



THE MESSENGER

ASCENSION Lutheran Church

OCTOBER 2026

WEEKLY EVENTS

Sunday Worship - 11:00 AM
Sunday School - 10:00 AM (children)
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 October 13 at 7:00 PM

We are always changing



from Pastor Kobert's Desk

October is a special time of the year for Lutherans, it is when we celebrate the reformation of the Church. We remember what Martin Luther did to spark a transformation of the Church of his time. He brought up questions that challenged the ideas of salvation that the Medieval Catholic Church promoted. He turned to scripture to answer those questions and saw that the practices of the Church were not faithful to Christ, so he sought to change that.

This change is a part of our heritage, which is both

*Reformation
Sunday October
2026 25th*

amazing and ironic for us. On the one hand we will joyfully uphold Luther and his decision to change the world through his writings and his understanding of God, yet at the same time be hesitant to embark on our own journey of change. Perhaps we do not wish to stray from his teachings on salvation, that is it Christ alone who saves and not our own works. Perhaps it is our German heritage and the idea of, “why change what works?” Or perhaps it is a fear of what might become of us should we deviate from what we are doing or where we are.

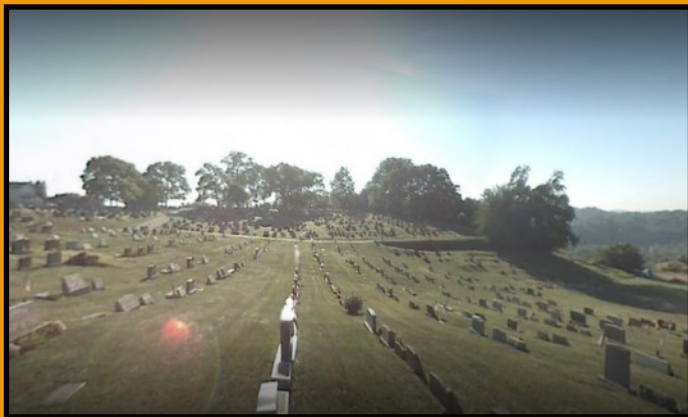
There is some truth to that fear, going into the unknown is a bit scary at times. We like to be assured of our next steps before we take them. Imagine if Luther lived his life this way! Would we even be in a reformed church? Perhaps not. Luther boldly proclaimed God’s grace in our lives, argued with theologians from Rome, struggled with depression, feared for his life, worked with others who also sought reform, and grew a church that embraced the grace of God as he understood it through scripture. He had no idea where the path of reform would take him, yet in faith he traveled it.

This is the legacy that Lutheran churches carry with them in their ministry to the world, and we are no different in that. One thing that this legacy does is remind us that we are always being made new, we are always changing. Our worship services will change, the way ministry is done will change, the people in the pews will change, the events celebrated will change, all of it led by the movement of the Holy Spirit. That is what remains unchanged, the knowledge that God guides us in this change.

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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)

With that faith in God, we go forth, not knowing what the path will look like, but always assured that God is leading us forward. How we will be made new in this next year is still a mystery to us, but together we may go boldly, trusting that it is Christ who guides us and leads us into the ministry of God's work in our congregation, our community, and our world. ■

OKTOBERFEST!

Saturday October 10, 6-8 PM

CEMETERY BOARD MEETING

Saturday Oct. 17 at 10AM in the MCC Chapel

Sip ... Stay ... Mingle

Sunday October 18th following worship

FAMILY CAMPFIRE & Pumpkin Painting

Saturday October 24, 6 PM

Reformation Sunday

October 25, 2026

REMINDER: "Fall Back" November 1st

Standard Time begins at 2 AM

SUNDAY WORSHIP ASSISTANT SCHEDULE OCTOBER - NOVEMBER 2026

Date	Supply	Assisting Minister	Communion Assistant	Lector	Usher	Acolyte	Sunday (or special)	color
Oct 4	Kathleen Howells	Jeff Williams	Al Morrow	Jason Eager	Volunteer	Volunteer	PENTECOST 19	GREEN
Oct 11	Pr. Ryan Kobert	Jeff Williams	Bob Thompson	Charlotte DeCola	Volunteer	Volunteer	PENTECOST 20	GREEN
Oct 18	Pr. Ryan Kobert	Daniel Giza	Avis Ritter	Sharon Giza	Volunteer	Volunteer	PENTECOST 21	GREEN
Oct 25	Pr. Ryan Kobert	Jeff Williams	Bob Thompson	Emilia DeCola	Volunteer	Volunteer	REFORMATION PENTECOST 22	RED or GREEN
Nov 1	Pr. Ryan Kobert	Mary Thompson	Al Morrow	Rich Mussman	Volunteer	Volunteer	ALL SAINTS PENTECOST 23	WHITE or GREEN
Nov 8	Pr. Ryan Kobert	Jeff Williams	Avis Ritter	Thad Ritter	Volunteer	Volunteer	PENTECOST 24	GREEN
Nov 15	Pr. Ryan Kobert	Mary Thompson	Bob Thompson	Gib Palmgren	Volunteer	Volunteer	PENTECOST 25	GREEN
Nov 22	Pr. Ryan Kobert	Daniel Giza	Al Morrow	Melissa DeCola	Volunteer	Volunteer	PENTECOST 26	GREEN
Nov 29	Kathleen Howells	Jeff Williams	Jennifer Burkholder	Jason Eager	Volunteer	Volunteer	ADVENT 1	BLUE



