



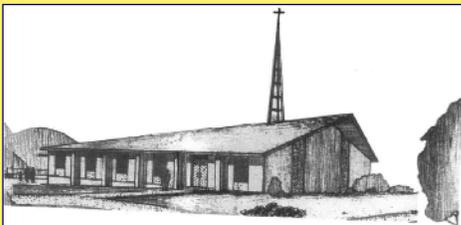
THE MESSENGER

ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH

August 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
- Mondays at 7:00 PM
- 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 August 9 at 7:00 PM

WHY do we go to church?



From Pastor's desk

Like many routines in our life, it is important every now and then to ask the question, "Why do I do what I do?" Sometimes it can weed out unhealthy habits. Other times it can strengthen and reaffirm what helps us to become better versions of ourselves. So, the question I want us to consider is, *why do you go to church?*

There are precious few opportunities for me as a pastor to go to church. I know that sounds funny. But it is true. On Sunday morning I have a job to do. As a leader of a community of faith I am

called to preach, lead worship, foster faith and relationships, and administer the sacraments. That does not mean that I do not also worship. As your pastor, I worship our Lord right alongside you.

Throughout the year there are a few special opportunities which I personally have to worship and I do take them very seriously. Every year I attend the annual chapter of Lutheran Franciscans where we worship several times throughout the day (Liturgy of the Hours). In the fall, I

continued on page 3

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 Chelsea Karaffa



*Council took a summer break for July -
no meeting, no highlights to report!*

Next Council Meeting

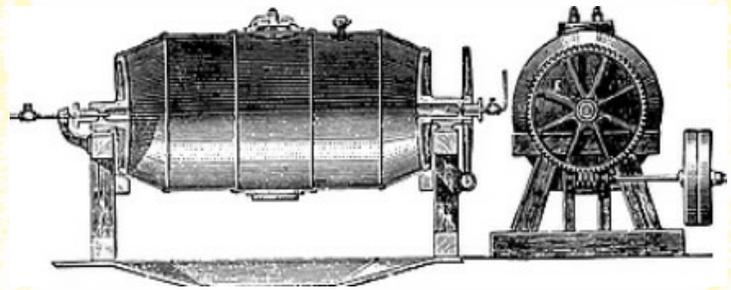
Tuesday, August 9, 2022 at 7:00 pm



We sincerely thank YOU
- our members and friends -
for your continued support
and generosity!

In addition to Sunday giving
envelopes, we do offer other ways
for you to add your contributions.
One popular, easy and secure way is
through [TITHE.LY](https://tithely.com)
(scan the QR code, left)
or visit our website www.alcpgh.com
to access a link.

YES. It's THAT old.



*Our "Other" collection to replace our "legacy"
boiler is chugging very slowly toward its goal . . .*

Total project cost: \$22,800. We've already
paid \$7,600 (one-third down) using previously
donated funds for special projects to lock in
this price, and thus will still owe \$15,200
when the project is completed at the end of
September.

Since our Boiler Campaign began this year in
mid-March, \$2,245 has been donated and
earmarked for this project by members and
friends via the "Other" designation on Sunday
giving envelopes, as well as several mail-in
donations. Combined with monies currently
available in our special projects fund, we are
only \$7,200 short of our goal!

SO - Empty those piggy-banks and let's fulfill
this goal by September's end!

8 weeks X \$900/week = \$7,200 . . .
totally doable, right? YES! We can do it!

As always, your generosity is most appreciated
and necessary to our mission here at
Ascension. We may not have MegaMillions, but
we do have - as we've had for over 62 years -
the spirit of cooperation and community at
1290 Silver Lane.

New boiler, here we come!



attend the bishop's convocation where, although I oversee the planning, I get to sit in pew and worship. Throughout the year there are also limited opportunities to worship with my family or fellow colleagues. I enjoy every opportunity that I can.

