

THE HILLTOPPER

JANUARY 2024

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 the church council.

OFF THE COLLAR

It's hard to believe another year has come and gone. The church has endured much and survived with God's grace. We have persevered as a family. In the book of James, the word "endurance" appears often. The meaning of this word in Greek has to do with "rising above" a circumstance while at the same time "holding on" within that circumstance. The exercise of perseverance is central to James's lessons on faithfulness.

What are some circumstances in your life or in the church in which the practice of "rising above while holding on" is called for? What would it mean to regard these circumstances as "pure joy?"

As we continue our search for a new Pastor, we have endured many struggles. We have persevered and used this time to find joy in our church family.

People have stepped up to preach who may never have given that a thought! We have struggled with "volunteers," but we have held on, and God has shown us the way.

As the new year begins, may we find the faith to "persevere" in our own lives. You are never alone!

Your church Council would like to offer an update on finding our next Minister/Interim status. As I am sure you are aware, we are still in a "holding pattern" when it comes to a minister or an interim minister. There are now more than 6 local parishes in this area that share our same situation. As of last week, we still have not received any interests for our vacancy for an Interim or Pastor from the ELCA or the Bishop's office. We are still in constant contact with them.

The council has discussed this situation at length with Stewardship and Administration along with our Call Committee and we have decided to take a different approach. We have researched several private companies that specialize in the placement of Pastors that are looking for opportunities. We have had discussions with (4) separate companies and we have chosen a company that we feel would be a great fit for our church. We did research with other churches and reviews on the success of this chosen organization. We spent months interviewing several options and believe that adding this as an additional option will certainly shorten our call process.

There was much prayer devoted to finding our next pastor. This is a church family that is constantly growing but surely needs a leader as a guiding force, feeding us with the word of God. We have had many great individuals from within and outside our church stepping up. It has been pure joy to listen to each and every teaching! Please continue to pray for our church family as we continue to strive for the best for Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church.

Church Council



BIRTHDAY WISHES TO:

Jan 01 Melissa Raho	Jan 12 Laiken Cassidy	Jan 22 April Selepak
Jan 02 Natalie Williams	Jan 12 Pat Giunta	Jan 23 Emily Horn
Jan 03 Jeffrey McKool	Jan 12 Vicki Karnes	Jan 26 Larry Hockensmith
Jan 05 Susan Kimmel	Jan 13 Sean Horn	Jan 26 Kadya Kobal
Jan 05 Donald Sauter	Jan 19 Gloria Reed	Jan 26 Hailea Morningstar
Jan 05 Dolores Schneider	Jan 20 Nathan Berkebile	Jan 27 Beverly Coughenour
Jan 08 Dave Raho	Jan 20 Jack Weisbrodt	Jan 27 Ronald Punako
Jan 09 Macey Whetzel	Jan 21 Rodger Thomas	Jan 29 Bob Zada
Jan 11 Rachael Wolfhope	Jan 22 Johnny Nerone	Jan 31 Lori Hiltz
	Jan 22 Jeffrey Nider	Jan 31 Hadley Pozun

UPCOMING EVENTS FOR JANUARY 2024

January 06	Evangelism	6:00
January 09	Property	6:00
January 16	Church Council	6:30
January 18	Social Ministry	6:30
January 18	Visitation Group	2:00

2024 COMMITTEES & ALTAR GUILD

All committees' welcome new members! There is no prior experience needed except for the willingness to do gratifying work for your church, church family and our Lord!

The Altar Guild can always use help. If interested, please contact either the office or Cindy Solarczyk at 814-244-4531. Please prayerfully consider joining any of our church committees.

CONTACT INFO



In the coming months you will find in the Narthex (3) current directories. Would you PLEASE take a moment to verify the information we have for you. If there needs to be any corrections, there are red pens to make the corrections. Thank you!

FOR THE GOOD OF THE CHURCH

Home Communion

Would you prefer, or need to have communion at your home? Sometimes during the winter months we realize it may be hard to get out in the cold. We have individuals that do home visitations. If you would be interested in having a visit at your residence, please contact Todd in the church office, and arrangements will be made.



Prayer Chain

If you would like to put a name on the prayer chain please call Mary Ann Mapes at 814-266-2185, or the church office.

WELCA

Two thoughts as we begin the new year. One is a very simple prayer; the second is a question to consider at the end of each day. First the prayer.

Dear God,

Help!

Thank you.

Wow!

Amen.

And the question: Where did I see God today?"

FLOWERS

The Altar flower chart is now available for 2024. The cost for flower donations is \$40.00. The Altar Guild is in need of any large juice cans to put Altar flowers in. If you have any to donate, please drop them off at the church anytime during office hours. *If you have donated flowers for the altar, please feel free to take them home.*



Altar Flowers

Thank You's!

Thank you to the volunteers who helped at the Family Kitchen or rang the Salvation Army bell or donated to the Hat Glove and Sock Collection. These are all things that help the community and can't be done without you!

