



THE PITTSBURGH LUTHERAN

VOL 95, NO 9, December 2020

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PALM DEVOTION

by The Reverend Dr. Douglas H. Spittel, President, Pittsburgh Area Lutheran Ministries



“Unto us...”

*The people who walked in darkness
Have seen a great light;
Those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death,
Upon them a light has shined.
You have multiplied the nation
And increased its joy;
They rejoice before You
According to the joy of harvest,
As men rejoice when they divide the spoil.
For You have broken the yoke of his burden
And the staff of his shoulder,
The rod of his oppressor,
As in the day of Midian.
For every warrior’s sandal from the noisy battle,
And garments rolled in blood,
Will be used for burning and fuel of fire.
For unto us a Child is born,
Unto us a Son is given;
And the government will be upon His shoulder.
And His name will be called
Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
Of the increase of His government and peace
There will be no end,
Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom,
To order it and establish it with judgment and justice
From that time forward, even forever.
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.
- Isaiah 9:2-7*

Palm Devotion (continued)

December is a time of contrasts of light and darkness. While the days grow shorter and the daylight fades, the Church lights one, then two, three, then four candles marking the weeks of Advent. On the Feast of Saint Thomas, the shortest day of the year, we begin to decorate our homes and prepare the baked goods for Christmas. Then on December 25, our homes and churches break forth with candles and electric lights in defiance of the darkness and celebration of the Light that has come into the world!

The year 2020, like December, gives the appearance that darkness reigns. But we Christians know better. We who walk in darkness have seen a great Light. Unto us a Child is born and that Child is Jesus Christ. He has come into our benighted world to take away that which brings darkness and death. He, the Child of Bethlehem, has taken away the sin of the world. In Him, we see the Light and celebrate a new Day. In Jesus alone, we have hope.

Even as the days begin to lengthen, slowly at first, but day by day to the Summer solstice, we know that the Light of Christ overcomes the darkness of this world. Our sins, our griefs, our sorrows are taken up by Jesus who gives us the hope of a new dawn. Avoid the temptation to let the world dictate how you should celebrate Christmas. Focus on the one thing needful, the Word of God, and then enjoy all the benefits that He bestows upon us in hearth and home, kith and kin. Let your light shine (literally and figuratively) so that your neighbors, your community, your city may see the hope that is in you. Unto us a Child is born and a Son is given. What a wonderful gift our God has bestowed upon us! Let us rejoice and be glad in it.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

December

6. Pastor Thompson installation Ascension Lutheran Church, McCandless, 3:30p.m.

6. Annual Christmas luncheon, Mt. Calvary, Westview, following the church service. Contact church for details.

13. Concordia Lutheran Ministries annual Live Nativity scene, Haven II, Cabot, Doors will open at 4:30 p.m. with 15-minute performances at 5:00, 5:30 and 6 p.m.

19. Live Nativity at Redeemer Lutheran School Oakmont. Open to the community. Contact the school office at 412-793-5884 or school@redeemer-oakmont.org

20. Annual Family Christmas Program Mt Calvary, Westview, Contact Church for details

TRI-PARISH WORSHIP SERVICES FOR THE CHRISTMAS SEASON

Wednesday, Dec. 2, 7 p.m. Advent Service at Zion
Wednesday, Dec. 9, 7 p.m. Advent Service at Bethel
Wednesday, Dec. 16, 7 p.m. Advent Service at St. John's

Wednesday, Dec. 24, 2 p.m. at Zion, 4:00 and 6:00 p.m. at St. John's and 8:00 p.m. at Bethel Christmas Eve Services with Holy Communion conducted by Pastor Hahn

Thursday, Dec. 25—Christmas Day Service, 11:00 a.m. at Zion



CALENDAR NOTE: DUE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC PLEASE KEEP IN MIND THAT ANY OF THE SCHEDULED EVENTS MAY BE CANCELLED OR POSTPONED. PLEASE CONTACT YOUR LOCAL CHURCH FOR UPDATES.WE PRAY THAT ALL OF YOU ARE SAFE AND HEALTHY.



The Pittsburgh Lutheran

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Editors
Nancy Koester, Mary Lou Rilee,
Megan Migyanko

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pittsburgh.lutheran.editor@gmail.com.

Please mail PALM donations to:
Pittsburgh Area Lutheran Ministries
Attn: Treasurer
535 N. Neville Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15213

PALM Officers
Rev. Douglas Spittel, President
Justin Spittel, Treasurer
Rev. Brian Westgate, Secretary

PALM Website
<http://www.palmpa.org>

PALM NEWS

by Justin Spittel, PALM Treasurer

Please Give Generously to PALM and Our Missions

Pittsburgh Area Lutheran Ministries is advancing the cause of outreach across our region with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. With two new mission churches now operating and new mission plants in the works, PALM serves our missions by providing administrative and financial assistance. This is only possible through the partnership of our beloved Synod, our Districts, the LCMS congregations in the Pittsburgh area, our partner Recognized Service Organizations, and generous donors like you!

In order to be the best stewards of the Church's mission that we can be, PALM will keep you informed about our financial outlook with regular reports. The Board of Directors receives a financial report at each of their monthly meetings, and a detailed report is given at the annual delegate meeting. Our treasury is audited annually by a certified public accountant and Form 990 is filed with the IRS every year. You may find this information on our GuideStar.org page at <https://www.guidestar.org/Profile/9177971>.

The snapshot of PALM's income and expenses over the past year presented here gives a simplified view of our financial health. These pie charts include only the missions and ministries for which PALM is directly responsible. (We often receive pass-through restricted gifts for specific LCMS ministries in Western Pennsylvania that we immediately pay out, so they are not shown for simplicity.) Please note that PALM Board is operated by volunteers, so this allows us to keep operating expenses at a minimum.

