



THE MESSENGER

ASCENSION Lutheran Church

January 2025

WEEKLY EVENTS

- Sunday Worship - 11:00 AM **new time!*
- 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
- Soccer Shots - Tuesday evenings (Spring-Fall)



2025 COUNCIL EXECUTIVES
and
2025 COUNCIL LIAISONS

New officer and liaison positions will be announced.

Ascension Council Members for 2025:

- Kelly Bryan*
- Jason Eager*
- Sharon Giza*
- Thom Kruse*
- Bob Stathers*
- Bob Thompson*
- Jerry Wessel*
- Deb Whitfield*
- Jeff Williams*

Next Council Meeting

Tuesday January 14 at 7:00 PM

2025: New Year, New Plan



Every year at this time, we reflect on the 365 days which we have left behind and look ahead to what we envision for the 365 days of the new year.

One of the most exciting aspects of New Year 2025 at Ascension Church is the beginning of a pastoral partnership with St. Paul Lutheran Church of Sewickley. **Pastor Ryan Kobert** will assume part-time duties at Ascension in addition to his service at St. Paul's. This "steady supply pastor" arrangement will provide more stability in all aspects of pastoral needs at Ascension until a permanent pastor is named via the ongoing Call Process.

The changes: To accommodate Pastor Kobert's dual schedule of duties, a collaborative decision between St. Paul's and Ascension was reached and the Sunday worship schedules for both churches have been modified. **As of January 5, 2025, Ascension's Sunday Worship time will be 11:00 am**, one half-hour later than previously celebrated. Consequently, Sunday School at Ascension will now be held at 10:00 am - one hour prior to worship.

Interim Pastor Gregory Clagg has served Ascension Church in that capacity since the departure of longtime Pastor Joe Murdy at the end of February 2024. "My prayers continue to be with you," said Pastor Clagg, adding that he is "celebrating Pastor Kobert's call to serve the Lord with you all."

Sunday January 5, 2025 will mark Pastor Kobert's initial 11 am worship service at Ascension Church.



Pastor Ryan Kobert

Mount Calvary Cemetery

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



Mount Calvary Cemetery Board Members
 wish all a very Happy New Year 2025
*Judy Henry • Bob Hughes • Bette Ann Kallay
 George C. Kasich • Joyce Leister*

**NOTE: SUNDAY
 WORSHIP TIME
 IS NOW AT 11:00 AM**

SUNDAY WORSHIP ASSISTANT SCHEDULE JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2025

Date	Supply	Assisting Minister	Communion Assistant	Lector	Usher	Acolyte	Sunday (or special)	color	Council Update
Jan. 5	Pr. Ryan Kobert	Jeff Williams	Amy Kruise	Rich Mussman	Volunteer	Volunteer	2 Christmas / Epiphany Jan 6	white	Jeff Williams
Jan. 12	Pr. Ryan Kobert	Mary Thompson	Bob Thompson	Jerry Wessel	Volunteer	Volunteer	Baptism of Our Lord	white	Sharon Giza
Jan. 19	Pr. Ryan Kobert	Jerry Wessel	Al Morrow	Melissa DeCola	Volunteer	Volunteer	2 Epiphany	green	Bob Thompson
Jan. 26	Pr. Ryan Kobert	Jennifer Burkholder	Amy Kruise	Sharon Giza	Volunteer	Volunteer	3 Epiphany	green	Jason Eager
Feb. 02	Pr. Ryan Kobert	Jeff Williams	Bob Dudek	Gib Palmgren	Volunteer	Volunteer	Presentation / 4 Epiphany	white or green	Kelly Bryan
Feb. 09	Pr. Ryan Kobert	Mary Thompson	Bob Thompson	Jason Eager	Volunteer	Volunteer	5 Epiphany	green	Deb Whitfield
Feb. 16	Pr. Ryan Kobert	Jerry Wessel	Jeff Williams	Charlotte DeCola	Volunteer	Volunteer	6 Epiphany	green	Bob Stathers
Feb. 23	Pr. Ryan Kobert	Jennifer Burkholder	Bob Dudek	Jeff Williams	Volunteer	Volunteer	7 Epiphany	green	Jeff Williams

Upcoming EVENTS

from Ascension Women's Group

Since December 2024 was such a crazy-busy month, Ascension's Women's Group will hold an **After-Christmas Christmas Party** on

Sunday January 12, 2025
 following worship that day.

