

# THE MESSENGER

## ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH

JULY 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 & Stewardship

John Bielewicz

Mutual Ministry

Jeff Williams

Personnel

Clay Marnich

Property

Phil Spano

Social Ministry & Evangelism

Sharon Giza

Worship & Music

Thom Kruise

Youth

Chelsea Karaffa, Venus Thompson

### Next Council Meeting

Tuesday August 8 at 7:00 PM

## Page 2 from Chaplain's Summer Log



Pastor Joe (bottom right) and a group of fellow chaplains hiking at Congaree National Park.

from Pastor Murdy's Bunk

*My dear friends in Christ,  
grace and peace to you!*

I miss you all so much!  
I give thanks for each of  
you and pray for  
Ascension Church every  
day. I am here to tell you  
that you *can* do hard  
things! I'm not talking  
about getting to work on  
time or having dinner

before 6. I'm talking about obstacles, challenges and things you never  
would have dreamed of. *You can do it!*

The first month of CHBOLC (Chaplain Basic Officer Leadership  
Course) has come to a close here at the U.S. Armed Forces Chaplaincy  
Center in Fort Jackson, South Carolina. A few weeks ago, we said  
goodbye to the Drill Sergeants, marching to and from every meal and  
the super-early mornings. Now, we get to eat on our own and talk at  
meals. We also get to sleep in for about an hour (morning PT - Physical  
Training - is at 5:30 now). The challenges we faced this past phase were  
some of the hardest and most formative things I have ever done.

At the culmination of our DCC (Direct Commission Course) which  
is otherwise known as officer boot camp, we had 4 days which  
pushed us to our limits. The week began with repelling from a 40-foot  
wall - which was fun. This was followed by a 3-mile ruck march to  
conduct land navigation and spend the night in the field. Every 30  
minutes a group of people watched over the camp. Needless to say,  
no one slept well. Then, around 3 a.m. the rain started. If you want to  
see some grumpy preachers, tell them take tents down, pack up and  
march in a thunderstorm at 3 in the morning.

Wait, it gets better! After returning to our rooms and getting ready,  
we had a full day of class from 9:00 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. Once it was dark,

*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



## ALC Council Meeting Highlights

Council meeting was held Tuesday June 13, 2023

### Call to order: 7:03 pm

- Motion was made to send \$454 to Interfaith Food Bank and \$100 to Tatum Grace Heart Warrior Fund.
- Facilities made a plan to repatch the potholes in the parking lot with cold patch before the Car Cruise.

### Fellowship, Social Ministry & Evangelism Report:

- Fellowship events have been planned through Rally Day.
- Ice Cream social for graduates scheduled for July 16.
- Blood pressure checks will be performed in September by members with a nursing background
- Communion visits for shut-ins are ongoing for the summer.

### • Important dates: No Council meeting in July

- Adjournment: 8:17 pm
- Next meeting: Tuesday August 8 at 7 pm.

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

we headed to "Nic at Night." This is a course that simulates a combat environment. With our heavy helmets and bullet proof vests we had to low-crawl through sand, under barbed wire, in the dark, through obstacles ... while they fired REAL machine guns over our heads! The next morning, we learned to trust our equipment. We were given gas masks and taught how to properly use them - only to take them off in a gas chamber and experience something I am hardly able to describe.

You *can* do hard things! We all are capable of doing things we've never imagined. This is but a few samples of some of the hard things our women and men in uniform have to experience and what they can expect in real time warfare. There were times I had to remind fellow chaplains that they could do hard things. There were times friends had to remind me, "Murdy, you can do it!" You know what, *we did it!!* We did it because God gave us the strength to do it. God was our strength when we wanted to say, "forget it, I'm going home." God was with us through every moment - reminding us that we have been called.

*continued on page 3*

“ If GOD call us  
TO IT,  
GOD will see us  
THROUGH IT.”  
~ PJ



Following these hard moments, the verse from Philippians 4:13 has come to mind with renewed power. **"I can do all things through him who strengthens me."** Truly, there was no way I could do any of this without the love and presence of God. My friends, if God calls us to it, God will see us through it. You might ask yourself, "how do I know I can do it?" The simple answer is, you can because God is with you.

I ask for your continued prayers. We are half way there! There are still physical challenges, but the pulse of our learning has switched to the classroom. This second half of CHBOLC is focused on learning to be a staff officer, a chaplain and spiritual leader in our pluralistic world. Every day is full of challenges, and full of the grace I need to tackle each one! Thanks be to God!

Love,  
PJ

**Ascension's Summer 2023  
outdoor worship schedule:  
July 9<sup>th</sup> & July 23<sup>rd</sup>  
August 13<sup>th</sup> & August 27<sup>th</sup>**

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



(above) Wife Amanda and the kids came down to visit PJ over Father's Day weekend.

