

ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH

The Messenger May 2016 Issue



2016 Council Officers

President- Bob Thompson
Vice President- Kelly Braun
Secretary- Venus Thompson
Treasurer- Clay Marnich

2016 Council Members

Christian Education- Venus Thompson
Fellowship- Karen Houseman
Social Ministry- Joel Randal
Finance- Clay Marnich
Evangelism- Bill Hendricks
Stewardship- Kelly Braun
Property- Bob Thompson
Worship/Music- Jerry Wessel
Comm./Publications- Dale Kozek
Youth Ministry- Joel Randal

NEXT COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday, May 10th
at 7:00 PM

From the desk of Pastor Murdy...

In my book by book reading of the bible this year I have arrived at 2nd Samuel. In the book of Samuel we read the story of the first king of Israel, Saul. We also read the story of Hannah, Samuel, and of course, King David- the shepherd boy turned king. I had the epiphany the other day that throughout the Pentateuch, Joshua and Judges there seems to be little music. All of a sudden in 1st Samuel music, singing, instruments, and praise make an appearance. David plays the harp for Saul to comfort him; he composes songs of remembrance for those who have died or in commemoration of a great event. David invites others to learn these songs and sing them often. For the church today, we have the psalms of David which are said, chanted, and song to glorify God.

One of my favorite lines in 2nd Samuel occurs after David is able to finally bring the tabernacle of the Lord to Jerusalem (a recent conquest and now named the city of David). The Ark of the Covenant which has never had a proper home is brought to the city- the new capital for the people of Israel. Until this point the tent of meeting had moved from one place to another for hundreds and hundreds of years. At this remarkable and historical event the people celebrate like they have never done before. They dance, sing, play instruments, and feast. As a result of the festivities the great king and conquer, the anointed one of Israel "makes a fool of himself for the Lord." David's wife is embarrassed but he stands firm to his foolishness as a way of losing himself in praise and worship to the Lord Almighty.

We all do foolish things. I'm sure each of us does at least one foolish thing before breakfast every day. Our silly antics are what make us who we are. Our foolishness is what makes us human. God deserves our foolishness. Amen?! God deserves our human praise, our vulnerabilities, and our sincerest gratitude from the place of no embarrassment!

Music is said to be one of the core aspects of our Lutheran identity. Martin Luther was the author of dozens of hymns and as you can see from the quote on the next page, "Music is an outstanding gift of God, and next to Theology." In our music on Sunday mornings we sing hymns, listen to or sing in the choir, and participate in the liturgy. We sometimes hold back our worship, don't we? We participate only as far as we are comfortable and to the extent of our familiarity. What does worship become if we hold ourselves back from it? Or, worse yet, show up unwilling to put our heart into it?

We must be like David and be fools for the Lord Almighty. Passionately throw ourselves into dance, song, and praise for Christ. Whether we worship in church, in the car or at the kitchen sink- worship fully and worship foolishly!

Yours in Christ + Pastor

The Choir In Lutheran Worship

Music is an outstanding gift of God and next to theology ... I would not give up my slight knowledge of music for a great consideration ... and youth should be taught this art ... for it makes fine skillful people ... I would certainly like to praise music with all my heart as the excellent gift of God which it is and to commend it to everyone.

Martin Luther

Every three years, 30,000 high school youth and their adult leaders from across the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America gather for a week of faith formation known as the Gathering. Through days spent in interactive learning, worship, Bible study, service and fellowship, young people grow in faith and are challenged and inspired to live their faith in their daily lives.

An important part of the Gathering's ministry are the two pre-events, the Multicultural Youth Leadership Event (MYLE), a faith formation and leadership development event primarily for youth of color, and the tAble, an ELCA gathering of youth with disabilities.



A Message from Rich...

This world offers few guarantees. We are assured that we will pay taxes, and we are going to die, nothing more than that. I offer another: To Him we shall return. Whatever we have been taught and believe about this life and the next, one thing is certain, we shall all return to our source, our Creator, He who knew us in the womb and breathed His breath of life into us. Regardless of our status in life, rich or poor, famous or infamous, it is to Him that we shall return. It makes sense to me that it is He who created us is the one who calls us home to himself, to that eternal place of peace, beauty, and everlasting love that He has prepared for us. That which He has prepared for us is beyond anything we can possibly imagine. There is no pain and suffering there. There is no anger, fear, or resentment there. You will not find any form of poverty in the home our Lord has prepared for us.

