

PREPARE
FOR THE BITE
2026 Capital Campaign



A LETTER FROM PASTOR ZAC

Celebrating our history *a mission for our future*

Dear Friends,

For more than 60 years, Atonement Lutheran Church has been a vibrant community of faith in Jesus Christ. Generations have been nourished here by Word and Sacrament, and countless lives have been shaped through the ministry we share. Through every season, God has been faithful.

And yet ... many of us carry the sense that we are not what we once were. Even with our growth in recent years, we are not the congregation we were twenty years ago. The hopes we held in earlier years have not fully come to pass. It is honest to name the grief, the fatigue, and the questions about what comes next.

In Luke's Gospel, Jesus meets fishermen returning from a long night with empty nets. They are exhausted, yet he says, "Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch" (5:4). It is a call beyond their expectations and recent experience.

You can imagine their response: "Are you kidding me?" But they go. They experience a "bite" beyond their wildest dreams, and their boats begin to sink because of the numerous fish.

We believe Atonement is being called into that same deep water.

This campaign, **Prepare for the Bite**, is not only about our building and property. It is about stepping forward in faith for the sake of those beyond our walls who are seeking grace, belonging, and hope. Already, we are seeing signs of encouragement in generous early support and in the strategic planning work that is helping to guide our future.

Preparing for the bite will take all of us. It will take courage, faith, and a generous investment in the mission God has given us.

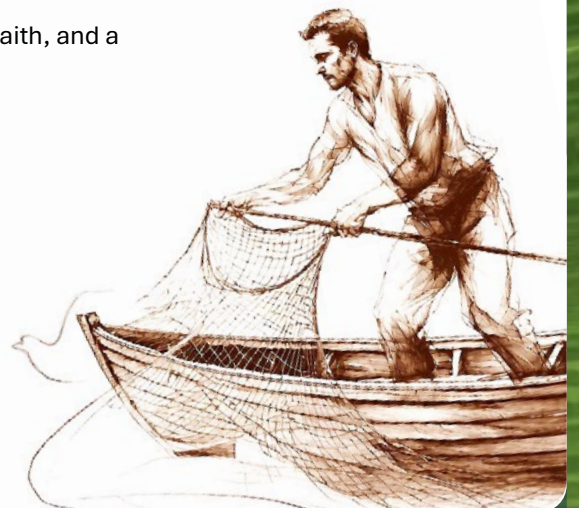
We are stepping into the deep water together.

Will you come with us? Will you help **Prepare for the Bite**?

In Christ's Service,



Pastor Zac





Being called into the deep water

Join us as we embark on a three-year journey to sustain our campus and ministries. Our goal is to replace aging buiding systems, repair sidewalks & the parking lot, and to better welcome our visitors & guests to Atonement Lutheran Church.

CAMPAIGN KICKOFF
April 19, 2026

CAMPAIGN LENGTH
3 years

OUR GOAL
\$2,000,000

Let us make ready the nets
AS WE PREPARE FOR THE BITE —————>

Voices from our Campaign

Erik and Kim Olson

MARRIED IN ATONEMENT'S NEW SANCTUARY IN 1999

For nearly three decades, Atonement Lutheran Church has been a place where our family's story and our faith journey have grown together. Twenty-seven years ago, we were blessed to be one of the first couples married in this beautiful sanctuary. Here, our children were baptized, confirmed, and surrounded by a community that helped shape the values and faith they now carry with them into adulthood.

Over the years, this church has been more than a building to us – it has been a blessing. A place of peace, restoration, and inspiration. In the midst of busy and often challenging lives, worship here grounds us in what matters most and reminds us of God's grace, love, and forgiveness. While the projects in this capital campaign focus on essential repairs and faithful stewardship of our campus, we see them as preparing the nets — ensuring this place continues to nurture faith, serve our neighbors, and welcome others who are also searching for hope.

In faith and gratitude, we are honored and excited to help prepare the way for what God will do next through this church community!

“*Over the years, this church has been more than a building to us — it has been a blessing.* ERIK AND KIM OLSON”

Stephen and Michele Aspleaf

BECAME ATONEMENT MEMBERS IN 2001

For more than 25 years, Atonement Lutheran has been woven into the story of our family's faith. It's where our children grew in their relationship with Christ and were confirmed, and now it's where two of our grandsons have been baptized—continuing a legacy that means so much to us. Michele has been a Sunday School teacher and is a bell choir member. Steve is in bell choir and choir. He has had the privilege of serving the congregation through two terms on the Church Council. Through every season of life, Atonement has been a place where we worship, serve, and grow together.

