



THE MESSENGER

ASCENSION Lutheran Church

March 2026

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
Bible Study - Thursdays at 7:00 PM
Soccer Shots - Saturday mornings &
Wednesday evenings (*Spring-Fall*)



2026 COUNCIL

President – Sharon Giza
Vice President – Debbie Whitfield
Treasurer – Bob Thompson
Secretary – Katie Mercadante

2026 COUNCIL LIAISONS

Call Committee
Joyce Leister

Christian Education
Jeff Williams

Communications & Publications
Jeff Williams

Fellowship, Social Ministry
& Evangelism
Debbie Whitfield

Finance & Stewardship
Bob Stathers

Mutual Ministry
Sharon Giza

Personnel
Sharon Giza

Property
Don Tarbert & Bill Whitfield

Worship & Music
Katie Mercadante

Youth
Katie Mercadante & Debbie Whitfield

Next Council Meeting

Tuesday March 10 at 7:00 PM

Providing abundantly

*26 Look at the birds of the air:
they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns,
and yet your heavenly Father feeds them.*

Are you not of more value than they?

*27 And which of you by worrying
can add a single hour to your
span of life? 28 And why do you
worry about clothing?*

*Consider the lilies of the field,
how they grow; they neither
toil nor spin, 29 yet I tell you,
even Solomon in all his glory
was not clothed like one of these.*

~Matthew 6:26-29

from

Pastor Kobert's Desk

I had plans for this first weekend of the month. The kids were off school on Friday, they would come with me to Tae Kwon Do class, then we would have lunch followed by some time playing outside. Then spend some time writing this newsletter article and then work on a sermon for Sunday. We would go do our taxes and then head to a fish fry.

Saturday would be for finishing up the sermon, and then the weekly chores. Dishes, laundry, taking down the last of the Christmas decorations, vacuuming up the dog fur, and then a restful evening with the family. On Sunday would be worship at both congregations, a little rest in between, then leading the ecumenical prayer service at St. Paul's.

Well, that was a nice thought anyway.

As you may have heard, my weekend took a different path that sent both my grandmother and father into the ER and involved a lot of coordination to get everyone where they needed to be. Sometimes life takes us down a different path than the one we thought we were going to take.

And yet our heavenly Father is with us.

Through all the stressors and sudden changes of life, God is there. God is there in ER staff as they kindly care for their patients. God works through community members as they support us in time of need. God is present in the workers preparing food for hungry guests. God appears in colleagues who offer a listening ear and comforting word.

In all our planning and toiling in life, God is there providing abundantly. When all our planning goes awry and our toil seems in vain, God is there providing abundantly. It just looks different than what we expected or hoped for. In the moment it might be difficult to see God in action, but when the dust settles and we reflect on what just happened we can recognize where God was with us.

May you always be able to see how God is present in your life, even in those times when your best laid plans get upended. ■

Mount Calvary Cemetery

1715 Middletown Road
 McKees Rocks, PA 15136
 Robert J. Dudek, Superintendent
 mtcalvarycem@alcpgh.com



Mount Calvary Cemetery Board Members

*Judy Henry • Bob Hughes • Bette Ann Kallay
 George C. Kasich • Pastor Kobert • Joyce Leister
 Debbie Whitfield • Jeff Williams*

ASCENSION CHURCH BIBLE STUDY



EVERY THURSDAY at 7:00 pm

Under the guidance of longtime spiritualist and Ascension Church member Rich Mussman, sessions promise to be friendly, interactive, and "just right." Come for a perfect evening of reflection during Lent!

