900.00</u>
TOTAL	113,612.00

TOTAL – PROPOSED EXPENSES	609,282.99
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INCOME

PLEDGES (Envelope Offerings, loose offerings and Sunday School)	454,000.00
SPECIAL OFFERINGS (Lent, Easter, Thanksgiving, Advent, Christmas)	17,000.00
OTHER INCOME (Rentals, Hall use, other donations and Thrivent Choice dollars)	81,500.00
PRESCHOOL INCOME (Building use fee)	50,000.00

TOTAL PROJECTED INCOME	602,500.00
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GRAND TOTAL PROPOSED INCOME LESS EXPENSES SURPLUS(DEFICIT)	(6,782.99)
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% of income to Expenses	-1.11%
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PRE-SCHOOL

Capital Improvements	0.00
Expenses (Preschool 229,100 + Building use fee 50,000)	<u>279,100.00</u>
TOTAL – PROPOSED EXPENSES	279,100.00

Income (Preschool tuition 280,000 + Afternoon Adventures 10,000)	<u>290,000.00</u>
TOTAL – PROPOSED INCOME	290,000.00

GRAND TOTAL PROPOSED INCOME LESS EXPENSES SURPLUS(DEFICIT)	10,900.00
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BIOGRAPHIES FOR COUNCIL POSITIONS OFFICAL AND BALLOT

Marie Marck: I have been a member of Ascension since 1959. I received all my religious instruction through Ascension's Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, and Confirmation programs. In my 20's and 30's I participated in children and youth ministries. These included Sunday School and Confirmation teacher, Junior Youth leader, and Confirmation Camp. I served on Church Council for several terms. Presently, I am a Stephen Minister, a member of the God's Work, Our Hands ministry, and lead the Stewardship Committee.

Nominations to the Congregational Council 2025

The following persons are nominated to serve on the Congregational Council for 2025:

_____ Marie Marck (1st 2-year term)

_____ Stephanie Holdcroft (3rd 2-year term)

_____ Lois Lehr (2nd 2-year term)

_____ Madeline Sharrock (2nd 2-year term)

_____ Kelly Reno (2nd 2-year term)

The following persons are nominated to serve a one-year term on the Congregational Council for 2025

_____ Janet Anderson (Treasurer)

_____ Anna Rihani (Latino Ministry Representative)

_____ Pat Massaro (WELCA Representative)

DEACONS

Recommendation: that Susan Bliss' call as a Synodical Deacon of Ascension Lutheran Church, Deer Park, N.Y. be extended for 2025

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 prayer group twice monthly, healing service once a month and educational activities on prayer.
2. Assisting on the Altar
3. Scheduling of Worship Assistants

Recommendation: that Vicki Elfers' call as a Synodical Deacon of Ascension Lutheran Church, Deer Park, N.Y. be extended for 2025.

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. Chairperson of the Reconciling in Christ Committee
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 AND BALLOT

Madeline Sharrock

My name is Madeline Sharrock. I, along with my husband, Peter, have been members of Ascension since 2019.

I am so blessed to call Ascension my church home and I have been pleased to serve as your Vice President and member of the Personnel Committee. I also assist with worship services as an Assistant Minister, Eucharistic Minister and Lay Reader. Being part of the Priscilla Circle of WELCA, I have led programming at our monthly meetings and enjoy the fellowship of our gatherings. 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 or hiking trails across Long Island with my husband, and I serve on the Board of Directors of Camp Ma-He-Tu, a Lutheran Girls' Camp in Bear Mountain.

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 2025 Metro Synod Assembly.

Marie Marck

I have been a member of Ascension since 1959. I received all my religious instruction through Ascension's Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, and Confirmation programs.

In my 20's and 30's I participated in children and youth ministries. These included Sunday School and Confirmation teacher, Junior Youth leader, and Confirmation Camp. I served on Church Council for several terms. Presently, I am a Stephen Minister, a member of the God's Work, Our Hands ministry, and lead the Stewardship Committee.

I believe the ELCA is at a critical moment in time where decisions need to be made that will help the Synod guide us into a promising future where our churches can serve God reaching new members. Therefore, I am interested in being a member of this important group representing Ascension and the future.

Vicki Elfers

I have been a member for 34 Years.

I have been involved in many ministries over the years with my current ministries being a Stephen Ministry leader, an assisting minister, a communion assistant, and preaching. I have also worked in the church office for 30 years.

I enjoy being involved in the business of the church. I take the privilege to vote very seriously and always look to vote with my conscience. This year I will listen carefully to each candidate running for Bishop and cast my vote for the person whom I feel will be best suited to lead our Synod.

Susan Bliss

I've been a member since 200

The ministries I've been involved with are The Prayer Group, the Healing service and I'm also a Stephen Minister.

I would like to attend the Synod assembly because I feel it's very important for me to be there as a voting member, especially at this time where we are electing a new bishop. I am always also interested in learning what our wider church is doing.

BALLOT FOR SYNOD ASSEMBLY REPRESENTATIVES

_____ Madeline Sharrock

_____ Marie Marck

_____ Vicki Elfers

_____ Susan Bliss

RESOLUTIONS

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:

Erica Barr

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	Jean Belcher	Vicki Elfers
Charlie Filippazzo	Ali Johnson	David Johnson
Peggy Lundquist	Mary Murphy	

During this year we benefited from additional staff members that we also want to express our gratitude to God for their work they provided during 2024:

Pastor John Krahn

Pastor Dennis O'Rourke

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

Ann Marie Achatz	Kathy Fifield	Tara Fazio
Jo-Ann Hegeman	Carol Marx	Susan Quinn
Dawn Scheid	Denise Walker	Katie Attard
Tara Casucci	Terri DeBlasi	Samantha Glibbery
Pat Harty	Jill Jensen	Kelly Levy
Sonja Milankovic	Jaime Nemeth	Hailey Quinn
Amanda Walker	Victoria 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 and Choice Dollars 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 and Pastor Patty.