



The Ascendant

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

July 2016

Work Camp 2016

Saturday, July 16-
Friday, July 22

Where: Philadelphia City
Camp/Episcopal Mission Cen-
ter.

Cost: \$398

Go to: episcopalmissioncenter.org/summer-break.html

This is always a very rewarding experience for Youth and for the adult chaperones. The number of spots is limited but sufficient, and will be filled on a first come first served basis. There is room for 18 youth and 4 adults.

Please contact Angie to sign up or with any questions:
angela.hightwalker@gmail.com.

Make checks out to Church of the Ascension, with Work Camp in the subject line. Please, leave the check with Kathy in the office, not in the plate or with Angie.

Fundraisers have been organized by youth and their parents.

Our next fundraiser will be on July 12. See page 4 for more information.

Scholarships are available. See Angie or Randy.

"Buried Talents"

Most of you will remember Jesus's story about the three employees who were entrusted with their employer's wealth, rendered in the famous parable as "talents." For most of the story about the talents we may think that the man who entrusted money to his employees while he went away for some unspecified amount of time was a pretty cool guy. He comes back from his journey and rewards the first two servants who've invested his money, with even greater responsibility.

But the one who didn't risk that which wasn't his was not only punished for not doing what the first two employees did but had what had been his taken away and given to the one who had the most and risked the most! The parable ends with the perplexing "but the one who has nothing even more will be taken away." This seems unduly severe, doesn't it? It helps to remember, I think, that our beloved and compassionate Jesus was a consummate teacher. He used parables to shock his hearers into a new way of knowing, being and doing. What I believe he is trying to show us in this story is the obvious "use it or lose it."

All we have and are comes from God. With the gift of life comes a responsibility to collaborate with our Maker. This means putting ourselves out there and taking risks. If we don't do that not only do we not honor the Giver of all good gifts but we lose something of ourselves.

We only begin to become who God has created each and every one of us to be by risking the loss of the very things that define us.

Peace, Randy

LIFE LONG LEARNING

Wednesday Book Group: *Gilead*

The Wednesday Morning Book Group ("WAM") is currently reading the novel *Gilead*, by Marilynne Robinson. Here's a description of the book on Amazon: the book is "an intimate tale of three generations, from the Civil War to the 20th century: a story about fathers and sons and the spiritual battles that still rage at America's heart. In the words of *Kirkus*, it is a novel "as big as a nation, as quiet as thought, and moving as prayer. Matchless and towering." *Gilead* tells the story of America and will break your heart." The book won the Pulitzer Prize in 2004, was a New York Times Top-Ten Book of 2004, and winner of the National Book Critics Circle Award for Fiction. It is available in multiple versions from Amazon.com: <http://amzn.to/24o1hVf>.

We meet Wednesdays at 10:00 a.m. in the Library. See the weekly announcement bulletin for chapter assignments.

We will start a new book on August 3; *Searching for Sunday, Loving, Leaving, and finding the Church* by Rachel Held Evans.

From Amazon: From *New York Times* bestselling author Rachel Held Evans comes a book that is both a heartfelt ode to the past and hopeful gaze into the future of what it means to be a part of the Church.

Centered around seven sacraments, Evans' quest takes readers through a liturgical year with stories about baptism, communion, confirmation, confession, marriage, vocation, and death that are funny, heartbreaking, and sharply honest.

A memoir about making do and taking risks, about the messiness of community and the power of grace, *Searching for Sunday* is about overcoming cynicism to find hope and, somewhere in between, Church.

Education for Ministry

The Education for Ministry (EfM) group here at Ascension wrapped up a wonderful year of exploring our faith. We are now signing people up for the coming year.

If you are interested, or just have some questions, contact David Mitchell at 240.454.1904, or newlywed98@comcast.net.

Yoga Classes

Randy teaches yoga every Thursday at 10:00 a.m. in the Chapel. These are gentle, entry level classes anyone may enjoy. No props are needed. There are some mats, blocks and blankets for those who want them. If you have your own mat, bring it to class. Wear loose fitting, comfortable clothing.

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. We gather twice a month for contemplative prayer, readings, and discussion.

