



The Ascendant

A Newsletter by and for Members and Friends of Church of the Ascension

June 2018

Father's Day Food Drive For Gaithersburg Help

Honor your dads, living and departed, while helping others. Bring a bag of groceries to church before or on Father's Day, Sunday, June 17, for the food pantry at Gaithersburg HELP. Forms for dedication information are found at the Narthex, and undercroft. As always, we will give thanks for the ministry of fatherhood in the Prayers of the People at all services on the 17th.

Ascension Music Update

Church of the Ascension is blessed to have so many talented and dedicated musicians to lead and inspire in our worship. Beginning Sunday June 10, 2018 The Ascension Choir will begin their summer hiatus. Music at the 10:00 a.m. service will continue to be drawn from a variety of sources. The Ensemble will continue to provide accompaniment along with the organ. This summer is an opportunity for new and old members to come and join in the singing and the playing. Rehearsal for the music of the day will be held at 9 AM prior to worship. Additional instrumental rehearsal to be arranged as needed.

Thank-you all,
Clarice Snyder, Interim Organist
and Choir Director

Summer Sunday School

June 10 is the last week of the regular Sunday school year. Both Joyful Path and Godly Play will celebrate our time together in the godly play class-room.

There will be summer Sunday school in room 3 (the toddler room/room of refuge). It will be geared toward ages 5 and under, but older children are welcome to come help or just hang out. If you have questions, contact Megan Didavi 703-636-7199 mdidavi@gmail.com.

Bishop Michael Curry: How I Wrote the Royal Wedding Sermon – and Why I Went Off Script

The sermon was all about love and that came straight from the couple – Meghan and Harry basically wrote it for me. It all came down to the passage of scripture they selected to be read at the wedding, a passage from the eighth chapter of Song of Solomon. I really read and prayed over that passage and after sitting with it for a while, I realized they had preached the sermon before even got to it. Up until that point in the chapter of Song of Solomon, the story is a series of love poems between a man and a woman. But when you get to the eighth chapter, the woman stops talking about their love for each other and starts connecting it to what she sees as a greater love, to God, who is the source of all love. I took my cue from that and was then able to develop the sermon through that perspective. There's enormous power in love, to heal and help. The people who matter in your life or my life, they've been people who loved us. There's enormous power, both motivational and transformational power in love. I picked up that cue and took that to the next step. Everything that matters to God, everything the bible is trying to tell us, it comes down to love of God or love of neighbor. They gave me the sermon. They gave me the text.

Not everyone reacted in the same way. I've been a preacher since 1978 and I've learned in that time that there's always a whole lot going on in any congregation. People may not have paid attention to every word but everyone was having their own moment with God, in their own way. I had fun with it too – at one point, I veered a little off script and said to them, "We gotta get y'all married." That was my way of saying, "Give me a minute. I got one more thing to say."

I spoke to the couple very briefly after the ceremony and they were very gracious, though they couldn't say much due to the crowds of people. The reaction from the rest of the world has been just remarkable – I thoroughly enjoyed the Saturday Night Live skit and it was beautiful to hear people outside the church cheering. As for what Queen Elizabeth thought, Her Majesty's reactions are her reactions, they're private.

And although the church was filled with celebrities and some of the world's most prominent people, when I was giving the sermon, it really felt like Michael the priest was giving a regular wedding sermon. It was no different than any other type of service – I think that's where God really came in. Part of me suspects that, in spite of me and my foibles, he was trying to say something to the couple and everyone there. I was just a small vessel in that transaction.

By Time.com

<http://time.com/5288994/michael-curry-royal-wedding-sermon/>

Yoga

Yoga classes are offered on Thursdays at 10:00 AM, taught by Lucia Pires. The class is multilevel, with an emphasis on gentle yoga, and is appropriate for beginners. Props are offered, but the students are encouraged to bring their own yoga mats.



Lucia Pires is from Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. She is a 500-hour Pranakriya Yoga School of Healing Arts certified yoga teacher. Her training focuses on cultivating and enhancing the relationship of the student with his or her life force through yoga postures, breath work and meditation, in order to create change in awareness and help the student move towards wholeness and greater aliveness. She completed her professional training in 2015.

Lucia is the mother of two boys, ages 14 and 10, and when they give her a little break she enjoys reading, writing, long walks in nature and dancing.