That's why the Prepare for the Bite campaign feels so important to us. This church has shaped our family, and we want to help ensure it continues to shape others for generations to come. Just as those before us invested in this ministry so that we could experience it, we feel called to do the same—preparing a place where families can gather, children can grow in faith, and the love of Christ can continue to be shared for many years ahead.

Prepare for the Bite Capital Campaign Leadership

MEET THE ATONEMENT CAPITAL CAMPAIGN TEAM



ERIK AND KIM OLSON

Erik and Kim Olson
CAMPAIGN CO-CHAIRS

Stephen and Michele Aspleaf
CAMPAIGN CO-CHAIRS

Jim and Cindy Peine
LEAD GIFT HOSTS

Bob Lindeblad
LEAD GIFT HOST

Boo McCready
CHILDREN'S LEADER

Drew Rennolett
YOUTH LEADER

Nathan Choate
COMMUNICATIONS LEADER

Kari Walberg
GRATITUDE LEADER

Penny Eaton
CELEBRATION LEADER

Pat Bjuland
PRAYER TEAM LEADER

Cathy Dykman-Acinger
VISION GATHERINGS LEADER

Steve Ruschill
VISION GATHERINGS LEADER

Keith Mundy
AFFINITY GROUPS LEADER

Roger Barrett
AFFINITY GROUPS LEADER

Pastor Zac Sturm
CAMPAIGN CONNECTOR FOR CHAIRS, HOSTS, & LEADERS

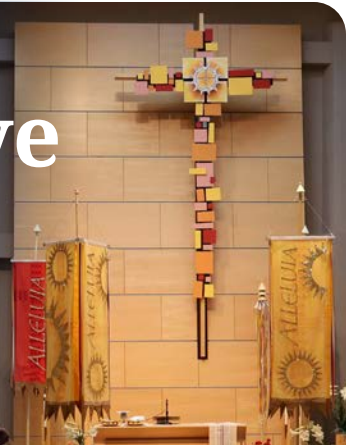


STEPHEN AND MICHELE ASPLEAF

OUR SHARED JOURNEY

Stewardship to preserve *our foundation of faith*

We have been blessed with an amazing campus to serve as a lasting home for ministry, a place for discipleship to grow, and a space for fellowship to support our members throughout their lives.



Our Purpose

The purpose of **Prepare for the Bite**, the name of our three-year capital campaign, is to raise funds to help repair major items at Atonement Lutheran Church and to help us better sustain the campus into the future. We are approaching 30 years since the new sanctuary was completed in 1999 and many parts of the campus, like the HVAC system and parking lot, are now in need of repair and replacement. We've identified four key projects that we've included as our priorities for **Prepare for the Bite**.

Our Opportunity

Our goal is to raise \$2,000,000. We are prayerfully considering how we move forward. God has blessed Atonement, and God will continue to work through us.

What God has already done is amazing. What God has in store for our future is even better. These strategic improvements are a way we can continue this Spiritual Legacy for the Next Generation of disciples!

