

# THE HILLTOPPER

## NOVEMBER 2023

Welcome Back! This is our exciting first edition of the “all new” Hilltopper! With your help and ideas, we are planning to resurrect and continue this publication, and send it out every month. We can only do this with everyone’s support. WE NEED YOU!!

If you have an event that will be happening, or some good news to share, we are interested! Any encouraging information you may have, please contact the office or anyone on church council.

Please consider helping us make this publication grow again...

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Our first OFF THE COLLAR is a message from Bishop Paula Schmidt in regards to our Pastoral vacancy.



Allegheny Synod

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

September 27, 2023

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

This past week I met with Mt. Calvary’s Congregation Council concerning your current pastoral vacancy and the details of a transition. There were several questions which your Council felt might be best answered in writing by me. As well, Assistant to the Bishop, Pastor Kevin Shock will be with you in-person and can answer these and other questions.

When our office was made aware that Pastor Klimke was participating in a call process, I began the search for an interim pastor for Mt. Calvary. Pastor Kevin and I interviewed three people from other synods and extended an invitation to two pastors in our synod. When that did not yield any prospects, I extended a plea to the 65 bishops in the ELCA Conference of Bishops. There were no available candidates interested in moving to Pennsylvania. That is not—hear that again NOT—because of anything related to Mt. Calvary. Mobility, which means a rostered minister’s desire and ability to move or change calls, is very slow across the ELCA.

That means there are fewer rostered ministers (pastors and deacons) who are interested in moving. That has affected our ability to find and place interim pastors as well as called pastors in open congregations. I have been in contact with some of our ecumenical partners about this issue and they are facing the same obstacles. In the early weeks of your pastoral vacancy, I received the names of seven pastors from the call committee. They asked me to be in contact with them concerning your open call. Unfortunately, those seven pastors were not available for the call process. Pastor Kevin and I continue to work to find Mt. Calvary an interim pastor and candidates for the called pastor position.

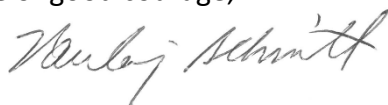
Transition is hard. The many details of ministry that still need to happen whether there is a called pastor in place can feel overwhelming. I understand the frustrations. During a transition, it's important to lean in and not step back. Often there are details that need to be cared for and having volunteers for those tasks is important for the stability of the congregation.

Not only is there a shortage of pastors available for calls, but there also are fewer authorized lay worship leaders. On any given Sunday, there are 30-32 congregations without worship leader coverage. We have 14 active authorized lay worship leaders and 6 ordained pastors who are able to provide supply coverage in our Synod. That leaves a dozen or more congregations without supply coverage each week. We have a volunteer who works with congregations and lay worship leaders to schedule coverage. There are limitations to that scheduling which include willingness to travel, family commitments, and health concerns among others.

I know Claudia Plows was helping to fill some of the voids in the congregation with worship leadership and there is frustration and resentment that she has been assigned to a different congregation to do her ministerial practice while she attends seminary. Mt. Calvary is a busy and complex congregation. Despite Claudia knowing the congregation well, Claudia's experience in running a congregation is limited at this time. As well, balancing a busy congregation with seminary education can be challenging. We want to give Claudia the best chance for success in both building her leadership skills and learning at new level in seminary.

I know hearing that we are doing the best we can is probably not much comfort at this time. I wish I had more to tell you. We will continue to work with local pastors to see whether we can provide coverage in different ways to ease the stress on members. Thank you for your willingness to work together in this challenging situation.

Be of good courage,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Marloj Schmitt".

## ***ATTENTION COLLEGE STUDENTS***



Your college address is needed. If you are interested in receiving special monthly mailings from your Mt. Calvary family, we need your mailing address. Whether you are attending school 10 miles up the road or 100 miles across the state. You can call the church office (814-266-4859) or email us at [office@mt-calvarylutheran.org](mailto:office@mt-calvarylutheran.org)



Our \$1.00 a bag clothing/toy drive brought in \$580.00. That was, without a doubt, one of the largest collections of clothes and toys we have ever had. This is a tribute to the people of Mt. Calvary and their kindness and generosity to others in our community. The money will be divided up between Hosanna House Inc., Helping Hand Mission, Rescue Mission, and Women's Help Center of Johnstown.



### **BIRTHDAY WISHES TO:**

11/03 Wendy Mayket  
11/03 Claudia Plows  
11/05 Levi Hockensmith  
11/06 Matthew Hockensmith  
11/06 Marissa & Tanner Miller  
11/06 Carson Reitnauer  
11/09 Joshua Brehm  
11/09 Ruth Pozun  
11/10 Laura Bower  
11/12 Wilma Hiltz  
11/15 Lucille Badowski

11/16 Savannah Foor  
11/17 Leda Miller  
11/18 Nancy Miller  
11/21 Ida Williams  
11/21 Alex Hockensmith  
11/23 Linda McMullen  
11/27 Jonathan Perry  
11/27 Jerry Pozun  
11/30 Deborah Ferrin



## ANNIVERSARY WISHES TO:

11/06 Harold & Sharon Ashcraft  
11/14 Gerald & Marlene Barrick

11/24 John & Sandy Plunkard  
11/27 Sam & Jackie Carpenter

## UPCOMING EVENTS FOR NOVEMBER 2023

November 2	Evangelism	6:30 pm
November 4&5	All Saints Day	
November 5	Spaghetti Dinner	4:00 – 6:00 pm
November 7	Election Day	
November 13	WELCA	6:00 pm
November 14	Property	6:00 pm
November 16	Social Ministry	6:30 pm
November 21	Council Meeting	6:30 pm
November	Alpha every Tuesday	6:00 pm

## SUNDAY SCHOOL

**Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me,  
And do not hinder them,  
For the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."  
Matthew 19:14**