PALM maintains dedicated fund accounts for missions that are used when restricted gifts or grants are received for those specific missions. PALM has three major funds to which we encourage all of our contributors to prayerfully and generously consider with their gifts:

PALM Operating Fund – this fund pays for the daily operations of PALM, including the services of our regional Nursing Home Chaplain, the Rev'd Reholma McCants, and any expenses incurred by *The Pittsburgh Lutheran*, the PALM website, or normal business expenses.

PALM Mission Grant Fund – this fund is held in an interest-bearing account and is used solely for the mission and ministry grants that PALM awards annually.

PALM Endowment Fund – this managed account is for the long-term financial health of PALM and our missions. Donations to this fund are rolled into the principal and used to grow the fund. Only the earnings from this fund are used to support the missions of PALM.

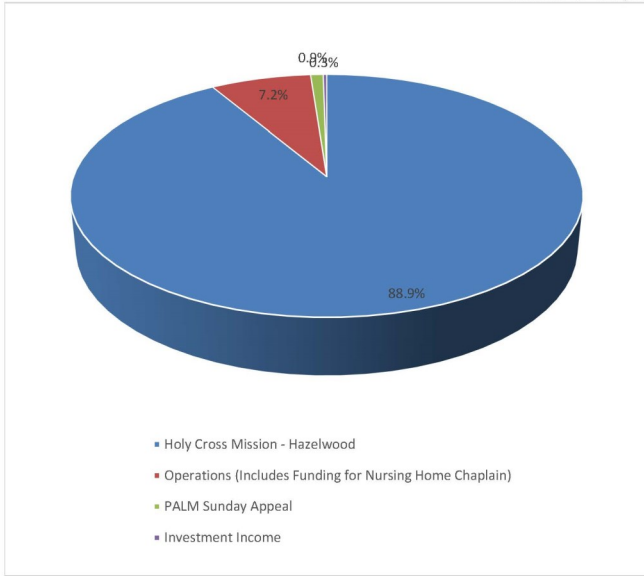
Please prayerfully consider donating to PALM and our missions as you are able. When donating to these funds, please make checks payable to "Pittsburgh Area Lutheran Ministries" and indicate to which fund you wish to contribute on the memo line. If no specific fund is indicated, the donation will go to the PALM Operating Fund by default.

Thank you for your prayers and generous support. God bless us and help us all.

PALM Income

1/1/2020 through 11/10/2020

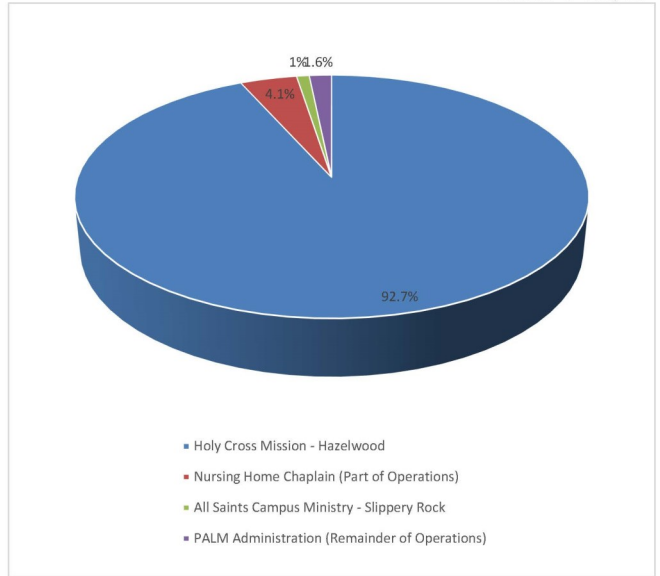
Holy Cross Mission - Hazelwood	88.9%	\$ 128,617
Operations (Includes Funding for Nursing Home Chaplain)	7.2%	\$ 10,363
PALM Sunday Appeal	0.9%	\$ 1,300
Investment Income	0.3%	\$ 367
Grant Fund Income (for 2021 Grants)	3%	\$ 4,000
	100.0%	\$ 144,647



PALM Expenses

1/1/2020 through 11/10/2020

Holy Cross Mission - Hazelwood	92.7%	\$ 130,929
Nursing Home Chaplain (Part of Operations)	4.1%	\$ 5,830
All Saints Campus Ministry - Slippery Rock	1%	\$ 1,300
PALM Administration (Remainder of Operations)	1.6%	\$ 2,286
PALM Mission and Ministry Grants (2020)	0.6%	\$ 875
	100.0%	\$ 141,220



SLIPPERY ROCK UNIVERSITY

Pastor's Lunches

by Augusta R. Mennell, Campus Ministry Director

Campus pastor at All Saints Lutheran Church and Student Center, Rev. Larry K. Loree, came up with a really great idea for sharing faith and friendship with college students. Because the monthly student Korean meals had to be canceled due to Covid, he decided to invite students to have lunch after Sunday worship.

The first time he announced his invitation he asked the students if they would like to have lunch at the North Country Brewery. They jumped at the idea and flocked in for lunch. It was such a hit that they asked if he could do it again. Who wouldn't enjoy a delicious meal and time to tell Pastor Loree about their classes and to ask questions they had on their minds. Pastor's idea worked!

The college students who were at the All Saints Reformation Sunday service were so glad to get another lunch invitation. This time everyone met at Ginger Hill Restaurant. At least thirteen students and adults crowded around a very long restaurant table. The students not only wanted to tell Pastor about their studies and their concerns about the virus, but they also wanted to understand more of what Lutherans believe. Since the students come from many denominations including Lutherans, Presbyterians, Methodists, and Roman Catholics, they want to understand the Lutheran point of view.

