



# THE MESSENGER

ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH

SEPTEMBER 2025

## WEEKLY EVENTS

Sunday Worship - 11:00 AM

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 – Sharon Giza

Vice President – Deb Whitfield

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

Jeff Williams

Youth

Debbie Whitfield

Call Committee

Sharon Giza

Council Member: Bill Whitfield

## Next Council Meeting

Tuesday September 9 at 7:00 PM

## Make room for *Selah*



by Pastor Ryan Kobert

Have you encountered *Selah* (הלל) before? Maybe you have, and maybe you haven't.

If you have only read the psalms from our bulletin or worship book, you wouldn't have encountered it. Within our hymnal are various musical ways to sing the psalms, and having an errant *Selah* in there would throw off the way the chant is set up.

If you look in your Bible however, you'll find the *Selah* at the end of seemingly random verses within the psalms, and three times in Habakkuk. Some psalms will have two or three close together, others will have but one or two spaced out, yet most psalms don't have any at all.

There is no real translation to this word either. There is a similar word in Hebrew that means "rock," but it is spelled differently. So, what then is this strange little word that can be found seventy-four times between the psalms and Habakkuk? Most scholars, both Jewish and Christian, see this word as a type of musical notation meaning "rest" or "pause."

Like within our own liturgy, ancient worshippers would have sung these psalms at times. The leader would see this notation and known to take a pause before continuing the chant. It would be similar to the musical rest notations that we have today in our music. When you have the chance, look at some of your favorite psalms and see if there is a *Selah* in it.

Now that you've encountered a *Selah*, have you ever experienced it?

Twice a year the clergy of our synod are invited into a time of *Selah*, a time of rest. An intentional day is set aside to gather at camp Lutherlyn to help us put a pause

*continued on page 6*

# MOUNT CALVARY CEMETERY

1715 Middletown Road | McKees Rocks, PA

**Robert J. Dudek, Supervisor**  
[mtcalvarycem@alcpgh.com](mailto:mtcalvarycem@alcpgh.com)

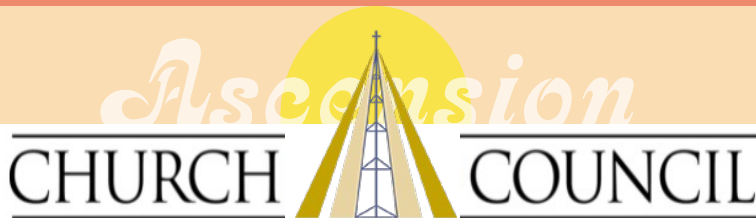


## Mount Calvary Cemetery Board Members

*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 August 12, 2025**

**Call to order: 7:03 pm**

**Review minutes of July meeting; minutes approved.**

**Council members** – Several terms expiring. Upon resignation of Jerry Wessel, VP Sharon Giza assumes presidency. Motions made and passed: Deb Whitfield becomes VP; Bill Whitfield becomes Council Member thru 12/15.. Jeff Williams will fill the Worship & Music position. Lynn Kinney assumes responsibility for communion items.

**Old Business:** • New stove ordered, installation Aug. 21. Purchase of new locks & cameras discussed.

**New Business:** • September 7, Rally Day • Oct. Nominations ballot

**Youth:** Deb Whitfield: Rally Day and other Youth events for 2025-26 discussed and planned.

**Adjournment:** unanimous.

**Next meeting: Tuesday September 9 at 7 pm**



## Council President's **CORNER**

As we begin our Sunday School year and celebrate Rally Day, I would like to take a moment to reflect on all the good things Ascension members have accomplished this past church year. We have a steady supply Pastor for our Sunday worships —thank you, Pastor Ryan Kobert! Volunteers will be teaching our Sunday school children and adult classes to spread the good news of God. Our Call Committee has interviewed one candidate for our Pastor position and is ready to interview others when the opportunity arises. We have a new stove/oven in our kitchen. Thanks to Bob S. for procuring the stove and to Jeff and Bob T. for the installation. We are anxious to use it on Rally Day! We are grateful to those who ensure that our altar and communion glasses are ready each Sunday. Also thanks to those who organize our church social gatherings and who provide homebound visitations.

