



The Ascendant

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

May 2016

Mother's Day Food Drive: May 8

In honor or in memory of our mothers on Mother's Day, Sunday, May 8, we invite you to donate a bag of groceries to replenish the food pantry at Gaithersburg HELP. There are forms available on the welcome desk, in the Undercroft Commons, and in the Chapel, where you can designate your contribution "in honor of" a loved one. That person will receive a letter notifying them of your gift. For donations "in memory of" loved ones, we will add those names to a list for special prayers.

Pictorial Directory

The last time we sat for portraits to create a pictorial directory of Ascension members was May 2011. Time for another!

Save these dates for your portraits: May 18-20 (Wednesday, Thursday, Friday) from 2:00-8:00 p.m. and May 21 (Saturday) from 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Other dates can be added as needed.

You can start signing up online today by following this link: <http://bit.ly/1UgWglo>

There will also be opportunities to sign up on Sundays.

If you want to help out with the project or have questions, contact Randy at ral@ascensionmd.org, or Sue Snay at subarsy@aol.com.

Capital Campaign Update

There isn't going to be one! Read on....

To all who participated in the "Cottage Meetings" and discussed ideas for renovations to our church building - THANK YOU. The remarks were insightful and showed much thought and love for our parish.

You Have Been Heard.

Three basic ideas clearly emerged as supported in the meetings. They are, 1) lowering the chancel (where the altar sits now) to the same level as the rest of the nave (main church); 2) improving lighting throughout the main church and narthex (entryway from the front doors); and 3) updating the sound system.

The pews will remain. The atrium and sacristy will be unchanged. Church will not be "in the round"; the only people behind the altar will be musicians and worship leaders....as it is now.

The Vestry and Rector believe these three changes should be pursued. Itemized costs have been estimated and are such that a formal capital campaign is not required. New microphones and speakers are being tried out now in the church; the Vestry has voted to purchase a similar system drawing the cost from a fund especially for improvements in worship.

There will still be a lot of details to decide upon and choices to make, but the most important point is that ideas were shared, parish groups talked about them, and priorities became clear. So again, on behalf of the Rector and Vestry, THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME, ENERGY, AND LOVE. The community spirit demonstrated through the Cottage Meetings is one reason why our space is so cherished.

It worked so well, we'd like to do it again:

Budget Priorities Discussion Groups

With the Annual Giving Campaign over, the Vestry would like to hear from you again. This time, we want your ideas on spending the treasure we pledge or put in the plate on Sundays. A series of meetings at church will start Sunday May 8. Come with ideas, suggestions, or just to listen. No sign-ups are necessary; the only requirement is to show up and share.

May 8: groups at 8:30, 10:15, and 12:15

May 15: groups at 8:30, 10:15

May 29: group at 12:15

All groups meet in the Library. If there are more than 12 in a group a "breakout" second group may be considered.

In Christ,
Randy, Enid, and Betsy

LIFE LONG LEARNING

Questions about Sunday School



The teachers of Godly Play and Joyful Path would like to learn more about the families we serve and welcome anyone interested in learning about Sunday School for preschool-5th grade.

We will be waiting in the Narthex, each Sunday in May after the 9:00, 10:15, 11:00 and 11:15 services for anyone who would like to share their impressions of our programs. Questions from parents are also welcome! Also, you may go to the written survey as another way to gather information at <http://svy.mk/1qHgOx3>. Thank you for sharing with us!

- Megan Didavi

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 encounter scripture and other texts through lectio divina and use contemplative practices to deepen our experience of the sacred in each moment. Meeting dates in May are May 2 and 16 from 7-8:30 p.m. in the library. Contact Lori Perine at lperine@gmail.com if you would like to join us.

Baptisms

Baptisms will be held in the Main Church next on May 15, Day of Pentecost, but may be scheduled at any time for a Chapel service.

Contact the Rector for more information at 301.948.0122 ext. 12 or ral@ascensionmd.org.

Spanish Class

The Spanish Class with Javier meets Tuesdays at 6:30 p.m. at Ascension House.

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 Hollywood 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 your calendars and plan to join your sisters for singing, hiking, crafts, study and togetherness.

Are you interested in helping plan the August Women's Retreat? We will meet on Thursday, May 5 at 6:45 p.m. in the library to discuss themes for retreat. We are looking for a few good helpers with logistics, crafts, activities, music, program ideas, etc. Contact Ophelia Magnusen Valley-Ogunru at opiemagz@gmail.com or Lauren Kingsland, Laurenkingsland@gmail.com.

FOR YOUTH

Youth Sunday



Ian Shaer

Thank you to the members of Ascension's Youth Group who led four of our six Sunday services on April 10. It was done respectfully and well and with a real sense of joy. Special acknowledgement of course goes to Trevor and Angie Hight Walker, the group's advisors, and to the preachers of the day: seniors Jackson Douglas and Ian Shaer. Many of the youth served at multiple services, and served in all the major leadership roles. They are truly as much the Church of Today as they are the Church of Tomorrow!



