



THE MESSENGER

ASCENSION Lutheran Church

AUGUST 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)
* on hiatus for the summer

ASCENSION CHURCH

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 August 4 at 7:00 PM

Food for Thought: Daily Bread

by Robert J Lohrmann



In the Small Catechism's section on the Lord's Prayer, Martin Luther listed good government as part of our prayer for "daily bread."

Expanding on this in the Large Catechism, he wrote: "Indeed, the greatest need of all is to pray for the civil authorities and government, for it is

chiefly through them that God provides us daily bread and all the comforts of this life" (*The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church; Fortress, 2000*).

With such words, Luther affirmed the important, God-given roles that political life and civic engagement play in our world. Just like God created families for support at home and the church to share the gospel, Luther believed that God created government to care for the secular communities in which we live.

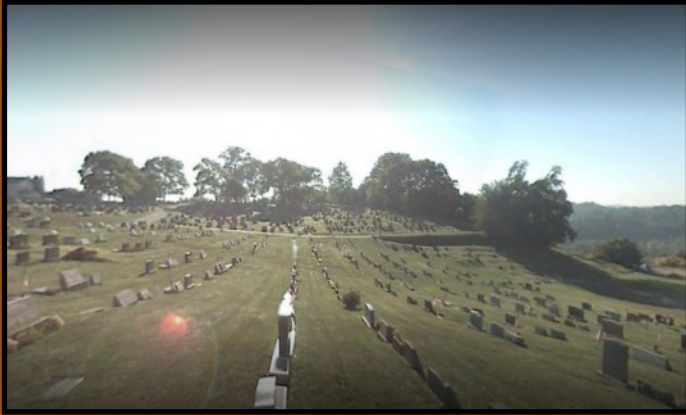
Luther knew that receiving daily bread is not an abstract issue. Getting real food to real stomachs means having functional economic and legal systems. Good governments provide fair weights and measures, promote honest business practices and maintain environmental protection so people can receive healthy nourishment. For Luther, good political leadership also helps share God's blessing of daily bread by supporting stability and peace: "For where dissension, strife, and war prevail, there daily bread is already taken away or at least reduced" (*Book of Concord*).

For this reason, Luther went on to say, "It would therefore be fitting if the coat of arms of every upright prince were emblazoned with a loaf of bread ... or if a loaf of bread were stamped on coins, in order to remind both princes and subjects that it is through the princes' office that we enjoy protection and peace and that without them we could neither eat nor preserve the precious gift of bread" (*Book of Concord*).

continued on page 2

Mount Calvary Cemetery

1715 Middletown Road
McKees Rocks, PA 15136
Robert J. Dudek, Superintendent
mtcalvarycem@alcpgh.com
412-331-0780
All Denominations Welcome



Mount Calvary Cemetery Board Members

Bob Hughes • Bette Ann Kallay

George C. Kasich • Pastor Kobert • Joyce Leister

Debbie Whitfield • Jeff Williams

Food for Thought: Daily Bread *(continued from pg 1)*

Imagine a loaf of bread being featured on our money, flags and courthouses! Imagine citizens knowing that the first and last job of our political leaders and civic institutions is to make sure that all people have what they need to be healthy and whole in daily life! How might those beliefs positively impact you and your community?

This Lutheran political commitment makes a practical difference by giving everyone a role to play in how God answers our prayer for daily bread. Those who grow, prepare, transport, buy, sell, cook, serve and share food are part of God's abundant blessings for the world. Politicians and civil servants who help maintain the peace, write and enforce fair policies, and oversee public safety are part of fulfilling this prayer too. Honest businesspeople, hardworking employees, thoughtful citizens, caring friends and loving family members all contribute to the nourishment of those around them.

A politics of "daily bread" allows us to see how God's abundance, good government and active citizenship come together all at once. ■

Excerpted from Martin J. Lohrmann's article "Good Government is Daily Bread" (Living Lutheran July 9, 2026). Lohrmann is associate professor of Lutheran confessions and heritage at Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa.

