



THE MESSENGER

ASCENSION Lutheran Church

MAY 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 May 12 at 7:00 PM

Sit ... Reflect ... Listen ... Seek



from Pastor Kobert's Desk

We are fast approaching the time of year when students will be graduating from high school and college. What happens next for them? That is a journey all its own. High school seniors hopefully have a plan for the fall, be it trade school, college, or jumping into a job right away.

College students might already have job opportunities lined up for themselves or are transitioning into a graduate program.

Making big decisions in life can be tough, whether it's choosing what to do after graduation, purchasing a home, choosing to be married, making medical choices for ourselves or loved ones, the list is endless. But the process of discernment is the same.

Often, this word is used in the realm of the Church to talk about our calling in life, but it is something that anyone can practice. Discernment is taking time to sit and recognize something, usually within ourselves. As followers of Christ, a time of discernment should help us become aware of our God given gifts and how we can use them in service to God. For some that does mean a call to ministry in the Church, but for most of us, it means a call to serve in the world in other ways.

This time of reflection can lead us on a journey of service to Christ in ways that we could never have imagined, but to do so we must be willing to ask ourselves some questions. What gifts has God given me to use? What is the purpose of these gifts? Where can my skills best be used to serve God's kingdom? What is holding me back from using them? These are some of the questions we can ask ourselves.

Sit with them. Reflect on the answers. Listen to the movement of the Holy Spirit through the process of discernment. Seek out others who will listen to your questions and reflections and give feedback on what they see in you.

This process is not meant to be done entirely on our own. It takes time, it takes community, it takes pausing to listen as God speaks through others. Discernment of our gifts and talents in this way is meant to help build up the body of Christ, and to hear how God is actively moving with us in the world.

And lest we think that this is something that we will only do once in our lives, remember that God makes all things new. This includes us. Whatever season of life we might find ourselves in, we can take time to reflect and discern what God is calling us to next. For tomorrow will not be the same as today, and will be a new opportunity to see how God can be shown to the world. ■

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*

IMPORTANT DATES

MAY 2026

Sun 10 Mother's Day

ALC Directory Deadline

Tue 12 Council Meeting

Thu 14 Ascension Day

Sat 16 Road Clean-up

Mon 18 Lutheran Table Talk

Thu 21 Lunch Bunch

Sun 24 Pentecost

Mon 25 Memorial Day

Sat 30 Kennedy Garden Fest

SUNDAY WORSHIP ASSISTANT SCHEDULE MAY - JUNE 2026

Date	Supply	Assisting Minister	Communion Assistant	Lector	Usher	Acolyte	Sunday (or special)	color
May 3	Pr. Ryan Kobert	Jeff Williams	Deb Walenchok	Jason Eager	Volunteer	Volunteer	5 TH EASTER	WHITE
May 10	Kathleen Howells	Mary Thompson	Bob Thompson	Sharon Giza	Volunteer	Volunteer	6 TH EASTER	WHITE
May 17	Pr. Ryan Kobert	Jennifer Burkholder	Al Morrow	Emilia DeCola	Volunteer	Volunteer	7 TH EASTER	WHITE
May 24	Pr. Ryan Kobert	Jeff Williams	Avis Ritter	Thad Ritter	Volunteer	Volunteer	PENTECOST	RED
May 31	Pr. Ryan Kobert	Mary Thompson	Bob Thompson	Gib Palmgren	Volunteer	Volunteer	THE HOLY TRINITY	WHITE
June 7	Kathleen Howells	Jennifer Burkholder	Deb Walenchok	Rich Mussman	Volunteer	Volunteer	PENTECOST 2	GREEN
June 14	Pr. Ryan Kobert	Jeff Williams	Al Morrow	Daniel Giza	Volunteer	Volunteer	PENTECOST 3	GREEN
June 21	Pr. Ryan Kobert	Mary Thompson	Bob Thompson	Charlotte DeCola	Volunteer	Volunteer	PENTECOST 4	GREEN
June 28	Pr. Ryan Kobert	Jennifer Burkholder	Avis Ritter	Jeff Williams	Volunteer	Volunteer	PENTECOST 5	GREEN



Council President's **CORNER**

A message from Council President Sharon Giza

Thank you to everyone who joined us for our Easter Sunday worship service to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus. It was truly wonderful to see so many new and familiar faces filling our sanctuary.

