

THE MESSENGER

ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH

March 2022

WEEKLY EVENTS

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



2022 COUNCIL EXECUTIVES

- President – Jason Eager
- Vice President – Chelsea Karaffa
- Secretary – Venus Thompson
- Treasurer – John Bielewicz

2022 COUNCIL LIAISONS

- Christian Education**
Pastor Joe Murdy
- Communications & Publications**
Jason Eager
- Fellowship**
Members
- Finance and Stewardship**
John Bielewicz
- Mutual Ministry**
Jeff Williams
- Personnel**
Clay Marnich
- Property**
Bob Dudek, Mark Thompson
- Social Ministry and Evangelism**
Sharon Giza
- Worship and Music**
Barbara Thompson
- Youth**
Chelsea Karaffa, Venus Thompson

Next Council Meeting

Tuesday March 8 at 7:00 PM

Take it to the Lord in prayer

From Pastor Murdy's Desk



My dear friends in Christ,

It's hard to believe that Lent is already upon us. By the time you read this newsletter it will already be Ash Wednesday. Lent is a very sacred time in the life of the church and one that when approached with an open heart, and intentionality, can lead to true spiritual rejuvenation. Lent is a penitential season of the church which means we give particular attention not necessarily to our sin(s), but the sin that often keeps us from the kind of relationship God wants with us. The same is true of Advent. When we consider

the sin that divides us, we realize how much we need God. That's what lent is all about, it's about re-realizing our need for the holiness of God. It's about understanding our humanity in light of God's divinity. All of which we come to understand most deeply in the death, burial and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Throughout the forty days of lent we are all encouraged to be intentional in how we observe lent. Often times we surrender something in order to better understand sacrifice. Whether it's meat on Friday or daily habits and routine. Giving something up is meant to shape us in new ways, foster humility and remind us of Christ's sacrifice.

One of the best ways we can be intentional about our Lenten observance is in developing better habits of prayer. Setting aside a few moments a day to reconnect with God doesn't have to be a challenge

continued on page 2

Mount Calvary Cemetery

1715 Middletown Road
McKees Rocks, PA 15136
Robert J. Dudek, Supervisor
mtcalvarycem@alcpgh.com



Mount Calvary Cemetery Board

Judy Henry Bob Hughes
Bette Ann Kallay Joyce Leister
Pastor Joe Murdy Jeff Williams

Why don't we use alleluias during Lent?

The omission of alleluia during Lent goes back at least to the fifth century in the western church. The custom of actually bidding it farewell, however, developed in the Middle Ages.

The hymn "Alleluia, song of gladness" (*Evangelical Lutheran Worship #318*) contains a translation of an 11th century Latin text that compares an alleluia-less Lent to the exile of the Israelites in Babylon. The text then anticipates the joy of Easter when glad alleluias will return in all their heavenly splendor.

Along with a sung farewell to alleluia, some congregations have embraced the practice of physically "burying" the alleluia. A banner or other visual presentation of the alleluia is crafted and then "buried." This ritual practice is can be especially delightful and meaningful for children.

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www.elca.org/worshipfaq

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

when everything else comes after it. I have often heard some people say that it isn't the time that's the challenge, it's knowing what to say. But, prayer isn't always about saying something. It's simply spending time with God. Of course, God wants to hear your voice! But, simply listening to God can be a powerful and transforming experience. God knows our heart and wants to be close to us.

This year at Ascension, we are offering a new way to foster and encourage prayer within our community worship. When you are in the sanctuary you will notice a 3D cross filled with sand on the floor. You are invited to come early or stay late and light a candle to be placed in the sand. As you light a candle offer a prayer, make a confession or give thanks to God. As the candle burns during the service may it serve as a reminder to us all that God hears our prayers.

Lent is a journey that takes us to the cross. There we discover the depth of God's love. When we place our faith, hope and trust in the cross of Christ we find our true selves and how much God truly loves us.

Yours in Christ+

Pastor Joe

“Prayer isn't always
saying something.
It's simply spending
Time with GOD.”
~ PJ



ASH WEDNESDAY

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICES – March 2

12:00 noon: Distribution of ashes and holy communion

7:00 pm: Traditional Ash Wednesday liturgy

Ashes will be administered safely with a cotton swab and the pastor will be wearing gloves.

Masks are strongly encouraged.

If you do not wish to receive ashes but would like time for consolation and prayer, the church will be open from 9:00 am to 3:30 pm. If you have any questions, please contact Pastor.

✠ *Bible Study* ✠
Come study The Greatest Story
Tuesdays at 10 a.m.

How much do you feel you know about the Bible, the greatest story? Don't worry if the answer is "little" or "nothing." We are here to discover together.

Come join on Tuesdays!

