

The Church Mouse

Ascension Lutheran Church Newsletter



October 2013



Pr. Nancy Wright

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Ascension's Vision

Ascension Lutheran Church celebrates faith and trusts in God's grace and salvation through Jesus Christ.

Our Mission

We worship in word and sacrament, care for God's creation, serve people in need, and respect differences.

Dear Friends,

On March 23, 2013, about fifty Ascension parishioners met on "March Mud Morning" to ask how we can serve and be better ministers in Christ's name. We wrote on large sheets a beautiful list of activities (see the list in this issue of the Mouse). Then council asked each committee to pick an activity for this year. The committees attached their budget requests for 2014 to these activities. Council will help the committees monitor their progress. Also, if you as an individual wish to take on any activity, please do so. Just let the relevant committee know. Here in unabbreviated form is what the committees have chosen to do beginning now:

CARE FOR CREATION COMMITTEE

The Mud Season planning event in March identified several Care for Creation objectives (list appended to this budget), two of which offer inspiration for work our Committee has long wanted to begin, that is to enlist Congregation members in taking active steps to reduce their environmental footprint, i.e.,

1. Become a voice for moving to a sustainable path in our lives and congregation
2. Make our church an example of sustainable practice and grow Ascension's reputation for care for creation

We request a small budget (\$75-\$150) to begin a campaign to enlist home-owner members of our congregation to get an energy audit and to implement the audit recommended home energy efficiency improvements. VT Interfaith Power & Light is working with Efficiency Vermont to develop a program that would reward a congregation with incentive payments if members of the congregation purchase a home energy audit and would offer additional reward payments if the homeowner acted to implement the audit recommendations. Efficiency Vermont would require that the funds be used for efficiency improvements in the Church building, something we want to do and will want help funding. We will design the program to recoup the budget cost in benefits provided by this campaign.

WORSHIP AND MUSIC COMMITTEE

We adopt this activity listed at Mud Morning: "We need the mechanisms to identify who needs visits, cards, and prayers, inclusive of all ages." At upcoming meetings, we will identify the mechanisms needed to provide loving support to parishioners in this way.

MISSION COMMITTEE

Group 2: Assimilating Youth and New Members

- Get them involved *Example: Two new Ascension members, Gail and Dick Butz, are members of the Mission Committee and are coordinating an activity for Service Sunday.*
- New member sessions (What activities? How to get involved? *Already we have decided to use "email blasts" as an additional communication tool and additional ways to do this will be forthcoming.*

Group 4: What is God calling us to do for those in poverty of spirit and means?

Plan movies and events to draw and address community and global needs so people bring questions and concerns. *Examples: Kay Antos's and others' educational activities about malaria taught members of all ages about this deadly disease and led to an outpouring of support. Bill Valliere's plan for a movie focused on Electrify Africa and advocacy for this through ONE will involve efforts that do not require monetary contributions but rather contact to members of Congress.*

Group 6: What is God calling us to do for the Elderly?

- What can/should we do to better support our elderly neighbors in the community?
For example, create a group that overtly connects young to old to achieve intergenerational learning/teaching. Example: As part of Service Sunday, the children will be going to Allenwood Senior Living Center where Ascension member Harriet Richards lives. It is hoped that this will start a connection between Ascension and Allenwood in the future.

CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILY MINISTRY

Group 1: Bonds through Fellowship

Form a group with younger couples/singles/young families: the committee will host a coffee hour for fellowship each Sunday at 9 am; foster fellowship events such as Best of the Worst (Oct. 26); develop other events that connect congregational families to one another.

With guidance from the Holy Spirit we will move forward this year in ministry, guided by council and all the above committees, along with the Long-Range Planning committee. The LRP committee helps us foresee and plan for our ministry into the next three to five years.