A number of the students are dating across denominational lines. This means they want and need to learn denominational theology so that they can make a biblical choice if they should happen to get serious in their relationships. The lunch gave an additional opportunity to check out particular Lutheran theological positions with Pastor. Infant baptism is an especially important area to several of them. Pastor gave several students a copy of a very readable booklet called [A Simple Explanation of Lutheranism](#) (CPH) to add to their understanding.

A wonderful thing happened at the lunch. Two young couples came to the lunch and eagerly greeted each other. One of the couples has been coming to Friday Bible study. She is a Catholic and he is a Presbyterian. They are Slippery Rock University students. Both are Christians who love studying the Bible and have strong backgrounds in what the Christian faith believes. They are a joy to join me in studying the book of Romans. They came to our Lutheran class because he plans to become a Catholic, but still has a strong desire to examine Lutheran theology. They have met and talked with Pastor Loree and feel at ease with him. During the most recent Bible study, Pastor came by and gave them an invitation to our next lunch, never expecting they'd like to attend our Lutheran worship, which they did on Reformation Sunday.



CAMPUS MINISTRY

There they were at the lunch when in walked Bryan, a student member of All Saints who attends Kent State University online, and his girlfriend, who attends SRU and does not yet have a church she calls her own.

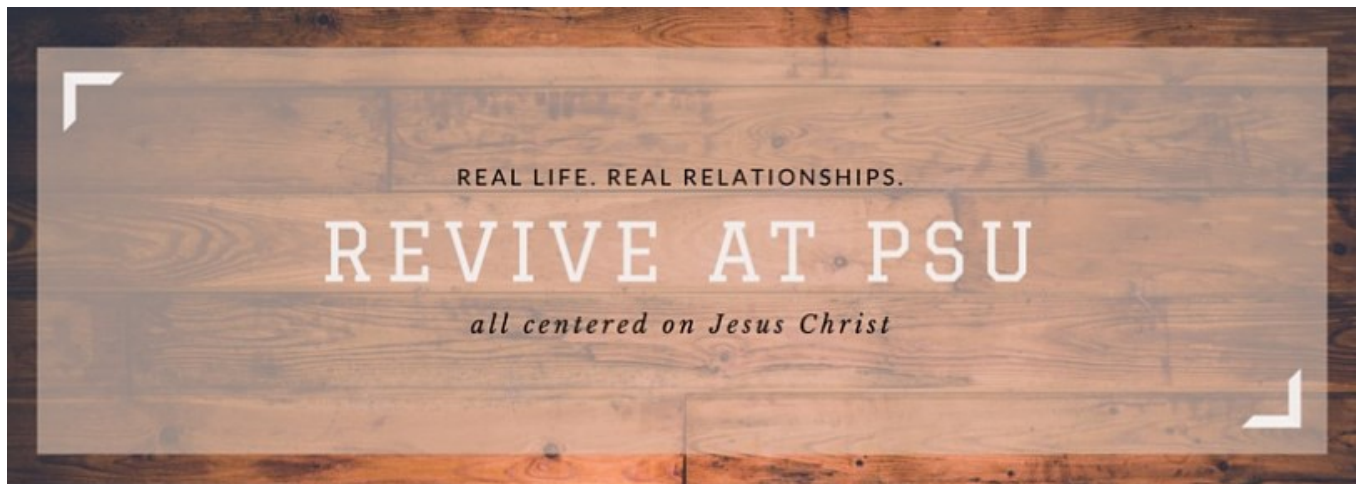
The two couples sat next to each other. They introduced themselves and then talked about the many books they had read, and places they had visited. History seems to be a shared passion. They couldn't stop talking. They left the meal wishing they had exchanged phone numbers. I realized their regret and found ways to help them get each other's numbers. It was a blessing to see this friendship blossom at Pastor's lunch. Who knows? Maybe all four will grow in faith because they had time to eat lunch together.

Pastor Loree is planning another lunch for students soon. In addition, he has a surprise in store for the students with the help of two church members. If not enough time is available before Thanksgiving when the semester ends, he will welcome them back with a meal and that surprise in January 2021. Pastor's lunches have been a big success with our college students.



PSU CAMPUS MINISTRY UPDATE

by Matt Slaybaugh, Director of Revive Campus Ministry



Our fall semester has been one to remember. There have been many changes and challenges but we have seen our God be faithful during this time. Penn State has strong COVID-19 restrictions limiting our in-person activities on campus. Therefore, our welcome week activities were geared with an outdoor focus. Some of our activities have included: hiking, ice cream social, weekly gathering, weekly small group, go karting, mini golf, movie night, go karting, and other theme nights.

Our regular in-person recruitment did not occur. However, we reached out to many students through social media and have seen our group nearly double in size. Our weekly gathering consists of a home cooked dinner, hang out, and bible study. Our lessons this semester have focused on topics such as: identity, adulting 101, money, family, along with the reformation. We have averaged around twelve students with almost half being new students.

We continue to build deeper relationships with students through lunches and coffees. Our Pastor and I recently finished up a 5 day online devotion highlighting, "Following Jesus in a World of Difference" during this election season.

The remainder of our fall semester will be all virtual following the Thanksgiving break. The Penn State administration has removed the spring break from the spring semester and there is the expectation of similar restrictions. Our group typically goes on a spring break mission trip and are exploring new opportunities to serve. We remain concerned over students who experience depression, anxiety, and mental health challenges during this time. I continue to advocate for "community in a safe and smart manner." Your prayers for our ministry are appreciated.

LOCAL MISSION

MILEPOSTERS NEWS



On October 25, the ninth Mileposters trail mom qualified as captain, with her son as stoker, pictured at Cumberland milepost 140 on the Great Allegheny Passage with her daughter; an older girl, granddaughter of another captain, is holding the son. All four are new riders this season. Soli Deo Gloria.