March 1 & 8 at the home of Mark & Barbara Thompson
 14 Bell Avenue in Crafton

March 15, 22, 29 at the home of Bob & Mary Thompson
 68 Kathleen Drive in Robinson.

“BLESSINGS IN A BAG”

Our youth collected items throughout February to build “Blessing Bags” for the homeless. Thank you to all who donated to “phase one” of our ongoing project! We were able to fill a number of bags for distribution to the homeless. This project continues throughout Lent, and we also continue to ask your HELP and generosity to fill even more “Blessings in a Bag!”

Please consider donating items such as socks, hand warmers, granola bars, rolled quarters for laundry, mini toiletry items, etc. by placing them in the boxes in the church hallway during Lent. Thank you for being a blessing to our youth and to the homeless in our community!

See photos of this project on page 6.



“SOUP & SERVICE”

Thursdays 6:00-7:30 p.m.

March 10, 17, 24, 31 and April 7

SOUP at 6:00pm; SERVICE at 7:00pm

SIGN UP in church to provide and share
 Soup * Bread * Salad

YOUTH GROUP EVENT!

Sunday, March 20th following worship, “Lucky Lutheran Bingo” and pot luck . . . Families welcome!

Best Wishes . . .

MARCH BIRTHDAYS!

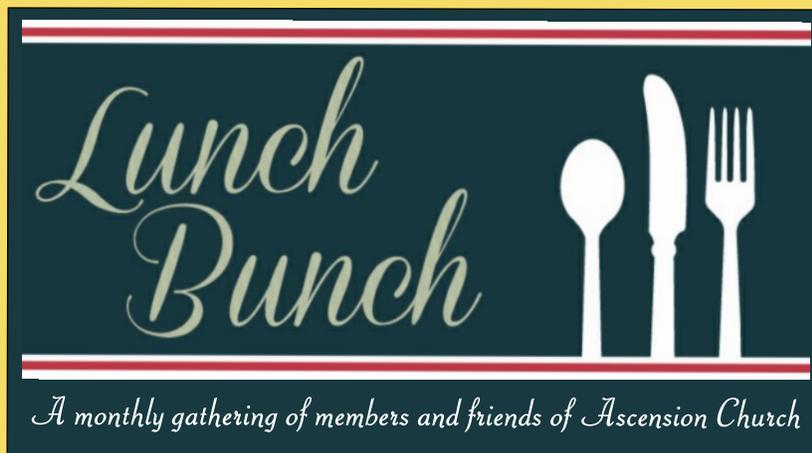
Date	Member / Friend
2	CJ Woods
4	Lynn Kinney Karen Houseman
5	Ellen Randal Michael Rodriguez
9	McKenna Schilling
10	Jeff Williams
15	Nancy Schreiber
21	Debbie Williams
25	Michael Bayer Dirk Houseman
29	Mason Bryan

MARCH ANNIVERSARIES!

Date	Members/Friends
18	Dirk & Karen Houseman
30	Gib & Jen Palmgren



**. . . and Blessings
to ALL!**



Join Ascension's LUNCH BUNCH for their next culinary adventure Thursday March 17

In February, a dozen Ascension "Lunch Bunchers" took a successful excursion to enjoy island life at Carmody's Grill on Neville Island. Although there was some heavy rain that day, conditions never reached hurricane levels; there was no flooding, and a good time was had by all. Oh, and the food was quite good also!

On **Thursday March 17**, the Bunch will transition from island life to life in the hills as hillbillies. Now, you don't need to dress like Jed Clampett or Ellie Mae, but you are invited to head to the hills of Greentree, where the Bunch will meet at Aracri's, 1006 Greentree Road. While there aren't grits, moonshine or Granny's spring tonic on the menu, the offerings look mighty fine and the venue is a new place for the Lunch Bunch to try.

As usual, please let Jerry Wessel (412-787-1213) or Nancy Schreiber (412-859-3969) know by Tuesday, March 15 if you plan to attend so that reservations can be made. All are welcome!

Y'all come 'round now, ya hear!

Pittsburghese translation:

"Yinz guys c'mon aht 'n join us, 'n 'at!"

- Jerry Wessel

READY TO SERVE! Ascension Church members (from left) Bette Kallay, Jerry Wessel, Mark Thompson and Deb Williams ensured great food and service for the "Mardi Gras" celebration Sunday, Feb. 27 in the Fellowship Hall. *Additional photos, pg 6*

ALC Council Meeting Highlights

Council meeting was held Tuesday Feb. 8, 2022

- Motion that the property committee bring forward formal quotes at the March meeting to be approved and presented to the congregation to move forward with the plan for reviewing options for expanding the church. All approved
- Motion to designate the next special project as a digital roadside sign at a cost not to exceed \$23,000. 2 approved, 5 no, 2 - abstained. Did not move forward.
- Motion that additional items be brought forward at the March meeting to review the next special project. 3 approved, 1 no, 5 abstained. Motion passed and will be presented in March.
- Youth provided update on 2022 projected calendar.
- Finance - reviewed Thrivent. Motion to reallocate current investments within Thrivent. 8 approve, 1 no. Motion passed. John will present details once completed with Thrivent and monies received from Good Shepherd.
- Property - discussed architect meeting, obtaining additional boiler quotes, and also that the parking lot needs to be looked at to be replaced or sealed. Also discussed plowing and snow removal aspects.

