



The Ascendant

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

June 2016

Annual Picnic

June 5, 2016



The annual parish picnic will be on Sunday, June 5 at the Park Pavilion at Bohrer Park. As we have done for the last few years, there will be a bilingual service at 11:00 a.m., meaning that there will be no Spanish service at 11:00 in the Chapel, nor a Holy Eucharist in the Main Church at 11:15.

The picnic, a pot luck affair, follows. Bring a dish to share and your own drinks. All paper goods will be provided. Feel free to bring chairs and blankets.

Sign up at: <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/70A0A4CABA82DA75-parish>

Yard Sale and Car Wash

On Saturday, June 25, Ascension will hold a yard sale and car wash to raise funds for the Church. If you have gently used clothes, house wares, furniture, books or any other items to donate for the yard sale, please bring them to church. Also, if you are able to help during the day of June 25, let Javier know at ocampo@ascensionmd.org.

When Things Fall Apart

No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it.
- 1 Corinthians 10:13 (NRSV)

Often I've heard people quote "the Bible" as saying something like "God won't give you more than you can handle," when being with a friend or loved one who was really having a tough time because of, for example, a serious health challenge, or a profound loss of some kind. I remembered seeing something like this in one of Paul's epistles, but I couldn't remember exactly where because it wasn't worded this way. Searching with my favorite online Bible study tool (www.biblestudytools.com) using the keyword 'handle' didn't yield anything! The terms 'temptation' and 'testing' did.

Paul tells us that God is faithful and will not let us be tested beyond our strength and will provide the way out. This is not to say that "testing" won't come. In fact, it seems to be a basic assumption! Hard times come to everyone. In that sense life is fair. No one is exempt from the experience of loss, which is the common denominator behind all adversity, when you think about it.

And to even label an experience as a "test" means that you have taken the first step toward "reframing" something painful that has happened to you in a way that God can provide the "way out." One might resign oneself to loss as just something that happens about which God doesn't seem to care at all. Seeing something as a "test" does not mean that God sent it to you, but that you have opened the door to allowing God and whomever God has placed in your life at the time to journey with you through the valley of the shadows.

This sounds simple, but it is not easy. It requires a "letting go" of control over the course of one's life, to allow a deeper wisdom and companionship in. Not that any of us has control! We just think we do! But we must admit the loss, and mourn, and relinquish the thing or person or situation that we desire to hold on to so deeply, so that grace - a way out - may come in.

Remember the funny story about the hiker who slipped over the edge of a deep gorge and was hanging by the exposed root of a tree over the abyss below? He couldn't find a toe hold to get himself back up on to the trail and called out to God in desperation: "Can you get me out of this?!" God did reply! "You must let go of the root of the tree..." After a moment's "discernment" the hiker replied, "Is there anybody else up there?"

The way out, surrender, letting go, dying to my attachment to what I had, is the prerequisite to grace. To resurrection. To new life on the other side.

- 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.

The Listening Heart Community Sabbatical

The Listening Heart Community are currently on hiatus until Monday, June 20, when we will resume our regularly scheduled meetings. Contact Lori Perine at lperine@gmail.com if you have questions or would like to join us.



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.

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.



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

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

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

CARING FOR OUR COMMUNITY

Outreach Retreat— Being Ambassadors of Christ!

All are invited to a Saturday morning Ascension Outreach Retreat on June 4th, to be held in the Chapel from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Our purpose is to deepen our awareness of how what we do in the community, especially under the auspices of our many outreach partner ministries, define our mission. All that's required is an interest in the world around us and a desire to be a disciple of Christ. Please come and share your experiences and dreams for Ascension, and what you'd like to do with them! Remember:

Through prayer, reflection, and discussion we'll strive to identify how we, as members of Ascension, can be the hands and feet of Christ in our community.

Sign up here if you plan to come: <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/70A0A4CABA82DA75-outreach>

For more information, please contact Paul Boynton at boynton357@verizon.net

Mother's Day Gaithersburg HELP Food Donation

88 pounds of non-perishable food was given to Gaithersburg HELP in honor of our mothers this year from Ascension's parishioners. Thank you to all who donated food and to Melanie Mitchell and Jerrold Tidwell for bringing it over to the kitchen.