Dear Friends of Mt. Calvary,

My thanks to all who made the delicious cookies and shared these with me. It was so thoughtful and very much appreciated. Warmest wishes to all and a blessed Merry Christmas, *Linda McMullen*

Thank you to anyone who helped in any way with the Children's Christmas Party. It was a grand success with the highlight being Santa Claus. There have been pictures posted on Facebook and there will soon be pictures posted on our Bulletin Board in the entranceway.

Thank you to the lovely children who performed the Nativity play in church on Sunday, December 17th. They brought us the true meaning of Christmas. Thank you, also, to the parents who worked with the children to prepare for the play.

Mt. Calvary would also like to thank ALL the volunteers who stepped up last month and all year long to help where they could. December is a very busy time in the church, and it takes a lot of volunteers to make it work. We are very grateful to all those that put up decorations, those that did the altar every weekend, the money counters, the Evangelism Committee for their parties and goodies, the Outreach for their reminders that we are to be a community minded church. Thank you to all to the readers and ushers this year. We are grateful to our new Office Manager who is always helping and is so willing to learn. He has brought us the efficiency needed in our office. We continue to be thankful to those who operate our presentation screens during services. Thank you to all the Sunday School teachers and helpers! We are grateful to the children who have stepped in to be acolytes. It's wonderful to see that. We are, and will continue to be, grateful to those who have become "ministers in Christ" for our daily message. It's been a true blessing to have you to lead us. As always, it's not always those who you see, sometimes, it's those you DON'T see, and we thank those individuals. We are so grateful to those who continue to contribute to the church with time, talents, and treasures.

Note: Next time you enter the church, please take some time to look at our 2 bulletin boards. The one has the thank you notes, cards and communications from outside the church or church members. The other bulletin board has pictures from the "happenings" at Mt. Calvary.

A five session study, Part 2

the "5 Things that happen, When you get a new pastor."

2. Some people will leave.

We don't like to talk about this, and we don't like to think about this, but it's true. Perhaps they're leaving because the previous pastor's departure gives them the freedom to also move on after being heavily involved. Perhaps they've been on the margins of the community anyway, and this allows them to step away quietly. Perhaps they're longtime members who just can't get on board with the new pastor and his way of doing things.

No community stays stagnant forever. There will be a temptation by the new pastor and the congregants to want to keep these people by hook or crook, but sometimes this just needs to happen for one reason or another. This particular transition will require trust, honesty and the ability for the congregation to love people enough to let them go if they have to leave.

(Session 3 coming in the February Hilltopper)

Jesus did not promise to change
the circumstances around us.
He promised great peace and pure joy
to those who would learn to believe that
God actually controls all things.
-Corrie Ten Boom



Richland Learning Center

Richland Learning Center recently applied for and was awarded \$7,400 from the Community Foundation for the Alleghenies! This grant is specifically for us to upgrade our preschool educational tools and upgrade our play areas as well. We appreciate the CFA's commitment to Early Childhood Education that supports our mission here at the Richland Learning Center.

The grant funding will be used to purchase educational and play items that will engage your child in new and different ways, but always with the goal of helping them grow academically, socially, and emotionally.

In the event that we didn't receive funding, we also sent out appeal letters to 50 local businesses asking for a \$50 donation. So far, we have received donations from **Kia Auto**, **Somerset Trust Company**, **H.F. Lenz Company**, and **ReMaxx Realty**! If you know anyone from these businesses, please mention your appreciation.

Also, if the business you work for would like to support what we do, let us know and we will get you an appeal letter. Businesses thrive when quality daycare is an option for their employees!

We love having your child as part of our RLC family!



PLEASE REMEMBER TO PICK UP YOUR 2024 ENVELOPES FROM THE NARTHEX! If you contribute via electronic check, you will not have an envelope. As usual, you will still receive credit for your giving. If you are NOT interested in envelopes, please advise the office.

The Youth Page



We will be starting our First Communion Classes on **January 14, 2024** during Sunday School hours. It will include all students who have not received their first communion from 1st grade to 4th grade. If your child has not had their First Communion, please make sure to let Mike Kozak or contact the office to let us know they will be attending these classes, so we have enough material. There will still be Sunday School for the other students not attending First Communion classes.

Music Programs



There is EXCITING NEWS!! We will be starting a Children's Choir soon. The children will perform on special holidays like Easter, Mother's/Father's Day, and Christmas. If your child would be interested, please sign their name on the sheet in the Narthex. If your child plays an instrument, please let us know. We would love to have them play in the church. We are by no means looking for perfect musicians. Everyone is welcome to join in our new music programs.

Music Programs Cont.

Have you ever wanted to learn how to play a musical instrument or even considered singing with the church choir?

Starting soon in 2024, Our music minister Dan Gresh, will be hosting an exciting beginner's course for anyone interested on learning how to play the church bells and chimes in the bell choir. In this course, you will also learn how to be able to read sheet music and much more! Or maybe you would just like some vocal lessons and an opportunity to sing with the Mt. Calvary choir? Please contact the office or Dan for upcoming details.



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



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