During the month of July, we will meet on Mondays July 11 in Room 3, and July 25, 7:00-8:30 p.m., in the library. Contact Lori Perine at lperine@gmail.com if you would like to join us.

Present Moment, Wonderful Moment: Still Water Mindfulness Practice Group

New and experienced practitioners are welcome on Tuesday evenings from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. in the Chapel. An introduction to mindfulness practice is offered on the last Tuesday of each month, at 6:45 p.m., followed by a guided meditation. Additional resources and program announcements are available via our Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/stillwatermpc>.

For more information, contact Lori Perine at swgaithersburg@gmail.com.

Summer Baptisms



Summer Baptisms will be offered in August. Please contact Randy if you want to schedule a baptism at ral@ascensionmd.org, or call 301.948.0122 ext. 12.



The Women's Retreat is back!! Once again Hal- lowood Retreat Center, near Sugarloaf Moun- tain, will be the site of our gathering of the women of Ascension for renewal, fellowship and learning from Friday evening, August 19 - Sun- day noon, August 21, 2016. Please mark you calendars and plan to join your sisters for sing- ing, hiking, crafts, study and togetherness.

The planning committee welcomes suggestions for topics or activities, particularly if someone can share their expertise. For example, some- one has offered to lead Centering Prayer on Saturday morning.

Contact Ophelia Magnusen Yalley-Ogunru at opiemagz@gmail.com or Lauren Kings- land, Laurenkingsland@gmail.com.

Men's Shelter Lunch Program



The Men's Shelter Lunch program provides bagged lunches for residents of a local homeless shelter, as- sembled in the Undercroft Commons once a month. Supplies are donated by Ascension mem- bers. Depending on the season, we provide forty to eighty lunches a month. Sign-up for contribu- tions are through an online system and assembly occurs by those present after the 9:00 o'clock service on the third Sunday of the month. We will assemble next on Sunday, July 17.

Contact Edith at esekasi@gmail.com if you would like to help, or follow this link <http://bit.ly/1DVayRb>.

Linkages to Learning

Although we are only in the middle of the summer, the Church will be gearing up soon for our annual Link- ages to Learning Backpacks project.

Linkages to Learning is a school-based collaboration among Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS), the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), and private sector health and human service agencies in Montgomery County, Maryland. The program is designed to enable at-risk children and their families to im- prove adjustment to and performance in school, home and in the commu- nity. Parents work as partners with program staff to develop solutions to various challenges confronting their children. The Summit Hall Element- ary School is a participant in this program, and we support their students with our backpack project.

The Backpacks project provides new backpacks filled with specific school supplies for students at each level in the school. Our project leader, Kris- ten Keating, will put out lists of supplies on Sunday July 10th, and parish- ioners can take a list (or two!), buy the supplies, and enclose a check in the specified amount to cover the cost of the backpack. Then, on Sunday August 14th during Connection Hour, we'll get a group together to assem- ble the backpacks.

- Kristen Keating



LIFE AT ASCENSION

Ascension Softball



The men's softball season started up again in April. Games are held mostly on Mondays at 6:30 p.m.

July 11 Ascension vs. Gaithersburg Church of the Nazarene at Johnson Field
July 18 Ascension vs. Seneca Creek Community Church

July 25 and 30 Playoffs

If you would like more information, contact Ted Bedell at tedbedell@comcast.net or 301.520.8449, or Bill Ward at William.ward@nrc.gov or 301.523.4088.

Helping your Senior

Senior high students are graduating and preparing for a new season of life. As you celebrate this season with your students, the Diocese would like to support your efforts in transitioning students from life at home to life on campus. Specifically, we would be honored to introduce them to the chaplains and clergy nearby- wherever they are headed. If you would like assistance in connecting your graduates with their new community, please contact us directly, or you may fill out the form found here: <http://tinyurl.com/2016graduates>

We will take the initiative to reach out to clergy and chaplains and pass along your student's contact information. We will ensure these leaders follow up with each student, letting students know of available programs and inviting each student to participate.

As your diocesan staff, we are proud of all that your students have learned and accomplished in their lives thus far, and we pray that the path ahead is one of continued growth and opportunity.