SUNDAY WORSHIP ASSISTANT SCHEDULE MARCH - APRIL 2026

Date	Supply	Assisting Minister	Communion Assistant	Lector	Usher	Acolyte	Sunday (or special)	color
Mar 1	Pr. Ryan Kobert	Jeff Williams	Al Morrow	Jason Eager	Volunteer	Volunteer	LENT 2	PURPLE
Mar 8	Pr. Ryan Kobert	Mary Thompson	Bob Thompson	Melissa DeCola	Volunteer	Volunteer	LENT 3	PURPLE
Mar 15	Pr. Ryan Kobert	Jennifer Burkholder	Avis Ritter	Thad Ritter	Volunteer	Volunteer	LENT 4	PURPLE
Mar 22	Pr. Ryan Kobert	Jeff Williams	Jennifer Burkholder	Rich Mussman	Volunteer	Volunteer	LENT 5	PURPLE
Mar 29	Pr. Ryan Kobert	Mary Thompson	Bob Thompson	Sharon Giza	Volunteer	Volunteer	PALM SUNDAY	PURPLE
Apr 3	Pr. Ryan Kobert	Jennifer Burkholder	n/a	Multiple TBA	Volunteer	Volunteer	GOOD FRIDAY 6:00 PM	NO COLOR
Apr 5	Pr. Ryan Kobert	Jeff Williams	Al Morrow	Gib Palmgren	Volunteer	Volunteer	EASTER SUNDAY	WHITE
Apr 12	Pr. Ryan Kobert	Mary Thompson	Bob Thompson	Rich Mussman	Volunteer	Volunteer	2 ND EASTER	WHITE
Apr 19	Pr. Ryan Kobert	Daniel Giza	Avis Ritter	Thad Ritter	Volunteer	Volunteer	3 RD EASTER	WHITE
Apr 26	Pr. Ryan Kobert	Jennifer Burkholder	Jeff Williams	Melissa DeCola	Volunteer	Volunteer	4 TH EASTER	WHITE



Council President's **CORNER**

A message from Council President Sharon Giza

Lent invites us into a shared journey — forty days of reflection, prayer, and intentional living as a community of faith. Together, we pause to listen for God’s voice, to care for our neighbors, and to make space for the Spirit to shape us in new ways.

Whether you choose to take something on, give something up, or simply be more mindful of God’s presence, know that you are not walking this path alone. Our church family walks together, supporting one another as we prepare our hearts for the joy and promise of Easter.

May this season strengthen our unity and deepen our faith.

Sincerely,
Sharon Giza

Congregational Meeting Highlights Feb. 22, 2026

- Call to order: Sharon Giza, Council President @12:15pm
- Mission statement was recited by all those in attendance.
- Pastor Kobert gave the opening prayer.
- Motion to accept the minutes from 12/7 meeting by Deb Walenchok, 2nd by Deb Whitfield. Motion carried.
- Opening Address (Sharon):
 - 4 new members
 - 185 confirmed members
 - Approximately 80 active members; approximately 50 that are eligible to vote
 - 21 members removed from membership for various reasons
 - Attendance is down, below Covid numbers and on special service Sundays as well.

Bulletin of Reports included submissions by:

Pastor Ryan Kobert; Council President; Call Committee; Christian Education; Communications/Publications; Creative Hands; Social/Evangelism; Music Ministry; Personnel; Property; Youth & Family; Office Administrator; Cemetery; Finance & Stewardship.

Motion to accept Bulletin of Reports. Joyce Leister, 2nd by Jennifer Burkholder. Motion carries.

Souls in Seats/Let it Shine presentation made by Bob Stathers. Motion to adjourn by Clay Marnich, Second by Deb Walenchok. Adjourned 1:26 pm



ALC Council Meeting Highlights

Council meeting was held Tues. Feb. 10, 2026

Call to order: 7:02pm

Attendance: Bob S, Jeff, Bob T, Don, Sharon, Deb W., Bill, Katie, Pastor Ryan

AED Check: Validated by Deb W.

Review/Approve Minutes of Last Meeting Passed unanimously.

Pastor Report & Office Administrator’s Report presented
Officer reports by Vice President & Treasurer.

Bob Thompson: Two-fold issue: need increase in membership/attendance and contributions.

Old Business: Resurfacing of parking lot; Upgrade/update office infrastructure. Bob S. will put together a proposal.

New Business:

- Updating the Church Directory to a “binder” format
- Ash Wednesday & Lenten services: need sign-ups to provide soup, bread, etc.
- Holy Week: Maundy Thursday @ St. Paul’s, Good Friday @ Ascension. Both services are at 6pm.

