

THE MESSENGER

ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH

November 2021

WEEKLY EVENTS

- Sunday Worship - 10:30 AM
- Sunday School - 9:30 AM (*adult & child*)
- NA Meeting - Wednesdays at 7:30 PM
- Spirituality Group - Thursdays at 7 PM
- AA Meeting - Saturdays at 10:00 AM
- Soccer Shots - Saturday mornings & Tuesday evenings (*Spring-Fall*)



2021 Ascension Church COUNCIL

Council Executives

- Jason Eager *president*
- Jeff Williams *vice-president*
- Clay Marnich *secretary*
- John Bielewicz *treasurer*

Council Liaisons

- Jerry Wessel *Christian Education*
- John Bielewicz *Youth*
- Jason Eager *Communications & Publications*
- Rudy Marnich *Social Ministry & Evangelism*
- Bob Thompson *Finance & Stewardship*
- Barbara Thompson *Worship & Music*
- Mark Thompson *Property*
- Jeff Williams *Mutual Ministry*
- Clay Marnich *Personnel*
- (Vacant) *Fellowship*

Next Council Meeting

Tuesday November 9 at 7:00 PM

With an attitude of gratitude



From Pastor Murdy's Desk

During this holiday season of the year, we often pause to give thanks for what we are grateful for. I would like to use this month's newsletter as an opportunity to continue giving thanks.

I am grateful and excited for all of the ministry I see happening at Ascension. Most recently our church has seen a flurry of weekday activity as our quilting group has begun settling in and preparing to make some incredible quilts which, in a year's time, will be sent out into the world to keep people warm.

I am grateful for our Sunday school teachers and youth leaders who provide for the education and faithful formation of our children and adults. Their dedication, hard work and persistence give each of us an invaluable gift that is hard to put into words.

I am grateful, as we all are, for new bathrooms! For months we have witnessed the hard work of demolishing, drywall/mudding, replacing doors, tile work, painting, decorating, and much more! I would list each helper by name but I would be terribly remiss if I left anyone out. Last, but not least are each of you. Without your generosity, our bathrooms would still look the same. Thank you for your financial support!

I am thankful for our dynamic staff! Darlene is the engine that keeps our office running as smoothly as it does. Her dedication, hard work, attention to detail and lest we forget her wit and humor all contribute to the gift it is to work in such a place! Johnathan puts the mellow and melody! His non-anxious presence, go-with-the-flow attitude and God given talent are what make our worship so smooth and exceptional.

Ever wonder why our church looks so clean and well-kept? Behind the scenes keeping things sharp is our very own Sophia Eager! You

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Celebrating St. Andrew the Apostle

Commemorated November 30

Andrew was the first of the Twelve. He is known as a fisherman who left his net to follow Jesus. As a part of his calling, he brought other people, including Simon Peter, to meet Jesus. The Byzantine church honors Andrew as its patron and points out that because he was the first of Jesus' followers, he was, in the words of John Chrysostom, "the Peter before Peter." Together with Philip, Andrew leads a number of Greeks to speak with Jesus, and it is Andrew who shows Jesus a boy with five barley loaves and two fish, with which Jesus fed thousands. Andrew is said to have died on a cross saltire, an X-shaped cross.

source: www.sundaysandseasons.com



Andrew was Saint Peter's brother, and was called with him. "As [Jesus] was walking by the sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon who is now called Peter, and his brother Andrew, casting a net into the sea; they were fishermen. He said to them, 'Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men.' At once they left their nets and followed him" (*Matthew 4:18-20*).

John the Evangelist presents Andrew as a disciple of John the Baptist. When Jesus walked by one day, John said, "Behold, the Lamb of God." Andrew and another disciple followed Jesus. "Jesus turned and saw them following him and said to them, 'What are you looking for?' They said to him, 'Rabbi (which translated means Teacher), where are you staying?' He said to them, 'Come, and you will see.' So they went and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day" (*John 1:38-39a*).

Little else is said about Andrew in the Gospels. Legend has it that Andrew preached the Good News in what is now modern Greece and Turkey and was crucified at Patras on an X-shaped cross.