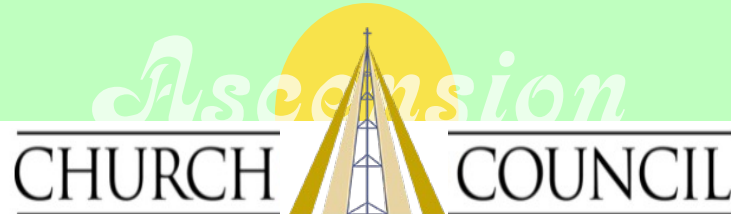
As we move into May, we have several opportunities to reach out to our community and highlight the great work our church continues to do.

- **May 16** – Robinson Township Road Cleanup We are once again responsible for our section of the annual township cleanup. Please consider volunteering your time to support this worthwhile effort.
- **May 30** – Kennedy Garden Spring Festival (12pm -4pm) We will have a table at the festival where we'll be handing out information about our church, the upcoming yard sale, and Vacation Bible School. A few more volunteers are needed to help with this important outreach event.
- **June 6** – **Annual Yard Sale** We will need as many volunteers as possible to help make this event a success. We are looking for donations of themed baskets to be raffled off to raise money for the McKees Rocks Food Panty. Signup sheets for basket donations are on the podium in the church hallway.
Sign-up sheets will also be available on the podium for those to assist with assigning vendor spots, helping with setup, running the **Basket Raffle**, and staffing the refreshment tent. We plan on having our church t-shirt to wear so we can proudly represent our congregation to the community.
- **Parking Lot Repaving Project** Our repaving contract has been signed, and the application for the interest-free loan has been submitted. We are now beginning our capital campaign to repay the cost over five years. Special project contributions —marked "Other" on church envelopes or through online giving — will go directly toward repaying the loan. We are already halfway to our 2026 goal of \$5,000 for the first year of the campaign. Please consider supporting this important safety and facility upgrade.

Thank you for assisting in these outreach events.

Sharon Giza

Ascension Lutheran Church Council President



ALC Council Meeting Highlights

Council meeting was held Tues. Apr. 14, 2026

Call to order: 7:00pm by Sharon and the reading of the mission statement.

Attendance: Sharon, Don, Katie, Bob S, Bob T, Debbie, Bill, Joyce, Jeff W, Pr. Ryan.

Devotion offered by Joyce.

March minutes minor spelling correction; approved.

Pastor & Admin reports submitted, also VP & Treasurer

Old Business: • Special Project: Apply for loan. Bob T to work on application; Don to work on contractor
• Church Directory update and VBS planning continue.

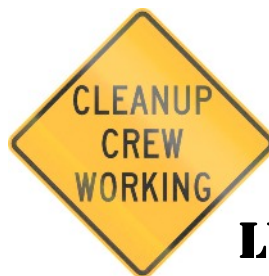
New Business: • Cleaning contract addressed; • Yard Sale particulars discussed. • Church T-shirts production
Upcoming events in which Ascension will participate:
• Kennedy Garden Festival May 30th; • Robinson Autumn Festival September 19th

Committee Reports Made by • Christian Education;
• Communication & Publication; • Fellowship, Social Ministry & Evangelism; • Finance & Stewardship;
• Personnel.

Property Cmte: 3 estimates for electrical work - Motion by Bob S to use CW Electrical, Katie 2nd. Carries.

Motion to adjourn: Don, 2nd by Bill. Carries.

Next Council Meeting: Tues. May 12, 2026 at 7 pm



**ROAD CLEANUP.
SATURDAY MAY 16.
10AM TO 1PM.
LUNCH IS INCLUDED.**

Synod Assembly 2026

**Friday, June 12 & Saturday, June 13
In-Person at PennWest California**

Voting members from our congregation have an important responsibility on behalf of all the members of our synod. This assembly is the highest legislative authority of our synod. **REGISTER** by May 15 at <https://www.swpasynod.org/assembly2026>

Special Project Fund: Parking Lot Repaving

The Special Project Fund ("Other" on your giving envelope) will be used to repay the loan for our parking lot repaving. Our goal is to raise \$5,000 per year for five consecutive years to fully repay this loan.

Any offerings marked "Special Project" will go directly toward this 5-year capital campaign. **Thank you for considering a contribution** to help improve the safety and accessibility of our parking lot. **Your support truly makes a difference.**

Calling All High School & College Graduates!

We want to celebrate your hard-earned accomplishments! Please email the office and let us know where you are graduating from **by May 23rd**. An Ice Cream Social will be held in your honor after worship on Sunday, June 14. We look forward to celebrating this milestone with you!

Garden Club Volunteers

We need one or two more volunteers to assist with our informational table at the Kennedy Garden Club Spring Festival. We will be handing out information about our church, our Yard Sale, and VBS along with seed packets labeled "Come Grow with Us!" The event date is Saturday May 30th from 12-4pm. If able to assist, please let Sharon Giza know ASAP at oneone2@verizon.net or 412-956-6222.

