

# THE MESSENGER

## ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH

SEPTEMBER 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 September 12 at 7:00 PM

## Getting Back into the Nitty-Gritty



Pictured above in uniform are the three ELCA chaplains who graduated from the 2023 U.S. Army Chaplaincy Program: Pr. Andrew Lewis (Georgia), Pr. Joe Murdy (Pennsylvania), Pr. John Klawiter (Minnesota) flanking the Director of Federal Chaplaincies for the ELCA, Pr. Christopher Otten.

days in the field including the six-mile ruck march back to the schoolhouse.

On the last Sunday in Columbus, S.C. my family and I, along with several other chaplains worshiped at Ebenezer Lutheran Church. Since many of us had attended throughout the summer, the church wanted to acknowledge our leaving. So, they sent us out with a commission and blessing. This blessing is done around the baptismal font and recalls the promises and covenant which God makes at our

*from Pastor Murdy's Desk*

*My dear friends in Christ,*

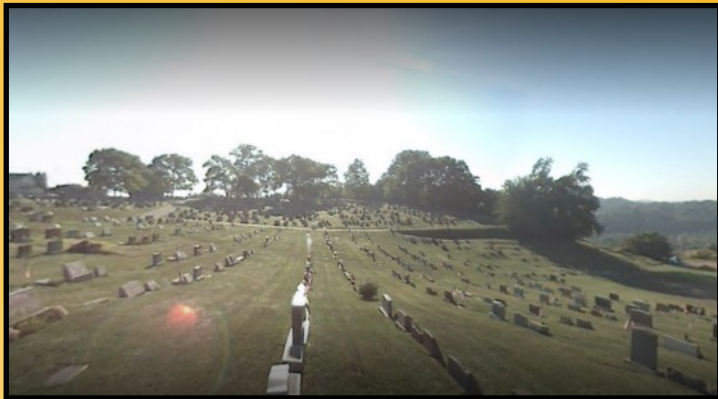
Funny how this summer should start with rain and end with a reminder of the promises of baptism. If you remember back in June when I was a just a few weeks into the adventure which unfolded at the U.S. Armed Forces Chaplaincy Center in Fort Jackson, South Carolina, I talked about the cold and the rain. There were several days when we had to march, run and workout in the rain. It was miserable. Eventually I grew to embrace the Army saying, "if it ain't raining, we ain't training." Thank goodness it didn't rain once during our four

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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

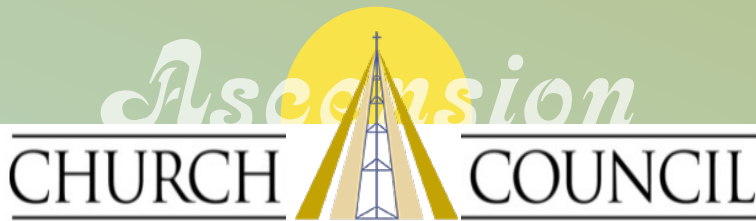
Bob Hughes

Bette Ann Kallay

Joyce Leister

Pastor Joe Murdy

Jeff Williams



## ALC Council Meeting Highlights

Council Meeting was held August 8, 2023

- Motion to pay Commonwealth of PA \$117.60 for boiler inspection. Passed unanimously.
- Motion to form a subcommittee to better define policies and procedures for use of cemetery funds to make purchases for the church. 5 yes, 3 no. Motion carried.
- Motion for all funds donated to the Special Projects fund to be assigned to construct an electronic road sign until all funds are available to pay for it. 5 yes, 2 no, one abstain. Motion carried.
- Important dates: 9/3 - Welcome back reception for Pastor; 9/10 is Rally Day.

Next meeting is Tuesday September 12 at 7 pm.

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

baptism. It was truly special to recall those sacred baptismal gifts and vocation at the conclusion of such a milestone.