Andrew the Apostle is the Patron Saint of:
Fishermen Greece Russia Scotland

source: www.franciscanmedia.org

From Pastor Murdy's Desk (continued from pg 1)

may not see her clean but she sure does a fantastic job! We are grateful for the ways she goes above and beyond.

This past year has been tremendous as we've grown as a community of faith and witnessed wonderful events in our life as a church, not least of which was our merger with Good Shepherd. The ability we have as a congregation to embrace change, welcome others and look towards the future with hope are sadly not characteristics of all churches. I am always so proud of Ascension! I am proud and grateful to be your pastor. Like a father sharing the accolades of his children I beam with pride as I brag about you. Thank you for being the kind of church you are! Keep being willing to grow and change. Remain faithful in your willingness to grow where you need to grow and continue to seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit in all you do. It is a firm trust in God's guidance that sets any church apart.

Thank you for your love, generosity and faithful living! Thank you for being the church!

Gratefully yours,

+Pastor Joe

“KEEP being willing
to GROW and
change”
~ PJ

got NEWS?

If you have pictures, articles, or ideas to submit for the **DECEMBER** Newsletter, please contact the office or Pastor, or email office@alcpgh.com.

It feels good to be FORGIVEN

When Covid struck in 2020, its effects were felt in every aspect of our daily lives. Of particular detriment was the decline in church attendance, and subsequently, income from offerings – upon which most churches heavily rely.

Ascension Church was fortunate to be given the opportunity to apply for and receive two loans through PNC Bank via the Small Business Administration's "Paycheck Protection Program" in order to help with the expenses of keeping our church running throughout the Covid crisis when needed the most.

We also now report that we have been blessed and fortunate to receive full forgiveness of both loans (totaling \$25,250), which was granted through the SBA.

Thanks to this help – and to the continued and unwavering support of our congregation as the crisis wanes – Ascension Church looks forward to a financially sound 2022.

— **Bob Thompson**
Finance & Stewardship
ALC Council

Answering the call



As most of you know, on October 1st I received the call that I was selected by the Army Reserves to serve as a chaplain. Over the past four years, I have been pursuing this call and can't begin to express how excited I was to get that call. I am beyond grateful for your

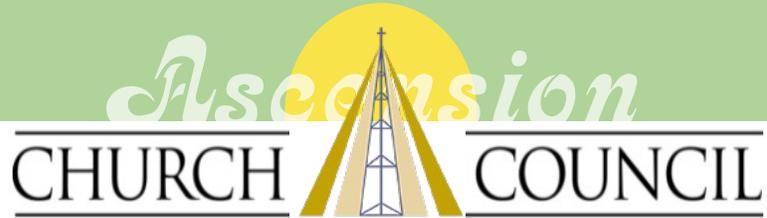
support, text messages, cards and emails sharing in my excitement. There are lots of unknowns ahead and I am grateful that you will be beside me through it all.

At some point in the future (no idea when) I will be required to be away for three months for training and education. Our council has graciously agreed to develop a sabbatical policy which will enable me to take time away to grow and learn while still supporting my family. At our next congregational meeting, the council will present this policy.

In mid-October I received my unit assignment which is in Coraopolis. I can't tell you how thrilled I was to hear that it will be so close. As I find out more, I will keep you all in the loop!

Thank you for your prayers, support and love as I answer this call.

~ PJ+



ALC Council Meeting Highlights

Council meeting was held Tuesday October 12, 2021

- Council welcomed two members from Good Shepherd who will be members of our council. Sharon Giza and perhaps temporarily, Bette Kallay. Council will hold two positions until 2023 for members who previously belonged to Good Shepherd. Currently, they have voice and no vote (based on the constitutional provision of council member numbers). This will change in a few months when changes will be made to the constitution and they will be given voice and vote.
- Subcommittee to establish sabbatical policy prior November council.
- Vice president Jeff Williams gave report from Mt. Calvary Cemetery board.
- Merger update: The filing has been submitted, but it has yet to be processed by the Department of State. Since the pandemic began, they've been taking 3 weeks or so to process filings. Once they do process, it will be effective the date that it was filed. Brian Lindauer will confirm.
- 2022 Church Budget and 2022 Cemetery Budget approved to be set before the congregation for final approval at its congregational meeting.
- Date for congregational meeting: **November 21**
- Constitutional revision is anticipated to be placed before the congregation in November or December. Once approved it will need to be ratified at the next annual meeting in January and then approved by Synod council before going into effect.
- Motion to send \$150 from unused council retreat budgeted funds to send to our sister synod in Madagascar

