



From the heart of  
**ASCENSION**  
Lutheran Church

**quarterly  
newsletter**  
May 2026

### From the Pastor's Desk

Dear Saints of Ascension,

It has been an exciting time at our church this Spring! Between new babies being born, new members joining our congregation, a number of Holy Baptisms, two new Confirmands, our parking lot getting repaved soon, serving 375 Spaghetti drive-thru meals, and hiring a new Youth Director we have a lot of amazing things going on and coming up! God is moving and working among us and through us! It is a humbling thing to be a part of, and I am excited to see what God has in store for us for the rest of 2026.

So this year, let's commend our congregation into the care of God and continue to be led by Him and ready to serve Him and those he sends us to. I think some really exciting things are to come.

"And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith."  
- Galatians 6:9-10

*Blessings, Pastor Thompson*

### what's inside?

have you  
heard?

people of the  
pews

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happenings

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puzzle

pastor is  
doing what?

directory

A Christ-centered community where we connect, learn, and serve.

# have you heard?

## Christian Ed Updates - Our Classrooms are Busy!

**Music update from Emily:** During music time, the children learned "Jesus Strong and Kind" and performed it for the congregation on February 1st. Since then, we have been practicing "I Am Jesus' Little Lamb" on the handbells. We performed this on April 26th!

**Toddler/Pre-K update from Lindsay:** The children have been focusing on gifts from God. One gift was the rediscovery of the Book of the Law -- a long-neglected scroll -- by King Josiah as he oversaw the repairs of the temple. The children constructed their own buildings and made a scroll with Deuteronomy 6:5: "Love the Lord God with all your heart." Another gift we considered is the ultimate gift of Jesus and the salvation he brings. We cover Jesus first, then lots of playdoh and building blocks!

**K-2<sup>nd</sup> grade update from Patti:** The children continue to work through the Old Testament, learning about the judges God sent to guide His people. We saw David defeat Goliath and read about his friendship with Jonathan. We met the first three kings of Israel. We'll finish the year completing our study of the Old Testament including how God provided for Elijah and the Widow and healed Naaman's leprosy.

**3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade update from Lora:** The students have been focusing on the birth and early life of Jesus, reading through the Gospels of Matthew and Luke including learning more about the songs and prayers found within those books. We took a break from those Gospels to focus on Holy Week. The class participated in an interactive escape room activity titled "The Case of the Empty Tomb," which provided a hands-on way to explore the events leading up to and including the resurrection.

**7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade update from Janine N:** The youth have continued to follow Paul through his third journey, arrest, imprisonment, and letter-writing. We've read and discussed Romans, Acts 21-28, Ephesians, and Colossians. We look forward to finishing up with Philemon, Philippians, and the pastoral letters.

## Christian Ed's Readers Corner



**Teaching the Faith  
at Home: What  
Does This Mean?  
How Is This Done?**  
by David Reuter

Teach them young! Reuter posits that early home instruction is key in keeping families connected to the Church, taking advantage of small children's ability to easily memorize. Part 1 focuses on laying a foundation. Part 2 is a practical how-to guide. Available at [cph.org](http://cph.org).

## Outreach Team Updates

We've been busy, busy, busy. Hope you have enjoyed all that has been going on.

**Lenten Dinners** – Many of you provided delicious dishes for these Wednesday meals. We were hoping for larger turnouts, but those that did attend enjoyed the fellowship and the food.

**Easter Brunch** – There was a very nice selection donated by those who attended. Again, we were hoping for a larger crowd, but those that came had a great time. Certainly no one left hungry.

In March we provided **dinner** for the group of blind adults that meet at First Trinity Church. Such a worthwhile project. They are all so appreciative. We served about 30 dinners of hearty, homemade soup, green salad, rolls, butter, and Texas sheet cake and ice cream. The soup was good to the last drop.

**Pleasant Valley Shelter for Homeless Men** on the Northside is one of our special projects. In early 2026, Joe Palma provided a delicious man-style meal of steak and all the fixings. The men absolutely loved it. They never get such a treat as that. In early May, Trish Young and Cristen Fiffik are the providers. We would love to have more volunteers. You will feel so good after you do this. Please let Lisa Marcellus know if you want to be considered. It's only done four times a year, and it's very easy..