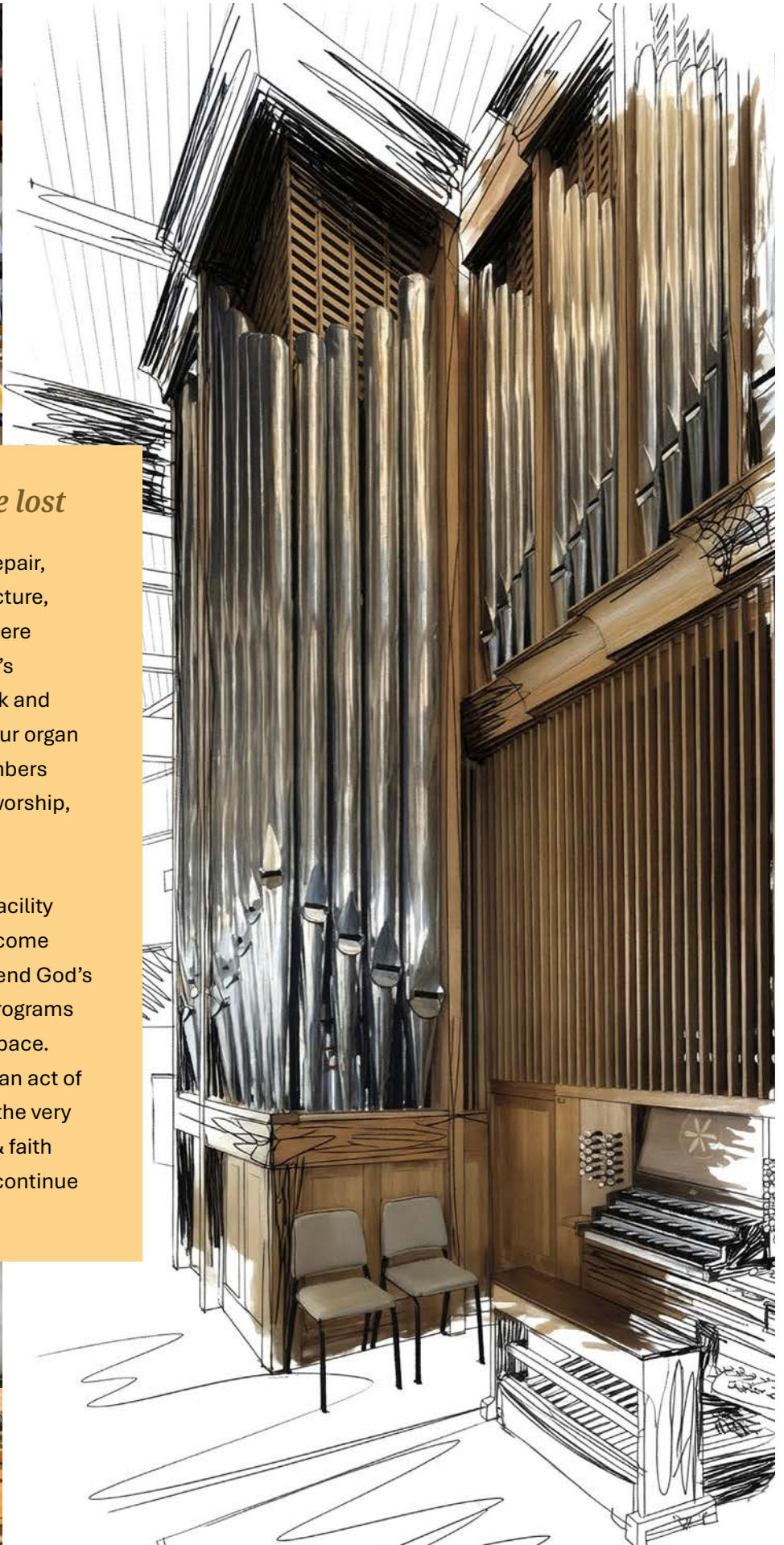
While pledges can be made over a 36-month period, we plan to start our first project in the spring of 2026.



Our Risk – *what could be lost*

If our church building falls into disrepair, we risk losing more than just a structure, we would lose the sacred space where generations have encountered God's presence — where beautiful artwork and the sounds of orchestras, arias, & our organ have moved hearts; where our members and community have gathered for worship, fellowship, and service.

The absence of a well-maintained facility would diminish our capacity to welcome seekers, disciple believers, and extend God's love to our neighbors through the programs and outreach that depend on this space. Preserving our building is therefore an act of stewardship — a way of protecting the very place where ministry, community, & faith have flourished and will be able to continue for years to come.



Making an Investment in *our Campus*

FOUR STRATEGIC IMPROVEMENTS AND ESSENTIAL REPAIRS HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED FOR THIS CAMPAIGN

Building Up Reserve **\$500,000** for Campus Sustainment

We know that our campus will have additional necessary repairs in the future. Roof repairs, bathroom renovations, kitchen updates, organ repair, and other projects will happen down the road. By building up our Campus Sustainment reserve account we will be able to cover these repairs and leave our General Fund donations focused more on day-to-day ministry and mission.

Welcoming Sam & Emma **\$75,000**

Who are Sam & Emma? They are the imaginary friends of our Strategic Planning Team. They are between 25 and 30 years old, they have not grown up in the Lutheran Church. As they enter our building, how can we make our space inviting to them?