Council President's CORNER

A message from Council President Sharon Giza



Fall is already upon us, and we continue to “**Shine a Light**” at Ascension Lutheran Church through our outreach and fellowship activities.

This month brings wonderful opportunities to gather, serve, and welcome others into our church community.

Oktoberfest – Saturday, October 10 • 6–8 PM

We are excited to host our **first Oktoberfest**, and we need many helping hands to make it a success. A sign-up sheet is available in the church hallway for volunteers and for those wishing to donate supplies. I encourage everyone to **bring one additional person** with you—let’s fill the room, share in the fun, and show our community the good work happening at Ascension.

Family Campfire & Pumpkin Painting – October 24

Join us for this beloved annual fall tradition! All are welcome to enjoy an evening of fellowship, creativity, and autumn warmth. It’s a wonderful event for families and friends alike.

Gratitude for Our Property Team

A heartfelt thank you to **Don Tarbert** and **Jeff Williams** for their year-round dedication to maintaining our property. They spend countless hours ensuring our church runs efficiently, and we deeply appreciate their time, care, and commitment.

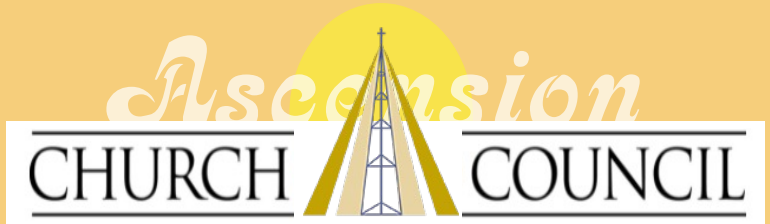
Celebrating 10 Years of Service

Congratulations to **Jonathan Snatchko** on his **10-year work anniversary** with Ascension Lutheran Church. His music enriches our worship each and every Sunday, and his leadership with our choir is a true blessing. We couldn’t ask for a better organist to grace our sanctuary.

Sincerely,

Sharon Giza

Ascension Lutheran Church Council President



ALC Council Meeting Highlights

Council meeting was held Tuesday Sept. 8, 2026

Call to order: Sharon 7:02 pm

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

Review/Approve Minutes of July Meeting

Pastor Report, Office Administrator’s Report

Old biz: Robinson Twp. Autumn Fest; Locks for church doors

New biz: •Ingram Days - trouble getting volunteers, will inform organizers

•Oktoberfest plans are underway

➤President – *Sharon Giza* contacted Pr. Asplin re: candidates; he suggested to review /add to the MSP to show exciting events going on.

➤Vice President – *Debbie Whitfield* Cemetery very busy; financials are strong; 40-yr-old roof needs to be replaced.

➤Treasurer – *Bob Thompson* Debbie moves to transfer \$20K from checking to a Thrivent fund. Don seconds, motion carries.

➤Christian Education *Jeff Williams*—Adult Sunday School will not resume, instead urge attendance at Thurs. Bible Study.

➤Communications & Publications *Jeff Williams* — sign updated

➤Fellowship, Social Ministry & Evangelism *Debbie Whitfield* — Sip, Stay, Mingle upstairs for Sept. Invite friends to Oktoberfest!

➤Finance & Stewardship *Bob Stathers*—averaged 6 people more per Sunday in the summer; \$323 per week more than last summer

➤Property *Don Tarbert & Bill Whitfield* - Problem with the mower. Will limp through the end of the grass cutting season then repair over the winter. Dumpster was moved to avoid “donuts” in the parking lot; dumpster now is also locked, keys available in church if needed. Hymn boards have been installed. AC issues abound. No insulation on the lines outside, losing efficiency. Do we spend the money for insulation or wait until the system is fixed. Parts for those units are no longer in production. Jeff moves to insulate the lines to extend the life of the system we have; Katie 2nd. Motion carries. Backflow test 2 weeks ago; we passed. Don will get additional keys made for the trailer.

➤Worship & Music *Katie Mercadante*—hymn boards are up; no hymns printed in bulletin starting Sunday.

