

The Focus

January 2024



PLEASE PASS THE PLATE

Symbols play a very important part in our lives. Some symbols, such as stop signs, yield signs or handicap parking signs inform us of what we should or shouldn't do when driving. There are symbols like a ring upon our finger that remind us of promises made in marriage. A cross hanging from a necklace can be a symbol of our faith. Then too there are those physical actions we make such as hand over our heart as we pledge allegiance. In a life of faith there are those familiar symbolic acts of folding our hands, bowing our heads or making the sign of the cross; signs of who we are and what we believe.

Worship is filled with symbolic actions that can play a powerful part in a life of faith. The acts of standing and sitting (kneeling) in liturgical worship can have a symbolic element to them. We stand to honor God as we make confession of our sins or profess our faith. We stand for hymns which are a musical version of prayer and praise. We stand for the reading of the Gospel as a sign of reverence for our Lord and Savior. These actions are not about "Lutheran Calisthenics" but symbolic acts of worship.

There was a time in American Christian worship when many of our symbolic acts of worship were put aside for a variety of reasons. The act of making the sign of the cross and weekly communion were very much a part of Lutheran tradition until, as Immigrants, our ancestors didn't want to stand out as different. It wasn't until the late 1970's and early 1980's that we chose to re-embrace elements of worship which helped shape our faith. In the late 80's and beyond faith traditions waned like participatory worship and congregational singing in favor of a more performance driven style of worship. In the process we started to forget that worship is not just about what happens up in front of the congregation but what we all do together. The word liturgy literally means "the work of the people."

In the age of Covid, when we were forced to be apart, worship truly became something we observed and not something we shared in doing. Learning to participate in worship has not been easy to relearn. Many young children have not learned that they too are invited to participate in worship, even sing. (Side note: One of the great benefits of children participating in worship is gaining proficiency in reading.) Symbolically participation in worship helps us all to see that we are a part of a community of faith. Each action tells us something about who we are as Christians. Reading together we learn of our shared faith. Confessing our sins and hearing the promise of forgiveness reminds us that we worship a loving God. The creeds remind us of key elements of what we believe. Prayers remind us that we have a God who lovingly listens to our needs and the needs of others. Holy Communion reminds us of the sacrifice that Jesus made for us and that he is with us even today. The benediction reminds us that we are indeed blessed, and the sending reminds us that we go out into the world as servants of the Gospel.

Recently the leaders of Our Redeemer have noted that we have neglected one important symbolic act of our liturgy and that is the Offering in the passing of the offering plate. This is the symbolic act in worship that reminds us that all that we have comes from God. In return we give back to God a portion of what we have received to provide for the ongoing ministry of the Church. This symbolic action in worship reminds us of our partnership in the Gospel and helps teach our children the blessings of giving.

(cOntinued on page 2)

PLEASE PASS THE PLATE (continued from page 1)

Since the pandemic many people now give to the ministry of the Church by means of “Simply Giving” or electronic/digital giving. This form of support has been a wonderful means to promote consistent giving to the work of the Church. Yet the symbolic act of the collection each Sunday serves to remind us all of the importance of giving. During the season of Epiphany we will once again make the collection a part of our weekly worship. Please understand that this is not a means to increase giving, but rather to reinstitute a neglected element of our worship. If you give by “simply giving,” or some other means yet have a desire to place something in the offering plate when it comes by, there will be (empty) envelopes you can place in the offering plate as it comes by.

Passing the offering plate again means that our ushers will need some help. If you are able to volunteer to serve periodically as an usher, we could use your help. As a worshiper, don't be afraid to reach out to help cover a gap if there is one where you are seated!

Pastor Kevin

2024 Our Redeemer Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting will be held on **Sunday, January 28 at 10:00am in the Sanctuary**. Reports are due no later than January 14. All members of Our Redeemer are urged to participate in the Annual Meeting. This will be an important year in our life together, so we need your support!