Faithfully,

Nancy Wright

Report from Council President, Steve Snook**From the Council President**

On September 6 Ascension Child Care formally informed Ascension Lutheran Church council that they are moving into a new facility, close by on Shelburne Road, just inside the Shelburne line. They were obliged to wait for approval of a grant application to the state of Vermont that they needed to upgrade the prospective property, by adding sprinklers, additional toilets and sinks, and so forth. The grant has been approved, praise God, and so the move is underway. ACC anticipates completing the move on November 30. There is much they have to do, and key among the tasks is a joint inventory of property. Council members Walter Grant and Valerie Rittershausen have kindly volunteered to conduct the joint inventory by October 31.

We celebrate the growth of ACC over the past twenty-five years into a vibrant child care facility that so flourished it outgrew the space we could provide. This is a success that we are proud of, and as we wish ACC all the best in the next chapter of its career, we note the challenge and the opportunity this change presents to the church. To meet the challenge and seize the opportunity, the Long Range Planning Committee undertook a survey of the congregation to learn members' views of how our space should be used.

The survey results are in. Bill Valliere is analyzing them and will present the results and his analysis to the congregation after the service on October 6.

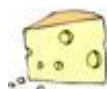
The congregation's views, once validated through discussion, will guide the Long Range Planning Committee as it rolls up its sleeves and gets to work on a plan that, God willing, will be presented, through council, to the congregation early in 2014, on what use to make of our space.

We are presented with an exciting opportunity, but this is a time of uncertainty as well. Council is putting together an annual budget that must account for the loss of rental income for an indeterminate period of time. This uncertainty requires us all to prayerfully reflect on what God calls us to do as stewards of our church. The Stewardship Committee is redoubling its efforts to stimulate pledging this year. I am confident that all members of the congregation will look into their heart and ask God to guide them as they make their pledge for 2014. I am inspired by the story of the loaves and the fish to believe that we will meet the budgetary challenge we face, and we will go forward with a renewed mission for use of our space.

As the air grows crisper and the season begins to change, Ascension Lutheran Church needs your prayers, your time, your talent and your gifts as much, if not more than ever before. I appeal to all members to rise to the challenge, and I believe all of us will.



Steve Snook



Summary Statement of Operations—Month Ended August 2013—submitted by Treasurer, France Leblanc

All amounts are in Dollars

Description	Actual 2013	Budget 2013	Variance Favorable (Unfav.)
Revenue			
Contributions received	101,451	111,056	(9,605)
Childcare rental receipts	15,662	21,304	(5,642)
TOTAL REVENUE	117,113	132,360	(15,247)
Expenses			
Pastoral Services	67,228	64,824	(2,404)
Administration	21,583	19,416	(2,167)
Worship & Music	6,646	7,896	1,250
Children, Youth & Family	522	512	(10)
Benevolence and Outreach	8,833	11,520	2,687
Youth Program	8,514	8,682	168
Church Property	18,174	18,464	290
Insurance	1,720	2,192	472
TOTAL EXPENSES	133,220	133,506	286
NET OPERATING GAIN (LOSS)	(16,107)	(1,146)	(14,961)

Parishioners in Worship

ALC Sunday Attendance

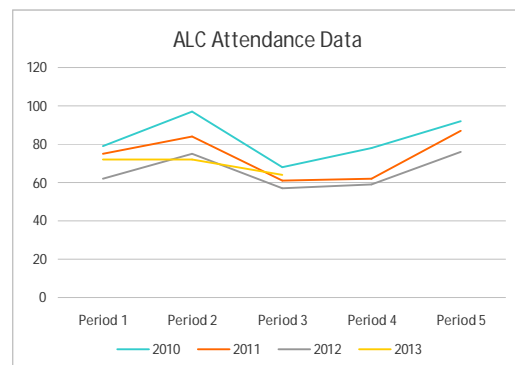
This is the first of a series of occasional discussions to appear in the Mouse on the subject of church attendance here at Ascension.