A few days later, on August 18<sup>th</sup> I graduated. I was overwhelmed with gratitude, love, exhaustion, accomplishment and relief. Above all, I was overwhelmed by the ways in which God has been and will always be at work in my life. I say it's funny that this summer should start with rain and end with a reminder of

*continued on page 5*

“The **JOURNEY**  
thus far may have  
**ended**, but there  
is **MUCH MORE**  
to **COME.**”

~ PJ



Please join us for the  
“**WELCOME BACK PJ!**”

## Ice Cream Social



**Sunday September 3<sup>rd</sup>**

**in our Fellowship Hall  
following worship**

*Yes, Pastor Joe is returning from his 3-month  
sabbatical - and ohhh, the stories he has to tell . . .  
Mark your calendars, it's a can't-miss event!*

*Back to School ... Back to Church!*



It's a fun day

**Sunday**

**September 10<sup>th</sup>**

It's **RALLY DAY 2023!**

Ascension's Social and  
Evangelism Ministries  
invite you to bring a  
covered dish or dessert  
to share at the celebration  
following worship.  
Chicken tenders & drinks  
will be provided.

*Sign-up sheet in the church  
narthex for what to bring!*

**HELP** IS ALSO NEEDED for

**set-up** before worship

(10 AM) AND for **clean-up**  
after the event.

**WHO'S READY FOR  
SUNDAY SCHOOL?**



## Best Wishes . . .

### SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS!

Date | Member/Friend

- 1 Deb Walenchok
- 4 Jen Marnich
- 5 Lynn Neilson  
Angel Rose
- 6 Carolyn Paladino
- 7 Curtis Woods
- 10 Mary Honath
- 12 Luciana Thompson
- 14 Arianne Marnich  
Brielle Marnich  
Marlene Porta
- 15 Judy Evans
- 17 Lauren Rose
- 23 Gavin Thomson
- 30 Blake Rhoads



### SEPTEMBER ANNIVERSARIES!

Date | Members/Friends

- 6 John & Mary Jane McGinnis  
Pastor Joe & Amanda Murdy  
Chris & Emily Paladino
- 10 Paul & Paula Tomchak
- 17 Tom & Amy Lanzarotta
- 19 Rick & Janey Zoltun
- 28 Mike & Lynn Kinney



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



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



**JOIN US  
THURSDAY  
SEPT. 21  
At Nico  
Luciano's**

*In August, a small (11) but talkative group of Lunch Bunchers took the highway to Sal's Italian(ish) place in Chippewa. The food was great (even though the manager didn't know the name of the baseball player whose picture Sal had up on the wall)!*

*Knowing that the Lunch Bunch is always looking for new places to try delicious cuisine, Sal's manager recommended an Italian place which none of us have ever visited. So, for the Lunch Bunch's September adventure, we'll be traveling on Thursday September 21<sup>st</sup> to Nico Luciano's at 813 Woodside Avenue in Ellwood City, Pa. - about a 50-minute drive from Ascension. I'm hoping that that Sal's manager actually recommended Luciano's to us because he really likes us, and not to dish out payback, and that Nico isn't in the same "Family" as "Lucky" Luciano, or a "Wise Guy" like me might be taken for "a ride in cement overshoes to sleep with the fishes," instead of being able to drive home after my usual fish sandwich for lunch!*

*If you find this to be an intriguing lunchtime proposition, then get on the Lunch Bunch bandwagon and call Nancy Schreiber at 412-859-3969 or Jerry Wessel at 412-787-1213 by Tuesday Sept. 19 to get on board for this excursion and we'll warn Nico's in advance of our arrival so that adequate reservations can be made. Driving - meet at the restaurant at 11:30. Carpoolers - meet at church by 10:30. Fedoras and double-breasted pinstripe suits are optional, but carrying a violin case is definitely discouraged.*

*Til then, CIAO! ~ Jerry Wessel*





baptism, because August 18<sup>th</sup> just so happens to be my baptismal anniversary! What a gift to be able to reflect on all God has done and think of what God is calling me to do.

