

# The Messenger



Ascension Lutheran Church,  
5730 SE 28th St,  
Ocala, FL 34480 Ph: 352-624-0066

OCTOBER  
2023



## Aiming Higher

**I've just finished** reading “Christendom – The Triumph of a Religion, AD 300 – **1300**” by Peter Heather. Its 587 pages of fairly dense reading, by the chair of Medieval History at King’s College, London.

Our faith story is amazing, inspiring, at times discouraging, and at times brutal. It includes martyrs, missionaries, saints, (like Francis of Assisi), rulers, like Good King Wenceslas, (who was for real and lost his life being good), as well as Crusades, Inquisition, and eventually a Church trying for rigid control. Some 200 years later a monk named Luther emerged, and Christendom took another turn.

So, especially in this month of Reformation, it is appropriate to think of what God wants us to be as Church and how, by grace and in faith, we try to be what the Spirit of God inspires and calls us to be today.

**I've begun another book entitled “Grace”** by Cody Keenan the chief White House speechwriter for President Obama. Now, before you say, “Pastor, you must be kidding! This ties in to what you wrote above?” Well, stay with me, and let’s see.

As President Obama prepared to head for the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the events at the Edmund Pettis Bridge in Selma, Alabama (events that gave life to the Civil Rights movement), Keenan and he worked on the remarks he would say there. **Obama said, “Selma is about each of us asking ourselves what we can do to make America better. That’s the American story.** Not just scratching for what was or settling for what is – but imagining what might be. *Insisting* we live up to

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our highest ideals.”

“There’s always been a tension between those high ideals of our founding and how short we fall of them. We’re at our best when we mind that tension. When we work to close that gap. Because we believe we can. *That’s what makes America exceptional.*”

Do you see the connection? Whether we are thinking about America, or thinking about the Church, are we living out what we say we believe? Are we willing to feel the tension between where we are right now as a congregation and individual Christians, compared with where we know that God is calling us to be? Is it enough to know that as Americans we say that all **have the right to “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness”**, but then we **just don’t want to hear about some folks being denied this?** Is it enough in Church to confess what we believe, but then not to ask ourselves how we are living this out in the world and sharing it with others? If we are willing to ask hard questions about ourselves, our Church, or our nation, and then to move in good and Godly directions, perhaps this is being exceptional as the above quote suggests.

When unarmed men, women and children were attacked on the Edmund Pettis Bridge in Selma by armed police, much of America watched news clips of this event with horror. This was not what they believed America should be. So, many joined the movement for reform, for civil rights, for a better country.

In our church today, do we desire only to be comforted, to keep things the **same and familiar, to take a “whatever will be, will be” attitude?** Or, are we constantly asking how we can tell others about Jesus and how today and in the years to come we can keep proclaiming the Gospel? That takes hard work! That will take prayer and possibly sacrifice. If church, and possibly America, is only a place where we can get something out of it for ourselves **today, then we have taken a cultural turn (there’s a lot of that feeling out there today) that doesn’t live out the high ideals that we confess.**

We are people who live by grace. There is a creative tension with who we are and who we know we should be. I feel that tension within myself. It is often not comfortable. Yet, God can use it to help me become more of the **person and pastor that God wants me to be .That’s why God’s grace is so**

From the Pastor

*Cont. from pg. 1*

wonderful! God loves us where we are but wants us to continue to become all that we can be.

This month we meet again St. Francis (at the beginning of the month on October 4) and Martin Luther (at the end of the month). Two individual Christians, very different, but both committed to serving God and others. Both wanted to serve Jesus and both sacrificed to do that. As with so many who have gone before us, we stand on their shoulders and are inspired by **their example to grow in God's grace and love. To be all God intends us to be.**

In Christ Jesus,

Pastor  
Chuck



My brothers and sisters in Christ,

I don't know how it can already be October. Before we know it, we will be entering Advent. Meanwhile, I'm already quite weary of all the Halloween decorations and such that went up at the beginning of September...but not tired enough of them to stop looking forward to our Trunk or Treat event! This was such a big success last year, and I'm sure this year even more people from the community will come out.

I send another heartfelt thanks to all who labored and planned and participated in 100 different ways to make our Fall Carnival happen. I was humbled to see all the effort and rejoiced that the community around us showed up. As I said in my emotion-fraught way in church the next day, we mattered.