New Worship Assistance Needed

We are very much in need of additional people to help with the worship services at Our Redeemer! As our congregation returns to multiple worship services, we need additional communion assistants, lectors, ushers, greeters, gift bearers and worship assistants. These roles take place during the worship service. Some of them require arriving ahead of the scheduled service while some take place only during the worship service itself. Perhaps you could give it a try! Please prayerfully consider whether God might be calling you to try something new in order to support the worship life of our community. If you are willing to give it a try, please email Elaine at orlc@comcast.net or speak with one of the pastors. Your help will be greatly appreciated.

New Member Class

Interest in Joining Our Redeemer? Maybe you would just like to learn more about the congregation? There will be a new members class held on January 28 from 1 to 3 PM. The class will also be available for people who would simply like to know more about the congregation. Please let us know if you would like to participate in this class. New members will be received on February 3 or 4. To let us know of your interest please contact the church office at orlc@comcast.net or talk with one of the pastors.

Office Schedule

The church office will be closed on Monday, January 1.
Noah's Ark Preschool will be on break from December 21 through January 1.

Snow/Bad Weather Policy

When a winter weather event occurs or when the weather forecast predicts a snow event to take place during the time of scheduled worship, the Senior Pastor and Council President will make a decision regarding the cancellation of one or more worship services. While the goal is to never cancel a worship service, the safety of our staff and worshippers will be kept in mind. If a decision is made to cancel one or more worship services, the congregation will be notified via Constant Contact (the congregational email). Notice will also be posted on the website and Facebook.

Baptism of Our Lord

Join us for worship on January 6-7 as we commemorate the baptisms of 2023. Those baptized at Our Redeemer in 2023 were:

Samantha Rae Beaversen, February 12

Amelia Marie Baumgart, September 10

Jackson Daniel Kinn, October 8

Evelyn Noel Dye, November 5

Holly Elise Rutkowski, November 18

Logan James Schnieders, December 17

Madison Grace Schnieders, December 17

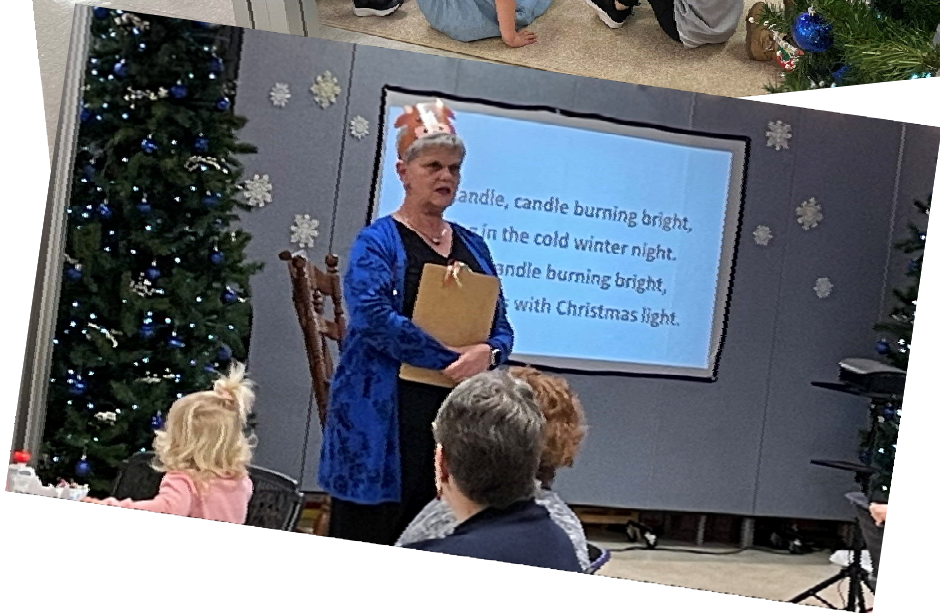
Breakfast at the Manger

Once again, Breakfast at the Manger was a great success! This year it was held on Saturday and Sunday mornings with more than 100 people in attendance. Special thanks goes to Lori Greene who coordinated the event and shared a special story with the children. Thanks also to all of the volunteers who decorated, or worked the kitchen, or provided the delicious food.