SUNDAY WORSHIP ASSISTANT SCHEDULE AUGUST - SEPTEMBER 2026

<u>Date</u>	<u>Supply</u>	<u>Assisting Minister</u>	<u>Communion Assistant</u>	<u>Lector</u>	<u>Usher</u>	<u>Acolyte</u>	<u>Sunday (or special)</u>	<u>color</u>
Aug 2	Kathleen Howells	Mary Thompson	Bob Thompson	Charlotte DeCola	Volunteer	Volunteer	PENTECOST 10	GREEN
Aug 9	Pr. Ryan Kobert	Jennifer Burkholder	Al Morrow	Sharon Giza	Volunteer	Volunteer	PENTECOST 11	GREEN
Aug 16	Pr. Ryan Kobert	Jeff Williams	Avis Ritter	Emilia DeCola	Volunteer	Volunteer	PENTECOST 12	GREEN
Aug 23	Pr. Ryan Kobert	Mary Thompson	Deb Walenchok	Jeff Williams	Volunteer	Volunteer	PENTECOST 13	GREEN
Aug 30	Pr. Ryan Kobert	Daniel Giza	Jeff Williams	Jason Eager	Volunteer	Volunteer	PENTECOST 14	GREEN
Sept 6	Pr. Ryan Kobert	Jeff Williams	Al Morrow	Rich Mussman	Volunteer	Volunteer	PENTECOST 15	GREEN
Sept 13	Pr. Ryan Kobert	Mary Thompson	Bob Thompson	Gib Palmgren	Volunteer	Volunteer	PENTECOST 16	GREEN
Sept 20	Pr. Ryan Kobert	Jeff Williams	Avis Ritter	Thad Ritter	Volunteer	Volunteer	PENTECOST 17	GREEN
Sept 27	Pr. Ryan Kobert	Daniel Giza	Deb Walenchok	Melissa DeCola	Volunteer	Volunteer	PENTECOST 18	GREEN



Council President's **CORNER**

A message from Council President Sharon Giza

As summer winds down and the back-to-school season approaches, there is a wonderful energy building here at Ascension. We are eagerly preparing for our upcoming **Vacation Bible School**, and I want to extend heartfelt thanks to everyone who will be volunteering their time or donated items. Your generosity makes this ministry possible.

On **Sunday, August 23rd**, we will be blessing backpacks for students and school personnel as they begin a new school year. We are also collecting items to help restock the **Montour High School pantry**, focusing on **paper products** and **cookie/cake mixes with icing**. Every contribution supports students and families in our community.

A huge thank-you to everyone who has donated toward our **parking lot loan**. We have already surpassed **\$5,000**, and we will continue working toward our long-term goal of **\$25,000 over five years**. Your support is deeply appreciated as we strive to pay off this loan as soon as possible.

Looking ahead, **Rally Day** will be held on **September 13th**. Watch for more details about our covered-dish lunch following worship as we celebrate the start of our Sunday School year.

Sincerely,

Sharon Giza

Ascension Lutheran Church Council President



ALC Council Meeting Highlights

Council meeting was held Tuesday July 14, 2026

Call to order: Sharon 7:00pm

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

Review/Approve Minutes of June Meeting

Pastor Report, Office Administrator's Report

Old business: VBS updates given.

New business:

- August Council Meeting date – currently is during VBS week; August 4th best date.
- Rally Day – September 13th
- Blessing of quilts date? September?

➤Vice President – *Debbie Whitfield* Mt Calvary purchased Golf Cart; plumbing repairs, garage and lines to house.

➤Fellowship, Social Ministry & Evangelism *Debbie Whitfield* Ingram days, Robinson days Sept 19 - need shifts - hours 12-9pm Wear green tees. Oktoberfest planning post-Rally Day.

➤Finance & Stewardship *Bob Stathers* 32 congregants for outside worship last week. Thrivent Choice Dollars, Action Dollars need allocate to ALC

➤Property *Don Tarbert & Bill Whitfield* Fire Inspection now required. Projects completed, AC in window needs secured. Power washing turned out great.

➤Youth *Katie Mercadante & Debbie Whitfield* Tentative calendar set up, Social Time after Service? Lemonade, treats, for conversation? Post or prior service? Offset weeks with Bible Study? Cider in Fall?