We are always looking for more volunteers as “**many hands make light work.**” We are especially in need of more Assistant Ministers. Please reach out to any church council member or to the church office if you are able to volunteer or have any suggestions for our upcoming church year.

Blessings,

**Sharon Giza**

*Ascension Church Council President*

## • DATES to REMEMBER •

### SEPTEMBER 2025

- 7 Rally Day & 1<sup>st</sup> day of Kids Sunday School**
- 9 Council Meeting**
- 14 1<sup>st</sup> day of Adult Sunday School**
- 18 Lunch Bunch at Angelo's - Washington, PA**

### OCTOBER 2025

- 12 Campfire Fellowship**
- 14 Council Meeting**
- 26 Reformation Sunday**  
“Pumpkins & Pancakes”



Join us on  
**Sunday, September 7<sup>th</sup>**  
for **RALLY DAY 2025!**

The theme is "JESUS ROCKS!" and we want everyone to sport their favorite (yet appropriate, please) Rock-n-Roll gear. Following 11am worship there will be a **potluck lunch in the pavilion** (weather permitting). Chicken fingers & drinks will be provided; a sign-up sheet to bring sides and desserts will be passed around for everyone to let us know what you'll be bringing to share.

**Sunday School**  
Classes are held at 10:00 am  
(before worship)

**Kids' Sunday School**  
begins Sept. 7, held every week

**Adult Sunday School**  
begins Sept. 14  
held on 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays

**Blessing + of  
School  
Back Packs!**

**Bring your school back  
pack to church  
on Rally Day  
SUNDAY Sept. 7  
to get blessed!**

## YOUTH & FAMILY EVENTS 2025-26

### Hey YOUTH! **JESUS ROCKS.**

**Wear your rock n' roll gear on  
Rally Day Sunday Sept. 7!**

The Youth and Family Committee met in July to plan an exciting new season of events ahead. The fun starts on **RALLY DAY Sept 7<sup>th</sup>** - with "Jesus Rocks!" and Backpack Blessings. See you there!

#### **2025**

Sept 7 - Rally Day "Jesus Rocks!" (Wear your rock n' roll gear!) and Backpack Blessings

Oct 12 - Family Campfire

Oct 26 - Pumpkins and Pancakes

Nov - College Care Packages

Nov - Service project with Creative Hands

Dec - Presents for Patients

Dec 14 - Cookie Exchange

#### **2026**

Jan 17 - Family Ice Skating

Feb 15 - Family Bowling

Mar 15 - Lucky to be Lutheran Family Bingo

Apr 19 - Spring clean-up, creating planters,  
Chalk the Walk

May - Activity Bingo

For any volunteers interested in leading any of our events, please reach out to Melissa DeCola to discuss obtaining and submitting your clearances to have on file with the church office. *Thank you!*



