

# ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH

## The Messenger February 2016 Issue



*From Pastor Murdy's desk...*

The story of Saint Valentine is not well known throughout the modern Christian church. At least not to most Lutherans. Valentinus was a third century priest who lived in a time when Christians were still being persecuted. Emperor Claudius the II ordered all Romans to worship twelve gods and made it a crime to associate with Christians. But, Valentinus' dedication to Christ would not waiver even under penalty of death. He was arrested and imprisoned. While in prison he helped to teach the prison guards blind daughter, Julia, many things. In this time he taught her to believe in and love God. From his cell he wrote letters, which is why we have Valentine's Day cards. Before his martyred death, Julia came to faith in Jesus Christ. On the eve of his death Valentinus wrote a last note to Julia, urging her to stay close to God. He signed it, "From your Valentine." His sentence was carried out the next day, February 14, 270 A.D., near a gate that was later named Porta Valentini in his memory. He was buried at what is now the Church of Praxedes in Rome. It is said that Julia planted a pink-blossomed almond tree near his grave. Today, the almond tree remains a symbol of abiding love and friendship. On each February 14, Saint Valentine's Day, messages of affection, love, and devotion are exchanged around the world."

It is a unique conscience that Ash Wednesday, the start of our Lenten pilgrimage and the feast of Saint Valentine are so close in proximity to one another in the month of February. The legacy of one man's martyrdom for the faith and the road that begins our journey to the cross-a source of sacrificial love that remains a source of hope and healing. Valentine's Day is a day of love after all, the basis of which is the love of Christ.

During the season of Lent we are called to repentance and reconciliation with God and with one another. Throughout this penitential season we hear stories of sacrifice and liberation. Most of all we hear the greatest story ever told, a story of love so deep that it is unparalleled. The story of Christ's passion draws us in and shows us that we too are a part of the story, for Christ died for us that we might know God and have the promise of forgiveness and life everlasting.

Jesus says, "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends" Let us give thanks that Jesus calls us friends.

***Yours in Christ,***

***Pastor Joseph G. Murdy***

### 2016 Council Officers

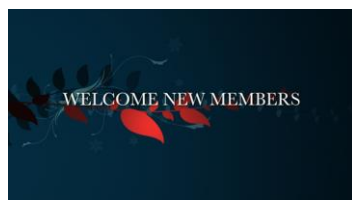
President- Bob Thompson  
Vice President- Kelly Braun  
Secretary- Venus Thompson  
Treasurer- Clay Marnich

### 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, February 9<sup>th</sup>  
following Shrove Tuesday  
Service.



**Elliot Michael Woods**



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.



**GOOD FRIDAY, MARCH 25, 2016**  
**7:00 P.M.**

HAL H. HOPSON'S

## TENEBRAE: A SERVICE OF DARKNESS

Join us for this reflective time of worship and song led by the choir. In this service, eight candles are gradually extinguished, symbolizing the flight and denial of the disciples and friends of Jesus at the time of His crucifixion.

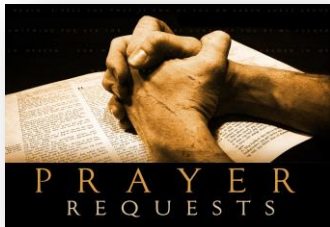


Ascension Lutheran Church  
1290 Silver Lane, Robinson Township, PA. 15136

## A Message from Rich...

A Word About Prayer: So much can be and is said about prayer. What it comes down to is a person's willingness to take the time, what many of us feel we do not have enough of, and spend a few minutes with God. There are so many ways we can spend time with God in prayer that if we think about it prayer can become a part of our daily routine without any interruption at all. Take a moment and look at a few of the forms of prayer, which is simply spending time with God in a personal way. Most of us use verbal prayer as a means of speaking with God and asking Him for His help (Grace) in our lives. Others ways which we may not be aware of are to sing to God, and inviting Him to join you in a song of worship. What about silent prayer? This is something we can do when making dinner, driving to the store, while out shopping at any time or place. Listening to God is an essential part of a person's prayer life as well. Simply presenting ourselves before God and opening our hearts and minds to Him and asking Him to enter into our heart, mind and soul is a ways of allowing God to influence our thoughts and actions. What is comes down to is that there is no valid excuse for not spending at least a few minutes quietly with God each day. We don't even have to speak, we can simply think of Him, reflect on what He means to us and ask for His blessing. Is there something keeping you from speaking with or listening to God today? If there is, think again. He is waiting to hear from us. Speak with Him today!

*Rich Mussman*



Shirley Vete; Pat and Gene Summerhill; Mary and Harold Honath; Ken "Butch" Thompson; Chuck Kohnen; Courtney Kohnen; Ron and Pat Williams; Elizabeth Reuben; Sandy Belsky; Dee Gratzmiller; Matt Wilkinson; Jean Nau; Aaron Braddick; Kay Braisted; Lorraine Zwinkl; Connor Paselivis; and Rich Mussman.

Holy Family Academy, an affordable and innovative Catholic high school serving students of all faiths invites families of current 8th, 9th and 10th graders to attend an open house on Wednesday, February 3 from 5 to 8 p.m. and Saturday, March 5 from noon to 3 p.m. RSVP or learn more by visiting [hfa-pgh.org](http://hfa-pgh.org) or contacting [Admissions@hfa-pgh.org](mailto:Admissions@hfa-pgh.org) or 412-307-0230.



## Lent collection

### Heads, SHOULDERS, ~~knees~~ and TOES!

Throughout the season of Lent Ascension will be collecting personal hygiene and paper products that are necessary for daily life. In the fall we discovered that Good Shepherd, in addition to food really need personal items. We invite you to help us help others. We will be collecting the following items: toilet paper, paper towels, floss, shampoo, deodorant, soap, kids soap, tooth paste, tooth brushes, foot powder, and other things we use in our daily lives.

## 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.

## 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.

### 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.

# Lent



Shrove Tuesday, February 9<sup>th</sup>

Supper 7:00 PM

Ash Wednesday, February 10<sup>th</sup> 7:00 PM

Lenten Suppers (February 17<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>, March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, & 16<sup>th</sup>) 6:00 PM

Palm Sunday, March 20<sup>th</sup> 10:30 AM

Maundy Thursday, March 24<sup>th</sup> 7:00 PM

Good Friday, March 25<sup>th</sup> 7:00 PM

Easter Vigil, March 26<sup>th</sup> 7:00 PM

Easter Sunday Resurrection, March 27<sup>th</sup> 10:30 AM

## *Inside this Month Issue...*

*A Message from Rich*

*Prayer List*

*Upcoming Events*

*Birthdays and Anniversaries*

*Crossword Puzzle*



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