Motion to adjourn & Closing Prayer.

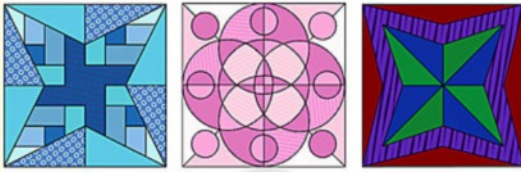
Next Council Meeting: Tuesday August 4th at 7 pm



RALLY DAY 2026

SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 13





Ascension's

Creative Hands Group

desperately need some willing hands & generous hearts to

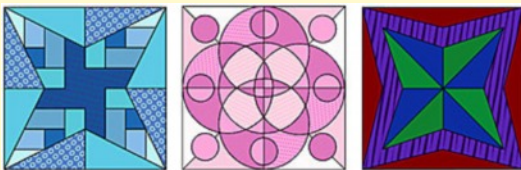
VOLUNTEER

and help to fulfill their mission to create and provide **QUILTS** for those in need!

The group gets together every **Wednesday from 11am to 1pm** – that's only **TWO** hours – to cut, piece, sew and finish quilts for distribution through Lutheran World Relief.

Also needed are "old sheets and pillow cases" – gently used and in re-useable condition – to use for the creating of these one-of-a-kind quilts.

Contact Darlene Witt, Jennifer Burkholder or Lynn Kinney to give them the good news that **YOU** will be happy to help.



Thanks - a 'LOT,' ...again!



After a LOT of hard work and a LOT of generosity, Ascension's parking lot was resurfaced on June 24, 2026, and the striping was done the following week.

SPECIAL PROJECT FUND: PARKING LOT RE-SURFACING YES! WE HAVE ACHIEVED THE FIRST \$5,000!

The Special Project Fund ("Other" on your giving envelope) will continue to be used to repay the loan from the Lutheran Church Extension Society (LCES) for our recent parking lot re-surfacing. Our goal was established at the outset of this project to raise \$5,000 per year for five consecutive years to fully repay this loan.

As of Sunday July 5th, your generosity has yielded sufficient funds to cover the first \$5,000!

We began "Round 2" of our \$25,000 goal during the month of July 2026 as our Special Projects Fund has reset to the next \$5K. Any offerings marked "Special Project" will go directly toward this ongoing capital campaign.

Thank you for considering a contribution for the safety and accessibility of our parking lot.

SAVE THE DATE!!

RALLY DAY

2026

SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 13

Blessing of backpacks Sunday Aug. 23



all teachers, counselors, school personnel and especially **STUDENTS** are encouraged to bring their backpacks, briefcases, etc. for a special blessing to ensure a successful new school year!

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS!

Date | Member/Friend

- 1 Katy Thompson
- 4 Nancy Jacobs
- 6 Mary Jane McGinnis
- 7 Emily Paladino
- 9 Bonita Stephenson
- 10 London Rickerd
- 12 Raleigh Rickerd
- 14 Abigail Lescalette
- 15 Finn Randal
- 17 Matt Bryan
- 28 Rose Marie LaQuinta



AUGUST ANNIVERSARIES!

Date | Members/Friends

- 2 Bob & Judy Bryan
- Bill & Suzie McEwen
- 25 Drew & Joyce Leister
- Thad & Avis Ritter



AUGUST 2026

IMPORTANT DATES

- Tue 04 Council Meeting**
- Sun 9 Outdoor Worship**
- Mon 10-Fri 14 VBS week**
- Fri 14 Family Bonfire**
- Sun 23 Outdoor Worship**

Lunch Bunch



A monthly gathering of members and friends of Ascension Church

Join the Lunch Bunch Thursday Aug. 20!

On Thursday July 16th the **Ascension Lunch Bunch** gathered at La Cucina in Weirton, WV. The food was good and as usual too much for most of us to finish. The conversations were not too much for us however, and we greatly enjoyed each other's company. I also was able to unload a dozen zucchini, a couple to some unfortunate ladies who happened to be leaving at the same time the rest of us did. If you did not attend, think of the many pounds of zucchini you missed out on (or were saved from)!

