



THE MESSENGER

ASCENSION Lutheran Church

MAY 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
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 May 13 at 7:00 PM

With Faith Like a Child



from Pastor Kobert's Desk

Just after Easter a few of our youth continued their journey of learning about communion. I say continued, because for their entire church-going life they have been exposed to the sacrament of communion. They have watched Pastor Joe, and others lead the liturgy, raising the bread and cup, speaking the words of Jesus,

and sharing it with the congregation. They've come forward for a blessing, and heard the words, "The body of Christ is given for you." and "The blood of Christ is shed for you."

As they enter this next step of their faith journey, Katie is leading them to dig deeper into why we share communion as people of God. Having conversations about how the promise of God is found in bread and wine is always a joy. The insightful questions and creative understanding of children is always a amazing, because they often have a unique way of seeing God that we as adults often fail to recognize. No wonder Jesus said, "let the little children come to me!"

The joy of watching the faith journey of a child goes beyond conversations about communion. As they wrestle with their faith, they ask earnest questions and have insights into the divine nature of God that give me pause. Children aren't concerned with church governance, they don't understand denominational orthodoxy, these are human constructions. At their age they have an unbiased view of the world and see God and God's creation in beautiful ways.

I have often been amazed at the questions my own children have asked as they discover more of God's creation and start to see how humanity interacts with God's world. They have a way of understanding the world and seeing how living in God's creation can be so simple, yet also point out how humanity has made it more difficult for ourselves. I've read somewhere that sometimes we just need to talk to a three-year old in order to understand life again, and I truly believe it.

Children, whether they are three years old or preparing for

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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 Members

*Judy Henry • Bob Hughes • Bette Ann Kallay
George C. Kasich • Joyce Leister
Pastor Ryan Kobert • Sharon Giza*

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

communion, have a developmentally different understanding of the world than adults do. We can each look at that branch that fell in the yard from the last storm and see completely different things. While an adult might see debris that needs to be removed before the grass can be cut, a child can see a baton, a sword, a bug swatter, a home for bugs, a puddle stick, a walking stick, and so much more. Their focus is more on what is directly before them and how it intersects their life right now, than on the future. What can be done with the blessing God put in front of us now?

In this line of thought I think that children have a great insight into what communion means that more of us could benefit from. We see the sacrament and focus on that future promise without remembering that the promise is also here in the present. This meal does not only prepare us for a future in God's realm, it enables us to live into the realm of God as it is right now!

I have shared the bread of life with adults who approach with such reserved reverence that it borders on resigned acceptance of a thing that reminds them of how terrible of a sinner they are, and I have shared this same bread of life with children who are simply giddy with excitement that they can hardly contain it, because they get to "hold Jesus!" They eagerly and with enthusiasm

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SUNDAY WORSHIP ASSISTANT SCHEDULE MAY-JUNE 2025

Date	Supply	Assisting Minister	Communion Assistant	Lector	Usher	Acolyte	Sunday (or special)	color	Council Update
May 04	Pr. Ryan Kobert	Jennifer Burkholder	Avis Ritter	Jason Eager	Volunteer	Volunteer	3 EASTER	WHITE	Jason Eager
May 11	Pr. Ryan Kobert	Jeff Williams	Jennifer Burkholder	Thad Ritter	Volunteer	Volunteer	4 EASTER Mother's Day	WHITE	Deb Whitfield
May 18	Pr. Ryan Kobert	Jerry Wessel	Bob Dudek	Daniel Giza	Volunteer	Volunteer	5 EASTER	WHITE	Jeff Williams
May 25	Pr. Ryan Kobert	Mary Thompson	Amy Kruise	Melissa DeCola	Volunteer	Volunteer	6 EASTER	WHITE	Jerry Wessel
June 1	Pr. Ryan Kobert	Mary Thompson	Bob Thompson	Gib Palmgren	Volunteer	Volunteer	"ASCENSION SUNDAY"	WHITE	Bob Stathers
June 8	Pr. Ryan Kobert	Jeff Williams	Jerry Wessel	Charlotte DeCola	Volunteer	Volunteer	PENTECOST	RED	Kelly Bryan
June 15	Pr. Ryan Kobert	Jerry Wessel	Bob Dudek	Jason Eager	Volunteer	Volunteer	HOLY TRINITY Father's Day	WHITE	Sharon Giza
June 22	Pr. Ryan Kobert	Jennifer Burkholder	Avis Ritter	Thad Ritter	Volunteer	Volunteer	PENTECOST 2	GREEN	Bob Thompson
June 29	Pr. Ryan Kobert	Mary Thompson	Bob Thompson	Daniel Giza	Volunteer	Volunteer	PENTECOST 3 SS. Peter & Paul	GREEN	Jason Eager

