

THE MESSENGER

ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH

October 2022

WEEKLY EVENTS

Sunday Worship - 10:30 AM

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

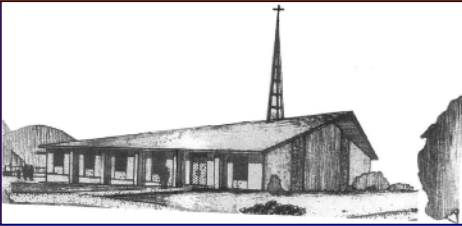
NA Meeting - Wednesdays at 7:30 PM

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*)



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

Social Ministry and Evangelism

Sharon Giza

Worship and Music

vacant

Youth

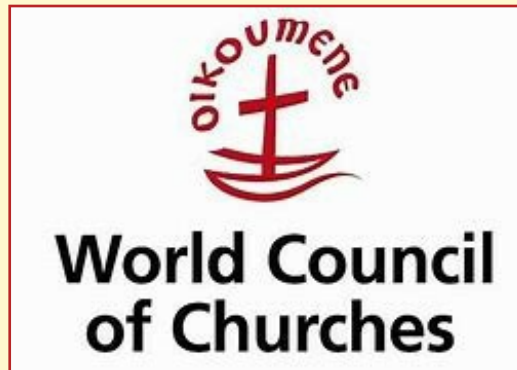
Chelsea Karaffa, Venus Thompson

Next Council Meeting

Tuesday October 11 at 7:00 PM

A Table Set for ALL

From Pastor's desk



*M*y time in Karlsruhe, Germany was absolutely wonderful. It was like watching the Olympics your whole life and then getting to go to watch the games with your own eyes. The 11th Assembly of the World Council of

Churches was very much the equivalent to the global Olympic games. The only difference was that rather than compete against one another we sat together as one finding ways to make our common effort stronger. We all came from different countries, represented 350 denominations and spoke different languages, but there we all had one goal in common - sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ. Sharing the gospel is more than just retelling the old-old story. It's about living Christ-like lives, caring for creation and recognizing Christ in all people.

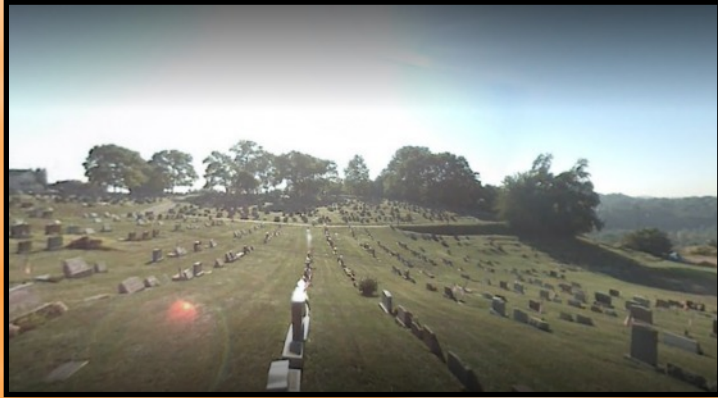
Before I even made it into the assembly hall, I knew this would be a life-changing experience. On the tram into Karlsruhe, my head was spinning with questions and thoughts about what I could anticipate. Immediately upon entering the security checkpoint my mind went silent. All I could do was listen and observe. I listened to languages from French to Arabic, Spanish to Ukrainian. The dress of those assembling was fascinating. Hats, staffs, blessing crosses, wide collars, African dresses and South American flair. Every culture, every church and every language - and as I shared with people back home "some you've never even heard of" - seemed to be represented.

I was admittedly star-struck my first few days. On day one we were welcomed by the leaders of the WCC, the Lord Mayor and the President of Germany. The next day I met Cardinal Koch, the president for the pontifical council for promoting Christian unity. This was definitely a highlight as he read a letter from Pope Francis (in Spanish) addressed to our gathering. Next to last day I met Archbishop Justin Welby, the head of the Anglican

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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 September 13, 2022

- There were no notable highlights outside of regular activities shared within this newsletter. It was a very brief meeting. The boiler was scheduled to be installed at the end of the month and the 2023 preliminary budget will be drafted soon.

Next Council Meeting

Tuesday, October 11, 2022 at 7:00 pm



"SAVE THE DATE"

Congregational Meeting
Sunday December 4
following worship

YES. It's HERE!



Our "Other" collection to replace our "legacy" boiler reached its goal, and the NEW boiler has been installed!