The last week of CHBOLC (Chaplain Basic Officer Leadership Course) was still full of classes, events, paperwork and equipment turn-in. Amanda and the kids got to spend the last week with me, for which I was grateful, as you can imagine! On Monday the schoolhouse hosted a family event in the park which was fun for all the kids. While I was in class, they provided childcare for a few days because spouses also had class. Amanda was able to participate in the spouse's seminar, where she could learn about the Army, the Chaplain Corps, deployment, and gain new friendships and support. At the end of the seminar, she was pinned with the chaplain corps regimental pin by the Chief of Chaplains' wife. Wednesday before graduation we got to get all dressed up and attend our first formal "dining out" ball.

After graduation, we spent a day and a half at the beach. It was just enough time to regroup as a family and have fun in the sun. It's nice to be home now and getting back to new and old routines.

This summer was probably one of the most challenging summers of my life. I couldn't have done it without the love and support of my wife, our church, family and friends. The journey thus far may have ended, but there is much more to come. I am full of gratitude for each of you and for all God has done. I can't wait to see you all! Looking forward to the hugs and getting back into the nitty-gritty of what God has called us to do at Ascension.

Blessings+

PJ

# REMEMBER: YOUTH BEGINS WITH **YOU!**

Please keep an eye on these  
**FUN** upcoming **Fall 2023**  
**YOUTH and FAMILY** events:

**Sunday Sept. 17<sup>th</sup>**

**Family Mini-Golf at Scally's**

**Sunday October 22<sup>nd</sup>**

**Pumpkins, Pizza & Pop  
With PJ!**

**Sunday November 5<sup>th</sup>**

**Service with Creative Hands  
& College Care Packages**

**Friday December 1<sup>st</sup>**

**Parents Night Out!**

Please reach out to **MELISSA** with  
any questions or concerns at  
[melissadecola@hotmail.com](mailto:melissadecola@hotmail.com)

**happy LABOR DAY Sept. 4, 2023**

"Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." ~ 2Corinthians 9:7



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

In addition to Sunday giving  
envelopes, we offer other ways  
for you to add your financial  
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](http://www.alcpgh.com) to  
access a link.



***Social Ministry and Evangelism***  
**Meeting Sunday, September 24 after worship**  
Join us as we plan events for  
**October, November & December 2023**

## National Grandparents Day

falls each year on the  
first Sunday after  
Labor Day. It's not a  
holiday invented just  
to sell cards and  
flowers. It was  
initiated at the

grassroots level by West Virginian grandmother Marian Lucille Herndon McQuade, with the behind-the-scenes support of her husband Joseph L. McQuade. The McQuades had 15 children, 43 grandchildren, 10 great-grandchildren, and one great-great grandchild. Note that there is no apostrophe in "Grandparents" as Mrs. McQuade did not envision the holiday as "belonging" to grandparents. Instead, she saw it as a day of celebration involving the whole family, a day to connect the generations. It's just as much a day to honor grandparents as it is a day for grandparents themselves to confirm their loving legacy to the generations that follow them.

There are three purposes for National Grandparents Day: 1) To honor grandparents. 2) To give grandparents an opportunity to show love for their children's children. 3) To help children become aware of the strength, information and guidance which older people can offer.

Lailah Rice, granddaughter of Marian McQuade, has voiced a message for today's children: "You can learn a lot more from grandparents than you think you can - and it's not a chore!"

National Grandparents Day is an important official marker of intergenerational relationships. Children have an opportunity to show their appreciation and love toward their grandparents (and other special older adult friends), and grandparents feel valued as their role is validated.





# SEPTEMBER LESSER FESTIVALS & commemorations

## September 2

**Nikolai Frederik Severin Grundtvig** *bishop, renewer of the church, d. 1872*

Grundtvig was, with Søren Kierkegaard, one of the two great Danish theologians of the nineteenth century. As a pastor, he battled the prevalent idea that Christianity was more a philosophy than divine revelation. He wrote over a thousand hymns.

