



THE MESSENGER

ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH

November 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
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 November 14 at 7:00 PM

Remembering to give THANKS

from Pastor Murdy's Desk



I am sure you have heard the phrase, “’Tis the season ____.” You can fill in the blank with just about anything from the Flu, to Christmas one-liners or something a little more sarcastic. As I thought about the phrase, ‘Tis the season

to give thanks, it made me wonder, why do we NEED a SEASON to give thanks?

As people of God, we have ample reason to give thanks. But I wonder, how often do we return that thanksgiving to God? How often do we surrender our time, talent and treasure to the mission of the Gospel as a response to all that God has given to us and done for us? Many years ago, I read a story that has stuck with me. I thought it was appropriate for a life time of thanksgiving:

“During a stormy night in 1860, two vessels, one a freighter and the other a passenger ship, collided on Lake Michigan. The passenger ship, the Lady Elgin, carried several hundred passengers. When the ship sank, the people jumped into the water, clinging to whatever came their way.

As the survivors struggled toward the Illinois shore, people from the land waded out into the water to extend a helping hand. One such person aiding in the rescue effort was a university student by the name of Edward Spencer, who was an excellent swimmer. During the early morning hours and throughout the day Spencer succeeded in rescuing 17 persons from a watery grave. But so great was the strain on him that he lost his health and spent the rest of his life in a wheelchair.

In later years, this hero was asked what he remembered most about that tragic day. He replied, ‘I recall the fact that not one of the

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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

"Save the Date"
Congregational
Meeting
Sunday,
November 19th
following worship

Meeting will include:
ratifying constitutional
amendments, approving
2024 budget and election
of new council members.

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

seventeen rescued persons thanked me for saving their lives.'"

Jesus Christ sacrificed His life to rescue us from sin and death. Have we thanked Him? Is our thanksgiving by words accompanied by thanks-living? And do we live our thanks by giving ourselves in service to others? The apostle Paul tells the Philippians, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the God of peace, which transcends all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus." (4:6-7)

May our lives be an expression of the psalmist: "O Lord my God, I will give You thanks forever." (30:12)

As we prepare ourselves for the great turkey feast - I offer you this as food for thought! May we always live thankfully!

Have a blessed Thanksgiving,

+PJ

“
As people of **GOD**
we have ample reason
to give **THANKS**”
~ PJ

★ UPCOMING EVENTS ★

Social Ministry, Evangelism & Outreach ministries

November: Collection for food bank and
NEW blood pressure checks
beginning Sunday, November 5th

December: Presents for Patients
Thursday, December 7th

Help the food bank neighbors in need, neighbors indeed.

*Jesus said, "It is more blessed to give
than to receive." (Acts 20:35)*

This is the season for THANKS and GIVING. As we prepare for our holiday gatherings, we remember those who may be dependent on the generosity of others. This is why throughout the month of November, we collecting special items for the Inter-Church Food bank in McKees Rocks. Items of particular need include: Canned yams, cranberry sauce, stuffing mix and instant mashed potatoes.

*There also is a particular need for toiletry items such as soap, shampoo, tooth brushes, tooth paste, etc.
Help us make the season brighter for others!*



"OTHER"-wise ...

Ascension's iconic
road sign is going
DIGITAL!

You can greatly help
to fund this new
Special Project by
directing a portion of your Sunday offering
to "OTHER" on your giving envelope.
Questions? Ask any Council Member for
details about this new outreach venture.



Thanks for your generous support!



ALC Council Meeting Highlights

Council Meeting was held October 10, 2023

- Review Minutes of Last Meeting: Jason motioned, Bob second. Passed Unanimously.
- Pastor Report: Motion to approve Emilia DeCola for Confirmation on 11/19 by Jeff, Second by Jason. Passed Unanimously.
- Office Administrator's Report: Motion by Clay to move \$1200 earmarked for Christian Education to now be earmarked for the electronic sign. No second. Motion fails.
- Motion by Clay that use of \$1200 earmarked toward Christian Education must be approved by council. No second. Motion fails.
- *Mt. Calvary Cemetery* – Meeting occurred 9/17. Looking to purchase an excavator, as theirs is non-repairable. They are looking to trade in or resell the used excavator. They are also looking to purchase security cameras for the office and main road.
- Important dates:
Next meeting: Tuesday, November 14
Congregational Meeting: November 19
- Adjournment: Motion to adjourn by Thom. Sharon second. Passed unanimously at 7:49pm.



Christmas Program Help Needed!

On Sunday December 17th Ascension Church will host a birthday party for Jesus! Join us for an after-church luncheon to celebrate the birth of our savior. During worship we are hopeful to once again support a children's Christmas program. If you are interested in helping to coordinate this effort, or help with the luncheon, please reach out to Pastor Joe pastor@alcpgh.com.