(more pictures on page 4)

More Breakfast at the Manger Pictures...



Donations for Christmas Decorations

Gary and Stephanie Ausefski in memory of Brian Ausefski
The Barczak Family in memory of our parents Jo-Anne and Harry Thieret
The Barczak Family in memory of our parents Connie and John Barczak
The Barczak Family in memory of our brother John Barczak
Jim Beaumont in memory of Bernadette Wittman
Jim Beaumont in memory of Matthew W. Wittman
The Binotto Family in thanksgiving for family and friends
Missy Bookhammer in memory of Tom McCollum
Missy Bookhammer in honor of the Wold family
Tina and Dave Borra
Carol Brandyberry in memory of Joan and Ed Handshue
Carol Brandyberry in celebration of Jack Webster
Maegan and Jim Bregenser, Jr. in honor of our children: Hardy and Amanda Kern-Carberry, Kelsey and Patrick
Gallagher, Jimmy Bregenser, Mary Bregenser, and Leah Kern
RaDonna Burik and Julie Flynn in memory of my Dad, Donnie
RaDonna Burik and Julie Flynn in memory of Meleny
RaDonna Burik and Julie Flynn in memory of Aunt Ruth
Cindy Callen and Jean Ulmer in memory of Jean Myers and Jerry Callen
Brian and Laura Casper in thanksgiving for our beautiful children, Grace and Jacob
Grace and Jacob Casper in thanksgiving for our Grandma
Pastor Martha and Pastor Kevin Clementson in memory of Clarence and Helen Clementson
Pastor Martha and Pastor Kevin Clementson in memory of The Rev. Gilson and Lois Waldkoenig
Patti and Larry Day in memory of Margaret and Yutie Vukovcan
Patti and Larry Day in memory of Marty and Richard Day
Shirley Dempster in honor of David Dempster
Shirley Dempster in honor of Chris Dempster
The Divelbliss Family in memory of Terry L. Divelbliss
Janet P. Elliott in memory of Norman W. Elliott Sr.
Janet P. Elliott in memory of Norm and Julia Elliott Jr's. father-in-law, John Fennessey
Janet P. Elliott in memory of Dorothy Uhlemann
Bruce and Mike Engman in celebration of our family
Karen Glass in memory of Buddy Glass
Karen Glass in memory of Larry Wagner
Karen Glass in thanksgiving for my family
Jennifer Wilson Hewitt in loving memory of my dear parents, J. Paul and Beverly Wilson
Jennifer Wilson Hewitt in loving memory of my grandparents, Gerald and Clarabelle Kistler and Joseph and Dorothy
Wilson
Barb and Ray Hrabar
Aubrie Angeline Kartman in memory of Angeline "Angie" Kazmeraski
Kris Kent in honor of Gary and Janet Kent
Sharon King in memory of loved ones
Soheila Lunney in memory of my mother, Mahin Rahimi
Jean Mace in memory of Bill Mace
Jean Mace in memory of Aunt Fran
Ginny Mickitsch in memory of John Mickitsch
Ginny Mickitsch in memory of Mark and Judy Dubich
Rolf Otterness
Phyllis J. Permar in thanksgiving for my family
Sally and Carl Ruppel in celebration of the birth of our Savior Jesus
Alan and Donna Schaefer in memory of Grant Schaefer
Alan and Donna Schaefer in memory of Brent Jones
Alan and Donna Schaefer in memory of Robert Barone
Bob and Carol Shader in memory of Detta Shader
Bob and Carol Shader in memory of George and Antoinette Ranii
Larry and Susan Steffick in memory of Paul and Vica Steffick
Larry and Susan Steffick in memory of Jeanette Steffick
Larry and Susan Steffick in memory of Charles and Emma Mayer
John and Nancy Till in honor of our congregation
Jim and Kathy Tomamichel in celebration of our grandchildren, Dylan and Beckham
Trudy Wagner in memory of my son, Richard
Trudy Wagner in memory of my husband, Larry

Thank you!

