



# Ascension News

One Church, One Body, One Spirit, Serving all People  
Una Iglesia, Un Cuerpo, Un Espíritu, Sirviendo a todas las personas  
Ib Lub Tuamtsev, Ib Lub Cev, Ib Tug Ntsujplig, Ua Num Rua Txhaus Tug Tuabneeg

## Who is My Neighbor?

More than 8 years ago, I was coming out of Walgreens with my 2 kids. Like every morning, I was in a hurry. I had to take my kids to school and get to church to lead our weekly Bible Study. That day I decided to wear a clerical blouse. I stopped at the traffic light and while I was lecturing my kids about something I don't remember now, someone knocked on my window. It was a man I was used to seeing every morning in that same spot asking for money. My plan was to ignore him, and after knocking a third time I turned and looked at him, through the glass he said: "Reverend, please bless me!" Instantly and like a chill, a sense of guilt and shame ran through my spine. I looked him in the eye, did the sign of the cross and said: "Que el Senor te bendiga mi amado projimo" ("May God bless you my beloved neighbor"). It felt like a slap on the face from God. Not my brightest moment.

Sometimes we dread to look our neighbor in the eye, and I get it, as you can see it happened to me. Sometimes looking our neighbor in the eyes makes us too aware of the realities in our world, and that can make us feel uneasy, which brings me to the question of: Who is my neighbor?

Jesus held a simple and unfiltered belief — everyone is a neighbor. Everyone in every sense of the word, not just the people in our orbit whom we have something in common with, but also the ones we don't notice, the people we don't value, and those we don't welcome. Admittedly, noticing people who aren't loved ones, or a part of our day-to-day life isn't always top of mind.

Jesus didn't have the distraction of a smartphone or bickering children, but he was a popular guy who drew crowds. People sought his attention, yet he took time to give his attention to those who never got any. He noticed ill-stricken people with leprosy and comforted them. These were people who were ignored by everyone else, yet he displayed neighborly love towards them. We thought about the people we don't notice in our own lives walking down the street, in the aisle at the grocery store, or even those living next door to us. Jesus' example served as a simple yet powerful reminder that he put the "every" in everyone.

Jesus often led by example. In our world, it's easy to value those who share the same values as us or those who belong to the same groups, but we were inspired by Jesus' willingness to defy that trend. We noticed that Jesus was inclined to welcome others, his prerogative was to find neighbors who were vastly different from him and one another to bring together.

Who is the unnoticed, the undervalued, and the unwelcome in our own lives? Each one of them is part of a whole. People we should offer compassion to because if they flourish, we all do. Each one of us is a part of one larger community. Jesus knew that all too well. That's why he wanted us to use our differences as a catalyst for conversations that can lead us to invite each other in, rather than keeping one another at bay.

Beloveds, as we start this new month let's ask the Holy Spirit to give us neighborly love for everyone.

In Christ,  
Pastor Aida

## *In This Issue*

Who is My Neighbor

Because of You

Upcoming Unified Worship  
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## Worship services

English: 9:00 am

Spanish: 10:15 am

Hmong: 11:30 am

## Trilingual unified services

See next page for upcoming  
unified and special services!

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## Because of You

Ascension disciples have faithfully supported our community of faith on South Layton Boulevard in Milwaukee for 100 years. Today we look different than we did in 1923 when our building was dedicated. In the early 1980s we began to embrace and celebrate the beautiful diversity of our community as the church welcomed Spanish and Hmong language ministries. Today, 40 years later, our multicultural and diverse identity is firmly established, and we are “One Church, One Body, One Spirit” with three language ministries in English, Hmong and Spanish.

“**Because of You**” Christian education is strong among the children and youth of Ascension. Our young people continue to benefit from Sunday school, First Communion and Confirmation classes. This month, nine of our teenagers, having returned from the ELCA’s National Youth Gathering in New Orleans, will share lessons from their experience with us.

