



THE MESSENGER

ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH

August 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 August 16 at 7:00 PM

Rest in JOY . . . a pastoral reflection



Dear Church,

At the end of July our family went on vacation to Myrtle Beach. I didn't realize how much I needed a vacation until I put my feet in the sand. I think it is true for most people that we can sometimes find ourselves so busy we don't know how or when to stop. All too often we get to a place of burnout and exhaustion that can sometimes leave us feeling bitter and overwhelmed. Sometimes when we get beyond the point of exhaustion, we have no other choice than to rest.

Rest is something we all need. It is built into our biology that at some point during the day we need to stop and sleep because our bodies need rest. God made us with built-in timers and when the timer goes

From Pastor Murdy's Desk

off, our bodies are quick to tell us we need a nap. Rest is something that is also built into our lives and is at the center of our relationship with God. From the very beginning of creation, we hear this idea of rest and *sabbath* - to stop what we are doing and rest in God. To plug in and reconnect. Do we do that?

After our family vacation, I went on my annual retreat with my religious community, the Order of Lutheran Franciscans. Normally our time is full of community business, fellowship and presentations/lectures for our continuing development and education. This year

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Celebrating St. Moses the Black *Aug 28*



Saint Moses (who also is called Moses the Black and Moses the Ethiopian) lived during the fourth century in Egypt. He was a slave, but because of his evil life, his master cast him out, and he he joined a band of robbers, becoming a ruthless thief, dissolute in all his ways. Moses and his band of brigands committed many evil deeds, including murders and robberies. People were afraid at the mere mention of his name. Later, however, through the great mercy of God he came to repentance, converted, and entered a desert monastery under the guidance of Saint Isidore of Skete, the igumen (abbot). There he wept interminably, begging to be admitted as one of the brethren. The monks were not convinced of the sincerity of his repentance, but the former robber would not be driven away nor silenced. Moses continued to plead that they accept him. He eventually was admitted to the monastery and gave himself over to prayer and the mortification of the carnal mind with such diligence that he later became a priest of exemplary virtue.

Once, four men of his former band of robbers descended upon the solitary dwelling of St. Moses. Although following an austere monastic life, he had lost none of his great physical strength, so tying them all up, he threw them over his shoulder and brought them to the monastery, where he asked the

Continued on page 5

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

was a little different. We all acknowledged how tired we were. We didn't want to sit and listen to someone talk for hours. We needed to breathe, pray and recupe. Many of us are pastors and let's face it, it's been a very busy year and quite draining for many of us. So, this year, rather than academic lectures, we learned about different styles of prayer, mediation and contemplation. Here are just a few of the things we learned about, explored and tried out: The daily Examen, Centering prayer, prayer labyrinth/walking, body prayer of Julian of Norwich, Lectio Divina, and Visio Divina or praying with icons.

The truth is, I know I have been tired and exhausted for some time and I've known I needed rest. But I haven't always been sure how to take that rest. The first step in taking rest is simply to *make* time. No one is going to take it for you. It is so important to rest, especially in our culture of go, go, go! The second step is finding what works best for you.

Many of the siblings in my Order have been honest about which styles of prayer and contemplation work or don't work for them. I have enjoyed learning about many of these styles; some were new to me. As I walked around the prayer labyrinth It quickly occurred to me that I wasn't in a place to get much from it. I had too much on my mind. So, a few siblings and I decided to go for a walk along the river. There it hit me that what often gives me rest and where I often feel most connected to God is in those places and moments that bring me joy. *Water brings me joy!* That's my happy place! Here we could fill the pages with baptismal connections. But I'll save that for another time.

What I learned on vacation and what I learned on retreat was that I must give myself time and space to reconnect with God - and there, in the midst of those things which bring me joy - I can be renewed.

Do you need rest? What brings you joy?

With you in Christ+

Pastor Joe



LESSER FESTIVALS & commemorations

August 8 - Dominic, d. 1221 *founder of the Order of Preachers (Dominicans)*

Dominic was a Spanish priest who saw the wealth of the clergy as a stumbling block for the church, so he formed a movement, the Order of Preachers (commonly called Dominicans) devoted to itinerant preaching and living in poverty.

August 10 - Lawrence, d.258 *deacon, martyr*

As one of the seven deacons of the church at Rome, Lawrence was responsible for the church's financial matters and for the care of the poor. Asked by the emperor to gather the church's treasure, he presented a collection of orphans, lepers, and the like. The enraged emperor Valerian had him put to death.

