



THE MESSENGER

ASCENSION Lutheran Church

JULY 2025

WEEKLY EVENTS

Sunday Worship - 11:00 AM **new time!*
Sunday School - 10:00 AM (adult & child)
Drum Class - Tuesdays 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 &
Wednesday evenings (Spring-Fall)



2025 COUNCIL

President – Jerry Wessel
Vice President – Sharon Giza
Treasurer – Bob Stathers
Secretary – Jason Eager

2025 COUNCIL LIAISONS

Christian Education
Jason Eager
Communications & Publications
Sharon Giza
Finance & Stewardship
open
Mutual Ministry
Bob Stathers
Personnel
Kelly Bryan
Property
Bob Thompson
Fellowship, Social Ministry
& Evangelism
Jeff Williams
Worship & Music
Jerry Wessel
Youth
Debbie Whitfield
Call Committee
Sharon Giza

Next Council Meeting

Tuesday July 15 at 7:00 PM

SWPA ELCA: New Era, New Leader



Rev. Melissa L. Stoller, Bishop-Elect

"In these liminal times, it is important that we strengthen our ties, so that we may be Church together, communities of justice of hope, sharing the Good News with our neighbors."

~ Rev. Melissa L. Stoller

from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Chicago

The Rev. Melissa L. Stoller, Pittsburgh, was elected on June 13 to serve a six-year term as bishop of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). The election took place during the synod assembly, June 12-14 at La Roche University in Pittsburgh.

Stoller was elected on the fourth ballot, with 189 votes. The Rev. William Schaefer, pastor of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Latrobe, Pa., and Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church in Derry, Pa., received 49 votes.

The bishop-elect has served as director for evangelical mission and assistant to the bishop for the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod since 2017. Prior to this role, she served as

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MOUNT CALVARY CEMETERY

1715 Middletown Road | McKees Rocks, PA

Robert J. Dudek, Supervisor

mtcalvarycem@alcpgh.com



Mount Calvary Cemetery Board Members

Judy Henry • Bob Hughes • Bette Ann Kallay

George C. Kasich • Joyce Leister

Pastor Ryan Kobert • Sharon Giza



ALC Council Meeting Highlights

Council meeting was held Tuesday June 10, 2025

Call to order: 7:00 pm

Review minutes of May meeting; minutes approved.

- Discussion of ideas for improvements of 2026 Yard Sale
- Audit results discussed; very clean results
- New locks, WiFi cameras discussed

Fellowship, Social Ministry and Evangelism:

- Call process addendum (additions to MSP part 4 commentary) discussed; motion to forward to Call Committee for inclusion in MSP. Passed unanimously.

Youth: Discussion to gather in July to plan Fall activities

Upcoming event: Graduate Ice Cream Social July 13

Next meeting: Tuesday July 15 at 7:00 pm

New Leader (continued from pg 1)

pastor of Zion Lutheran Church in Pittsburgh (2011-2017); pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church in Cook, Minn. (2005-2010); and intern pastor at the Moscow Protestant Chaplaincy in Moscow, Russia (2003-2004). Previously she worked in housing and health care advocacy for the Minnesota Senior Federation.

Stoller earned a Bachelor of Arts in religion and governmental affairs from Augustana University in Sioux Falls, S.D., in 1999 and a Master of Divinity from Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago (LSTC) in 2005.

Augustana is one of 28 ELCA colleges and universities, and LSTC is one of seven ELCA seminaries.

She will take office on Sept. 1 and be installed on Saturday, Oct. 18, at Berkeley Hills Lutheran Church in Pittsburgh, at 1 p.m.

The Rev. Kurt F. Kusserow will retire Aug. 31 after serving as bishop since 2007.

Rev. Stoller begins the work of bishop on September 1, and will be installed on Saturday, October 18, 1 PM at Berkeley Hills Lutheran Church, 517 Sangree Rd, Pittsburgh, PA 15237.



Elected to the office of bishop of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod in June, 2007, Bishop Kurt Kusserow will retire Aug. 31, 2025 at the close of his third six-year term.





Council President's CORNER

A message from Ascension's Council President

Summer is here! And so is HOT and HUMID weather, which we've had plenty of already. Sunshine may not be in the picture every day, but "SON"shine is always present here at Ascension Church. Especially during the summer months, we hope you won't take a vacation from church! We are open all year, so come worship with us and refresh your spirits throughout the "dog days" of 2025.