I encourage all of you to move past some of this theology of fear about death. Remember what the first words are from His messengers-"do not be afraid" or Isaiah as he writes that we shall walk through the fire and not be harmed. Believe in the promises of our Lord, be of strong faith and do not falter. Let us live our lives in great anticipation of that great and glorious day when we are called home, to our eternal home. Go forth with faith, courage and conviction, ever forward towards that day when to Him we shall return. God Bless.

Rich Mussman



Shirley Vete; Pat and Gene Summerhill; Mary and Harold Honath; Ken "Butch" Thompson; Ron and Pat Williams; Elizabeth Reuben; Sandy Belsky; Matt Wilkinson; Jean Nau; Lorraine Zwick; Connor Pasellvis; Barbara Jean Murdy; Michele Germusa and Rich Mussman.

New in the Church

A big thank you to, Pastor Leonard Larson, for the generous donation, that went towards the new A/C Unit, in our Fellowship hall. Mr. Jerry Wessel had multiple contractors come out and give bids; we chose Wade Heating and Air, to do the install. Jerry was here from start to finish, he's a trooper. If you get a moment, please go take a look. It will be a wonderful addition for the upcoming warmer months



Ever thought of giving your child a private and quality education?

Holy Family Academy, an affordable and innovative Catholic high school serving students of all faiths! If you would like to learn more, please visit hfa-pgh.org or contacting Admissions@hfa-pgh.org or [412-307-0230](tel:412-307-0230).



Family Promise Wish List

When families successfully leave our Shelter program for housing of their own, our Home Again program sets them up with the furniture and household goods they need to make a successful new start!

We are *desperately seeking* mattresses and box springs of all sizes, but twin beds for kids are most important!

We pick-up!

Please contact Laura Vincenti at lvincenti@familypromiseswpa.org, 412-576-9795 or 724-229-1129.

Worship and Music

Worship: If you have an interest in decorating the church during special times of the year please see Lynn Kinney or Pastor Joe. We are looking for your talents and ideas on how we can decorate the church to be more festive and display symbols related to the season. For example, Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, Thanksgiving, etc. We would love to work together!

Music: Have you ever wondered how hymns are selected and why we sing certain songs when we do? If you are interested in helping in the music selection process please see Pastor Joe or Brandy. As part of our three year mission plan we would like to invite more participation in the planning process. Let us know!

NEW- We invite you to share your favorite hymns with us that can be incorporated in our worship. Hymnals are available in the narthex, along with a sheet for you to list your favorites. Feel free to borrow a hymnal to spend more time with your selections.

Additional Ways to Give Towards the Church...

SIMPLY GIVING:

Simply giving is a new and much more suitable way to give to your church. Many of us pay our bills online or have them set up to be paid automatically for convenience. Now you can give to the church the same way. You simply fill out a form indicating how much you would like to give a week, bi-weekly, or monthly and it will easily be withdrawn from your bank account.

THRIVENT MEMBERS:

The Thrivent Choice Program lets members choose where some of Thrivent Financials charitable outreach funds go. If you are a Thrivent member who is eligible to participate in this program, you can choose Ascension to receive your choice dollars. To learn more, please contact church office.

Memorial Fund

When a loved one dies, how do we remember them? This question is especially important when a saint of the church dies and people whose lives were touched want to honor God in whom they rest and who provided such a gift- for however short a time. In the like of the church when a loved one dies we have the opportunity to contribute to the memorial fund.

Ascension Lutheran Church is changing hymnals!

We will soon begin to use the new Lutheran hymnal, the Evangelical Lutheran Worship (ELW) or Cranberry book. We welcome you to contribute to this effort by donating a book to the glory of God in honor or in memory of someone. Each hymnal cost \$22.50. We invite you to use the envelopes provided in the bulletin.

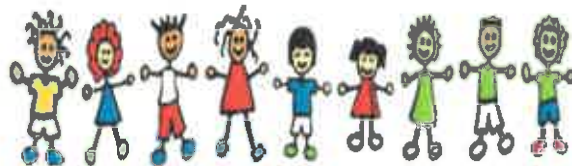


Evangelical Lutheran Worship



**Ascensions 5th Annual
WING FLING
Saturday, August 27th
3PM**

**We have some big Ideas, be
sure to not miss this event!**



Vacation Bible School:

**Mark your calendars August 1st to the 5th
(6pm-8pm) for Vacation Bible School
this year!**

More information to come!