When I was away for my two weeks of Annual Training in July [see story on page 7], I had a few unique worshiping experiences. As a new chaplain, I observed more than I led on both

“AS YOUR
PASTOR,
I WORSHIP OUR LORD
Right alongside
YOU.”

Sunday mornings. I attended the Catholic mass at 0730 and the protestant service at 0830 to see how other chaplains do it. The Catholic mass was all too familiar and echoed our own Lutheran worship. The protestant service was ... different. Every chaplain offers their own tradition and experience, which is beautiful. Even though it was different, I worshiped.

The truth is, I missed our worship on Sunday. I missed the rhythm of our liturgy. I missed our collective prayers and hymns. Most of all, I longed for the sacrament of Holy Communion.

When we worship, we join not only the faithful around us but the echoing strains of all the witnesses who have gone before us. When we worship, we sit at Christ's table to hear God's holy word. There we are fed and nourished, equipped as disciples and renewed through the Holy Spirit.

When we come to church, we learn who God is and who we are as God's children. We hear the story of our faith and God's faithfulness. Worship is an act of giving and surrendering - not an opportunity to "get something." Through our worship we come to give, not take away. We come to be formed, strengthened, and renewed by God's word and holy meal. Worship is about giving thanks. Giving God just moments of our lives in response to God's unconditional love for us.

Come to church. Worship with us. Then go and share the good news.

With you in Christ+

PJ

Best Wishes . . .

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS!

Date | Member/Friend

- 1 Katy Thompson
- 4 Nancy Jacobs,
- 6 Nolan Cropper
Mary Jane McGinnis
- 7 Emily Paladino
- 9 Bonita Stephenson
- 10 London Rickerd
- 12 Raleigh Rickerd
- 14 Abigail Lescalette
- 15 Finn Randal
- 17 Matt Bryan
- 24 Jessica Rodriguez
- 25 Tom Lightner
- 28 Rose Marie LaQuinta



AUGUST ANNIVERSARIES!

Date | Members/Friends

- 2 Bob & Judy Bryan
Bill & Suzie McEwen
- 3 John & Brittany Bielewicz
- 17 Phil & Dolly Spano
- 25 Drew & Joyce Leister
- 26 Tom & Darlene Ganley



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



In the presence of God,
family and friends,
Megan Giza and Matthew Mezzio
were joyfully united in marriage on
June 11, 2022. The ceremony took place
at St. John's Lutheran Church of Highland
in McCandless, officiated by
Pastor Joe Murdy and Deacon Rick Caruso.
Congratulations and Best Wishes
to the happy couple!

Join Ascension's **LUNCH BUNCH** at the **LOG CABIN INN**

On **Thursday August 18**, The **Lunch Bunch** will travel up I-79 just north of Zelienople for a sumptuous lunch at the **Log Cabin Inn**, located at 430 Perry Highway (Route 19) in Harmony, PA in a casual atmosphere complete with Colonial décor. As their web site says "The Log Cabin Inn not only features a full service bar with seasonal favorites but also aged Black Angus beef, chops, steaks, fresh seafood, sandwiches, soups & salads." Homemade desserts are made daily by their pastry chef. We'll meet there at 11:30am; those folks carpooling should leave Ascension by 10:45 or sooner, since traffic on I-79 is sometimes unpredictable. Please let Jerry Wessel (412-787-1213) or Nancy Schreiber (412-859-3969) know by **Tuesday August 16** if you plan to attend so that enough space can be reserved. ~ Jerry Wessel

2022 Ascension Church Summer Worship

Our remaining Summer 2022 outdoor worship schedule:

August 14th & August 28th

**You are welcome to bring a lawn chair or blanket.
Otherwise, our benches will be available as pews!
Dress accordingly. If it rains, we will be indoors. ~ PJ**



Peace in the presence of our Lord

A reflection by Nancy Jacobs

Each of us has our own way of worshipping our Lord in addition to attending church. We listen and learn through bible study and use of additional Christian teaching aids. The little daily reading booklets are one way they express experiences, advice, suggestions – written by pastors of churches nationwide.