Sincerely,

Jason Evans and Iman Green,
Young Adult, Youth and Family Missioners,
Episcopal Diocese of Washington

Armor of Light

As you may recall we are planning a viewing of the acclaimed documentary on gun violence - recently broadcast on PBS - *The Armour of Light*. We want to have the viewing (or viewings) in September. Our plan is to have it either at the church or in people's homes. Or both. In either scenario we will want to discuss the film in small groups. We'll be sending out an invitation for those of you who would like to facilitate a small group discussion so you let us know that you're interested. Group facilitators will prepare by viewing the video and working with other facilitators to generate questions and talking points to get the discussions going. - Alice Benson and Kirk Fitch (fitchbenson@comcast.net).

Yard Sale / Car Wash Update

We are very grateful for the support given to the Yard Sale and Car-wash last weekend. We sold a total of \$1,300 which have been delivered to the Church. Thanks to all those who in some way or another made this possible. Thank you to those who donated and those who came out to sell items, and those who came to shop.

Work Camp Fundraiser—Dine Out



Come out and support our Youth Group. Grab lunch or dinner (or both) on July 12 at Ledo Pizza, 19200 Montgomery Village Avenue, Village Plaza. Bring the flyer available on the table outside the office and in the Chapel.

When you show them the flyer and mention Ascension, our Youth Group will receive 20% of the check for their Work Camp trip to Philadelphia.

Contact Angie with any questions at angela.hightwalker@gmail.com

LIFE AT ASCENSION

The Diocesan Council Approves Grant for Ascension

Diocesan Council approved the first batch of growth grants made possible by increased congregational contributions to the diocesan operating budget. The five grants ranged from \$3,000 to \$20,000 and will support Latino and campus ministry initiatives as well as new worship services and musical offerings.

“The Council was energized and excited by the evangelistic focus of the grant proposals.” Bishop Mariann Edgar Budde said. “It affirmed our hope that with increased financial capacity, EDOW congregations would gladly and creatively reach out to their communities. These grants represent the first step on what I pray will be a rewarding journey for us all.”

Church of the Ascension in Gaithersburg received \$20,000 for expanded outreach to the Spanish speaking community in its immediate neighborhood with the possible inclusion of the local campus of Montgomery College. The Rev. Javier Ocampo will lead the ministry.

Ascension Choir



On June 12, the Ascension Choir finished its regular season at the 9:00 service, but some of the members will continue to sing every other week during the summer on July 10, July 24, August 7, and August 21.

On these dates anyone interesting in singing for the 9:00 service can meet in the choir room at 8:15 am. Jerrold will select music based on how many are there at that time. If you have been thinking about singing with the choir, you are most welcome, and this is a great opportunity to try it out without further commitment. Just show up on one or more of the Sundays. Being able to read music is helpful but not required.

Ascension’s Adventurers to Visit Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens

All parishioners and friends are invited to join us in visiting Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens on Saturday, July 16, where we will participate in their annual “Lotus and Water Lily Festival.”

We will meet in the Ascension House parking lot at 9:00 a.m. to carpool. Alternatively, you can meet us at Kenilworth’s Visitors Center at 10:00 a.m. Admission is free.

At the festival, we will walk around the gardens to see a spectacular display of lotus and water lilies in full bloom. There will also be opportunities to enjoy gardening workshops and traditional Asian & African dancing performances. Hands-on activities will include face painting, lotus tea tasting, and painting demonstrations. Participants may also visit with educational and cultural exhibitors. Carpools will depart the gardens around noon to return to Ascension.

Participants are also invited to join us at Thai Farm Restaurant (800 King Farm Blvd., Suite 125, Rockville) for lunch.

For information about Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens see: <https://www.nps.gov/keaq/index.html> .
For information about Thai Farm Restaurant see: <http://www.thaifarmrestaurant.com/> .

Also, feel free to contact Richard Snay at rssnay@aol.com or 240.750.5960 if you have any questions.

Driving Directions:

Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens (visitor center facilities) is in northeast Washington, D.C., just south of the Route 50, Baltimore-Washington Parkway, Kenilworth Avenue intersection. The entrance to the Aquatic Gardens is at 1550 Anacostia Avenue, NE, Washington, DC 20019.

