



THE MESSENGER

ASCENSION Lutheran Church

SEPTEMBER 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)
* 2nd & 4th Sundays of the month

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 September 8 at 7:00 PM

Praying for God's Creation

from Pastor Kobert's Desk



When we think of feast days, we might think of that as something the Roman Catholic Church has to commemorate saints or festivals. You'd be correct, because they do, but they aren't the only ones who have feast days as part of the liturgical calendar. Pick up the red hymnal and look on pages 13 -17 and you'll find a whole list of Principal and Lesser Festivals and Commemorations. This list, however, is outdated, as a new feast day was recently added.

This past May, the Lutheran World Federation added a new feast day called "Creation in Christ" Sunday. September 1st is the actual feast day and is observed on the first Sunday of September.

The institution of this feast day started back in 1989 when Ecumenical Patriarch Dimitrios I declared September 1st as a day of prayer for creation within the Eastern Orthodox Church. Since then, other denominations and ecumenical groups have picked up the day of pray and extended it through the month of September culminating with the Feast of St. Francis on October 4th.

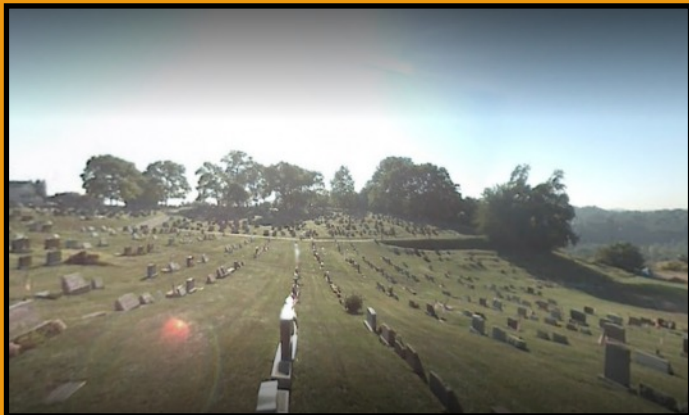
This day and month is dedicated to praying for God's creation, studying God's word on how God provides for the world, and seeking ways to serve God by being good stewards of creation. We already do some of this every week in worship, yet it is good to be reminded of and focus on this.

God is creator of all the earth and has called the creation "good" even before humanity was formed. All of creation is viewed by God as "very good," and God continues to bless the world. God shows care to sparrows and lilies (Matthew 6:26-30) and brings "rain on a land where no one lives, on the desert, which is empty of human life" (Job 38:26). Our scriptures witness to this, and our creeds affirm God the Father of Jesus Christ as "maker of heaven and earth," Jesus Christ as the one "through whom all things were made," and the Holy Spirit as "the Lord, the giver of life" (Nicene Creed).

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

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

We are intimately related to all of this and depend on creation's abundance and health to survive. The whole of creation is just as important to God as we are, and God has seen fit to entrust us with the gifts necessary for maintaining that which God calls good. This festival reminds us of our shared responsibility to shepherd and tend God's world.

As we prepare for the coming autumn season, how will you seek to tend to God's world? ■



BACKPACKS WERE BLESSED during the Sunday Aug. 23rd worship service which was held outdoors. A successful 2026 school year is wished to all students and teachers!

THURSDAY ADULT BIBLE STUDY
RESUMES on September 17 at 7:00 PM

SUNDAY WORSHIP ASSISTANT SCHEDULE SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 2026

Date	Supply	Assisting Minister	Communion Assistant	Lector	Usher	Acolyte	Sunday (or special)	color
Sept 6	Pr. Ryan Kobert	Jennifer Burkholder	Al Morrow	Rich Mussman	Volunteer	Volunteer	PENTECOST 15	GREEN
Sept 13	Pr. Ryan Kobert	Jennifer Burkholder	Bob Thompson	Gib Palmgren	Volunteer	Volunteer	PENTECOST 16 RALLY DAY	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
Oct 4	Kathleen Howells	Jeff Williams	Al Morrow	Jason Eager	Volunteer	Volunteer	PENTECOST 19	GREEN
Oct 11	Pr. Ryan Kobert	Mary Thompson	Bob Thompson	Charlotte DeCola	Volunteer	Volunteer	PENTECOST 20	GREEN
Oct 18	Pr. Ryan Kobert	Jeff Williams	Avis Ritter	Sharon Giza	Volunteer	Volunteer	PENTECOST 21	GREEN
Oct 25	Pr. Ryan Kobert	Daniel Giza	Deb Walenchok	Emilia DeCola	Volunteer	Volunteer	REFORMATION PENTECOST 22	RED OR GREEN



Council President's CORNER

A message from Council President Sharon Giza

September marks the beginning of our new church year, and with it comes a renewed sense of energy, purpose, and fellowship at Ascension Lutheran Church. We are excited to welcome our children back to Sunday School and to gather for several meaningful church and community events throughout the month.

