



THE PITTSBURGH LUTHERAN

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PALM DEVOTION

by The Reverend Dr. Douglas H. Spittel, PALM President

“The Household of Faith”

Let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.- Galatians 6:9-10



The New Testament pictures the Church in many ways. She is the eternal Bride of Christ. We are all members of one Body of Christ. As rich and beautiful as these depictions are, the one I find most tangible is St. Paul's proclamation in Galatians that we are the Household of Faith. It is in a household that we experience being part of a family. A household has many varied relationships that overlap and complement one another. When Dr. Luther asks us to *“Consider your place in life according to the Ten Commandments: Are you a father, mother, son, daughter, husband, wife, or worker?”* he is speaking of relationships found foremost in a household. A household extends beyond the immediate family to include everyone under the roof or in the field: extended family, friends, workers, and even sojourning visitors. So, St. Paul exhorts us to do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith. The Apostle presents an order here that has a beginning and a goal. This order goes beyond the aphorism that *“charity begins at home”* and uses the household as a base of operations, as it were, to “do good” to all around us.

What is the “household of faith?” This is not our earthly household, borne out of familial circumstances. Nor is it a commune of like-minded individuals. These are temporary and transient. The household of which St. Paul speaks is born of the Faith he proclaims in his letter to the Romans, which comes from hearing the Word of God. It is *“the congregation of saints in which the Gospel is rightly taught, and the Sacraments are rightly administered.”* Simply put, it is the tangible, earthly Church bound together in agreement *“concerning the doctrine of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments.”* This household of faith is found in your local congregation and your sister congregations of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod across the Pittsburgh Area.

St. Paul calls upon us to “do good,” that is, help everyone by supporting the Holy Ministry, missions, and mercy outreaches of our local congregation and those around us. Since 1902, the Lord has blessed Western Pennsylvania and parts of Ohio, Maryland, and West Virginia with the organization we now know as Pittsburgh Area Lutheran Ministries. It is through this recognized service organization of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod that our local congregations come together to help one another proclaim the forgiveness and love of Jesus Christ to our neighbors. We “do good” to those of the household of faith and, thereby, do good to all around us. Think of each of our congregations as a powerful local beacon of the Gospel. As we “do good” to each congregation and to our joint efforts through PALM, we strengthen the ability of each “beacon” to shine out that “good” to their neighbors. As we help each other, we help all.

<https://bookofconcord.org/augsburg-confession/of-the-church/#ac-vii-0001>
<https://bookofconcord.org/augsburg-confession/of-the-church/#ac-vii-0002>

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

February

6. Good Samaritan Hospice (GSH), Concordia Lutheran Ministries, free Spousal Grief Support Group, Concordia of Cranberry, 10 Adams Ridge Blvd., Mars, each Tuesday, 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

True Love

For God so lo**V**ed the world,
That He g**A**ve
his on**L**y
Begott**E**n
So**N**
That whosoever
Believeth **I**n Him
Should **N**ot perish,
But have **E**verlasting life."
John 3:16