The friendly and efficient crew from Beverly Services labored during the last week of September to take out the old, and bring in the new. What a job! Thank You, EVERYONE!



In with the NEW!

Out with the OLD ...

Hard to believe that this impressive pile of junkyard treasure served Ascension for nearly 60 years!

Thank you to everyone for your incredible generosity in reaching our Fall goal to install a new boiler.



Lord, Make Us Instruments of Your Peace



On Tuesday, October 4th the church commemorates the life and ministry of **Saint Francis of Assisi**, renewer of the church. Francis is known for many things, not least of which is his love and care for creation. His life is a model of discipleship that demonstrates self-denial, kindness and Christ-like love for those for whom the world often casts aside. Francis continues to be a universal saint loved and admired across denominations and religions around the world.

Eight hundred years later *Il Poverello*, the Little Poor Man of Assisi, is still teaching the church through examples of love and gospel centered living. But, what can someone who used to wear rags and beg for food possibly teach us today? I believe that in the tumultuous and divisive times in which we live, Francis can teach us how to model and be a source of peace.

Francis personified such peace when he met with the Sultan of Egypt, Malek al-Kamil in 1219. The world was at war. The crusades (not a pretty part of our history) were in full swing. Prior to his arrival, the sultan declared that anyone who delivered him the head of a Christian would be rewarded in gold. Yet, in the face of death, Francis stepped forward. The story is cinematic to say the least. However, it wasn't his readiness for martyrdom that we remember. It was what Francis said that is worth his weight in gold. When he encountered the Sultan, he simply said, "May the Lord give you peace."

These words not only surprised the Sultan, they gave the world a different perspective in a time of war and bloodshed. It was Francis' courage and enthusiasm for the gospel which demonstrated a vision of God's peace. As a pastor serving the church, and as an army chaplain serving people in uniform, I know all too well the desire for peace which we all share as a global community. As we commemorate the life and legacy of Francis, may we model the peace of Christ he sought. May we speak peace to those times and people with which we struggle. May we be bold to surprise the world with the peace that comes from knowing Christ.

Pastor Joseph Murdy, OLF
United States Army Reserves Chaplain

*The Order of Lutheran Franciscans is a Synod Authorized
Worshiping Community of the Gulf Coast Synod, ELCA.
www.lutheranfranciscans.org Pastor Joe's article ran in the
August-October 2022 issue no. 11 of The Wayfarer, the quarterly
newsmagazine of the ELCA's Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod.*

From Pastor's desk (continued from pg 1)

communion. All of these encounters were a humbling reminder of how important this global event truly was.

The speakers and opportunities throughout the event were truly amazing. However, it indeed became a holy and sacred experience when we began to worship together. I loved it! Singing songs in different languages, hearing prayers and scripture in languages I didn't know and seeing the diversity of Christ's table was eye-opening. The most powerful experience came when we all said the Lord's Prayer together in the language of our hearts. We each had our own language, our own inflection, pace and tone but we all had one thing in common - our Lord Jesus had taught it to us. In a world where we see and experience so much difference and disunity, it was a joy to experience what Christ has in store for us at his table in the kingdom.

Humbling to be reminded that we can realize this unity now.

Gratefully yours,

~PJ

“ . . . Seeing the
diversity
of Christ's table
was
eye-opening.”
~ PJ

Best Wishes . . .

OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS!

Date | Member/Friend

- 1 Harper Murdy
- 7 Suzie Bryan
- 8 Cayley Hughes
- 9 Rich Mussman
Jameson Murdy
- 10 Callie Derbish
Rachael Hall
- 13 Jerry Wessel
- 20 Dave Walenchok
- 23 Myrtle Cairns



OCTOBER ANNIVERSARIES!

Date | Members/Friends

- 4 Brian & Jeannette Tomchak
- 7 Mike & Jill Lescalette
- 12 Bob & Mary Hughes
- 15 Travis & Candace McEwen
- 21 Michael & Diane Bayer



. . . and Blessings to ALL!



All youth are welcome to join us in the outdoor pavilion after church on Sunday, October 30th for some Fall fun! We will have pumpkins ready for you to decorate... we can't wait to see what creations you make! No RSVP required. Please contact Melissa at melissadecola@hotmail.com with any questions!



To eat ... or not to eat ? The Lunch Bunch has the answer at Shakespeare's

Steeped in tasty memories of their last gathering at La Cucina in Weirton, W.Va., Ascension's **Lunch Bunch** is ready for their next culinary adventure.

