



THE MESSENGER

ASCENSION Lutheran Church

February 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
- AI-Anon Meeting - Mondays at 7:30 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
Thom Kruse
- 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 February 11 at 7:00 PM

Getting to know you . . .

from Pastor Kobert's Desk



Greetings to you all!

It is a joy to be working with you all here at Ascension as your interim pastor. I hope to be able to help provide pastoral care for you as you seek to call a new pastor.

As this time together begins, I thought it might be helpful to share a bit more about myself with you all.

I grew up around Pittsburgh, in O'Hara township east of the city, graduated from Fox Chapel High School in 2005, and was accepted to Penn State New Kensington to study engineering. That degree decision only lasted a year before I changed majors and began to study Medieval History. I moved to State College for the 2007-08 school year and graduated in 2010 with two majors, Medieval Studies and History. During that time, I worked at Camp Lutherlyn over the summers, met my wife Cindy, and discerned that after graduating I would go to seminary.

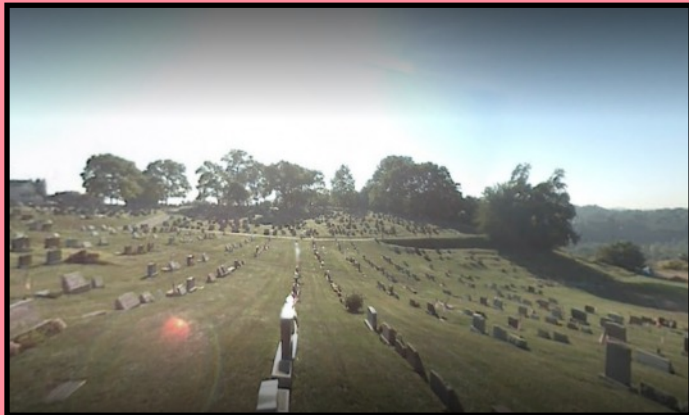
Cindy and I were married in June of 2010 and later that fall, I began my studies at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg. For internship we traveled to Rural Retreat Virginia, a small town located about an hour east of Bristol off I-81. As we prepared for my final semester in seminary, we found out that we were expecting our first child, and shortly after that we found out that I was assigned to the Southwest PA Synod.

I took my first call at Faith Lutheran in New Florence in the summer, and our son Logan was born that fall. Two years into the call Faith began to work with Hebron in Blairsville to share a pastor, similar to our current

Continued on page 2

Mount Calvary Cemetery

1715 Middletown Road
McKees Rocks, PA 15136
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 Kobert • Sharon Giza*

From Pastor Kobert's Desk (continued from pg 1)



Pastor Ryan Kobert

partnership!
I served both congregations for another two years before starting the call process that brought me to St. Paul's in Sewickley.

Since starting that call in 2018, our family grew, and we welcomed Nora into the world in 2019.

Logan, Nora, and I all practice Tae Kwon Do together, and I am active in the PTA at their school. We are also caretakers of a cat and dog and enjoy going for walks around the neighborhood.

This is a condensed version of my background, and I would be happy to sit and share more of my life story with you. I also look forward to getting to know many of you better, hearing your story, and learning how you have come to be a part of Ascension's life in ministry. Blessings to you all!