During recent years (2010-2013) attendance at Ascension’s Sunday services has varied from a low of 30 to a high of 179. On any given Sunday there is a 50/50 chance that attendance will be between 61 and 84 people (and a 50/50 chance that the number will be above or below that range. Further, church attendance varies considerably in a “normal” year, tending to peak during the Easter and Christmas seasons. However, by dividing the years into four 10-week periods plus one 12-week period and averaging the attendance data for each of those periods, it becomes possible to see some trends.

The numerical data is as follows:

Pe- riod	2010	2011	2012	2013
1	79	75	62	72
2	97	84	75	72
3	68	61	57	64
4	78	62	59	
5	92	87	76	

The trends become more evident when we view the same data graphically:



Mission note from Marcia Gustafson

Thanks to all who contributed to Service Sunday to make a grand celebration of ELCA's 25th anniversary! We touched a wide variety of community members with our service projects, and they are grateful.

Our line-up of mission activities for the last quarter of the year includes Meals on Wheels (every 1st and 5th Friday); the CROP Walk on Sunday, October 13; the Bread for the World letter writing on October 20; and alternative gift fair with date still to be determined; and the annual Giving Tree. Ongoing projects include shampoo and kids' books for JUMP. Your participation is welcome in one or all!

Thank you,

Marcia

ON NOV. 2, JUMP WILL BE HOSTING THE 4TH BEST JUMP DINNER EVER!

We'll gather at 1st United Methodist Church in Burlington, and our church will again provide the Brats and Sauerkraut (and mashed potatoes) for the dinner. If you would like to donate this year please let Beth Dreibelbis know...She will be calling the usual chefs also. Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$5 for children. Seatings are 5:00 and 6:30. More information will follow. See you there !!....

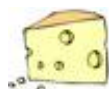
SHAMPOO AND QUART JARS NEEDED !!

Every week JUMP distributes about 50 bottles of shampoo. We are one of two "shampoo churches". Families are so thankful to be able to have clean hair. Shampoo is often on sale for less than a dollar...please bring shampoo to church and Beth will take it weekly to be distributed. Thanks for helping.....**JUMP is again making that wonderful Friendship Soup for the holidays.** If you have any Mason - type jars please bring them to church and put them in the JUMP basket in the narthex. The jars must be QUART jars, smaller jars are not able to be used. Lids are not necessary.

We had a terrific response to the **JUMP food bag project.** Jake Hansen was given receipts for **\$1,010.28** worth of food bags. Wow! *If you were involved would you please write your name on a piece of paper and put it in Jake's box in the office or email him at organic343@hotmail.com.* Thrivent requests the names of those who were involved in the project. We don't need to match names with amounts given, just asked to list those who helped.

**B R E A D F O R T H E W O R L D S U N D A Y I S
O C T O B E R 2 0 T H ... 1 I N 2 4 !**

Although many of us faithfully support the ELCA World Hunger Appeal, Lutheran World Relief, JUMP, and other food charities, all of that combined accounts for only 1 in 24 bags of food assistance. The remaining 23 out of 24 bags are provided by federal nutrition programs. Government budget cutting has the potential to completely overwhelm our charitable efforts with newly impoverished people trying to completely feed their families. If we are willing, we can make a difference: On October 20, Bread for the World Sunday, Ascension will be participating with an Offering of Letters to Congress urging support for the reduction of hunger and poverty at home and around the world. **Contact Richard or Gail Butz to learn more.**



Care for Creation Note from Sam Swanson**Care for Creation Committee – the long term commitment to energy efficiency**

Ten years ago, Ascension faced gradually increasing energy bills as energy use and the cost of energy grew each year, requiring more and more funds from our budget. By 2005 Ascension was spending about \$12.6 thousand on gas and electricity – \$6.2 thousand on natural gas to heat the building and \$6.4 thousand on electricity.

The newly formed Care for Creation Committee wanted to change this, recognizing that energy efficiency and renewable energy were not only good for the planet but also offer a great opportunity to save money. The Committee set a Congregation goal of reducing energy use from polluting fossil fuel by 50 percent by 2015 and by 80 percent by 2020. In choosing to move ahead and make changes to reduce energy use, Ascension took decisive moral action that is helping to tackle the climate crisis.

