



# THE MESSENGER

ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH

APRIL 2023

## WEEKLY EVENTS

**Sunday Worship** - 10:30 AM

**Sunday School** - 9:30 AM (adult & child)

**Drum Class** - Mondays 5-8 PM Apr-July

**NA Meeting** - Wednesdays at 7:30 PM

**Spirituality Group** - Thursdays at 7:00 PM

**AA Meeting** - Saturdays at 10:00 AM

- Mondays at 7:00 PM

**Soccer Shots** - Saturday mornings &  
Tuesday evenings (Spring-Fall)



## 2023 COUNCIL EXECUTIVES

**President** – Jeff Williams

**Vice President** – Chelsea Karaffa

**Secretary** – Thom Kruise

**Treasurer** – Bob Thompson

## 2023 COUNCIL LIAISONS

**Christian Education**

Pastor Joe Murdy

**Communications & Publications**

Jason Eager

**Fellowship**

Sharon Giza

**Finance and Stewardship**

John Bielewicz

**Mutual Ministry**

Jeff Williams

**Personnel**

Clay Marnich

**Property**

Phil Spano

**Social Ministry and Evangelism**

Sharon Giza

**Worship and Music**

Thom Kruise

**Youth**

Chelsea Karaffa, Venus Thompson

## Next Council Meeting

Tuesday April 11 at 7:00 PM



*"He is  
not here,  
but has  
risen."*

*~ Luke 24:5b*

*Dear friends in Christ,*

Easter is without a doubt the highlight of the church year! It is also one of the most experiential celebrations of the church. Easter tantalizes our spiritual and physical senses through the aromatic lilies, candles, incense, bells and hymns. As quickly as the thrill of Easter arrives it always seems to fade away. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ is the foundation of our faith, but as the weeks go by, and turn into months we tend to forget about God's grace and forgiveness and focus on our brokenness.

As Easter people, how do we live our daily lives fully aware of God's love and mercy? The answer is as easy as it is challenging, **keeping our eyes on Jesus**. When we look to Christ, we see that God's love comes to us immeasurably and unconditionally. Henri Nouwen once said, "God's love for us is everlasting. That means that God's love for us existed before we were born and will exist after we have died." This is how we hold on to Easter, **look to Christ**. When you fix your eyes on Jesus, you will never lose sight of God's love.

The story of Easter is one told time and again, and although many know the words, it is hard to say we truly grasp its effect on our lives. **The Easter impact**, as I like to call it has changed everything. The way we conceptualize our human lives, the way we

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# 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

“When you fix  
your eyes on  
**JESUS,**  
You will never  
lose sight of  
God's **LOVE.**”

~ PJ

## Pastor's Easter Message (continued from pg 1)

understand God, the way we understand the world around us, and how we contemplate our life and death. Above all; Easter answers the now and later questions. What happens after I die? What happens now, in the sadness? In the separation? In the midst of sin and in the hope of something more?

Friends in Christ, Easter reminds us that in our lives, in the midst of searching for answers we often find ourselves looking for Jesus in the wrong place. **“Why do you search for the living among the dead?”** We can sometimes allow our pain, despair, sadness, addictions, worries, guilt, and uncertainties rule over us like a sealed tomb. It looks like there is no way out, this must be the end. Jesus broke the chains which hold us to doubt. He tore the veil of separation between us and the Father, and he triumphed over sin and death! **Alleluia! Christ is Risen!**

As we journey forward in our faith let us be reminded of those Angelic words spoken to the women who came to the tomb that early morning, **“Do not be afraid.”** We must not be afraid, for Jesus who was crucified and died, has been raised to new life and releases us from the power sin and death.

