



THE MESSENGER
ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH
NEWSLETTER, AUGUST 2015

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2015 Council:

- Clay Marnich, President
- Rick Zoltun, V. President
- Venus Thompson, Secretary
- Ellen Randal, Youth Ministry
- Bill Hendricks, Social Ministry
- Lynn Neilson
- Rudy Marnich, Finance
- Kelly Braun, Stewardship
- Dale Kozek, Communications
- Pastor, Worship/Youth

August 2015

FROM THE PASTOR—

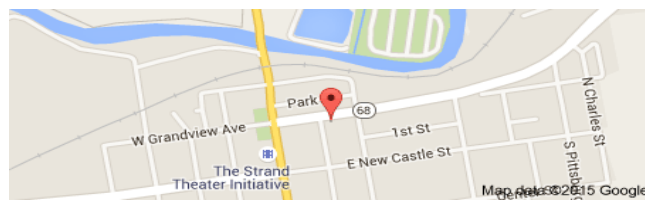
“Are we lost?”

I promised I would share this story. A few weeks ago Judy Bryan, Lynn Kinney and I set out on an unexpected journey. We were carpooling to a mission planning meeting at First English Lutheran in Zelenople. Our journey began as many do, with the simple press of a button on the GPS. My first mistake was typing in the wrong church. Already running behind we arrived at Zion Lutheran Church. The name of our destination I would later remember was First English. “This isn’t right,” I said. “I don’t think we are in Zelenople,” Judy chimed in from the back. Shortly after stopping the car, Pastor Blair Morgan called to see where we were. “We are at the wrong church,” I said. After he assured me that we were only 5 minutes away we were confident we would be there soon. I typed in the name of the church, English Lutheran, and we were off. “Are you sure you know where you are going now,” Lynn asked. About 30 minutes later and after several good chuckles from my passengers I called Pr. Morgan to say we had somehow ended up in Butler. Finally, an hour and ten minutes late we arrived at our destination. Only to be greeted with applause and laughter. We set off on a journey that should have taken 25 minutes. We traveled to two churches whose names were not even close to the First English Lutheran Church in Zelenople. This was to be our final meeting as a collection of churches working toward mission planning. I learned a few things that night. One always double check where you are going. Two, if you are lost its better to be with friends. Needless to say this is one memory I will not forget.

As travelers on the journey of life we often use the phrase, “this isn’t where I’m supposed to be!” When we look at our lives we sometimes reflect from the starting point to where we are. Our thoughts are often the same, “I should have accomplished more,” “shouldn’t I have more money in the bank,” “I guess I never really took the time to _____,” “I thought God would have given me better directions.”

Many times in Gods story we read accounts where God sends someone on a journey. Abraham was sent to a new land with a new promise. Moses was sent into the wilderness with no map and a whole lot of back seat drivers. Prophets were sent to speak of justice, truth and hope to people who were less than welcoming at times. Ruth was sent to a new place with a new family. David was sent into battle. Daniel was sent to the lion’s den. Jesus was sent to us. When we were baptized we were sent out. Where to? How will we know when we get there? What do I do when I get there? Do I travel alone?

Our baptism takes us to a lot of places, mostly unexpected. What’s important is to realize when we feel lost, God is there to guide us (Luke 15:1-10). When we don’t know where to go, God shows the way (Genesis 12:1). No matter where we are on the journey of life God is the one that must lead us. When we depend on the faulty navigation that daily surrounds us we are bound to get lost. Look to your baptism, look to Christ and look to God to show you the way. “Let the Lord your God show us where we should go and what we should do.” Jeremiah 42:3



Yours in Christ+

Pastor Joseph Murdy



A Message from Rich....

CLAIMING SPIRITUAL GROWTH

If we say we are growing spiritually and proclaim our own development in spirituality, are we any different than those Pharisees Jesus tells us not to be like? Is spiritual growth something to be bragged about to others as if we are more spiritual than they? Who is the judge of our growth? Who decides if we are growing spiritually or not? Do we judge ourselves? Is it a group of religious experts before whom we present our qualifications? Neither, for it is God Himself who is the judge. For only He can look deep into our mind, heart, and soul and determine what is there and what is not. How often do we hear people proclaim their own spiritual growth and determine that they are spiritually fit? They have determined that because they rise in the morning and recite a few memorized formal prayers followed by a hearty amen that they are fit for the day. Granted, there are some who rise and begin each day with a sense of humility and gratitude, and I do not speak of those in this essay, but rather those who practice an instant spirituality and announce they are now fit for the day. Our first inclination is to say "baloney," but who are we to determine what is in a person's heart? It is in the self-pronouncement that I personally find annoying, but perhaps this is a sign of my intolerance. In the end only God knows the heart and spirit of a man or woman, not I or anyone else. He is the one who knows the thought behind the thought, the motive behind the motive for our prayers and how we do them. He is the one who understands the emotion of our prayers and the feelings of the spirit that we either have or do not have. He looks into our soul to determine our fitness. In the end it is a matter for us to simply follow His command not to judge others. It is also suggested that perhaps we tend to our own spiritual development and not that of others unless we are asked to do so. However; I for one will not proclaim my spiritual fitness, I will leave that up to God.