Worship and Music

What Goes Up Must Come Down!! On Saturday, January 6 at 10:00 a.m., the Worship and Music Committee will be packing the Christmas decorations away for safekeeping. We could use some help, especially if you are able to help lift, carry and climb a ladder! We were very grateful for all of the help that was given on decorating day. If you can give us an hour or two on the morning of January 6 we would be very thankful.

Poinsettias Looking for Good Homes!! Thank you to everyone who donated toward the decorating of our sanctuary this Christmas. Those who donated poinsettias are welcome to stop by the church and pick them up during office hours. After the Saturday and Sunday worship services on December 30 & 31, everyone is welcome to take poinsettias home to enjoy them.

College Packages for Our College

Our Redeemer is famous (or is infamous!) for sending a winter care package to our college students. We are told that the students love receiving a care package from their church family.

So, once again we are collecting snacks and goodies to fill our packages in time for the Super Bowl. Individually wrapped items (i.e. candy, microwavable foods, individual bags of popcorn, etc.) can be dropped off at the church through January 28. Donations to cover the cost of shipping is also appreciated.

College students and parents...please make sure that the church office has your current address.

Crossroads Confirmation

Crossroads Confirmation will meet on **Sunday, January 28 from 6:30pm - 8pm**. Students are also invited to attend Youth Group from 4:30-6:15pm, and then stay for class.

Young Adult Gathering

Young adults (age 18-30ish) are invited to gather at the church on **Tuesday, January 2 at 6:30pm** for pizza and games.

Family Friday

K-6th graders and families: bring your dinner and join us for Family Friday on **Friday, January 12 at 5:30pm** in the Social Hall for a story, activities, and playtime! Sign up on the bulletin board or online.

Youth Group

All 7th-12th graders are invited to join Pastor Kerri for Youth Group on **Sunday, January 28 from 4:30-6:15pm**. We'll make and eat dinner together (spaghetti!) and play games. Crossroads students should plan to stay for class at 6:30pm. Sign up on the bulletin board or online.

ELCA Youth Gathering News

Next summer the ELCA Youth Gathering will be held July 16-20 in New Orleans, Louisiana. Students currently in 8th-12th grades are eligible to attend, and young adults age 18-35 are eligible to attend a parallel event. More information is available on the ELCA Gathering website: <https://www.elca.church/gathering>. Youth interested in attending the 2024 Gathering need to contact Pastor Kerri; young adults will register separately.

Dining Divas

The Dining Divas will meet for lunch on **Tuesday, January 9 at 12:30pm** at Plaza Azteca (1010 Trinity Circle, Washington).

Noah's Ark Preschool

Registration for the 2023-2024 school year will be held in person at the church. Paperwork will be uploaded to the website and ready to print the week before. If you'd like a tour, contact Heidi at 724-942-6699.

- January 22 Registration open for current families 9:00am
- January 23 Registration open for alumni and church families 9:00am
- January 29 Registration open for new families 9:00am



Miss Heidi

Member News

On December 17, we welcomed through the Sacrament of Baptism Logan James and Madison Grace Schnieders, children of Matthew and Jennifer Schnieders. *Welcome children of God!*

Food Helpers (Washington County Food Bank)

A group of ORLC volunteers will be helping at the Greater Washington County Food Bank on Tuesday, January 16, 10:00 a.m. - noon. You can still sign up to participate through January 11. We will meet at the food bank (CNX Building at Southpointe). The snow date is January 18.