Coming by car: Take Route 295 southbound to the Eastern Avenue Exit. Go straight up the ramp to the second street on the right, Douglas Street. Make a right onto Douglas Street. At the end of Douglas Street, make another right onto Anacostia Avenue to get to *Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens*.

VESTRY DIGEST

Vestry Digest, May 2016

Attendance: Randy Lord-Wilkinson, Betsy Hasegawa, Rose Buck, Janet King, Denise Lionetti, Gary McLaughlin, Zbadinga Ogada, John Pruessner, Najma Stubblefield, Paul Whitmore, Absent: Enid Cole and Avin Lalmansingh.

The meeting started with a Lambeth Bible Study. Denise commented on the positive impact that the Health and Well-being Committee's is having on the congregation.

Old Business

Parish Life Committee. Betsy and Lauren had prepared a list of anticipated events per year that would require Parish Life support. The five parishioners who have indicated a willingness to share the committee's responsibilities were unable to meet at this vestry meeting. So Randy suggested we try to get them to come to our next meeting.

The annual picnic was held in the undercroft because of weather concerns. It was very well attended.

Renovation. Randy went over the costs associated with the three items the congregation supported to upgrade the church building.

Sound system. This has been completed with existing dedicated funds. The cost for two Bose nave speakers and chancel monitor speaker, and a wireless handheld mic was \$7799. The fund that was used, was the Worship Memorial Fund.

Lighting improvements in the nave. \$23,500. For two LED "halos". John Pruessner has contacts in the lighting arena; Randy asked him to do some research to see if we can reduce the planned cost of lighting.

Accessibility. \$45,000 for lowering the cancel, putting the pulpit and altar on platforms, and updating the flooring. Lighting enhancement in the Narthex. \$8362 for new main entrance doors with glass.

The Vestry plans to offer a three-year renovation pledge to finance the improvements.

Facilities-garbage disposal. WSSC no longer allows for garbage disposals in churches. So the vestry discussed having more frequent cleaning of the grease trap to help alleviate the bad smell.

New Business

Sunday School Survey. The surveys were still coming in from the congregants. Randy would like all parishioners to take the survey- the early questions are generic to all.

Counters. Paul reported on the money counting efforts. Two new computers have been donated for the sole use of the weekly income counting. There are now six teams of two counters each. Paul would train them on how to use the computers. The date is yet to be set.

Youth Group Work Camp Funding. The Youth Group wants to raise funds for their annual summer trip to Philadelphia for work camp. The Vestry voted to approve their fund raising efforts which include such

Enid Cole's discernment for the diaconate. Enid's studies and discernment for the diaconate leaves little time for her to fulfill her responsibilities as Senior Warden. It was with regret and gratitude that her resignation was accepted. Betsy Hasegawa has agreed to succeed her as Senior Warden. Janet King was chosen to complete Betsy's term as Junior Warden. A new vestry person will be selected to take Janet's place.

Cottage Meetings for the Budget. There were several cottage meetings held after the different services to talk about the congregation's priorities. It was evident that most wanted to keep our priorities the same as they are now as far as outreach and ministries were concerned. It was discussed that there was a need to explore various approaches to increasing income.

Agenda Items and Long Vestry Meetings. Again concerns were raised about how to get an item on the agenda. Betsy explained that email to the executive committee (rector and wardens) is the path. Also discussed was the length of the vestry meetings and having a more realistic time set for discussions.

Missioner Position. Randy told Vestry that financial campaigns can be used also to finance personnel such as missioners. He mentioned that such a position could even be shared with another parish.

Wear and Tear. Janet reported on the old and tattered cardboard inserts that are used to identify the current Sunday. Randy said that they are no longer needed to be used. The liturgical date is indicated in every bulletin. So the Welcome Teams no longer need to post the date.

Respectfully Submitted,
Janet King, Jr Warden

CURRENT FINANCIAL STATUS

Financial Update, May 2016

Budget Development and Implementation

As the year progresses, we continue to monitor month-to-month income and expense figures, comparing these numbers to projections for the year based on the budget the Vestry adopted for 2016. Closely related, we are assessing the impact of the deficit budget on Ascension's cash flow and the Endowment as we approach mid-year.

