



THE HEART OF ASCENSION



Congregation Meeting

A Congregation Meeting is scheduled for Sunday, **February 16, 2020** at Noon following Christian Education.

The next free *Ascension Community Fellowship Luncheon* will be on Monday, **February 17, 2020 at 11:30 AM** in the Fellowship Hall. Lunch is served at Noon. All are invited. This is Presidents' Day and hopefully those who have the day off will come to lunch and bring a friend!



Lent begins on **ASH WEDNESDAY, February 26, 2020**. There will be one worship service with Holy Communion on Ash Wednesday at 7:00 PM.

Mid-week Lenten Services will be held at 7:00 PM on Wednesday evenings. The dates of the mid-week Lenten services are March 4, 11, 18, 25, and April 1, 2020. Please see details inside about this year's Lenten series, *Eyes on Jesus*.



MORNING WITH THE LORD – Join us for **Praise and Prayer Time** Wednesday mornings at 10:00 AM in the Fireside Room. For more information, please see Bob Booth.

LADIES! We are happy to restart a new women's Saturday morning Bible study! Katie and Cristen will facilitate beginning Saturday, **February 22** at 9:30 AM. More details to follow, but plan on approximately every other Saturday for eight (8) weeks. Looking forward to studying the Bible (and perhaps some fellowship and food).





PASTOR LEE'S FAREWELL LUNCHEON

This event was a huge success with over 80 in attendance. The Fellowship Hall was overflowing. What a tribute to him. Many compliments were received for the food which was provided by Monteverde Catering. Thanks to everyone who helped.





Thanks to Bj Astridge, the children of SOAR enjoyed a wonderful magic show by Weird Eric on January 10, 2020!

SPIRITUAL NEEDS/EMERGENCIES – Please feel free to contact one of the Elders listed below in case of an emergency requiring spiritual care:

Mike Fiffik, Head Elder	412-780-1647
Cooper Blake	412-654-4146
Bob Booth	808-295-1835
Pete Candreva	412-999-4856
David Dille	412-726-1934
Darryl Gunther	724-272-0441



BAND OF BROTHERS will not be held in February.

THRIVENT CHOICE DOLLARS

ATTENTION THRIVENT MEMBERS: Thrivent Choice[®] is Thrivent's charitable grant program. As a Thrivent member you can designate your Choice Dollars to Ascension Lutheran Church. **Choice Dollars designated to eligible benefit members in 2019 must be directed by March 31, 2020.** To designate your Choice Dollars, or for more information, visit Thrivent.com/choicedollars or call 1-800-847-4836.

2020 LENTEN WORSHIP SERVICE SERIES



*O come, let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.
(Gradual for Lent, based on Hebrews 12:2)*

When the characters in the Passion narrative look at Jesus, what do they see? In most cases, people misunderstood who He is and what He was doing. In some cases, by faith, people recognized Him aright. **Our Lenten series this year, *Eyes on Jesus*, is based on the Passion according to St. Mark. We will examine how the various people around Jesus viewed Him—and how we should view Him.** We will “fix our eyes” on what Jesus has done to save us from our sins by His holy, precious blood and innocent sufferings and death, and celebrate what God sees on account of His work: our justification for His sake.

On **Ash Wednesday**, we will see how, in spite of Jesus’ repeated predictions about His upcoming Passion, the disciples with “Misjudging Eyes” fail to recognize that soon He will not be with them, and they cannot see the anonymous woman’s anointing of Jesus as preparation for His burial. But Jesus sees her actions as a beautiful deed that will be proclaimed throughout the world wherever the Gospel is heard.

At our **midweek service after the First Sunday of Lent**, we will look through Judas’ “Betraying Eyes” and learn why he did this awful deed. Yet the behind-the-scenes-reality is that Jesus was “handed over” (another way of translating the verb for “betray”) by God the Father Himself, so that Jesus could die for the sin of the world.

“Sleepy Eyes” is the theme for the **second week of Lent**. In Gethsemane, Jesus’ inner circle of Peter, James, and John cannot keep their eyes open to watch and pray with Jesus for even an hour, while Jesus comes to see that His Father’s will is that He drink the cup of God’s wrath when He comes to the “hour” of His suffering.

In the **third week of Lent**, we stare into the “Denying Eyes” of Peter and the other apostles. They could not see how they could ever fall away from Jesus, but after Jesus is betrayed by Judas, ten of them flee, and Peter—when he is spotted by a servant girl and sees that his own neck is on the line—sees fit to deny Jesus, which leads to his own eyes weeping in remorse. We sinners likewise deny our Lord in many ways, but Jesus denied Himself to take up the cross for our salvation.