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DEVOTION CONTINUED

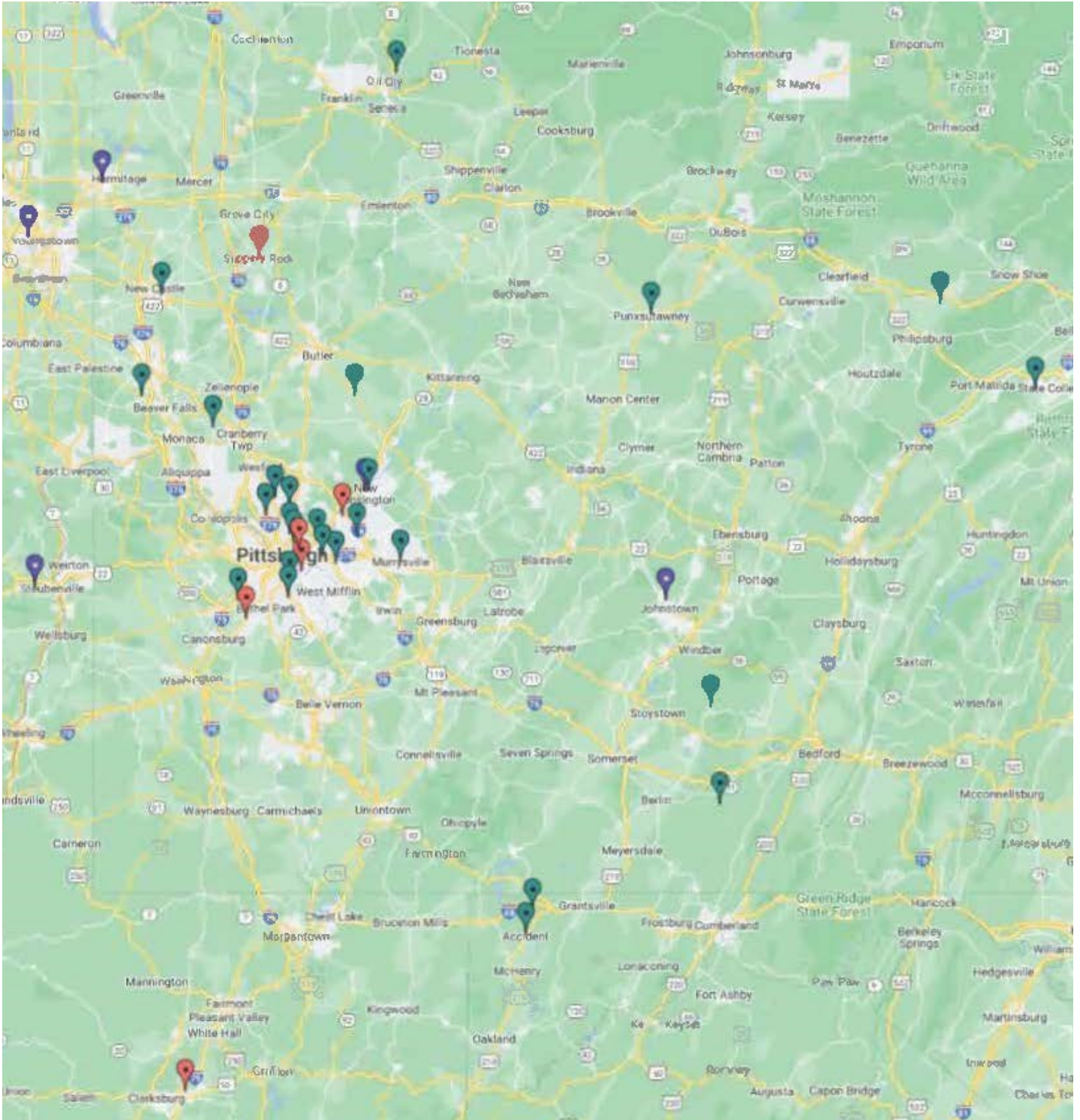
Pittsburgh Area Lutheran Ministries was created on May 17, 1902 as the *Martin Luther Extension Society of Western Pennsylvania* by Lutherans like you. Renamed the *Lutheran Church Extension Society of Pittsburgh and Vicinity* on January 13, 1938 and then reconstituted as *Pittsburgh Area Lutheran Ministries* (PALM) on May 5, 1997, the basic mission of helping one another to proclaim the Gospel and to establish new mission church plants has remained the same. Over the years, PALM has taken on other cooperative LCMS tasks like the annual Reformation Service, the publication of *The Pittsburgh Lutheran* and *The PALM Digest*, and the administration of the Minersville Cemetery for our brothers and sisters from the former Second Saint Paul's Lutheran Church, but our core mission remains the same. We are privileged to coordinate the efforts of our Lutheran schools and homeschoolers. We are encouraged by our partnerships with the Eastern, English, and SELC Districts of the LCMS. We have been blessed with missions to the Blind, the Deaf, the poor and homeless, college students, and youth. We serve a wide diversity of people across the region with the love of Jesus founded upon the solid rock of doctrine and practice we find in His Word. We were founded by Missouri Synod Lutherans, are governed by Missouri Synod Lutherans, and continue to be one hundred percent committed to the mission and ministry of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod.

In the Pittsburgh Area, which stretches from Steubenville, Ohio, in the West to State College, Pennsylvania, in the East, and Oil City, Pennsylvania, in the North to Bridgeport, West Virginia, in the South, The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod has thirty-five congregations and two unchartered mission churches. Of these, thirty-one congregations are members of PALM, and the two mission churches are supported by PALM. Our “household of faith” has tremendous potential and resources from which to draw. We are beacons to our local communities, shining the light of Jesus and His love and mercy. Together, in PALM, our congregations assist one another in bringing the Gospel to our neighbors, and we work together to multiply these efforts by planting new congregations or rejuvenating existing ones throughout the area. Your contributions of time, talents, and treasure to PALM are guaranteed to support the work of the congregations and missions of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod in the Pittsburgh Area.

Following the encouragement of St. Paul, let us continue to do good, especially to the household of faith, so that together, we may bring to all the goodness of Jesus Christ and welcome them into the household of faith. May God, in His mercy, so help us.