Committee Reports by •Christian Ed; •Communications; •Fellowship, Social Ministry & Evangelism; •Finance and Stewardship: *Marketing strategies, engaging the community, effectively promoting events such as Yard Sale, Pet Blessing.* •Personnel; •Property; •Worship & Music; •Youth: *Bowling Sun 2/15, Lucky to be Lutheran BINGO 3/15, General BINGO for everyone in May.*

Important dates: Feb 15 Mardi Gras Lunch after worship
Feb 18 Ash Wednesday service 5:00pm
Sunday Feb. 22 Congregational Meeting
Wednesday Feb 25: Soup & Service 6pm
Saturday June 6: Yard Sale

Motion to adjourn: Katie, Jeff

Next Council Meeting: Tues. Mar. 10, 2026 at 7 pm

2026 Easter Flowers

All orders with payment must be received in the office

by Sunday MARCH 15!

Same pricing as 2025. Order forms available in church, or check your email.





Lenten Soup Suppers

“Soup and Service”

HELD WEDNESDAY EVENINGS

MARCH 4 • 11 • 18 • 25

- Soup, salad and bread are offered 6:00-6:45 pm
- Midweek Service celebrated 6:45-7:00pm

Please consider signing up to bring soup (two varieties are offered weekly), salad or bread.

(No Midweek Service during Holy Week)

Holy Week & **EASTER** schedule of services

MAUNDY THURSDAY
6:00 pm April 2, 2026
St Paul’s Sewickley

GOOD FRIDAY
6:00 pm April 3, 2026
Ascension Church

EASTER SUNDAY

11:00 am April 5, 2026
Ascension Church



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*
- Tom Walenchok – brother-in-law of Deb Walenchok – *lung & brain cancer*
- Silas – 9-year-old grandson of Cy & Kathleen Howells – *recovery from brain tumor*
- Nancy Jacobs – *recovering at home!*
- Sharon Snatchko – John’s mother – *currently undergoing cancer treatment*
- Deb Walenchok – *lung cancer*

God’s Work, Our Hands

Make GIVING a part of your 2025 Lenten journey by adding to the collection of toiletry items and paper products for the Inter-Church Food Bank in McKees Rocks. Please help fill the containers in the hallway for delivery on Good Friday, April 3rd. God counts on all of us to share our bounty with our neighbors.
Thank You!

MARCH

Date | Member / Friend

HAPPY BIRTHDAY:

- 2 CJ Woods
- 4 Lynn Kinney
- 5 Ellen Randal
Michael Rodriguez
- 10 Jeff Williams
- 15 Nancy Schreiber
- 21 Debbie Williams
- 25 Michael Bayer
- 29 Mason Bryan



Happy Anniversary:

- 30 Gib & Jen Palmgren



YOUTH & family

We had a terrific turnout for our annual Family Bowling event at Paradise Island Bowling on February 15th. *(photos below)* Thanks to all who came out to enjoy some fun and fellowship!

Please join us for our next Youth and Family event after worship Sunday, March 15th. We will host our annual "Lucky to Be Lutheran" BINGO ... hope to see you there! *(see pg. 6)*



Lunch Bunch

A monthly gathering of members and friends of Ascension Church

The YARD awaits Lunch Bunch Mar. 19th

The Ascension Lunch Bunch had an even dozen members visit Downey's House in February. The pepperoni rolls were a hit and so was everything else people ordered. Men were outnumbered three to one by the women, but held their own in the conversations (at least we men thought so).

Ascension guys, here's your chance to better the odds on Thursday, March 19th when the Bunch goes to The Yard. No, not the church side-yard, but The Yard restaurant near Target in the Pointe at North Fayette (670 Chauvet Drive). We were there more than a year ago and the food was very good then. Hopefully they'll have some fresh new selections now, but also offer those great menu items as last time. As is our standard operating procedure, please let Jerry Wessel (412-787-1213) or George Kasich (412-726-1645) know by Tuesday March 17th if you plan to attend so we can make sure they have room in The Yard for all of us. It's a good chance to get out of the house and experience "almost" Spring (that starts a few days later). We hope to see more hungry people (both guys and gals) on the 19th. ~ Jerry Wessel

We sure had a "SOUPeR" Time!