Next Council Meeting: Tuesday, November 9th

Congregational meeting:
Sunday, November 21st

Best Wishes . . .

NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS!

Date | Member/Friend

- 1 Emily Lescallette
Joel Randal
- 2 Bill McEwen
- 6 Suzie McEwen
- 8 Leslie Rickerd
- 10 Darlene Ganley
- 17 Dolly Morrow
- 18 Bryce Adams
Kayleigh Adams
- 19 Allison Bayer
- 22 Kathleen Bowman
- 23 Dirk Stathers
- 25 Holden Tomchak
- 26 Dee Lightner
Gib Palmgren
- 29 Linda Siemons



NOVEMBER ANNIVERSARIES!

Date | Members/Friends

- 2 Edward & Jean Murdy
- 6 Ted & Mary Green
- 15 Dave & Deb Walenchock



. . . and Blessings to ALL!

Join the LUNCH BUNCH at Downey's House - Thursday Nov. 18

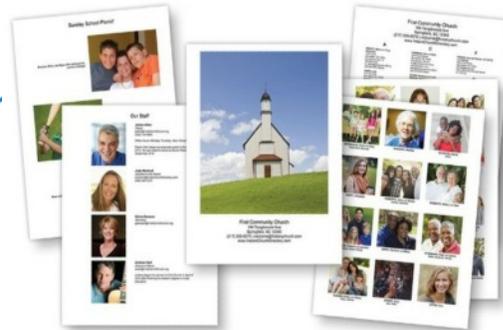
A "hop, skip and jump" from Ascension, Downey's House is located at 6081 Steubenville Pike in Robinson in the "West Way Shoppes" area. Plan to arrive there by 11:30 AM., Or if carpooling, meet at church ready to depart at 11:15. In either case, all planning to attend need to let Jerry Wessel (412-787-1213) or Nancy Schreiber (412-859-3969) know by Tuesday afternoon Nov. 16 so that reservations can be made. All are welcome to join the fun!

THANK YOU!

Thanks are in order to the hard-working **Outdoor Cleanup Crew** who went the "extra mile" to beautify the adjacent streets, parking lot and grounds around Ascension Church during our Fall Clean-up Days. Your efforts are gratefully appreciated!

It's time for our NEW CHURCH PHOTO DIRECTORY!

Mon. November 29 & Tues. November 30
2:00 pm to 8:30 pm



Time slots are available for sign up! You can sign up on your own or at church on Sunday mornings before and after worship. To sign up on your own, go to www.ucdir.com.

When you open the Universal Picture Directory website, you will see a box to the right which says,

"Photography Appointment Scheduling Login"

Login: Church code: **pa910**

Church password: **photos**

IT'S SUPER EASY! All you need to do is pick a day, pick a time and sign up. **Please note:** If you make an appointment but need to change it, you will need to let us know, as only our photography team can modify appointments. Also, appointments cannot be scheduled online on the weekends, except by our team.