## September 9

**Peter Claver** *priest, missionary to Colombia, d. 1654*

Born into Spanish nobility, Claver became a Jesuit missionary, and served in present-day Colombia. His ministry was focused on the slaves that arrived there. He gave them food and medicine, learned their dialects, and taught them Christianity.

## September 13

**John Chrysostom** *Bishop of Constantinople, d. 407*

John was a priest in Antioch and an outstanding preacher. His eloquence earned him the nickname “Chrysostom” (“golden mouth”), but it also got him into trouble. As bishop of Constantinople he preached against corruption among the royal court. The empress, who had been his supporter, sent him into exile. His preaching style emphasized the literal meaning of scripture and its practical application.

## September 14

**Holy Cross Day**

Helena, the mother of Constantine, made a pilgrimage to Israel to look for Christian holy sites. She found what she believed were the sites of the crucifixion and burial of Jesus, sites that modern archaeologists believe may be correct. Here Constantine built two churches. The celebration of Holy Cross Day originated with the dedication of the Church of the Resurrection in 335. Today the festival provides the church an opportunity to lift up the victory of the cross with a spirit of celebration that might be less suitable on Good Friday.

## September 16

**Cyprian** *Bishop of Carthage, martyr, d. ca. 258*

Cyprian worked for the unity of the church and cared for his flock in North Africa during a time of great persecution. During Cyprian’s time as bishop many people had denied the faith under duress. In contrast to some who held the belief that the church should not receive these people back, Cyprian believed they should be welcomed into full communion after a period of penance. He insisted on the need for compassion in order to preserve the unity of the church. His essay *On the Unity of the Catholic Church* stressed the role of bishops in guaranteeing the visible, concrete unity of the church. Cyprian was also concerned for the physical well-being of the people under his care. He organized a program of medical care for the sick during a severe epidemic in Carthage.

## September 17

**Hildegard** *Abbess of Bingen, d. 1179*

A mystic who was widely influential within the church, Hildegard was chosen as abbess of her community, which she reformed as well as other convents. She advised and reproved kings and popes, wrote poems and hymns, and produced treatises in medicine, theology, and natural history. She also was a musician and artist.

## September 18

**Dag Hammarskjöld** *renewer of society, d. 1961*

Dag Hammarskjöld (HAH-mar-sheld) was a Swedish diplomat and humanitarian who served as secretary general of the United Nations. He was killed in a plane crash on this day in 1961, in what is now Zambia, while on his way to negotiate a cease-fire between the United Nations and the Katanga forces. His life was a combination of diplomatic service and personal spirituality, and of contemplation on the meaning of Christ in his life and action in the world.

## September 21

**Matthew** *Apostle and Evangelist*

Matthew (“Levi” in the gospels of Mark and Luke) was a tax collector for the Roman government in Capernaum. In the gospels, tax collectors are mentioned as sinful and despised outcasts, but it was these outcasts to whom Jesus showed his love. Matthew’s name means “gift of the Lord.” Since the second century, tradition has attributed the first gospel to him.

## September 29

**Michael and All Angels**

On this festival day the church ponders the richness and variety of God’s created order and the limits of human knowledge of it. The scriptures speak of angels (the word means “messengers”) who worship God in heaven, and in both testaments angels speak for God on earth. Michael is an angel whose name appears in Daniel as the heavenly being who leads the faithful dead to God’s throne on the day of resurrection. In Revelation, Michael fights in a cosmic battle against Satan.

## September 30

**Jerome** *translator, teacher, d. 420*

Jerome was a biblical scholar and translator, but rather than translating the original Hebrew and Greek scriptures into classical Latin, he worked in the commonly-spoken Latin of the day, creating a version called the Vulgate. Thanks to the work of Jerome, many people received the word in their own language and lived lives of faith and service to those in need.

Source: [www.sundaysandseasons.com](http://www.sundaysandseasons.com)



*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