## Best Wishes . . .

### SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS!

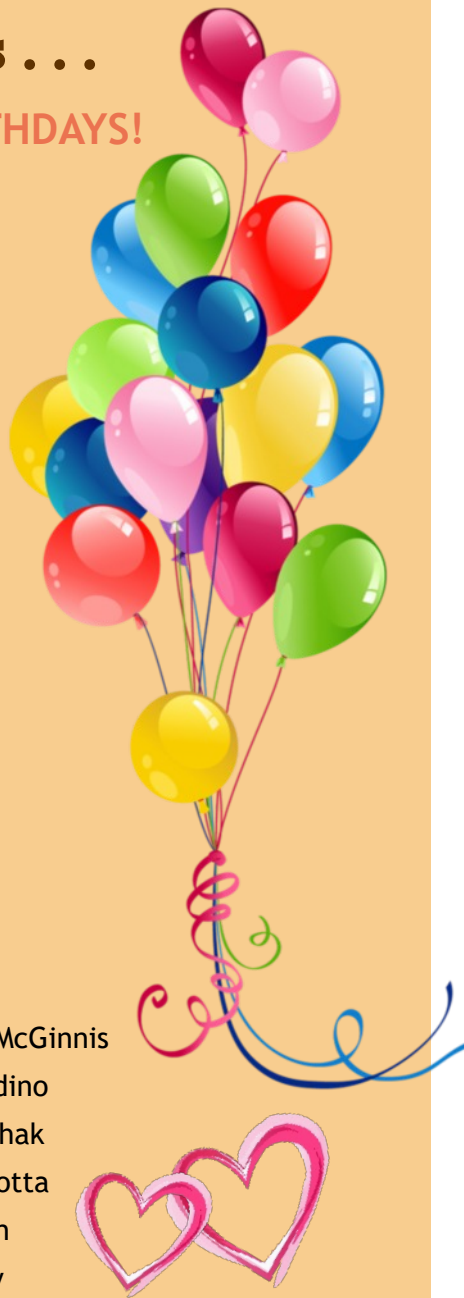
Date | Member/Friend

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

### SEPTEMBER ANNIVERSARIES!

Date | Members/Friends

- 6 John & Mary Jane McGinnis  
Chris & Emily Paladino
- 10 Paul & Paula Tomchak
- 17 Tom & Amy Lanzarotta
- 19 Rick & Janey Zoltun
- 28 Mike & Lynn Kinney



## CONGRATS TO OUR CREATIVE HANDS!

Congratulations to our Creative Hands group. They met the challenge of reaching their goal of 100 quilts (the most ever) this year. The quilts will be shipped all over the world, where needed - including the United States - by Lutheran World Relief.

Thank you to our group of tirelessly working women and men: Jennifer Burkholder, Lynn Kinney, Judy Henry, Amy Kruse, Helen Weir and Darlene Witt. Also, to Thom Kruse and Bob Thompson for helping carry things and putting them away.

The quilts will be displayed on Sunday Oct. 12 for Blessing by Pastor Kobert. Creative Hands will need help on Saturday, Oct. 11 at 11:00 am putting the quilts out for display. On Oct. 12, after church, help will be needed to box them up for transport to St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Zelienople on Monday Oct. 13 by Bob Dudek and Frank McQuillan from Mount Calvary Cemetery.

Creative Hands are always in need of sheets and pillowcases. And most importantly needed are extra hands. Even if you can't make the meetings on Wednesdays at 11:00 am, you can help by cutting squares at home. Creative Hands will provide you with the material and a template. Every little bit helps!

For more information, contact Judy Henry at 724-290-1869.

*submitted by Bob Dudek*



Young Ascension members engage with Pastor Kobert during the Children's Sermon on Sunday August 24. photo: Sharon Giza

## Heartfelt Thanks

The Creative Hands Group would like to thank my cousins Donna and Debbie for donating over twenty (20) beautiful quilt tops fashioned by their mother - my beloved late Aunt Aileen Faloney - over the last four years.

This is the 10<sup>th</sup> year that we have sent quilts to Lutheran World Relief. My aunt would be so very happy that her handiwork would have such a significant destination. Thanks to all!

*~ Rose Marie La Quinta*

## Someone's in the kitchen . . .

A real LABOR of dedication was invested during the week of August 18 when the old "legacy" oven/stove was removed and the new modern model installed by Jeff Williams, Bob Thompson and crew, just in time for Rally Day. Thanks to all our laborers!



photo by Sharon Giza

# Monday September 1

## HAPPY LABOR DAY

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HARD WORK



## CONFIRMATION CLASSES

Parents with children going into 6th, 7th and 8th grade who would like to enroll in Confirmation classes, please email or call the church ASAP so that arrangements can be made to start classes in the fall.

## We need you!

We are in need of additional Lectors, Acolytes and Worship Assistants to help during Sunday worship. If interested and willing to serve, please email Sharon Giza at [oneone2@verizon.net](mailto:oneone2@verizon.net)

## School Supplies Donations

Thru Rally Day Sept 7, we will be collecting school supplies to donate to local classrooms to help them kick off their school year.

Examples of school supply items include: pencils, notebooks, folders, tissue paks, hand sanitizer, stickers, paper, etc.