Options include warmth and comfort updates to our Lobby, elevating our Café and coffee service, improving audio and visual integration in the sanctuary, and signage to help visitors navigate the building. The Strategic Planning Team is following the Spirit's lead and discerning plans that help us best welcome Sam & Emma.



Heating & Air Conditioning Updates

\$1,075,000

There are several HVAC systems that are outdated, inefficient, and in dire need of replacement. The most immediate concern is the system that services the sanctuary next cooling season. These current non-functioning issues can limit ministry and risk significant damage if a system were to fail, especially during a peak liturgical season.



Asphalt & Concrete Repairs

\$350,000

Our parking lot is very spacious and heavily used. Over 1.5 miles of cracks and large potholes would be ground down and patched. It's not just about appearance — it's also about safety. Uneven spots cause tripping hazards and icy conditions. We will need to install new asphalt in some areas and perform milling & overlay in other areas. Additionally, we will be addressing repairs to exterior sidewalks and stairs.

Operating on half of a system

The large sanctuary HVAC system is made of two units side-by-side. One side has not been operational over the past few years.



Mechanical systems are exceeding their planned service life

We have been blessed with the mechanical systems lasting much longer than their expected service lives – that means some of our equipment is operating with rust and damage like these heat exchangers had been before replacing.

HVAC
MECHANICAL
SERVICE
ROOM

PHOTOGRAPH OF THE SANCTUARY HVAC SYSTEM AND SURROUNDING ROOF OVER THE NURSERY



Blocked access to the service room

These Lobby A/C units are blocking the doors and will need to be moved to allow access to the service room.



Industrial-sized Air Handler

The inside part of the HVAC unit is a large air handler that must be cut apart to be removed when the system will be replaced.

Understanding *the challenge*

Replacing the industrial sized HVAC system for the sanctuary poses a unique set of challenges in addition to its large size. Its location on the roof, the location of other units around it, and the overall deterioration of many of the systems also being at or near the end of service life – are all contributing factors in the overall costs.

Your commitment helps grow *a foundation of faith*

Every gift, whether a one-time contribution or over three years, helps us realize the vision of a rejuvenated campus for generations to come. As you pray about how God is leading you to share your blessings toward Atonement’s Capital Campaign — this gift chart may help you plan your generosity.

# OF GIFTS NEEDED	WEEKLY GIFT	MONTHLY GIFT	ANNUAL GIFT	3 YEAR GIFT
1	\$1,603	\$6,944	83,333	\$250,000
2	\$641	\$2,778	\$33,333	\$100,000
3	\$481	\$2,083	\$25,000	\$75,000
4	\$231	\$1,389	\$16,667	\$50,000
5	\$231	\$1,000	\$12,000	\$36,000
8	\$154	\$667	\$8,000	\$24,000
11	\$115	\$500	\$6,000	\$18,000
14	\$77	\$333	\$4,000	\$12,000
15	\$58	\$250	\$3,000	\$9,000
20	\$38	\$167	\$2,000	\$6,000
30	\$19	\$83	\$1,000	\$3,000
42	\$6	\$28	\$333	\$1,000
				TOTAL \$2,000,000

Ways to give your support

Every commitment to **Prepare for the Bite** is an act of faith and a step into the future God is calling us toward. We offer several simple, flexible ways to give so you can participate in a way that fits your life and circumstances. We also encourage you to reach out to your personal financial advisor to explore creative ways to support the campaign that are unique to your situation.



One-Time Contribution

A flexible option for our campaign. Some gift types may make it more convenient when fulfilling your commitment as a single gift contribution.

- ✓ Single Check or Electronic Transfer
- ✓ Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCD)
- ✓ Stock & Asset Transfer
- ✓ Donor Advised Funds (DAF)



Three-Year Pledge

The cornerstone of our campaign. By spreading your gift over 36 months, you can contribute significantly to our long-term stability.

MONTHLY GIFT	3-YEAR TOTAL
\$100 / month	\$ 3,600
\$500 / month	\$ 18,000
\$1,000 / month	\$ 36,000



Bank Bill Pay

Many banks offer bill-pay services that allow you to schedule recurring gifts. You can set these up through your bank, and they are typically sent to the church as a paper check rather than an electronic transfer.



