



Ascension Lutheran Church // February 2026

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

From Pastor Aida's Desk

"We are not to simply bandage the wounds of victims beneath the wheels of injustice; we are to drive a spoke into the wheel itself"

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

A couple of weeks ago Bishop Paul Erickson wrote a pastoral letter on Immigration Enforcement to everyone in our Greater Milwaukee Synod. Not only do I encourage you to read it, but I also encourage you to wrestle with it, I think that as Christians we all need to.

I have kept quiet for too long about the current situation of persecution, murders, and racial profiling. Just like many groups in Wisconsin, the Wisconsin Council of Churches, the Milwaukee Inner-City Congregations Allied for Hope: MICA, have been helping clergy and faith leadership be prepared for when "trending" federal agencies come to our communities.

Like Bishop Erickson, I too affirm the responsibility of our law enforcement officials regardless of people's citizenship status and at the same time also have noticed something totally different. We are seeing people being arrested and detained because of race, language and culture, and place of work, regardless of citizenship and legal residence. This affects Ascension in a very personal and direct way. Lately, I've been wrestling with the weight of my "yoke" (stole) and how to be a good pastor during these times. I've been reading, going to training, and most of all praying for wisdom and courage. Beloveds, Seminary does not prep us for this...

I agree with our Bishop. We need to be truth tellers, bear witness and love our neighbor. This is not the time to, as the Church, look away... The church has a public and moral role today; we are called to be the public and prophetic voice of the Gospel, and to be visible and clear with our values. How can we be the hands and feet of Christ here, among the people, today? That's a good question to wrestle with.

In Christ's Love,
Pastor Aida

In This Issue

From Pastor Aida's Desk

Christmas Eve Worship Photos

Thrivent Choice Dollars

Thank you, Ascension Disciples!

Happy New Year!

Upcoming Events

Synod Event – Book Discussion

2025 Impact Report

Treasurer's Year-end Report

Share Our Best Furniture Ministry

Black History and Civil Rights
Discussion

Sunday Worship Services

English: 9:00 am

Spanish: 10:15 am

Hmong: 11:30 am

10:00 am unified worship
services at least once a month

For specific dates, see the
calendar under
News & Events at
www.ascensionmke.com.

Christmas Eve Worship



Thrivent Choice Dollars

REMINDER

Thrivent Choice Dollars must be used by March 31st. Thanks to all who have designated AMIS as their choice.

You are a Blessing,
Jan Fox

Thank you, Ascension Disciples!

GRACIAS!
THANK YOU!

Thank you to everyone who brought gifts or gave a monetary gift to the children and families of Hephatha Lutheran Church this past Christmas. We had a fantastic turnout even with the weather working against us! Rest assured, all gifts were delivered, even if you brought them the Sunday after In As Much Sunday due to the cold weather!

Fondly,
Chuck and Christy Kudy

The church office received a lovely thank you note from our friends at Hephatha for the gifts Ascension provided. Please see the bulletin board near the Commons to read the full letter.



Nyob Zoo Xyoo Tshab! ¡Feliz Año Nuevo! Happy New Year!

We enjoyed celebrating Hmong New Year with all who joined us on January 4th!

Thank you to all the minds and hands that went into planning and preparing for Hmong New Year, hosted by the Ascension Hmong Ministry.

Shout out to Compass Visuals and Pr. Chris Manke for capturing the day!



Upcoming Events

Reconciling in Christ (RIC)
Sunday unified worship service
Sunday, February 15th, 10:00 am

Ash Wednesday worship service
Wednesday, February 18th, 7:00 pm

Cocinado con Amor • Cooking with Love

Saturday, March 7th, at 6:00 pm in the dining room

See Pastor Aida for more information.

Annual Budget Meeting & Involvement Fair

Sunday, March 15th, after 10:00 am unified worship service

Easter Sunday unified worship service

Sunday, April 5th, 10:00 am

Synod Event – Book Discussion

My Grandmother's Hands Discussion Group

February 16th, 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm

Rev. Afi Dobbins-Mays will lead a discussion on the book *My Grandmother's Hands*. This will be time to time unpack the deep and meaningful content of this book. This discussion is open to anyone who's read the book and would like to participate.

