

# THE MESSENGER

## ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH

July 2021

### WEEKLY EVENTS

**Sunday Worship** - 8:30 & 10:30 AM  
**Sunday School** - on break for summer  
**NA Meeting** - Wednesdays at 7:30 PM  
**Spirituality Group** - on break for summer  
**AA Meeting** - Saturdays at 10:00 AM  
**Soccer Shots** - Saturday mornings &  
Tuesday evenings (*Spring-Fall*)



### 2021 Ascension Church COUNCIL

#### Council Executives

Jason Eager *president*  
Jeff Williams *vice-president*  
Clay Marnich *secretary*  
John Bielewicz *treasurer*

#### Council Liaisons

Jerry Wessel *Christian Education*  
John Bielewicz *Youth*  
Jason Eager *Communications &  
Publications*  
Rudy Marnich *Social Ministry &  
Evangelism*  
Bob Thompson *Finance &  
Stewardship*  
Barbara Thompson *Worship & Music*  
Mark Thompson *Property*  
Jeff Williams *Mutual Ministry*  
Clay Marnich *Personnel*  
(Vacant) *Fellowship*

### Next Council Meeting

**Tuesday July 13 at 7:00 PM**



*From Pastor Murdy's Desk*

## Good Shepherd UPDATE!

*Dear Church,*

I would like to once again use this opportunity which the newsletter gives to share updates and information regarding the proposed merger between Good Shepherd and Ascension. As most of you are aware, Good Shepherd Church held its final worship service in their building on Sunday, June 27<sup>th</sup>. Ascension was well represented in offering their support and love. Many of those present from Ascension held wonderful memories of weddings, friendships and ministry. I had the honor of presiding at communion (*photo, left*). Before and after the service I was able to meet lots of new people from Good Shepherd and the community.

What happens to all the stuff in the church? Since the building has been sold and will be closed in just a few weeks after this article is printed, it was important to start gathering and organizing items which were intending on coming to Ascension and items which will be stored and incorporated later. Some of these items are large, some small and others were brought to Ascension so that we can find proper homes for them in the future.

Ascension was very fortunate to receive what are probably the biggest gifts, an organ and a Steinway piano which were moved into our church on the 28<sup>th</sup>. In my opinion they look beautiful and the organ looks as though it has always had a home in our sanctuary. Good Shepherd was kind enough to cover the moving and installation costs of the organ. The organ was purchased by Good Shepherd about 20 years ago and if purchased new today would be valued at \$60,000. I hope you are as

*Additional photos on page 7*

*continued on page 2*





Heinrich Schütz by  
Christoph Spätner, c. 1660



Bach in 1746 by  
Elias Gottlob Haussmann



Portrait of Handel by  
Balthasar Denner c. 1726

## Celebrating Musical Masters

### Schütz, Bach, Handel commemorated July 28

**Heinrich Schütz** (18 Oct, 1585 – 6 Nov 1672) was a German composer and organist, generally regarded as the most important German composer before Johann Sebastian Bach, as well as one of the most important composers of the 17th century. He is credited with bringing the Italian style to Germany and continuing its evolution from the Renaissance into the Early Baroque. Most of his surviving music was written for the Lutheran church, primarily for the Electoral Chapel in Dresden.

He died in Dresden from a stroke in 1672 at the age of 87.

**Johann Sebastian Bach** (31 March 1685 – 28 July 1750) was a German composer and musician of the late Baroque period. J.S. Bach is renowned for his instrumental compositions, keyboard works, and vocal music. Since the 19th-century Bach Revival, he has generally been regarded as one of the greatest composers in the history of Western music.

Bach's compositions include hundreds of cantatas, both sacred and secular. He composed Latin church music, Passions, oratorios, and motets. He often adopted Lutheran hymns, not only in his larger vocal works, but for instance also in his four-part chorales and his sacred songs.

He died of complications after eye surgery in 1750 at the age of 65.

**George Frideric Handel** (23 February 1685 – 14 April 1759) was a German-born Baroque composer becoming well known for his operas, oratorios, anthems, concerti grossi and organ concertos. Handel received his training in Halle and worked as a composer in Hamburg and Italy before settling in

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

excited as I am to hear its influence in our worship.

Some of the larger items which will be stored and later incorporated into our space are the pulpit and the lectern as well as a new screen and projector. Over the next few weeks, we will be making room in the trailer for what will be the quilters' group. Don't worry, it will still be our youth and confirmation Sunday school room.

Some of the smaller items are mostly related to worship. Among these smaller items are a stunning chalice and ciborium set, brass missal stand, processional cross and other things which will enhance and add to our collective worship.

We have two important dates coming up that I want to put before you as a reminder. Sunday, July 11<sup>th</sup> we have invited Good Shepherd to worship with us and following worship we will have a mixer of sorts to get to know one another with refreshments. Wednesday, July 14<sup>th</sup> we will provide another opportunity to ask questions and learn more about the merger process. This town hall will be held virtually via Zoom at 7 p.m.

