

THE MESSENGER

ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH

September 2022

WEEKLY EVENTS

Sunday Worship - 10:30 AM

Sunday School - 9:30 AM (adult & child)

NA Meeting - Wednesdays at 7:30 PM

Spirituality Group - resumes in the fall

AA Meeting - Saturdays at 10:00 AM

- Mondays at 7:00 PM

Soccer Shots - Saturday mornings &
Tuesday evenings (Spring-Fall)



2022 COUNCIL EXECUTIVES

President – Jason Eager

Vice President – Chelsea Karaffa

Secretary – Venus Thompson

Treasurer – John Bielewicz

2022 COUNCIL LIAISONS

Christian Education

Pastor Joe Murdy

Communications & Publications

Jason Eager

Fellowship

Members

Finance and Stewardship

John Bielewicz

Mutual Ministry

Jeff Williams

Personnel

Clay Marnich

Property

Bob Dudek, Mark Thompson

Social Ministry and Evangelism

Sharon Giza

Worship and Music

Barbara Thompson

Youth

Chelsea Karaffa, Venus Thompson

Next Council Meeting

Tuesday September 13 at 7:00 PM

GOD is with us



From Pastor's desk

I want to thank you for your generosity. Not just financially, although, your financial contributions at times are incredibly humbling. I want to thank you for your generous spirit. When I think of spirit I think of the heart, don't you? Not some floating orb or some spooky bedtime story but the *heart*. Ascension, as a faith community has

always been very loving, open and supportive. You hear that we need a new boiler, you ask "how can I help?" You hear the pastor is called to serve as an army chaplain, you ask, "how can we support him?" You hear we need a new addition and sure there are questions and concerns, but the over all spirit is one of excitement and curiosity.

Over the years we have taken some pretty big steps together. Not least of which was our merger one year ago this month. We embraced new communities and put our faith to work. We made the commitment to continue to ministry of Mt. Calvary. Together we made hard decisions and easy decisions. We trusted one another and above all we trusted in God to guide us.

I have spent a lot of time this summer thinking about what's next. Pretty soon we will be installing a new boiler which will provide reliable heat as we worship and as our community groups, AA and NA gather. Pretty soon our appointed building committee will come together to discuss and discern the how, what, and when of a new building and its campaign. *No matter where we go, we are always looking forward.* That's one of the

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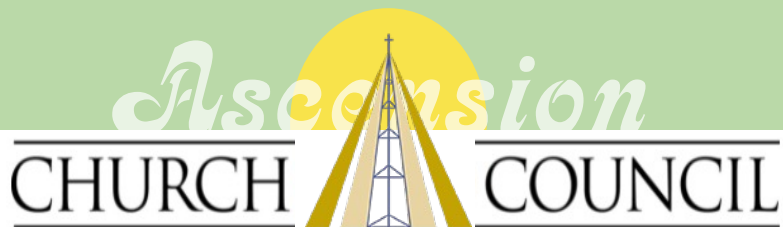
Mount Calvary Cemetery

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 Chelsea Karaffa



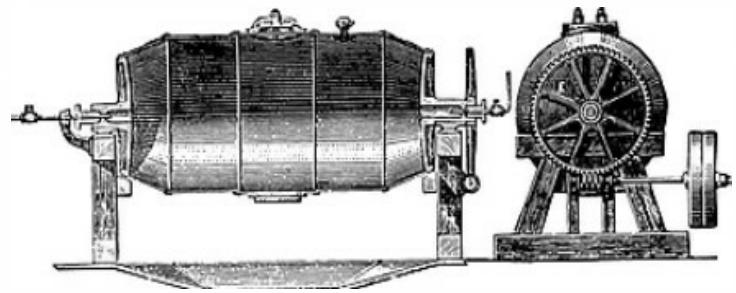
Council Meeting was held August 9, 2022

- Congregational Meeting set for December 4th, 2022 to approve Ascension's 2023 budget as well as Mt. Calvary's 2023 budget.
- Motion to hire Mr. Anthony Nolfi as our new church cleaner.
- Parking lot lights have been completed and now all three are working.
- Rally Day September 18th, 2022 with church picnic to follow worship. Adult Bible Study to be self-run.
- Tractor broke down, needed to purchase a few parts, \$250 and possible tires.

Next Council Meeting

Tuesday, September 13, 2022 at 7:00 pm

YES. It's THAT old.



But not for long . . .