ELCA Lutheran Table Talks are coming!

SAVE THE DATE! Starting on **Monday, May 18th at 7:00 PM**, join Pastor Ryan for a time of conversation about ELCA Lutherans in the twenty-first century. We will gather at Carmody's Grille on Neville Island, 4905 Grand Ave. Join us!

Special Congregational Meeting Sunday, April 12 HIGHLIGHTS

Called to order @ 12:14pm by Council President Sharon Giza.
Pastor Kobert led the congregation in opening prayer.
Sharon read the Ascension Mission Statement.

Business:

- Proposal for updating the parking lot. Copies of the bid were distributed with ballots to all voting members.
- Needed as a project because our building is used by the community and as we grow our church, we want our parking lot to be in good working order.
- Applied to Lutheran Church Society for interest-free loan.
- Earliest scheduling for work to begin is August.

Balloting indicates pursuing the Lutheran Service Society loan.

Jeff Williams motion, Don Tarbert second to approve \$25,000 for the parking lot improvement project with Holbein Inc.

Capital campaign duration expected to last 5-7 years. Preference is to pay with an interest-free loan and a capital campaign.

Wrap up at April Council meeting.

Motion to adjourn by Deb Walenchok and 2nd by Rich Mussman.
Meeting adjourned at 12:27pm.



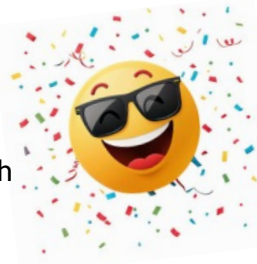
Please keep in your prayers:

- 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*
- Tom Walenchok – brother-in-law of Deb Walenchok – *lung & brain cancer*
- Deb Walenchok – *lung cancer*
- Lynn Simeoni – friend of Ascension Church – *terminal brain cancer*
- Justin Lauria – son of Barbara Cross – *prayers after 4/30 surgery*

♥ *Happy Mother's Day!* ♥
Sunday May 10, 2026

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



Lunch Bunch



A monthly gathering of members and friends of Ascension Church

MORE fun with Lunch Bunch MAY 21st

Fourteen Lunch Bunchers for their April meeting didn't drive any Firebirds but went to Firebird's Wood Fired Grill in Bridgeville anyway. The food, service and conversations were all very good - if you missed it, we are sorry, since we may not return there for a year or so.

However, you do have a chance on **Thursday May 21st** to join the group at Sal's, 2764 Darlington Road, Beaver Falls, Pa. (though it's really in Chippewa - about 45 minutes up HW 376 - an easy drive from Ascension). We learned on previous visits there that the place is not named for a Sally or a mule named Sal that spent 15 years on the Erie Canal, but maybe we will find out who Sal really is this time. We also learned that the food is very good there, well worth the scenic drive (hopefully on a pretty day) to get there. As is our custom, please let George Kasich (412)726-1645 or Jerry Wessel (412)787-1213 know by Tuesday the 19th if you plan to attend so Sal (whoever that is) will have sufficient places reserved for all those attending. We hope to see some newcomers there! ~ *Jerry Wessel*

CHURCH DIRECTORY UPDATES DUE MAY 10

Thanks to all who have responded to our call for UPDATED directory information! If you haven't done so already, please use the Google Form link which was emailed to Ascension members, or use the PINK sheet in the hallway to manually update and submit your information.

NOTE: All updates must be submitted by MAY 10 to be included in the "New & Improved" Ascension Member Directory!

Questions: see *Katie Mercadante* or *Don Tarbert*



AUTISM SPEAKS!

Jacob Lescallette shared his own autism journey at Ascension Church during Autism Awareness Month, assisted by cousin

Nora Thompson.

Ascension Church



AND **Beautiful Bountiful Baskets Raffle**!

SATURDAY JUNE 6, 2026

*** 8AM to NOON ***

→ Looking to sell? We provide the space, you provide your own table/set-up and treasures to sell.

\$10 per 10x10 spot, pre-paid by May 30th.

Otherwise, \$20 per spot "at the door."

NON-REFUNDABLE. Register by e-mailing

Ascensionyardsale@gmail.com

or call (412) 859-3711

2026 Yard Sale

"Beautiful Bountiful Baskets" RAFFLE CREATE A BASKET TO DONATE!

