



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

A message from Pastor Aida

Beloved siblings in Christ,

Peace to you all from the One and Triune God!

It's been a minute since my first day with ALC, May 21, 2024 to be specific. I've been building relationships and observing as well. During the last eight months I've been working with all three communities and now I have a better understanding of ALC: its strengths, its lack, its wants and its needs. Some of them I have communicated with leadership, others I'm still pondering on. I have received love and challenges equally and for that I'm grateful, and I think we've had some fun along the way. Here are some thoughts that I have shared with leadership that in my opinion should be crucial:

1. I have seen how ALC is still in recovery from the pandemic, and due to the lack of stability this process has been even more difficult.
2. The structure needed for this type of multi-ethnic and program ministry needs some TLC.
3. The concept of community within the particularities of ALC needs to be addressed in an intentional way.

As we work on those three aspects of ministry then wants and needs should be taken care of like music, quality and volunteers for livestream, Confirmation Classes, and Youth and Children Ministry. Let me tell you that the leadership and myself have been working non-stop with many of those things already.

I've heard comments full of hope, and some a little pessimistic, that's normal. As you approach this time of discernment, I pray for ALC and I ask ALC to pray for this pastor as well. May the Holy Spirit guide us all as we make decisions for the sake of ALC's ministry.

During this time know that I'm available for one-on-one conversations if you would like to hear more on the things mentioned above.

In Christ,
Pastor Aida

*Pastor Aida recently attended an ELCA multi-ethnic conference in California!
More photos inside the newsletter.*



In This Issue

A Message from Pastor Aida

ICE Information

Because of God's Great Mercy:
It's Not Too Late!

Introducing S.W.A.G.

February and March Unified
Worship Schedule

Welcome to Ascension News 2025

More Than a Roof Campaign
Exceeds Goal

Attention Thrivent Members!

Treasurer's Report

Worship Services

English: 9:00 am

Spanish: 10:15 am

Hmong: 11:30 am

**Unified Worship
Sunday, February 23rd
Meeting to call a pastor!**

10:00 am unified worship
services at least once a month
For specific dates, see the
calendar under
News & Events at
www.ascensionmke.com

IF YOU INTERACT WITH ICE AGENTS AT WORK

1. Ask if you are free to leave. If so, you may calmly walk out.
2. You have the right to refuse consent to a search.
3. You have the right to remain silent. You do not have to discuss your immigration status with anyone, such as about where you were born, whether you are a citizen, or how you entered the country.
4. If you have valid immigration documents, you should show them. Never provide fake documents.
5. If you are arrested, say that you wish to remain silent until speaking with a lawyer.
6. You have the right to record your interaction with immigration agents as long as you do not interfere.

KNOW
YOUR
RIGHTS

ACLU

Because of God's Great Mercy: It's Not Too Late!

It may already be February, but that doesn't mean it's too late for you to be a faithful steward of the gifts God has given you and submit your commitment to Ascension for 2025! Commitment cards are available in both English and Spanish on the greeters' table outside the sanctuary.

We are thankful that we have received commitments from 40 disciples, 14 of whom have increased their giving for 2025. We appreciate everyone who turns in a commitment card! Please feel free to take one from the greeters' table next Sunday, fill it out, and drop it

in the offering plate. You can also call Chuck in the church office at 414.645.2933 between 9:00 am and 4:30 pm Monday through Thursday, and he'll be happy to fill out a commitment card for you. Chuck will also be happy to answer any questions you might have about giving automatically to Ascension via Vanco, so please feel free to give him a call! May God continue to bless our work at Ascension in 2025 and beyond!

Use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.
- 1 Peter 4:10

Grace Thomsen and KaBao Yang,
Stewardship co-chairs

Introducing S.W.A.G.



"S.W.A.G." is the acronym for "Saved With Amazing Grace". S.W.A.G. Faith Formation will focus on young people and promote participation and leadership around the church. It will involve confirmation, youth nights, youth lock-ins, potential fundraisers and hopefully youth-led services. As we start the new year, we want to focus on getting the youth more involved around the church, as they are the future of our congregation.

Kou Thao

February and March Unified Worship Schedule

Instead of the third Sunday in February (the 16th), February's unified worship service will take place at: **10:00 am, Sunday, February 23rd**, with a meeting to call a pastor.

March's unified worship service will take place on the third Sunday of the month, **10:00 am, Sunday, March 16th**, with the annual congregational meeting.



Welcome to Ascension News 2025

The Communications Team has been happy to bring you the Ascension News since September 2021. As we begin our 4th year of publishing the Ascension News, we hope to make the News an even more informative source of information about Ascension.

We sometimes hear from people that they did not know about events or other information. We need your help to keep everyone informed. We can only include this important information if the information is provided to Cindy Jackson, our newsletter editor and producer. Everyone is invited to send news and announcements to Cindy. Every newsletter includes the deadline for the next newsletter on the back page and includes Cindy's email address. We hope you will be an active contributor to the newsletter. Help us keep everyone informed. A big thank you to everyone who has been contributing articles and information. We hope you will continue to be an active contributor.