Father's Day Food Drive

Honor your dads, living and departed, while helping others. Bring a bag of groceries to church before or on Father's Day, Sunday, June 19, for the food pantry at Gaithersburg HELP. Forms for dedication information are found on the welcome desk, in the Undercroft Commons, and in the Chapel. Letters of appreciation will be written to living fathers, and a list of all paternal honorees will be published.

As always, we will give thanks for the ministry of fatherhood in the Prayers of the People at all services on the 19th.

Men's Shelter Lunch Program

The Men's Shelter Lunch program provides bagged lunches for residents of a local homeless shelter, 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. Sign-up for contributions 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, June 19.

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

Work Camp 2016

Saturday, July 16- Friday, July 22

Where: Philadelphia City Camp/Episcopal Mission Center. l
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 are being organized by youth and their parents. Scholarships are available. See Angie or Randy.

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. Play-offs will be July 25 and 30.

June 13 Ascension vs. Seneca Creek CC at Flower Hill Field
June 16 Ascension vs. St. Francis at Nike Field
June 20 Ascension vs. Gaithersburg Church of the Nazarene at Nike Field
June 27 Ascension vs. Journeys Crossing at Flower Hill Field

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.

Changing of the Guard!

Absorbed as she now is with her studies and discernment for the Sacred Order of Deacons, Enid Cole has resigned from the Vestry and as Senior Warden. We are most grateful for her 2+ years of leadership! She is a dynamic, colorful and compassionate ambassador of Christ. She is succeeded by Betsy Hasegawa, a veteran warden already, and Vestry member Janet King was selected by her partners in mission as the new Junior Warden.

Congratulations Graduates!

Our Youth Group graduates are:

Kaifa Boyce
Jackson Douglas
Ian Shaer
Alfred Wasikye



Also, congrats to Kate and Diana on the occasion of their graduation from Virginia Seminary on May 19.

Recipient of the 2016 Virginia Seminary Ford Chair, a gift of Susan Ford to a member of the graduating class who has exhibited a strong commitment to the community life and mission of the Seminary, was the Rev. Kate Siberine from the Diocese of Chicago.

Movie Night, Friday, June 3

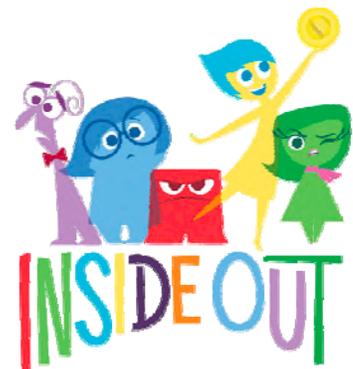
Everyone is welcome to meet up in the Undercroft Commons on Friday, June 3 at 6:00 p.m. to watch *Inside Out* (rated PG). From Amazon: "When 11-year-old Riley moves to a new city, her Emotions team up to help her through the transition. Joy, Fear, Anger, Disgust and Sadness work together, but when Joy and Sadness get lost, they must journey through unfamiliar places to get back home."

We'll start off with pizza and whatever else people want to bring. We do ask for a donation of \$5 per person with a \$15 per family maximum toward the cost of the pizza. We'll start the movie at 6:30 and we'll most likely be out and off to bed by 8:30 p.m.

Please bring your favorite beverage, and some to share. Snack foods will not be denied admission. You need not be a child, or have one, to attend! Dolls, favorite toys, sleeping bags and pillows are also welcome!

Please RSVP by Midnight Thursday, June 2. We need 10 confirmations to make Movie Night happen...

Sign up here: <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/70A0A4CABA82DA75-seeinside>



LIFE AT ASCENSION

Ascension's Adventurers Seeking Ideas

Ascension's Adventure Team is 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 activities have been half-day events, but full-day/multi-day events will also be considered.

Please email your suggestions to Richard Snay (rssnay@aol.com) by June 5, 2016. Richard will then compile a list and ask parishioners to vote so as to identify the most popular of the suggested options.

P.S.: You are allowed to suggest redoing adventures that we previously enjoyed.