May Financials and Year-to-Date Summary

- Total income for May was \$46,023. Ascension received \$5,650 in plate receipts and \$32,043 in pledge income. Plate receipts exceeded projections by \$1,661, and pledge income was slightly less than planned. Thus far in 2016, we continue to remain under budget in plate receipts, although the gap has narrowed and is now just \$1,625 or 7% less than expected. We remain slightly ahead in pledge income. Rental Income and Miscellaneous Unrestricted Income for the month were \$2,060 and \$6,270, respectively.

- For May, our total expenses were \$52,019. We incurred slightly higher expenses in Salary & Benefits, Programs Ministry, and Facilities than planned. Salary & Benefits was over budget in May and remains over budget year to date largely due to higher costs for Temporary Services. Programs Ministry remains over budget for the year, as well, with higher expenditures in the Fellowship and Music portions of this budget area. While Facilities costs were over budget in May, we are still significantly under budget year to date, helping to offset higher costs elsewhere.

- We had negative net income for May of \$5,996 based on the income and expenses figures just described. Year to date, we have received income of \$207,595, against total expenses of \$244,114, creating negative net income for the year of \$36,519. Our total income figure of \$207,595 is about \$3,000 or 1% higher than anticipated thus far. While Salaries & Benefits and Programs Ministry are higher year to date, Utilities and Facilities are under budget. Thus, we have not accrued as large a deficit to this point as expected.

Finally, the overall balance in Ascension's Endowment Fund is \$402,669 as of May 31. This balance reflects the status of the cash holdings in the Fund, as well as an increase during May in the equity portion of the

Fund as a result of the performance of the stock market.

Howard Holland, *Treasurer and Chair, Operations and Finance Committee*, hhollbike@verizon.net.

FROM THE OFFICE

Summer Office Hours

During the months of June, July, and August, the church office hours will change. The office will be open Mondays-Thursdays, 9:30 a.m.—4:00 p.m., and on Fridays 9:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

Prayer Request Policy

The term for a prayer request is four weeks, infinitely renewable. The regular Sunday prayer list is for parishioners and their families, including extended family members. The weekday list used by the staff, called the "extended prayer list," is for coworkers, friends, and so on. When you see a name missing that you think should be included in the Prayers of the People and the list in the bulletins, say their names at service, preferably out loud, then fill out a new prayer request form, found on the desk under the bulletin board in the Narthex, and the table near the Chapel door. - Randy

Connect with Us

There are many ways to keep up to date with what is going on here at Ascension:

Email us at eca@ascensionmd.org, visit our website at www.ascensionmd.org, like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/pages/Episcopal-Church-of-the-Ascension/108963675039, or Twitter at <https://twitter.com/#!/ascensionmd>

Altar Flower Donations

There are several openings for Altar Flower donations. If you wish to donate, please fill out an envelope located on the desk outside the office and in the Chapel, place your money in it, and leave it for the office or place in the collection basket.



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July 2016

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

Sunday Services

7:45 a.m.—Holy Eucharist

"Meditative" service, no music - Main Church

9:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist

Classic sacred music of the Church accompanied by Choir and Organ—Main Church

10:15 a.m.—Eucharist for Young Children and Families

Storytelling of the Gospel with children's songs—Chapel

11:00 a.m.—Eucharist in Spanish

Songs and prayers in Spanish—Chapel

11:15 a.m.—Holy Eucharist

Music and liturgy in the vernacular accompanied by instrumental ensemble—Main Church

5:00 p.m.—"Last Chance Church" Eucharist

Informal service with music blending Gospel and jazz influences—Chapel

Parish Staff

Rector	Randy Lord-Wilkinson
Assistant to the Rector	Javier García Ocampo
Minister of Music	Jerrold Tidwell
Office Coordinator	Kathy Van Arnum
Communications	Pia Leaman
Children's Music Leader	Howard Hanson
Chapel Musicians	Eric O'Loughlin
	Samuel Munguia
Sexton	Betty LaVern
Nursery Director	Giséle Lachance