ELCA Good Gifts

Thanks to your generosity, 3 goats, 7 honeybees, 5 piglets, a latrine, and a microloan for a woman were purchased through the ELCA Good Gifts program. Much of the order was eligible for a matching gift program. Thank you.



Thank you to all who gave gifts for the Washington County Children & Youth Services and thank you to Kristie Chestney for driving the gifts down.

Thank you to all who gave gifts for Glade Run and thank you to Barb Schumacher for delivering the gifts.



In Our Prayers

We lift up the following members of our congregation so that they may be strengthened by our prayers of intercession:

Lynn Broman, Joe Maize, Mandy Jarosh, Sally Lowery Ferko, Brian Casper, Lori Gajdowski, Chris Decker, Jen Barbati, Gary McGaffic, and Randy Stonemark.

We remember those friends and family members who have asked for our prayers:

Larry Pansino, Lara Alderson, The Rev. Warren Lundblad, Mike Zgorliski, Ron Rieger, Kerwin Broman, Mike Engman, Kayden Spencer, Marcy Raeford, Nancy Lyons, Nancy Adams, Robert Ruppel, Lydia Damoose, Lisa Kilgore, Laura Norton, Anthony Santaguida, Judy Concannon, Ray Keisling, Dan Stimmel, Tamara Brister, Wendy Brosky, Heidi Garner, Janice Poole, and Nester Miskow

We remember those who grieve:

Carl and Sally Ruppel on the death of their nephew, Kevin Ruppel.

The most recently added names appear at the beginning of the list and will remain for three months. You may add names, remove a name, or ask for renewal by submitting your request in writing and placing it in the offering plate, drop off in the church office, or submit by email to orlc@comcast.net.

Stewardship— How Are We Doing?

Year to Date as of November 2023

	This Year			Last Year		
	Current	Building	Total	Current	Building	Total
Income	\$432,702	\$47,683	\$480,385	\$437,546	\$53,271	\$490,817
Expenses	\$397,584		\$397,584	\$426,095		\$426,095
Surplus (deficit)	\$35,118	\$47,683	\$82,801	\$11,451	\$53,271	\$64,722
Surplus (deficit)			\$82,801			\$64,722

Other Outreach Offerings	Year to Date
Abiding Missions	\$1,200
City Mission	\$428
City Mission Food Pantry	\$258
ELCA World Hunger	\$5,245
ELCA Disaster Relief DOM	\$1,032
ELCA Disaster Relief Intl	\$895
Lutheran World Relief	\$420
	\$9,478