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

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.

Easter at Ascension Lutheran was very uplifting and encouraging with more than 125 people attending and a large number of children and youth counted in that number. It would be nice if we needed to add folding chairs for *every* Sunday service! Thanks to the choir and Johnathan for the music, Darlene for her work on the bulletin and other preparations, and all those - especially Pastor Kobert - who helped make the service special.

The death of Pope Francis the day after Easter has for me raised some parallels between the Roman Catholic Church and the ELCA. While many news stories have highlighted positives of Francis's reign, some have pointed out growing problems in the Roman church. One such story in Tuesday's *Wall Street Journal* (April 22) was titled, "Conservative US Catholics Gain Sway" and sub-titled, "Adherents revive old practices, grow more assertive as church enters new era." It goes on to say, "Behind the scenes, the conservatives were gathering strength in America, bound together by a conviction that liberalism in its many guises - political, social, theological - has run aground." Also, "They believe that a project to embrace modernity instead yielded empty pews." Several thought-provoking quotes by Catholics which I've seen include, "Everywhere the Church has accepted the modern world and its contemporary values, it's died" . . . "We felt like a lot of the Catholic institutions had lost the sense of their roots" and "The way to renew the Church is not to change the Church's teaching to try to be popular."

Soon the Roman Catholics will have a new Pope - will he go back to their church's roots or continue to try to please everyone and alienate many? Our synod will select a new bishop in June - will that person go back to the Lutheran confessions or continue to try to please everyone and alienate many? Whoever the College of Cardinals chooses when their Conclave meets will affect the Roman Catholic Church dramatically going forward. Likewise, decisions by the ELCA at this summer's Churchwide Assembly will dramatically affect the way our Lutheran church body will go forward.

What the Catholics decide won't affect us, but what the ELCA decides definitely will. As I have expressed before, I encourage you to stay informed about what is going on in the ELCA.

Sincerely,

Jerry Wessel

Ascension Council President



ALC Council Meeting Highlights

Council meeting was held Tues. Apr. 8, 2025

Call to order: 7:00 pm

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

AED Check: Validated

Review / Approve Minutes of Last Meeting: Motion to accept as presented by Debbie; Second by Sharon; Passed unanimously.

Pastor Report & Office Admin Report presented
Vice President Sharon Giza: Cemetery income for Feb.; Discussed email exchange with Pastor Asplin with regard to follow-up meeting – Jerry to coordinate.

Treasurer Bob Stathers: -Discussed the inclusion of financial information in Sunday bulletin.

Old Business: -Capital Projects(s) for 2025 – Property Committee is open to suggestions

Communications & Publications: *Sharon* - The electronic sign has up Easter Sunday and Holy Week schedule/timing

Fellowship, Social Ministry & Evangelism: *Jeff* - Visitations were completed; Pastor Joe is deploying on Easter Sunday for 9 months

Finance & Stewardship: *Thom* - Prep for internal audit will start at the end of the month; Late May/Early June is the plan of the execution of the audit

Mutual Ministry: *Bob S* - Met with Pastor Kobert and St. Paul's Mutual Ministry committee; Need to analyze if the Mutual Ministry description should be revised.