(below) Pastor Joe with Pastor John Klawiter, ELCA - Minnesota.



**WORSHIP ASSISTANT SCHEDULE - JULY 2023**

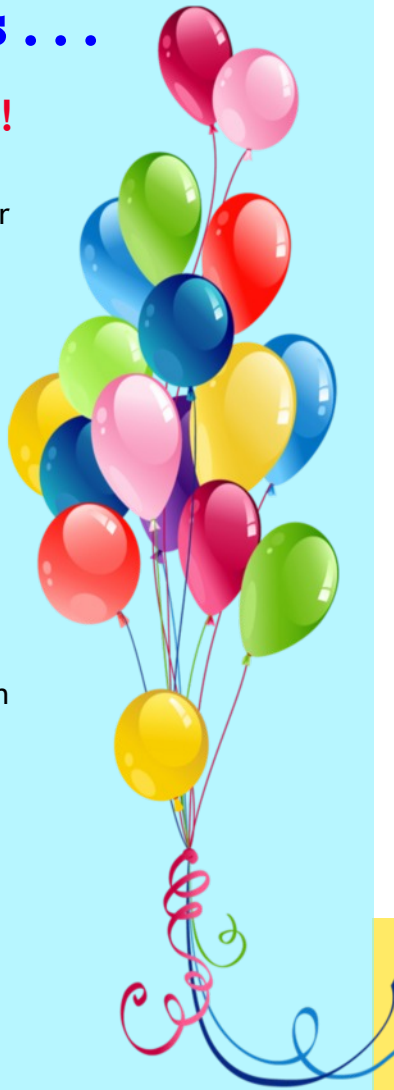
Date	Assisting Minister	Communion Assistant	Lector	Usher	Acolyte	Sunday	Color	Supply	Space
July 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Mary Thompson	NA (Service of the Word)	Rich Mussman	Vol.	Vol.	5 <sup>th</sup> Pent.	G	Mr. Jerry Wessel	Indoors
July 9 <sup>th</sup>	Jerry Wessel	Bob Thompson	Amanda Murdy	Vol.	Vol.	6 <sup>th</sup> Pent.	G	Pr. Ann Schmid	Outside
July 16 <sup>th</sup>	Jeff Williams	Al Morrow	Gib Palmgren	Vol.	Vol.	7 <sup>th</sup> Pent.	G	Pr. Ann Schmid	Indoors
July 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Jennifer Burkholder	Amy Kruse	Sharon Giza	Vol.	Vol.	8 <sup>th</sup> Pent.	G	Kathleen Howells	Outside Comm. Res.
July 30 <sup>th</sup>	Mary Thompson	NA (Service of the Word)	Rich Mussman	Vol.	Vol.	9 <sup>th</sup> Pent.	G	Kathleen Howells	Indoors

# Best Wishes . . .

## JULY BIRTHDAYS!

Date | Member/Friend

- 1 Jennifer Burkholder  
Megan Ganley
- 2 Greg Thompson  
Camryn Endes
- 3 Pastor Joe Murdy  
Brian Tomchak
- 5 Zoey Murdy
- 7 Diane Bayer
- 12 Venus Thompson
- 14 Jane Gregory  
Giovanni Thompson
- 17 Amanda Derbish
- 18 Bob Stathers
- 19 Amanda Murdy
- 21 Al Morrow
- 22 Mary Thompson
- 23 Grayson DeCola
- 24 Virginia Shar
- 26 Paula Wessel
- 29 Tom Ganley
- 31 Amy Kruise



## JULY ANNIVERSARIES!

Date | Members/Friends

- 22 Al & Dolly Morrow
- 25 Mike & Lynn Neilson



## . . . and Blessings to ALL!

## GO NEWS?

If you have pictures, articles, or ideas to submit for the **AUGUST 2023** Newsletter, please contact the office or Pastor, or email [office@alcpgh.com](mailto:office@alcpgh.com).



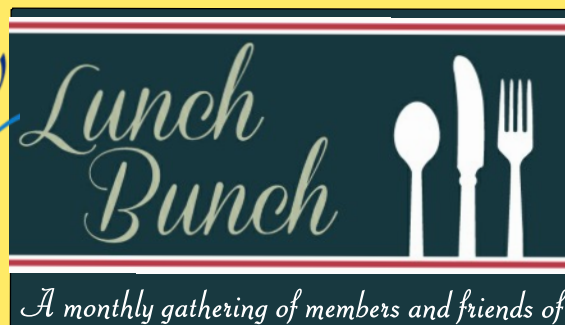
## Ice Cream Social

*DESTINED FOR GREATNESS ... AND A GREAT CELEBRATION!*

Join us as we congratulate our 2023 GRADUATES

**Connor Hughes, Emily Lescallette, Raleigh Rickerd, Luciana Thompson, Kelly Bryan, Emily Reckner, Nathan Reckner**

on Sunday July 16 following worship with an **ICE CREAM SOCIAL** in our Fellowship Hall.