And what about Adult Christian Education? How do you nourish your Christian faith? How do we discern what God is calling us to do and believe in this time and place? Where do you get an opportunity to truly think about, discuss, and grow spiritually?

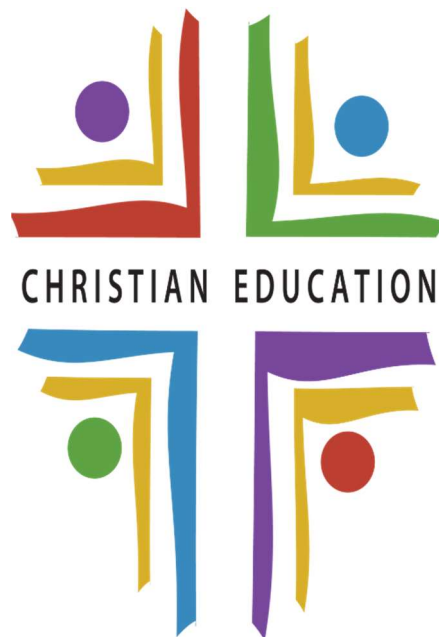
A faithful group of disciples, AMIS, continue to meet four times a year to learn about and support mission work here in Milwaukee and around the world. A group of women get together monthly for Bible study. Another group meets less regularly and has undertaken book studies and discussion that focus on social justice, combating racism and celebrating our diversity. Pastor Novelli-Angrisano has led Bible study sessions in Spanish.

We give thanks for these gatherings of adult disciples! A challenge we face is that most of our gatherings for study and adult Christian education do not provide opportunities for sharing across language and culture. There is work to be done and with God’s help we will make progress finding time and space where we can come together in respect and understanding to grow and share with one another. This is our challenge, this is our goal, and “**Because of You**”, we will get there!

*May my teaching drop like the rain,  
my speech condense like the dew;  
like gentle rain on grass,  
like showers on new growth.*

Deuteronomy 32:2

Sincerely,  
Grace Thomsen and Ka Bao Yang,  
Stewardship Chairs



## Upcoming Unified Worship Schedule and Special Events

**August 18<sup>th</sup>** – 10:00 am worship service.

**September 8<sup>th</sup>** – 10:00 am, God’s Work, Our Hands Sunday, in conjunction with Sunday School Rally Day.

**September 15<sup>th</sup>** – 10:00 am worship service. Following worship, we will celebrate Joyce Henkel’s 100<sup>th</sup> birthday.

**October 27<sup>th</sup>** – 10:00 am Reformation Sunday service. Following the service there will be a congregational meeting at which a report from the MET will be presented.

**November 3<sup>rd</sup>** – 10:00 am Día de los muertos & All Saints Sunday.

**November 17<sup>th</sup>** – 10:00 am unified worship service.

**December 15<sup>th</sup>** – 10:00 am unified worship service.

**Tuesday, December 24<sup>th</sup>** – Christmas Eve unified worship service at 4:00 pm.

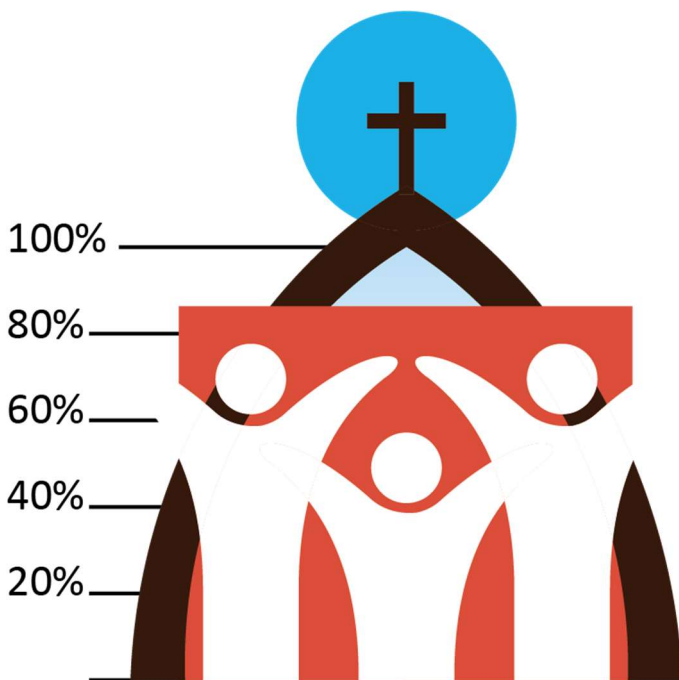
**January 5<sup>th</sup>**, 10:00 am, Hmong Ministry’s New Year celebration.