Our "Other" collection to replace our "legacy" boiler is steadily inching toward that goal!

Since our "We Can Do It" Boiler Fund Wrap-Up Campaign began on Sunday August 7,

***\$3,387.25** has been contributed toward our final-push \$7,200 goal ...*

We're nearly half-way there ... ONLY **\$3,812.75** MORE TO RAISE!

As always, your gracious generosity is most appreciated and necessary to our mission here at Ascension Church.

Thank you - and "keep it boiling" so that we can fulfill this ultimate goal by September's end!

"SAVE THE DATE"

Congregational Meeting
Sunday
December 4
following
worship



2022 ELCA Churchwide Assembly summary of actions

8/19/2022

Chicago —The 2022 ELCA Churchwide Assembly met Aug. 8-12 at the Greater Columbus Convention Center in Columbus, Ohio. Gathering under the theme "Embody the Word," the assembly worshiped together in services of eucharist and lament, experienced a liturgy rooted in Indigenous traditions, and heard a public apology in a nonlegislative session to Iglesia Luterana Santa María Peregrina for harm experienced from actions taken by the Sierra Pacific Synod and this church.

The following key actions were taken by the assembly:

- Elected Imran Siddiqui of the Southeastern Synod as vice president of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA).
- Directed the ELCA Church Council to establish a Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church to reconsider the statements of purpose for each expression of this church, the principles of organizational structure and our shared commitment to dismantle racism, with findings to be reported to the 2025 Churchwide Assembly in preparation for a possible reconstituting convention. Directed an external audit of the governing documents of the ELCA to consider diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility, with findings resulting in recommended changes to the governing documents.
- Authorized revisions to the social statement *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust*; approved exploration of reconsideration of the four stated positions of "bound conscience."
- Encouraged members, congregations and synods of this church to educate themselves about Indigenous peoples, calling on the churchwide organization to work with synods and Indigenous partners to identify sources of funding for ministries for Indigenous peoples, and encouraging restorative justice that could include the return of land to the appropriate Native nations.
- Referred a proposed study of pay gaps for rostered ministers to the Church Council.
- Mandated a review process of the roster manual and policies related to specialized ministries, on leave from call status, and protocols for removal from the rosters; encouraged bishops and synod councils to use sparingly the process of removal from the roster for non-disciplinary reasons.
- Approved the budget proposal for the triennium, including a spending authorization of \$68,814,000 for

From Pastor's desk (continued from pg 1)

reasons I am so proud to be your pastor. At the heart of Ascension is a deep desire to serve God, our community and encourage one another in faith. We do this every time we take a step forward following God's call.

At the recent baptism of baby Dakota Bielewicz [pictured on front with her parents, John and Brittany], I was reminded of something very important. After baptism and just before they are welcomed, we say this as a congregation, "*little sibling, by this act of Baptism, we welcome you to a journey that will take your whole life. This isn't the end. It's just the beginning of what God will do with you life. What God will make of you, we know not. Where God will take you, surprise you, we cannot say. This we do know and this we say; God is with you. And God will be with us as we live out our Baptism.*" What I was reminded of was that we are never given a road map or a perfect plan. God will guide us, God will show us the way and God will be with us.

As we move into a new chapter of the church let us be mindful of the promises of God. The promises we have received through baptism. As the baptized, we are entrusted with gifts and responsibilities. Gifts to be given and the responsibility to foster faith and share the gospel.

Thank you for your generous spirit. As we look to the future may we continue to do so with the hope and assurance that God is with us.

~PJ
“No matter
WHERE we go,
we are ALWAYS
looking forward.”

Best Wishes . . .

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS!