My most treasured aid is my little brown book, written in the first person. And that person is Jesus. “*Jesus Calling: Enjoying Peace in His Presence*” by Sarah Young provides me with a daily conversation with our Lord. He teaches us, shows His love for us, thanks us, leads us, and yes, even admonishes us. Share a conversation with Him.

“Learn to enjoy life more. Relax, remembering that I am God with you. I crafted you with enormous capacity to know Me and enjoy My presence. When My people wear sour faces and walk through their lives with resigned rigidity, I am displeased. When you walk through a day with childlike delight, savoring every blessing, you proclaim your trust in Me, your ever-present Shepherd. The more you focus on My presence with you, the more fully you can enjoy life. Glorify Me through your pleasure in Me. Thus, you proclaim My presence to the watching world.”

Reprinted from *Jesus Calling: Enjoying Peace in His Presence* by Sarah Young (pub. Thomas Nelson Incorporated, 2011)
382 pgs ISBN 1404174443, 9781404174443

LESSER FESTIVALS & commemorations

August 8 - Dominic, d. 1221 *founder of the Order of Preachers (Dominicans)*

Dominic was a Spanish priest who saw the wealth of the clergy as a stumbling block for the church, so he formed a movement, the Order of Preachers (commonly called Dominicans) devoted to itinerant preaching and living in poverty.

August 10 - Lawrence, d.258 *deacon, martyr*

As one of the seven deacons of the church at Rome, Lawrence was responsible for the church's financial matters and for the care of the poor. Asked by the emperor to gather the church's treasure, he presented a collection of orphans, lepers, and the like. The enraged emperor Valerian had him put to death.

August 11 - Clare of Assisi d. 1253 *Abbess of San Damiano*

At age eighteen, Clare of Assisi heard Francis preach a sermon in a church in town. From that time, she determined to follow in his example of Christian living. With Francis's help (and against the wishes of her father) she and a growing number of companions established a women's Franciscan community, called the Order of Poor Ladies, or Poor Clares. She became a confidante and advisor to Francis, and in standing up against the wishes of popes for the sake of maintaining complete poverty, she helped inspire other women to pursue spiritual goals.

August 13 - Florence Nightingale d. 1910; Clara Maass d. 1901 *renewers of the church*

Nightingale was born in England, and horrified her wealthy family by deciding to become a nurse. Trained at Kaiserswerth, Germany, with a Lutheran order of deaconesses, she led a group of nurses in ministering in the midst of the Crimean War, and worked for hospital reform. **Maass**, a native of New Jersey, also was a war nurse, and volunteered as a subject for research on yellow fever. She died of the disease.

August 14 - Maximilian Kolbe, d. 1941; Kaj Munk, d. 1944; *martyrs*

Kolbe was a Franciscan priest, born Raymond Kolbe. After spending some time working in Asia, he returned in 1936 to his native Poland, where he supervised a friary that came to house thousands of Polish war refugees, mostly Jews. The Nazis were watching, however, and he was arrested. Confined in Auschwitz, Kolbe gave generously of his meager resources and finally volunteered to be starved to death in place of another man who was a husband and father. After two weeks, he was executed by a lethal injection.

Munk, a Danish Lutheran pastor and playwright, was an outspoken critic of the Nazis, who occupied Denmark during the Second World War. His plays frequently highlighted the eventual victory of the Christian faith despite the church's weak and ineffective witness. The Nazis feared Munk because his sermons and articles helped to strengthen the Danish resistance movement. He was executed by the Gestapo on January 5, 1944.