Here at Ascension, we venture forward in mission, knowing with all certainty that Christ is alive and that he has shown himself to us. It is our joy to share this news with others! As Christians we have but one job, which is to share the good news. Let us go forth into our homes, to our neighbors, to the streets, and to the ends of the earth calling people to Christ by saying, **“Come and see.”**

With you in the risen Christ+  
Pastor Joseph Murdy

# HOLY WEEK & EASTER SERVICES

Palm Sunday

10:30 am - April 2<sup>nd</sup>

Maundy Thursday

7:00 pm - April 6<sup>th</sup>

Good Friday

7:00 pm - April 7<sup>h</sup>

*Easter Sunday*

8:30 & 10:30 am - April 9<sup>th</sup>



## EGG HUNT

for the children after the  
10:30 Easter Sunday  
service!

## 'BETTER TOGETHER'

### Two voting members needed for 2023 SWPA Synod Assembly

Each year the ELCA churches of Southwest Pennsylvania gather for fellowship, business, elections, and mission. Every congregation is invited to be represented by sending two lay voting delegates along with their pastor. Each year, people who have not experienced this expression of the wider church are encouraged to attend this worthwhile gathering. This year, Pastor Joe is not able to attend. If you would be interested in representing our church, or are curious for more information, please talk with pastor Joe.

#### Conference 6 Caucus Meeting

Wednesday, May 3<sup>rd</sup> at 7 p.m. via Zoom.

#### Synod Assembly

Fri. June 16<sup>th</sup>, 6-9 p.m. via Zoom

Sat. June 17<sup>th</sup>, 9 am-5 pm at California Univ. of Pa.



## ALC Council Meeting Highlights

*Council meeting was held Tuesday Mar 14, 2023*

- Motion to amend minutes from February. Two yes, 8 no, 2 abstain. Motion fails.
- John motions to approve as written. All in favor. 1 abstain. Motion carries.
- Motion to approve Tyler and Jackie Hoffman as members. All in favor. Motion carries.
- Motion to approve additional two weeks of sabbatical for Pastor Murdy, starting May 18. All in favor. 1 no, and 1 abstain. Motion carries.
- Motion to amend to have pastor use two weeks of vacation for the two weeks after May 18. Motion is not seconded. Amendment fails.
- Roberts Rules of Order and future procedures: motion to create a time limit of 5 minutes per speaker during debate. All in favor. Motion carries.
- Review of survey and motion to move forward with paintings.
- Motion to utilize \$6,000 gift from the cemetery fund and \$3,000 from the Memorial Fund to pay for commission of paintings. 8 yes, 1 no, 2 abstain. Motion carries.
- Property to make decision on vendor. Special project "other fund" March 19<sup>th</sup> to May 14<sup>th</sup> to go towards HVAC. Motion for property committee to approve vendor for repair ductless system. All in favor. Motion carries.
- Motion to adjourn. Seconded. Motion fails.
- Secretary read letter (added to the minutes) to address conflict, behavior at congregational meeting.
- **Fellowship, Social Ministry and Evangelism:** Quarterly meetings, 6/11, 9/24, & 11/5.
- **Personnel:** Betty Kallay, Greg Thompson, and Jamie Cropper appointed for evaluation team for pastor. and put forward for approval at council. Motion for appointment. All in favor. Motion carries.
- **Next meeting Tuesday April 11.**
- **Motion to adjourn. All in favor. 8:55 p.m.**



## Best Wishes . . .

### APRIL BIRTHDAYS!

Date | Member/Friend

- 5 Dee Gratzmiller
- 6 Karen Houseman
- 7 Judy Bryan  
Jennifer Palmgren
- 8 Leo Rickerd
- 12 Christopher Paladino
- 15 Samantha Siemons
- 19 Kristin Bryan
- 23 Mike Lescalette
- 30 Mary Ann Groskova

### APRIL ANNIVERSARY!

Date | Members/Friends

- 7 Leo & Leslie Rickerd

## . . . and Blessings to ALL!

### Coordinator needed for April 23 Road Clean-up event !

Did you know that Ascension has an Adopt-A-Highway? Our stretch runs from the start of Beaver Grade Road by the BP (there is a sign) and winds all the way down to where the trucks park across from Ventana Hills. This humble stretch of road is ours to keep clean of trash. Some could tell you stories of things we have found!

We are looking for a Road Clean-up Coordinator - just one person or family who can arrange and lead our Beaver Grade Road clean up that happens once or twice a year.