Next Council Meeting

Tuesday, March 8, 2022 @ 7pm

CEMETERY BOARD MEETING
SUNDAY MARCH 6
FOLLOWING WORSHIP



Holy Week Services

Palm/Passion Sunday - April 10th
 10:30 a.m.

Maundy Thursday - April 14th
 7 p.m.

Good Friday - April 15th
 7 p.m.

Easter Vigil - Saturday, April 16th
 5 p.m.



Sunday, April 17th

EASTER

**The Resurrection
of our Lord**

**Easter Sunday
Services:**

8:30 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.

got NEWS?

If you have pictures, articles, or ideas to submit for the **APRIL 2022** Newsletter, please contact the office or Pastor, or email office@alcpgh.com.

Blessings & Merriment!



On the final weekend of February, **Ascension's Youth Group** assembled "Blessing Bags" to distribute to the homeless in the community. Thanks to the generosity of ALC members, the group was able to create a bounty of bags for the benefit of others.

Sunday February 27 was a day of much merriment within the walls of Ascension's Fellowship Hall, where members gathered for a Pre-Lenten celebration, complete with pancakes, sausage, and all the tasty fixin's.

LESSER FESTIVALS & commemorations

March 1 George Herbert

hymnwriter, d. 1633

An excellent scholar, Herbert served briefly in the English parliament, then became a parish priest. He was known for devoted care of his parishioners, as well as for writing poetry and hymns, including “Come, my way, my truth, my life.” He died at age 40.

March 2 John Wesley & Charles Wesley

d. 1791 & 1788; renewers of the church

These brothers led a revival originally intended to remain within the Church of England, one that involved frequent communion and advocacy for the poor. Except for a brief time in America, they worked in England. Charles was also a prolific hymn writer. After their deaths, their work led to the formation of the Methodist Church.

March 7 Perpetua & Felicity and companions

Martyrs at Carthage, d. 202

Vibia Perpetua was a noblewoman, and Felicity her slave, who were catechumens at Carthage, northern Africa. They, with four other catechumens, had defied the Roman emperor who had forbidden conversions to Christianity, and were put to death in the amphitheater.

March 10

Harriet Tubman, d. 1913 Sojourner Truth, d. 1883

Renewers of society

Harriet Tubman, born into slavery, helped about 300 others to escape slavery until the institution was abolished. Sojourner Truth, whose birth name was Isabella, was freed after slavery was abolished, and discerned a call to be a preacher. Taking the name Sojourner Truth, she set out on an evangelistic journey, where people found her testimony to be deeply moving.

March 12 Gregory the Great

Bishop of Rome, d. 604

Born into wealth and power, Gregory was for a time the chief administrator of the city of Rome. Giving this up for a life in the church, he was elected pope in 590. He influenced public worship through the establishment of a lectionary and prayers to correlate with the readings. Gregorian chant is named in his honor.

March 17 Patrick

Bishop, missionary to Ireland, d. 461

A native of Britain, Patrick was kidnapped by pirates at age sixteen and sold into slavery in Ireland. After a few years, he escaped, returned home, and entered the ministry. Returning to Ireland, he successfully served as a bishop and missionary there.

March 19 Joseph, Guardian of Jesus

Though the Bible tells us little about the husband of Jesus’ mother Mary, we know that he was a carpenter or builder by trade. He is also shown as being devoted both to God and to Mary and Jesus. It is assumed that he died before Jesus became an adult.

March 21 Thomas Cranmer, Bishop of Canterbury

martyr, d. 1556

Cranmer’s lasting achievement is contributing to and overseeing the creation of the Book of Common Prayer, which remains (in revised form) the worship book of the Anglican Communion. He was burned at the stake under Queen Mary for his support of the Protestant Reformation.

March 22 Jonathan Edwards

Teacher, missionary to Native Americans, d. 1758

A Puritan minister in Connecticut, Edwards is remembered as being a great preacher. Though his most famous sermon talks at length about hell, he was more concerned with God’s love. He served both as missionary to the Housatonic people in Massachusetts, and as president of the future Princeton University.

March 24 Oscar Arnulfo Romero

Bishop of El Salvador, martyr, d. 1980

Romero was deeply concerned with injustices evident toward the poor and powerless in El Salvador, and worked forthrightly against political repression. He was assassinated while presiding at the Eucharist in a chapel near the cathedral in San Salvador.