UPCOMING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Worship & Music Meeting
Monday, May 2nd at 7:00 PM
Council Meeting
Tuesday, May 10th at 7:00 PM
Fellowship Meeting
Sunday, May 22nd at 12:00 PM
Communication/Publications Meeting
Tuesday, May 24th at 7:00 PM
Christian Education Meeting
Sunday, June 5th at 12:00 PM



If you are interested in purchasing flowers to be placed in the chancel to the glory of God, we invite you to sign up in the Narthex on the flower chart. (Please ONLY place your name if you are purchasing flowers) Checks can be placed in the offertory plate or church office, check are to be payable to Ascension Lutheran Church. The cost for two vases is \$50.



AUTISM SPEAKS
It's time to listen.

Statistics show that Autism now affects 1 in 68 children and 1 in 42 boys. Autism is the fastest growing developmental disorder in the US for which there is still no medical detection or cure. We hope to shed light on Autism and offer hope to those affected. The annual walk for Autism Speaks will be held in Pittsburgh on Sunday, June 12th. We were able to raise \$574 towards the annual walk for Autism Speaks. To learn more information, please visit

<http://www.autismspeakswalk.org/atl/home/default.asp?event=1150338>



STEWARDSHIP STATION

Marion Cerar has been serving behind the scenes as Ascension's volunteer financial secretary since 2012. We reached out to Marion to ask her to tell us about what she does in this role, and to heartily extend our thanks to her for all her time and effort she gives to us and to God:

I am the Financial Secretary of Ascension Lutheran Church. This is my fifth year serving in this capacity. In 2012, after the untimely death of Sandy Shane, there was a need for someone to step in and I volunteered to do so. With the help and advice of Lisa Cook, I was able to go back to the beginning of 2012 and bring the reporting up to date.

My duties include recording weekly offerings and crediting them to the correct donor. A challenge each week is making sure that my totals for each week balance with the counters' total. At the end of the year, it is my job to print out the annual offering summary for each family and make sure they are either passed out in church or mailed by the end of January. I am looking forward to having this be a much faster, easier process this year since we have a new software program. Shepherd's Staff software will include all the information with a touch of a button for the whole congregation that I used to have to enter manually, one summary at a time. The last part of my job involves labeling the new envelopes with the family's name and number for the following year.

My unofficial duties over the past few years have involved helping out in the office, mostly in between office administrators or during busy times such as Holy Week. I have printed, folded, and stapled bulletins for worship and refilled and straightened the visitor and prayer cards in the pews. It's hard to imagine just how much "behind the scenes" work is involved in keeping the church running smoothly. It makes me appreciate just how hard Pastor Joe, Nicole, and so many others work every week to keep Ascension the way we expect it to be.

THANK YOU MARION!

**Yours in Christ,
Stewardship Committee**

OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE

Ascension's current constitution is approximately 20 years old, and our Synod and the ELCA are encouraging us to update it. If reading and pondering are your strengths, we would love to have you join our new Constitution Committee at Ascension to assist with this process. The ELCA adopted a Model Constitution in 2013, and we will be using that as our starting point. We expect this process to take several months, but not require many meetings.

If you are interested (or want to learn more), please contact Kelly Braun at braunk@pepperlaw.com or 412-787-7773.

Ascension Supports "Family Promise" at Sewickley United Methodist

On Monday, March 14, volunteers from Ascension provided transportation, dinner, and fellowship to homeless families temporarily housed at Sewickley United Methodist (SUM), through Family Promise of Southwestern PA. This non-profit organization connects children and families experiencing homelessness with a network of local congregations and dedicated staff, all focused on providing them with shelter, meals, hospitality, and support until they are able to return to sustainable independent lives in their own homes. Due to recent placement of one of the families into their new home, there were just two families staying at SUM on the evening that Ascension volunteered. With five children ranging in age from four months to eight years old, we had a great time playing games, making artwork and Easter crafts, and reading books with them. They loved to play "school," pretending to be the teacher and principal, and giving us math and reading lessons. Shortly after our volunteer date, we learned that one of the two families would be moving into their new home at the end of the month!

Thanks so much to all of the volunteers who generously donated their time, energy, and delicious food/cooking! Ascension is currently scheduled to support SUM again during their next hosting week, on Monday, June 13, 2016. If you are interested in learning more and/or getting involved (volunteering as a van driver, dinner host, evening host, or overnight host), please contact Lynn Neilson (lynnneilson@gmail.com) and Ellen Randal (ellen.randal@gmail.com). To learn more about Family Promise, visit their website at www.familypromise.org.



