

FROM THE PASTOR—

New Beginnings

I have always wondered what it must have been like to be Noah and his family when they first stepped off the boat. Have you ever come to a moment in your life when you felt like for the first time in a long time your feet were on solid ground? There are times we feel the rock of the boat or the unexpected turbulence of life, often followed by a thankful kiss to the ground. Then there are times when life simply takes a new direction and we land on soil that is yet untouched.

I know in my own life as Amanda and I begin our married life together with our blended family we can sometimes feel the excitement of new land along with the occasional unsteady footing. As a church we are about to begin anew phase of mission and ministry as we engage our community in new ways and build upon our foundation of faith and fellowship. New beginnings can be exciting, but it can also leave us feeling uncertain or unsteady. Fear not.

When God called Noah to build the Ark it was because something new had to take place. The world was not as God had intended. Rebirth had to take place. The old had to go and the new had to come fourth. I think this is apropos given the dawn of autumn that is upon us. With everything new there is something that must go away.

When God creates something new in our lives we must learn to shed the old, replace the broken and allow God to work wonders by giving us new life every day. Our problem is that we love to hang on to the old. We are spiritual hoarders. We hold on to sins, grudges, hurt, loss and guilt. LET IT GO! Open your hearts and lives, shed the old and see what God will do. Paul reminds us, "If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation; everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!"

Whether you are about to begin a new journey in your life like us Murdy's, or you see God's Spirit at work in our church moving things you don't like moved, or your struggling to let go and let God- look out and see the horizon. God is bringing you to a new place, new soil, new possibilities, and new life.

Yours in Christ+

Pastor Joseph Murdy



THE MESSENGER

ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH

NEWSLETTER, SEPTEMBER 2015

Inside this issue:

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Community Information

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

Upcoming Events



**God's Work
Our Hands**

"God's work. Our hands." Sunday, September 13, 2015
ELCA Day of Service. RALLY DAY! Sunday School resumes.



MAKING STRIDES AGAINST BREAST CANCER WALK!

Would any ALC members be interested in participating in a group/team for this organization? <http://www.makingstrideswalk.org/>
I (Nicole) would be glad to put together the team, please contact me at office@alcpgh.com DATE: October 17th, 2015.

A Message from Rich....

THE GOD OF OUR IMAGINATION

What do we imagine God to be? Is God a man, a woman, an unseen impersonal force driving the universe and the cosmos? Is the God of your imagination big, strong, tough, or intelligent? Is your God happy, sad, angry, vengeful or loving and forgiving?

Here is the question for all of us adults: Now that we are adults, and presumably thinking for ourselves, how do we honestly imagine God to be? Do some of us have an image of God that we received from our parents, teachers, priests, religious leaders and others? Are we holding to a fear of God that may have been the result of something we were told as a young child? Are we believing in a God that keeps score of good and bad and has an up to date checklist prepared to judge us with? Is your image of God that of a punisher, a supreme being who is a harsh judge and wants to send us to an eternal banishment?

In a study of His Son Jesus we begin to see a different face of God, one that is an expression of love and understanding, rather than that of a distant punishing God. Instead of an angry God, one who sits in a distant kingdom far away in the clouds, I prefer to experience the God who told his disciples to bring the little children to him so they can sit on his lap to laugh and play. I see a loving God who said He came to earth so show us what we needed to do in order to live with Him forever. I see Him as an approachable God, who wants us to come to Him with all of our fears and phobias, faults and misunderstandings.

We must take God seriously of course, for He is Lord of all. He is Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier, all knowing, all powerful and present everywhere. I am convinced that He does not want us to be afraid of Him, to be fearful of Him. Rather, I believe He wants us to have an abundance of respect and awe as we approach Him. He seeks us out to have a close intimate relationship with Him, for we are His children and He is our loving God. We can imagine having a meal with God, laughing, eating and enjoying our time with Him. We can imagine Him saying how much He enjoys His time with us, his children.

Why not take some time and reflect upon your own image of God and how being an adult you relate to Him. Cast away those negative concepts you may have learned as a child and see Him as the loving Father He really is. Let me suggest that we all take the time to be still and relate to Him in a loving way, as a child does to a loving father

Richard Mussman



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:

Mister Rogers' real neighborhood was Oakland, home to WQED (the first public television in the country) and the "[Neighborhood of Make Believe](#)."



GRADE

WELCOME BACK TO SCHOOL



Each day I'll do my best,
And I won't do any less.
My work will always please me,
And I won't accept a mess.
I'll color very carefully,
My writing will be neat.
And I will not be happy,
Till my papers are complete.
I'll always do my homework,
And try my best on every test.
I won't forget my promise,
To do my very best!



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.



Paul and Paula Tomchak
Brian and Jeannette Tomchak (Blake and Holden)
Alissa Karmis (Tomchak)
Donald Lucas
James and Karen Mentzer
Jim Gillooly

COMMUNITY BOARD

"Flower Power Party"

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

618 Russellwood Ave, McKees Rocks, PA

Downstairs in Social Room (entrance off Dale Street)

RSVP by October 10th

Call church office at 412-771-1993

Chinese Auction for Centerpieces

Souvenir Photographs

Free Will Offering Accepted

Robinson Township's 13th Annual Autumn Festival

Saturday, September 12, 2015

12:00 noon to 10:00 p.m.

Burkett Sports & Recreation Complex

Mark Your Calendars!

<http://www.festival.townshipofrobinson.com/entertainment.html>

For more information, please copy and paste link.

SEPTEMBER 11-15, 2015
AT THE RIVERPLEX

CELEBRATING
25 YEARS



\$12 Adults In Advance

\$14 Adults at the Gate

\$8 Seniors (over 60)

\$8 Student with I.D.

\$8 Public Safety/Military (retired or active) with I.D.

FREE - Children 12 and Under/\$30 - Weekend Pass

Group discounts available! Call 412-422-1113 for details.

2014 FESTIVAL DATES:

Friday, September 5 (4 pm - 11 pm)

Saturday, September 6 (11 am - 11 pm)

Sunday, September 7 (9 am - 5 pm)

FESTIVAL LOCATION:

Riverplex at Sandcastle, 1000 Sandcastle Drive

West Homestead (Pittsburgh), PA 15120



Altar Flowers

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.

**Altar Flowers for
September
Weekends
Available**

9/13/15

9/27/15

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!

Faithful

Simply Giving:

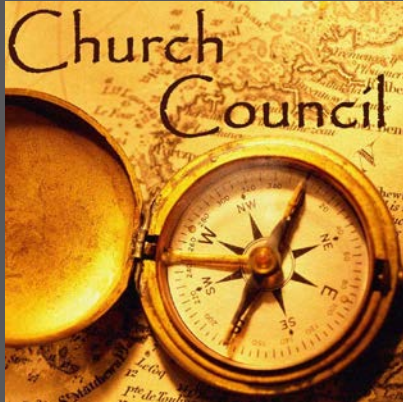
Have you been wondering what simply giving is? Simply giving is a new and much more convenient way to give to your church. Many of us pay our bills on line or have them set up to be paid automatically for convenience. Now you can give to church the same way. Simply giving is a program offered through 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.

September 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.



Ascension Lutheran Church

1290 Silver Lane
McKees Rocks, PA 15136

412.859.3711

office@alcpgh.com

music@alcpgh.com

pastor@alcpgh.com

www.alcpgh.com