“Murderous Eyes” is the theme of **week four in Lent**. The chief priests and scribes saw Jesus as an obstacle to be rid of by murdering Him through the Roman judicial system. Yet during the Passover festival, they would unwittingly bring about the Father’s sacrifice of the ultimate Passover Lamb.

In the **fifth week of Lent**, we look through the “Worldly Eyes” of Pilate, the Jewish leaders, and the Roman soldiers. Pilate can only view matters in a worldly, pragmatic way, wishing to placate the worldly Jewish leaders and crowd, so he consents to handing Jesus over for crucifixion. The soldiers see the opposite of a worldly king, but their ironic hailing of Him as “King of the Jews” proclaims who He really is. The world looks for power and glory; God’s way is suffering and the cross.

On **Maundy Thursday**, there is “More Than Meets the Eye” to the Lord’s Supper. We will look into the Old Testament background of the Last Supper and rejoice in the mystery that Jesus, in and with, bread and wine, gives us His body and blood in order to deliver to us the benefits of His Passion.

On **Good Friday**, we look through “God’s Eyes” to see what is happening during the Passion: the once-for-all atonement for the sin of the whole world and the justification of all sinners on Easter.

Finally, **Easter Sunday** gazes upon “Angel Eyes.” The angel in the tomb knows the whole story of Jesus’ resurrection. When he sees the women, he proclaims the Gospel to them, shows them where Jesus’ body had formerly lain, and tells them that they can see Jesus themselves in Galilee. Likewise, the “angels” or messengers of the Church in the apostolic ministry tell God’s people where they can find Jesus and His salvation in the Means of Grace.

With *Eyes on Jesus* as our theme this Lent, we will continuously focus on Jesus Christ and Him crucified, buried, and risen for our justification. This is a vision that will never disappoint, for by trusting in Jesus, He promises that we will gaze upon His beautiful face now by faith and forever in heaven!

For God so lo**V**ed the world
th**A**t he gave his
on**L**y
begott**E**n
So**N**,
tha**T** whoever
bel**I**eves
i**N** him should not perish
but hav**E** everlasting life.

(John 3:16, NKJV)

Two New Ways To Give!

Yes, it's back and better than ever! Vanco Payment Solutions has a fast and easy way to donate. Donate to the church like you pay most of your other bills—with your computer or smart phone. Some of the highlights of this new system include: Ability to pay the transaction fee which will save the church money, ability to donate to a specific fund, and the ability to give through the website or a smart phone app.

Online

- Go to Ascension website (www.ascensionpgh.com).
- Click on "Giving" tab at the top of main page.
- Then click on "Donate Now."
- Create an account or enter in your donation information. (You can choose to which fund you want your donation to go.)
- Enter the rest of the requested information.

Mobile

- Download the app "Give+" by Vanco.
- Make sure you select Ascension Lutheran Church.
- Create an account or select "Give Now."
- You can choose which fund you want your donation to go to.
- Enter the rest of the requested information.

Tips:

- Using either method, you can set up an account so you don't have to enter your personal information in every time. You must set up an account if you set up recurring donations.
- If you wish to donate to a fund that isn't listed, contact the Financial Secretary and it can be added.
- If you give online and still want to put an envelope in the offering plate, just write "Gave online" on your envelope and put it in the plate as usual. You don't have to enter an amount on the envelope.
- You can give either by withdrawal from your checking/savings account or by credit card.
- You can choose to pay the transaction fee, saving the church money.

Some reasons to consider giving online:

- Easy. Even a caveman can do it! If you set up an account, you only have to navigate through a couple screens. If you set up a recurring donation, you won't have to do anything.
- Convenient. You don't have to worry about forgetting to bring your envelope or writing a check. If you miss a Sunday or two for vacation, sickness, or whatever, the church will still get your donation if you set up recurring donations.
- Fast. The church gets your money faster and it's deposited directly into the church's checking account.
- You probably pay other bills online or with an app. Why not give to church the same way?

So give it a try. See if you like it. Let's put the counters out of business! If you have any questions, see me or email me at finance@ascensionpgh.com.

Bob Marcellus

Online Giving
is simple and easy!



Operation Christmas Child

Even though Christmas and Operation Christmas Child are over for another year, the job of bringing these underprivileged children to Christ has just begun. The Greatest Journey, a 12-lesson voluntary course that teaches the kids more about the Bible and God, begins after they receive their shoebox. A graduation ceremony, often including cap and gown, highlights their journey into a lifelong commitment. We plant seeds. Christ grows followers.