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

July Ascendant

Have an announcement for the July Ascendant? Email Pia at leamanp@ascensionmd.org by Monday, June 20.

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>

June is LGBTQI+ Pride Month!

Among its many other meanings, June is LGBTQI+ Pride Month; locally, nationally and internationally. Though lesbian / gay / bisexual / transgender / queer / intersex et al history is as long as human history, in June of 1969, LGBTQ people at New York City's Stonewall Inn fought back against a police raid. Every June since, there have been more Pride observances in more secular and faith communities -- marches, festivals, worship services and much more -- including here in the DMV (DC / MD / VA).

And the LGBTQ community calendar has grown to include other special days, such as the international Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDOR) each November, where we remember all those who have lost their lives to transphobia - especially trans women of color, two of whom have been murdered in Gaithersburg and Rockville in the last few months. Montgomery County's 6th annual TDOR is being planned for this November.

The Episcopal Church has long been a leader in the journey towards LGBT social justice, especially since the 1970s, within the larger Church and faith community as well as in the secular world. And we of TEC are blessed with our own LGBT organizations, including Integrity USA and its transgender-focused partner TransEpiscopal.

Part of Integrity's ministry is inviting Episcopal communities to become Believe Out Loud congregations, who publicly welcome and affirm LGBT people and have completed a six-step process -- Ascension is proud to be a BOL church; see <http://www.ascensionmd.org/about-us/believe-out-loud/>.

At the same time, much work remains to be done around LGBTQI+ issues, in the Episcopal Church, the wider Church, the rest of the faith community, and the secular world. And our work must be intersectional -- based on an understanding of how oppression based on sex, gender and sexuality intersects with racism, classism, ableism and more.

For more information about LGBT issues in our Church, we invite you to visit EpiscopalChurch.org/page/lgbt-church, IntegrityUSA.org, and TransEpiscopal.org (you can also find them on Facebook and Twitter). And happy Pride!!"

VESTRY DIGEST

Vestry Digest, April 2016

Attendance: Randy Lord-Wilkinson, Enid Cole, Betsy Hasegawa, Rose Buck, Janet King, Avin Lalman-singh, Gary McLaughlin, Zadinga Ogada, John Pruessner. Absent: Denise Lionetti; Najma Stubblefield; Paul Whitmore. Also attending: Peg Ruppel; Lauren Kingsland.

Financial Reports. A breakdown of what was spent on the Capital Campaign up to this point was provided as follows: To Broadhurst Architects, \$27, 549.48. To the Episcopal Foundation Consultant, \$5,627.21. Total paid = \$33,176.69.

Also, an update to the total Lenten Rice Bowl offering was made. The updated collected amount is \$2937.32. 50% is earmarked for a Episcopal Relief and Development gender-based violence program, and 50% to support Syrian refugees being settled in our area. Because of the low number of Syrian refugees at this point, \$1500 is being held in reserve for that purpose.

The Consent Agenda was then passed.

Old Business

Parish Life Committee. Lauren has been pursuing the creation of a corps of Parish Life volunteers; several have volunteered on a preferred “ad hoc” basis, rather than taking the permanent chair. Volunteers will be invited to the next Vestry meeting where a calendar of expected events will be provided, along with discussion of what process will work for everyone involved.

Heat Pump. Before HVAC installation can proceed, an internal sprinkler head must be moved, and the locks on the exterior door to the mechanical room must be replaced. Estimates are being sought. Gary recommended repair of three interior doors as well; Randy will contact Michael Lam, Ascension’s handyman of late, to estimate cost of the repairs/replacements.

Solar Power. After discussion that included thoughts on solar power as not only a sound business decision but a moral one as well, and of the risks vs benefits of signing a 20 year contract with RER, it was moved, seconded and passed that Ascension move forward with the RER solar power provision proposal.

Vestry Committee-Liaison assignments. New members undertook committee assignments, and some assignments were changed .

New Business

Capital Campaign End/Budget priorities Cottage Meetings. Based on information collected from the cottage meetings on the potential renovations to the Ascension building, the Vestry decided to cancel the capital campaign. An announcement will be provided in various forms for the congregation. Moving forward, a new series of cottage meetings will take place to discuss ideas on how our money should be budgeted and spent. Meetings are planned to begin May 8, and last throughout Sundays in May.