Rally Day – Sept. 13

We hope you'll join us after worship for our Rally Day covered dish lunch. Ascension will provide the chicken tenders, and with the great cooks in our congregation, the rest of the meal is sure to be delicious. Your presence makes these gatherings special.

Sip, Stay, and Mingle – Sept. 20

Our first Sip, Stay, and Mingle will take place after worship. This new monthly fellowship invites everyone to stay for at least 30 minutes to enjoy conversation and a refreshing beverage provided by volunteer families. It's a simple way to strengthen our connections and enjoy each other's company.

Robinson Township Autumn Festival – Sept. 19

As part of our outreach mission, Ascension will host a table at the Robinson Autumn Festival to share who we are with the wider community. We still need volunteers to cover the hours of 3–7 PM, which is prime festival time. Even offering one or two hours of your afternoon will help ensure our presence and allow us to shine a light on what Ascension has to offer.

Looking Ahead – Oktoberfest

This will be another opportunity to welcome our neighbors and continue building bridges within the community.

A Heartfelt Thank You

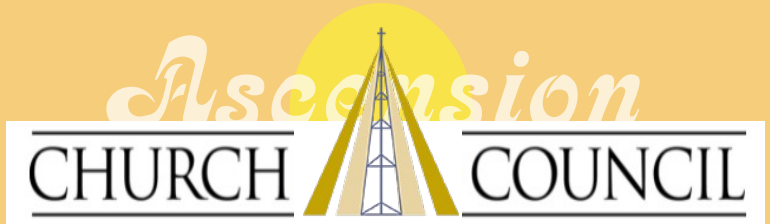
Finally, thank you to the many volunteers who helped make our August Vacation Bible School a tremendous success. It was wonderful to see VBS return to Ascension Lutheran Church, and your dedication made it a joyful and memorable week for all involved.

With gratitude and anticipation for the season ahead,

Sincerely,

Sharon Giza

Ascension Lutheran Church Council President



ALC Council Meeting Highlights

Council meeting was held Tuesday August 4, 2026

Call to order: Sharon 6:57 pm

Attendance: Sharon, Jeff, Bob S., Joyce, Katie, Don, Pastor Ryan

Review/Approve Minutes of July Meeting

Pastor Report, Office Administrator's Report

Old biz: VBS updates. Blessing of Quilts Sept 20

New biz: •Robinson Twp. Autumn Fest table 9/19,

9am 7pm, ALC key chain giveaway

•Oktoberfest possibly 10/10, evening event

➤Vice President – *Debbie Whitfield (Reported by Joyce)* — plumbing work completed; work on getting all bills on autopay.

➤Treasurer – *Bob Thompson (Reported by Sharon)* — Sharon will check with Bob T to see how much we need to keep in checking, vs moving to a Thrivent fund.

➤Christian Education *Jeff Williams*—for fall will see if we continue adult Sunday School and if Rich M is continuing his Thursday Bible Study. Kids are every week.

➤Communications & Publications *Jeff Williams* — Simplified the e-sign procedure. Jeff will set up a Gmail account for the sign.

➤Fellowship, Social Ministry & Evangelism *Debbie Whitfield* — visited 3 shut-ins; will reach out to all in August. “Sip & Mingle” 3rd Sunday of the month (if it's a Steelers Sunday, consider doing before church). Rally Day theme: “Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus”

➤Finance & Stewardship *Bob Stathers*—attendance is holding steady/above average. Send a letter to folks we haven't seen as we gear up for Rally Day, etc.

➤Property *Don Tarbert & Bill Whitfield*- changed mower blades, still not cutting evenly; weed killer applied to firepit before VBS; office window secured; PC for the door locks is the next priority. We should look into getting a 3rd lawn mower in the long term.

➤Worship & Music *Katie Mercadante*—Johnathan is planning a choir cantata for Sun. Dec. 20th. He feels strongly that we should go back to using the hymnals and printing smaller bulletins to save toner, paper, time. Starting on Rally Day we will NOT print hymns in the bulletin. Motion by Katie, 2nd by Don. Motion carries.

➤Youth *Katie Mercadante & Debbie Whitfield*—reviewed calendar for the year which was set by the youth committee.

Motion to adjourn & Closing Prayer.

Next Council Meeting: Tuesday September 8th at 7 pm

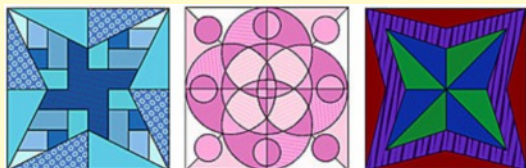
SEPTEMBER 2026

IMPORTANT DATES

Tue 08 Council Meeting

Sun 13 RALLY DAY

Sun 20 Blessing of Quilts



On **Sunday, September 20** a sample of the quilts created this year by our Creative Hands group will be displayed and blessed during the worship service.