## More Than a Roof Campaign Update

In December 2021, Ascension launched a capital campaign to cover the cost of a new roof and repair our air conditioning units. This was a critical repair project that would cost \$864,000. We obtained a loan from the ELCA Mission Investment Fund to cover this cost and approached the congregation with the More Than a Roof campaign for financial support. Sixty families responded to this call with commitments to give \$508,866 over a three-year period. The roof and air conditioning repairs are complete, and we are now in the final 4 months of the campaign with only \$81,441 remaining to be given. The commitment goal is in sight! THANK YOU, faithful givers for your support.

We have reached 85% of our pledged goal!



We are grateful for the success we are having in our three-year campaign. Now the More Than a Roof Team is turning its attention to the balance of the loan Ascension has with the Mission Investment Fund. Next year this loan will enter the final two years of payments at a 3.7% rate of interest. At the end of the two years, the balance owed will likely incur a higher rate of interest. It is in Ascension's best interest to focus on debt reduction. The team is exploring ways to reduce or eliminate the balance of the loan. This includes fundraising events, grants and sustaining the successful gifting seen in our 3-year campaign. The team has pledged to continue our leadership for this new focus along with a commitment to continue our own contributions to the More Than a Roof Fund. We pray that others will join this initial effort by extending their gifts beyond 2024.

More Than a Roof Team Members:  
Lee Her, Cindy Jackson,  
Sue Kaschak, Diane Loppnow,  
Laura Ruiz

## Plant HOPE Plant Sale



### Ascension Lutheran Church

**Saturday & Sunday,  
September 14<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup>**

AMIS (Ascension in Mission) is holding its Annual Mum Plant sale to raise money to help support Mission Projects, both locally and globally. Beautify your garden or home with a lovely, locally grown mum plant, or give as a gift.

Beautiful large mum plants will be available for purchase, or you can **pre-order by calling Marilyn Lange at 262-490-5892 or emailing her at [mlange8959@gmail.com](mailto:mlange8959@gmail.com).**

Pick up plants or purchase them on Saturday, September 14<sup>th</sup>, from 10:00 am-1:00 pm or on Sunday, September 15<sup>th</sup>, from 8:30 am-11:00 am while plants last.