August 11 - Clare of Assisi d. 1253 *Abbess of San Damiano*

At age eighteen, Clare of Assisi heard Francis preach a sermon in a church in town. From that time, she determined to follow in his example of Christian living. With Francis's help (and against the wishes of her father) she and a growing number of companions established a women's Franciscan community, called the Order of Poor Ladies, or Poor Clares. She became a confidante and advisor to Francis, and in standing up against the wishes of popes for the sake of maintaining complete poverty, she helped inspire other women to pursue spiritual goals.

August 13 - Florence Nightingale d. 1910; Clara Maass d. 1901 *renewers of the church*

Nightingale was born in England, and horrified her wealthy family by deciding to become a nurse. Trained at Kaiserswerth, Germany, with a Lutheran order of deaconesses, she led a group of nurses in ministering in the midst of the Crimean War, and worked for hospital reform. **Maass**, a native of New Jersey, also was a war nurse, and volunteered as a subject for research on yellow fever. She died of the disease.

August 14 - Maximilian Kolbe, d. 1941; Kaj Munk, d. 1944; *martyrs*

Kolbe was a Franciscan priest, born Raymond Kolbe. After spending some time working in Asia, he returned in 1936 to his native Poland, where he supervised a friary that came to house thousands of Polish war refugees, mostly Jews. The Nazis were watching, however, and he was arrested. Confined in Auschwitz, Kolbe gave generously of his meager resources and finally volunteered to be starved to death in place of another man who was a husband and father. After two weeks, he was executed by a lethal injection.

Munk, a Danish Lutheran pastor and playwright, was an outspoken critic of the Nazis, who occupied Denmark during the Second World War. His plays frequently highlighted the eventual victory of the Christian faith despite the church's weak and ineffective witness. The Nazis feared Munk because his sermons and articles helped to strengthen the Danish resistance movement. He was executed by the Gestapo on January 5, 1944.

August 15 - Mary, Mother of Our Lord

The church (including Martin Luther) honors Mary with the Greek title *Theotokos*, meaning God-bearer. Origen first used this title in the early church, and the councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon upheld it. Luther upheld this same title in his writings. The honor paid to Mary as *Theotokos* and mother of our Lord goes back to biblical times, when Mary herself sang, "from now on all generations will call me blessed" (Luke 1:48). Mary's life revealed the presence of God incarnate, and it revealed God's presence among the humble and poor. Mary's song, the Magnificat, speaks of reversals in the reign of God: the mighty are cast down, the lowly are lifted up, the hungry are fed, and the rich are sent away empty-handed.

August 20 - Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux, d. 1153

A Cistercian monk, Bernard was a man of great spirituality who wrote mystical works and criticized those whom he thought took an overly intellectual approach to the faith. He became an abbot, and wrote several hymns that are still beloved today.

August 24 - Bartholomew Apostle

Mentioned as one of Jesus' disciples in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, Bartholomew's name is replaced in John's gospel by Nathanael, leading many to believe that the two are different names for the same person. Little is known about his work, though some traditions place him later in India or Armenia.

August 28 - Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, d. 430

Augustine was one of the greatest theologians of the Western church. Born in North Africa, he was a philosophy student in Carthage, where he later became a teacher of rhetoric. Much of his young life was a debauched one. As an adult he came under the influence of Ambrose, the bishop of Milan, and through him came to see Christianity as a religion appropriate for a philosopher. Augustine was baptized by Ambrose at the Easter Vigil in 387. He was ordained four years later and made bishop of Hippo in 396. Augustine was a defender of the Christian faith and argued, against the Donatists, that the holiness of the church did not depend on the holiness of its members, particularly the clergy, but that holiness comes from Christ, the head of the church. Augustine's autobiography, *Confessions*, tells of his slow movement toward faith and includes the line "Late have I loved thee."

August 28 - Moses the Black d.ca. 400 *monk, martyr*

Converted from life as a thief and a robber to Christianity, Moses was an Ethiopian who became a desert monk at Skete. The change in his heart and life had a profound impact on his native country. He was murdered when Berber bandits attacked his monastery.

BEST WISHES . . .

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS!

Date | Member

- 1 Katy Thompson
- 5 Kimberly Wessel
- 6 Mary Jane McGinnis
Nolan Cropper
- 7 Emily Paladino
- 9 Greg Rose
- 10 London Rickerd
- 12 Raleigh Rickerd
- 15 Finn Randal
- 17 Matt Bryan
- 24 Jessica Rodriguez
- 25 Tom Lightner



AUGUST ANNIVERSARIES!

Date | Members

- 2 Bob & Judy Bryan
Bill & Suzy McEwen
- 3 John & Brittany Bielewicz
- 17 Phil & Dolly Spano
- 26 Tom & Darlene Ganley



. . . and blessings to all

got NEWS?

Let us hear from YOU !