The **spaghetti drive-thru** was a huge success. We served 375 dinners. We received donations of \$862. We had about 45 volunteers of all ages, not counting all the cookie makers. We had a serious issue which we conquered, in that we had no electric from 9:30am to 3pm. Thankfully we have a gas stove. We also were very hindered by the tree that fell across Peebles preventing possible customers from easily getting to the church. But, all's well that ends well. It was overwhelming. Thank you to all who worked so very hard to make this a super outreach project.

Ascension is truly an amazing congregation.

Our yearly **baby bottle campaign** for the Network of Life is from May 1 to May 31. View all the info in the Narthex & take home a baby bottle to fill.

The **annual plant sale** was held May 3. Cheryl was very busy growing the vegetables and flowers. All the money went back to the church.

We are so excited to tell you about the Speaker's Program being held on May 20 at 6:30 pm. It will be presented by Jeff Wissner, Town of McCandless Fire Marshal, and will be a **fire safety class**. Sign up in the Narthex.

Please add to your calendar the **Sunday School year-end Picnic** on June 7, 2026. It will sure be a great time for food, fellowship & activities!

## Council Update

Woohoo! Soon we will have a newly paved parking lot! The Church Council would like to thank the Parking Lot Ad Hoc Committee consisting of Michael Fantin, Tim Mayes, Darryl Gunther, and Cristen Fiffik for volunteering their time to look into references provided by the paving companies who provided quotes for our parking lot. Thanks to the committee's efforts, a recommendation was made to the Congregation and unanimously voted on at our special voters meeting held on April 12<sup>th</sup>!

In other news, the Church Council has been working to put together a Child Protection Policy as well as looking into programs to help improve connecting with and communicating to our Congregation. Stay tuned...!

## Pastoral Review Committee (PRC) Update

The **Bi-annual Congregation survey** is coming soon. The PRC would like your opinions on how our pastor is performing. The last survey was conducted in 2022. The results of this survey will help Pastor know where he needs to focus and will provide guidance for the PRC in supporting him.

## Trustees Update

### Driveway Project -

The congregation has approved the new driveway and parking lot project. It will start on May 18.

### Interior Door Quotes -

New Interior doors between the Sanctuary and the Narthex have been installed!

### Church Sign Lighting & Communication Issue -

The sign is fully operational again!

## Outdoor Sign Ideas

Everyone loves our sign. Have any short 1-2 sentence ideas? Put them in the jar in the Narthex! Bonus points for any with a seasonal & church holiday theme!

## Stewardship Team Update

### We want you!

Are you looking for an opportunity to use your gifts of time, talent, and treasures to develop good stewards of Ascension Lutheran? Ascension has an opening as the **Head of Stewardship**.

If you are interested in learning more, please reach out to Pastor Thompson or Beth Gard about this role!

## Financial Update

### Financial Update for the First Quarter 2026

#### Income:

Offerings (including online):	66,151
Loose Plate:	1,867
Hall Use:	4,943
Other:	1,794
Total:	74,755

**Expenses:** 87,085

**Income vs. Expenses:** -12,330

Most of our deficit is because of the harsh winter and the need for a lot of snow removal services.

Thank you for your generous giving to God's Kingdom through your offerings.

Questions? Ask:

Darryl Gunther - Financial Secretary

Patti Lopresto - Treasurer

## Worship Committee Update

We want to extend a special thank you to our musicians, AV volunteers, ushers, altar guild, and everyone who helped make our Lenten and Holy Week services so meaningful. It was wonderful to see everyone's talents in action.

We also had a fantastic turnout at our Scoops of Thankfulness event honoring our music and AV volunteers—it truly was a big scoop of fun! Thank you to everyone who came out, and for all that you do. We couldn't do this without you.

## Fellowship Team Update

The team worked hard in 2025 to come up with a general schedule for 2026! We are looking forward to having more fellowship time this summer & fall. Loads of fun are coming.