Richard Mussman



Vacation Bible School

Vacation Bible School, Discovery Camp will be the week of August 3rd through 7th. If you would like to learn more on how you can help this week, please contact the church office.



WING FLING

Annual Wing Fling will be held on August 29th. We will need volunteers, sauces, coolers, and of course... your APPETITE. If you are new to Ascension and or never been a part of our annual wing fling—we'll get ready! ALL YOU CAN EAT! Come taste local sauces, play volleyball and join in the fellowship.



Sunday, August 16th Blessing of the backpacks
Sunday, August 30th Luther League 11:30 – 1 pm Bible Study and Tie Die (bring a white T-Shirt) Jr/Sr. High is MOVIE Night 6-8 pm



"God's work. Our hands."

Sunday, September 13, 2015 ELCA Day of Service.

Pittsburgh Steelers



by Jennifer Wallace

Pittsburgh Steelers.
Here you come on the field.
Ready to make all other plays yield.
Do what it takes to prove, who the big deal is.
Let them know who's for real.
All your mighty power as a team.
Coming up with all sorts of intelligent schemes.
Fun filling your NFL dreams.
Coming out the big winners.
Showing you're not the ones who are beginners.
And forever more rule as champions.
Even against big and mighty players.
That may come crashing your way.
You show them who's boss each and every day.
Go Steelers Go!
Show the world who rules the football world!



Our New Nursery

We now have a beautiful nursery which gives parents and children a safe place to worship without the anxiety of interruption. We are asking for volunteers to help watch children during worship so that parents have the opportunity to sit in church. A Sign-Up sheet is in Narthex, Thank you to everyone for your support and thank you to the parents who decided one day that it was possible.

Fun Facts:

First Motion Picture Theatre - 1905

The first theater in the world devoted to the exhibition of motion pictures was the "Nickelodeon," opened by Harry Davis on Smithfield Street in Pittsburgh.

First Bingo Game - early 1920's

Hugh J. Ward first came up with the concept of bingo in Pittsburgh and began running the game at carnivals in the early 1920s, taking it nationwide in 1924.



Shirley Vete; Pat and Gene Summerhill; George and Julia Kasich; 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.

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 the God in whom they rest and who provided such a gift- for however short a time. In the life of the church when a loved one dies we have the opportunity to contribute to the memorial fund. After our 2015 annual meeting we established a memorial fund committee to help educate and oversee the receiving and use of funds contributed. If you are interested in being a part of this conversation, please see the Pastor. Gifts given to the memorial fund can either be designated for a particular item or use, or it can be left to the church to decide how to best utilize those donations. If you have questions about this process you can contact the office at any time. If you wish to make a donation in memory of a loved one cards are available in the **narthex**.



Please help the church in keeping our "Brother Martin's Pantry" stock full for those in need! We have been able to help so many thus far. So the next time you are at the grocery store, grab just one more can of soup, canned vegetable or fruit, or even a box of pasta and a jar of sauce. *We are also accepting personal hygiene products.* Every little bit goes a LONG way and your constant support helps tremendously in someone's life daily! THANK you, *for all you do*, Ascension Family!



Simply Giving:

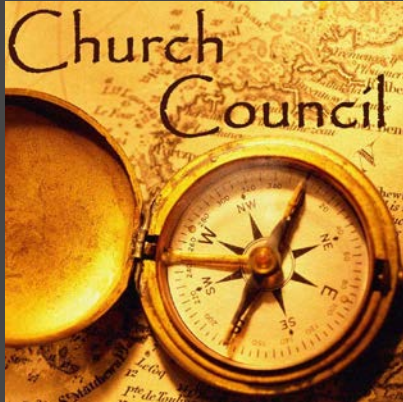
Have you been wondering what simply giving is? Simply giving is a new and much more convenient way to give to your church. Many of us pay our bills on line or have them set up to be paid automatically for convenience. Now you can give to church the same way. Simply giving is a program offered through Thrivent Financial and a company called Vanco. 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. You can even establish how much you want to give for Christmas, Easter, benevolence, local and other. It's easy and simple- that's why they call it *simply giving*. Nicole, pastor and others will be available to you if you have any questions. We encourage anyone who is interested. This enables us to track giving more efficiently, secures giving during the low months and helps with that Sunday morning dilemma "I forgot my check book." Forms will be available beginning in September and will be available throughout the year for you to start any time.

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. Thank you to those who have already designated their Choice Dollars to Ascension! For any questions concerning the Thrivent Choice Program, please contact your Thrivent representative or call Kurt Herbst, Ascension's Thrivent representative at 724-814-6058.

August 2015

COUNCIL MINUTES AVAILABLE!

Have you ever wondered what council is up to or what our finances are looking like these days? We invite you to see what going on by keeping up with our council minutes now available in the hall way and office. You may have noticed a new binder in the narthex. If you take a look inside you will see: a monthly council agenda and minutes, finance reports, team reports, our constitution and our annual bulletin of reports. If you wish to take a copy home you can find them located just inside the office on the wall in a folder marked council minutes. If you have any questions please feel free to ask your council representatives or pastor.



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