Community YARD SALE

Saturday, June 4th 8:00 AM – 2:00 PM

Set up time will be scheduled for 6:00 AM, we have extended hours this year.

Cost is \$10 per (10x10) spot.

You keep all the money you earn from the sale. We will be working with AMVets to donate any unwanted items, left over from the sale, on Monday, June 6th.

The church will also be hosting a food/bake sale throughout the entire event; proceeds will go towards a non-profit organization.

If you would like to sign up and reserve a spot, please send an email to ascensionyardsale@gmail.com



Soccer Season Is Upon Us!

Carla Stewart, Director

WHO: All kids ages 2-8 *Mini (ages 2-3); Classic (3-5); Premier (ages 5-8)

WHERE: Ascension Lutheran Church

WHEN: Our 8-Week season starts Wed. 3/30 and Sat. 4/2

*Multiple, convenient class times from which to choose!

* Please visit our website for more information

<https://www.soccershots.org/pittsburgh/>



REGISTER FOR SUMMER CAMP 2016

www.lutherlyn.com or 724-865-2161

An Invitation to CAMPBLAST! Saturday, May 7th ~11am -4:30pm

Classic Camp- Juniors (Grades 4-6) Jr. High (Grades 7-9)

Classic Senior High (Grades 10-12)

Small Fry Days (Grades 1-3)

Day Camp at Lutherlyn (Grades 1-6)

SO MUCH MORE FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES!



The Fellowship Chart has been posted in the Narthex and is ready to receive sign-ups from members who are eager to provide a light snack after worship! Just take a look at the available dates and sign up for the date that works for you!

Important Dates:

June 4th – Yard Sale

August 27th – Wing Fling

Please mark your calendars and plan to attend these excellent Ascension events and stay tuned for Painting with a Twist and Oktoberfest events coming soon!

Dear Parents with young children in church...

You are doing something really, *really* important. I know it's not easy. I see you with your arms overflowing, and I know you came to church already tired. Parenting is tiring. Really tiring.

I watch you bounce and sway trying to keep the baby quiet, juggling the infant car seat and the diaper bag as you find a seat. I see you wince as your child cries. I see you anxiously pull things out of your bag of tricks to try to quiet them.

And I see you with your toddler and your preschooler. I watch you cringe when your little girl asks an innocent question in a voice that might not be an inside voice let alone a church whisper. I hear the exasperation in your voice as you *beg* your child to just sit, to be quiet as you feel everyone's eyes on you. Not everyone is looking, but I know it feels that way.

I know you're wondering is this worth it? Why do I bother? I know you often leave church more exhausted than fulfilled. But what you are doing is *so* important.

When you are here, the church is filled with a joyful noise. When you are here, the Body of Christ is more fully present. When you are here, we are reminded that this worship thing we do isn't about bible study or personal, quiet contemplation but coming together to worship as a community where *all* are welcome, where we share in the Word and Sacrament together.

When you are here, I have hope that these pews won't be empty in 10 years when your kids are old enough to *sit quietly and behave in worship*. I know that they are learning how and why we worship now, before it's too late.

They are learning that worship is important.

I see them learning. In the midst of the cries, whines, and giggles, in the midst of the crinkling of pretzel bags and the growing pile of crumbs, I see a little girl who insists on going two pews up to share peace with someone she's never met. I hear a little boy slurping (quite loudly) every last drop of his communion wine out of the cup, determined not to miss a drop of Jesus.

I watch a child excitedly color a cross and point to the one in the front of the sanctuary. I hear the echos of "Amen's" just a few seconds after the rest of the community says it together. I watch a boy just learning to read try to sound out the words in the worship book or count his way to Hymn 672.

Even on weeks when I can't see my own children learning because, well, it's one of *those* mornings; I can see your children learning.

I know how hard it is to do what you're doing, but I want you to know *it matters*. It matters to me. It matters to my children to not be alone in the pew. It matters to the congregation to know that families care about faith, to see young people... and even on those weeks when you can't see the little moments, it matters to your children.

It matters that they learn that worship is what we do as a community of faith, that everyone is welcome, that *their* worship matters. When we teach children that their worship matters, we teach them that they are *enough* right here and right now as members of the church community. They don't need to wait until they can believe, pray or worship a certain way to be welcome here, and I know adults who are still looking to be shown that. It matters that children learn that they are an integral part of this church, that their prayers, their songs, and even their badly (or perfectly-timed, depending on who you ask) cries and whines *are* a joyful noise because it means they are present.