October 4<sup>th</sup> might bring many kinds of animals to our church to be blessed. What fun! It is also **my husband Bobby's birthday, and may he and all Ascension folks with October birthdays have a blessed day whenever their natal events occur.**

I look forward to cooler weather and spending time with you in worship.

*Deanne Kells*



# **Blessing of the Animals**

**Wednesday October 4, 2023**

**6pm**

**On the feast day of St. Francis of Assisi  
we will bless animals in an outdoor service.**

**You and your pets are most welcome.**

**Feel free to bring lawn chairs or blankets**

**Ascension Lutheran Church**

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**Ocala, FL 34480**

**352-624-0066**

## WHEN ANIMALS BLESS US

When invited to identify specific blessings they receive from their pets, people often name such things as unconditional love, companionship, protection, meeting their need to be needed, motivation to walk daily, playfulness, and contentment. Some also speak of the roles their companion animals play in helping them maintain their independence and providing services to help them manage disabilities.

Others describe how caring for pets has helped their children learn to become more responsible, patient, and compassionate.

Animals are a blessing, both in what they provide to us and in their intrinsic value as beloved members of God's creation. In Psalm 104, the psalmist praises God for the wonderful diversity of all that God has made, including creatures large and small, of land and sea. As we participate in blessing the animals, we become more aware of all the creatures, wild and tame, with whom we share the earth.

*This message is excerpted from "Living creatures of every kind" by Julie Kanarr in the October 2017, Gather magazine.*

## OLD PICTURES BLESSING THE ANIMALS IN MARYLAND



















I had fun when I  
Got to pet the goat!



I had fun. I Made a  
friend.



Hello Ascension Lutheran Church!

My Kids and I just wanted to make you a THANK YOU card for having such a great carnival! We had such a fun time - from the animals, to the face painting, to the drum set. up - everything was great! Even Glen<sup>son</sup> who helped with the rockets! (That was so cool!) We appreciate all the hard work it took to put on a nice event. And truthfully, I was overjoyed when we walked up and found out everything was FREE! !! Wow! As a single man of 5, I do my best to keep up with everything, but everything is so expensive. Having a fun event that my kids really enjoyed for free was really nice of your church.

I truly  
show God's love  
great! Thank you.



from the Scott family.

S. Scott

**Pinelands Conference of the Florida-Bahamas Synod  
Fall Gathering – September 30, 2023**

at St Matthew's Lutheran Church, 3453 E Silver Springs Blvd, Ocala 34470



**We welcome Rev. Nate Gruel**

**NEARING THE KINGDOM**

**Schedule**

9:00-9:30 Gathering and Refreshments

9:30-10:00 Worship - led by host, Pr. Gayle Nelson

10:00-11:00 Presentation: Rev Nate Gruel

11:00 Business Meeting, Chair Charlie Meier

1. Introductions and Roll Call
2. Minutes of Spring 2023 Gathering, Carrie Scott
3. Treasurer's Report / Dues to the Conference, Diane Kahler
4. Election of Chair and Treasurer
5. Report of the FB Synod, Pr Rob Carlson
6. Dean's report, Pr Lynn Fonfara
7. Pinelands Joint Worship Service for Reformation, October 30, 10 am at Joy LC, Ocala
8. Other
9. Date and place for Spring 2024 Gathering
10. Closing prayer