**JOIN US  
THURSDAY  
JULY 20!**

On June 21<sup>st</sup> the Ascension Lunch Bunch celebrated the Summer Solstice by trekking through Penn's Woods to the Log Cabin Inn. Fifteen people braved the forest to attend, although no bears, bobcats or bigfoot were encountered. We had a nice day and had our meals on the veranda, received great service and had a great time.

This month, the Bunch will head to Sunny Jim's, 225 Camp Home Road, for their regular get-together on Thursday July 20. We did think about finding Cloudy Claude's or Rainy Janey's, but opted instead for sun. Sunny Jim's was established in 1934, the year that their secret sauce for chicken was created. Along with that tasty dish, the restaurant also offers lots of All-American choices on the menu.

As usual, the Bunch will shoot to arrive at Sunny Jim's at 11:30 a.m. Those wanting to carpool should coordinate to meet at church for a 10:45 departure. Please let Nancy Schreiber (412-859-3969) or Jerry Wessel (412-787-1213) know if you plan to attend by Tuesday July 18 so that places in the sun can be reserved. (You can bring your own sunglasses and suntan oil ... dress is "beach casual" but no flimsy flip-flops or risqué swim suits, please). Hope to see you there where the sun *does* shine because it's always "Sunny!"

~ Jerry Wessel





**THANK YOU to all who  
helped with and attended the  
Taytum Grace  
CAR CRUISE  
on Friday June 23!**

As we continue to support  
**Baby Taytum** with our prayers, you are  
thanked most sincerely for your support of  
this fundraiser to help with medical costs of  
the heart transplant which she is awaiting!

**WITH A THANKFUL HEART . . .**

Jesus said, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you can move mountains. And that we did! From the initial request to be able to hold a benefit Car Cruise at Ascension Lutheran Church to the Friday June 23 event night, we moved mountains.

The overwhelming response from community businesses and individuals far exceeded my expectations – over 50 baskets! Thank you to Ricci's in Kennedy Township (20 lbs. hot sausage), Mancini's Bakery (15 dozen sausage rolls) and Bruster's Ice Cream Robinson Township (hot dogs, sausage and surprise – pulled pork). We received a donation of 5 cases of 20oz. Coca-Cola from Auto Zone Kennedy Township. Shop 'n' Save, Mt. Washington donated cases of pop and water. Additionally, we received so many donations from various businesses and individuals which would probably take up most of this newsletter! A very special thank-you to Judy, Amy, Jeff & Debbie Williams for their donation and assistance throughout the day. And a huge thank-you to everyone who came out to support this wonderful cause.

The weather may not have been in our favor, but we entertained 43 cars and many spectators. For every call I received to inquire if the event was still on – I said yes it was and I had faith that the rain would hold off until after the Cruise (that little mustard seed) – and it did! Yes, there was a slight sprinkle at the beginning which lasted less than 5 minutes, but it did not hinder our evening of fun.

All in all, we were able to raise over \$4,000. On Saturday, all remaining food, chips, pop, water and supplies were donated to the Light of Life Mission in the North Side.

I am truly blessed to be a part of the Ascension Lutheran Church family – you are all awesome, wonderful, and generous.

On behalf of Taytum's family and from the bottom of my heart -  
**THANK YOU!**

Blessings and Peace,  
Deb Walenchok



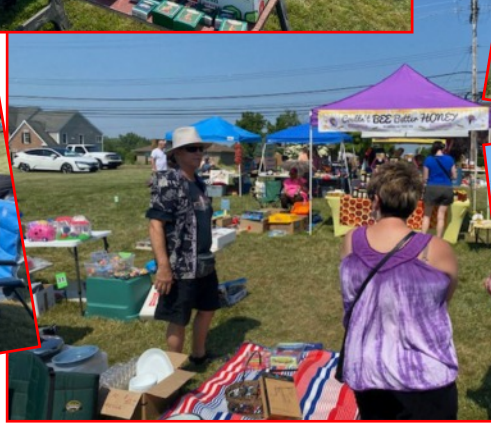




# THANK, THANK, THANK YOU!



Photos by Sharon Giza  
and Jeff Williams



Ascension's 2023 YARD SALE was a great success! Despite the stifling temperatures on Saturday June 3, vendors, volunteers and patrons came out to enjoy a morning full of treasures, bargains and some good food & refreshments. Thanks, everyone!