In this groundbreaking book, therapist Resmaa Menakem examines the damage caused by racism in America from the perspective of trauma and body-centered psychology.

See

<https://milwaukee-synod.org/event/my-grandmothers-hands-discussion-group/2026-02-16/> for more information.



2025 Impact Report

Submitted by Charlie Kudy



2025 Impact Report Summary

*One Church.
One Body. One Spirit.*

\$190K
in ministry investment donations

\$100K
in Ascension Endowment Support for ministry operations

10+
active disciples ministries

∞
amount of Jesus' love and acceptance shared with each other

Worship & Gathering Ministry

130+
active Ascension disciples, per our annual synodical reports

140+ hours of worship music shared

15+ unified multi-cultural services planned

Youth & Family Ministry

40+
Youth Engaged Regularly through Sunday School, Confirmation, SWAC, Easter Egg Hunt, Trunk-or-Treat, etc!

30+
Youth and Family Faith Formation Classes & Events

Community Outreach Partners

8 Community Service Non-Profits Partners

4 New Community Partnerships in 2025

1.2K Est. of individuals served through our ALC Campus Weekly

Serving & Sending Ministry

7+ Global Ministries Supported through AMIS (Ascension in Mission)

Regular Newsletter Recipients **170+**

4+ Outreach drives: clothes, food, hygiene and In-As-Much Christmas Gifts

Visit our website, and sign up for the ALC Newsletter!



Pledge Your Mission Investment for 2026

Ascension Involvement Fair & Annual Budget Meeting

You're warmly invited to join us for our Annual Budget Review Meeting, where we'll share updates and look ahead together. After service, be sure to stop by the ALC Involvement Fair, showcasing our ministries and the many community-building opportunities available to help you connect, serve, and grow. We look forward to seeing you and celebrating all the ways we can be involved together!

Date and Time

15th
of March

10AM

Unified Worship & Meeting
Followed by an Involvement Fair



Treasurer's Year-end Report

	26 Proposed Budget	25 Budget	12.31.25 Actual	12.31.24 Actual
Endowment	\$100,000.00	\$100,000.00	\$112,825.96	\$99,999.96
Donations	\$190,000.00	\$205,000.00	\$186,054.11	\$204,495.06
Building Rental	\$194,264.86	\$137,686.52	\$158,148.72	\$132,980.03
Misc	\$23,750.00	\$31,250.00	\$18,238.37	\$33,476.92
Roof Donations	\$15,000.00	\$15,000.00	\$29,776.00	\$82,916.00
TOTAL REVENUE	\$523,014.86	\$488,936.52	\$505,043.16	\$553,867.97

Adminis- tration	\$281,450.00	\$282,470.00	\$275,344.4	\$318,013.03
Ministry	\$38,500.00	\$31,400.00	\$32,641.43	\$42,606.66
Building	\$136,300.00	\$146,750.00	\$169,043.53	\$156,740.43
Utilities	\$76,790.00	\$61,550.00	\$73,022.14	63,811.67
Addtl Roof Prinp. Pmt	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$45,000.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$533,040.00	\$522,170.00	\$550,051.5	\$626,171.79

Difference	\$(10,025.14)	\$(33,233.48)	\$(45,008.36)	\$(72,303.82)
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As a congregation, we set out an ambitious goal in 2025 to cut our deficit (a loss) by 44% in one year from \$72K to \$33K. While we did not achieve that goal, we reduced our deficit by 38%. This was accomplished through continued mission investment (giving) by our disciples, renewing and expanding community partnerships and use of our building, and continued support from the Endowment Board for budget support.

As we turn to 2026 and look ahead to the future in celebrating our 174th year of ministry, we yet again set out on our mission to serve as a congregation that serves its community on Milwaukee's south side by throwing open our doors to ALL our neighbors, proudly proclaiming "HERE WE STAND!".