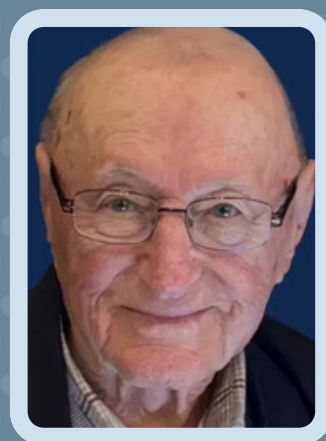
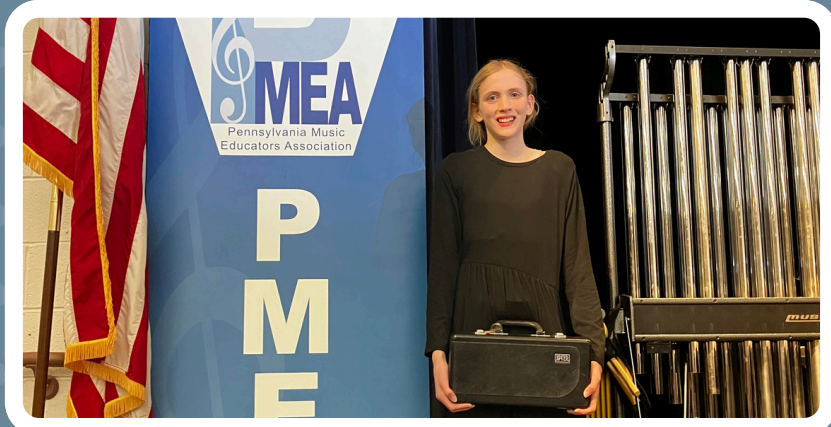
We are continuing to encourage the men, women, and youth to also spend some intentional time together as brothers and sisters in Christ! Stay tuned for more.

Thanks to all who attended our Bingo Night: Pie Day edition. It was loads of fun to eat pizza pie and pie pie with our brothers and sisters in Christ!

Want to join in pulling off these events?  
Let Marissa know!

# people of the pews

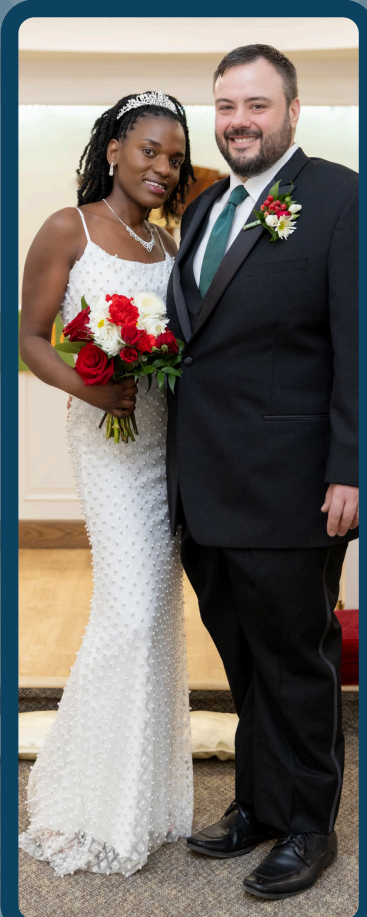
**Hannah Koontz** represented Eden Christian Academy at the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association Junior High District 1 West Band Fest April 10-11, 2026. The fest was held at Trinity High School in Washington, PA.