For those of you into statistics, here is the breakdown of the shoeboxes collected at Ascension for 2019:

	2-4 years old	5-9 years old	10-14 years old
Boy	12	58	18
Girl	14	87	15

Below is the breakdown of the totals since we started this project in 2013. (I am missing the breakdown for one year, so this is a six-year total.)

	2-4 years old	5-9 years old	10-14 years old
Boy	75	267	118
Girl	100	324	123

The grand total for all seven years is 1,149 shoeboxes!

Thanks be to God for all the generous people at Ascension who, year after year, continue to amaze me at how many shoeboxes are packed. Even though we may be small in number, we are big in heart!!

Only about 8 more months until kick-off for Operation Christmas Child 2020! 😊

Bob Marcellus



THE NEXT SOAR RESPITE NIGHT will be held at Ascension on Friday, **February 14, 2020 from 6-9 PM and we will be celebrating Valentine's Day!** SOAR (Special Opportunities, Abilities, and Relationships) is for children with special needs and their typical siblings ages 2-10. This free event is a "night off" for parents where children have fun playing games, creating crafts, making music, and forming relationships with their buddy and other children. **We try to have a buddy for each child, so we can always use more volunteers!** Please pray about and consider helping with Respite Nights as a way to reach out to those with special needs in our community. If you can help or have any questions, please email soar@ascensionpgh.com or see Emily Marcellus.

February Anniversary:
14 Bob & Karen Booth



February Birthdays:

- | | | | |
|----|-------------------|----|------------------|
| 4 | Charlotte Beiter | 24 | Lucas Mayes |
| 4 | Mark Bocian | 25 | Pam Davis |
| 6 | Grace Fiffik | 25 | Steve Diak |
| 13 | Rebecca Diak | 25 | Carolyn Fagen |
| 13 | Janet Seitz | 26 | Elijah Blake |
| 16 | Shannon Schroeder | 26 | Clay McClellan |
| 18 | Chris Bocian | 26 | Amanda Zdobinski |
| 20 | Ron Davis, Sr. | 27 | Bernice Yeager |
| 23 | Sherri Kirk | 28 | Zac Schroeder |
| 23 | Tillie LaMastro | 29 | Craig McMillin |



IF WE MISSED YOUR BIRTHDAY OR ANNIVERSARY, PLEASE CALL THE CHURCH OFFICE AT 412-364-4463.

New Address!



DON SOHNGEN'S NEW CONTACT INFORMATION – Don Sohngen has moved to an assisted living apartment at St. Barnabas. His new address is The Arbors 3, 6005 Valencia Road, Apartment #7, Gibsonia, PA 15044. His cell number remains the same, 412-726-3053. If anyone would like to contact him, he doesn't answer his phone often since he can't hear very well, but he does text.



A son of two Concordia of Franklin Park residents called the Church Office and expressed his thankfulness to our church for providing Christmas gifts to all the residents every year. His mother and father have lived at Concordia of Franklin Park for nearly three years. He also sent a money donation to Ascension to help with the gifts we provide.

We received this thank you note from a Concordia of Franklin Park resident:

Thank you so very much for all your generous Christmas gifts. Your thoughtfulness is greatly appreciated. Ascension Church is so kind to all at Concordia. Happy and Healthy New Year!

Thanks and take care!

Loretta



Camp Erin® Pittsburgh

Friday - Sunday

June 12-14, 2020

Camp Kon-O-Kwee Spencer

Camp Erin® Pittsburgh Needs You!

Camp Erin® Pittsburgh, a bereavement camp for children and teens who have lost a significant person, pairs traditional summer camp activities with grief education and peer support. It is sponsored by Good Samaritan Hospice and Eluna Network (formerly the Moyer Foundation), a national foundation that focuses on giving comfort to children who have experienced the death of a significant person in their life. This three-day, overnight camp provides a safe, caring environment where grieving children and adolescents (ages 6-17) can create friendships with others who understand what they're going through. Camp Erin is looking for volunteers for all weekend, one day or just for a few hours. Some example volunteer positions are: activity facilitators, Big Buddies, RNs as well as volunteers to help with registration/welcome on Friday and camp setup and tear down. Volunteers are provided training, guidance and support throughout their time and camp also fills college or university service hour requirements. Contact Camp Director Alison Marcin at 412-215-5864 if you would like to volunteer. For more information and volunteer opportunities, check out www.CampErinPittsburgh.org.