SUNDAY WORSHIP ASSISTANT SCHEDULE FEB. - MAR. 2025

**NOTE:
SUNDAY WORSHIP TIME
IS NOW AT 11:00 AM**

Date	Supply	Assisting Minister	Communion Assistant	Lector	Usher	Acolyte	Sunday (or special)	color	Council Update
Feb. 02	Pr. Ryan Kobert	Jeff Williams	Bob Dudek	Gib Palmgren	Volunteer	Volunteer	Presentation	WHITE	Kelly Bryan
Feb. 09	Pr. Ryan Kobert	Mary Thompson	Bob Thompson	Jason Eager	Volunteer	Volunteer	5 Epiphany	GREEN	Deb Whitfield
Feb. 16	Pr. Ryan Kobert	Jerry Wessel	Jeff Williams	Charlotte DeCola	Volunteer	Volunteer	6 Epiphany	GREEN	Bob Stathers
Feb. 23	Pr. Blair Morgan	Jennifer Burkholder	Bob Dudek	Jeff Williams	Volunteer	Volunteer	7 Epiphany	GREEN	Jeff Williams
Mar. 02	Pr. Ryan Kobert	Jerry Wessel	Avis Ritter	Thad Ritter	Volunteer	Volunteer	Transfiguration	WHITE	Jason Eager
Mar. 05	Pr. Ryan Kobert	Mary Thompson	Bob Thompson	Gib Palmgren	Volunteer	Volunteer	ASH WEDNESDAY	PURPLE	Kelly Bryan
Mar. 09	Pr. Ryan Kobert	Jeff Williams	Bob Dudek	Jason Eager	Volunteer	Volunteer	1 LENT	PURPLE	Sharon Giza
Mar. 16	Pr. Ryan Kobert	Jennifer Burkholder	Amy Kruse	Jeff Williams	Volunteer	Volunteer	2 LENT	PURPLE	Jerry Wessel
Mar. 23	Pr. Ryan Kobert	Jerry Wessel	Jeff Williams	Thad Ritter	Volunteer	Volunteer	3 LENT	PURPLE	Jeff Williams
Mar. 30	Pr. Ryan Kobert	Mary Thompson	Bob Thompson	Charlotte DeCola	Volunteer	Volunteer	4 LENT	PURPLE	Bob Stathers

NOTICE: Former Ascension Council President Jerry Wessel, author of this column, has resigned from Ascension's congregation and membership. Although this column and the opinions stated therein had previously been published in this issue of "The Messenger," it represents Mr. Wessel's personal opinions during his tenure as council president and does not reflect any official position of Ascension Lutheran Church.



ALC Council Meeting Highlights

Council meeting was held Tues. Jan. 14, 2025

AED Check: Performed by Sharon.

Call to order: 7:02 pm

Attendance: Jeff, Jerry, Bob T., Sharon, Thom, Jason, Bob S., Pastor Kobert, Debbie W.

Devotions: January: Bob February: Jason
Review Minutes of Last Meeting: Motion to accept as presented by Jerry, second by Debbie. Passed unanimously.
Officer Reports given. Old business discussed.

New business – election of officers and assignment of liaisons for 2025:

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

Christian Education: Jason Eager; *Youth:* Deb Whitfield;
Communications and Publications: Sharon Giza;
Fellowship, Social Ministry & Evangelism: Jeff Williams;
Finance and Stewardship: Thom Kruike; *Property:* Bob Thompson;
Worship and Music: Jerry Wessel; *Mutual Ministry:* Bob Stathers; *Personnel:* Kelly Bryan; *Call Committee:* Sharon Giza

Important Dates:

- Sunday Feb 2: Congregational Meeting w/ Installation of Council & Bulletin of Reports
- Sunday February 9: "Soup-er Sundae" party w/Welcome to Pr. Kobert
- Confirmation: June 1 • Yard Sale: June 7

Motion to adjourn: Jerry. Sharon second. 8:25pm.

Closing Prayer

Next Council Meeting: Tues Feb. 11, 2025 at 7 pm

Committee, he has said that we could call a Presbyterian or United Methodist minister to be our pastor. I'm a Lutheran, not a Calvinist or Wesleyan! We do not share the same theology. I do not want them teaching our youth. I encourage everyone to do their own research into the ELCA and alternatives.

BE ON YOUR GUARD!

Jerry Wessel

Ascension Council President

ACTS 20:31 "SO BE ON YOUR GUARD"

In this passage, St. Paul is warning the congregation at Ephesus about people from their own group distorting the truth. There have been divisions and schisms in the Christian church from its beginning. St. Paul dealt with several in his epistles. In 1054 AD the Orthodox church split from the Roman Catholic church. In 1517 AD Luther started the reformation. It is no wonder then that we see controversies and divisions in the church today.

To "Be on your guard," you should be aware of what is happening in Ascension's national church body, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). Many congregations are leaving the ELCA for other church bodies. Look up the ELCA's so-called social statements; the "Report on the diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility audit" recently published with recommendations to change congregations' constitutions; and other things said and done by the presiding bishop and other leaders in the church. See if you agree with them.

