



ALC 2019 highlights

WHAT DO THESE COMMITTEES DO?

Worship & Music committee

- ▶ **W&M arranged for guest worship leaders for when Pastor Nancy is away from Ascension.**
- ▶ **W&M facilitated collaboration and coordination between Pastor Nancy, assorted Choirs, musicians, ushers, Liturgical assistants, and Communion assistants to provide a pleasant, efficient worship experience for the congregation.**
- ▶ **W&M created a formal mechanism for tracking service settings used throughout the year.**
 - ▶ From January through Sept. 2019 an average of 55 adults and 7 children worshiped in 37 worship services.
 - ▶ This compares to January through Sept. 2018, which had an average of 55 adults and 6 children.
- ▶ **W&M acted on a suggestion from CFC which resulted in changing the format of the weekly bulletin to save a considerable amount of paper.**
 - ▶ The general form of the bulletin (the reusable portion) is on white paper while the portion that's specific to a given week is printed on one sheet of flesh-colored paper.
- ▶ **W&M facilitated variety in our worship experience**
 - ▶ Provided a variety of service leaders, including:
 - ▶ Dr. Thomas/Good Shepherd, Reverend Ann Larson, Wanda Hines (JUMP), Senator/Reverend Debbie Ingram, and Father Micah from St. Timothy's
 - ▶ Arranged for an assortment of Temple Talks
 - ▶ Facilitated a variety of worship types
 - ▶ Worship at North Beach, Blessing of the Animals, Youth Sunday
- ▶ **W&M arranged for pot-luck gatherings mid-week during Lent**

Mutual Ministry committee

The Mutual Ministry Committee (MMC) is considered to be the Human Resources committee for ALC.

- ▶ **MMC met monthly during the year to consider and to address personnel matters and issues arising from the congregation.**
- ▶ **MMC made a recommendation to Council for a constitution discrepancy related to the term limits of Council Officers.**
 - ▶ The recommendation was that Officers may serve a total of 6 years (two 3 year terms) which was ultimately brought to the Congregational Meeting.
- ▶ **MMC reviewed the Congregation Evaluation responses to questions rating the services, the congregation, Pastor Nancy, and other staff.**
 - ▶ MMC then provided feedback to Council.
- ▶ **MMC developed Self-Evaluations for Pastor and church staff.**

Education committee

- ▶ **Sunday School now has 4 full classes of youth plus a thriving class of parents.**
 - ▶ There were 34 registered children and youth in Sunday school
 - ▶ This includes 7 confirmands and 3 classes of pre-K to 7th graders
 - ▶ Attendance averaged 13 weeks per child (not including Confirmation, for which the 7 confirmands attended the majority of the classes)."
 - ▶ We welcomed 2 new families to our program last school year and a third family new this fall.
 - ▶ Attendance each week has been fairly steady across each class.
- ▶ **Education Committee...**
 - ▶ kicked off our year with our annual service on North Beach,
 - ▶ learned about Martin Luther and the history of the Lutheran church,
 - ▶ had our annual Christmas pageant,
 - ▶ celebrated "Love" Sunday,
 - ▶ made Resurrection egg sets to learn about Holy Week and Easter, and
 - ▶ had a great youth Sunday!
- ▶ **We had a few of our youth serving as ushers in 2019**
 - ▶ We have several new youth that are excited to get involved in serving next year.
- ▶ **We also had a small but successful Kidz Kamp during the summer months.**

Social Action committee

- ▶ **Social Action Comm. facilitated 7 Educational Temple Talks and Coffee-Hour Programs**
- ▶ **Social Action Comm. sponsored 5 Fellowship Events and Fundraisers**
 - ▶ Oktoberfest Fundraiser for Hurricane Victims through ELCA
 - ▶ Christmas Lutheran Church/National Cathedral Advent Service Simulcast Breakfast and Fundraiser for Bright Stars of Bethlehem Scholarships
 - ▶ Scandinavian Dinner in support of Meal Packaging Event
 - ▶ Coffee Hour celebrating 40 years of Meals on Wheels
 - ▶ Chicken Barbecue in support of Meal Packaging Event
- ▶ **Social Action Comm. successfully advocated for financial and other support to many local charities, including:**
 - ▶ ANEW Place (*transitional housing and rehab program for homeless adults*)
 - ▶ Ascension Quilters
 - ▶ Chittenden County Food Shelf
 - ▶ Cooperative Christian Ministry at UVM
 - ▶ ELCA Hunger Appeal/Disaster Relief
 - ▶ Good News Garage
 - ▶ McClure Miller Respite House
 - ▶ JUMP
 - ▶ Lutheran World Relief
 - ▶ Vermont Interfaith Action