Donation boxes are located in the church hallway. THANK YOU!

## SUNDAY WORSHIP SCHEDULE - SEPTEMBER 2024

| Date    | Supply          | Assisting Minister  | Communion Assistant | Lector         | Usher     | Acolyte   | Sunday (or special)            | color        | Council Update |
|---------|-----------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------|-----------|-----------|--------------------------------|--------------|----------------|
| Sept 7  | Pr. Ryan Kobert | Jeff Williams       | Dan Giza            | Melissa DeCola | Volunteer | Volunteer | PENTECOST 13 RALLY DAY         | GREEN        | Bob Stathers   |
| Sept 14 | Pr. Ryan Kobert | Jennifer Burkholder | Amy Kruise          | Jason Eager    | Volunteer | Volunteer | PENTECOST 14 & Holy Cross Sun. | GREEN or RED | Deb Whitfield  |
| Sept 21 | Pr. Ryan Kobert | Mary Thompson       | Al Morrow           | Dan Giza       | Volunteer | Volunteer | PENTECOST 15                   | GREEN        | Jeff Williams  |
| Sept 28 | Pr. Ryan Kobert | Jeff Williams       | Avis Ritter         | Sharon Giza    | Volunteer | Volunteer | PENTECOST 16                   | GREEN        | Sharon Giza    |
| Oct 5   | Pr. Ryan Kobert | Jennifer Burkholder | Bob Thompson        | Jeff Williams  | Volunteer | Volunteer | PENTECOST 17                   | GREEN        | Bob Thompson   |



on the busy-ness of the clergy life. Once at camp, we have the flexibility to experience the rest that we need to. There are times set aside for praying together, for sharing a meal and conversation, and even workshops to teach some monastic spiritual practices focused on rest, but if one decides that the best rest is to walk the trails to experience the new growth of spring or the beautiful colors of fall, then that is available as well. These pauses help us to re-center, refocus, and prepare for what comes next.

When was the last time you experienced *Selah*? It is important to take those pauses in life, to rest in the presence of God and simply be. Be present with yourself. Be present with your thoughts. Be present with the divine around you. Simply to be, to breathe, to listen.

We all want to rush around and make sure the laundry is folded, the dishwasher run, the lawn cut, and leaves raked. The clergy will still be organizing worship, making visits, preparing for meetings, and dropping everything for the sudden emergency. The thing is that this will still be there in a never-ending cycle with the desire to have to get it all done before taking that rest.

Put a *Selah* in your life somewhere. Break up that never-ending cycle and listen. To the world around you. To yourself. To God.

*Pastor Ryan Kobert also serves St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Sewickley, Pa.*

## **Please keep in your prayers:**

- JoAnne Erwin, Dee Gratzmiller, 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*
- Linda Younkers, mother of Kathleen Howells – *stage 4 cancer*
- Hogan Moody, friend of Cy & Kathleen Howells – *cancer*
- Pastor Joe Murdy as he serves his tour of duty in Kuwait
- Norma Kohnen – *hospitalization for pneumonia*



# Lunch Bunch



**JOIN US  
THURSDAY  
SEPT. 18!**

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

## **The Bunch goes to Washington (PA, that is.)**

In August, sixteen Lunch Bunchers congregated at Jabby Joe's in Fleming Park. No one actually saw Joe and thankfully, no one was jabbed, but everyone got plenty to eat and most took leftovers home. The special of the day was liver and onions, which must have been pretty good because the sole taker didn't leave any to take home. The others didn't know what they were missing, but everyone enjoyed each other's company. *(Photos below)*

On Thursday September 18<sup>th</sup>, the group will travel to Angelo's Restaurant at 2109 North Franklin Drive in Washington, Pa. It's near the Wild Things ballpark, only about 30 minutes from Ascension.