The North American Lutheran Church (NALC) was formed 14 years ago by pastors and congregations that disagreed with the ELCA's "WOKE" theology, ordination of people in same-sex relationships, support for abortion on demand, and transgender advocacy. NALC now has over 480 congregations that have left the ELCA. Look them up on the web along with other Lutheran groups like "Lutheran Coalition for Renewal" (CORE), www.lutherancore.org and "Lutheran Congregational Support Network" at lutherancongregationalupport.org which just became active November 26, 2024 because of constitutional changes being considered by the ELCA which may try to strip congregations withdrawing from the ELCA of all their land, buildings and bank accounts.

I for one am finding it very hard to stay in the ELCA. Every time a synod official has addressed the Call



FEBRUARY

Date	Member/Friend
6	Brittany Bielewicz Sue Thomson
8	Mary Hughes
11	Cindy Stathers
13	Nora Thompson
15	Conner Hughes
20	Bob Dudek
21	Marion Cerar
24	Jamie Cropper
27	Audriana DeCola

Best wishes & many blessings!



got NEWS?

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

A monthly gathering of members and friends of Ascension Church

MORE ISLAND PARADISES (!?) **Join the Lunch Bunch FEBRUARY 20th**

In January, the Ascension Lunch Bunch braved the cold, windy (and that day, very snowy) Pittsburgh weather to enjoy some fellowship in the Bahama Breeze. Yes, some participants still wore their flowered shirts, Island dresses and leis. Some however also wore long johns underneath - it was a cold day for the island! There was a warm breeze inside the restaurant, good food and drinks and warm conversations.

If you missed the island trip in January, give us a try in February when we visit another island. We will meet on balmy Neville Island in the scenic Ohio River on February 20th at 11:30 AM at Carmody's Grill, 4905 Grand Avenue. Please let Nancy Schreiber (412-859-3969) or George Kasich (412-726-1645) know by Tuesday, Feb. 18th if you plan to come so that sufficient warning may be given to Carmody's. The food is always good there, as will be the company, so if you can, please do try to attend. All are welcome!

~ Jerry Wessel

Happy Valentine's Day!
Friday February 14



**Semi-Annual
Congregational
Meeting
Sunday
February 2, 2025**
Following worship

Upcoming EVENTS

from Ascension Women's Group

A SUPER DAY . . .



On **Sunday February 9th**

Ascension's Women's Group will hold a
"SOUP-er Bowl Sundae" Lunch

A variety of delicious Soups
and Ice Cream Sundaes will be served!



The gathering will also feature a special
welcome to Pastor Kobert.

first



FIRST COMMUNION 2025

Anyone wishing to attend
First Communion classes
(held during the Sunday School hour at 10:00 am)
please contact Pastor Kobert ASAP so that
enough study books may be ordered.

communion

ASH WEDNESDAY

MARCH
5th
2025



Stay tuned
for the schedule of
Lenten and Easter
services for
2025



Please keep in your prayers:

- JoAnne Erwin, Dee Gratzmiller, Mary Honath, Norma Kohnen,
Lottie Lodge, Jean Marion, Betty Simpson, Rose Rahner,
Betty Borden, Nancy Jacobs – *shut-ins*
- Mary Jane McGinnis – *health concerns*
- Mary Miller, friend of Sharon Giza – *multiple medical issues*
- Thad Ritter – *health concerns*
- Bill McEwen – *multiple health concerns*
- Kraig Rahner, son of Rose Rahner – *critical health concerns*
- Tina Kruise, stepmother of Thom Kruise – *stage 2 throat cancer*
- Virginia Shar – *recovering from fractured ankle*



Ascension Lutheran Church has several **committees** that could really use extra members to help enrich our important ministry work.

Areas in which help is needed are:

Christian Education - assist with Sunday School education and activities

Youth - Plan activities and service events throughout the year for our young members, the future of our church

Communications and Publications - We need assistance with updating the ALC website (alcpgh.com) and ideas for messages to be placed on our beautiful new digital sign! If you are good with websites, media, etc., please join this committee!