Enjoy your summer, and have safe travels wherever you may roam, even if it's just "staycation" at home!

Sincerely,

Jerry Wessel

Ascension Council President



Lunch Bunch

JOIN US
THURSDAY
JULY 17!

A monthly gathering of members and friends of Ascension Church

In June, a happy crowd of 21 people joined together for a late lunch /early supper (a *lunper?*) at the Log Cabin Inn in Zelienople. Several new attendees joined the old-time Ascension Lunch Bunchers for a good meal and great camaraderie. Those who tried the peanut butter pie got an especially delicious treat (at least, in my opinion).

On **Thursday July 17th**, the Lunch Bunch will travel to delectable destination: "**La Cucina**" at 200 Three Springs Drive, Weirton, W.Va. It's an easy drive west on NW 22-30 and only about 30 minutes from Ascension Church.

The food is always good and the desserts are great - worth saving room for. We would love to have more new attendees! Please let Jerry Wessel (412) 787-1213 or Nancy Schreiber (412) 959-3969 know by Tuesday July 15th if you would like to attend so that sufficient space can be reserved. Think about it – then DO it! It's worth the time and the trip!

SUNDAY WORSHIP ASSISTANT SCHEDULE - JULY 2025

Date	Supply	Assisting Minister	Communion Assistant	Lector	Usher	Acolyte	Sunday (or special)	color	Council Update
July 6	Carol Emch	Jerry Wessel	Bob Dudek	Rich Mussman	Volunteer	Volunteer	PENTECOST 4	GREEN	Bob Thompson
July 13	Carol Emch	Jennifer Burkholder	Avis Ritter	Thad Ritter	Volunteer	Volunteer	PENTECOST 5	GREEN	Sharon Giza
July 20	Pr. Ryan Kobert	Mary Thompson	Bob Thompson	Sharon Giza	Volunteer	Volunteer	PENTECOST 6	GREEN	Kelly Bryan
July 27	Pr. Ryan Kobert	Jeff Williams	Amy Kruse	Gib Palmgren	Volunteer	Volunteer	PENTECOST 7	GREEN	Bob Stathers
Aug 3	Pr. Ryan Kobert	Jerry Wessel	Bob Dudek	Charlotte DeCola	Volunteer	Volunteer	PENTECOST 8	GREEN	Jeff Williams



★ HAPPY BIRTHDAY,

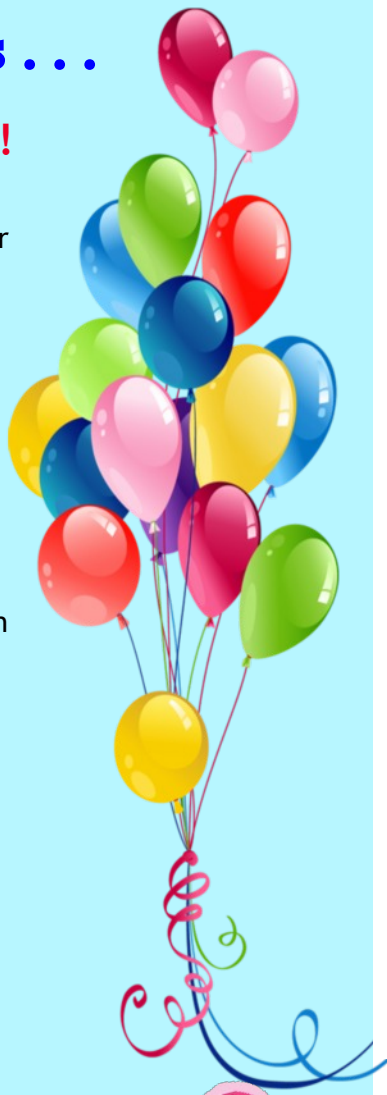
USA

Best Wishes . . .

JULY BIRTHDAYS!

Date | Member/Friend

- 1 Jennifer Burkholder
Megan Ganley
- 2 Greg Thompson
Camryn Endes
- 3 Brian Tomchak
- 7 Diane Bayer
- 12 Venus Thompson
- 14 Jane Gregory
Giovanni Thompson
- 17 Amanda Derbish
- 18 Bob Stathers
- 21 Al Morrow
- 22 Mary Thompson
- 23 Grayson DeCola
- 24 Virginia Shar
- 26 Paula Wessel
- 29 Tom Ganley
- 31 Amy Kruise



JULY ANNIVERSARIES!