We ask that each person attending **bring an appetizer** to share, and a no-more-than \$10 **grab bag gift**.

A SUPER DAY . . .



On **Sunday February 9th**

Ascension's Women's Group will hold a **"SOUP-er Bowl Sundae" Lunch**

A variety of delicious Soups and Ice Cream Sundaes will be served!



This gathering also will feature a special welcome to Pastor Kobert.



Council President's **CORNER**

Happy New Year, Church!

AN HONOR TO SERVE

I look forward to helping the new president of your Ascension Council and will continue on Council, working to do what's best for our congregation.

It's been an honor to serve you during these past two years. The previous president had to deal with the Covid pandemic; I was challenged to deal with Pastor Joe moving on to greener pastures. This position certainly has its ups and downs!

THANK YOU ONE AND ALL

I want to thank the congregation for their steady support and attendance. During the past two years you've been an inspiration to me in your resilience and putting up with all scheduling issues of getting supply pastors and lay worship leaders.

CHANGE IS IN THE AIR

Our supply pastor contract has been approved by the ELCA Synod, and we now will have an opportunity to meet Pastor Ryan Kobert from Saint Paul's of Sewickley on Sunday January 5th at 11:00 am. This arrangement has required both us and them to change our Sunday worship times. We get to start later and the folks at St Paul's are moving their worship sooner. We look forward to this agreement and Pastor Ryan's skills in leading the congregation.

MORE CHALLENGES TO COME

Finally, our congregation may face some challenges from the ELCA, as outcomes of the Churchwide Assembly (July 28 - August 2, 2025) may create consternation among our Bible-centric worshippers. May we continue to pray for guidance and unity.

Thank you and blessings to all,

Jeff Williams

Ascension Church Council President



ALC Council Meeting Highlights

Council meeting was held Tues. Dec. 10, 2024

- AED check by Sharon. Call to order: 7:00 pm
- Review Minutes of Last Meeting: Motion by Kelly to accept as amended, second by Sharon. Motion passes unanimously.

All current members in attendance plus incoming council members Jerry Wessel and Deb Whitfield.

- President: *Jeff Williams*, Visitation, welcome new members, e-Sign
- Vice-Pres *Jason Eager*: Mt. Calvary Cemetery update. 2025 budget passed.
- Worship time change – Motion by Sharon to change worship time to 11 am starting 1/5/25, contingent on supply contract. Second by Jason. Motion passes unanimously.
- Supply agreement – Motion by Kelly to approve the agreement as amended. Second by Bob. All yes, one abstention. Motion passes.
- Choose date for installation of new Council members and Bulletin of Reports – Sunday 2/2/25.
- Soup & Welcome Pastor Kobert Party – 2/9/25
- Important dates:
 - o Tuesday, January 14 council meeting
 - o January Congregational Meeting date: Feb 2 to review of Bulletin of Reports.
- Adjournment: Motion by Phil, second by Sharon. 8:08 pm.

Next Council Meeting:

Tuesday January 14, 2025 at 7 pm

Important upcoming date:

Semi-Annual Congregational Meeting

Sunday February 2, 2025

ATTENTION Envelope Users!