# LESSER FESTIVALS & commemorations

**July 1 - Catherine Winkworth, d. 1878; John Mason Neale, d. 1866; hymn translators**

Neale was an English priest who specialized in the translation of Latin and Greek hymns into English. Winkworth lived in Manchester, England, and devoted herself to translating German hymns. Almost all English-speaking hymnals include many of their translations.

**July 3 - Thomas, Apostle**

Though frequently remembered as “doubting Thomas,” this apostle also demonstrated a willingness to suffer and die with Jesus (John 11:16), and finally claimed the risen Christ as “my Lord and my God!” By tradition, he later worked as a missionary in India. Long commemorated on December 21, Thomas’s celebration is moved to July 3 in agreement with ecumenical calendars.

**July 6 - Jan Hus, d. 1415 martyr**

Hus was a Bohemian (present-day Czech Republic) priest who spoke against abuses in the church, and was seen by Martin Luther as his predecessor in the reforming movement. He was found guilty of heresy by a council of the church, and burned at the stake.

**July 11 - Benedict of Nursia, d. ca. 540 Abbot of Monte Cassino**

Benedict is known as the father of the Western monastic movement. Educated in Rome, he went to live as a hermit, and eventually gathered a community of monks around him. He wrote a rule for living in monasteries that is used by Benedictines and adapted by others.

**July 12 - Nathan Söderblom, Bishop of Uppsala, d. 1931**

A winner of the Nobel Prize for peace for his efforts to unite peoples after the First World War, Söderblom, a Swedish theologian, also called attention to the revival of early church worship principles, and helped to lay the groundwork for the World Council of Churches.

**July 17 - Bartolomé de Las Casas, d. 1566 missionary to the Indies**

A native of Spain, Las Casas first came to the Western hemisphere while serving in the military. Granted a large estate with indigenous slaves, he freed them after he was ordained a priest. He worked in the Caribbean and Central America to improve the lives of the native peoples.

**July 22 - Mary Magdalene, Apostle**

The gospels report Mary Magdalene was one of the women of Galilee who followed Jesus. She was present at Jesus’ crucifixion and his burial. When she went to the tomb on the first day of the week to anoint Jesus’ body, she was the first person to whom the risen Lord appeared. She returned to the disciples with the news and has been called “the apostle to the apostles” for her proclamation of the resurrection.

**July 23 - Birgitta of Sweden, d. 1373 renewer of the church**

Birgitta (beer-GEE-tuh) was married at age thirteen and had four daughters with her husband. She was widowed at the age of thirty-eight, shortly after she and her husband had made a religious pilgrimage. Following the death of her husband the religious dreams and visions that had begun in her youth occurred more regularly. Her devotional commitments led her to give to the poor and needy all that she owned, and she began to live a more ascetic life. She founded an order of monks and nuns, the Order of the Holy Savior (Brigittines), whose superior was a woman. Today the Society of St. Birgitta is a laypersons’ society that continues her work of prayer and charity.

**July 25 - James, Apostle**

James is one of the sons of Zebedee and is counted as one of the twelve disciples. Together with his brother John they had the nickname “sons of thunder.” One of the stories in the New Testament tells of their request for Jesus to grant them places of honor in the kingdom. They are also reported to have asked Jesus for permission to send down fire on a Samaritan village that had not welcomed them. James was the first of the Twelve to suffer martyrdom and is the only apostle whose martyrdom is recorded in scripture. He is sometimes called James the Elder to distinguish him from James the Less, commemorated with Philip on May 1, and James of Jerusalem, commemorated on October 23.

**July 28 - Johann Sebastian Bach, d. 1750; Heinrich Schütz, d. 1672; George Frideric Handel, d. 1759; musicians**

These three German-born musicians have done much to enrich the life of the church. Schütz was an early master who focused on settings of biblical texts. Bach wrote over 300 cantatas along with works for organ and instrumental pieces, and has been called the “fifth evangelist” for the way he proclaimed the gospel in music. Handel’s great work, *Messiah*, is a musical proclamation of scriptural texts.

**July 29 - Mary, Martha, and Lazarus of Bethany**

Friends of Jesus, Mary and Martha are remembered for the hospitality of their home that they offered him — Martha focused on serving their guest, and Mary on listening to him. Their brother Lazarus was raised from the dead as a sign of the greater resurrection to come.

**July 29 - Olaf, King of Norway, d. 1030 martyr**

Considered the patron saint of Norway, Olaf went from a life of piracy to becoming Christian and declaring himself king of Norway. He revised the laws and tried to administer them fairly. Driven from Norway in a rebellion, he was killed in battle trying to regain his kingdom.



*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