In Person or By Mail

You may give by check during worship or by mailing your gift to the church. Please include "**Prepare for the Bite**" in the memo line.



Text-to-Give

Text giving is an easy way to make one-time or recurring gifts. Simply text your gift amount to **(833) 436-8911** and follow the reply prompts to complete your donation. Once set up, giving again is quick and simple.

Online using Vanco

Online giving is a convenient and secure way to support the campaign. You can link a credit card, debit card, or bank account and choose how often and when you give, all via the Vanco website or mobile app on the giving webpage.

Scan the QR code or visit www.atoneluth.org/give to learn more & get started with giving to **Prepare for the Bite**.



Frequently Asked Questions

Why are we doing this project now?

We believe God is growing our church. Our facilities are aging and in need of updates. Acting now ensures our building matches our mission and we're ready to welcome the people God is sending.

How much do we need to raise?

Our goal is \$2 million through this campaign. This amount will allow us to accomplish three vital tasks. First, we will be able to pay off any money we borrow through the ELCA Mission Investment Fund more quickly. Second, the money will allow us to dream big about welcoming Sam & Emma (and others!) and help us move nimbly upon the recommendations of the Council and the Strategic Planning Team. Third, by raising the full \$2 million, we will build our Campus Sustainment Fund to a healthy balance for future repairs. This campaign will free more resources for ministry, and set a strong foundation for the future. We believe this goal is both attainable and God-honoring.

How does this campaign affect our regular ministry budget?

Our ministry budget remains the priority, supporting worship, discipleship, and outreach. **Prepare for the Bite** is above and beyond regular giving.

When will construction start and how long will it take?

The HVAC unit in the sanctuary is of first priority and work on that will begin in the late winter/early spring of 2026. The other projects will likely take 12–18 months to complete, though timelines can shift based on outside factors like weather, materials, and labor. We'll keep the congregation updated at every step, and we're excited to watch the vision take shape together.

Can my gift really make a difference?

Yes. When we join together, God uses all of our gifts — large and small — to accomplish God's work. What matters is not the amount, but the heart of faith and trust behind it.

What if my circumstances change?

Commitments are made in faith, not under pressure. If your situation changes in a way that makes giving harder — job loss, medical bills, unexpected needs — you are always free to adjust your commitment. On the other hand, if God blesses you with an unexpected raise, bonus, or inheritance, you may feel led to increase your commitment. Either way, your giving is between you and God, and we trust God to guide you in each season.

What if I've never given before?

This is a great time to start! Every journey begins with a first step. Pray and ask what God is calling you to give and trust God to provide.

Is this really about money?

While this campaign will provide the financial resources needed to update our campus and serve our mission, it is about far more than dollars. Our true desire is for each person to grow in faith, trust, and generosity. Money is simply the tool God uses to shape our hearts and fund God's work. We don't want something from you — we want something for you: a deeper walk with Jesus, the freedom of trusting him completely, and the joy of seeing lives changed through your generosity.

Prepare for the Bite is seeking some rather large gifts. What if I cannot give at the high level described above, beyond my usual generosity to Atonement?

Yes, we will need some large gifts to fully prepare for the bite and have a successful campaign. We realize our members are at various stages of life! Know that every single gift counts. Every gift, no matter what amount, is a step of growth in generosity, trust in God, and participation in our vital mission of communicating the good news of the gospel to a new generation.

Can I give non-cash gifts?

Yes. Options include stock, IRA distributions, EFT, bill pay, and more. These can even provide tax benefits.

Talking with your Financial Advisor

QUALIFIED CHARITABLE DISTRIBUTION (QCD)

If you are age 70½ or older, you may be able to make a gift directly from your IRA. This can count toward your required minimum distribution and may offer tax advantages. Please consult your personal financial advisor to learn more.

APPRECIATED STOCK

Gifts of stock or other securities can be a meaningful way to support the campaign and may provide tax advantages. Contact the church office or your personal investment advisor for information on stock transfers.

DONOR-ADVISED FUNDS (DAF)

If you have a donor-advised fund (DAF), you can recommend a grant to support *Prepare for the Bite*. This can be a flexible and tax-efficient way to give. Contact your personal financial advisor or DAF provider for more information.

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TO LEARN MORE

Scan the QR code or visit

www.atone.luth.org/thebite

to learn more about our capital campaign: **Prepare for the Bite.**