Date | Members/Friends

- 25 Mike & Lynn Neilson



... and Blessings to ALL!

READ ALL ABOUT IT!

GO NEWS?

If you have pictures, articles, or ideas to submit for the **AUGUST 2025** Newsletter, please contact the office or Pastor, or email office@alcpgh.com.



"Sundae"
JULY 13!

Class of 2025

Congratulations

To Our

2025 GRADUATES:

Bella Bryan

Jacob Eager

West Allegheny High School

★ CELEBRATE! ★

*In celebration of their
accomplishments,
an ICE CREAM SOCIAL*

will be held on

SUNDAY JULY 13

following Worship.

Jacob Anthony Eager

Jacob graduated Magna Cum Laude from West Allegheny High School in Imperial, Pa. His activities and interests include karate, baseball, JROTC and e-Sports. Jacob's future plans are to study Cybersecurity at CCAC.

Isabella Christina Bryan

Also a 2025 graduate of West Allegheny High School in Imperial, Pa. "Bella" lettered in cross-country and track & field at WAHS and was an ECIHSA scholar and a two-time Track & Field WPIAL qualifier, winning both the Top Newcomer award and Most Coachable award. Her activities also included wintertime indoor track, slow-pitch softball and Future Educators Club. Bella is set to begin her studies in Early Childhood/Special Education at Slippery Rock University, where she has been awarded a Merit Scholarship.

BEST WISHES, Bella & Jacob!

The Fourth of July — also known as Independence Day or July 4 — has been a federal holiday in the United States since 1941, but the tradition of Independence Day celebrations goes back to the 18th century and the American Revolution. On July 2nd, 1776, the Continental Congress voted in favor of independence, and two days later delegates from the 13 colonies adopted the Declaration of Independence, a historic document drafted by Thomas Jefferson. From 1776 to the present day, July 4th has been celebrated as the birth of American independence, with festivities ranging from fireworks, parades and concerts to more casual family gatherings and barbecues. The Fourth of July 2025 is on Friday, July 4.



4th of JULY . . . INDEPENDENCE Day

The first organized celebration of Independence Day would take place in Philadelphia on July 4, 1777. Founding Father John Adams wrote a prediction a year earlier, following the adoption of the Declaration of Independence, (which actually took place on July 2, 1776):

"I am apt to believe that it will be celebrated, by succeeding Generations, as the great anniversary Festival ... It ought to be solemnized with Pomp and Parade, with Shews, Games, Sports, Guns, Bells, Bonfires and Illuminations from one End of this Continent to the other from this Time forward forever more."

Source: www.history.com

Please keep in your prayers:

- JoAnne Erwin, Dee Gratzmiller, Mary Honath, Norma Kohnen, Lottie Lodge, Jean Marion, Betty Simpson, Rose Rahner, Betty Borden — *shut-ins*
- Mary Jane McGinnis — *health concerns*
- Thad Ritter — *health concerns*
- Bill McEwen — *multiple health concerns*
- Michele Alves-Martz, co-worker of Emily Reckner — *health concerns*
- Mike Voyten, co-worker of Amy Reckner — *cancer has returned*
- Linda Younkers, mother of Kathleen Howells — *stage 4 cancer*
- Hogan Moody, friend of Cy & Kathleen Howells — *cancer*
- Pastor Joe Murdy as he serves his 9-month Army tour of duty in Kuwait
- Rudy Marnich — *recent surgery*
- Melanie Hall — friend of Debbie Whitfield — *pancreatic cancer*
- Family of Pat Summerhill — *upon her passing June 21, 2025*





THANK YOU!

Ascension's 2025 YARD SALE / BAKE SALE was a fine success! Despite some soggy weather, the morning of Saturday June 7 welcomed vendors, volunteers and patrons who came to 1290 Silver Lane to enjoy an event full of treasures and some really good food and refreshments.

We were able to make a \$400 donation to the Inter-Church Food Bank with the proceeds!

Photos by
Sharon Giza
and Jeff Williams



A book to be read

a reflection by Nancy Jacobs

Let me digress from my idle chatter to tell you about a book I am reading. It is *"The Case for Christ"* by Lee Strobel. He is a retired crime reporter with the Chicago Tribune. Lee is an atheist.

But his wife surprises him by telling him she is becoming a Christian.