Jackson Douglas

Peace, (The Rev.) Randy Lord-Wilkinson, Rector

Work Camp 2016

Sign Up Now!
Saturday, July 16- Friday, July 22

Where: Philadelphia City Camp/Episcopal Mission Center. episcopalmissioncenter.org/summer-break.html
Cost: \$350

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.

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.

During our May 8 Youth Group, right after our meal, the rector will meet with youth and adults interested in going.

Finally, we are looking for donations to help offset the cost of youth-in-need and chaperones. Please consider a tax deductible donation and look out for Work Camp fund raisers!

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.

May 12 Ascension vs. Emory Grove at Nike Field
May 16 Ascension vs. Journeys Crossing at Field TBD
May 23 Ascension v. Epworth UMC 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.

Movie Night, Friday, May 6



Everyone is welcome to meet up in the Undercroft Commons on Friday, May 6 at 6:00 p.m. to watch the first Spider-Man (rated PG-13). From Amazon: "Average teenager Peter Parker is transformed into an extraordinary super hero after he is accidentally bitten by a radioactive spider. When his beloved uncle is savagely murdered during a robbery, young Peter vows to use his powers to avenge his death. Deeming himself "Spider-Man," he sets about ridding the streets of crime, bringing him into conflict with malevolent super-villain 'Green Goblin.'"

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, May 5. We need 10 confirmations to make Movie Night happen... Sign up here: <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/70A0A4CABA82DA75-seespiderman>

Music Minister Jerrold Tidwell in Concert

Our minister of music, Jerrold, will be conducting "Carmina Burana" with the Choral Arts Society of Frederick Saturday, April 30 at 3:00 p.m. The concert will be held at Frederick Community College's Jack B. Kussmaul Theater.

Tickets are available ahead through www.casof.org/WB for \$15 or at the door for \$18.

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.



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.

All God's Children Talk About Race

“The end is reconciliation; the end is redemption; the end is the creation of the beloved community.”

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., December 3, 1956

To give voice to the legacy of pain surrounding our shared heritage of racism, we are reading Prayers of the People May 1, 2016, at the 9:00 a.m. and 11:15 a.m. services. These prayers are the fruit of our Lenten series on race: All God's Children Talk About Race. As a community of lovers of Jesus, adults and youth, we joined in four interactive workshops to develop a shared vocabulary, to examine anxieties and hopes about race and to build a foundation for making a difference in the wider world. We anchored our discussions in personal experience and current events and in Martin Luther King, Jr.'s call for a Beloved Community. Out of the workshop on Systemic Racism came prayers we hope will make a difference in the world by publicly confessing to God our failures and bringing to God our hopes for reconciliation and justice. May we find Grace here.

We hope to continue the conversation. If you are interested talking about Racism on a regular basis, please let Randy or me know.

- Diana V Gustafson, Seminarian - Dmorgan1@vts.edu

Keep Us Informed



If you have a new email, phone number and/or address - please let the office know. You may email office@ascensionmd.org, leave the information in the basket on the table by the office, or call 301.948.0122.

Lost and Found



There is a box for lost and found items on top of the coat rack in the hallway outside the work room. If you think you may have left something at church, please check the box. It is starting to fill up. Thank you!

This Years' Rice Bowl

The Lenten Rice Bowl Offering has been an Ascension tradition since the 1980's. This year we chose Episcopal Relief and Development as well as Refugees Welcome Here to receive the offering. A total of \$2,937.32 was collected. Thank you for all of your donations.

Outreach Retreat—FEED OUR SHEEP!

All are invited to a Saturday morning Ascension Outreach Retreat on June 4th, to be held at the church from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Our purpose is to reflect on our dreams for Ascension and for our community. 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 dreams for Ascension, and what you'd like to do with them! Remember:

Christ has no body now but yours. No hands, no feet on earth but yours. Yours are the eyes through which he looks compassion on this world. Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good. Yours are the hands through which he blesses all the world. Yours are the hands, yours are the feet, yours are the eyes, you are his body. Christ has no body now on Earth but yours. - *Attributed to Saint Teresa of Ávila*

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.

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

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, May 15.



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

VESTRY DIGEST

Vestry Digest, March 2016

The Meeting was held on April 8, 2016

Attendance: Randy Lord-Wilkinson, Enid Cole, Betsy Hasegawa, Rose Buck, Janet King, Avin Lalmansingh, Denise Lionetti, Gary McLaughlin, Zadinga Zulu Ogada, John Pruessner, Paul Whitmore.

Old Business

Photo Directory. A Photo Directory is being planned for 2016; Sue Snay will chair this project. Photos will be taken in mid-May, and sign-ups are available on-line. A laptop and assistance will be available after each service, beginning April 24.

Parish Life chair and committee recruitment. Betsy and Lauren Kingsland prepared a list of expected dates of service throughout the year (2016-7) that a Parish Life event may be expected, the purpose being to recruit a team of volunteers to cover these events, and any others events as they occur.