On November 7, the group leader made the longest one-day ride of the season on the tri-plet, by himself, with a 33-mile round trip between Buena Vista and Whitsett, along the Youghiogheny River. The picture was taken at Milepost 43, in Whitsett. This ride raised the total for the Miles to Go 2020 campaign for Puerto Rico to 2,577 miles. Appeal letters are to be mailed out late in the last week of November, with the season-end celebration slated for early December.



LOCAL MISSION

One Year Anniversary of Holy Cross: “We Adore Thee, O Christ, and we Praise Thee; Because by Thy Holy Cross, Thou hast Redeemed the World”
by Vicar Silas Hasselbrook

In December, it will have been a year since St. Paul’s Lutheran Church (ELCA), became Holy Cross Evangelical Lutheran Chapel, a mission church of the LCMS in the Pittsburgh neighborhood of Hazelwood. Pastor Douglas Spittel, though, had been working in this area much before that. His connection with congregants of Holy Cross goes back to 2017, where he found a congregation with a vibrant food and clothing distribution center, but lacking a shepherd. Eventually, Rev. Spittel organized a weekly Bible Study that met on Wednesdays at noon, either at the local library, or Jozsa’s Corner down the street. The members of St. Paul were eventually faced with the closure of their church by the ELCA. Instead, they voted to sell the property for \$1 and become an LCMS Chapel. On Christmas Day, Holy Cross baptized their first member (known affectionately as Baby Matthew, and proudly touted as the first baptized member of Holy Cross by his parents and grandparents).



It is hard to believe that so much has happened in one year. Holy Cross has been served by two vicars in that time and developed a rich and varied worship schedule. Of course, the beloved Wednesday Noon Prayer followed by Bible Study was retained. The volunteers from the clothing and food distribution center downstairs take a break and come up to the sanctuary, where we pray Noon Prayer, and study the Gospel reading from the previous Sunday. Others from our church and community join us in the sanctuary to be edified by the Word of God. Because of the diversities in background, careers, life experience, and sometimes religious affiliation, the conversations are often lively and engaging, as we discuss any and every issue that the Gospel reading or the catechism portion brings up. Often, people simply ask questions they have always wondered about, or for guidance in their life. The wonderful thing is that the Word of God is our sole guide and unifying factor in these Bible studies and discussions, and though there may be varying viewpoints brought up, it is this Word that enables us to understand God’s will for our lives. Many people have expressed how much they learn and enjoy engaging in discussion at this Bible Study.



On Fridays, a similar event happens, with the volunteers and various people in the neighborhood joining in the sanctuary at noon. The difference is that the order of worship is the Stations of the Cross. As we make our way around the church, observing the 14 depictions of our Lord, reading Scripture, praying, and singing hymns, we are presented with an opportunity to reflect on the meaning and seriousness of Jesus’ Crucifixion. We also speak the phrase that constitutes the title of this article at each station. You might say this is the mission statement and motto of Holy Cross. Stations of the Cross prepares us well to anticipate and long for the gifts the Risen Lord brings to His people on Sunday.

LOCAL MISSION



Every Sunday is worship followed by Bible Study. Although the service starts a bit earlier than the noon hour (9:30), yet the people of Holy Cross gather, receiving the gifts of Word and Sacrament (every other week for the Eucharist when Rev. Spittel is present). These gifts are received through the structure of the liturgy and supported with hymns and chorales. This is the high point of the week for the congregation, around which all other services and acts of mercy revolve. Following this is a Bible Study that is full of questions and discussion, much as Wednesdays were. In the Sunday Bible Study, we are working through Genesis, one chapter at a time. This Bible Study, as well as the Wednesday study, is not restricted to adults only. We often have young adults and older children who sit in, listen, and ask many excellent questions.

Additionally, every other Sunday at 5:00 p.m. in the evening, we have a Community Dinner for anyone in need of a meal, followed by a Vespers service. This is a wonderful opportunity to meet other people from the neighborhood, enjoy fellowship with them around a good meal, and invite them into our church family. The sermon for the Vespers service focuses on a portion of the catechism, so that those unfamiliar with the church may learn God's Word in short and succinct fashion, preparing them for more extensive catechesis in the future.

Indeed, such extensive catechesis is occurring even now. We have three youth in catechesis classes, on track for confirmation in June. Further, we have at least four adults who are ready to take classes and join the church. This is an encouraging example of the Word of forgiveness and reconciliation changing lives and creating faith.

What is remarkable about the people of Holy Cross is that they are attending church on days other than Sunday, and not strictly out of habit. They desire to come and learn about the message Christ brings, and receive the Word of forgiveness, life, and salvation to bolster them in this sinful and broken world. In fact, some have asked me for even more opportunities to worship and longer Bible studies. What a joy there is such thirst to know the things of God!

Even as the Divine Service is the center of our worship at Holy Cross, the worship life is the center of the acts of mercy that occur here. As I mentioned, the congregation takes a break from their work in the food and clothing distribution center to worship and learn, then gets right back at it afterwards. Even as they have been shown mercy, they show mercy. Even as they have been loved, they love. COVID-19 did not put a damper on their efforts to feed and clothe the needy in Hazelwood, or anyone in need who happened to drive by us on Second Avenue. In fact, in response to the pandemic, the volunteers doubled their efforts. This, as can be imagined, was difficult to do, while also observing proper safety precautions. However, that did not deter them. Instead of offering their typical every-other-Saturday distribution of groceries, they did it every week. Not only that, but they had the doors open Monday-Saturday each week, giving food to those who needed it and rolling the clothes racks outside. At the end of each day, although the clothes go in, there is always free food left out on tables under the tents in front of the church.