This would involve overseeing the event (currently scheduled for Sunday, April 23<sup>rd</sup> following worship), contacting PennDOT in advance to arrange for supplies needed, picking up those supplies (clean-up crew sign, vests, bags, etc). Depending on the weather, we also sometimes have held a lunch following the event. This is an easy and rewarding 1-2 times a year experience. If you have any questions or if you have interest in leading this effort, please do talk with Pastor Joe.



## Lunch Bunch



*A monthly gathering of members and friends of Ascension Church*

### Join Ascension's LUNCH BUNCH for their next 'foodie' adventure April 20 . . .

Last month, seventeen hungry Ascension Lunch Bunchers cruised to the "big island" of Neville and enjoyed a visit to Carmody's. The fish sandwiches were good, as was everything else, and we had good island weather and good company.

On Thursday April 20<sup>th</sup>, the Bunch will be groovin' with D.J.'s (sometimes spelled "Dee Jay's") at 1155 Washington Pike in Bridgeville/Collier. While it is unknown if they will "spin some platters," they are sure to fill some platters with whatever you'd like to try from their appealing menu.

As usual, please let Jerry Wessel (412-787-1213) or Nancy Schreiber know if you plan to attend by Tuesday April 18<sup>th</sup> so that reservations can be made. We hope to see you then! ~ Jerry Wessel

## THANK YOU!



A very heartfelt thank you to everyone who came out to volunteer for the church clean-up on March 25<sup>th</sup>. If you weren't able to help on that day, there is still much to do outside. Please see Bob Thompson or Phil Spano to offer your help.

# LESSER FESTIVALS & commemorations

## **April 4 Benedict the African** **Confessor** *d. 1589*

Born a slave on the island of Sicily, Benedict first lived as a hermit and labored as a plowman after he was freed. When the bishop of Rome ordered all hermits to attach themselves to a religious community, Benedict joined the Franciscans, where he served as a cook. Although he was illiterate, his fame as a confessor brought many visitors to the humble and holy cook, and he was eventually named superior of the community. A patron saint of African Americans, Benedict is remembered for his patience and understanding when confronted with racial prejudice and taunts.

## **April 6 Albrecht Dürer, d. 1528; Matthias Grünewald, d. 1529; Lucas Cranach, d. 1553** **Artists**

These great artists revealed through their work the mystery of salvation and the wonder of creation. Dürer's work reflected the apocalyptic spirit of his time. Though he remained a Roman Catholic, he was sympathetic to Martin Luther's reforming work. Grünewald's paintings are known for their dramatic forms, vivid colors, and depiction of light. Cranach's work includes many fine religious examples and several portraits of Martin Luther. Cranach was also widely known for his woodcuts.

## **April 9 Dietrich Bonhoeffer** **Theologian, d. 1945**

Bonhoeffer was a German theologian who wrote profoundly, yet in an accessible manner. In the Second World War, he became a leader of the Confessing Church in Germany that resisted the Nazi movement. Linked to a plot to kill Hitler, he was hanged shortly before the end of the war.

## **April 10 Mikael Agricola** **Bishop of Turku, d. 1557**

Consecrated bishop of Turku, Finland, without the approval of the pope, Agricola began a reform along Lutheran lines. In only three years, he translated the New Testament and worship texts into Finnish, in the process establishing the rules of Finnish writing that are still used today.

## **April 19 Olavus Petri, priest, d.1552;** **Laurentius Petri, Bishop of Uppsala, d.1573;** **Renewers of the church**

These two brothers studied with Luther at the University of Wittenberg and then returned to their native Sweden to introduce the Lutheran reforms. Olavus published a catechism and hymnal; Laurentius was a professor who defended the office of bishop and later became one.

## **April 21 Anselm** **Bishop of Canterbury d. 1109**

This eleventh- and twelfth-century Benedictine monk was one of the greatest theologians of the Middle Ages. He is remembered for emphasizing the maternal aspects of God, and for the theory that the Son of God became human in order to make the necessary payment for our sin.