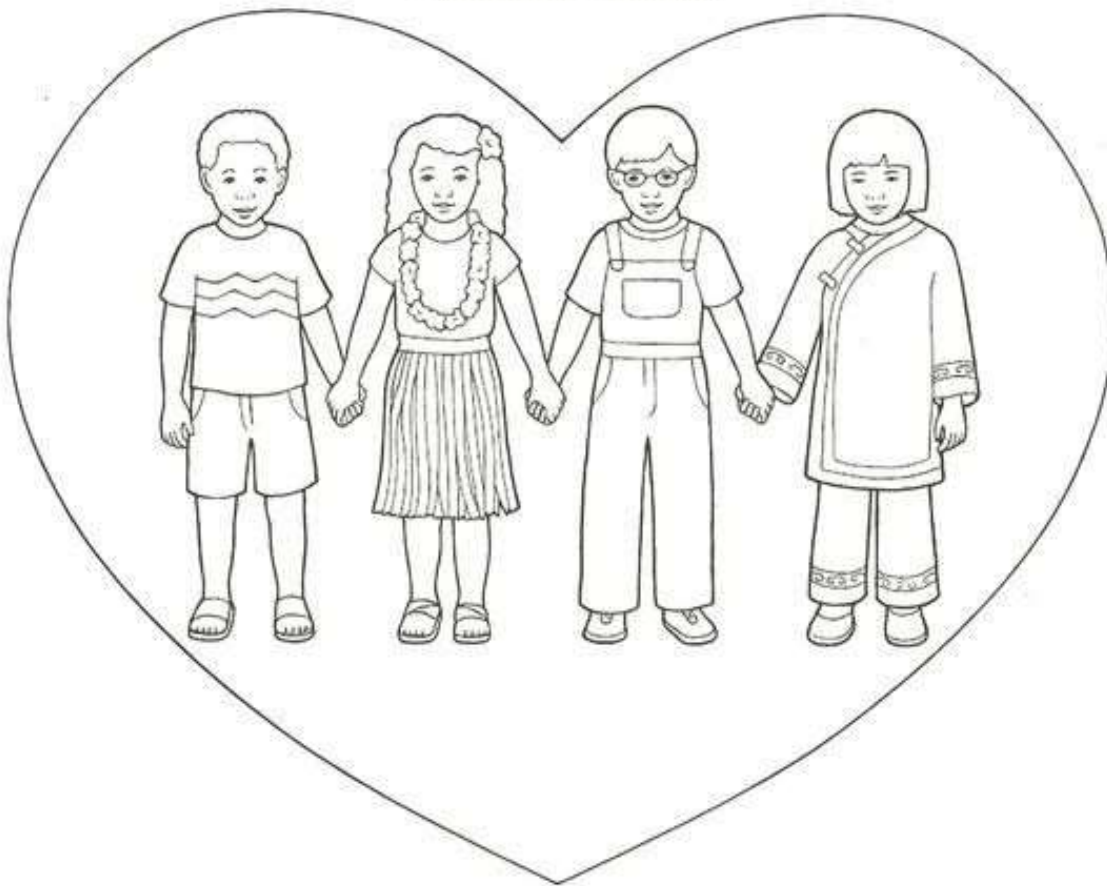
Plants are \$12.50 each, 2 for \$24 or 3 for \$35. All proceeds will go to support mission projects. This project is supported in part with a Thrivent Action Grant.

*Live generously.*



## Just for Fun

### I Will Love Others



#### Get it on the Calendar!

Contact Bonny López in the church office with any church-related meetings, even if held virtually, or in a non-church location. Let's keep each other informed of our sacred work!

Bonny López, [bonnylopez@ascensionmke.com](mailto:bonnylopez@ascensionmke.com)

#### Next Ascension News

**September 3**

Articles are due by noon on **Friday, August 23<sup>rd</sup>**.

Please email your group's content to:

**Cindy Jackson**, lead - [cindy\\_jaxn@yahoo.com](mailto:cindy_jaxn@yahoo.com)

**Gail Brodersen-Heins**, community - [grheins@hotmail.com](mailto:grheins@hotmail.com)

**Charlie Kudy**, Ascension teams/Website - [kudy826@gmail.com](mailto:kudy826@gmail.com)

**Ar Lee**, Hmong ministry - [lisab070520@gmail.com](mailto:lisab070520@gmail.com)

#### Ascension Contact Information

Phone: 414-645-2933

Website: [ascensionmke.com](http://ascensionmke.com)

Regular office hours: Monday – Thursday, 9:00 am – 4:30 pm

Pastor Aida Muñiz (pastor)

Pastor Germán Novelli-Angrisano (Latino pastor)

Chuck Ellingson (office manager)

If you know someone who would like a printed copy of this newsletter, contact Jan Fox at 262-782-5680.