LOCAL MISSION

The connections between the congregation and the community of Hazelwood run deep. Many of our members have lived in Hazelwood all or most of their lives, and grew up during the many changes that affected this neighborhood: the steel mills, the gang violence, and the present revitalization of the community. And so, when we do community events, it often feels like a reunion. One such example was the monthly community Flea Market in October. Holy Cross set up a tent to distribute free Bibles, wooden crosses, catechisms, and pamphlets concerning pro-life resources and our beliefs. Many of our members came and mingled with the community, reconnecting with old friends and meeting the newer people and organizations of the neighborhood.

This December, as happened last year, Holy Cross will host a Toy Drive for the families of our area. It is fitting that the birth of Holy Cross Evangelical Lutheran Chapel occurred at the same time we observed the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ, the light of the world. Hazelwood is not without its issues and many still need to be reached. But on this one-year anniversary, we give thanks that Holy Cross has been filled with the light of Christ, enabling us to shine as a light to the neighborhood of Hazelwood. While Holy Cross may have been 'birthed' a year ago, it is certainly growing more than a baby could in that time. Holy Cross is not taking baby steps, but long strides. Though small, it continues to grow and mature, displaying itself fully equipped and ready to care for all people in body and soul. And why not? For where the Word Incarnate, Christ Himself, is cherished, the Lord sees to it that His Gospel work is done.



Our Houses of Worship

By Shirley Freyer

Calvary Lutheran Church & Calvary Early Learning Center

4726 Old William Penn Highway,
Murrysville, PA 15668 724-327-2898

For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. - Ephesians 5:8-10



Its website encourages connecting people with the love of Jesus. Its marquee asks "Feeling puzzled? maybe God is the missing piece." And its pastor for the last 14 years reiterates those words of welcome. "Calvary's mission of connecting people to the love of Jesus reflects a commitment to the firm foundation based upon Christ our Lord played out through the care and acceptance of His people. Rather than focusing on what we cannot do, we confidently work on that which we can do... without regret or reservation," states Rev. David Weeks who is currently serving as vacancy pastor since his retirement there this past October. "This commitment matches my heart in service to the Lord," he confessed.

Calvary Lutheran Church is located on what the Murrysville community calls "Church Row" along with six other worship centers. Close to the PA Turnpike and 15 miles from downtown Pittsburgh, Murrysville borders Allegheny and Westmoreland Counties and is one of the larger municipalities in the area.

The number three describes the land parcels as well as the variety of services held each weekend. The A-frame sanctuary was built in 1956 on the highly visible corner of Route 22 and School Road, adjacent to Franklin Regional School District. A Fellowship Hall is located below the sanctuary and attached two story education wing which houses the Early Learning Center consisting of pre-school and Kindergarten and the Narthex. Built in the late 1980s, it is directed by Laura Schum Hoff.

"This school year marks Calvary Early Learning Center's 25th year of serving Murrysville and surrounding communities," noted Laura. "We are currently following the CDC guidelines, which allow us to have in-person classes. We pray that we will be able to continue this throughout the year and for many years to come."

CELC has students from age 2 - through Kindergarten. The program is vibrant and self-supporting with a maximum of 10 students in each of the four classes.

"We have an amazing opportunity to share the love of Jesus with these children every day, Laura said. "One year when my class was practicing a song for our Christmas program, a student asked, 'Who is the Babe in the manger?' Laura was the first person to tell this child about the birth of Jesus. It was a special Christmas of her 15 served at Calvary.

HOUSES OF WORSHIP SERIES

A second parking lot and a large building (named Calvary Community Center) that was formerly a bank, acquired in 2018, completes the church landscape.

The congregation offers three service types each weekend. According to the Chairman of the Board of Lay Ministry (elders), Tom Harbaugh, a 5:30 service on Saturday evening is contemporary and often the initial point of contact for new members. Attended regularly by as many as 25, it offers a prayer circle, video screen and a sound system. The bulk of the 200-member congregation attends an early Sunday morning worship service using the Divine Service settings with liturgy and hymns accompanied by a pipe organ. The 11 a.m. service is a combination of the contemporary and traditional formats.

Tom & Carolyn Harbaugh became members of Calvary in November of 1981. They and their three daughters moved to Murrysville from Sheldon, Iowa when Tom accepted a position with Westinghouse Electric Company as a Training Instructor in the Nuclear Operations Division.

“Calvary was close to where we were living at the time and we visited. They made us welcome, no pressure, just God’s peace, said Carolyn. “We never found a church home that was as welcoming and as much a family as Calvary, they agreed. “Calvary has always been the place where we feel like we belong. God’s word is preached and practiced, and God has blessed Calvary with that spirit of open arms and welcoming spirit.”

All three of their grandchildren attended pre-school and Kindergarten at Calvary Early Learning Center and the oldest granddaughter was confirmed this year.

In addition to the Early Learning Center, Calvary is a community resource for a number of ministries. The LCMS locator website lists them as education, human care, media and specialized support. Sponsored events include the Christian Art Show, Bake Sale and Gallery Café in November to benefit PALS (Pittsburgh Area Lutheran Schools) and a Car Cruise in June for Murrysville Meals on Wheels.

Special worship services are Blue Christmas on the first Sunday evening in December for those who are grieving, lonely, sad or just in need of a time of quiet in the busy-ness of the season. As a veteran, Tom Harbaugh actively supports the Veterans Day service and the Veterans Center for homeless and needy veterans. Both Carolyn and Tom volunteer at the Blackburn Center ministry for battered spouses.

Then there is also the Bottle Campaign for the Monroeville Pregnancy Center and the Crop Walk to stop hunger, The National Day of Prayer meeting place, the Shiprock Navajo Indian Reservation where members conduct Vacation Bible School and the Loaves & Fishes ministry at a neighboring church. The Prayer Shawl Ministry, Together in Mission to support Campus Crusade for Christ in the Susquehanna Valley and military and college Care Package Ministry.