For August's lunch on Thursday the 20th, the group considered several weather-related locations - Rainy Randy's, Cloudy Claude's, Foggy Fred's and Overcast Olive's. However, we settled on **Sunny Jim's** at 255 Camp Horne Road. It is a shorter drive than our last couple of outings, though sunny weather is not assured, despite the name. We know the food will be good though and hope to have a lot of attendees.

Please let George Kasich (412)726-1645 (or tell him at church) or Jerry Wessel (412) 787-1213 know by Tuesday, August 18th if you plan to join the Bunchers. If you need a ride or want to convoy from Ascension, let one of us know and we will make it happen. The zucchini season will probably be over by then, so don't let that scare you off! ~ Jerry W.



ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH MEMBERSHIP INITIATIVE

>We recently participated in the **Kennedy Garden Club Spring Festival** to help spread the word about our church and the wonderful things we do for the community.

>**Looking ahead**, we will host our **Vacation Bible School the week of August 10-14**. Please share this with family and friends — VBS is open to children ages 4 through 4th grade, and we would love to welcome new faces.

>**This fall**, we will also have a table at the Robinson Autumn Festival as another opportunity to introduce our church to the community.

>**To grow our congregation**, we truly need everyone's support. Invite a friend or family member to worship with us, and encourage them to join in our many outreach events throughout the year. Together, we can continue building a vibrant, welcoming church family.



WHAT A MESS!
VBS

Ascension Lutheran Church
1290 Silver Lane
Robinson Twp.

Vacation Bible School

August 10-14 | 5:30-8pm

Campfire Celebration

August 14

Register Here



Suggested Donation:
\$5 per child

Ages 4 - 4th

Questions:

ascensionvbs15136@gmail.com

Grade

must be potty trained

VBS BONFIRE!

Join us on **Friday, August 14th** for the family bonfire concluding VBS week. Help celebrate a messy week of fun and faith with s'mores! **All are welcome --** *you do not need to be attending nor volunteering at VBS to come to the bonfire.*

Back-to-School Donation Drive

to assist the Montour High School Supplies Pantry.

The following items are most needed:

- Paper products (tissues, toilet paper, paper towels)
- Cake and cookie mixes and icing

Donations taken thru August 23rd

Please add your donation items to the boxes in the hallway.

Pantry serves 40 families in the Montour School District.

Thanks to Ascension's **Basket Raffle** at the 2026 Yard Sale, a donation of \$1,188.00 was made to the Inter-Church Food Bank in McKees Rocks.

Program Director Donna Pollard sends this

Thank-You:

Dear Council & Congregation,

Much thanks for your very generous donation to Interchurch Food Bank. Your continued support means so much to us.

☀️ OUTDOOR WORSHIP

Weather permitting, Sunday worship will be held outdoors in the pavilion on the 2nd & 4th Sunday, **AUGUST 9 & 23**

Please keep in your prayers:

- JoAnne Erwin, Dee Gratzmiller, Norma Kohnen, Lottie Lodge, Jean Marion, Betty Simpson, Rose Rahner, Betty Borden, Virginia Shar – *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*
- Nancy Jacobs – *prayers for better health*
- Bob Thompson – *continued recovery from leg injury*
- Liz Eisenhauer – friend of Katie M. *continued recovery, childbirth complications*
- Monica Esposito – daughter-in-law of Deb Walenchok – *early-stage breast cancer*

To update a status or add to this prayer list, please email Ascension office office@alcpqh.com

AUGUST LESSER FESTIVALS & commemorations

August 8 - Dominic, d. 1221 *founder of the Order of Preachers (Dominicans)*

Dominic was a Spanish priest who saw the wealth of the clergy as a stumbling block for the church, so he formed a movement, the Order of Preachers (commonly called Dominicans) devoted to itinerant preaching and living in poverty.

August 10 - Lawrence, d.258 *deacon, martyr*

As one of the seven deacons of the church at Rome, Lawrence was responsible for the church's financial matters and for the care of the poor. Asked by the emperor to gather the church's treasure, he presented a collection of orphans, lepers, and the like. The enraged emperor Valerian had him put to death.