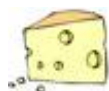
We started by enlisting the help of VT Interfaith Power & Light (VTIPL) with identifying effective energy saving actions. VTIPL provided an energy assessment that the committee used to develop a plan of action for the Church.

The work done so far has included upgrading to efficient new lighting and to ENERGY STAR appliances, and installing a new energy-efficient heating system. In 2009 the Committee applied for and won a Vermont climate action grant that provided \$11,000 toward the \$26,000 cost of replacing the 30-year-old inefficient heating boiler with a new high efficiency one. We have reduced electricity and natural gas use by about 40 percent. Although energy prices have increased we now spend \$4 thousand less per year on heating and electric bills than we spent prior to making the changes. In addition to cutting our energy bills month after month and year after year, the changes have greatly reduced the contribution we make to climate change, since using less energy has reduces the carbon dioxide emissions from producing the electricity we use and from burning natural gas fuel in the heating system.

Last winter the Care for Creation Committee accepted an offer by Vermont Gas to provide a free energy audit that included a building inspection and a test that measures how gaps in the building structure let the heat out and the cold in during the winter. The Vermont Gas inspector identified serious deficiencies in the ceiling insulation in the section of the Church building occupied by Ascension Child Care and Church Offices. Vermont Gas reports the fiberglass insulation has fallen out in places and that there is no air-seal to keep heated air from escaping through the roof. In the weeks ahead our Committee will work with the Property Committee to repair and improve ceiling conditions in this building. We expect these repairs will move us even closer to achieving Ascension's long term goals for protecting the environment, God's beautiful creation.

We are making great progress. This work has been recognized by the National Interfaith Power & Light designation as a "Green Congregation," the Vermont Natural Resource Council in its profiles of successful community action, and by VTIPL in their annual report to members. There is much more to be done at Ascension and in each of our own homes. We will be in touch with you over the weeks ahead to suggest steps each of us may take in our life at home and our life at Ascension.

The Care for Creation Committee will be hosting a public showing and discussion of the documentary "Journey of the Universe" on Thursday, October 24th, from 6:00-9:00 p.m. Don't miss this opportunity to see this beautiful film and bring your friends. The film has aired numerous times on PBS and was the recent centerpiece for the premiere performance of "The Emergent Universe: An Oratorio" which gathered more than 1,000 people to hear and experience the story in the Breeding Barn at Shelburne Farms.



Group 1: Bonds through Fellowship

- Create a committee to focus on/provide fellowship activities within ALC
- Reinstitute Zone Meetings, including some that have a clear objective/assignment for the participants
- Create a process for "non-committal activities...i.e., project-specific tasks that folks could sign up to participate in, but which had a clear start/end time.
- Provide for a low level of commitment that is natural, organic, and less intimidating as a contrast to today's almost-lifetime responsibility for any committee that one joins.
- Arrange a specific brainstorming meeting to determine what sort of groups/activities would be desirable/appropriate for the community of ALC
 - For example, we might establish support groups based on specific interests and plan social events for these sub-groups
 - People can volunteer to lead one event and that is all.
- Form group with younger couples/singles/young families
 - informal planning meeting
 - everyone plans 1 event for that year
 - 100% social events, no obligations
- Variety
 - New members, sponsors, events
 - Use technology to spread the word, advertise
 - Make it ok to get together in small groups and not include everyone in every activity everytime.

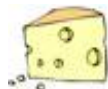
Group 2: Assimilating Youth and New Members

- Get them involved
- New member sessions
 - What activities?
 - How to get involved?
- Have sponsor families/mentoring
- Update new member handbook
- Confirmants – engage and/or mentors
- Redundancy in new membership communication. Use bulletin board with bio's and pictures
- Core group to contact visiting families

Group 3: What is God calling us to do in the Environment?