If you have any questions please contact

Dolly Spano dollyspano@gmail.com; Deb Whitfield debw1216@hotmail.com; or Pastor Joe pastor@alcpgh.com

LECTOR SCHEDULE

NOVEMBER 7

Venus Thompson

NOVEMBER 21

Mark Thompson

NOVEMBER 14

Eddie Vendetti

NOVEMBER 28

Mary Thompson



Creative Hands, Giving Hearts

by Rose Marie LaQuinta

When I retired in the Fall of 2014, I prayed for a mission to fill my time. Our Lord led me to Emanuel's Church in Bellevue, where several Good Shepherd ladies were in a sewing group. In mid-2015, our ladies moved back to Good Shepherd with more ladies and several men. We found two sewing machines which had been left there by the sewing group which my mother and 5-6 ladies had used to make quilts in the early 1990s. We named our group "Creative Hands." We made four quilts in 2015, then 25 quilts in 2016. These were displayed over the pews in Good Shepherd Church, blessed during Mass, boxed, then driven to St. Paul Lutheran Church in Zelienople, Pa.

Every October, many churches from the Tri-State area deliver hundreds of quilts to St. Paul's, where they are then sent to Lutheran World Relief in Baltimore, and finally distributed as needed worldwide. From 2015 to 2021, we so far have sent over 150 quilts!

I hope to soon start quilts here at our new church and new Creative Hands home. Once we have settled in and gotten set up, we will ask new volunteers to join us – both women and men are welcome, and no sewing skills are needed. God's blessings!

Rose Marie LaQuinta, formerly of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in McKees Rocks, is one of several ladies who give of their time and talent as members of the "Creative Hands" crafters group, which meets in their new home - Ascension's fellowship hall - several days a week.

Lutheran World Relief distributed its first quilts in 1945 to families in war-torn Europe following the Second World War. Within a decade, the ministry was reaching around the globe to villages far removed from the world's attention. Today, an average of 300,000 quilts are lovingly given worldwide each year.



(photo, top) Darlene Witt, Rose Marie LaQuinta and Judy Henry put finishing touches on a new quilt.

(above left) Boxes packed with quilts for their journey to help those in need.

(above right) Quilts made and displayed by the Creative Hands group at Good Shepherd Church in McKees Rocks shortly before its closing.

(below) Photo "quilt" of the handiwork sent to Lutheran World Relief.



MADE with care . . . to GIVE with LOVE!

This November, Ascension's new **Creative Hands Group** will be selling baby quilts, baby fleece blankets, adult fleece blankets, children's fleece ponchos and several other handmade items. Look for the display in the church entrance! These unique items certainly will give you a good head start on your Christmas shopping, and all profits will be donated to the McKees Rocks Food Bank. Questions? See CHG member Judy Henry.



Food bank collection

Throughout November, you are invited to make a difference in lives of many in McKees Rocks. We will be collecting items for the Food Bank that is still active in the Good Shepherd building. *They have a particular need for toiletry items.* Non-perishable food

items are also always welcome. More information will be published in the Sunday bulletin.

HOLDEN EVENING PRAYER



Join us for midweek Advent services

7 p.m. Thursday, December 2nd, 9th and 16th

Services of Holden Evening prayer is a brief liturgy which encapsulates all of the senses. Candles, incense, singing, meditation and prayer are all incorporated into this midweek service. Come take a break from the busy world and join us for worship. Following worship, we will have DESSERT and fellowship.

Christmas Eve

Friday December 24, 2021

4 pm & 7 pm traditional Christmas Eve worship
5:30-6 p.m. fireside worship with hymns

All Saints Remembrance



Once a year, the church pauses to remember the saints who have gone before us. Not just those noted on special feast days who are remembered for the extraordinary. But those ordinary saints who have touched our lives in extraordinary ways. Traditionally the church only announces by name those who have died in the past year who have entered the church triumphant.

Over the past few years, we have embraced the tradition of creating an *Ofrenda*, a table which displays a collection of pictures and objects to remember those who have died. This tradition comes from Latin America, namely Mexico.

Everyone is invited to participate and remember on **Sunday, November 7th** those who have died and now live fully in the kingdom. Pictures, objects and flowers may be added on the day of, or brought to church beforehand.



IT'S TIME TO SING!

We all have missed the choir, but now it's time to bring them back! Please consider joining our choir and lifting your voice in song and praise. Never sung in a

choir before? Curious? No problem! Join us on Sunday, November 14th after worship to see what it's all about. We hope to sing once during Advent, on Christmas Eve and perhaps once a month during the year. If you are interested or have questions, please talk to Johnathan or Pastor Joe.