Open Mic

“Miscellaneous” items in the budget. Gary questioned the use of “miscellaneous” as a category under “Other Restricted Fund Balances”, and suggested these items be identified.

Acolytes. It was noted that acolytes at the 0900 service are frequently absent or late, and seemingly untrained. All who attend this service acknowledge this situation and it will be followed up.

The Agenda. Gary also asked for clarity on getting topics added to the Vestry agenda, rather than just speaking up at Open Mic. A message to the Vestry Executive Committee (rector, senior, and junior warden) is the most direct method.

Discussion Length. Gary observed that we are falling back into redundant and/or lengthy discussions that result in unreasonably long meetings. Preparation for the meeting, and strict attention to the duration assigned to each topic was discussed.

Parish-Wide Activity. Guest Peg Ruppel urged the Vestry to research an activity that could attract and engage the entire congregation, eg, being present at the Gaithersburg Book Fair or Olde Towne days.

With similar thought, Rose introduced a list of 1100 Service Activities that has been drawn up by the Spanish-speaking congregation for the whole parish. The list includes a Childrens’ Day, car wash, yard sale, and celebration of a variety of Latino events. All money-raising events must be approved by the Vestry. It was moved, seconded, and passed that the Vestry approve all events listed on their handout.

Respectfully submitted,
Betsy Hasegawa, Jr Warden

CURRENT FINANCIAL STATUS

Financial Update, April 2016

Budget Development and Implementation

Following the Vestry's adoption of the budget earlier this year, we have continued to monitor month-to-month income and expense figures and to compare these numbers to projections for the year. Closely related, we have looked closely at the impact of the deficit budget we adopted on cash flow and how Ascension will meet its operating needs throughout the year.

April Financials and Year-to-Date Summary

- Total income for April was \$38,846. Ascension received \$3,882 in plate receipts and \$27,688 in pledge income during the month. Both figures were less than we had projected based on expected budget totals for the month. Thus far in 2016, we remain under budget in plate receipts, and we are slightly ahead in pledge income. Rental Income and Miscellaneous Unrestricted Income were \$2,060 and \$5,216, respectively.

- For April, our total expenses were \$45,964. We incurred slightly higher expenses than we had planned in Education & Training and Salary & Benefits. Both categories are also over budget year to date, as well, largely due to higher costs for Temporary Services. Of note, we were significantly under budget in Facilities, spending \$3,095 less in April than we had planned. We were also under budget for the month in General Office Expense and Utilities expenses.

- Thus, we had negative net income for April of \$7,118 based on the income and expenses figures just described. Year to date, we have received income of \$161,573, against total expenses of \$192,095, creating negative net income for the year of \$30,522. This figure is consistent with the deficit budget adopted for 2016.

Finally, the total balance in the Endowment Fund is \$400,319, as of April 30. This balance reflects the changes in cash holdings described above, as well as an increase 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.

WORSHIP

Attention all Worship Leaders, and Those Interested in Becoming a Worship Leader

I am in the process of updating the list of worship leaders (chalcists, lectors/readers, welcome team members/ushers, acolytes and flower deliverers). If you would like to join in any capacity (we will train you) or change your status (add or delete a worship position), please email me asap.



I will also be preparing the new worship roster for the months of July, August, and September shortly; if there are any changes specific to those months, let me know that too. Many thanks! Sari Stoddard.

Contact me at sari.stoddard@verizon.net.

In Our Thoughts and Prayers



We Give Thanks for the Confirmations of:

Alice Bennett

Grace Bennett

Jerry Fitzpatrick

Fayemi Johnson

Wendy Quijada

Alfred Wasikye

We Give Thanks for the Lives of:

Jerry Jenkins, who died on April 30.

Rick Wilkinson, who died on May 23.



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June 2016

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

*Happy Father's Day
June 19*

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

Rector	Randy Lord-Wilkinson
Spanish Language Missioner	Javier García Ocampo
Minister of Music	Jerrold Tidwell
Seminarian	Diana Gustafson
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

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