➤Youth *Katie Mercadante & Debbie Whitfield*—Melissa okayed paying for the 2027 curriculum out of the 2026 budget. She is following up with the tree people in Findlay.

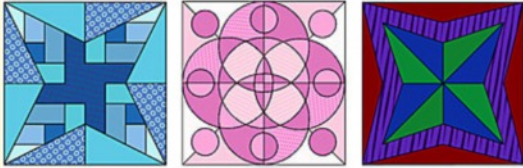
Motion to adjourn & Closing Prayer.

Next Council Meeting: Tuesday October 13th at 7 pm

OCTOBER 2026

IMPORTANT DATES

Tue 13 Council Meeting
Sat 10 OKTOBERFEST!
Sat 24 Family Campfire



On Sunday, September 20 a sample of the quilts created this year by our Creative Hands group was displayed and blessed during the worship service. Afterwards, they were boxed and stored in the trailer along with the rest of the 100 quilts to be shipped to Lutheran World Relief on Monday, Oct. 12.



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*
- Lynn Simeoni – friend of Ascension Church – *terminal brain cancer*
- Nancy Jacobs – *prayers for better health*
- Liz Eisenhower – friend of Katie M. *childbirth complications*
- Monica Esposito – daughter-in-law of Deb Walenchok – *early-stage breast cancer*
- Judy Henry – *prayers for better health*
- Bill Helterbran – brother of Debbie Whitfield – *prayers for stroke recovery*
- Family of Tracie Hall – *upon her passing* "Thank you from my family to our church family for their prayers on the loss of our oldest daughter, Tracie Hall. My church family is the best and I am so grateful." – *Debbie Whitfield*
- Jennifer Burkholder – *prayers for recovery from recent shoulder surgery*
- Deb Walenchok – *lung cancer and recovery from broken femur surgery*



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



October

OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS!

Date | Member/Friend

- 7 Suzie Bryan
- 8 Cayley Hughes
- 9 Rich Mussman
- 10 Callie Derbish
Rachael Hall
- 20 Dave Walenchok
- 23 Myrtle Cairns
- 26 Thad Ritter



OCTOBER ANNIVERSARIES!

Date | Members/Friends

- 4 Brian & Jeannette Tomchak
- 7 Mike & Jill Lescalette
- 12 Bob & Mary Hughes
- 15 Travis & Candace McEwen
- 21 Michael & Diane Bayer

Lunch Bunch



A monthly gathering of members and friends of Ascension Church

Join the Lunch Bunch This Month!

In September, twelve Lunch Bunchers traveled to Napoli's in Bridgeville. The food was very good, although too much for most attendees and many take-home boxes went out the door with us. We had a nice separate room and lots of space for other attendees. If anyone didn't come for fear there would be no room, then they missed some good conversations in addition to the good food. Next time . . . Here's your chance:

Thursday October 15th will see the Lunch Bunch make their annual visit to **Shakespeare's Castle** at 1495 Mercer Road in Ellwood City. It may sound far away, but it is an easy trip, and the scenery is always worth the time to get to the Castle. The old-timers (well, most of us are old anyway) go especially for the seasonal pumpkin bisque but all of the entrées are very good, so you should give it a try with us. As is our custom, please let Jerry Wessel (412)787-1213 or George Kasich (412) 859-3792 know by Tuesday October 13th if you can attend so that we make sufficient reservations. Elizabethan dress is not required, nor is a great knowledge of Shakespeare's plays. However, should someone like to perform an act or two from one of the Bard's plays, I'm sure the rest of us will enjoy it and not give bad reviews (nor laugh too loudly). Hope to see many of you then. ~JW



On Saturday, September 19th at Burkett Park, Ascension Lutheran Church hosted a table at the **Robinson Township Autumn Festival** as part of our ongoing "Let it Shine" outreach initiative. The event proved to be a wonderful opportunity to share who we are with our community. Thank you to all of the volunteers who helped staff the table throughout the day, and to all who provided donations of wrapped candy.



Sip Stay & Mingle



The first monthly Sip, Stay & Mingle was held Sunday Sept. 20 following worship. Be sure to join the next on Sunday Oct. 18!



St. Andrew Fall Fun Fest!

187 Beaver Grade Rd, Moon Township

Sunday, October 11, 3:00—5:30 pm

- Trunk or Treat
- Cookie Decorating
- Roasting marshmallows
- Games
- Crafts
- Refreshments
- Steelers game on the outside screen



Come one, come all!

Bring a friend!

It's fall, it's fun and it's FREE!



If you want to decorate your trunk for Trunk or Treat, please e-mail the church office so we can plan on parking

standreamoon@gmail.com

**Ascension Church
THURSDAY ADULT
BIBLE STUDY**
meets weekly at 7:00 PM

2026 RALLY DAY



RALLY DAY 2026 was held on Sunday September 13, when Ascension Church was bustling with the joys of the start of a new Sunday School year. Potluck favorites were enjoyed by all.