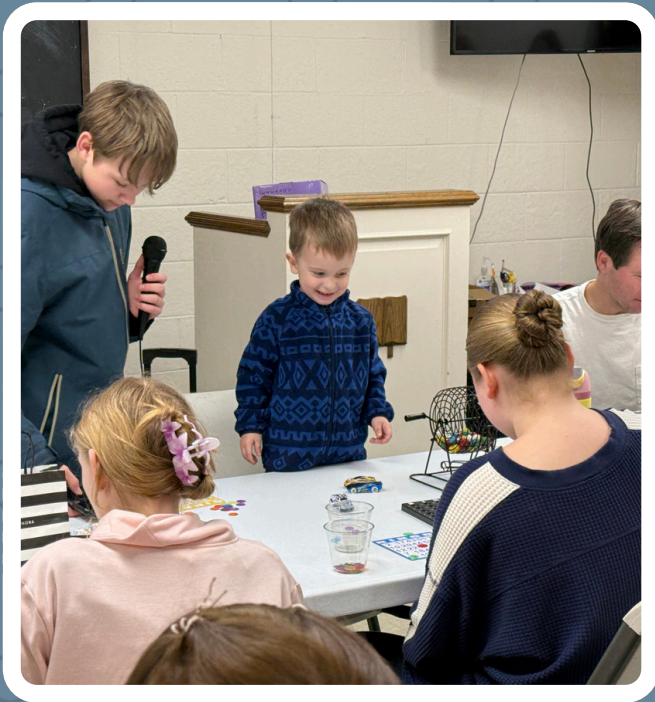
**Harlan "Clayton" Mees**  
**March 8, 1926 - April 2, 2026**

Clayton lived a wonderful 100 years as a cherished friend and brother in Christ. Janeen shared that in his final days, he knew exactly where he was going and told us not to worry about him. We will miss him dearly, but we know we will see him again. Rest in glory, Clayton.

**Anitha & Brian Brugos** renewed their wedding vows on their first anniversary, February 7<sup>th</sup> 2026, here at Ascension! Congratulations!



# recent happenings



**Pie Day Bingo!**



**PALM Bible Study  
at Ascension**



**Adult Bible  
Class**



**Pittsburgh Center for the  
Blind Dinner at First Trinity**



**Good Friday**



# Some of the Music from this Lenten Season





**FREE Spaghetti Dinner  
Drive-Thru 2026  
We served 375 meals!**



# End of Year Confirmation Party



**Congratulations Concetta & Craig on your confirmation!**



**Children's Bell Choir**



**Special visitor to a Sanctuary windowsill**

# pause for a puzzle



## THE RESURRECTION

### Word Search



U F Z E R B P G T A W N V E E O C L J M  
R E B I R T H X G Y V C F N N Y H C X Z  
M I R A C L E Q H A F R O G D S R R G G  
R E D E M P T I O N D I E V B K I O O W  
P S E U V P H O L Y T X S V E I S S D L  
R A N C O P B F H C D I J G O N T S J P  
A C T O N I F K E T E R N A L S A D B N  
Y R E U I A P R I V I C T O R Y S N V O  
E I G F H S R Y J H G R A C E A M A T I  
R F I A O U N E E H O B T A F T Y O P T  
R I W S S R D E V A T P S T G O A I C A  
B C O E L J G S C I S I E W J N F P R V  
G E R G L B C I X S L T A L X E G X Q L  
S J L P L A F B V Y A E E F I M O A V A  
Q P U N E O M D W E F L D R V E S I H S  
Q Q I Z B A R B W T N Z M Z N N P F Y F  
R D Q R Y R C Y H S R E U T L T E P E L  
G U O X I V L E Z C F K S F C E L A B V  
P R Z P O T K J Y I F D A S Q I L O V E  
I V I N B P Y A L G F E E Y C X V K I R

Victory

Christ

Cross

Easter

Passover

Sacrifice

Salvation

Hope

Redemption

Faith

Resurrection

Life

Prayer

Grace

Gospel

Holy

Rebirth

Atonement

Covenant

Glory

Deliverance

Lamb

God

Miracle

Ascension

Spirit

Love

Forgiveness

Peace

Eternal

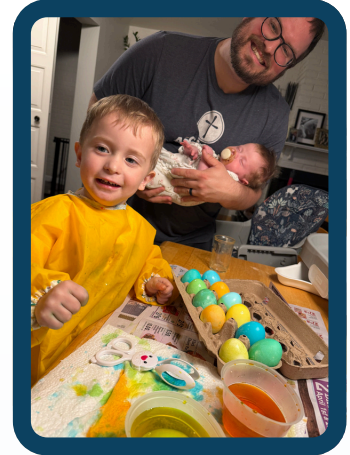
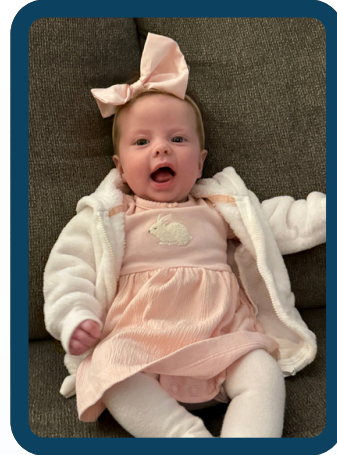