**Giving envelopes for 2025
are awaiting pickup.**

**NOTICE: 2024 Giving Statements
will NOT be mailed automatically.
Please notify the office if you
need a Giving Statement for 2024.**



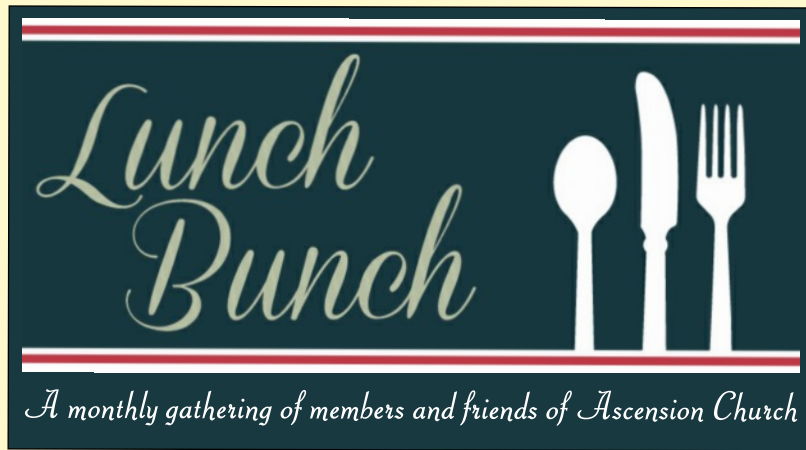
JANUARY

- | Date | Member/Friend |
|------|--|
| 4 | Dolly Spano |
| 5 | Daniel Giza |
| 9 | Philip Paladino |
| 13 | Bette Ann Kallay |
| 14 | Layla McEwen |
| 15 | Kelly Bryan |
| 21 | Alexis Brown |
| 23 | Darlene Witt |
| 24 | Glenn Simpson
Nate Zoltun |
| 27 | Ryan Hughes
Don Lucas
Clay Marnich |
| 28 | Mark Marnich |
| 31 | Joyce Leister |

Best wishes & many blessings!

got NEWS?

If you have pictures, articles, or ideas to submit for the **FEBRUARY 2025** Newsletter, please email office@alcpgh.com.



Join the LUNCH BUNCH Thursday Jan. 16 . . . it will be a real BREEZE!

In December, ten Ascension Lunch Bunch members braved the pre-holiday traffic and crowds to meet at *Bravo!* in the Pointe at North Fayette. Many of the lunch regulars were busy elsewhere, but those who could attend enjoyed some great food and good company.

For January's lunch (Thursday Jan 16 at 11:30 am) the Bunch will don their Hawaiian shirts, sunglasses and grass skirts (maybe?) and other island attire to enjoy the Bahama Breeze experience at 6100 Robinson Center Drive (near the Robinson Mall). Bermuda shorts are NOT recommended, but given the unusual weather we've had lately in Pittsburgh, it may be a game-time decision as to what to wear. So if you want to go "full-island," bring your change of clothes with you. As usual, please let Jerry Wessel (412-787-1213) or Nancy Schreiber (412-859-3969) know by Tuesday, Jan. 14 if you plan to come so that there will be enough room reserved to seat everyone. Hope to see you there if you're craving some brief relief from the cold ... All are welcome!

~ Jerry Wessel

THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

Following the departure of Pastor Murdy at the end of February 2024, seventeen individuals - including Bishop Kurt Kusserow - graciously served the faithful of Ascension Church in a supply capacity.

We sincerely thank:
Pastor Peter Asplin
Dr. David Brauer
Ms. Linda Broman
Pastor Gregory Clagg
Ms. Carol Emch

Pastor Wilfred Goetze
Ms. Kathleen Howells
Ms. Janice Jeletic
Bishop Kurt Kusserow
Mr. Jeff McKinley
Pastor Blair Morgan

Pastor Larry Mort
Pastor Melissa Stoller
Pastor Karen Taylor
Pastor Debra Thompson
Pastor Dona Van Eck
Mr. Jerry Wessel



**Semi-Annual
Congregational
Meeting
Sunday
February 2, 2025
Following worship**

*With a
listening ear
and open
arms . . .*

A reflection by Nancy Jacobs

Recently while flicking thru the TV channels (don't usually find anything interesting), I came across Joel Osteen, a TV preacher whom I must admit was very charming, had a decent delivery and a worthwhile message, so I bought his book "55 Ways to be Blessed & Not Stressed." It's a daily reading type and has interesting and meaningful messages.