August 15 - Mary, Mother of Our Lord

The church (including Martin Luther) honors Mary with the Greek title *Theotokos*, meaning God-bearer. Origen first used this title in the early church, and the councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon upheld it. Luther upheld this same title in his writings. The honor paid to Mary as *Theotokos* and mother of our Lord goes back to biblical times, when Mary herself sang, "from now on all generations will call me blessed" (Luke 1:48). Mary's life revealed the presence of God incarnate, and it revealed God's presence among the humble and poor. Mary's song, the Magnificat, speaks of reversals in the reign of God: the mighty are cast down, the lowly are lifted up, the hungry are fed, and the rich are sent away empty-handed.

August 20 - Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux, d. 1153

A Cistercian monk, Bernard was a man of great spirituality who wrote mystical works and criticized those whom he thought took an overly intellectual approach to the faith. He became an abbot, and wrote several hymns that are still beloved today.

August 24 - Bartholomew *Apostle*

Mentioned as one of Jesus' disciples in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, Bartholomew's name is replaced in John's gospel by Nathanael, leading many to believe that the two are different names for the same person. Little is known about his work, though some traditions place him later in India or Armenia.

August 28 - Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, d. 430

Augustine was one of the greatest theologians of the Western church. Born in North Africa, he was a philosophy student in Carthage, where he later became a teacher of rhetoric. Much of his young life was a debauched one. As an adult he came under the influence of Ambrose, the bishop of Milan, and through him came to see Christianity as a religion appropriate for a philosopher. Augustine was baptized by Ambrose at the Easter Vigil in 387. He was ordained four years later and made bishop of Hippo in 396. Augustine was a defender of the Christian faith and argued, against the Donatists, that the holiness of the church did not depend on the holiness of its members, particularly the clergy, but that holiness comes from Christ, the head of the church. Augustine's autobiography, *Confessions*, tells of his slow movement toward faith and includes the line "Late have I loved thee."

August 28 - Moses the Black d.ca. 400 *monk, martyr*

Converted from life as a thief and a robber to Christianity, Moses was an Ethiopian who became a desert monk at Skete. The change in his heart and life had a profound impact on his native country. He was murdered when Berber bandits attacked his monastery.

Source: www.sundaysandseasons.com

Pastor Joe: serving God, serving those who serve

My two weeks at annual training at Fort Indian Town Gap (July 9-23) was my first true military experience. It was amazing! I learned more than I ever imagined and was grateful to have questions answered, meet new people and learn what it means to serve God and country through military chaplaincy.

About halfway through training, we traveled an hour to Gettysburg. Although I lived there for three years, I had never walked the battlefield the way we did. A few of us stayed back to walk rather than take the tour (the bus broke down...long story). Five of us walked 13 miles from one end of Gettysburg to the other, covering all three days of one of the Civil War's most epic battles.

Along the way we met some re-enactors. With them was a Civil War era chaplain whose endorsing church body is in real life the Episcopal church. It was a great photo opportunity (*photo, right*) and a humbling moment as I remembered in that moment all the chaplains who have served our men and women in uniform since before Declaration of Independence.

I am grateful for your love and support. I hope you know that I take you all with me when I serve as chaplain. Your love and mission is the love and mission I extend to others. It is going to be a learning experience for us all as we continue to discover what it means to be lean into this bi-vocational ministry of pastor and chaplain.

Moving forward, I will begin serving one weekend a month. We show up on Saturday mornings at 0700 and since I live close, I will get to come home at the end of the day. Sunday will be the same, except I am



excused to lead worship at Ascension and return for duty following church. So, naturally on those Sundays I will be in boots instead of dress shoes! If you have any questions or curiosities, please don't hesitate to ask.

As this new adventure begins, I humbly ask for your prayers and continued support.

~ PJ

SUNDAY SEPT 18!

RALLY DAY

for both adults and children of all ages. Adults meet in the trailer outside and children meet in the fellowship hall. Rally day will include **fun games, activities, and a church picnic!** Everyone is invited to bring a covered dish if desired. Our main entree and drinks will be provided.

**Come one! Come all!
Come tall and small!
Come young and ...seasoned!**

Join us on **Sunday, September 18th** as we kick off Sunday School! Sunday School begins at **9:30am**



*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