Sunday School has started!!! It's so nice to see so many new and familiar faces in Sunday School. Sunday School is held each week in Sander Hall from 9:45-10:15 am. The children spent the first half of the class hearing a Bible story and discussing the lesson. The second half is a craft or some type of game or activity. Currently, we are learning about why we should pray to God, and how God is preparing to send Jesus into the world during the coming season of Advent. We are planning a Christmas program to take place on December 17. If you would like to have your child participate, or have any questions, please contact [Mike Kozak at 814-244-6880](mailto:Mike.Kozak@stlouis.edu)



## ALL SAINTS DAY

### Remembering those who are no longer with us.

Allison, Gertrude	February 8, 2023	Luther, Francis	March 13, 2023
Bell, Dorothy	April 16, 2023	Mayket, Paul	October 13, 2023
Blough, Dalton	July 25, 2023	Mills, Rich	October 3, 2023
Boothman, Dolores	April 21, 2023	Oleska, George	August 27, 2023
Bower, Dale	July 8, 2022	Pellon, Jean	March 28, 2023
Brown, Bernie	September 23, 2023	Rohrbaugh, Barbara	July 9, 2023
Clark, Francis	January 28, 2023	Shaffer, Sally	September 5, 2023
Dunbar, Jayne	November 7, 2022	Toomey, Tom	January 16, 2023
Finnegan, Hellen	April 15, 2023	Von Lunen, Pat	January 15, 2023
Greene, Joann	November 29, 2022	Wagner, Anna Mae	March 8, 2023
Gresh, June	March 31, 2023	Weaver, Howard	December 12, 2022
Hill, Nancy	October 18, 2023	Williams, Jeane	February 8, 2023
Hostetler, Dennis	February 16, 2023	Withers, Marie	October 23, 2023
Just, Alvin	April 20, 2023	Zerby, Natalie	December 16, 2022
Louder, David	October 20, 2023		

### Remembering those who were baptized.

Grayson, Zada	May 7, 2023
Holby, Brooklyn	August 19, 2023
Kylor, Ainsley	August 26, 2023
Ondesko, Haden	October 28, 2023
Pozun, Violet	May 13, 2023
Ritenour, Cole	November 19, 2022
Wingard, Elizabeth	March 4, 2023



## THANK YOU!

- On behalf of the YWCA's Kuddle Korner,

We want to thank you for your donations and for considering us as a beneficiary of your shoe drive for 2022-2023. As a result of your generosity, we were able to purchase and install a much-needed new countertop for our kitchen at the daycare! We prepare meals for over 20 children daily, and our countertop has shown signs of wear and tear for some time now. We are very excited about the improvement to our kitchen space and are very grateful as well.

Stephanie Reighard  
YWCA Director

## THANK YOU! cont.

- On behalf of the Residents of Windber Woods Senior Living,

We would like to thank you for the generous donation of snacks, misc. items, and health N' beauty items. We will use them for bingo prizes, auctions, and special treats. Thank you again for thinking of the residents.

Susan Haluska  
Activity Director

- To Mt. Calvary,

Thank you to the social ministry team for organizing the collection and distribution of items to nursing homes in the area. Thank you to the congregation for the donations you provided. Windber Woods Nursing Home received a generous supply of items from the collection. They were used as BINGO prizes and auction items. The activity department arranged an auction, providing 'funny money' to residents so we could bid on supplies/gifts we could use here at the home. Thanks again for your generous donation.

Residents at Windber Woods Nursing and Personal Care Home; Becky Lilya

- To Our Mt. Calvary Family,

Thank you for your loving support and prayers during our recent loss of George Oleksa. We appreciated every call, text, and cards we received. The use of the church hall for the funeral dinner was the perfect location for the family to gather. Thank you for the set up/tear down services! God Bless.

Kevin & Chris Oleksa

- Claudia and staff,

Thank you for providing such a beautiful service for Dad. Your comfort and guidance helped us to celebrate the life he lived. He loved his church family!

With love,

The family of Dalton Blough,  
Judy, Randy, Sue, & Mark

## REQUESTS:

There is a family in need of any furniture you may no longer need. If you have anything to donate, please contact the church office.

## UPDATES:

We are grateful for all those that **“LEAN IN”** and volunteer wherever they can. We are ALWAYS in need of new faces to lend a hand. If you aren’t sure what is needed, please ask anyone on the church council, committee chairs, or at the church office.

### COUNCIL MEMBERS in alphabetical order

Noelle Berkey  
Missy Brodt  
Todd Moss  
Kevin Oleksa  
Ruth Pawloski  
Jeff Penrod  
Dave Raho  
Mark Rychak  
Cindy Solarczyk  
Judy Stinebiser  
Jack Weisbrodt

### COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Evangelism – Noelle Berkey  
Social Ministry – Mike Kozak  
Steward & Finance – Kevin Oleksa  
Youth – Mike Kozak  
Property – Mark Rychak  
  
Office – Todd Moss



## WE ARE OPEN!

We have returned to normal business hours at the church.  
Office hours are Monday thru Friday 8:30am to 4:00pm. Everyone is welcome!

The church office has a new email address. Please use [office@mt-calvarylutheran.org](mailto:office@mt-calvarylutheran.org) when communicating to the church via all emails and requests.

**EMAIL ADDRESS & CONTACT REQUEST 2024:** Please don’t forget to update your email address and make sure that your contact information is up to date and accurate with the church office. There are some interesting and enlightening happenings that you may be missing out on by mistake.

*If you would like to unsubscribe from this mailing list or would like to receive in digital format only, please call our church office at 814-266-4859 or send us an email at [office@mt-calvarylutheran.org](mailto:office@mt-calvarylutheran.org)*