Best Wishes . . .

NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS!

Date | Member / Friend

- 1 Emily Lescalette
Joel Randal
- 2 Bill McEwen
- 4 Andrew Burkholder
- 6 Suzy McEwen
- 8 Leslie Rickerd
- 10 Darlene Ganley
- 17 Dolly Morrow
- 18 Bryce Adams
Kayleigh Adams
- 19 Allison Bayer
- 22 Kathleen Bowman
- 23 Dirk Stathers
- 25 Holden Tomchak
- 26 Dee Lightner
Gib Palmgren
- 29 Linda Siemons



NOVEMBER ANNIVERSARIES!

Date | Members / Friends

- 15 Dave & Deb Walenchok

. . . and Blessings to ALL!

CHRISTMAS

Worship

Christmas Eve
Sunday, December 24th

10:30 a.m. - Advent 4 worship

**4 p.m. & 7 p.m. - Traditional
Christmas Eve Worship**



Aracri's in Greentree awaits another Lunch Bunch visit

Nine wannabe Elizabethan players (well, Ascension Lunch Bunchers, actually) traveled to Shakespeare's Castle outside of Ellwood City last month. No one got lost en route, but alas and alack, neither did we see Romeo, Juliet nor MacBeth along the way. We did however see some great Fall scenery and had some great food (the pumpkin bisque was really good), and enjoyed the atmosphere and the company.

On Thursday November 16th the Bunch will assemble at Aracri's, 1006 Greentree Road. Contrary to this writer's previous notion, the restaurant's title is not spelled "Arachnids" nor will there be any spider-related menu items. There will - based on previous visits - be good food and a pleasant ambience for us to converse about.

As usual, in order to reserve ample space, please phone Nancy Schreiber 412-859-3969 or Jerry Wessel 412-787-1213 or snag them in person at church by Tuesday November 14th to let them know that you'll be joining in the fun. We will meet at Aracri's at 11:30. Carpoolers should meet at church and leave by 11am. Hope to see you then!

~ Jerry Wessel



All Saints Remembrance planned for Sunday Nov. 5



Once a year, the church pauses to remember the saints who have gone before us. Not just those noted on special feast days who are remembered for the extraordinary, but those ordinary saints who have touched our lives in extraordinary ways. Traditionally, the church only announces by name those who have died in the past year who have entered the church triumphant. Over the past few years, we have embraced the tradition of creating an *Ofrenda*, a table which displays a collection of pictures and objects to remember those who have died. This tradition comes from Mexico as they celebrate *Dio de los Muertos* (Day of the Dead). This day also coincides with the church's official All Saints celebration, on November 1st.

Everyone is invited to participate and remember on **Sunday, November 5th** those who have died and now live fully in the kingdom. Pictures, objects and flowers may be added the day of or brought to church beforehand.

**REMEMBER TO "FALL BACK"
at 2am November 5th
as Daylight Savings ends!**

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

Sunday November 5th
**Service with Creative Hands
& College Care Packages**

Friday December 1st
Parents Night Out!

Questions? Reach out to **MELISSA**
melissadecola@hotmail.com

Happy Thanksgiving!
Thursday November 23

**HOLDEN EVENING
PRAYER**

Join us for midweek Advent services

7 p.m. WEDNESDAYS: December 6, 13 & 20

Join us as we await the newborn King throughout the season of Advent through our midweek services of Holden Evening Prayer. This unique contemplative worship service originally was written during the winter of 1986 while the composer, Marty Haugen, was in residence at Holden Village in the North Cascade mountains of Washington state. A remote wilderness community and retreat center, Holden is rooted in the Lutheran tradition which welcomes all people.

Ascension Church has long enjoyed this beautiful service (about 30 mins). We hope that you will join us on Wednesdays - December 6, 13 and 20 throughout this sacred season. Unsure of driving in the dark? Don't! Please ask for a ride. Come take a break from the busy world and join us for worship.

THANK YOU ALL!

The Creative Hands ladies thank everyone who helped on October 1st to display the 51 hand-crafted quilts which were made this year. Thanks to Pastor Joe for blessing the quilts, and to all who helped to pack them into 7 generous boxes, especially those unnamed gentlemen who so enjoyed using the tape gun! The boxes then were taken from the church pews by Mt. Calvary's Bob D. and Frank McQ. who kindly delivered them to Zelenople, the next stop to their final destination. Thanks, guys! Anyone who is interested in helping to fashion quilts for next year, please see Creative Hands members Darlene, Rose Marie or Judy. *(photo)*

Many of the quilting jobs don't require sewing skills, so please join us!

BLESSINGS to ALL!