## **April 23 Toyohiko Kagawa** **Renewer of society d. 1960**

Born in Kobe, Japan, Kagawa was orphaned as a young child. Later, when he became Christian, he was disowned by the rest of his family. Wishing to bring Christian principles into society, he worked among poor people, established schools and hospitals, and worked for peace.

## **April 25 Mark** **Evangelist**

Though Mark himself was not an apostle, it is likely that he was a member of one of the early Christian communities. It is possible that he is the John Mark of Acts 12 whose mother owned the house where the apostles gathered. The gospel attributed to him is brief and direct. It is considered by many to be the earliest gospel.

## **April 29 Catherine of Siena** **Theologian d. 1380**

A member of the Order of Preachers (Dominicans), Catherine was the first woman among Roman Catholics to receive the title Doctor of the Church. She was a contemplative and is known for her mystical visions of Jesus. Catherine was a humanitarian who worked to alleviate the suffering of the poor and imprisoned. She was also a renewer of church and society.



# Ascension Impressions!



## Lights of Hope

This is now our second year with the candle cross. More and more people utilize the opportunity for prayer and candle lighting each Sunday. Come Easter Day, our cross of prayer becomes a cross of hope and promise.



## Baptized in the Spirit

Many blessings to the family of Julian Philip Vietmeier, who was baptized at Ascension Church on Saturday, March 18<sup>th</sup>.



## Lucky to be Lutheran Bingo!

After worship on Sunday, March 19<sup>th</sup>, our youth stuck around to play bingo, eat lunch and win some prizes! Because we are "Lucky to be Lutheran," everyone won something!





# Creative Hands, Inspired Heart



About four years ago, Darlene Witt's sister-in-law introduced her to the joy and challenge of making dresses from pillowcases for little girls in orphanages in foreign countries. Since then,

Darlene (*pictured above*) has been inspired to design and sew over 300 dresses and now has expanded to making rompers for little boys. Every month she mails one or two boxes filled with dresses, rompers, and little toys and books. Going to thrift shops and receiving donations from friends, she has been able to build stock for this much-needed endeavor.

She also has sent dresses through missionaries when they make their trips overseas. Darlene recently has started to send her treasures to the Sioux Indian Reservation in South Dakota and has shipped in the past to Little Dresses for Africa and various charitable agencies in other countries.

A member of the Creative Hands ministry at Ascension Church, Darlene is a much-appreciated helping hand in making quilts for Lutheran World Relief. She also has sewn, too numerous to count, articles for the craft shows in which the Creative Hands group used to participate.

Always cheerful and willing to lend a hand, Darlene continues to be an asset to both the Creative Hands and SALT groups at Ascension. She says that these activities keep her busy and bring her peace, especially after the passing of her husband two years ago.



## Seeking Yard Sale Event Coordinator

We are looking for one person to help the pastor oversee and organize the Yard Sale. Specifically, to provide presence at 6 a.m. June 3<sup>rd</sup> (the day of the event), when sellers begin to arrive for set-up. Coordinator would assist the office in preparing for the day and implementing spot assignments on the day of the sale. The primary role would include hospitality to the community. In essence, you'll need to be PJ in PJ's absence! So, lots of smiling is required. This really is an easy job, but it does need to be coordinated by one person. If you have any questions or if you are interested, talk with Pastor Joe.

**Ascension Church**  
**YARD SALE**  
**SATURDAY JUNE 3, 2023**  
**8:00 AM to NOON**

**Bake Sale and refreshments also available!**

- ♦ \$10 per area (approx 10'x10')
- ♦ You keep all of the \$\$\$ from what you sell!
- ♦ We provide the space, you provide your own table/set-up and treasures to sell.
- ♦ Register by calling the church office at (412) 859-3711 or by e-mailing [Ascensionyardsale@gmail.com](mailto:Ascensionyardsale@gmail.com)

## Veterans Clothing and Shoe Drive

will take place through the month of May.  
Details to come!



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

**Contact Us**  
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PLACE  
STAMP  
HERE