Members of Ascension Church and Pastor Ryan Kobert (above) enjoyed the "Souper Sundaes" social event following worship on Sunday February 8.



AND we had a blast at our annual

Mardi Gras

Pancake Lunch!



**Sunday
Feb. 15**



**Family & Youth
special upcoming
EVENT:**

**"LUCKY TO BE
LUTHERAN"**

BINGO!



**Sunday March 15
Following Worship
Fun for everyone!**

LESSER FESTIVALS & commemorations

March 1 George Herbert

hymnwriter, d. 1633

An excellent scholar, Herbert served briefly in the English parliament, then became a parish priest. He was known for devoted care of his parishioners, as well as for writing poetry and hymns, including “Come, my way, my truth, my life.” He died at age 40.

March 2 John Wesley & Charles Wesley

d. 1791 & 1788; renewers of the church

These brothers led a revival originally intended to remain within the Church of England, one that involved frequent communion and advocacy for the poor. Except for a brief time in America, they worked in England. Charles was also a prolific hymn writer. After their deaths, their work led to the formation of the Methodist Church.

March 7 Perpetua & Felicity and companions

Martyrs at Carthage, d. 202

Vibia Perpetua was a noblewoman, and Felicity her slave, who were catechumens at Carthage, northern Africa. They, with four other catechumens, had defied the Roman emperor who had forbidden conversions to Christianity, and were put to death in the amphitheater.

March 10

Harriet Tubman, d.1913 Sojourner Truth, d. 1883

Renewers of society

Harriet Tubman, born into slavery, helped about 300 others to escape slavery until the institution was abolished. Sojourner Truth, whose birth name was Isabella, was freed after slavery was abolished, and discerned a call to be a preacher. Taking the name Sojourner Truth, she set out on an evangelistic journey, where people found her testimony to be deeply moving.

March 12 Gregory the Great

Bishop of Rome, d. 604

Born into wealth and power, Gregory was for a time the chief administrator of the city of Rome. Giving this up for a life in the church, he was elected pope in 590. He influenced public worship through the establishment of a lectionary and prayers to correlate with the readings. Gregorian chant is named in his honor.

March 17 Patrick

Bishop, missionary to Ireland, d. 461

A native of Britain, Patrick was kidnapped by pirates at age sixteen and sold into slavery in Ireland. After a few years, he escaped, returned home, and entered the ministry. Returning to Ireland, he successfully served as a bishop and missionary there.

March 19 Joseph, Guardian of Jesus

Though the Bible tells us little about the husband of Jesus’ mother Mary, we know that he was a carpenter by trade. He is also shown as being devoted both to God and to Mary and Jesus. It is assumed that he died before Jesus became an adult.

March 21 Thomas Cranmer, Bishop of Canterbury

martyr, d. 1556

Cranmer’s lasting achievement is contributing to and overseeing the creation of the Book of Common Prayer, which remains (in revised form) the worship book of the Anglican Communion. He was burned at the stake under Queen Mary for his support of the Protestant Reformation.

March 22 Jonathan Edwards

Teacher, missionary to Native Americans, d. 1758

A Puritan minister in Connecticut, Edwards is remembered as being a great preacher. Though his most famous sermon talks at length about hell, he was more concerned with God’s love. He served both as missionary to the Housatonic people in Massachusetts, and as president of the future Princeton University.

March 24 Oscar Arnulfo Romero

Bishop of El Salvador, martyr, d. 1980

Romero was deeply concerned with injustices evident toward the poor and powerless in El Salvador, and worked forthrightly against political repression. He was assassinated while presiding at the Eucharist in a chapel near the cathedral in San Salvador.

March 25 Annunciation of Our Lord

Nine months before Christmas, the church celebrates the annunciation. In Luke, the angel Gabriel announces to Mary that she will give birth to the Son of God, and she responds, “Here am I, the servant of the Lord.” Ancient scholars believed that March 25 also was the day on which creation began and was the date of Jesus’ death on the cross. Thus, from the sixth to eighth centuries, March 25 was observed as New Year’s Day in much of Christian Europe.