On **Thursday October 20**, the Bunch will travel north to the Ellwood City area for a return visit to "Shakespeare's Castle" - formally known as Shakespeare's Restaurant & Pub at Olde Stonewall Golf Club - "Where ye olde world meets the new in an immersive dining experience." Shakespeare's is a one-of-a-kind Medieval-style dining venue where every customer is "treated like royalty." The restaurant features an American-style menu with a casual medieval theme.

Shakespeare's is located at 1495 Mercer Road in Ellwood City, Pa. Those carpooling can meet at Ascension Church at **10:30 AM** (although in consideration of the persistent I-79 construction, you might want to add a little extra time to that), and those who would rather go straight to the restaurant should plan to arrive there by 11:30 AM. In either case, all planning to attend need to let Jerry Wessel (412-787-1213) or Nancy Schreiber (412-859-3969) know **by Tuesday afternoon Oct. 18** so that reservations can be made. As always, everyone is welcome to join in the Lunch Bunch fun! ~ Jerry Wessel

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL BIBLE STUDY

We're back in Sunday School session again after our summer vacation, and we're going to learn more about the Book of Romans.

This will give us an insight into Saint Paul - a troubled and troublesome person.

What caused his turning to become

God-driven ... to teach how

Christian lives should be lived?

Come, join in to put to use Paul's teachings.

9:30 a.m. Sundays in the Learning Center
(a.k.a "the trailer!")



Jesus loves me, this I know . . .

A reflection by Nancy Jacobs

When I was about 5 years old, my mom handed me off to my cousin, Dotty, to start me at Sunday School at Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church (forerunner of Good Shepherd). Miss Ruth, our teacher, taught us "Jesus Loves Me, This I Know, for the Bible Tells Me So." As a 5-year-old, I just took it for granted. If Miss Ruth and my mom said so, it must be true.

But as I aged, I knew not to take it for granted ... I knew it was an involved relationship with my Lord as I continued to grow in His teaching, a continual learning process of deserving His love. My "conversation" through my *Jesus Calling* reader showed me that his Love was there for me *all the time* . . . I just needed to be open to it.

"Never take for granted My intimate nearness. Marvel at the wonder of My continual presence with you. Even the most ardent human lover cannot be with you always. Nor can another person know the intimacies of your heart, mind, and spirit. I know everything about you - even to the number of hairs on your head. You don't need to work at revealing yourself to Me.

Many people spend a lifetime or a small fortune searching for someone who understands them. Yet I am freely available to all who call upon my name, who open their hearts to receive Me as Savior. This simple act of faith is the beginning of a lifelong love story. I, the Lover of your soul, understand you perfectly and love you eternally."

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

October 4

Francis of Assisi, *renewer of the church*, d. 1226

Born into the family of a wealthy merchant, Francis gave up his inheritance to serve poor people. He formed the Order of Friars Minor (called Franciscans), who took on poverty and the task of preaching “using words if necessary.” Francis had a spirit of gratitude for all of God’s creation.

Theodor Fliedner, *renewer of society*, d. 1864

Fliedner helped to bring about a revival of the ministry of deaconesses among Lutherans. He was influenced in this by Moravian deaconesses he had met. The motherhouse he founded in Kaiserswerth, Germany, inspired many around the world to take up this ministry.

October 6

William Tyndale, *translator, martyr*, d. 1536

Tyndale was ordained a priest in England, and his life’s desire was to translate the Bible into English. He was opposed in this by King Henry VIII, causing him to flee to Germany. He completed the New Testament in 1525, but before he could finish the Old Testament, he was tried for heresy and burned at the stake.

October 7

Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, *pastor in North America*, d. 1787

Divided Lutherans in America asked leaders in Europe to send someone who could take charge and unite their work. Muhlenberg was sent, and was effective in organizing the American Lutherans. Among other accomplishments, his liturgical principles became the basis for the Common Service of 1888.

October 15

Teresa of Ávila (**Teresa de Jesús**), *teacher, renewer of the church*, d. 1582

Teresa of Ávila (AH-vee-la) is also known as Teresa de Jesús. She chose the life of a Carmelite nun after reading the letters of Jerome. She worked to reform her monastic community in Ávila. Her reforms asked nuns to maintain life in the monastic enclosure without leaving it and to identify with the poor by not wearing shoes. Teresa’s writings on devotional life have enjoyed a wide readership.

October 17

Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, *martyr*, d. ca. 115

Ignatius was the second bishop of Antioch in Syria, the city where the name “Christians” originated. Ignatius is known to us from his letters, which encouraged Christians to live in love, yet stand firm in true doctrine. When his own martyrdom approached, he wrote in one of his letters, “I prefer death in Christ Jesus to power over the farthest limits of the earth. . . . Do not stand in the way of my birth to real life.”