Social Action committee, pg. 2

▶ **Social Action Comm. participated in 5 Legislative-related activities:**

- ▶ Bread for the World (*collective Christian organization urging US lawmakers to end hunger at home and abroad*) Offering of Letters (2 campaigns)
- ▶ ONE (*global campaign to end extreme poverty and preventable disease by 2030*) letter writing campaigns (3: in support of BUILD Act, Global Fund Program, and Global Fragility)
- ▶ Fund for Global Health letter writing campaign to support increased funding for US AID Tuberculosis Program
- ▶ Attendance at Vermont Senate Budget Hearings
- ▶ Letter to US Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service to comment against revising categorical eligibility in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which, if implemented, would lead to over 13,000 Vermonters losing benefits

▶ **Social Action Comm. coordinated special activities and events:**

- ▶ Meal Packaging (12, 000 meals)
- ▶ Student Meal for Cooperative Christian Ministry at the University of Vermont
- ▶ Giving Tree
- ▶ Abenaki Food Shelf
- ▶ Fair Trade Coffee Project (ongoing)
- ▶ Shelburne Charlotte Hinesburg Interfaith Projects (*SCHIP, area faith communities working together to raise funds for grants to local communities through SCHIP's Treasures Resale Shop, ongoing*)
- ▶ Endorsement of 6/16/19 Conference, "Responding to the Humanitarian Migrant Crisis"

Long Range Planning committee

- ▶ **Long Range Planning Comm. (LRPC) completed a congregation needs survey and Mud Morning2 workshop**
 - ▶ The combination of these two activities gave us a comprehensive perspective on the direction the congregation desired to go and what needed to be done to enable that direction.
- ▶ **LRPC arranged a preparation meeting for our consultation with J.Spann (building consultant for ELCA Mission Investment Fund).**
 - ▶ This workshop was facilitated by B.Lemley and was focused on composing a “Needs assessment”.
- ▶ **LRPC arranged a meeting between ALC members and the ELCA representative for church architecture (Jeff Spann).**
 - ▶ He provided many useful recommendations, both for the building/grounds themselves and for how our evaluative procedure ought to run.

Property committee

- ▶ **Property Comm. initiated a task force that has developed a landscaping plan**
- ▶ **Developed a playground improvement addressing safety concerns**
- ▶ **Completed modification of outdoor storage shed to accommodate our mowing machines**
- ▶ **Installed LED motion sensor light over outside door to annex**
- ▶ **Attended a Safety/Emergency Planning Meeting presented by Homeland Security**
- ▶ **Sponsored CONGREGATION spring work/cleaning day:**
 - ▶ Washed windows inside and out
 - ▶ Did general dusting including sills, shelves, cobwebs, basement stairs, etc
 - ▶ Sorted and cleaned the main kitchen and refrigerator
 - ▶ Cleaned surfaces in the Sunday School room and nursery,
 - ▶ Did general yard work
 - ▶ Removed of pine needles from the roof
 - ▶ Flushed the roof rain gutters

Finance committee

- ▶ The Finance Committee worked closely with the Council and the Stewardship Committee to implement the successful “Raise the Bar” campaign to help balance the 2019 budget.
- ▶ Quarterly investment reviews and portfolio adjustments were held with our financial advisor Thrivent Financial.
- ▶ The Committee provided quarterly reports on the financial health of the congregation to all members
- ▶ Long term space use contracts were negotiated in concert with other committees and staff and extended with two tenants, St. Timothy and Prevent Child Abuse Vermont.
- ▶ The Finance Committee took the lead in assisting and compiling the 2020 draft budget with all committees.

Memorials and Celebrations committee

- ▶ **The amount in the M&C fund (as of Sept'19) is \$17,886.86**
 - ▶ Project grants from this fund can be requested to pay for needs of the congregation by filing out a request form and submitting it to M&C for consideration.
- ▶ **Labeled envelopes for donations to the M&C fund have been produced listing:**
 - ▶ Donor,
 - ▶ Amount,
 - ▶ Date to be recognized in bulletin,
 - ▶ Flowers, or In honor/memory of: General Fund or Other designation.
 - ▶ These will be placed to the right of the entrance to the Sanctuary
- ▶ **Ron Ulmer will be creating a bench for the Memorial garden.**
 - ▶ The bench will be crafted from the remaining wood of the Memorial Garden Cross
 - ▶ The project will include applying wood preservative for both the bench and the cross.
 - ▶ Cindy Ulmer will inquire about the cost of a plaque with the inscription "And God planted a seed," which will be applied to the bench.