Blessing
of Pets
Saturday
October 7

Pumpkins
Pizza,
& Pop
with PJ
Sunday
October 22



NOVEMBER

LESSER FESTIVALS & commemorations

November 1 *All Saints Day*

The custom of commemorating all of the saints of the church on a single day goes back at least to the third century. All Saints Day celebrates the baptized people of God, living and dead, who make up the body of Christ. On this day or the following Sunday, many congregations will remember the faithful who have died during the past year.

November 3 *Martín de Porres, renewer of society, d.1639*

Martín was the son of a Spanish knight and a freed black slave from Panama. As a lay brother in the Order of Preachers (Dominicans), he engaged in many charitable works in Lima, Peru. He founded an orphanage, a hospital, and a clinic for cats and dogs.

November 7 *John Christian Frederick Heyer, d.1873; Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg, d.1719; Ludwig Nommensen, d.1918; missionaries*

Heyer was the first missionary sent out by American Lutherans. After teaching at Gettysburg College and Seminary he was assigned to the Andhra region of India. A worker among the Tamil people on the southeast coast of India, **Ziegenbalg** was opposed both by local Hindus and by Danish authorities who favored a different missionary style. He was known for caring about the welfare of the whole person. **Nommensen** was born in northern Germany and was sent to Sumatra as a Lutheran missionary. Working among the Batak people, he translated the scriptures into their language, and honored their native culture.

November 11 *Martin, Bishop of Tours, d.397*

Martin's pagan father enlisted him in the Roman army. Approached by a beggar, Martin cut his cloak in half and gave part to the man, whom he later understood as representing Christ. He asked to leave the army, but was jailed instead. After his release, he became a preacher, and later a bishop.

November 11 *Søren Aabye Kierkegaard, teacher, d.1855*

Kierkegaard was a Danish theologian whose writings also gave rise to the modern philosophy of existentialism. He frequently attacked the complacency of the state church of his day, as well as its desire to be accepted by polite society rather than be a stumbling block.

November 17 *Elizabeth of Hungary, renewer of society, d.1231*

Born in Hungary, Elizabeth was betrothed to the son of the Landgrave of Thuringia, and at age four was taken to be raised with him at the Wartburg Castle. Ten years later they were married. She was very generous to the poor, and after her husband's death she lived in cruel hardship until her own death at age twenty-four.

November 23 *Clement, Bishop of Rome, d.ca.100*

Clement was the third bishop of Rome. He is best remembered for a letter he wrote to the congregation in Corinth, still struggling with the same problems that led to Paul's letters to them. As did Paul, he focused on the need for love among Christians.

November 23 *Miguel Agustín Pro, martyr, d.1927*

Pro grew up among oppression in Mexico, where revolutionaries accused the church of siding with the rich. He was a Jesuit priest who served during a time of intense anticlericalism, and therefore he carried out much of his ministry in private settings. He worked on behalf of the poor and homeless. Miguel and his two brothers were arrested, falsely accused of throwing a bomb at the car of a government official, and executed by a firing squad. Just before the guns fired, he yelled, "¡Viva Cristo Rey!" meaning "Long live Christ the king!"

November 24 *Justus Falckner, d.1723; Jehu Jones, d.1852; William Passavant, d.1894; pastors in North America*

Not only was **Falckner** the first Lutheran ordained in North America, but he also published a catechism which was the first Lutheran book published on the continent. **Jones** was the Lutheran church's first African American pastor and carried out missionary work in Philadelphia which led to the formation there of the first African American Lutheran congregation (St. Paul's). William **Passavant** created and nurtured a new level of organized social ministry in western Pennsylvania, now known as Lutheran Services in America. Passavant and his legacy sought to serve the poorest of the poor, providing shelter, medical, and living assistance.

November 25 *Isaac Watts, hymnwriter, d.1748*

Thought by many to be the greatest hymnwriter in the English language, Isaac Watts was born in England to a family of nonconformists. He wrote about six hundred hymns, many in a two-year period beginning when he was twenty years old. Some of Watts's hymns are based on psalms, a nonconformist tradition. Ten of Watts's hymn texts are in *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, including "O God, Our Help in Ages Past."

November 30 *Andrew, Apostle*

The first of the disciples to be called by Jesus, Andrew quickly began to bring others to the Savior, including Simon Peter. The Bible also shows him leading some Greeks to meet Jesus, and he brought forward the boy with five loaves and two fish, with which Jesus fed thousands.



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

Contact Us
(412) 859-3711
pastor@alcpgh.com
office@alcpgh.com
music@alcpgh.com
mtcalvarycem@alcpgh.com



Ascension Lutheran Church
1290 Silver Lane
McKees Rocks, PA 15136
(Robinson Township)
Visit us on the web at
www.alcpgh.com

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1290 Silver Lane
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PLACE
STAMP
HERE