MINISTRY SCHEDULE/JANUARY 2024

	January 7, 2024		January 14, 2024		January 21, 2024		January 28, 2024	
WORSHIP LEADER	9:00am	11:00am	9:00am	11:00am	9:00am	11:00am	9:00am	11:00am
Acolyte	*	Isaac Hilderhoff	*	Jaclyn Capezzuto	*	Henry Binotto	*	Jaclyn Capezzuto
Lay Assistant	Beth Pansino	Carl Ruppel	Kim Chupinka	Jackie Beck	Karen Glass	Kim Maize	Ken Rigby	Maegan Bregenser
Lector	Ruth Ann Lowery	Jen Milavec	Garrett Langley	Jenn Capezzuto	Trudy Wagner	Keith Mason	Terry Divelbliss	Mary Helen Barr
Communion Assistant	Missy Bookhammer	Carol Brandyberry	Tina Borra	Eliana Beck	Missy Bookhammer	Brenda Binotto	Missy Bookhammer	Eliana Beck
Communion Assistant	Karen Glass	Sarah Dagnal	Laura Culp	Maegan Bregenser	Kim Chupinka	Sarah Dagnal	Tina Borra	Jackie Beck
Communion Assistant	Susan Loeser	Lori Greene	Garrett Langley	Barb Hrabar	Debbie Healey Langley	Lori Greene	Laura Culp	Barb Hrabar
Communion Assistant	Keith Lowery	Becky Long	Ruth Ann Lowery	Sue Lambert	Susan Loeser	Soheila Lunney	Ruth Ann Lowery	Sue Lambert
Communion Assistant	Ruth Ann Lowery	Keith Mason	Linda Nickles	Heather Morelli	Phyllis Permar	Keith Mason	Linda Nickles	Susan O'Brien
Communion Assistant	Trudy Wagner	Nancy Till	Phyllis Permar	Susan O'Brien	Trudy Wagner	Gerda Moul	Phyllis Permar	Sally Ruppel
Greeter(s)	Anne Scher	Hilderhoff Family	Karla Lance	Paula Reese	Phyllis Permar	Gerda Moul	Karla Lance	Dani Mizia
Usher	Ken Rigby	Doug Meley	Dave Borra	Simon Beck	Clint Langley	Doug Meley	Dave Borra	Jim Mizia
Usher	Dan and Sam Scher	Gary Milavec	Drew Lance	Eric Reese	Garrett Langley	Jacob Casper	Drew Lance	Jim Doughty
Gift Bearer	Sophie Scher	Owen Hilderhoff	*	Titus Pomposelli	*	Jack Binotto	*	Penny Mizia
Altar Guild	Volunteer	Carol Brandyberry	Tina Borra	Volunteer	Tina Borra	Volunteer	Laura Culp	Volunteer
Altar Guild	Volunteer	Becky Long	Susan Loeser	Volunteer	Kim Chupinka	Volunteer	Volunteer	Volunteer
PowerPoint	Rolf Otterness	Meredith Pomposelli	Karen Glass	Ryan Hettinger	Dan and Sam Scher	Gary Milavec	Rolf Otterness	Ryan Hettinger
Camera	X	Sam Mizia	X	Sam Mizia	X	Sam Mizia	X	Sam Mizia
Head Teller (Monday)	Gary Milavec		Judy Pilof (Sunday)		Dave Borra		Susan Loeser	
Council Teller (Monday)	Larry Day		Clint Langley (Sunday)		Sue Lambert		John Yocca	

*Child volunteer(s) is requested.

If you find that you cannot serve when scheduled, please contact the church office.

OUR REDEEMER LUTHERAN CHURCH

105 Gateshead Drive
McMurray, PA 15317-3101

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105 Gateshead Drive McMurray, PA 15317-3101
724-941-7467

WORSHIP SERVICES

SATURDAY 5:30 PM and SUNDAY 9:00 and 11:00 AM (live-streamed)
Online services are available through [facebook.com/ORLutheran](https://www.facebook.com/ORLutheran), YouTube
and the church's website.

GROWING IN GOD (Sept. - May), 10:00 AM, Age 3-Adults

THE REV. MARTHA CLEMENTSON, INTERIM PASTOR
443-699-9837, clementsonmartha@gmail.com

THE REV. KEVIN CLEMENTSON, INTERIM PASTOR
443-699-8534, kclementson@yahoo.com

THE REV. KERRI CLARK, PASTOR - 724-603-5589, rev.kerri.clark@gmail.com

HEIDI GARNER, DIRECTOR, NOAH'S ARK PRESCHOOL - 724-942-6699
noahspreschool@comcast.net

MARY HELEN BARR, MUSIC DIRECTOR - 412-780-3357 (cell)

ELAINE DOLCICH, OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR

THE REV. JOHN F. YEDLICKA, PASTOR EMERITUS

Office 724-941-7467 Fax 724-941-3262

E-mail: orlc@comcast.net

Website: <https://www.OurRedeemer-peters.org>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ORLutheran>

YouTube: <https://tinivurl.com/ORLCyoutube>

OUR VISION

The vision of Our Redeemer Lutheran Church is to be a welcoming church where people of all ages and backgrounds will: encounter God in worship, experience Christian community, discover their God-given gifts, grow in faith, and be equipped for service and witness as we are sent out into God's world.