SALT Committee - this committee (**S**erving **A**s **L**utherans **T**ogether) plans events throughout the year for our church to participate in, including Women's Bible Study and service to our community

Property - helps with maintenance of the church and grounds

Worship and Music - meets quarterly to discuss worship and music for the calendar year in the church

Please email us at office@alcpgh.com if you are interested in helping or if you have any suggestions. *Thank you!*

FEBRUARY LESSER FESTIVALS & commemorations

February 2 Presentation of Our Lord

Forty days after the birth of Christ we mark the day Mary and Joseph presented him in the temple in accordance with Jewish law. There a prophetess named Anna began to speak of the redemption of Israel when she saw the young child. Simeon also greeted Mary and Joseph. He responded to the presence of the consolation of Israel in this child with the words of the *Nunc dimittis*. His song described Jesus as a "light for the nations." Because of the link between Jesus as the light for the nations, and because an old reading for this festival contains a line from the prophet Zephaniah, "I will search Jerusalem with candles," the day is also known as Candlemas, a day when candles are blessed for the coming year.

February 3 Ansgar, Bishop of Hamburg

Missionary to Denmark and Sweden, d. 865

Ansgar was a monk who led a mission to Denmark and later to Sweden, where he built the first church. His work ran into difficulties with the rulers of the day, and he was forced to withdraw into Germany, where he served as a bishop in Hamburg. Despite his difficulties in Sweden, he persisted in his mission work and later helped consecrate Gothbert as the first bishop of Sweden. Ansgar had a deep love for the poor. He would wash their feet and serve them food provided by the parish.

February 5 The Martyrs of Japan, d. 1597

In the sixteenth century, Jesuit missionaries, followed by Franciscans, introduced the Christian faith in Japan. But a promising beginning to those missions—perhaps as many as 300,000 Christians by the end of the sixteenth century—met complications from competition between the missionary groups, political difficulty between Spain and Portugal, and factions within the government of Japan. Christianity was suppressed. By 1630, Christianity was driven underground. Today we commemorate the first martyrs of Japan, twenty-six missionaries and converts who were killed by crucifixion. Two hundred and fifty years later, when Christian missionaries returned to Japan, they found a community of Japanese Christians that had survived underground.

February 14

Cyril, monk, d. 869 and **Methodius, bishop, d. 885**
missionaries to the Slavs

These two brothers from a noble family in Thessalonika in northeastern Greece were priests and missionaries. After some early initial missionary work by Cyril among the Arabs, the brothers retired to a monastery. They later were sent to work among the Slavs, the missionary work for which they are most known. Since "Slavonic" had no written form at the time, the brothers established a written language with the Greek alphabet as its basis. They translated the scriptures and the liturgy using this new Cyrillic alphabet. The Czechs, Serbs, Croats, Slovaks, Ruthenians and Bulgars regard the brothers as the founders of Slavic literature. The brothers' work in preaching and worshiping in the language of the people are honored by Christians in both East and West.

February 18 Martin Luther

renewer of the church, d. 1546

On this day in 1546, Martin Luther died at the age of sixty-two. For a time, he was an Augustinian monk, but it is his work as a biblical scholar, translator of the Bible, public confessor of the faith, reformer of the liturgy, theologian, educator, and father of German vernacular literature that holds him in our remembrance. In Luther's own judgment, the greatest of all of his works was his catechism, written to instruct people in the basics of faith. And it was his baptism that sustained him in his trials as a reformer.

February 23 Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna

martyr, d. 156

Because he is said to have been known by John, the author of Revelation, as well as the important early church fathers Irenaeus and Ignatius, Polycarp serves as a vital link in church history. He was burned at the stake at age 86 for refusing to renounce his faith.

February 25 Elizabeth Fedde

deaconess, d. 1921

Fedde was born in Norway and trained as a deaconess. In 1882, at the age of thirty-two, she was asked to come to New York to minister to the poor and to Norwegian seafarers. Her influence was wide-ranging, and she established the Deaconess House in Brooklyn and the Deaconess House and Hospital of the Lutheran Free Church in Minneapolis. She returned home to Norway in 1895 and died there.



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

Contact Us
(412) 859-3711
pastor@alcpgh.com
office@alcpgh.com
music@alcpgh.com
mtcalvarycem@alcpgh.com

Ascension Lutheran Church
1290 Silver Lane
McKees Rocks, PA 15136
(Robinson Township)
Visit us on the web at
www.alcpgh.com

Ascension Lutheran Church
1290 Silver Lane
McKees Rocks, PA 15136

PLACE
STAMP
HERE