When he sees the changes in her, he decides to investigate the case for Christianity. He travels all over the country meeting with learned theologians, professors, religious authors, all PhDs. He poses to them such questions as the reliability of the Gospels, reliable facts of Jesus/God, was Lazarus really dead, and of course, the empty tomb.

He asks them why a loving God would send people to hell. He asks about miracles ... just a bunch of made up stories? Wasn't Jesus just a human being like you and me?

I am truly fascinated by this book.

There have been over 10 million copies sold ... hope *you* will make it part of your "books to be read."

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.

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 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

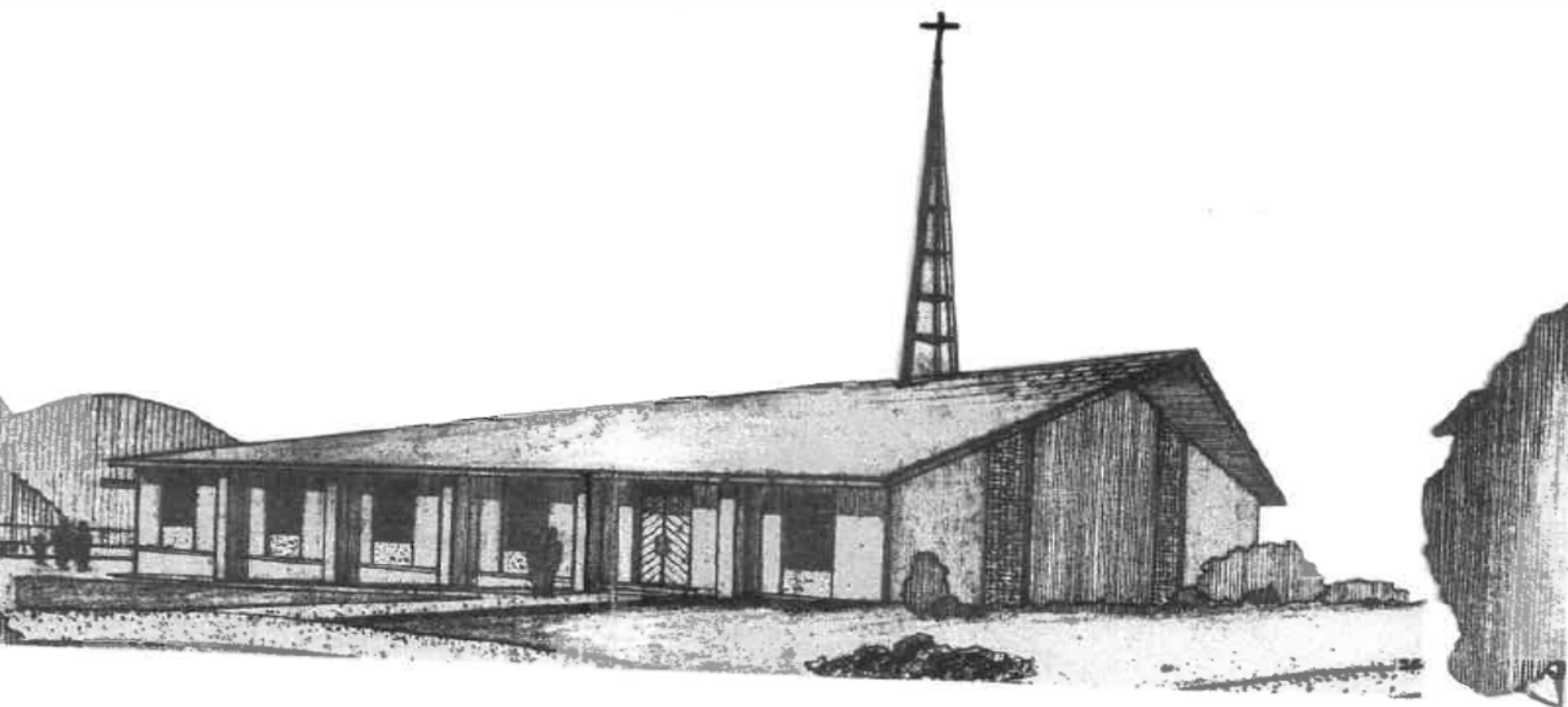
These three German-born musicians have done much to enrich the life of the church. Schütz was an early master who focused on settings of biblical texts. Bach wrote over 300 cantatas along with works for organ and instrumental pieces, and has been called the “fifth evangelist” for the way he proclaimed 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.



*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