I know it's hard, but thank you for what you do when you bring your children to church. Please know that your family — with all of its noise, struggle, commotion, and joy — are not simply tolerated, you are a vital part of the community gathered in worship.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jamie-brueshoff/parents-kids-church_b_9909086.html

500th Anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation


500 Years of Evangelical Reformation 1517-2017

When Martin Luther posted his "Ninety-five Theses" on the church door in Wittenberg in 1517, no one expected the breadth of evangelical reforms in Christian teaching and practice that followed. In every dimension of Christian faith a renewed trust in God's forgiving mercy replaced a reliance on teachings and practices that, like the sale of indulgences, were vulnerable to abuse and corruption.

Preaching a few years later, Luther said, "I opposed indulgences ... but never with force. I simply taught, preached, and wrote God's Word; otherwise I did nothing. I did nothing; the Word did everything." When he began to propose reforms in worship, he wrote similar words. "This is the sum of the matter: let everything be done so that the Word may have free course."

Nearly 500 years later, the results of this evangelical confidence in God's forgiving and liberating Word are evident today in Christian communities of all types. In the years leading to 2017 ELCA members, congregations and synods will observe the anniversary of this evangelical reformation in a variety of ways with numerous partners.

Please visit our website at
www.ELCA500.org.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
 JUNE 2016						
5 3rd Sunday Pentecost Mutual Ministry & Christian Ed Meetings	6 Property Meeting @ 7:00 PM	7 Dee Gratzmiller & Sandy Tambellini Birthday	8 Mary Jane Knetzer Birthday Choir Practice 7:00 PM NA Meeting 7:30 PM	9 Aisha Pollard Birthday Tom & Dee Lightner Anniversary Spirituality Group 7 PM	10 Millie Johnson Birthday	11 Worship Server Luncheon 12-2 PM AA Meeting 9:00 AM
12 4th Sunday Pentecost Blake Tomchak Birthday	13 Clark Rose Birthday	14 Ken Thomson, Brian Stanford, & Alissa Karmis Birthdays Council Meeting @ 7:00 PM	15 Choir Practice 7:00 PM NA Meeting 7:30 PM	16 LUNCH BUNCH MEETS Spirituality Group 7 PM	17 Mike Neilson Birthday	18 AA Meeting 9:00 AM Darron Rose Birthday
19 5th Sunday Pentecost JoAnn Erwin Birthday	20	21 Emily Reckner Birthday	22 Choir Practice 7:00 PM NA Meeting 7:30 PM Greg & Venus Thompson Anniversary	23 Spirituality Group 7 PM	24	25 AA Meeting 9:00 AM
26 6th Sunday Pentecost	27 Pastor Larsen & Destiny Johnson Birthdays	28 Stewardship Meeting @ 7:00 PM Ryan Williams Birthday	29 Mike Siemons Birthday Choir Practice 7:00 PM NA Meeting 7:30 PM	30 Dale & Marion Cenar Anniversary Spirituality Group 7 PM	1	2 AA Meeting 9:00 AM
					3 Bob & Mary Thompson Anniversary Vincent Zeller Birthday	4 Mary & Hal Honath Anniversary ANNUAL YARD SALE Leah Yen Birthday AA Meeting 9:00 AM

Church Office Hours: Monday- Thursday 9:00 AM – 2:30 PM

Office Email: office@alcpgh.com

Pastor Email: pastor@alcpgh.com

Website: www.alcpgh.com

Pastor Email: pastor@alcpgh.com

Phone: 412-859-3711

Music Director Email: Music@alcpgh.com

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
MAY 2016						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6 th Sunday Easter		Rudy Mornich Jr. Birthday	Amy Summerhill and Abbey Fisher Birthday Choir Practice 7:00 PM NA Meeting 7:30 PM		Debbie Rose Birthday's	AA Meeting 9:00 AM
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
7 th Sunday Easter Bobby Brown Birthday	Paula Tomchak Birthday	Bob Bryan Birthday Council Meeting 7 PM	Choir Practice 7:00 PM NA Meeting 7:30 PM	Spirituality Group 7 PM		AA Meeting 9:00 AM Johnathan Endes Birthday
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Day Of Pentecost Abbey Rose Birthday				Spirituality Group 7 PM	Helen Rose and Dale Cerar Birthdays	AA Meeting 9:00 AM
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
The Holy Trinity	Janey Zoltun Birthday	Bob Thompson Birthday	Choir Practice 7:00 PM NA Meeting 7:30 PM Cindy and Bob Stathers Anniversary	Spirituality Group 7 PM		AA Meeting 9:00 AM
29	30	31				
3 rd Sunday of Pentecost	Mike Kinney, Payten Fisher, and Paul Tomchak Birthday	Jill and Jacob Lescallette Birthdays	Choir Practice 7:00 PM NA Meeting 7:30 PM	Spirituality Group 7 PM		AA Meeting 9:00 AM