However, one of the messages gave me pause. It dealt with whom you surround yourself - based on St. Paul's teaching in Romans - to watch out for those who cause problems. I interpreted this to mean those who are jealous or disgruntled in our dealings with them and that we should not let them into our lives. Be kind and respectful, but don't get involved.

Well, I disagree with Joel. Maybe that person we are avoiding needs a friend, a shoulder to cry on, someone to be there for them. Explain how we can do both ... be kind but ignore? We need to know with whom we agree ... TV preacher man or our Christian beliefs.

So ... step up and step in with a listening ear and open arms. You'll make a difference in their outlook ... and in yours, too.



THANK YOU ONE AND ALL

for your generous year-round contributions to keep our church running smoothly and enable us to help others as we faithfully follow our mission

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



Please keep in your prayers:

- JoAnne Erwin, Dee Gratzmiller, Mary Honath, Norma Kohnen, Lottie Lodge, Jean Marion, Betty Simpson, Rose Rahner, Betty Borden, Nancy Jacobs – *shut-ins*
- Mary Jane McGinnis – *health concerns*
- Bob Thompson – *health concerns*
- Mary Miller, friend of Sharon Giza – *multiple medical issues*
- Thad Ritter – *health concerns*
- Family of Frank Gillespie, friend of Amy Reckner – *upon his passing*
- Bill McEwen – *multiple health concerns*
- Kraig Rahner, son of Rose Rahner – *critical health concerns*
- Tina Kruike, stepmother of Thom Kruike – *stage 2 throat cancer*

2024: my, what a year!

The year 2024 certainly was eventful!

We thank God for His many blessings and challenges as we strengthen our faith in Him and in one another.

- We bade farewell to **Pastor Joe Murdy** in February and hello to interim **Pastor Gregory Clagg** and a steady stream of supply pastors and worship leaders March thru December.
- **Bishop Kusserow** worshipped with us on March 10.
- Our commissioned paintings by artist **Pr. Scott Bryte** - one of Christ the Good Shepherd and the other of The Ascension - were unveiled on Easter morning March 31, 2024.
- In April, our **Call Committee** met for the first time to initiate the intense work of finding a permanent pastor.
- We said goodbye to **+Dolly Morrow** and **+Kay Braisted** in May.
- In June we welcomed table after table of vendors to our annual **Yard Sale**.
- Ascension's **Lunch Bunch** lunched their way through monthly epicurean adventures.
- Our **Social Ministries** held events throughout the year: Shrove Sunday pancake breakfast, Food Bank collection, Church & roadway spring cleanup, Autism awareness talk & walk, Veterans clothing collection, Graduate party, Rally Day festivities, Campfire Fellowship, Pumpkin, Painting & Pancakes, Presents for Patients, Happy Birthday Jesus, and more!
- Ascension's **Creative Hands Group** crafted over 75 quilts last year, ending with a blessing and boxing event in October, when the quilts were sent to charity agencies.
- In late November we said goodbye to our trusty old road sign and hello to our shiny new digital model, thanks to an unbelievably successful fund-raising campaign which collected well over \$20,000!

Here's to many more successes and happy times as we continue to grow.



LESSER FESTIVALS & commemorations

January 1 The Name of Jesus

By Jewish law, every baby boy was circumcised and named on the eighth day of life, so on the eighth day of Christmas the church celebrates this event in Jesus' life. The keeping of the covenant as well as Jesus' name are signs of God's salvation given to us through him.