Remember to check out Ascension's Facebook page and website for other sources of information at <https://www.facebook.com/ascensionmilwaukee> and <https://ascensionmke.com>. If you have any questions or suggestions, feel free to contact Cindy or any of the Communications Team members.

Your Communications Team,
Cindy Jackson, Charlie Kudy, Jerry Vang, Marilyn Lange, Susie Hess, Ar Lee, Gail Brodersen-Heins

More Than a Roof Campaign Exceeds Goal

WOW!

Our More Than a Roof three-year campaign that began in January 2022 with promises of \$508,866 came to a close on December 31st. **Thanks to an exceptional response at the end of the year, we have exceeded intended gifts by \$77,016!** We are so grateful for the faithful and generous gifts that have been made.

Did you know that the total cost of the new roof and air conditioning units was \$863,600? A 20-year loan with the Mission Invest Fund allowed Ascension to undertake this project. The \$585,882 contributed has been applied to the loan but Ascension will carry the debt that remains (approximately \$280,000) for the coming 17 years. We are grateful to learn that there are contributors who intend to extend their giving to the fund to help reduce this debt. We invite you to join these faithful contributors.

Thank you, More Than A Roof Team, Lee Her, Cindy Jackson, Sue Kaschak, Diane Loppnow and Laura Ruiz, for your leadership!

Cheryl Groth, Ascension Council President



More photos from Pastor Aida's trip to the ELCA multi-ethnic church conference

Attention Thrivent Members!

Thank you to all Thrivent members who have designated their Thrivent Choice Dollars to Ascension Milwaukee. Choice Dollars designated to Ascension go to support local, national or international mission projects and programs chosen by AMIS (Ascension in Mission). If you have not designated your 2024 Choice Dollars, you have until the March 31 deadline to do so. Choice Dollars are added to your account quarterly so even if you designated them earlier in the year, you may have additional 2024 dollars that may be designated. You can check whether you have Choice Dollars available by calling Thrivent at 1-800-847-4836 and say "Choice Dollars" when prompted or login to your Thrivent account at [Thrivent.com](https://www.thrivent.com).

Marilyn Lange



Treasurer's Report

Happy New Year, Ascension!

2024 was sure a busy year for our congregation, and an ambitious one as we set out to search for new community partners in our space, renew our current relationships, and began forming our pastoral staff.

I wanted to provide a transparent draft of where we ended our year financially, and reflect how far we have come. In 2023, we ended our year with a \$131,305.16 deficit, due to the costs associated with a full restoration of our kitchen and dining room, along with other building needs that came up throughout the year.

	<u>12/31/23</u>	<u>2024 Budget</u>	<u>12/31/24</u>
Endowment	\$ 93,333.00	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 99,999.96
Donations	\$ 193,215.00	\$ 205,000.00	\$ 199,421.93
Building Rental	\$ 167,330.00	\$ 147,411.00	\$ 132,980.03
Misc	\$ 449,927.66	\$ 55,612.01	\$ 33,309.92
Roof Donations	\$ 78,000.00	\$ -	\$ 82,916.00
TOTAL REVENUE	\$ 981,805.66	\$ 508,023.01	\$ 548,627.84
Administration	\$ 273,818.16	\$ 305,059.01	\$ 318,258.22
Ministry	\$ 35,571.71	\$ 49,108.00	\$ 38,470.62
Building	\$ 736,292.57	\$ 129,815.00	\$ 158,611.38
Utilities	\$ 67,428.38	\$ 64,550.00	\$ 62,889.83
Addtl Roof Prinp. Pmt	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 45,000.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 1,113,110.82	\$ 548,532.01	\$ 623,230.05
Difference	\$ (131,305.16)	\$ (40,509.00)	\$ (74,602.21)

Going into 2024, we set an ambitious goal to cut this deficit down to only \$40,000 (a nearly 70% reduction!!). While we did not meet that goal exactly, we DID cut our deficit by 45%, which includes an additional \$45,000 toward roof principal payments. (Normal monthly roof payments are factored into our accounting, as well.) *(Deficit is defined as an excess of expenditure over income or assets in a given period.)*

For 2025, we are starting the year with increased rental revenue from two of our current partners and exploring a new lease with one of them, as well, to have greater use of our facility, bringing new life into our north and south wings! There is also a dedicated team of individuals exploring grant possibilities and planning enhance programming possibilities for our youth and faith formation. All in conjunction with now maintaining a pastoral staff of one full-time pastor, which will be reflected in my proposed budget on Sunday, March 16th, at the annual meeting.

Our cash position remains stable, and endowment remains healthy and growing, with the guidance of our financial advisors and Endowment Board. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at 414-758-4079!

Charlie Kudy, Treasurer

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

Ascension Contact Information

Phone: 414-645-2933

Website: ascensionmke.com

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

Rev. Aida Muñiz (pastor)

Chuck Ellingson (office manager)

Next Ascension News

March 3rd

Articles are due by noon on **Tuesday, February 18th**.

Please email your group's content to:

Cindy Jackson, lead - cindy_jaxn@yahoo.com

Gail Brodersen-Heins, community - grheins@hotmail.com

Charlie Kudy, Ascension teams/website - kudy826@gmail.com

Ar Lee, Hmong ministry - lisab070520@gmail.com

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