LESSER FESTIVALS & commemorations

November 1 *All Saints Day*

The custom of commemorating all of the saints of the church on a single day goes back at least to the third century. All Saints Day celebrates the baptized people of God, living and dead, who make up the body of Christ. On this day or the following Sunday, many congregations will remember the faithful who have died during the past year.

November 3 *Martín de Porres, renewer of society, d.1639*

Martín was the son of a Spanish knight and a freed black slave from Panama. As a lay brother in the Order of Preachers (Dominicans), he engaged in many charitable works in Lima, Peru. He founded an orphanage, a hospital, and a clinic for cats and dogs.

November 7 *John Christian Frederick Heyer, d.1873; Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg, d.1719; Ludwig Nommensen, d.1918; missionaries*

Heyer was the first missionary sent out by American Lutherans. After teaching at Gettysburg College and Seminary he was assigned to the Andhra region of India. A worker among the Tamil people on the southeast coast of India, **Ziegenbalg** was opposed both by local Hindus and by Danish authorities who favored a different missionary style. He was known for caring about the welfare of the whole person. **Nommensen** was born in northern Germany and was sent to Sumatra as a Lutheran missionary. Working among the Batak people, he translated the scriptures into their language, and honored their native culture.

November 11 *Martin, Bishop of Tours, d.397*

Martin's pagan father enlisted him in the Roman army. Approached by a beggar, Martin cut his cloak in half and gave part to the man, whom he later understood as representing Christ. He asked to leave the army, but was jailed instead. After his release, he became a preacher, and later a bishop.

November 11 *Søren Aabye Kierkegaard, teacher, d.1855*

Kierkegaard was a Danish theologian whose writings also gave rise to the modern philosophy of existentialism. He frequently attacked the complacency of the state church of his day, as well as its desire to be accepted by polite society rather than be a stumbling block.

November 17 *Elizabeth of Hungary, renewer of society, d.1231*

Born in Hungary, Elizabeth was betrothed to the son of the Landgrave of Thuringia, and at age four was taken to be raised with him at the Wartburg Castle. Ten years later they were married. She was very generous to the poor, and after her husband's death she lived in cruel hardship until her own death at age twenty-four.

November 23 *Clement, Bishop of Rome, d.ca.100*

Clement was the third bishop of Rome. He is best remembered for a letter he wrote to the congregation in Corinth, still struggling with the same problems that led to Paul's letters to them. As did Paul, he focused on the need for love among Christians.

November 23 *Miguel Agustín Pro, martyr, d.1927*

Miguel Agustín Pro grew up among oppression in Mexico, where revolutionaries accused the church of siding with the rich. He was a Jesuit priest who served during a time of intense anticlericalism, and therefore he carried out much of his ministry in private settings. He worked on behalf of the poor and homeless. Miguel and his two brothers were arrested, falsely accused of throwing a bomb at the car of a government official, and executed by a firing squad. Just before the guns fired, he yelled, "¡Viva Cristo Rey!" which means "Long live Christ the king!"

November 24 *Justus Falckner, d.1723; Jehu Jones, d.1852; William Passavant, d.1894; pastors in North America*