Spanish Class

Come and take part in Ascension's Spanish Class on Mondays from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at Ascension House. You don't need to know Spanish to come, because we get together to learn and practice. For more information contact Javier at ocampo@ascensionmd.org

Tai Chi Class

Tai Chi classes are offered at 4:00 p.m. on Thursday afternoons in the Chapel; a good time of peace and balance in a lovely place at sunset. Please come and join us. Contact Claire Rosser at 301.275.0617 or Cjrosser@aol.com if you have any questions.

The Listening Heart Community



The Listening Heart Community is Ascension's "monastery of the heart", an intentional group for seekers in all stages of their spiritual journey to explore Benedictine and other contemplative spirituality in community. This fall and winter, we will be praying with the writings and teachings of Thomas Merton, the American mystic and Trappist monk, in observance of the centennial of his birth.

First Responder Presentation

Would you know how to act quickly if a person in your pew suddenly had a heart attack? Do you know where our AED is located, how to use it, or even what it is? What would you do if a stranger entered the church carrying a weapon, or simply looked threatening? A presentation given by a member of the Gaithersburg Police Department will address all these issues, and more, on Sunday, June 24th following the 10:00 a.m. service in the undercroft. Please plan to attend this important meeting to learn more about these urgent issues.

Kitchen Closed

Until repairs are completed, the kitchen will be closed. We are sorry for the inconvenience and thank you for your support during this time.

Facilities Committee Seeks Volunteers!

Have you ever built a house all by yourself? Neither have we. But we have lived in houses and apartments where things break and need repairs. If you have experience calling plumbers, electricians, roofers, etc., and meeting them when they come for estimates, you are just the kind of person we need for the facilities committee. While we welcome handy people who can fix a lock, drive a screw or change a light bulb, most of our duties consist of identifying projects, arranging for estimates and meeting prospective contractors. Perfect for retirees! The more of us there are, the less any one person has to do. If you are interested, contact one of the following: Ted Bedell, 301-520-8449; Luis Pedron, 301-922-5610; John Pruessner, 240-271-4739, or email Lin Keene at: office@ascensionmd.org

Events Schedule Update

We are in the process of updating "Together We Shine" and if you have any event that is scheduled between now and December 2018, Please email all the event's name and date to Eleni at Comm@ascensionmd.org

CONNECT WITH US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

 <http://bit.ly/2tHzJuT>

 <http://bit.ly/2tC0Ysa>

 <http://bit.ly/2sYC8UV>

 <http://bit.ly/2paseJO>



Saturday, July 24- Friday, July 29, 2018

Where: Philadelphia, PA St. James School

Cost: \$350 however scholarships will be found for those in need. Please make check out to Ascension and put “work camp” in the memo. Also please do not hand it to me but rather give it to church office in person or mail.

This is always a very rewarding experience for our Ascension Youth. The church will send them off on June 24th at the 120 am service.

Fifteen Ascension Youth, joined by 4 youth from the dioceses in Virginia, will head to inner city Philadelphia for a one week Work Camp on Sunday June 24th. Currently, Philly’s poverty rate is 25% (adult poverty rate) and 38% (child poverty rate), giving the unwanted distinction of having the highest rate in the nation among the 25 most populous U.S. counties. The Youth will work specifically at the St. James School <https://stjamesphila.org/> with which Ascension has a long and rewarding relationship. St. James is a faith-based middle school in the Episcopal tradition, committed to educating traditionally underresourced students in a nurturing environment. This school is located in in northern Philadelphia where the poverty rate is nearly double the city’s rate, surpassing 44%. The importance of education for these students can not be overstated considering that only 50% of Philadelphia high school students graduate on time and more than 40% drop out altogether. Please keep the Youth in your prayers and consider donating their cause.

Please contact Angie to sign up or with any questions: angela.hightwalker@nist.gov.

Wednesday Morning Book Group

We are reading Brian McLaren’s latest book entitled *The Great Spiritual Migration: How the World’s Largest Religion is Seeking a Better Way to be Christian*. Here’s a description from Amazon.com (<http://amzn.to/2nGabwg>): “Brian McLaren, a leading voice in contemporary religion, argues that—withstanding the dire headlines about the demise of faith and drop in church attendance—Christian faith is not dying. Rather, it is embarking on a once-in-an-era spiritual shift. For millions, the journey has already begun.” The group meets on Wednesday mornings at 10:00 a.m. in Ascension’s library. Read Chapters 5 and 6 for this coming Wednesday.

Attention Worship Leaders

I will be starting the roster of worship leaders (lectors, chalcists, acolytes, hospitality angels, etc) soon. If there are any changes, if you have black-out dates, or if you would be interested in serving as a specific worship leader, please let me know before June 12.