If you have pictures, articles, or ideas to submit for the **SEPTEMBER** Newsletter, please contact the office or Pastor, or email office@alcpgh.com.

LECTOR SCHEDULE FOR AUGUST & SEPTEMBER

AUGUST 1

Debbie Whitfield

SEPTEMBER 5

Mary Thompson

AUGUST 8

Kelly Braun

SEPTEMBER 12

Mark Thompson

AUGUST 15

Luciana Thompson

SEPTEMBER 19

Kelly Braun

AUGUST 22

Gib Palmgren

SEPTEMBER 26

Venus Thompson

AUGUST 29

Eddie Vendetti



Pastor Joe will email the lessons to each lector at least one week before the scheduled reading date. Lessons are found in the the RED hymnal - page 43, Year B.



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Elders what to do with them. The Elders ordered that they be set free. The robbers, learning that they actually had chanced upon their former ringleader, and that he had dealt kindly with them, followed his example: they repented and became monks. Later, when the rest of the band of robbers heard about the repentance of Moses, they also gave up their thievery and became fervent monks.

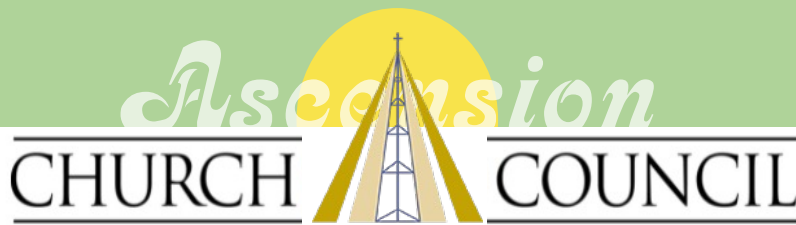
Endeavoring to achieve deliverance from the passions of extravagance, St. Moses undertook many efforts during his quest to overcome his secular desires. Once, making the rounds of the wilderness cells by night, he carried water from the well to each brother. He did this especially for the Elders, who lived far from the well and were not easily able to carry their own water.

Accounts about the many exploits of St. Moses spread among the monks and even beyond the bounds of the desert wilderness. The governor of the land wanted to see this man. When St. Moses heard of this, he decided to hide from any visitors, and departed his dwelling. Along the way he met servants of the governor, who asked him how to get to the cell of the desert-dweller Moses. The humble monk answered them: "Go no farther to see this false and unworthy monk." The servants returned to the monastery where the governor was waiting, and they related the words of the Elder whom they had chanced to meet. Hearing a description of the Elder's appearance, the servants realized that they actually had encountered St. Moses himself.

After many years of monastic deeds, St. Moses was ordained a deacon. The bishop clothed him in white vestments, of which the saint remarked that although he now was outwardly white, ". . . God knows that I am still dark within." The humble saint who believed himself unworthy of the office of deacon eventually was ordained a presbyter. St. Moses labored for fifteen years in this rank, and gathered around himself 75 disciples.

When Moses reached the age of 75, he warned his monks that soon brigands would descend upon the skete and murder all that were there. The saint blessed his monks to leave, in order to avoid violent death. His disciples beseeched the monk to leave with them, but he replied: "For many years already I have awaited the time when the words which my Master, the Lord Jesus Christ, should be fulfilled: 'All who take up the sword, shall perish by the sword'" (Mt. 26:52), a reference to the fact that that he himself had slain other men during his early days a thief. After this profession, seven of the brethren remained with the monk, and one of them hid nearby during the attack by the robbers - reportedly Berbers - who killed St. Moses and the six monks who remained with him. Their deaths occurred around the year 400.

Sources: oca.org and goarch.org



ALC Council Meeting Highlights

Council meeting was held Tuesday July 13, 2021

July Council Highlights:

- Minutes were amended and approved.
- Motion made and carried to nullify previous motion to purchase ciborium.
- Motion to approve updated merger documents.
- We reviewed the process to amend Bylaws and Constitution.
- Reviewed our list of Due Diligence Requests (all documents that are received are kept in a binder in the hallway for anyone to review).
- Motion to keep bylaw regarding pastor having voice but no vote on cemetery board intact, 6 in favor, 3 opposed, 1 abstained.

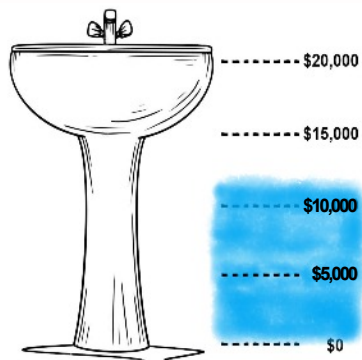
Next Council Meeting

Tuesday, August 10 at 7:00 pm



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 continues!