*Daily Scripture Readings for OCTOBER*

Sunday Oct 1	Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32	Psalms 25:1-9 (6)	Philippians 2:1-13	Matthew 21:23-32
Mon – Oct 2	Judges 14:1-20	Philippians 1:3-14	Psalms 28	
Tue – Oct 3	Judges 16:1-22	Philippians 1:15-21	Psalms 28	
Wed – Oct 4	Judges 16:23-31	Matthew 9:2-8	Psalms 28	
Thu – Oct 5	Jeremiah 2:14-22	Colossians 2:16-23	Psalms 80:7-15	
Fri – Oct 6	Jeremiah 2:23-37	Philippians 2:14-18,	Psalms 80:7-15	
Sat – Oct 7	Jeremiah 6:1-10	John 7:40-52	Psalms 80:7-15	
Sunday Oct 8	Isaiah 5:1-7	Psalms 80:7-15 (14, 15)	Philippians 3:4b-14	Matthew 21:33-46
Mon – Oct 9	Ezekiel 19:10-14	1 Peter 2:4-10	Psalms 144	
Tue – Oct 10	Isaiah 27:1-6	2 Corinthians 5:17-21	Psalms 144	
Wed – Oct 11	Song of Solomon 8:5-14	John 11:45-57	Psalms 144	
Thu – Oct 12	Isaiah 22:1-8a	1 Peter 5:1-5, 12-14	Psalms 23	
Fri – Oct 13	Isaiah 22:8b-14	James 4:4-10	Psalms 23	
Sat – Oct 14	Isaiah 24:17-23	Mark 2:18-22	Psalms 23	
Sunday Oct 15	Isaiah 25:1-9	Psalms 23 (5)	Philippians 4:1-9	Matthew 22:1-14
Mon – Oct 16	Exodus 19:7-20	Jude 17-25	Psalms 34	
Tue – Oct 17	Amos 9:5-15	Philippians 3:13–4:1	Psalms 34	
Wed – Oct 18	Song of Solomon 7:10–8:4	John 6:25-35	Psalms 34	
Thu – Oct 19	Judges 17:1-6	3 John 9-12	Psalms 96:1-9 [10-13]	
Fri – Oct 20	Deuteronomy 17:14-20	1 Peter 5:1-5	Psalms 96:1-9 [10-13]	
Sat – Oct 21	Isaiah 14:3-11	Matthew 14:1-12	Psalms 96:1-9 [10-13]	
Sunday Oct 22	Isaiah 45:1-7	Psalms 96:1-9 [10-13] (7)	1 Thessalonians 1:1-10	Matthew 22:15-22
Mon – Oct 23	Daniel 3:1-18	Revelation 18:1-10,	Psalms 98	
Tue – Oct 24	Daniel 3:19-30	Revelation 18:21-24	Psalms 98	
Wed – Oct 25	Daniel 6:1-28	Matthew 17:22-27	Psalms 98	
Thu – Oct 26	Numbers 5:5-10	Titus 1:5-16	Psalms 1	
Fri – Oct 27	Deuteronomy 9:25–10:5	Titus 2:7-8, 11-15	Psalms 1	
Sat – Oct 28	Proverbs 24:23-34	John 5:39-47	Psalms 1	
Sunday Oct 29	Leviticus 19:1-2, 15-18	Psalms 1(2)	1 Thessalonians 2:1-8	Matthew 22:34-46
Mon – Oct 30	Deuteronomy 6:1-9, 20-25	James 2:8-13	Psalms 119:41-48	
Tue – Oct 31	Deuteronomy 10:10-22	James 2:14-26	Psalms 119:41-48	



Celebrations for OCTOBER



- 10/2 Eleanor Newton
- 10/4 Bobby Bryant
- 10/7 Taylor Kurtz
- 10/12 Matthew Vanderbush
- 10/15 Kathy Keif
- 10/24 Rhonda Gonsalves
- 10/26 Cindy Richardson
- 10/27 Susan Gonsalves



Saturday October 28th

11:00 AM

At Joy Lutheran Church

7045 SW 83rd Place

Ocala, FL 34476



**Reformation**

A special combined Reformation Service  
Of our Pinelands Conference



- 10/22 Gene and May Duffey
- 10/22 Rhonda and Susan Gonsalves

**Sunday October 29, 2023**

**5-6:45pm**



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# OCTOBER 2023

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
<b>1</b> Eighteenth Week After Pentecost  10:30am—Worship with Holy Communion	<b>2</b> 5:30pm—AA	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> 9:00 am—Quilting  Blessing of the Animals 6:00 PM	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>8</b> Nineteenth Week After Pentecost  10:30am—Worship with Holy Communion	<b>9</b> 5:30pm—AA	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> 9:00 am—Quilting	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>15</b> Twentieth Week After Pentecost  10:30am—Worship with Holy Communion	<b>16</b> 5:30pm—AA  <b>YARD SALE WEEK CONTRIBUTIONS</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>  <b>YARD SALE</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>22</b> Twenty-first Week After Pentecost  10:30am—Worship with Holy Communion	<b>23</b> 5:30pm—AA	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> 9:00 am—Quilting	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> Reformation-Combined Service At Joy Lutheran 11:00AM
<b>29</b> Reformation Sunday 10:30am—Worship with Holy Communion  Trunk or Treat 5-6:45PM	<b>30</b> 5:30pm—AA	<b>31</b>				