Personnel: *Kelly* - Need to review where we stand with training/background checks for those working with children.

Property: *Bob T:* Replaced drinking fountain valve; Replaced the hydrant valve at the pavilion; Tractor got repaired.

Worship and Music: *Jerry:* Discussed plans for Easter service setup.

Youth: *Deb Whitfield:* No Confirmation on Palm Sunday and Easter.

Important dates:

Sunday June 1: First Communion

Sunday June 1: Confirmation

Saturday June 7: Yard Sale

Pastor Kobert on vacation Sunday July 6 & 13

Motion to adjourn: Jeff; Second by Debbie.

Passed unanimously. **Closing Prayer at 8:11 pm.**

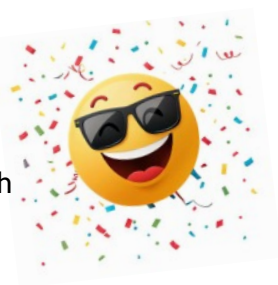
Next Council Meeting:

Tuesday May 13, 2025 at 7:00 pm

MAY BIRTHDAYS!

Date | Member/Friend

- 2 Charlotte DeCola
- 3 Rudy Marnich Jr.
- 4 Melissa DeCola
Amy Reckner
- 6 Betty Simpson
- 8 Bobby Brown
- 9 Bob Hughes
Paula Tomchak
- 10 Bob Bryan
- 14 Johnathan Endes
- 16 Megan Mezzio
- 17 Nathan Reckner
- 20 Dale Cerar
- 23 Janey Zoltun
- 24 Bob Thompson
- 28 George C. Kasich
- 30 Mike Kinney
Paul Tomchak
Emilia DeCola
- 31 Jill Lescallette
Jacob Lescallette



MAY ANNIVERSARIES!

Date | Members/Friends

- 20 Sharon & Brian Giza
- 22 Deb & Bill Whitfield
- 25 Cindy & Bob Stathers



* Dates to Remember *

- Sun May 11 Mother's Day
- Tues May 13 Council Meeting
- Mon May 25 Memorial Day
- Thurs May 29 Ascension Thursday
- Sun June 1 1st Communion & Confirmation
- Sat June 7 Annual Yard Sale
- Sun June 8 Pentecost Sunday

Lunch Bunch



A monthly gathering of members and friends of Ascension Church

IT'S ALWAYS SUNNY AT JIM'S . . .

Join the Lunch Bunch on MAY 15

Last month(in April), eleven Ascension Lunch Bunchers met at the recently established Firebird's in Bridgeville. No one drove their Firebird and none were even seen in the parking lot (bummer), but the food and company were great.

On Thursday May 15th the Bunch will go to Sunny Jim's Tavern, located at 255 Camp Horne Road. It is only about 20 minutes from church - if 79 North is not backed up - so you probably should give yourself extra time because 79 has been a mess lately.

You also may want to bring your sun glasses, since we thought "Sunny Jim's" would be a lot more fun than Cloudy Claude's or Rainy Janey's. The food is always good – although I don't think that

the menu is all sunny-side-up.

As is our custom, please let Nancy Schreiber (412-859-3969) or Jerry Wessel (412-787-1213)



know by Tuesday May 13th if you plan to join the Bunch for lunch so that sufficient places in the sun at Jim's can be reserved. Hope to see you then!

~ Jerry Wessel

Do Good, Do God

A reflection by Nancy Jacobs

The Book of James almost gave me a nervous breakdown! He instructs us in faith and wisdom, poverty and riches and warns us against prejudices.

After reading that, I felt like I failed a high school exam.

When you pray, he writes, you must have no doubts at all. I guess we humans look for an answer to Monday's prayer on Tuesday. No matter how "Christian" we are, we do suffer the occasional doubt. What then?