August 11 - Clare of Assisi d. 1253 *Abbess of San Damiano*

At age eighteen, Clare of Assisi heard Francis preach a sermon in a church in town. From that time, she determined to follow in his example of Christian living. With Francis's help (and against the wishes of her father) she and a growing number of companions established a women's Franciscan community, called the Order of Poor Ladies, or Poor Clares. She became a confidante and advisor to Francis, and in standing up against the wishes of popes for the sake of maintaining complete poverty, she helped inspire other women to pursue spiritual goals.

August 13 - Florence Nightingale d. 1910; Clara Maass d. 1901 *renewers of the church*

Nightingale was born in England, and horrified her wealthy family by deciding to become a nurse. Trained at Kaiserswerth, Germany, with a Lutheran order of deaconesses, she led a group of nurses in ministering in the midst of the Crimean War, and worked for hospital reform. **Maass**, a native of New Jersey, also was a war nurse, and volunteered as a subject for research on yellow fever. She died of the disease.

August 14 - Maximilian Kolbe, d. 1941; Kaj Munk, d. 1944; *martyrs*

Kolbe was a Franciscan priest, born Raymond Kolbe. After spending some time working in Asia, he returned in 1936 to his native Poland, where he supervised a friary that came to house thousands of Polish war refugees, mostly Jews. The Nazis were watching, however, and he was arrested. Confined in Auschwitz, Kolbe gave generously of his meager resources and finally volunteered to be starved to death in place of another man who was a husband and father. After two weeks, he was executed by a lethal injection. **Munk**, a Danish Lutheran pastor and playwright, was an outspoken critic of the Nazis, who occupied Denmark during the Second World War. His plays frequently highlighted the eventual victory of the Christian faith despite the church's weak and ineffective witness. The Nazis feared Munk because his sermons and articles helped to strengthen the Danish resistance movement. He was executed by the Gestapo on January 5, 1944.

August 15 - Mary, Mother of Our Lord

The church (including Martin Luther) honors Mary with the Greek title *Theotokos*, meaning God-bearer. Origen first used this title in the early church, and the councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon upheld it. Luther upheld this same title in his writings. The honor paid to Mary as *Theotokos* and mother of our Lord goes back to biblical times, when Mary herself sang, "from now on all generations will call me blessed" (Luke 1:48). Mary's life revealed the presence of God incarnate, and it revealed God's presence among the humble and poor. Mary's song, the *Magnificat*, speaks of reversals in the reign of God: the mighty are cast down, the lowly are lifted up, the hungry are fed, and the rich are sent away empty-handed.

August 20 - Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux, d. 1153

A Cistercian monk, Bernard was a man of great spirituality who wrote mystical works and criticized those whom he thought took an overly intellectual approach to the faith. He became an abbot, and wrote several hymns that are still beloved today.

