

Ascension Lutheran Church 2018 Annual Report

We are committed to being an extension of the hands of Christ by pointing to Jesus, prayer, outreach, affirmation and calling others to service.

Pastor's letter

Dear Ascension Church Family,

Sometimes I am asked, “What is your vision for your congregation?” and I answer, “I don’t have a vision for the congregation because I believe the vision of who our congregation is must come from the people themselves.” I am a partner in ministry with each of you, and *together* we live out the mission of our congregation, incorporating new members, building strong and healthy relationships, nurturing our faith through worship and helping each other live out our faith in between Sundays, too. *Together* we are the extension of Christ into our community.

I think I say it every year, but the practice of reporting on our ministries and congregation life is both joy and encouragement for me. It helps remind me of God’s abundance and generosity when I witness your response to God’s grace in your love for each other and for our neighbors.

I am especially grateful for the ways that you allow me to be a community pastor involved with Hospice Cleveland County and the Common Ground pay-as-you-can café and for your investment in my ongoing formation and education. In 2018, I spent time with colleagues learning about the intersections of pastoral care and spiritual care and training in mental health first aid and suicide intervention. I also dedicated time to the craft of preaching, learning alongside other preachers in St. Paul, receiving constructive criticism from The Rev. Amy Butler from Riverside Church in New York, and participating in North Carolina’s own women’s preaching festival in Durham.

As you read the reports from our ministries, celebrate what you see, but also ask, what’s missing?” and write down your questions. Let’s pay attention to where God is leading us next *together*.

+ Pastor Christina

p.s. I cannot say thank you enough as well for the prayers, support and care given to me and my family before, during and after my medical leave in November. Thank you for the gifts of encouragement and love that you extended to us.

Began as a mission church organized by a small group of people from St. Matthew's, Kings Mountain

1923

Purchased Lafayette Street lot

1927

Laid the cornerstone for the sanctuary

1932

Built the parsonage adjacent to the sanctuary

1938

Became a self-supporting congregation

1945

95 YEARS OF BEING THE CHURCH

Supported the resettlement of 75 immigrants

1940s

Supported Advent Lutheran, a mission church in Spindale

1946

Purchased a new parsonage and converted the former parsonage into an education building

1958

Completed the current education building

1971

Fed hungry neighbors monthly

2005-2018

Dedicated the columbarium

2007

Dedicated the prayer garden

2018

To every person who
serves and makes
Ascension who we are,
THANK YOU!!!

Worshiping Together

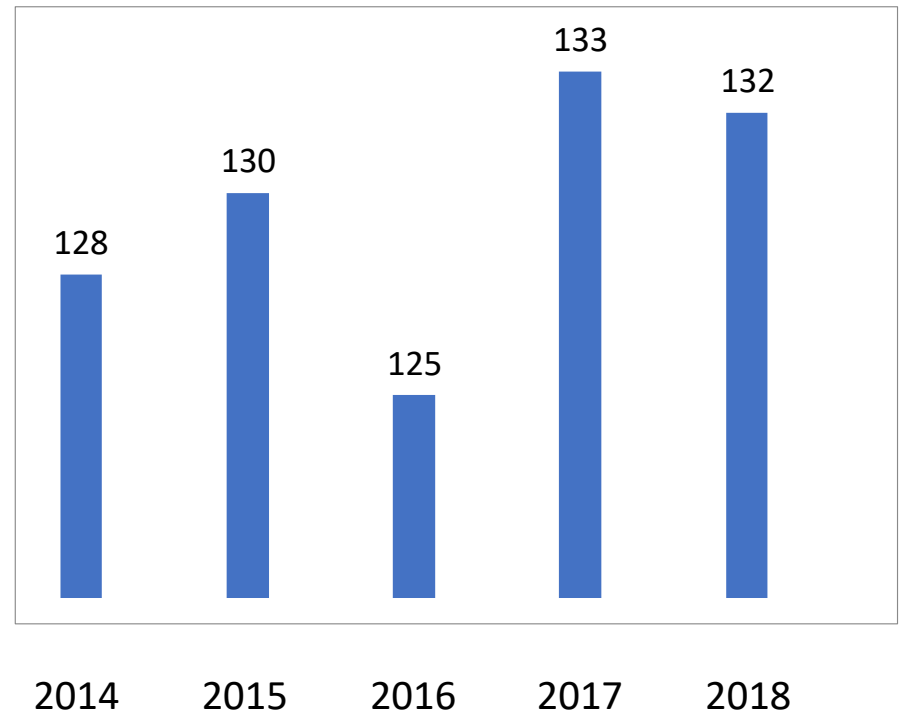
58

average
attendance
on
Sunday
mornings

39

average
attendance on
Wednesday
nights

Baptized Membership



Special Worship Occasions

Prayer Garden Dedication
Bold Women's Sunday
new Ash Wednesday Worship
Holden Evening Prayer
Baptism of Norah Wood
"Ordinary Time" banner
dedication
Confirmation on Pentecost
Blessing of the Animals
Men's Sunday
Veterans Recognition
Community Thanksgiving
Hanging of the Greens
Lessons and Carols