LESSER FESTIVALS & commemorations

October 4

Francis of Assisi, *renewer of the church*, d. 1226

Born into the family of a wealthy merchant, Francis gave up his inheritance to serve poor people. He formed the Order of Friars Minor (called Franciscans), who took on poverty and the task of preaching “using words if necessary.” Francis had a spirit of gratitude for all of God’s creation.

Theodor Fliedner, *renewer of society*, d. 1864

Fliedner helped to bring about a revival of the ministry of deaconesses among Lutherans. He was influenced in this by Moravian deaconesses he had met. The motherhouse he founded in Kaiserswerth, Germany, inspired many around the world to take up this ministry.

October 6

William Tyndale, *translator, martyr*, d. 1536

Tyndale was ordained a priest in England, and his life’s desire was to translate the Bible into English. He was opposed in this by King Henry VIII, causing him to flee to Germany. He completed the New Testament in 1525, but before he could finish the Old Testament, he was tried for heresy and burned at the stake.

October 7

Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, *pastor in North America*, d. 1787

Divided Lutherans in America asked leaders in Europe to send someone who could take charge and unite their work. Muhlenberg was sent, and was effective in organizing the American Lutherans. Among other accomplishments, his liturgical principles became the basis for the Common Service of 1888.

October 15

Teresa of Ávila (Teresa de Jesús), *teacher, renewer of the church*, d. 1582

Teresa of Ávila (AH-vee-la) is also known as Teresa de Jesús. She chose the life of a Carmelite nun after reading the letters of Jerome. She worked to reform her monastic community in Ávila. Her reforms asked nuns to maintain life in the monastic enclosure without leaving it and to identify with the poor by not wearing shoes. Teresa’s writings on devotional life have enjoyed a wide readership.

October 17

Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, *martyr*, d. ca. 115

Ignatius was the second bishop of Antioch in Syria, the city where the name “Christians” originated. Ignatius is known to us from his letters, which encouraged Christians to live in love, yet stand firm in true doctrine. When his own martyrdom approached, he wrote in one of his letters, “I prefer death in Christ Jesus to power over the farthest limits of the earth. . . . Do not stand in the way of my birth to real life.”

October 18

Luke, *Evangelist*

St. Luke is identified by tradition as the author of both Luke and Acts. Luke is careful to place the events of Jesus’ life in both their social and religious contexts. Some of the most loved parables, including the good Samaritan and the prodigal son, are found only in this gospel. Luke’s gospel has also given the church some of its most beautiful songs: the *Benedictus* sung at morning prayer, the *Magnificat* sung at evening prayer, and the *Nunc dimittis* sung at the close of the day. These songs are powerful witnesses to the message of Jesus Christ.

October 23

James of Jerusalem, *martyr*, d. ca. 62

One of three early-church leaders named James, this man is identified in the New Testament and by a historian of the time as a brother of Jesus. Scholars are uncertain whether this means a blood brother. He was a leader of the church in Jerusalem.

October 26

Philipp Nicolai, d. 1608; **Johann Heermann**, d. 1647; **Paul Gerhardt**, d. 1676; *hymnwriters*

These great hymnwriters all worked in seventeenth-century Germany in times of war and plague. Nicolai, a pastor, lost 1,300 parishioners to plague, 170 in one week. He wrote “O Morning Star, how fair and bright” and “Wake, awake, for night is flying.” Heermann’s hymns often express the emotions of faith. Gerhardt, perhaps the greatest Lutheran hymnwriter, was a pastor in Berlin.

October 28

Simon and Jude, *Apostles*

Little is known about Simon and Jude. In New Testament lists of the apostles, Simon the “zealot” or Cananaean is mentioned, but he is never mentioned apart from these lists. Jude, sometimes called Thaddeus, is also mentioned in lists of the Twelve. At the last supper Jude asked Jesus why he had chosen to reveal himself to the disciples but not to the world. A traditional story about Simon and Jude says that they traveled together on a missionary journey to Persia and were both martyred there.

October 31

Reformation Day

By the end of the seventeenth century, many Lutheran churches celebrated a festival commemorating Martin Luther’s posting of the *Ninety-five Theses*, a summary of the abuses in the church of his time. At the heart of the reform movement was the gospel, the good news that it is by grace through faith that we are justified and set free.

UPCOMING YOUTH EVENTS

2026

October 24 - Family 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.*



Contact Us

(412) 859-3711

office@alcpgh.com

mtcalvarycem@alcpgh.com

pastorstpaulsrew@gmail.com

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1290 Silver Lane

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PLACE
STAMP
HERE