January 2 Johann Konrad Wilhelm Loehe

renewer of the church, d. 1872

A nineteenth-century German Lutheran pastor, Loehe worked to enliven the church with the eucharist at its center, from which would flow evangelism and social ministry. He sent pastors to North America, Australia, New Guinea, Brazil, and Ukraine.

January 15 Martin Luther King Jr.

renewer of society, martyr, d.1968

An American prophet of justice among races and nations, King was an eloquent preacher, a leader of the nonviolent resistance to race-segregated society, and recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964. Born on this date, he was assassinated on April 4, 1968.

January 17 Antony of Egypt

renewer of the church, d. ca. 356

One of the earliest of the Egyptian desert fathers, Antony gave away his sizeable inheritance and became a hermit. Later he became leader of a group of monks who devoted themselves to prayer, worship, and labor.

January 17 Pachomius

renewer of the church, d. 346

Born in Egypt, Pachomius became a Christian while a soldier. He became a hermit (a solitary monk) and organized others into a religious community. His rule for monasteries influenced later ones in both the Eastern and Western churches.

January 18 Confession of Peter

• **Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Begins** •

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is framed by two commemorations, the Confession of Peter (a relatively recent addition to the calendar) and the older Conversion of Paul. Both apostles are remembered together on June 29, but these two days give us an opportunity to focus on key events in each of their lives. Today we remember that Peter was led by God's grace to acknowledge Jesus as "the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:16). This confession is the common confession that unites us with Peter and with all Christians of every time and place.

January 19 Henry, Bishop of Uppsala martyr, d.1156

When Erik, King of Sweden, determined to invade Finland for the purpose of converting the people there to Christianity, Henry went with him. Henry is recognized as the patron saint of Finland.

January 21 Agnes martyr, d. ca. 304

Agnes was a girl of about thirteen living in Rome. The details of her martyrdom are not clear, but she gave witness to her faith and was put to death as a result, most likely by the sword. The church has honored her as one of the chief martyrs of her time.

January 25 Conversion of Paul

• **Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Ends** •

The week of prayer begun by the remembrance of Peter's confession now comes to an end as we recall the pivotal moment in the life of the other pillar of the early church, the apostle Paul. His encounter with the risen Christ turned him from persecutor of the followers of Christ to one of their leaders.

January 26 Timothy, Titus and Silas missionaries

These three early Christian men were missionary companions of the apostle Paul. Timothy became bishop of Ephesus, Titus bishop of Crete, and Silas was imprisoned with Paul at Philippi until they were delivered by an earthquake.

January 27 Lydia, Dorcas and Phoebe

witnesses to the faith

Women as well as men were important Christian leaders from the beginning, as demonstrated by these coworkers of the apostle Paul. Lydia, a seller of purple goods, lent her home for a church; Dorcas was known for charitable works; Phoebe was a deacon in the church at Cenchrae.

January 28 Thomas Aquinas teacher, d. 1274

Thomas Aquinas was a brilliant and creative theologian of the thirteenth century. He was first and foremost a student of the Bible and profoundly concerned with the theological formation of the church's ordained ministers. As a member of the Order of Preachers (Dominicans), he worked to correlate scripture with the philosophy of Aristotle, which was having a renaissance in Aquinas's day. Some students of Aristotle's philosophy found in it an alternative to Christianity. But Aquinas immersed himself in the thought of Aristotle and worked to explain Christian beliefs in the philosophical culture of the day.



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

Contact Us
(412) 859-3711
pastor@alcpgh.com
office@alcpgh.com
music@alcpgh.com
mtcalvarycem@alcpgh.com

Ascension Lutheran Church
1290 Silver Lane
McKees Rocks, PA 15136
(Robinson Township)
Visit us on the web at
www.alcpgh.com

Ascension Lutheran Church
1290 Silver Lane
McKees Rocks, PA 15136

PLACE
STAMP
HERE