Volunteers will be invited to the April 24 vestry meeting to discuss their role and what they need from the Vestry.

Pledger "Thank You!" luncheon (April 10). As leaders of this event, Rose and Avin were congratulated on the great job they did in contracting a caterer, organizing a team, and implementing the entire function. 62 people signed up.

Solar Power proposal. Bids have been solicited and are being reviewed. So far, the prevailing thought is to use a solar farm instead of panels on Ascension property; using the farm is less expensive as transmission costs are not believed to be significant. Randy expressed a strong belief that solar power represents good stewardship of creation that is an important Judeo Christian value.

New Business

HVAC proposal. Ascension facilities-lead Ted Bedell was unable to attend this meeting. He has solicited and received bids on replacing our HVAC system. He recommended Tri-State Home Services to replace our units. No action was taken on their proposal at this time.

New Sound System in the nave. Cardinal Sound and Communications loaned Ascension samples of speakers and microphones to test; Enid was there at installa-

tion and reported excellent results. Gary moved, John seconded, and all voted to purchase this system contingent on a successful one-week trial with funds specifically set aside for worship-space improvements.

"Safeguarding God's Children" at Ascension. Ascension will be a host-site for this Diocesan-required training on a Saturday morning in May. A volunteer from Ascension will be needed to organize things on site.

Open Mic

Cottage-meeting results. Betsy reported a summary of comments and conclusions of participants in the Cottage Meetings convened for discussion of proposed renovations for the main Ascension building.

A clear consensus on priorities emerged, the top three of which were: 1) lowering the chancel for an accessible worship space; improving sound in the nave; and improving the lighting in the nave and narthex area. Discussion took place on how and when to share this with the congregation.

Vestry Liaison assignments. Due to the late hour, this task was postponed until April 24.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Betsy Hasegawa, Jr Warden

In Our Thoughts and Prayers



We Give Thanks for the Baptisms of:

*Charlotte Mary Doss,
daughter of Kate and Brian Doss.*

*Holden Beckman McGuirk,
son of Rachel Robbins, and Kevin McGuirk.*

We Give Thanks for the Lives of:

Rafael Marchante, who died on April 10.

CURRENT FINANCIAL STATUS

Financial Update, March 2016

Through the first quarter of 2016, we continue to address implementing the budget adopted for year based on the income and expenses figures currently projected. As noted in previous reports and during Ascension's annual parish meeting in March, doing so will require addressing the structural deficit between income and expenses, and how best to address Ascension's needs going forward.

March Financial Figures

March income figures tracked slightly lower than we projected, while expenses tracked at or below expectations with the exception of expenses for major program areas, which were slightly higher.

- Total income for March was \$38,967. We received \$5,235 in Plate receipts and \$28,485 in Pledge income. Both numbers were lower than expected. However, year to date, we are just \$2,904 behind in Plate and are ahead of what we expected to this point in Pledge Income. Rental income was \$4,681, which was more than planned.
- For March, our total expenses were \$40,453. Our expenses were much lower in March in part because we had budgeted for three pay periods during the month, which happens twice each year. Our expenses for Facilities was also significantly under budget, in part because of a pre-payment for cleaning expenses credited to this expense area. The only category in which we were significantly over budget was for program support, reflecting the timing of costs for music expenses.
- Based on March income and expenses, we had negative net income of \$1,486 for the month. Year to date, we have income of \$114,283, and expenses of \$145,516, for a total deficit to date of \$31,233.

Finally, the balance in the Endowment Fund was \$456,842 as of March 31, including \$153,827 being held in the cash portion of the Fund. The balance in the Capital Improvements & Building Repairs fund is at \$10,835.

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



Dear Ms. Sekasi and Ascension Members,

Your dedication to providing meals for our community's most vulnerable neighbors is truly exemplary.

We thank you for the instrumental role you play in supporting our clients through your gift of more than 500 meals in 2015.

I truly appreciate your inclusion in our network of more than 4,000 generous volunteers who collectively donated over 101,000 meals last year for the clients at our Home Builders care Assessment Center men's emergency shelter. Your generosity enables us to maximize our limited financial resources for other client needs.

Thank you for your partnership and dedication to fulfilling our vision to build a community where everyone has a safe, stable, and affordable place to call home.

Sincerely,

Susie Sinclair-Smith Executive Director, Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless

WORSHIP

Pentecost Readers Needed



The Day of Pentecost is drawing near! I'd like to invite those of you who can read in another language to let me know if you can read a verse of the Gospel on Sunday, May 15, at either the 9:00 or 11:15 a.m. service. Please email Randy at ral@ascensionmd.org.



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May 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

Parish Staff

Rector	Randy Lord-Wilkinson
Spanish Language Missioner	Javier García Ocampo
Minister of Music	Jerrold Tidwell
Seminarians	Kate Siberine
	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