This year, in place of our traditional Bake Sale, we will be hosting a Basket Raffle featuring a variety of themed baskets donated by our members. All proceeds will support the McKees Rocks Food Pantry. A sign-up sheet is available on the hallway podium with suggested basket themes for anyone who would like to donate a filled basket. We will still offer hot dogs, chips, and refreshments during the Yard Sale, so be sure to stop by, enjoy the day, and help us support a great cause. Thank you for your generosity and community spirit!

A sign-up sheet for volunteers to help with Yard Sale also will be on the podium beginning in May. We need as many volunteers as possible to make our 2026 Yard Sale a success.

Easter at Ascension

On Sunday April 5th, Pastor Ryan Kobert welcomed a churchful of members, family and friends to celebrate the resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ at the 11am worship service.



photos by Sharon Giza

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

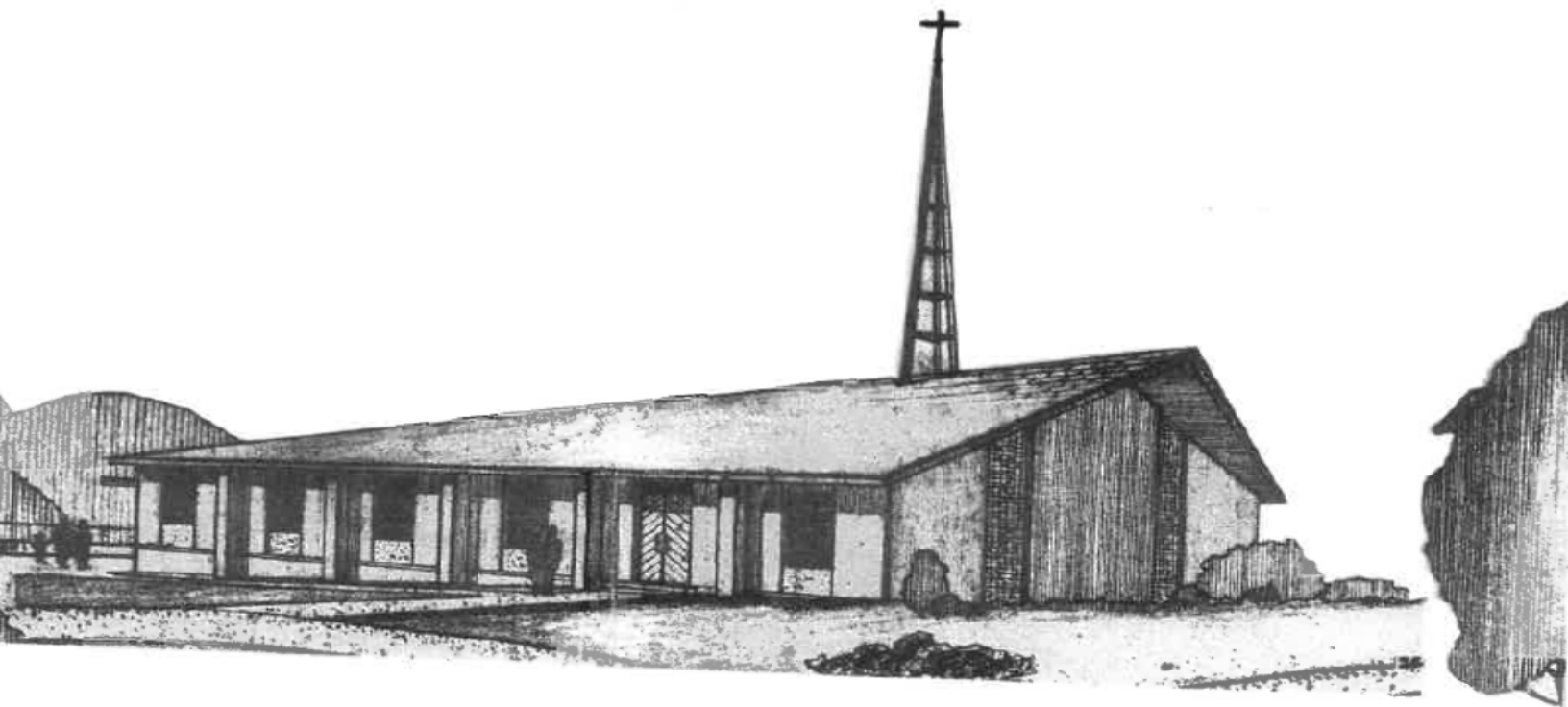
Gifted both as a systematic theologian and as an interpreter of scriptures, Calvin embraced the Reformation, and as a preacher in Geneva, Switzerland, brought a theocratic government to it. He is regarded as the father of the Reformed churches.

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, who 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.*



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PLACE
STAMP
HERE