Thanks,

Sari Stoddard | 301-972-0914 | Sari.stoddard@verizon.net

First Responder Presentation

Would you know how to act quickly if a person in your pew suddenly had a heart attack? Do you know where our AED is located, how to use it, or even what it is? What would you do if a stranger entered the church carrying a weapon, or simply looked threatening? A presentation given by a member of the Gaithersburg Police Department will address of all these issues, and more, on Sunday, June 24th following the 10:00 a.m. service in the undercroft. Please plan to attend this important meeting to learn more about these urgent issues.

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LIFE AT ASCENSION

Ascension's Adventurers Seeking Ideas for Future Activities



Ascension's Adventurers gather for lunch at Normandie Farm restaurant after a morning of activities along the C&O Canal in September 2017

Ascension's Adventurers are seeking ideas for excursions/activities to undertake within the next 12 months or so. The excursions/activities may be recreational, educational, social, cultural, religious and/or just good fun. Please think outside of the box, we do not want to confine ourselves at this point in time.

All past excursions/activities have been half-day events, but suggestions for full-day events will also be considered.

Please provide your suggestions to Richard Snay (email: rsshay@aol.com, phone: 301.977.5259) by June 9, 2018. Richard will then compile a list and ask parishioners to vote so as to identify the most popular of the suggested options.

You are allowed to suggest redoing adventures that we have previously enjoyed.

Note that we are already scheduled to visit the beautiful Ladew Gardens in Monkton, MD on Saturday, June 2nd (rain date = June 16th).

Below is a list of the adventures that we undertook during the past 12 months:

Aug. 2017	Tour the National Cryptologic Museum in Laurel, MD
Aug. 2017	Experienced the solar eclipse from Ascension's lawn
Sep. 2017	At the C&O Canal, viewed Great Falls and hiked along the Gold Mine trail
Oct. 2017	Walked along the Underground Railroad Experience Trail in Sandy Spring, MD
Nov. 2017	Visited President Lincoln's summer cottage in DC
Jan. 2018	Toured Schifferstadt, a house built prior to the American Revolution in Frederick, MD
Feb. 2018	Toured the Surratt House in Clinton, MD
Mar. 2018	Watched musicians ring the bells while touring the National Cathedral's bell tower
Apr. 2018	Toured the Hillwood mansion & gardens in DC

Diana Gustafson Ordination

Dear Ascension Friends

By the Grace of God and the people consenting I will be ordained to the priesthood on June 16, 2018 at 10:00 at the National Cathedral. I am joyful and humbled to invite you join me. I will have a more formal invitation and further details to send in a few weeks.

National Cathedral
101 Wisconsin Ave NW,
Washington, DC 20016

Blessing

Donations for Gaithersburg HELP

Thank you all so much for your generous donations of food to the Gaithersburg HELP food pantry. We get a wide range of donations from week to week, and are very grateful. We especially appreciate donations of canned fruit, boxed cereal, pasta, beans, peanut butter, and soup. There are, however, a couple of categories of items that we cannot accept:

- Perishable items, especially bread. The pantry does have agreements with a couple of local bakeries, by which their unsold (but still fresh) baked goods are delivered directly to our freezers. Loaves of bread left at the church are likely to be crushed or go moldy before they can be delivered to the pantry.
- Open items, or items that are not in their original packaging. We respect our clients and show concern for their health and safety by not giving them open boxes, half-empty jars, pasta or beans in unlabeled plastic bags, or loose flavor packets.

If you would like to volunteer for Gaithersburg HELP, or if you need assistance, visit gaithersburghelp.org or call (301) 216-2510. Thank you!

Melanie Mitchell

Montgomery Hospice

Montgomery Hospice is a nonprofit hospice that has been serving the residents of Montgomery County for 36 years. Our team (of doctors, nurse practitioners, nurses, spiritual counselors, social workers, hospice aides, bereavement counselors and volunteers) works with patients and their families to provide quality end-of-life care in homes, extended care facilities and at Casey House, our acute care facility. We are looking for new volunteers. Our greatest need is for volunteers to visit patients. These volunteers provide companionship for patients, respite for family members, lavender oil hand massages, music by the bedside or help with practical matters. Many provide the gift of "presence" by simply being with a patient. All volunteers go through an application process and a three-day training. For more information, call 301-921-4400 or visit www.montgomeryhospice.org/volunteer

Men's Shelter Lunch Program



The Men's Shelter Lunch program provides bagged lunches for homeless men, assembled in the Undercroft Commons once a month. Supplies are donated by Ascension members. Depending on the season, we provide forty to eighty lunches a month. The next program is on March 18 at 10:15 a.m. Contact Edith at esekasi@gmail.com if you would like to help, or sign up at <http://bit.ly/1VAKEz8>.