Well, look further to James.
Do Good, he tells us!
He reminds us that
Faith Without Action is dead!

The Lord waits for us to act . . . the church waits, the needy wait, the food bank waits . . .
what are WE waiting for?



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*
- Bette Ann Kallay – *recovering from recent knee surgery*
- Michele Alves-Martz, coworker of Emily Reckner – *health*
- Mike Voyten, coworker of Amy Reckner – *cancer returned*
- Linda Younkers, mother of Kathleen Howells – *stage 4 cancer*
- Hogan Moody, friend of Cy & Kathleen Howells – *cancer*

Ascension Church

YARD SALE *and Bake Sale!*

SATURDAY JUNE 7, 2025

8:00 AM to NOON

- ◆ \$10 per area (approx 10'x10')
- ◆ You keep all of the \$\$\$ from what you sell!
- ◆ We provide the space, you provide your own table/set-up and treasures to sell.
- ◆ Register by calling the church office (412) 859-3711 or by e-mailing Ascensionyardsale@gmail.com

Ascension Lutheran Church | 1290 Silver Lane
Robinson Township PA 15136 | 412-859-3711

From Pastor Kobert's Desk *(continued from pg 2)*

hold out their hand, and just as quickly eat the bread because they are included in this sacrament. Would that we all could come to the table of Jesus' promise with such excitement!

They see this blessing in front of them, and know that they are loved and included, right then and there. This blessing of Jesus' presence, as seen, tasted, smelled, and felt in communion has so much to offer us in the present. It sustains us as we find ourselves bogged down with stress or work. It nourishes our bodies when we feel weakened and weary. It reminds us of the joy and hope that Jesus brings when we find ourselves grieving. It is a very real presence of Christ here and now, not just for later.

These children, baptized in the name of Christ and filled with the Holy Spirit, are welcome at Christ's table. All who are baptized in the name of Christ are welcome at Christ's table. We are all welcome to the place of God's gift of life.

If you are curious about communion, for either your child or yourself, I am more than happy to hear your questions!

What does it mean to **you** to receive communion?

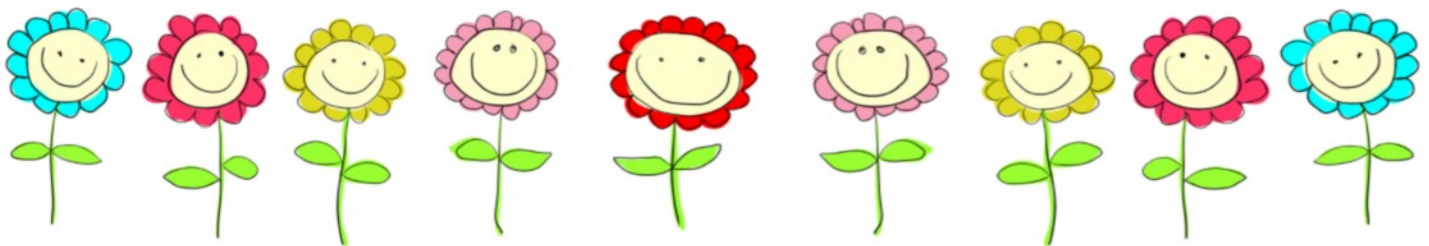
How can we go about receiving the kingdom of God as a little child does? ■

EASTER at Ascension!

Sunday April 20, 2025



From Pastor Ryan Kobert's inspiring words to the uplifting sounds of the Ascension Choir led by Music Director Johnathan Snatchko, Easter Sunday 2025 at Ascension Church was memorable and at capacity! An Easter Egg Hunt also was enjoyed by the children in attendance on that beautiful Resurrection Day.
photos by Sharon Giza



♥ Happy Mother's Day! ♥

Sunday May 11, 2025

LESSER FESTIVALS & commemorations

May 1 Philip and James, Apostles

Philip was one of the first disciples of Jesus, who after following Jesus invited Nathanael to “come and see.” According to tradition, Philip preached in Asia Minor and died as a martyr in Phrygia. James, the son of Alphaeus, is called “the Less” (meaning “short” or “younger”) to distinguish him from another apostle named James who is commemorated July 25. Philip and James are commemorated together because the remains of these two saints were placed in the Church of the Apostles in Rome on this day in 561.