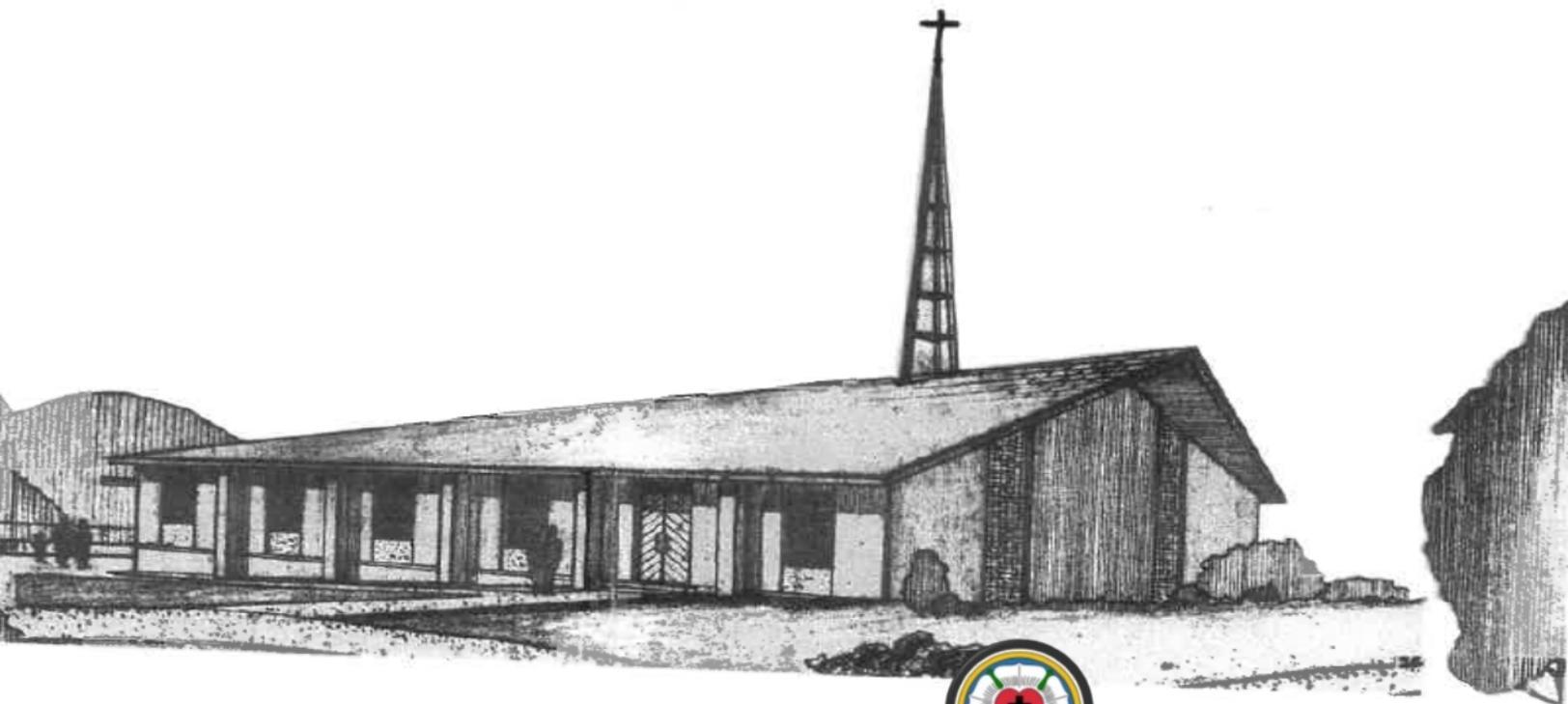
Not only was **Falckner** the first Lutheran ordained in North America, but he also published a catechism which was the first Lutheran book published on the continent. **Jones** was the Lutheran church's first African American pastor and carried out missionary work in Philadelphia which led to the formation there of the first African American Lutheran congregation (St. Paul's). William **Passavant** created and nurtured a new level of organized social ministry in western Pennsylvania. It was the seed of the system of social services that is now known as Lutheran Services in America. Passavant and his legacy sought to serve the poorest of the poor, providing shelter, medical, and living assistance.

November 25 *Isaac Watts, hymnwriter, d.1748*

Thought by many to be the greatest hymnwriter in the English language, Isaac Watts was born in England to a family of nonconformists. He wrote about six hundred hymns, many in a two-year period beginning when he was twenty years old. Some of Watts's hymns are based on psalms, a nonconformist tradition. Ten of Watts's hymn texts are in *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, including "O God, Our Help in Ages Past" (ELW 632).

November 30 *Andrew, Apostle*

See feature about the holy Apostle Andrew on page 2 of this issue.



*To be Christ's Disciples,
nurture our faith, serve God,
welcome our neighbors,
and joyfully share in His love.*

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PLACE
STAMP
HERE