March 29 Hans Nielsen Hauge *renewer of the church, d. 1824*

Hauge was a layperson who wished to revitalize the church in Norway. Many professionals in the church feared his motives and influence; he was imprisoned for leading unauthorized gatherings.

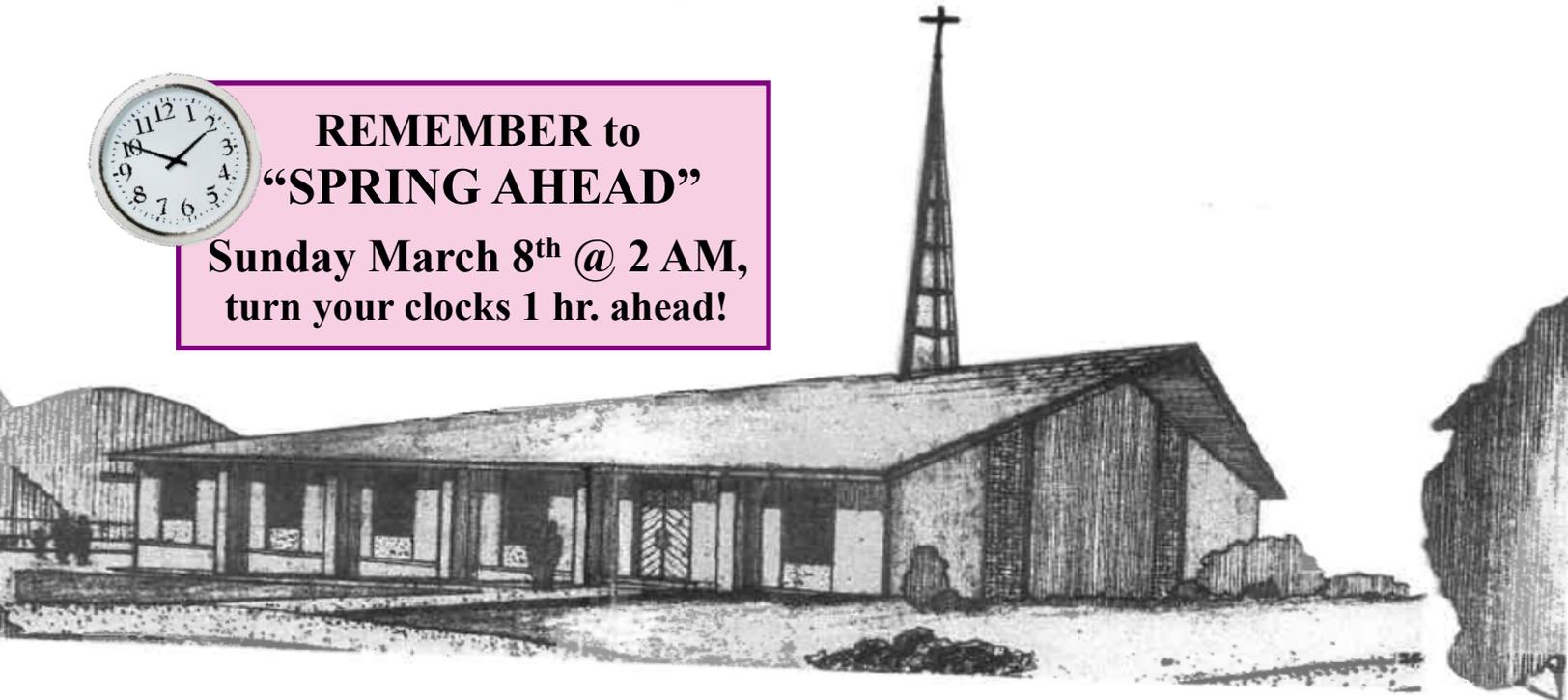
March 31 John Donne *poet, d. 1631*

After finishing his education at Oxford University, Donne seemed headed for a career in the English public service. But a series of circumstances led him into the ordained ministry. He is well known as a writer of both secular and sacred poetry.



**REMEMBER to
“SPRING AHEAD”**

**Sunday March 8th @ 2 AM,
turn your clocks 1 hr. ahead!**



*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