Date | Member/Friend

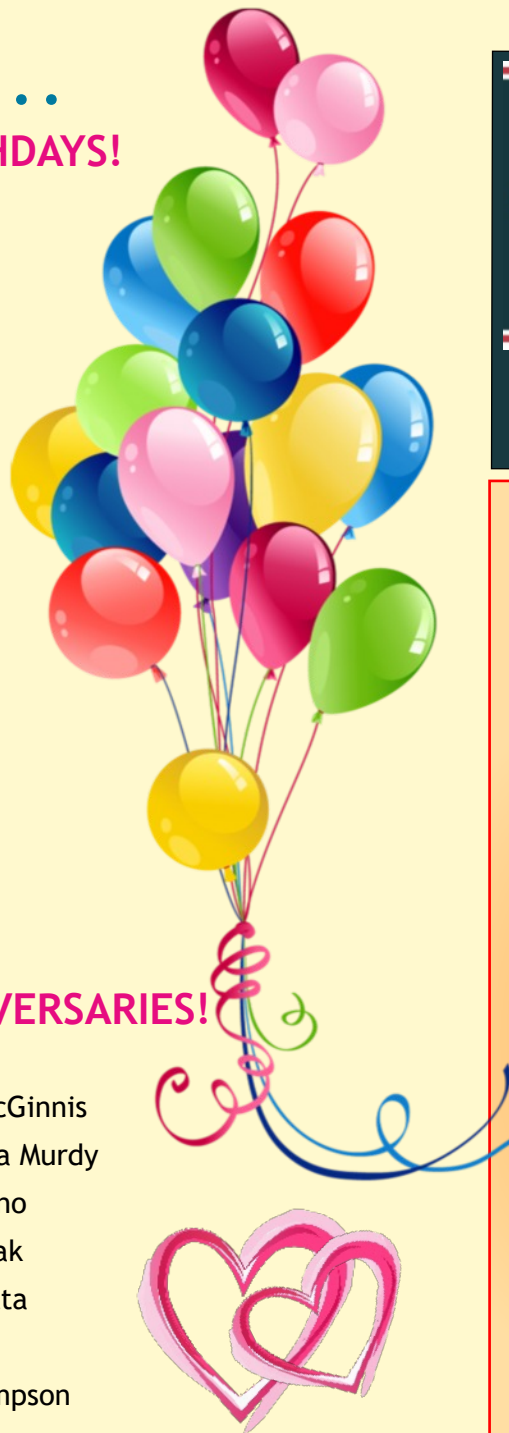
- 1 Deb Walenchok
- 4 Jen Marnich
- 5 Lynn Neilson
Angel Rose
- 6 Carolyn Paladino
- 7 Curtis Woods
- 10 Mary Honath
- 12 Luciana Thompson
- 14 Arianne Marnich
Brielle Marnich
Marlene Porta
- 15 Judy Evans
- 17 Lauren Rose
- 23 Gavin Thomson
- 30 Blake Rhoads

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
- 21 Mark & Barbara Thompson
- 28 Mike & Lynn Kinney

. . . and Blessings to ALL!



Lunch Bunch



*A monthly gathering of members and friends of
Ascension Church*

Out of the Woods ... and into heaven (almost)

In August, thirteen Ascension Lunch Bunchers went deep into Penn's Woods to the Log Cabin Inn. It was a beautiful day and the Bunch sat out on the veranda and enjoyed the good food and even better company. We heard all about Pastor Larsen's trip to Hawai'i, but he stopped short of showing us how to do the hula and how to surf.

On **Thursday September 15**, The Lunch Bunch will banquet in heaven (almost) as we travel west (West Virginia, that is) for a heavenly (almost) lunch. St. Peter won't be welcoming us through the Pearly Gates, but we will pass through the doors of the **La Cucina Grill**, located at 200 Three Springs Drive in Weirton. It's a "straight shot" down 22-30 to the Three Springs exit, and after bearing right off the ramp, the restaurant is just a mile down the road on the left.

We'll meet there at 11:30 am; those folks carpooling should leave Ascension by 11:00 am. As usual, please let Jerry Wessel (412-787-1213) or Nancy Schreiber (412-859-3969) know by Tuesday September 13 if you plan to attend so that sufficient space can be reserved at the "banquet table."

See you then ... in "heaven" (almost).

~ Jerry Wessel

**Creative Hands:
blessed to create,
blessed to give,
blessed to receive**

On **Sunday, October 2nd** we will bless nearly 40 quilts that our Creative Hands ministry team have been working diligently to complete. Each quilt will be boxed up and delivered to a Lutheran church in Zelienople and from there will be sent out into the world through Lutheran World Relief. Following worship, we will need help folding, boxing and loading up the quilts for delivery, so please stay to help if you can. We thank our ladies for all of the hard work they have done throughout the year. *We are so blessed to have you share your talents and ministry here at Ascension!*

2023 for the current fund, along with a spending authorization of \$22,869,000 for ELCA World Hunger.