HOUSES OF WORSHIP SERIES

One of the church's favorite outreaches is Sonshine Community Ministries, created by members of the former Concordia Lutheran Church in McKeesport and led by its pastor for 20 years, David Weeks. Converted to a food pantry, it has grown into a pregnancy resource center, an afterschool homework and mentor program, a clothing bank and one of the most comprehensive community resources our Lutheran churches offer in western PA.

Calvary's long-time congregant and a member of the Concordia Lutheran Ministries (CLM) Board for 18 years, Paul Rehkopf talks about the lasting connection between CLM and Calvary. Often in the past years, Calvary has retained representation on the parent Board through its pastors, first Rev. Ken Hoener and then Pastor Weeks as well as member Dave Alsing. Pastor Minetree served as a chaplain at Concordia. Paul just finished his final year as a CLM parent board member, but he looks forward to the development of potential plans for the Westmoreland project - a Concordia retirement living community adjacent to the Country Club.

"Laura (his late wife) and I moved to Pittsburgh from Michigan in 1962 when we took up residence in Penn Hills," he related. The couple joined Epiphany Lutheran Church (which closed in 2008) because it was close to home and stayed at Epiphany until after their second son, Tim was born. "When we moved to Murrysville in 1964 it was more convenient to become members of Calvary," said Paul. "Since then I have served in many capacities - as chair of Evangelism, Deacon, Elder and Chairman."

Calvary's oldest member, Ruth Hill is a resident of Concordia of Monroeville and Calvary's longest tenured pastor, Ken Hoener and wife Charlotte have made their home at Concordia Haven for the last decade.

Current chairman of the congregation Ryan Lynch believes Calvary exists "to humbly and exhaustively serve and obey our Living Lord and Savior, for the exclusive purpose of rescuing others with the love and hope of Jesus, one soul at a time" and asks for prayers during this time of the calling of a pastor. Ryan and his wife joined Calvary after a church search. "My wife grew up Lutheran, me Catholic. It took us a little while to understand the difference in the Synods," he explained. "We attended one service at Calvary and Pastor Weeks was awesome." He also mentioned there was a couple who greeted them and explained the church in detail. "We loved it and the people," he concluded.



SCHOOL NEWS

REDEEMER LUTHERAN SCHOOL

Oakmont / Penn Hills

The temps and the snowflakes are falling... 2020 is nearly over. As the seasons change, the events and special moments continue at Redeemer.

Our high school girls volleyball team finished their season by making it to the playoffs once again, this time advancing to the semifinals and nearly making it to the finals in a hard-fought match! Seniors Mia Kefalos and Kalee Thornton were named to the all-conference team. We are proud of them for their hard work. Congratulations to the girls and to volleyball coach Mr. Loewe.

Our high school cross country team once again participated in the WPIAL competition on Wednesday, October 28, in White Oak. The Lord granted pleasant weather for the day, and all runners did well, with three of the team members finishing in the top 100. Congratulations to senior Charis Carroll for running her best time and placing 41st. The team was once again featured in an online Tribune-Review article; we encourage everyone to check it out on the Trib website. Thanks to Athletic Director Nathan Loewe and cross country coach Dr. Dana Brown for working with the entire team this year.

RLHS held their annual National Honor Society induction ceremony on October 30, recognizing junior London Ellis who joins the NHS chapter this year. Congratulations to London for her hard work and dedication.

Our high school robotics team continues to work on their entry for the Wolverine BEST Robotics competition sponsored by Grove City College (held remotely this year). The two-day event involves presentations in marketing, engineering/design, and robot performance. As of this writing, portions of the competition will be held on November 20 & 21, with final portions to be presented later this month. The team, led by Mrs. Schumacher, is pressing on in with their work and preparation and is excited for the upcoming events. They look forward to sharing their results with the Pittsburgh Lutheran community in the February issue.

Our middle and high school students participated in Redeemer's second annual "Hopecoming Week" during the final week of October. Students paid \$1 per day to participate in different themes, including Decades, Disney, and School Spirit. High school grades created mini floats for a parade, with the elementary and middle school students voting on the best float. The end of the week culminated with fun competitions in games such as Family Feud and Minute to Win It. Each grade earned points for participation and spirit, with the winning sophomore class receiving a trophy. All proceeds from the week are going to support fire restoration efforts for St. John's Lutheran School in Napa, CA.

On Wednesday, November 11, Redeemer held the annual Veterans Day event. In lieu of the usual parade and ceremony, classes produced a special video to honor all those who have served and are currently serving in our country's armed forces around the world. Students presented poems and songs, and Pastor Edward Grimenstein from Zion Lutheran Church, Bridgeville, shared a brief and heartfelt message. We encourage everyone to view the video on our Facebook page

Students used donated items from school and church families to assemble Christmas gift bags to send to troops that are currently deployed. Thanks to these generous donations, we were once again able to pack over 200 bags. We are grateful for this opportunity to support and encourage those that are bravely defending our country and our freedom.

We wish everyone a blessed holiday season. We will see you in 2021.

SCHOOL NEWS

RLS Teacher Spotlight:

Mrs. Sarah Stanley, middle/high math and science teacher

Hometown: South Fork, PA

Alma mater: St. Francis University

Interesting past work experiences: worked with AmeriCorps and designed lessons for a second-grade reading program

Family: husband Matt, 5th grade son Issak, kindergarten daughter Ella

On my decision to become a teacher: "God called me into this profession. I was driving to my ER rotation and pulled on the side of the road crying, feeling God's presence pulling me to something else."

My RLS Experience: "When this opportunity became known to us, we lifted this job in prayer to God; at the time of my interviewing for this position, we lived about an hour and 30 minutes from Redeemer. We asked for guidance, wisdom, provision. Sure enough, He answered through scripture. Our children love RLS. Truly a blessed transition. Even our commute has been a blessing. God is good!"