- Become a voice for changing our lives to sustainable path in our lives and congregation
- Lectures for public and movies
- Use of woods for education
- Development of trail
- Use of woods for spiritual center
- Nurture connection between secular lives, spiritual lives and environment
- Make our church an example of sustainable practice
- Give church reputation for care for creation
- Connect with youth
- Be open and careful with language to avoid exclusive language
- The more we can be multi-use and open, the more we will attract new members and community
- Help each member to transform personal lives
- Community – Which linkages?

Schools	State of VT
City of South Burlington	Greater Burlington
All higher Ed	Childcare
- Enjoy the Environment



Group 4: What is God calling us to do for those in poverty of spirit and means?

Hotels. Shelburne Road – leave contacts for JUMP and ALC

Plan movies and events to draw and address community and global needs so people bring questions and concerns

Learn the need of people in South Burlington. Understand their demographics and needs more accurately and fully. This includes Shelburne and other communities

Who is serving correction facility needs?

Orchard Elementary School opportunity and needs of children and families?

Understanding our role relative to health, emotional, spiritual and poverty around us.

What do we bring to the situation?

Learning and open minds

Join Interfaith Action

Group 5: What is God calling us to do for Children, Family and Youth?

Sunday school classrooms for ALC

Consider church shoppers

Christian Ed Curriculum

Building and maintaining relationship with RIPPLE

Meeting need in south Burlington for mentoring and after-school tutoring (Orchard school and South Burlington Parks and Rec and VT State may have dollars for mentoring and environmental ed.)

Strengthen relation with schools. Make religion real. Jesus in the world.

Don't exclude people for religious reasons

Daycare is very important to community without religions

After school programs very much in demand.

Use our space more intensively. Positive cash flow, but more important is meeting community need

Follow the model of the visiting high school choir from New Jersey...develop a music program to make up for lack of such in the schools. Children's choir for the community/other local churches.

Group 6: What is God calling us to do for the Elderly?

Find a way to minister to the homelessness and poverty of the elderly in our community.

Define a process to connect with the elderly within the ALC family. For example,

How do we identify when someone has not been attending service for a few weeks?

How do we determine when someone has become infirm and is in need of our support and prayers?

How do we provide support to shut-ins and the infirm? (e.g., delivery of flowers from a Sunday service + a visit)

Should we create a group whose role it is to identify shut-ins and the infirm within the ALC family and to provide visitation?

We need the mechanisms to identify who needs visits, cards, and prayers

Pick a shut in each week. Pray for that person and send a card letting them know we prayed for them.

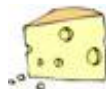
Create a support group for the elderly/aging.

What can/should we do to better support our elderly neighbors in the community?

For example, create a group that overtly connects young to old to achieve intergenerational learning/teaching

Create a "Pairs and spares" social group

Adopt a grandchild/be a grandparent mentor



	October 6 10:00 a.m. Holy Communion With Contemporary Praise Stewardship Sunday	October 13 10:00 a.m. Holy Communion	October 20 10:00 a.m. Holy Communion	October 27 10:00 a.m. Holy Communion Reformation Sunday
Celebrant/	Pr. Nancy Wright	Pr. Nancy Wright	Pr. Nancy Wright	Pr. Nancy Wright
Altar Guild	Lydia Wisloski	Jo White	Antje Mann	Jean Fahrenbach
Communion Assistant	Julie Valliere	Matt Henson	Bob Furst	Marcia Gustafson
Lectors	France LeBlanc	Cheryl Couillard	Cathy Cameron-Muscente	Vicky Devault
Liturgical Assistants	Kathe Bruno	Leah Burke		Denise Puisto
Organist	Denise Puisto	Charles Child	Charles Child	Charles Child
Coffee Hosts	Hansens	Bruno	Joyce Gallimore	
Greeters	Karen and Red Martin	Kay and John Antos Marilyn Johnson	Greta Krag, Harriet Richards, Jake Hansen	Suzanne Furst and Marcia Gustafson
Ushers	Team 2: Bob Furst, Charlie Cutting, Jake Hansen, France LeBlanc			