Things are continuing to move forward and we as a council are learning a lot. On June 29<sup>th</sup> we had the opportunity to sit down with the synod's attorney, who also represents Good Shepherd and the Mt. Calvary Cemetery. Speaking for myself, it was incredibly insightful and answered many of our questions and concerns.

So, what's next for the congregation. It is anticipated that both Ascension and Good Shepherd's council will vote to approve the merger agreement document (we approved it in June but had one small revision which needs to be approved once more). We have been diligently working to amend our by-laws and incorporate new ones, all of which will come to you for approval. Most of the by-laws concern finances and cemetery operations. Once the council approves the merger agreement (along with Good Shepherd's approval) and the by-laws revisions, we will share this news with the congregation along with a date for a congregational meeting. This meeting will be called 30 days in advance and our primary business for that meeting will be to vote on both the merger agreement and the by-laws.

Please know that you, my dear church, are the ones who make and approve the final decision. I believe this to be an exciting opportunity for our church and I am grateful for this tremendous experience as a pastor. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask me or any member of council. I am looking forward to our continued conversations and mutual discernment.

*With you in Christ+*

Pastor Joe

*Continued on page 5*

# 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. Because John’s gospel describes Mary as weeping at the tomb, she is often portrayed in art with red eyes. Icons depict her standing by the tomb and holding a bright red egg, symbol 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 a woman of some standing who, in her early thirties, served as the chief lady-in-waiting to the queen of Sweden. 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 [also see feature on page 2]**

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.



# BEST WISHES . . .

## JULY BIRTHDAYS!

Date | Member

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



## JULY ANNIVERSARIES!

Date | Members

- 13 Greg & Debbie Rose
- 22 Al & Dolly Morrow
- 25 Mike & Lynn Neilson



**. . . and blessings to all**



**Mark your calendar:  
Rally Day set  
for Sunday  
September 12!**



Written during World War I in 1918, **Irving Berlin** published the sheet music for "GOD BLESS AMERICA" in March 1939, during the turbulent time prior to the start of World War II. Taking the form of a prayer for God's blessing and peace for our nation, the hymn begins with a seldom-heard introduction, then breaks forth into the glorious and beloved patriotic song which we know today.

*While the storm clouds gather far across the sea  
Let us swear allegiance to a land that's free  
Let us all be grateful for a land so fair,  
As we raise our voices in a solemn prayer:*

God bless America, land that I love  
Stand beside her and guide her  
Through the night with the light from above  
From the mountains to the prairies  
To the oceans white with foam  
God bless America, my home sweet home!  
God bless America, my home sweet home!

# got NEWS?

## Let us hear from YOU !

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

## Lutheran Day at Kennywood Park! Wednesday, July 21



### *From the SWPA Synod office . . .*

Pavilion 17 (behind the Aero 360) will be designated for Lutheran Day use - all are welcome to use during the day. A digital scavenger hunt for all to participate in also will be available. Season pass holders do not need to purchase an additional ticket to join in the Lutheran Day fun. To order tickets, please mail a check ASAP (\$25 per person / \$15 per person over 60 / \$11 per person over 70) made out to the SWPA Synod, indicating the number and type of tickets you're ordering (general, over 60, over 70), and mail to:

Zion Lutheran Church  
Attn: Deacon Amy  
11609 Frankstown Road  
Pittsburgh, PA 15235

### **Celebrating Musical Masters** (continued from pg 2)

London in 1712, where he spent the bulk of his career and became a naturalized British subject in 1727. He was strongly influenced both by the middle-German polyphonic choral tradition and by composers of the Italian Baroque.

Handel's father, Georg, was a barber-surgeon; his mother (the elder Handel's second wife) was the daughter of a Lutheran minister, Pastor Georg Taust of the Church of St. Bartholomew in Giebichenstein, who came from a long line of Lutheran pastors. Handel was the second child of this marriage.

Almost blind, Handel died a respected and rich man in 1759, and was given a state funeral at Westminster Abbey.