Upcoming events: Live Nativity, Saturday, December 19th Open to the community Contact the school office at 412-793-5884 or school@redeemer-oakmont.org for more details!



Top Left: High school students pack gift bags for troops around the world

Bottom Right: Mia Kefalos and Kalee Thornton named to HS volleyball All-Conference team

Bottom Left: Redeemer middle school girls enjoy Disney Day during Homecoming Week



NEWS FROM AREA CONGREGATIONS

ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH

McCandless

We are excited to announce that Pastor Adam Thompson has officially accepted the Divine Call to be Pastor of Ascension Lutheran Church. Pastor Thompson has been Associate Pastor at Fairlawn Lutheran Church in Fairlawn (Akron) Ohio. Pastor Thompson graduated from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis in 2016 and was called to Fairlawn Lutheran Church after graduation. While serving as the Associate Pastor, he also led the Young Adult group, and was the Director of Youth and Family Ministries. Pastor Thompson's installation will be on Sunday, December 6, 2020 at 3:30 PM at Ascension Lutheran Church.



CONCORDIA LUTHERAN

Brentwood

Concordia has resumed our first Saturday of the month Men's Breakfast following a long Corona Virus-induced hiatus. This is open to all the men of Concordia, and we encourage bringing a friend to this easy get-together in hopes of encouraging them to ALSO come check us out on SUNDAY morning as well.

Thanks to member Johnny Mainarich, our undercroft is getting a makeover, as his Eagle Scout service project is to repaint it, and installing acoustic ceiling tile. As part of this fixup, we've re-plastered several areas that needed touching up, and as the light fixtures have to come down for the tile installation, new electrical outlets are going in as well. We look forward to enjoying these upgrades, and appreciate Johnny picking us to BE his Eagle Service project.

While we cannot hold our traditional Stewardship Kickoff Covered Dish Luncheon this year (Corona Virus, and the undercroft being repaired), Concordia has teamed up with the Rev. Bill Brath of LCEF at LCMS headquarters to produce a customized stewardship video. This video will be posted to our YouTube page - extolling our theme, "Sow your seed in the morning, and at evening let your hands not be idle!", based on Ecclesiastes 11:6. We're excited to have Pastor Brath as our "guest speaker" this year, even if only by YouTube!

Congratulations to John & Evelyn Nickel, who recently celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary!

Pictured below is our Walther League Hayride at Simmons farm on October 17. Youth and adults from Concordia - Brentwood, Zion - Bridgeville, First Trinity - Oakland, and Ascension McCandless attended, over 40 in all! Thanks to Scott & Jan Simmons for having us.



NEWS FROM AREA CONGREGATIONS

MT. CALVARY

Westview

For this year's Christmas Blessings project, Mt. Calvary is donating non-perishable food items to the North Hills Community Outreach ministry. Members and friends of the congregation have been collecting products and giving donations since the beginning of November to help make Christmas brighter for some local families. The items will be delivered in December.

The Outreach Group at Mt. Calvary has been busy as the year winds down. Meeting every Tuesday evening, the ladies have been crafting Christmas ornaments out of recycled cards to give to people receiving Meals on Wheels. They also continue to make bookmarks, jewelry, and gift tags, and design stacks of cards, both for Christmas and for all occasions. All money earned from purchases of the crafts is donated to local mission projects. In addition, the ladies created colorful ornaments to be hung on the church Christmas tree.

(Left: Cards and gifts designed by Mt. Calvary's Outreach Group are showcased at the church.)

(Right: Wynn Yocum displays some of the ornaments designed by the Outreach Group.)



While the bell choir started practice in October, the voice choir also joined the action in November. Both groups performed the Sunday before Thanksgiving and will be part of the annual Family Christmas Program on December 20.

Mt. Calvary also planned its annual Christmas luncheon on December 6 following the church service. For the past few years, the congregation has used the Cooked Goose catering service to provide an excellent meal, and a grab bag is also part of the fun.



JOIN US FOR CONCORDIA'S EIGHTH ANNUAL LIVE NATIVITY

Sunday, December 13
148 Marwood Rd., Cabot, PA 16023
(Entrance #5, Haven II)
Performances at 5, 5:30 and 6 p.m.

Due to do the COVID-19 pandemic, the event this year will take place all outdoors to ensure proper social distancing.

- *Live animals*
- *Hot beverages and refreshments*
- *Gift for children 12 and under*



This will be a “walk-through” nativity, so guests are encouraged to dress warmly. Parking at entrances 5 and 6. For more information, call 724-352-1571, ext. 8343 or visit www.concordialm.org.



Adopt A Concordia Resident At Christmas

A fun way for a church group to remember residents is the "Adopt-A-Resident" approach. As we approach the Christmas season, we ask that you also do what you can to support the residents at our Concordia communities. In these uncertain times, please consider helping our Activities Directors with gifts for our residents.

If you prefer to send a general gift, we can suggest the following newly purchased items that our residents can typically use: large or extra large sweat suits; adjustable ball caps, socks, large or extra large undershirts, Hair clips/combs/barrettes, Stationery/stamps, Puzzle books, Word Search, Sugar free candy, Books on tape, large or extra large size Dusters/loungers, Snack shop gift certificates, Door decorations, Puffs or Kleenex brand tissue, Watches with large numbers, Lotions and cologne, Tape players/radios for rooms, Music CDs and cassette tapes, a gift box of chocolates, Digital clocks with large numbers, Seasonal sun catchers with suction cups, Large print books (no magazines), Large or extra large cardigan sweaters or sweatshirts, Washable slippers with backs or slipper socks, Jewelry (not pierced), Gift certificates for beauty/barber shop, Decorative small pillows, Devotional books, Decorative throws/blankets, Magnifying glasses, Picture albums/small frames, Lipstick, rouge, liquid makeup, loose powder, toiletries, Sports memorabilia, and Snow globes. Donated general items should not be wrapped and may be dropped off to the Lund Care Center, Building #4. If it is after hours or on the weekend and the administration area is closed, please leave items at a nurse's station.