March 25 Annunciation of Our Lord

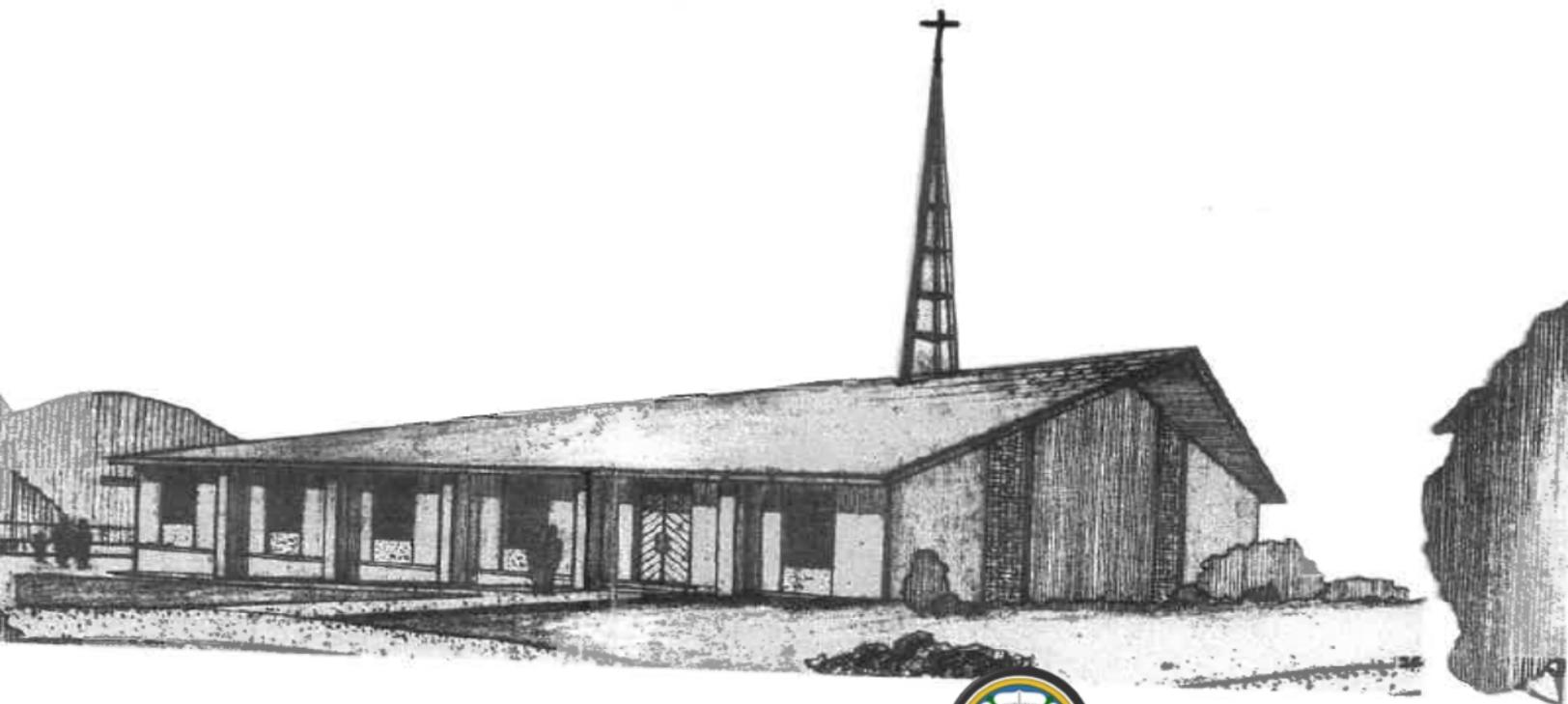
Nine months before Christmas the church celebrates the annunciation. In Luke, the angel Gabriel announces to Mary that she will give birth to the Son of God, and she responds, “Here am I, the servant of the Lord.” Ancient scholars believed that March 25 was also the day on which creation began and was the date of Jesus’ death on the cross. Thus, from the sixth to eighth centuries, March 25 was observed as New Year’s Day in much of Christian Europe.

March 29 Hans Nielsen Hauge *renewer of the church, d. 1824*

Hauge was a layperson who wished to revitalize the church in Norway. As a result of a mystical experience, he felt called to preach. Many professionals in the church feared his motives and influence; he was imprisoned for leading unauthorized gatherings.

March 31 John Donne *poet, d. 1631*

After finishing his education at Oxford University, Donne seemed headed for a career in the English public service. But a series of circumstances led him into the ordained ministry. He is well known as a writer of both secular and sacred poetry.



*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