Source: Wikipedia

## ALC Council Meeting Highlights

Council meeting was held Tuesday June 15, 2021

### **June Council Highlights:**

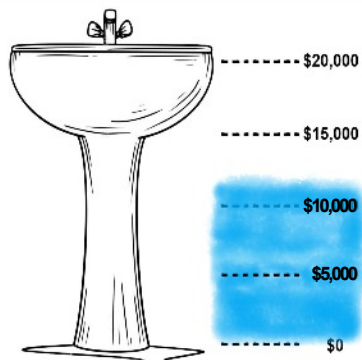
- Motion to accept all items available from Good Shepherd with organ acceptance being effective 6/27/2021. All in favor.
- Merger Document review. Motion to keep to agenda to review merger documents. 8 in favor, 1 opposed.
- Motion to send approved Merger Agreement as amended by council to Good Shepherd's council for their approval. All in favor. *\*\*\*Please note that there will likely be one minor revision which will need to be approved by Ascension's council at our July meeting.*
- Motion to appoint Jason/John/Pastor as a subcommittee to discuss and draft by-law revisions and amendments and report back to council. All council members are welcome to attend. 9 in favor, 1 opposed.
- Rally Day (first day of Sunday school) is Sunday, September 12<sup>th</sup>
- Yard Sale postponed until Spring of 2022.
- **Next Council Meeting:** Tuesday, July 13 - 7pm



Our Yard Sale has been postponed until **Spring 2022**. Please help spread the word and encourage friends and neighbors to join us for worship Sunday mornings and to stay posted for next year's date! Also ... Remember to save your "stuff" (treasures) to sell next year!



## The "OTHER" time has come!



**THANK YOU!**  
The **Bathroom  
Renovation** offering  
has collected over  
**\$13,000**

Work has begun and  
extra help is needed!

## BUILDING & MAINTENANCE PROJECTS HELP NEEDED!

### 1. Bathroom Renovations

The plumbing company has dismantled the Men's Room; drywall and tile have been installed; sink, toilet, and urinal installation is next . . .  
Yes, the Men's Room is nearing completion!  
When the Men's Room is operational, the reno crew will then start the Women's Room.

*Please contact Bob Thompson ASAP if you can help with any phase of the Bathroom Reno project. Phone 412-389-1869 Email [Bob.thompson72@outlook.com](mailto:Bob.thompson72@outlook.com)*

### 2. Lawn Mowers

Still in need of 1-2 lawn mowers to lend their help and expertise over the summer months.

### 3. Mulch Spreaders *Thank You!*

Thanks to Robinson Township for the load of mulch and to all who labored to place and spread it!

### 4. Painters *Thank You!*

The pavilion and playground areas were tended to on June 26 (see photo, right). Really looks great!

**Please let Bob Thompson know ASAP if you're willing & available to help with our beautification and maintenance projects.**

**Phone 412-389-1869**

**Email [Bob.thompson72@outlook.com](mailto:Bob.thompson72@outlook.com)**



#### **"MEN's AT WORK!"**

Bathroom renovations are coming along! Thank you to everyone who has helped. Even in its early stages, the men's room looks amazing!



**A WELCOMING SIGN** There has been a dream of sprucing up our sign for a long time now. Over the past month this raised bed was accomplished by Clay Marnich's crew. Before the end of summer, we will add some plants to make our roadside presence extra special. Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this effort!



**BRUSHIN' UP** A big thank you to all of our volunteers who came out to help paint the pavilion on Saturday, June 26<sup>th</sup>. We finished painting all of the benches and the upper sides and poles of the pavilion. An extra thank you to Mark Thompson, who revitalized the benches and repaired a lot of the wood.



# WELCOME BACK!

## Ascension Church is OPEN!



**GETTING “ORGAN-IZED”** Ascension’s Worship and Music Director Johnathan Snatchko (*right*) plays a passage from J.S. Bach’s famous “Toccata and Fugue in D minor” as he tests the newly-acquired organ in the church sanctuary. The organ is a welcome gift from the congregation of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, which celebrated its closing service on Sunday June 27 (*photo below*). The grand instrument was installed by organist and master installer Jeff Kirk (pictured at Johnathan’s right), owner of Gerrero-Kirk Classic Organ, Inc.



**A CLASSIC STEINWAY PIANO** also has been gifted to Ascension Church by the Good Shepherd congregation.



**GATHERED TOGETHER** Sunday June 27, 2021 are members of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, joined by members of Ascension Church in celebration of GSLC’s final service in their worship space on Russellwood Avenue in McKees Rocks, Pa.

### IMPORTANT DATES!

Mark your calendars . . .

#### Town Hall Meeting

**July 14<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm via Zoom**

Everyone is welcome and encouraged to attend this town hall meeting, which is an opportunity to ask questions and learn more about our potential merger with Good Shepherd Lutheran Church. We want to ensure that communication, transparency and understanding are a top priority.

#### Sunday, July 11<sup>th</sup> - 10:30 service:

#### Ascension-Good Shepherd Mixer!

Good Shepherd officially closed June 27 and we have invited their members to worship with us. On July 11<sup>th</sup>, we will have an opportunity to meet one another and spend some time getting to know each other. Light refreshments will be provided.



*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](mailto:pastor@alcpgh.com)

[office@alcpgh.com](mailto:office@alcpgh.com)

[music@alcpgh.com](mailto:music@alcpgh.com)

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Visit us on the web at [www.alcpgh.com](http://www.alcpgh.com)

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PLACE  
STAMP  
HERE