Ministerio Felicidad

Ascension members prepare lunches and send love and prayers to day laborers in the neighborhood of the church. Join Javier at 6:00 a.m. on Saturday, April 28 in the church kitchen. If you have any questions, Contact him at ocampo@ascensionmd.org

Prison Ministry

Bubba Pflantzbaum has been writing to an inmate in Cumberland for about 10 years, providing friendship and access to information. His name is Jim, and he may be released in the next year or so. Jim is always looking for people to correspond with, so if you are interested in getting involved with this ministry, please email Bubba at bubbashalom@gmail.com

Make a difference for someone facing the end of life

JSSA Hospice and Transitions Volunteer Training May 6 and 7, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Rockville, MD.

JSSA, a non-sectarian community agency, is seeking volunteers over the age of 18 to help enhance the quality of life of individuals and families facing life-threatening or terminal illness. JSSA offers specialized training for prospective volunteers for its Hospice and Transitions programs. Following the training, volunteers are asked to commit to a minimum of 2 hours a week visiting patients in the Hospice or Transitions programs. If you're interested please fill out the application. Or contact Carrie Myatt, Volunteer Coordinator, at 301-816-2611 or cmyatt@jssa.org

VESTRY MINUTES

April 22, 2018

PRESENT: The Rev. Javier Garcia Ocampo, Senior Warden Betsy Hasegawa, Junior Warden Janet King, Vestrypersons Rose Buck, Gordon Donnelly, Susan McLaughlin, Zadinga Ogada, Luis Pedron, John Pruessner, Berenice Rodriguez and Bob Waters. Absent: Meredith Horan. Guest: Curt Lindsay/Worship Committee Co-Chairman.

The meeting opened at 1:30 p.m. with a short prayer led by Janet, and check in around the table.

CONSENT AGENDA: Berenice moved that the consent agenda be adopted as presented. John seconded the motion, and it passed.

OLD BUSINESS

Worship Committee Report. Curt reported on the Worship Committee's recent meetings. They had agreed that everyone will have to give up something from their favorite service in order to fairly combine four previous services (9:00, 10:15, 11:15 and 5:00) into a single one at 10:00, beginning on May 6. Eye-catching posters, fliers and banners with times of the new services are needed. Some decisions will have to wait until our new Minister of Music is hired. The Vestry discussed which building to hold each service in. Janet made a motion that all three new services be held in the main building; Luis seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. There was further discussion on how to most effectively use the chapel building.

Music Minister search; update. John reported that there are three finalists for the job, all with excellent qualifications. The committee has a final meeting with a candidate on Thursday, after which a quick decision will be made. Salary was discussed, as was the need for the selectee to be aware that we are in transition. Rose volunteered to research appropriate salary information. It was noted that Karina Gomez, our 11:15 ensemble leader, would be happy to volunteer her services when and if needed. Luis brought up music at the Spanish language service; Jesse Velazquez has been providing the music for free for the last year and a half. He's created a choir and is wonderful on the piano. The previous music provider at that service was given a salary; the Vestry agreed that Jesse should be compensated.

Vestry members conversations with parishioners. Bob has spoken to a number of parishioners about their thoughts on the transition. Everyone he talked to was surprised and delighted to have been contacted for their opinions and reported loving Ascension, our community and our 1A Sundays. Most were open to whatever our services may become, although a few preferred traditional services.

NEW BUSINESS

Committees - refresh, renew, establish. Betsy reminded us that the Vestry is doing a lot of the

church's business that should instead be done by committees. Vestry discussion included perhaps having parishioners volunteer their services in appropriate cases as opposed to hiring outside firms. Rose suggested using the bulletin to ask for volunteers.

Bulletins. Starting with our May 6 services, there will be only one bulletin for the 8:00 and 10:00 services. Hymns will be listed by number and sung from the hymnals, instead of being printed in the bulletin. This should result in a substantial savings, both in Eleni's time and in paper and copying costs.

Ascension House rental. We have tried to find a renter for part of Ascension House for many months; it was agreed that the effort should end. With all services to be held in the main church, the Vestry felt we had a much better chance to rent the chapel. Janet made a motion that Frank Sanya be asked to end his search for a tenant for Ascension House, with the warm thanks of the Vestry for his endeavors. Motion was seconded by Zadinga and passed.