“Stewardship is a perfectly good word and a very powerful idea, but it’s not a big enough doctrine; it’s not central enough. For nothing less than the doctrine of grace would be an adequate doctrine to shape the Christian community’s mind and practice in a way appropriate to the catastrophe in the environment.” From Joseph Sittler’s *Gravity & Grace* (1986). Sittler (1904-1987) was a Lutheran Professor of Theology at Chicago Lutheran Seminary and Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago and an important contributor to the Lutheran Church in America’s Confession of Faith. He was said to be the single most sought after university and college preacher in America. Additional books include *The Care of the Earth* (1964) and the *Ecology of Faith* (1961), the Yale Beecher lectures.

October Celebrations

<u>Birthdays</u>		<u>Baptisms</u>	
Oct 3	Susan Williford	Oct 3	Isabelle Mae Bracket
Oct 6	Daryll Kemp	Oct 8	Madeline Tylenda
Oct 7	John Antos		Heidi Western
Oct 9	Jamie Wilhite	Oct 9	Henry Herrington Wisloski
Oct 11	Lauren Dreilbelbis	Oct 11	Katherine Hill
	Gary Pittman	Oct 15	Rachel Valliere
Oct 14	Susan Agne	Oct 24	Brian Dreibelbis
Oct 16	Jean Fahrenbach	Oct 25	Tawnya Kiernan
	Richard David Norton		Sally Norton
Oct 18	Robert Furst	Oct 27	Jacob Gottschalk
Oct 19	Jacob Hansen	Oct 28	Arlene Krapcho
Oct 20	Rachel Bruno		
Oct 22	Diane Menzel (Clark)		
	Nesreen Qubrosi		
Oct 27	Betsey Jenkins	Oct 2	Jessica Wisloski
Oct 31	Rochelle Hanson	Oct 8	Michelle Hobbs
	Jeff Kelly		Paul Hobbs
		Oct 12	Sharon Norton
			Hubert Norton
		Oct 15	David Burke
			Leah Burke
Belated birthday wishes to Kay Antos whose birthday was September 30th!		Oct 27	Jennifer Archambault



October 2013

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>You can view this calendar online at Alcvt.org/calendar.html</p>						
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Stewardship Sunday 9 a.m. Sunday School 10 a.m. Holy Communion 11 a.m. Congregational Meeting Noon Harvest fest Potluck		6:30-8:30 Ripple Leadership	6:00 Choir 7:00 Bells	6:30 Worship & Music		9:00-Noon VT Choral Union practice
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
9 a.m. Sunday School 10 a.m. Holy Communion CROP Walk	Columbus Day	Ripple 5:00 Current 6:30 Shared Meal 7:00 Immersion	6:00 Choir 7:00 Cont'porary		4-8 p.m. Whole Body Decision Making Workshop	8 a.m.-5 p.m. Whole Body Decision Making Workshop
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
Bread for the World Sunday 9 a.m. Sunday School 10 a.m. Holy Communion	5:30 C, Y, F 7:00 Council		6:00 Choir 7:00 Bells	6:00-9:30 p.m. Showing and discussion of the film "Journey of the Universe"		5:00-8:00 p.m. Octoberfest "Best of the Worst"
27	28	29	30	31		
Reformation Sunday 8:30 a.m. Long Range Planning 9 a.m. Sunday School 10 a.m. Holy Communion	Pr. Nancy at Bishop's Convocation		6:00 Cont'porary 7:00 Bells			



WORSHIP SCHEDULE

WORSHIP

10:00 a.m. Holy Communion
9:00 a.m. Sunday School (youth and adult)
will resume in the fall

On the first Sunday of each month
Holy Communion is celebrated with Contemporary Praise.

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we might cut down on paper and cost. Thank you.

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A Good News Letter From Ascension Lutheran Church
Published Monthly By Ascension Lutheran Church
95 Allen Road, South Burlington, VT 05403

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LUTHERAN CHURCH**



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