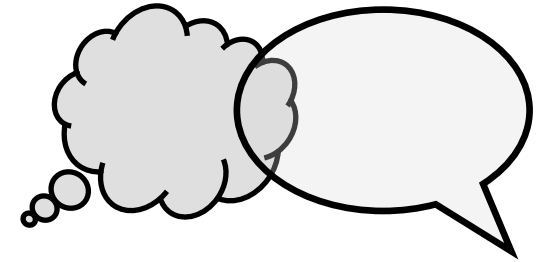
Sundays and Holy Week

57 worship services
15 communion assistants
12 altar guild volunteers
11 ushers
10 tabulators
8 readers & assisting
ministers
3 acolytes
3 crucifers
1 volunteer financial
secretary

Guest preachers

Seminarian Angie Littlefair
Bishop Timothy Smith
The Rev. Dee Liss
Mary Costner
Ludy Wilkie
The Rev. Danielle DeNise
Deacon Deb Johnson
The Rev. Sara Ilderton

Learning Together



Confirmation—Rotating study of Bible, Lutheranism and Faithful Questions

Adult Bible Study—Weekly Lectionary study

Lenten Book Study—*Falling Upward* by Richard Rohr

Summer Bible Study—The Gospel of John

Summer Book Study—*Grounded* by Diana Butler Bass

Fellowship



Shrove Tuesday Baked Potato Dinner

Easter Egg Hunt

Breakfast for graduates and confirmands

Annual Congregation Picnic

Monthly Adventurers' Breakfast

For the Sake of the World

\$4,000

given to the NC Synod to support mission of the Church

\$1,787

distributed to members and ministry partners in crisis

\$681

given to ELCA Good Gifts
(includes Lent, Easter, WELCA)

\$687.66

given in noisy offerings to the following organizations:

Graham School Social Workers

Boys & Girls Club of Cleveland County

Cleveland County Potato Project

Agape Mission Community

**Plus 113 pairs of socks
and 470 lbs. of potatoes!**

Property

		Maintenance
		indoor and outdoor lighting repairs
		tree limb cleanup, stump removal and erosion control
Accessibility	Safety and Security	power washing and parking lot resealing and painting
new electric elevator	6 new cameras	'spit and polish' inside and outside
audio and video downstairs	1 video monitor	
	3 doors with push bars	

President's letter

Dear Ascension Church Family,

One again I thank you for the privilege of leading your church Council for another year. As Daryl Cook begins his new term as president, we look back at what we accomplished over the past year with gratitude that God continues to bless our congregation.

Marking our 95th anniversary of ministry in this place, we dedicated the Prayer Garden which provides a welcoming quiet space on the church property and we supported Hospice Cleveland County monthly with a collection of items from their wish list.

We continued packing backpacks for Graham Elementary, and for the first half of the year, feeding the residents at the men's shelter monthly. While those feeding ministries concluded in 2018 we always are looking for ways to support the community. After a devastating rainy season, the Cleveland County Potato Project needed potatoes to feed hungry Cleveland County citizens, and we answered with a pickup load of potatoes!

Ascension's Women of the ELCA presented our annual Bold Women's Sunday service in February and provided a financial gift to the ELCA Good Gifts program to buy uniforms and pay school fees for girls overseas. We support Hospice Cleveland County and Heritage Oaks, the assisted living home in Gastonia, with ongoing volunteer efforts and projects.

We had a rich variety of voices join us this year in worship: Angie Littlefair, Pastor Dee Liss, Mary Costner, Ludy Wilkie, The Rev. Danielle DeNise, Deacon Deb Johnson and The Rev. Sara Ilderton all preached during the year. And Bishop Tim Smith returned to Ascension to preach and confirm Zach Smolzer, Max Smolzer, Chase Buchanan, and Logan Lacy on Pentecost. We also hosted the Rutherford Chamber Consort free

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community concert in our sanctuary, and for the second year, the annual Community Thanksgiving Service allowed us to host other church members and clergy in the Shelby area.

We welcomed Vickie Jo and Ronnie Franks, William Coyne, and Fred and Nancy DeBell as new members.

The challenges of an aging buildings and equipment go hand in hand with celebrating 95 years of ministry here in Shelby. With the education roof successfully repaired, the thirty-five year old lift demanded attention when it failed in August. The process of getting competitive bids, selecting a vendor and replacing the lift was more complex than you might imagine, and the lift was completely out of commission for several months. Concern that people who needed the lift could not worship sparked the idea, suggested by Willi Lacy, to convert an unused room in the church basement into a small chapel with speakers and a closed circuit television. Thanks to Willi Lacy and to the property volunteers for taking an idea and making it into a reality. Although the lift is operating again, the chapel remains available for guests.

Late in 2017, Council decided to update the safety and security in our church building. This year, safety and security guidelines were developed, and we installed new locks on all outside doors and six surveillance cameras that are monitored from the narthex.

Looking to the future, ELCA financial planner Mitzie Schafer helped us develop endowment bylaws and a gift policy as well as talked with members regarding their giving and planning.

Special thank yous to Calvin Blalock, Lisa Philbeck, as their Council terms end. In 2019, we welcome back Bob Bryant, Greg Blalock, Steve Eckard and Ludy Wilkie and extend Sandra Waldrop's term.

Respectfully Submitted,

Judy Bridges

Council President 2018

2018 Financials

Budgeted amounts:

Annual budget
(expenses and contributions) **\$ 148,751**

Actual amounts:

Actual receipts **\$ 159,023**
Over / (under) budget **\$ 10,272**
Actual expenses **\$ 153,655**
Over / (under) budget **\$ 4,904**
Year-to-date surplus / (deficit) \$ 5,368

Actual Receipts