"The Pittsburgh Region of the LCMS"



Key:

Green Pins- Eastern District

Red Pins- English District

Black Pins- SELC District

PALM NEWS

PALM MISSION

by Rev. Benjamin Janssen

I am reaching out regarding our upcoming Higher Things retreat co-hosted by First Trinity Evangelical-Lutheran Church and the Pittsburgh Area Lutheran Ministries. This retreat will take place on February 16th and 17th at First Trinity located at 531 N. Neville St., Pittsburgh, PA 15213. Email all inquiries to lifedrowning@palmpa.org.

This retreat is intended for communicate members of our LCMS congregations in youth group and/ or high school and will include plenary lectures on Baptism by Rev. Eric Andrae and different breakout sessions by laity from the Pittsburgh region and LCMS clergy.

Regular Registration ended Monday, January 15th and is \$50 per attendee. This includes two meals and a t-shirt. All registrations received after January 15th will cost \$60 and will not include a t-shirt.

All aspects of the retreat (including sleeping) will take place at First Trinity. Students will need to bring sleeping bags, pillows, toiletries, one change of clothing, etc. Boys and Girls will not be allowed to sleep together, and the building will remain locked and secured by chaperones during the event.

Please Note: you do not have to pay the registration fee while registering online. You may pay Higher things directly, but we also encourage members to pay the registration fee by paying their respective congregation and sending one check with your youth to the retreat. If you choose to pay in this manner, please make all handwritten checks to First Trinity Evangelical-Lutheran Church. [This format is similar to how churches pay for district youth retreats and the National Youth Gathering].

We pray this is the first of many annual retreats to serve our Lutheran youth in this region of the country. May our Lord Jesus Christ Bless you all this Advent Season and into the Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord!



LIFE BY DROWNING

First Trinity Lutheran Church
in Pittsburgh, PA
February 16-17, 2024

What does the call to repentance
mean for your life today?



CAMPUS MINISTRY

SRU CAMPUS MINISTRY

by Augusta R. Mennell, Campus Ministry Director

Opportunities

All Saints Lutheran Church and Student Center has a wonderful opportunity that our congregation is challenged to deal with. Ours is a small, chapel-sized church. We need to use our space wisely especially now that even more college students from Grove City College are attending worship. This is a great challenge and a wonderful opportunity to make space for all the college students so that they can continue to grow in Christian faith.

Space is not the only opportunity. Rev. Jacob Deal serves two parishes so time is precious, but he sees this as an opportunity. He uses every opportunity he gets to meet students personally and that gets results.

An example is the confirmation Christmas Eve day of a student Rev. Deal met at the beginning of the fall semester at Grove City College. Rev. Deal immediately made time to invite the student to come to worship; to Sunday afternoon student Bible study, and told the student to call him anytime.

Rev. Deal clearly values students, even learning their names immediately. In addition to his use of the opportunities to draw students to faith, he has brought the vicar, Zachary Wessel, into opportunities like leading student meals. These two men have combined determination to make use of opportunities with the college students. This is infectious as they banter back and forth at the student meals. The students clearly enjoy being at the meals with them.

Despite the fact that Grove City College is seven miles from All Saints, it has proven to be an outreach opportunity. Several members of All Saints have volunteered to frequently drive students to and from worship from Grove City, to and from the airport for students going home for semester breaks, to the grocery store or to social events at All Saints. This transportation is much more than helping get students from point A to point B. It is a definite way to establish trust and friendship with the conversations held in the car while making those trips. More than one student has even invited the car drivers to their weddings. The transportation is an opportunity that provides time to grow close. What a blessing.

The monthly student meals are more than opportunities to feed hungry students. Rosemary Rigney really touched the hearts of the students at a recent meal by asking them "What would you like to eat for our next meal?" They had never been asked that question before and were very excited about giving her their answers. They were impressed by the care she showed them with this question. It was an opportunity to let them know how much they matter.

The downstairs door at All Saints opens on Main Street, and therefore some students walk past it on the way to classes. Beautifying and enlarging the door area leading into the downstairs will be an excellent opportunity to make All Saints more inviting to students. This will show them our church building is a place to study, have coffee, and come to talk with the Campus Ministry Director. It's also a location to put up colorful signs saying "Free prayer," "Time to have snacks," "Time to talk," and "Welcome!"

A Muslim international friend continues to give All Saints a very special opportunity. She found out years ago that Christians are kind, so she came to All Saints for friendship and conversation with the Campus Ministry Director, and she still does. She comes in because she can share her life, the good and the bad. She often describes how impossible it is for her to forgive a person she had loved with all her heart, but now does not because she was so hurt in the relationship. I tell her that the Bible teaches that forgiveness is essential in relationships.