(From Concordia Lutheran Ministries)



**MESSAGE TO THE EASTERN DISTRICT
OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH-MISSOURI SYNOD
FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF
PIONEER CAMP AND RETREAT CENTER, INC.**

January 17, 2020

With great regret, the Board of Directors of Pioneer Camp and Retreat Center, Inc. wishes to advise the Board of Directors and the officers of the Eastern District of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, the member churches of the Eastern District, and the general church membership that, as a result of the deteriorating financial condition at Camp Pioneer, it is unlikely that the camp will operate in 2021, and it is all but certain that the camp will run significantly reduced operations in 2020.

As many of you are aware, the financial condition of Camp Pioneer has been on a downward trajectory for several years. The factors causing this include increased costs of operations, in particular summer camp, and the inability to increase camp revenue to match such costs; decreasing camp attendance; increased employee expenditures due to minimum wage obligations; decreased giving to camp; inability to raise funds for necessary capital improvements resulting in needing to make such improvements from operating income; inability to amortize long term debt of the camp; and exhaustion of avenues of raising capital financing.

The board further regretfully advises that given the current precarious financial situation at Camp Pioneer, it is very possible that the board will have to consider a disposition of the camp property at the end of 2020 in order to pay its long term obligations. After payment of the camp's obligations, the net proceeds of sale would revert to the Eastern District.

The board further advises that it has accepted the resignation of Alex Knowles as Executive Director of Pioneer Camp and Retreat Center, Inc., effective January 20, 2020. The board is grateful for Alex's devoted service, and that of his wife Sue and their children, to Camp Pioneer and to the people of the Eastern District and of western New York generally. Alex will continue to work with camp in a voluntary capacity for a period of time. Alex says, "Sue and I and our family cherish the opportunity that we have had to work in the outstanding Christian ministry that is Camp Pioneer. While we have determined that at this point in our lives new opportunities beckon, we are and always will be devoted to Camp Pioneer, and I will continue to support Camp Pioneer on a voluntary basis and assist the camp in moving forward."

The board has appointed Brian Sreniawski, currently the General Manager of Pioneer Camp and Retreat Center, Inc., as Interim Executive Director, effective January 20, 2020. Brian has been in his current role of General Manager since June 2019, prior to which he spent fifteen months as a manager in the hospitality industry, four and half years as Youth Director at St. John's in Orchard Park, NY, and two years at Camp Pioneer as Summer Program Director. Brian has worked closely with Alex and is intimately familiar with all aspects of camp operations. The board is confident that Brian can steward the camp in these difficult times.

We understand you may have questions, some of which we may be able to answer. If you desire to speak to someone about the status of Camp Pioneer feel free to call Camp Pioneer at (716) 549-1420.



FOR HEALTH & HEALING

Eileen Vogel (recovery from surgery); Susan, Carol, and Karen (health issues – friends of Trish Young); Cookie (health issues – Trish Young’s sister-in-law); Cheryl Sedar’s son (mass on heart); Gino (cancer – friend of Gene Williams); Gene Williams (mesothelioma); Carolyn Fagen (health issues); Grace (broken hip – mother of Linda Williams); Shut-ins: Elva Fields, Helen Goettmann, Lois Kitzki, Phyllis Kitzki, Clay McClellan, Don Sohngen, Nadine Weber

FOR STRENGTH & COMFORT

For all those who lost loved ones, especially Mark, Coleen, and Nick Koorsen and Mark’s three grandchildren, on the loss of Mark’s daughter, Rebecca; for the citizens, survivors, relief workers, missionaries, and families affected by hurricanes, earthquakes, terrorist attacks and disasters worldwide

FOR THANKSGIVING

For the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ; the gifts of love and God's Word; family and friends; our country

FOR SAFETY/PROTECTION

For our college students; missionaries; our armed forces; unborn children

FOR DIRECTION AND FAITH

For those who are experiencing a crisis of faith; women with unplanned pregnancies

GENERAL PRAYER, GUIDANCE, AND PROVISION

For Pastor Lee and his family; the Gaertner family; SOAR Respite Nights and participating families; Gene Williams, Jr. and DiscipleMakers; Pastor Eric Andræ and Campus Ministry in Oakland; seminary students; the residents and staff of Concordia Lutheran Ministries; Shepherd’s Heart Fellowship; Food For The Poor; Christian Counseling Associates counselors and their clients; those with special needs (physical, mental, or emotional)

***Please note that prayer requests will remain on the prayer list for 60 days and then be removed unless an extension is requested by notifying the church secretary.**



Upcoming Lutheran Hour Broadcasts

February 2, 2020: “Gold Without Glitter” Without the fire of the refiner's forge, there can be no glittering gold. And so it is with us. You are more precious to God than gold. But, like gold, you and I need refining. (Genesis 42) Speaker: Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler

February 9, 2020: “Break Through the No-Go Zone” Sometimes, the difference between then and now, between what used to be and what is, comes in a single moment, a defining act. We call that a breakthrough. (Genesis 43-45) Speaker: Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler

February 16, 2020: “Families and Joseph's Tears” (Genesis 50:15-26) Guest Speaker: Dr. Dean Nadasdy

February 23, 2020: “TBD” Speaker: Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler

Lutheran Hour broadcasts can be heard on WWNL/1080 AM on Saturdays at 3:30 PM and on Sundays at 8:00 AM. You may also read the sermon or listen to it at <https://www.lutheranhour.org/sermon.asp>.



New Free Resource for Kids!

Samaritan's Purse has developed an app to help children learn the Scriptures. It's called GREATEST JOURNEY. The lessons are based on the Greatest Journey course that Operation Christmas Child box recipients receive. The app uses a time-traveling spaceship that shows kids major events in the Old and New Testaments and focus on the life of Jesus. While playing, the kids also memorize Scripture. This app is for children ages 5 through 9 years old.

APP AVAILABLE ON:



IMPORTANT: Apple users must be on iOS 11 or a more recent mobile operating system; for the most efficient download experience, please connect to WiFi before beginning.



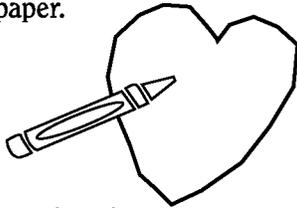
Send an Invisible Valentine to Someone You Love!

Here's what you'll need:

- Scissors
- White construction paper
- White crayon
- Pen
- Pink or red watercolor

Here's how to make an invisible Valentine:

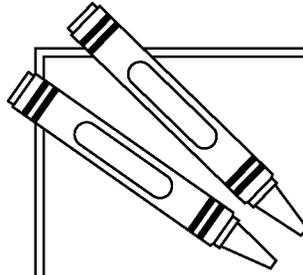
1. Cut a heart shape out of the white construction paper.



2. Use the white crayon to decorate the heart with designs and a message. Press hard!
3. On the back, use the pen to write: "Brush the other side with pink or red watercolor to find a secret message."



4. Give the valentine to someone you love. When the person paints the "blank" side, your secret message will be revealed!

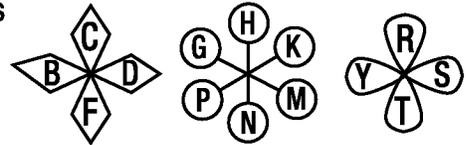


Just for KIDS

You Are Special!

Have you heard that no two snowflakes are the same? Each is different - unique - special ... just like each of God's children.

Here are some words from the Bible that talk about this. Use the code to find the missing letters.



" e e a e i e e
 i o i , u
 e a e i i " | Corinthians 12:4

" ou a e e o o
 i , a ea
 o e o ou i a a
 o i " | Corinthians 12:27

"You are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it."

"There are different kinds of gifts, but the same spirit."

**ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH
8225 PEBBLES ROAD
PITTSBURGH, PA 15237**

Address Correction Requested

SUNDAY SCHEDULE:

Prayer time at 8:45 AM in Fireside Room
Worship Service: **Sunday at 9:30 AM**
Christian Education: **11:00 AM**

Office Hours:

Monday – Friday **9:00 AM-Noon; 1:00-4:00 PM**

**OUR MISSION AND VISION
STATEMENT:**

Acknowledging the great gift of God the Father in sending His Son, Jesus Christ, as our Savior, we the people of Ascension Lutheran Church, as guided by the Holy Spirit, are committed to the furtherance of God's Kingdom. We will share and live the Gospel in our homes, our church, our community, and the world. Motivated by Christ's love for us, we are dedicated to spiritual growth and unity, worship and fellowship, and compassionate service. We recognize this as our common purpose and pray that God will enable us by His strength and wisdom to seek His will.

THE HEART OF ASCENSION

A monthly publication of
Ascension Lutheran Church.
Barbara Marcellus is the Editor.

**CHURCH OFFICE:
412-364-4463 / 412-364-5636
FAX NUMBER:
412-369-0599**

**SECRETARY'S E-MAIL:
secretary@ascensionpgh.com
MUSIC DIRECTOR'S E-MAIL:
vcandрева@ascensionpgh.com
www.ascensionpgh.com
www.facebook.com/AscensionPgh
www.twitter.com/AscensionPgh**

<https://plus.google.com/+AscensionLutheranChurchPittsburgh>