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

Bathroom renovation continues! Men's Room nears completion! Drywall and tile have been installed; fixtures are in; partitions to come. When the Men's Room is fully operational, the reno crew then will start to renovate the Women's Room ...

2. Lawn Mowers

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

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



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

Lunch Bunch



A monthly gathering of members and friends of Ascension Church

Lunch Bunchers plan their next adventure for Thursday August 19 . . .

Meeting again in the month of July for a mid-day meal, seventeen “Lunch Bunchers” braved the back woods of Harmony, Pa. to partake of the fare at the Log Cabin Inn. Well, maybe it's not so “back-woodsy” – it's right on the highway, but the food was very good and the company even better. Beneath the piercing glass eyes of buffalo, caribou and elk, the Bunchers got stuffed with fish sandwiches, margherita pizzas, wraps or whatever their hearts (and stomachs) desired. It was a good time and a neat place to visit.

Thus, continuing their quest for culinary excellence (or just darn good food), the Bunch plans to take a trip on **Thursday August 19** in the opposite direction and head south toward Weirton, W.Va. to Dee Jay's - a popular local eating establishment. Located at 380 Three Springs Drive, just off the route 22 exit with the same name, it's a textbook “straight shot” drive, an easy 30 minutes from our neck of the woods before you get to Weirton.

In case you're wondering, “Dee Jay's” does not stand for “Disc Jockey's” so don't bring your old favorite vinyl records and expect them to be played! And don't mistake the name for “PJ's” and come to lunch in your pajamas, it might be a little embarrassing.

All levity aside, the place is famous for their outstanding ribs and tropical atmosphere, so bring a healthy appetite and join Ascension's Lunch Bunch on August 19 for an afternoon of food, fellowship and fun!

Meet us at Dee Jay's at 11:30 a.m. - or at Ascension at 10:45 a.m. for all who wish to carpool. In either case, whether you're going to drive directly to the restaurant or carpool from church, please contact Nancy Schreiber at 412-859-3969 or Jerry Wessel at 412-787-1213 by noon on Tuesday August 17 so that enough reservations can be made.

All are invited!

~ Jerry Wessel

Ascension Church: building COMMUNITY!

"God's work. Our hands." Sunday



**Sept. 12
2021**

On Sunday, September 12, congregations of the ELCA will come together for

"God's work. Our hands." Sunday,
a dedicated day of service.

As church, we are guided by our life in Christ to share the love of Jesus and serve our neighbors – even if these acts of service take place from our homes, outdoors or from a safe distance because of ongoing pandemic concerns.

As you explore opportunities to participate, visit [ELCA.org/DayOfService](https://www.elca.org/DayOfService) for planning resources including a tool kit, videos, posters, social media graphics and a special hymn for the day. *(right)*

The hymn, titled "God's Work, Our Hands," and written by Wayne Wold, was selected as the winning entry in the ELCA's "God's work. Our hands." Sunday hymn contest in 2019. More than 120 entries were submitted to be considered as a hymn for the ELCA's annual dedicated day of service. The selected hymn represents the official tagline of the ELCA and expresses how the people of this church live in service for the life of the world. We offer our thanks to all who submitted original compositions – the large number of entries gives witness to the enthusiasm that "God's work. Our hands." Sunday has inspired throughout this church and in our communities. The selected hymn includes music to a familiar tune as well as music to an original composition. The hymn is available as a year-round worship resource.

God's Work, Our Hands

God's work, our hands: working together,
building a future, repairing the world,
raising up homes, planting new gardens,
feeding the hungry and sheltering the cold.
Bless, God, our hands as we work in your name,
sharing the good news of your Gospel.

God's work, our feet: trav'ling together,
following Jesus to places unknown,
walking as friends, marching for freedom,
running the race with God's future the goal.
Bless, God, our feet as we follow your way,
sharing the good news of your Gospel.

God's work, our voice: singing together,
praising, proclaiming to all who will hear,
praying for peace, shouting for justice,
claiming God's love for the lost and the least.
Bless, God, our voice as we speak in your name,
sharing the good news of your Gospel.

God is at work in and around us:
seedlings are sprouting and bread's on the rise!
Washed and set free, humbled and honored,
gifted by grace, we respond in God's love.
Bless, God, our lives as we answer your call,
sharing the good news of your Gospel.

Text: Wayne L. Wold

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Wayne Wold is a professor and chair of the music department at Hood College in Frederick, Md., where he also serves as concert manager and college organist. He is also the director of music ministry at First Evangelical Lutheran Church in Ellicott City, Md.





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

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PLACE
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HERE