Afterwards, they will be boxed and stored in the trailer along with our other 100 quilts to be shipped to Lutheran World Relief Monday, Oct. 12.

Thank you to our wonderful volunteers who have worked so hard all year long to make this happen. If you are interested in helping with this project or have any questions, please ask Judy Henry, Jennifer Burkholder, Lynn Kinney or Darlene Witt.

They can also be reached by phone. Starting in September, we'll meet on the first & third Wednesdays of each month at 11:00 am in the church hall.

We are also always in need of used sheets in all sizes. And as always, extra hands are welcome and needed. Next year we might not make as many quilts, but we do have a number of other projects in mind to raise some funds for our much-needed materials.

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 5 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.

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*
- Liz Eisenhauer – friend of Katie M. *continued recovery, childbirth complications*
- Monica Esposito – daughter-in-law of Deb Walenchok – *early-stage breast cancer*
- Judy Henry – *prayers for better health*

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



Laughter is God's medicine

a reflection
by Nancy Jacobs

I have a cousin, Jack, who is a walking "OOPS"... I burned the chicken I was frying, I broke my coffee cup, I stepped on the dog's tail ... He makes me laugh. But then I think of all the "OOPS" I do every day myself, so I really have to laugh at myself as well.

It feels good to laugh. It tells me not to take myself so seriously. God works with me in my life so my life is not so difficult. Sure, there are situations and conditions that may be hurtful or even

harmful, but the Lord says to relax and "know that I am with you." We can be comforted knowing He carries our burdens so we can laugh off some of the thoughts that we tend to think are monumental and overpowering.

Laughter is God's medicine when we are feeling low.

Did you hear the one about the guy who ... "No," I laughed, "I haven't heard it ... do tell me about it!!!!"

— Nancy

September

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS!

Date | Member/Friend

- 1 Deb Walenchok
- 4 Jen Marnich
- 6 Carolyn Paladino
- 7 Curtis Woods
- 12 Luciana Thompson
- 14 Arianne Marnich
Brielle Marnich
Marlene Porta
- 23 Gavin Thomson
- 30 Blake Rhoads



SEPTEMBER ANNIVERSARIES!

Date | Members/Friends

- 6 John & Mary Jane McGinnis
Chris & Emily Paladino
- 10 Paul & Paula Tomchak
- 19 Rick & Janey Zoltun
- 28 Mike & Lynn Kinney



A monthly gathering of members and friends of Ascension Church

Join the Lunch Bunch This Month!

Plans for September's LUNCH BUNCH gathering are still in the works as of this issue ... check the Sunday bulletin or call George Kasich (412)726-1645 (or ask him at church) or Jerry Wessel (412) 787-1213 for details.



Beginning this church year, we invite everyone to "Sip, Stay & Mingle" after worship **every 3rd Sunday of the month**. Light refreshments will be available, and we are asking for volunteers to sign up to provide refreshments for one of these monthly gatherings. **Dates and sign-up sheets are posted in the hallway**

ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH MEMBERSHIP INITIATIVE

Saturday, September 19, 2026 • 12 PM–9 PM at Burkett Park

Ascension Lutheran Church will host a table at the **Robinson Township Autumn Festival** as part of our ongoing "Let it Shine" outreach initiative. This is a wonderful opportunity to share who we are with our community.

We are seeking volunteers to help staff the table throughout the day (noon to 9 pm) — any amount of time you can devote is appreciated. **A sign-up sheet with available time slots is posted in the church hallway.**

We also welcome your DONATIONS of WRAPPED CANDY that we can pass out at our table during the Autumn Festival. **Please bring your candy to church by Sunday Sept. 13th.** Thank you for helping to "sweeten" our Ascension table!



What a MESS: VBS wrap-up!

After a long hiatus, VBS at Ascension Church made a comeback the week of August 10, 2026. We welcomed 14 kiddos for a super fun and “mess-filled” week, where we learned that God loves us, even if we are a mess.

Thank you to EVERYONE who helped to make this week possible! This includes our 24 adult volunteers throughout the week AND those who so very graciously donated supplies, or money to purchase supplies.

This week would not have been possible without each and every person! No contribution was too small. Looking forward to 2027 - we will be hosting “Lava Lava Luau!” Look for more info to come ... we are currently seeking pool noodles and any Hawaiian décor, new or used for this event. So, check those clearance aisles and the bins of random stuff in your basement.