Finally, monetary contributions are always appreciated and need to be sent to CLM Foundation, 134 Marwood Road, Cabot, PA 16023.

If your congregation or individual members are interested in "adopting a resident," please call:

CABOT

Jaime White (personal care): 724-352-1571 ext. 8302

Brandy Muth (skilled nursing): 724-352-1571 ext. 8241

ORCHARD

Jodi Macko (personal care): 724-285-4490

HARMONY PHYSICAL REHABILITATION (Concordia of Monroeville)

Diana McDade: 412-373-3900 ext. 3463.

(Only blankets, socks, and sweatshirts)

FOX CHAPEL

Kelly Ellena or Sharon Scott: 412-767-5808

WEXFORD

Michelle Moan: 724-935-1266



Concordia Delegates Elect History-Making Board of Directors

Keith E. Frndak, President and CEO, Concordia Lutheran Ministries announced the election of seven board members at the annual delegate meeting on Nov 8. For the first time in the 139-year history of the organization, one-third of the 18-member parent board are women. Installed by Rev. Jack Hartman, director of chaplaincy services, the newly elected members follow. Each will serve a three-year term.

Rev. Ronald Bright of Forest Hills. Pastor of Christ Lutheran Church in Forest Hills since 2007. (2nd from Left)

Charlie Buttgerit of Highland Park, He and his wife Eliza are members of Redeemer. (3rd from Left)

Fred Heintz Jr. of Glenshaw, lifelong member of Bethel Lutheran Church. (1st from Left)

Gail Holzer of North Huntingdon, Principal and school administrator of Redeemer Lutheran School, Member of Redeemer Lutheran Church. (4th from Left)

Nell Kroeger Wilson of Greentree, she and her family are members of Zion Lutheran in Bridgeville (5th from Left)

Sherrie Purucker of Shaler, member of St. John's in Millvale (6th from left)



Presented with a thank-you plaque for their service was Mary Ann Bornemann (Grace, Penn Hills) for six years, Peter Humphrey (Prince of Peace, Freedom) for six years, Rev. Barry Keurulainen (St Luke) for 18 years, Robert Schmidt (Zion, Bridgeville) for six years and Paul Rehkopf (Calvary, Murrysville) for 18 years.

Nineteen churches were represented and a total of 48 delegates as well as management staff were in attendance at three locations – Haven I at Cabot was live and the Chapel at Concordia at Rebecca Residence and the Harmony Room at Concordia of the South Hills were video-conferenced. Keith E. Frndak, President and CEO is both impressed and delighted with the caliber of the candidates and looks forward to robust expansion and strong support of our mission of faithful caring.



Concordia Lutheran Ministries Ways to give during COVID-19

As we continue to combat this pandemic together, we at Concordia have been so grateful for the tremendous support we've received from the community. Many people have asked how they can make a difference during these challenging times.

Here are a few ways that you can help Concordia while still maintaining social distancing:

Participate in our card/video campaign for our residents and patients.

To send cards for our residents to enjoy, please contact the Activities Department at the location you are interested in sending them. To send a video message, email us at SendASmile@concordialm.org.

Make or donate any type of masks or other personal protective equipment (PPE). There is no shortage of PPE for daily use at Concordia, but if you would like to help us prepare for our long-term supply needs, please contact our purchasing director at: 724-352-1571, ext. 8374.

Give the gift of a companion.

Some people have chosen to give toward our acquisition of lifelike robotic pets that help our residents cope with loneliness – especially during this time of social distancing. Please call our Foundation office at 724-352-1571, ext. 8363 for more details.

Making a tribute gift in honor of your loved ones.

Tribute giving is a heartfelt way to recognize, honor and celebrate your loved ones or the staff that are helping to care for them. With a tribute gift, you continue to support our mission of providing faith-based, quality care to those who need it most. You can give online at Give.ConcordiaLM.org and click the "GIVE NOW" button or mail to the CLM Foundation at 134 Marwood Rd, Cabot, PA 16023.

If you are interested in helping with any of these initiatives, please contact the Foundation Office at 724-352-1571, ext. 8363 or giving@concordialm.org.

For the most up-to-date information on Concordia's COVID-19 response, visit www.ConcordiaLM.org

Your Dream for Free:

Let Concordia pay for your nursing degree!



recently forged a partnership that will provide amazing opportunities for our community members interested in earning a degree in nursing!

How it works:

- ◆ Apply and earn acceptance into BC3's Nursing Program
- ◆ Apply for Concordia's BC3 Tuition Assistance Program by visiting www.concordialm.org or scanning this QR code to the right
- ◆ Graduate in two years
- ◆ Begin your new career as Registered Nurse with Concordia, debt free!

Quick Q & A:

Q: Will Concordia pay for all of my tuition or a portion of it?

A: In the program, your tuition is FULLY PAID by Concordia!

Q: Do I have to work for Concordia while in school?

A: No, however, if you do commit to 5-6 days a month, Concordia will also reimburse the cost of your books!

Q: What kind of nursing position will I have with Concordia?

A: Concordia has 16 locations across western Pennsylvania that offer inpatient care or residence, and our home health, hospice, and private duty service lines serve 13 counties – so we have a wide variety of nursing positions available!



Interested in a closer look at Concordia?

Call 724.352.1571 x8372 to schedule a personal appointment with a safe distance tour of the Concordia at Cabot campus! Concordia is blessed to be able to give back to our local community members with this amazing opportunity! Email BC3NursingProgram@concordialm.org to learn how you can turn your dream into a reality!