Regarding rental of the chapel, Berenice and Luis pointed out that the chapel has way too many chairs (obstacles to leaving in an emergency) and that the chapel seems to be a storage area for quite a variety of items. Berenice felt the chapel should be kept at all times in a clean, uncluttered, well laid-out, and attractive appearance for potential renters. It was agreed that the excess chairs should be put in the lower atrium around the walls, thereby providing extra seating when needed.

OPEN MIC

Luis brought up fund-raisers that Spanish language congregation has planned, with the question of who/what should benefit from them. It was suggested that perhaps Jesse could be paid from the proceeds.

John reported that Lin needs to have the former nursery cleaned out. She doesn't know who should be responsible for it.

Sari was asked to add Pentecost to the Parish Life calendar.

Due to the fourth Sunday in May being Memorial Day weekend, the Vestry agreed to hold the May meeting on the third Sunday, May 20th.

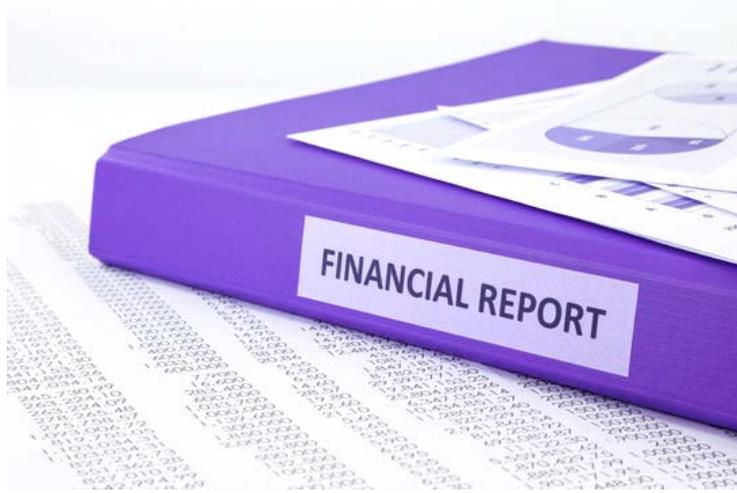
ADJOURNMENT: At 4:22 p.m., Janet moved that the meeting be adjourned. Rose seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Sari Stoddard
Clerk of the Vestry

PARISH FINANCES

Budget Development and Implementation



Budget Development and Implementation

We are actively working with the Priest in Charge, Wardens and Vestry to implement the budget adopted for 2018, monitor income and expenses, and assess Ascension's needs for the rest of the year.

April Financials

April income figures tracked higher than was projected, while expenses tracked below expectations.

Total income for April was \$52,891. Ascension received \$6,672 in plate receipts and \$36,655 in pledge income. The relatively stronger pledge income in April compared to March helped boost income in general.

For April, our total expenses were \$43,969. Expenses in April are the highest so far this year, but not out of the ordinary. Salary & Benefits accounted for majority of expenses at \$22,254. April expenses include the projected monthly Diocesan Pledge of \$2,214. Facilities expenses for April were \$7,234. Utilities expenses were the lowest for the year so far at \$1,425.

We had net positive income for April of \$8,922 based on the income and expenses figures just described.

Finally, the Treasurer's Report shows that the balance in the Endowment Fund stands at \$308,736. Our Unrestricted Cash Reserves increased to \$129,197. The Facilities Reserve Fund is at \$49,515.

July Ascendant

Please e-mail Eleni Hailu by Friday, June 23, if you have anything for the July Ascendant at comm@ascensionmd.org. Thank you!



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Letter by and for Members and Friends of Church of the Ascension

June 2018

The Episcopal Church of the Ascension
205 South Summit Ave.
Gaithersburg, MD 20877-2315

Address Service Requested

"We are ambassadors who represent Christ." - 2 Corinthians 5:20

Contact Us

Phone: 301.948.0122 Fax: 301.926.9012
eca@ascensionmd.org www.ascensionmd.org

Parish Staff

Priest in Charge
Interim Organist & Choir Director
Parish Administrator
Media Specialist

Javier Garcia Ocampo
Clarice Snyder
Lin Keene
Eleni Hailu

Sunday Services

8:00 a.m. – Holy Eucharist
10:00 a.m. – Holy Eucharist
12:00 a.m. – Eucaristia en Espanol

Office Hours
Monday–Thursday : 9:30 A.M. – 3:30 P.M.
Friday : 10:00 A.M. – 2:00 P.M.