All Saints is grateful for the opportunities to share God's love.



NEWS FROM AREA CONGREGATIONS

MT. CALVARY

West View, PA

Mt. Calvary in West View was looking forward to taking a breather in January following a December that was extremely busy. Preparations that in some cases had been going on for many weeks, culminated in a variety of events in the final month of the year. December started with the annual Christmas party, Dec. 3, which this year combined with the Oktoberfest that had to be postponed. But the team turned the event into a German Christmas Market theme, with a menu that featured both traditional Oktoberfest delicacies prepared by the Hoover family, and regular buffet items.

The Hoovers and members of the Outreach Group decorated the auditorium, and Jennifer Skinner's Girl Scout Brownie Troop 52841 added candy-filled favors to each table. Nikkie Kuntz drafted games, including a "Match the Gift Giver and the Gift Receiver to the Gift" challenge. She searched the stories of the Bible to find gifts such as "120 talents of gold, many spices, and precious stones," and "10 loaves, cracknels, and a cruse of honey." Nikkie kindly provided the Bible references so people could locate both the giver and receiver. It was a reminder of the greatest Gift and Giver of all, and how fortunate we are to be the receivers. A grab bag exchange concluded the afternoon's activities.

Two weeks later, following the Dec. 17 service, members and friends of the congregation performed a family Christmas program titled "Christian Christmas ABC." Written and directed by music director Sharon Pritchard, the show featured a visit from the popular morning show, "Live with Debra Ann and Jonathan." The program combined comedy and music as it told the Christmas story from A to Z - Angels to Zeal - with special performances by the Mt. Calvary Choir, soloist Harmony Karwoski singing "O Holy Night," and Harmony's brother Logan starring as the (not-so) "Little Drummer Boy."

Other December activities included finishing and delivering the card packages made by the Outreach Group to Meals on Wheels recipients, and collecting and delivering gifts to children through the Glade Run Foundation's Christmas Angels program. The church asked for 50 gift tags from Glade Run, and the congregation responded with gifts and gift cards for all of them, along with an additional dozen gift cards, plus \$325 in cash.

Glade Run provides health and behavioral services to individuals throughout Western Pennsylvania.

NEWS FROM AREA CONGREGATIONS

MT. CALVARY
West View, PA

Christmas party - a "German Christmas Market Stall"



Table favors made by the Brownie troop



Christmas program- Harmony singing "O Holy Night," the children performing, and Jonathan Hoover and Debra Ann Yagatich with Sharon Pritchard "on the set."



UPCOMING SPECIAL EVENTS

[Good Samaritan Hospice \(GSH\), a mission of Concordia Lutheran Ministries, will host a free Spousal Grief Support Group](#) every Tuesday from 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. at Concordia of Cranberry, 10 Adams Ridge Blvd., Mars, PA 16046. The weekly group will meet for six weeks from Feb. 6 to March 12. Attendees can expect to be in a safe and respectful environment with discussion led by GSH Bereavement Coordinator Christina Reuschlein, MSW. Group talk will be focused on sharing stories, processing daily emotions, and learning new coping skills to better equip group members for living with their grief. Registration is required for the support group.

The sessions are a series, so attendees will get the most out of the group if they attend each one. For more information or to sign up for a group, call Christina Reuschlein at 1-800-720-2557, ext. 4423.



PITTSBURGH LUTHERAN CHORUS resumes weekly rehearsals at Zion, 237-37th St., Lawrenceville each Thursday at 6:30 p.m. in preparation for the Stations of the Resurrection presentation in April. All are welcome to join. Parking is available at the Lower Lot. All you need is a love of music. Perhaps your congregation is interested in hosting a concert. At this time, all Saturdays and Sundays in April are open. Please contact Shirley Freyer at 412/480-9933 or e-mail sfreyer@concordialm.org to reserve a date.



Grief Support Group

An Adult Grief Support Group hosted by Good Samaritan Hospice

**Every Monday from
January 8 through February 5
4 - 5 p.m.**

Middlesex Office Location
116 Browns Hill Road, Valencia, PA 16059

Facilitated by Bereavement Coordinator Julie Tuskan, this free grief support group will provide an opportunity to share with others who have also experienced the death of someone close to them. Many people find that learning more about grief, connecting with others, and listening to other people's stories helps them feel comforted on their grief journey.

Walk-ins are welcome, but registration is strongly encouraged by Jan. 4.

For more information or to register, call Brittany Foy
at 1-800-720-2557, ext. 4428.



**Good
Samaritan
Hospice**

A mission of Concordia Lutheran Ministries

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