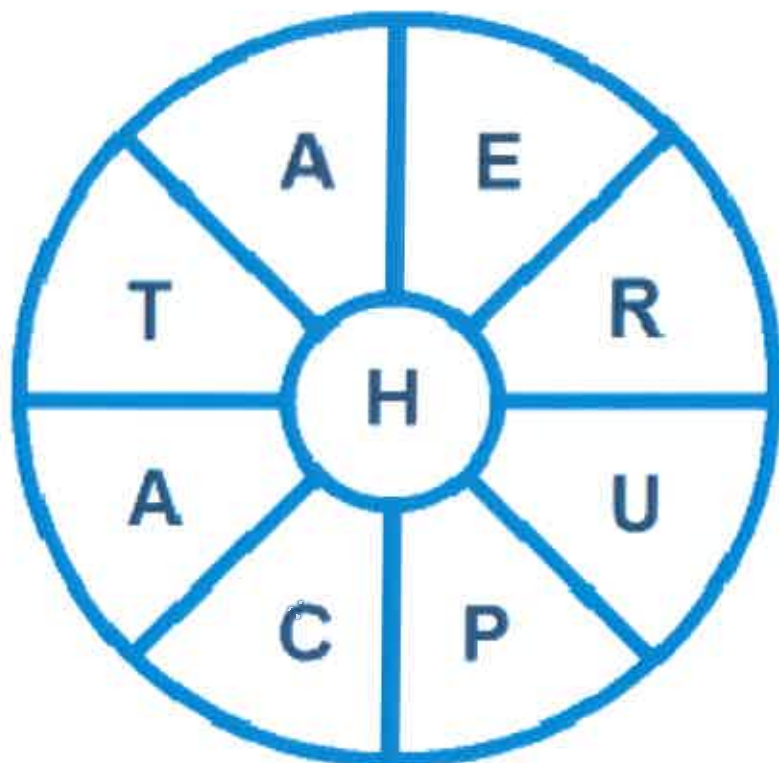
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Phone: 412-859-3711
 Music Director Email: Music@alcpgh.com

PUZZLE CHOICE

How many words can you make from the letters in the wheel? Each word must contain the hub letter H. Can you find a 9-letter word and at least 15 other words of five letters or more avoiding proper nouns?





Inside this Month Issue...

A Message from Rich

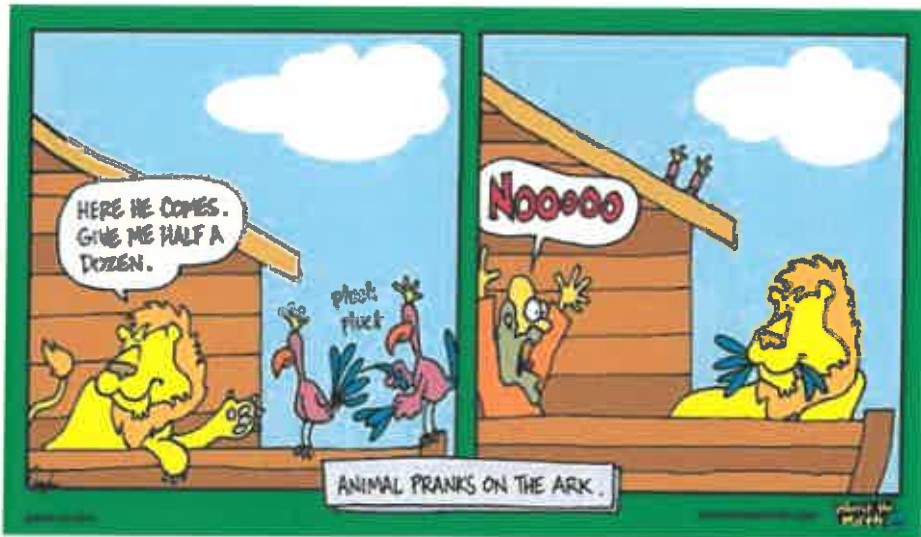
Soccer Shots

Fellowship

Upcoming Events

Birthdays and Anniversaries

Stewardship Article



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