August 24 - Bartholomew *Apostle*

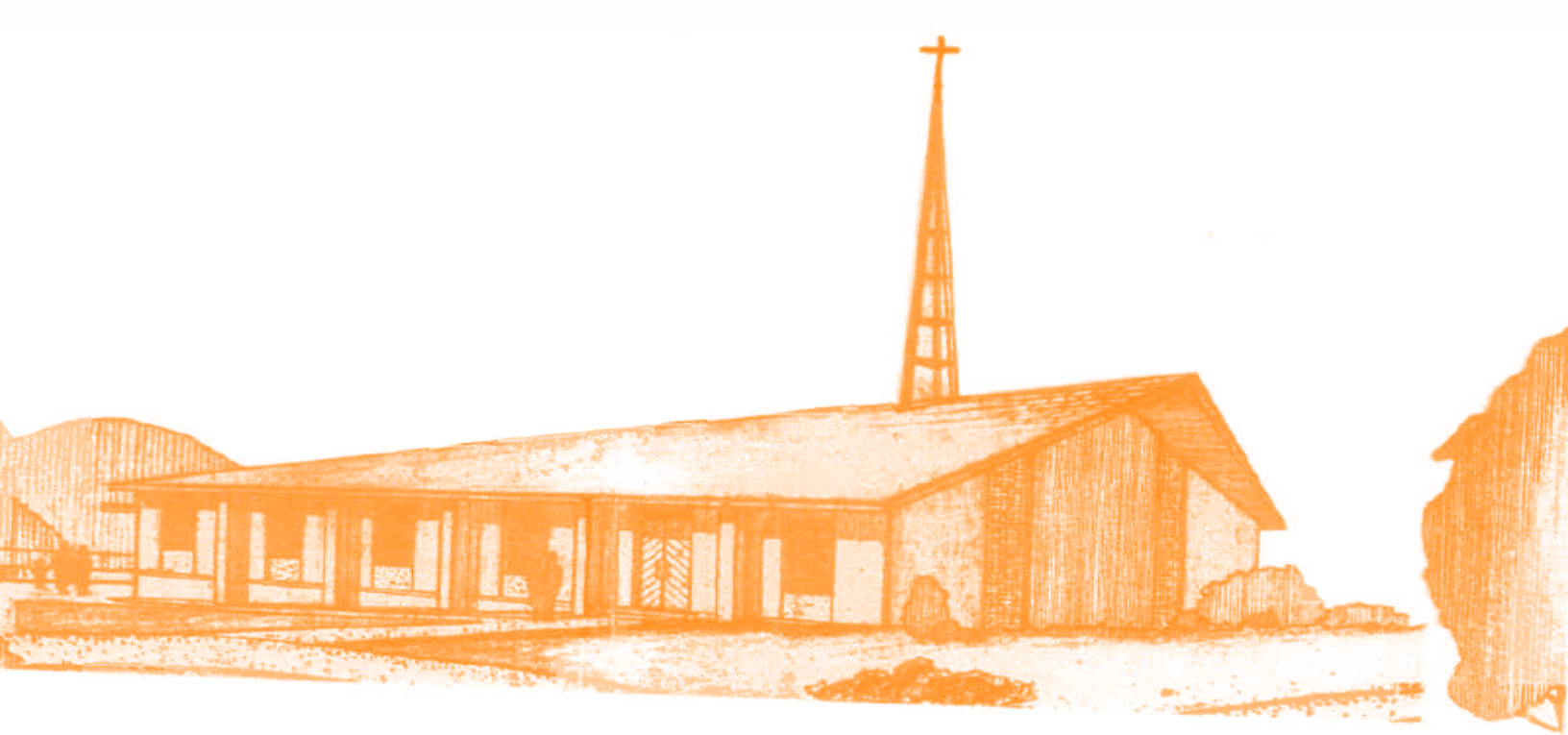
Mentioned as one of Jesus' disciples in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, Bartholomew's name is replaced in John's gospel by Nathanael, leading many to believe that the two are different names for the same person. Little is known about his work, though some traditions place him later in India or Armenia.

August 28 - Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, d. 430

Augustine was one of the greatest theologians of the Western church. Born in North Africa, he was a philosophy student in Carthage, where he later became a teacher of rhetoric. Much of his young life was a debauched one. As an adult he came under the influence of Ambrose, the bishop of Milan, and through him came to see Christianity as a religion appropriate for a philosopher. Augustine was baptized by Ambrose at the Easter Vigil in 387. He was ordained four years later and made bishop of Hippo in 396. Augustine was a defender of the Christian faith and argued, against the Donatists, that the holiness of the church did not depend on the holiness of its members, particularly the clergy, but that holiness comes from Christ, the head of the church. Augustine's autobiography, *Confessions*, tells of his slow movement toward faith and includes the line "Late have I loved thee."

August 28 - Moses the Black d.ca. 400 *monk, martyr*

Converted from life as a thief and a robber to Christianity, Moses was an Ethiopian who became a desert monk at Skete. The change in his heart and life had a profound impact on his native country. He was murdered when Berber bandits attacked his monastery.



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



Contact Us
(412) 859-3711

office@alcpgh.com
mtcalvarycem@alcpgh.com
pastorstpaulsrew@gmail.com

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PLACE
STAMP
HERE