- Affirmed limits on the use of nondisclosure agreements by the churchwide organization; urged synods, congregations and other ministries to apply the same limits.
- Reaffirmed the commitment of this church to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, directing the churchwide organization to set a goal of a 50% reduction of net greenhouse gas pollution by 2030, with a long-range goal of achieving net-zero emissions by 2050.
- Called for a review of the nomination and elections processes used by synods and the churchwide organization.
- Responded to memorials on diversity; nuclear weapons; voting rights and Washington, D.C., statehood; strategies for fortifying urban ministries; a Black migrant strategy; the right to boycott; gun violence; LGBTQIA+ welcome; substance abuse;

Roe v. Wade; remembrance of Armenian, Assyrian and Greek genocide; parental and medical family leave; a process for pre-identification of nominees for the Office of the Presiding Bishop; revisions to the mission development process; consideration of communion practices related to remote worship; affirmation of the task force created by the Church Council to review the discipline process; and a social message on child abuse and protection.

- Approved or ratified amendments to the Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA, most of which were related to general clarifications and updates; inclusive language; synod-authorized ministry; designation of advisory members by the Church Council; boards of the separately incorporated ministries; and election procedures for officers and the Churchwide Assembly.
- Elected members of the Church Council, Committee on Appeals, Committee on Discipline, Nominating Committee and boards of the separately incorporated ministries.

Listen, focus, be grateful, simplify

A reflection by Nancy Jacobs

I wonder sometimes if I have a split personality ... when I have something to do or somewhere to go that I really enjoy, I am impatient. If I have something to do or somewhere to go that I don't enjoy, I procrastinate ... Sometimes it bothers me, other times it doesn't.

Then, in my trusty little brown book (*Jesus Calling: Enjoying Peace in His Presence*), I heard what the Lord thought about that and how He advised me to simplify my life ... how to avoid tension or doubt or unrest. I do my best to listen to Him, focus on Him and His words and be grateful that I can turn to Him when in need or just to give thanks.

"Stop trying to work things out before their times have come. Accept the limitations of living one day at a time. When something comes to your attention, ask Me whether or not it is part of today's agenda. If it isn't, release it into my care and go on about today's duties. When you follow this practice, there will be a beautiful simplicity about your life ... a time for everything, and everything in its place.

A life lived close to Me is not complicated or cluttered. When your focus is on My presence, many things that once troubled you lose their power over you. Though the world around you is messy and confusing remember that I have overcome the world. I have told you these things so that in Me you may have peace."

Reprinted from *Jesus Calling: Enjoying Peace in His Presence* by Sarah Young (pub. Thomas Nelson Incorporated, 2011)
382 pgs ISBN 1404174443, 9781404174443

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

140 years of celebrating labor

Sept. 5 marks 2022 observance

Labor Day pays tribute to the contributions and achievements of American workers and is traditionally observed on the first Monday in September. It was created by the labor movement in 1882 and became a federal holiday in 1894. Labor Day weekend also symbolizes the end of summer for many Americans, and is celebrated with parties, street parades and athletic events.

Labor Day originated during one of American labor history's most dismal chapters.

In the late 1800s, at the height of the Industrial Revolution in the United States, the average American worked 12-hour days and seven-day weeks in order to eke out a basic living. Despite restrictions in some states, children as young as 5 or 6 toiled in mills, factories and mines across the country, earning a fraction of their adult counterparts' wages.

People of all ages, particularly the very poor and recent immigrants, often faced extremely unsafe working conditions, with insufficient access to fresh air, sanitary facilities and breaks.

As manufacturing increasingly supplanted agriculture as the wellspring of American employment, labor unions, which had first appeared in the late 18th century, grew more prominent and vocal. They began organizing strikes and rallies to protest poor conditions and compel employers to renegotiate hours and pay.

On September 5, 1882, 10,000 workers took unpaid time off to march from City Hall to Union Square in New York City, holding the first Labor Day parade in U.S. history.

source: www.history.com



CHILD LABOR A young girl tends the spinning machine at a cotton mill in North Carolina. Children worked adult hours for pennies in mills and factories all over the United States until the enactment of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938.
photo: Bettman/CORBIS

***Come one! Come all! Come tall and small!
Come young and ... seasoned!***



SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 18!



Join us on **Sunday, September 18th** as we kick off **Sunday School!** Sunday School begins at **9:30am** for both adults and children of all ages.

Adults meet in the trailer outside
and children meet in the fellowship hall.

Rally day will include

**fun games, activities,
and a church picnic!**

**Everyone is invited to bring a covered dish
if desired. Our main entree and drinks
will be provided.**

SEE YOU THERE!



*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