# pastor is doing what?

Since our last update we've been getting a lot more sleep... woo hoo! New baby plus the lenten season was a doozy but we did it! Josie is a blessing and is such a great baby at 4 months old. Henry just turned 3 and is thriving in brotherhood and the knowledge of all things monster trucks. He has even decided to start potty training himself. He is such a cutie learning so much, talking so much and finally trying more foods. Marissa and I are still getting the hang of two kiddos at a time but we are slowly figuring it out. We are excited for some nice weather and family time this summer. Prayers for continued recovery and energy are always appreciated!

I can't believe this Summer marks 10 years of being in the ministry! It seems like yesterday I was getting my first call out of the seminary! December will be 6 years at Ascension. January it will be 5 years married.. Life is moving fast! I am very blessed.

I am still the President of PALM and have been teaching the YA Bible Study at Ascension and just enjoyed the PALM bowling outing. More of those to come.



# upcoming ways to...

For more visit:  
[ascensionpgh.com/news](http://ascensionpgh.com/news)

## serve:

**Want to get more involved? You can always join one of our teams!**

Altar Guild | Acolytes | Choir  
Class Teachers | Fellowship Team  
Handbell Choir | Money Counters  
Praise Team Band | Worship Tech Team  
Ushers | Christian Education | Outreach  
Worship Committee

**Specifically, right now we are on the hunt for:**

- Praise Team Members (voice or any instrument!)
- AV Booth Help (slides/sound/camera)
- Head of Stewardship

## spring newsletter deadline:

Send your newsletter content & photos to [mthompson@ascensionpgh.com](mailto:mthompson@ascensionpgh.com) by Wednesday, July 15. Thanks!

## connect:

**Joint Parish Ascension Day Service**  
Thursday, May 14 7pm at Ascension

**Prayer and Praise**  
Wednesdays - Fireside Room - 10am

**End of Christian Ed Year Picnic**  
June 7 after service

**Annual Pirates Baseball Outing**  
June 28<sup>th</sup> 11am - See Tim M for tickets  
asap

## learn:

**Christian Education Hour**  
Sundays 11am-12pm, classes for ages 2+

**Ladies Bible Study**  
Taking a break for the summer!

**Men's Bible Study**  
Fireside Room 8:30am  
4th Saturday of the Month

**Fire Safety Seminar**  
May 20 6:30pm Fellowship Hall



# **ASCENSION**

## Lutheran Church

8225 Peebles Road Pittsburgh, PA 15237

### WORSHIP WITH US

Join us each Sunday at 9:30am for worship in our Sanctuary.  
View our live streamed services on our YouTube Channel: AscensionPGH

### CONTACT US

#### CHURCH OFFICE

Monday - Thursday: 9:30am - 3:00pm  
412-364-4463

\*Need to visit? Call ahead to make sure someone is in the office.\*

#### CHURCH CONTACTS

Rev. Adam Thompson, Pastor	<a href="mailto:pastor@ascensionpgh.com">pastor@ascensionpgh.com</a>
Lisa & Emily Marcellus , Music Directors	<a href="mailto:music@ascensionpgh.com">music@ascensionpgh.com</a>
Alicia Weisser, Secretary	<a href="mailto:secretary@ascensionpgh.com">secretary@ascensionpgh.com</a>

President - Beth Gard	<a href="mailto:president@ascensionpgh.com">president@ascensionpgh.com</a>
Vice President - Lynn Gunther	<a href="mailto:vp@ascensionpgh.com">vp@ascensionpgh.com</a>
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