— Katie Mercadante, VBS coordinator



JOIN OUR ASCENSION FAMILY
AS WE KICK OFF ANOTHER YEAR!

2026 RALLY DAY

Sunday, September 13th

YOU ARE INVITED
to bring a **main dish**,
side dish or **dessert** to share at our

RALLY DAY

celebration following 11am worship.

Chicken tenders & drinks
will be provided.

SEPTEMBER LESSER FESTIVALS & commemorations

September 2

Nikolai Frederik Severin Grundtvig *bishop, renewer of the church, d. 1872*

Grundtvig was, with Søren Kierkegaard, one of the two great Danish theologians of the nineteenth century. As a pastor, he battled the prevalent idea that Christianity was more a philosophy than divine revelation. He wrote over a thousand hymns.

September 9

Peter Claver *priest, missionary to Colombia, d. 1654*

Born into Spanish nobility, Claver became a Jesuit missionary, and served in present-day Colombia. His ministry was focused on the slaves that arrived there. He gave them food and medicine, learned their dialects, and taught them Christianity.

September 13

John Chrysostom *Bishop of Constantinople, d. 407*

John was a priest in Antioch and an outstanding preacher. His eloquence earned him the nickname “Chrysostom” (“golden mouth”), but it also got him into trouble. As bishop of Constantinople he preached against corruption among the royal court. The empress, who had been his supporter, sent him into exile. His preaching style emphasized the literal meaning of scripture and its practical application.

September 14

Holy Cross Day

Helena, the mother of Constantine, made a pilgrimage to Israel to look for Christian holy sites. She found what she believed were the sites of the crucifixion and burial of Jesus, sites that modern archaeologists believe may be correct. Here Constantine built two churches. The celebration of Holy Cross Day originated with the dedication of the Church of the Resurrection in 335. Today the festival provides the church an opportunity to lift up the victory of the cross with a spirit of celebration that might be less suitable on Good Friday.

September 16

Cyprian *Bishop of Carthage, martyr, d. ca. 258*

Cyprian worked for the unity of the church and cared for his flock in North Africa during a time of great persecution. During Cyprian’s time as bishop many people had denied the faith under duress. In contrast to some who held the belief that the church should not receive these people back, Cyprian believed they should be welcomed into full communion after a period of penance. He insisted on the need for compassion in order to preserve the unity of the church. His essay *On the Unity of the Catholic Church* stressed the role of bishops in guaranteeing the visible, concrete unity of the church.

September 17

Hildegard *Abbess of Bingen, d. 1179*

A mystic who was widely influential within the church, Hildegard was chosen as abbess of her community, which she reformed as well as other convents. She advised and reproved kings and popes, wrote poems and hymns, and produced treatises in medicine, theology, and natural history. She also was a musician and artist.

September 18

Dag Hammarskjöld *renewer of society, d. 1961*

Dag Hammarskjöld (HAH-mar-sheld) was a Swedish diplomat and humanitarian who served as secretary general of the United Nations. He was killed in a plane crash on this day in 1961, in what is now Zambia, while on he was his way to negotiate a cease-fire between the United Nations and the Katanga forces. His life was a combination of diplomatic service and personal spirituality, and of contemplation on the meaning of Christ in his life and action in the world.

September 21

Matthew *Apostle and Evangelist*

Matthew (“Levi” in the gospels of Mark and Luke) was a tax collector for the Roman government in Capernaum. In the gospels, tax collectors are mentioned as sinful and despised outcasts, but it was these outcasts to whom Jesus showed his love. Matthew’s name means “gift of the Lord.” Since the second century, tradition has attributed the first gospel to him.

September 29

Michael and All Angels

On this festival day the church ponders the richness and variety of God’s created order and the limits of human knowledge of it. The scriptures speak of angels (the word means “messengers”) who worship God in heaven, and in both testaments angels speak for God on earth. Michael is an angel whose name appears in Daniel as the heavenly being who leads the faithful dead to God’s throne on the day of resurrection. In Revelation, Michael fights in a cosmic battle against Satan.

September 30

Jerome *translator, teacher, d. 420*

Jerome was a biblical scholar and translator, but rather than translating the original Hebrew and Greek scriptures into classical Latin, he worked in the commonly-spoken Latin of the day, creating a version called the Vulgate. Thanks to the work of Jerome, many people received the word in their own language and lived lives of faith and service to those in need.

UPCOMING YOUTH EVENTS

2026

September 13 - Rally Day

October 14 - Bonfire & Pumpkin Painting

November - College Care packages; Creative Hands service;
Clinton Park Light-Up Tree decorating

December 13 - Cookie Exchange & Bells Program

at ASCENSION CHURCH

2027

February 7 - Family Bowling

March - Month of Bingo

March/April - Spring Clean-up Service



*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