Stewardship committee

- ▶ **Launched the “Raise the Bar” campaign in January to meet and/or exceed the financial needs of the 2019 budget passed by the congregation.**
 - ▶ The “high bar” was set at 8% to balance the budget.
 - ▶ The congregation generously responded to the challenge and pledged more than 10% to balance the 2019 budget.
 - ▶ Through August 2019, receipts are an additional 6% ahead of budget. Thank you!
- ▶ **Collected Time & Talent participation/volunteer commitments from church members.**
- ▶ **Organized spring Time & Talent Fair and Coffee Hour (hosted by Church Council) to better introduce committees and ministries to church family and friends.**
- ▶ **Tabulated and distributed Time & Talent volunteer information and commitments to all committees for action.**
- ▶ **Coordinated 2020 budget with Finance Committee and Church Council for the 2020 fall stewardship campaign.**
- ▶ **Organized and carried out the 2020 fall stewardship campaign.**
 - ▶ Chose Transformation (Romans 12:2) as the campaign’s theme and Scripture guidance. Thanks to John Fritsche for his suggestion.
 - ▶ Scheduled four temple talks (Barry Lemley, Beth Dreibelbis, Erik Breiland and John Fritsche).
 - ▶ Sent out the stewardship letter with theme and important dates and events.
 - ▶ Planned the fall Time & Talent Fair and Coffee Hour, with the distribution of the Time & Talent forms, for Oct. 6.
 - ▶ Updated and planned distribution of new pledge card and financial information.
 - ▶ Planned and hosted celebratory Stewardship Sunday (Oct. 13) Potluck Luncheon.

Care for Creation committee

Note: *By the end of 2018 the carbon emissions from energy use at Ascension totaled about 28 tons of CO₂, 77% of which was from burning natural gas to heat the church building and the remaining 23 percent from the electricity we use. **This is only 46 percent of the 61 tons CO₂ in 2005.***

- ▶ Sponsored an Earth Day Celebration: Pollinators
- ▶ C4C members attended Water Action Network Meetings at Echo and Montpelier
- ▶ 3 C4C members attended Clean Water Day at Montpelier
- ▶ Climate Action Campaign in April encouraged members to Act for the climate letter writing campaign in support of passage of S. 96, the clean water funding bill
- ▶ Policy was changed in kitchen to stop using any paper goods except napkins
- ▶ C4C facilitated writing a letter to TJ Donovan pertaining to “Endangered Species Threatened”, asking him to join CA and MA in a suit.
- ▶ C4C sponsored a Sacred Waters Canoe Trip and Hike (Funded through grant from NE Grassroots Foundation)
- ▶ 11 members of ALC rang bells for the Climate Strike 0 9/20, while Pastor and several others joined a rally on Church Street
- ▶ C4C members have joined the Vermont Clean Water Network and collaborated with other network members on taking steps to nurture a culture of clean water.

Care for Creation committee, pg. 2

- ▶ **In January, members of C4C traveled to Montpelier to participate in a Vermont Clean Water Day.**
 - ▶ ALC followed up by working with our congregation to support action by the Vermont Legislature to advance action needed to protect Vermont waters.
- ▶ **In April, C4C led congregation efforts to voice support for state legislation to fund a sustained water clean-up program in Vermont.**
 - ▶ This was eventually enacted into law in June.
- ▶ **In April and May, C4C began publicizing the availability of the Congregational Watershed Discipleship Manual that Richard Butz and Pastor Nancy developed for Vermont Interfaith Power and Light over the last year.**
- ▶ **On June 9, C4C funded and led a congregation canoe trip with naturalists from the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum on the LaPlatte River.**
 - ▶ A total of 39 people participated.
- ▶ **On September 9th, C4C helped to organize, to raised funds for, and participated in the Sacred Waters Canoe Trip and Hike sponsored by Ascension, All Souls Interfaith Gathering, VTIPL, and ECHO.**
- ▶ **C4C introduced the “Brain Bytes” feature in the weekly church E-News.**
 - ▶ The “Brain Bytes” offers interested readers links to interesting ideas about applying a commitment to caring for Creation in our daily lives.
 - ▶ The articles address a wide range of topics from personal health to protecting the local environment.

Care for Creation committee, pg. 3

- ▶ **C4C hosted a coffee hour discussion on recycling, re-use, and composting practices.**
 - ▶ Lauren Lynd from the Chittenden Solid Waste District (CSWD) led an energized discussion of recent advances in recycling, re-use, and composting practices we all can adopt.
- ▶ **C4C purchased two sets of recycling/composting/waste-disposal bins, one for each of our two kitchens.**
 - ▶ This project was aided by a matching grant we obtained from the CSWD
 - ▶ The new bins are attractive, and with their clear labeling will help us practice good recycling, composting, and waste minimization.
- ▶ **On May 5 Ascension participated in the nationwide Climate Sunday prayer and education.**
 - ▶ Committing our congregation to the Climate Sunday worship celebration is now a regular Ascension activity that we conduct around the time of the worldwide Earth Day in April.
- ▶ **On September 20th, members of the Ascension community joined in ringing bells for 60 seconds at noon.**
 - ▶ In doing this, ALC joined the community gathering in Burlington to express support for the global student climate strike, which engaged millions of people around our planet.