Outstanding Roof Debt as of 12/31/23: \$572,518.70

Outstanding Roof Debt as of 12/31/24: \$418,167.42

Outstanding Roof Debt as of 12/31/25: \$264,011.62

Charlie Kudy, treasurer

Share Our Best Furniture Ministry



Hello Friends and Partners with Christ,
I am reaching out to you today for your help.

As you may know, the Share Our Best Furniture Ministry has been working for the last five years to gather furniture that has useful life. We then work with a number of partners to deliver that furniture to provide hope and comfort to those in Milwaukee and surrounding areas.

We have two needs right now.

1. We are short of beds and dressers. We will take queen-, full- and twin-size beds. We will take them with mattresses, box springs, frames and bedding. Any parts of these are ok. Again, we need to have pieces with useful life. For the dressers, upright or chest of drawers are preferred. If they are horizontal or a bureau style, they need to be less than 60 inches long.
2. We need help moving furniture. We are doing all the pickups and deliveries with a small staff. When people contact us to pick up something, we need to have people available. We need some help with moving the furniture. We are doing all of the pickups and deliveries with a small staff. It sometimes is difficult to manage as it is only when people contact us to pick up something, then we need people available. We are NOT a service.

In 2025, we delivered more than 50 beds to over 60 locations. This has prevented some families from having to sleep on the floor. We appreciate any consideration and help.

We run our ministry on a small budget and have begun asking for free-will donations for our pickups.

Andy Dederich

Share Our Best Furniture Ministry Coordinator

If you have any questions, please contact Charlie Kudy, who will get you in contact with Andy Dederich.



Black History and Civil Rights Discussion

EYES STILL ON THE PRIZE
 A CONVERSATION WITH
 THE REVEREND JOSEPH ELLWANGER
 GUIDED BY MINISTER VENICE R. WILLIAMS

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2026
MEQUON PUBLIC MARKET
 6300 W. MEQUON ROAD
 5:30PM - 8:30PM

Reverend Ellwanger became involved in the Civil Rights Movement, while serving as pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church in Birmingham, Alabama. He continued his work in Milwaukee as Pastor of Cross Lutheran Church for several decades. We hope you will join us for this evening of an in-depth conversation with Pastor Joe about where we have been and where we are now, book signing for *Strength For The Struggle*, complimentary soul food dinner by Café Wright, Cultural Makers Market, and an opportunity to explore your own place in history. Where do you stand? Where will you stand?

5:30PM CULTURAL MAKERS MARKET OPENS
 6:30PM CONVERSATION WITH REVEREND ELLWANGER
 7:30PM SOUL FOOD DINNER
 This event is FREE, limited to 125 attendees.
 To register, cut and paste the EVENTBRITE link below.
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/eyes-still-on-the-prize-tickets-1981582102411?aff=oddtcreator>

Alice's GARDEN *Perfect* *AMMO* *The Table* *TODAY*

Peace and Blessings to you all,

As we honor Black History Month in February, we will be celebrating a leader amongst us who has been on this civil rights and human rights journey throughout his ministry and almost all of his living. A true ally, fighting alongside Black and Brown folks for a very long time.

Black History Is Everybody's History.

Joe and Joyce Ellwanger “found me” at Valparaiso University in the mid 1980’s, invited me to Milwaukee, deeply impacting the path my living would take. 36 years later, I am still here. I am still serving. I am still grateful.

I hope some of you will join us as we “reunite” for an evening of conversation, a FREE Soul Food Dinner, Cultural Makers Market, and time of reflection.

Tickets are FREE but you must pre-register. Here is the Eventbrite link:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/eyes-still-on-the-prize-tickets-1981582102411?aff=oddtcreator>

In courage and faith,

Minister Venice R. Williams

Get it on the Calendar!

Contact Bonny López or Chuck 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: www.ascensionmke.com

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Chuck Ellingson: officemanager@ascensionmke.com

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

If you know someone who would like a printed copy of this newsletter, please contact Jan Fox at 262-782-5680 or Chuck in the church office.

Next Ascension News

March 3rd

Articles are due by noon on **Friday, February 20th**.

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