Please let George Kasich (412) 726-1645 or Jerry Wessel (412-797-1213) know by Tuesday the 16<sup>th</sup> of September if you plan to attend. We plan to be on site at 11:30 AM. Unfortunately, the Wild Things regular season will be over by that date, but maybe they'll do well in the playoffs. Hope to see YOU at Angelo's!



photos by Sharon Giza

# SEPTEMBER 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 he was 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**

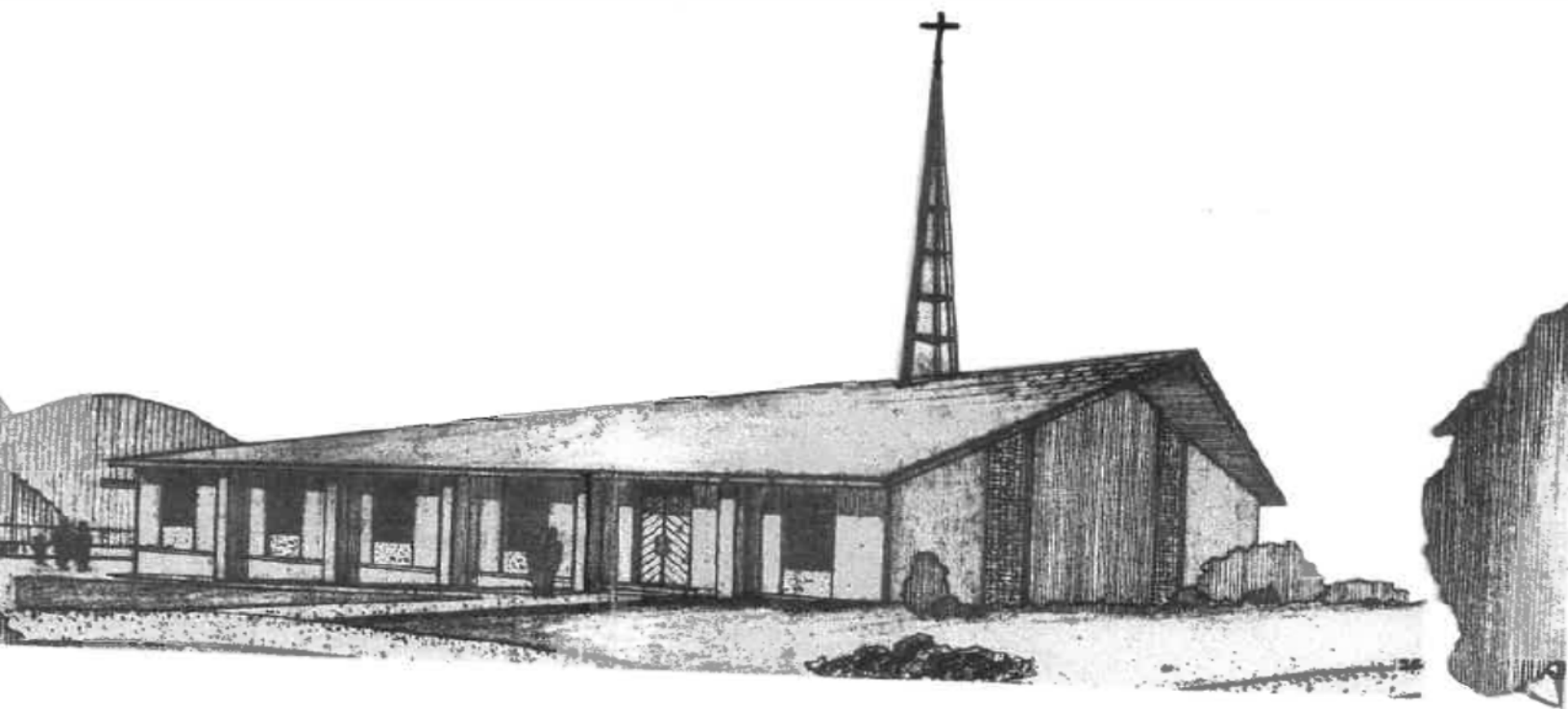
On this festival day the church ponders the richness and variety of God’s created order and the limits of human knowledge of it. The scriptures speak of angels (the word means “messengers”) who worship God in heaven, and in both testaments angels speak for God on earth. Michael is an angel whose name 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](http://www.sundaysandseasons.com)



***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