October 18

Luke, *Evangelist*

St. Luke is identified by tradition as the author of both Luke and Acts. Luke is careful to place the events of Jesus’ life in both their social and religious contexts. Some of the most loved parables, including the good Samaritan and the prodigal son, are found only in this gospel. Luke’s gospel has also given the church some of its most beautiful songs: the *Benedictus* sung at morning prayer, the *Magnificat* sung at evening prayer, and the *Nunc dimittis* sung at the close of the day. These songs are powerful witnesses to the message of Jesus Christ.

October 23

James of Jerusalem, *martyr*, d. ca. 62

One of three early-church leaders named James, this man is identified in the New Testament and by a historian of the time as a brother of Jesus. Scholars are uncertain whether this means a blood brother. He was a leader of the church in Jerusalem.

October 26

Philipp Nicolai, d. 1608; **Johann Heermann**, d. 1647; **Paul Gerhardt**, d. 1676; *hymnwriters*

These great hymnwriters all worked in seventeenth-century Germany in times of war and plague. Nicolai, a pastor, lost 1,300 parishioners to plague, 170 in one week. He wrote “O Morning Star, how fair and bright” and “Wake, awake, for night is flying.” Heermann’s hymns, including “Ah, holy Jesus,” often express the emotions of faith. Gerhardt, perhaps the greatest Lutheran hymnwriter, was a pastor in Berlin.

October 28

Simon and Jude, *Apostles*

Little is known about Simon and Jude. In New Testament lists of the apostles, Simon the “zealot” or Cananaean is mentioned, but he is never mentioned apart from these lists. Jude, sometimes called Thaddeus, is also mentioned in lists of the Twelve. At the last supper Jude asked Jesus why he had chosen to reveal himself to the disciples but not to the world. A traditional story about Simon and Jude says that they traveled together on a missionary journey to Persia and were both martyred there.

October 31

Reformation Day

By the end of the seventeenth century, many Lutheran churches celebrated a festival commemorating Martin Luther’s posting of the *Ninety-five Theses*, a summary of the abuses in the church of his time. At the heart of the reform movement was the gospel, the good news that it is by grace through faith that we are justified and set free.

Building Committee meets PLANS FOR EXPANSION

Our building committee held its first meeting on Sunday, October 25 to dream, share in honest conversation and to discuss how best to present a vision for the future. From the founding of our church in the early 60s to today, the idea of adding on to our building has always been a dream.

Ascension Church was founded as a mission start congregation and our current facilities were phase one of a three-phase plan. There was a plan to add a new sanctuary which would connect to our current worship space, making it a fellowship hall. Over the years there have been ideas upon ideas. For the last 10-15 years the desire to have an adequate and modern fellowship hall has been at the top of our list of needs. Over the past few years a few began to dream again of an addition as an actual concept.

You now are invited over the next few weeks (starting on October 16) to join us for fellowship following worship to see professional sketches and drawings of what our future addition could look like.

It is important that we hear from you and hear what questions, curiosities and excitements you may have. As you dream with us, we will ask one question, **will you support the dream?** It is our hope to kick off a 3-to-5-year building campaign, beginning at our 2022 Congregational Meeting on Sunday the 4th of December.

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

On **Sunday, October 2**, dozens of handmade quilts that our Creative Hands ministry team have diligently been working to complete will be blessed. Each quilt will be boxed and delivered to a Lutheran church in Zelenople, and from there will be sent out into the world through Lutheran World Relief.

Following our church merger just one year ago and picking up "seamlessly" from where they left off at their former home at Good Shepherd Church, our creative ladies - Judy Henry, Rose Marie LaQuinta and Darlene Witt - have continued their ministry at Ascension. We are truly blessed with these loving and talented members and sincerely thank our Creative Hands for all of the hard work, dedication and love which they have given to this unique ministry all throughout the year.



Filling the pews at Ascension Church with their beautiful handiwork, the Creative Hands ministry team of (top and left photo, left to right) Darlene Witt, Rose Marie LaQuinta and Judy Henry gathered fabrics, cut quilt squares and sewed all of the colorful quilts pictured. Their creations will be blessed on Sunday October 2 then boxed and sent to those in need by Lutheran World Relief. The three have carried on their ministry from their former residence at Good Shepherd Church (bottom left photo), which officially merged with Ascension Church in late September 2021.



*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