May 2 Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria d.373

Best remembered for defending the teaching that Christ was fully God against those who taught otherwise, Athanasius was an influential church leader around the time of the Council of Nicea. He was banished from Alexandria five times for his views.

May 4 Monica, mother of Augustine d.387

Monica was married to a pagan husband who was ill-tempered and unfaithful, but whom she helped bring into the Christian faith. She repeated the influence on her son Augustine, who went on to become one of the greatest church teachers.

May 8 Julian of Norwich, renewer of the church, d. ca.1416

When she was about thirty years old, Julian (or Juliana) reported visions that she later compiled into a book, *Sixteen Revelations of Divine Love*, now a classic of medieval mysticism. The visions declared that love was the meaning of religious experience, provided by Christ who is love, for the purpose of love.

May 9 Nicolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf, renewer of the church, hymnwriter d.1760

When he was 22, a group of Moravians asked permission to live on Zinzendorf’s land. He agreed, and eventually worldwide Moravian missions emanated from this community. Zinzendorf participated in these missions, and is also remembered for writing hymns characteristic of his Pietistic faith.

May 14 Matthias, Apostle

Matthias was the apostle added to the Twelve after Jesus’ resurrection, as a replacement for the dead Judas Iscariot. He had traveled among the followers of Jesus throughout the Lord’s ministry. Formerly commemorated on February 24, Matthias’s celebration is moved to May 14 in agreement with most Western calendars.

May 18 Erik, King of Sweden, martyr d.1160

Erik is considered the patron saint of Sweden. As king of that nation, he tried to bring peace in the region, and to spread Christianity in Scandinavia. He was also known for his attempts to make fair laws and to protect those who were poor or sick.

May 21 Helena, mother of Constantine d.ca.330

Wife of the co-regent of the West, Helena (Helen) was mother of Constantine, who later became Roman emperor. After he was converted to Christianity, he influenced her also to become Christian. She is also remembered for traveling through Palestine and building churches on the sites she believed to be where Jesus was born, where he was buried, and from which he ascended.

May 24 Nicolaus Copernicus, d.1543; Leonhard Euler, d.1783; scientists

These two men were both scientists who helped to explain the wonders of God’s universe. Copernicus is best known for promoting the idea that the sun, not the earth, is at the center of our solar system. Euler was one of the founders of pure mathematics, and contributed to many other fields.

May 27 John Calvin, renewer of the church d.1564

Gifted both as a systematic theologian and as an interpreter of scriptures, Calvin embraced the Reformation, and as a preacher in Geneva, Switzerland, brought a theocratic government to it. He is regarded as the father of the Reformed churches.

May 29 Jiri Tranovský, hymnwriter d.1637

Considered the “Luther of the Slavs” and the father of Slovak hymnody, Tranovský trained at the University of Wittenberg in the early seventeenth century, was ordained in 1616 and spent his life preaching and teaching in Prague, Silesia, and finally Slovakia. He produced a translation of the *Augsburg Confession* and published his hymn collection *Cithara Sanctorum*.

May 31 Visit of Mary to Elizabeth

Sometime after the Annunciation, Mary visited her cousin Elizabeth. Elizabeth greeted Mary with the words “Blessed are you among women,” and Mary responded with her famous song, the *Magnificat*. Luke’s gospel tells that even John the Baptist rejoiced and leapt in his mother’s womb when Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting. On this festival two women are seen: one, the elder, bears the last prophet of the old covenant, and one, the younger, bears the incarnate Word and the new covenant.



***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

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PLACE
STAMP
HERE

