



# The Ascendant

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

January 2019

## Winter Weather Policy



At Ascension, we always TRY to have church even when the weather is bad. We realize that travelling may be very difficult for some, so please make the best decision for you and your family about Sunday church attendance. Even if we have Sunday services during inclement weather, we may cancel all other activities, such as Christian Formation for Children, Youth and Adults. Volunteer leaders, likewise, should use personal judgment about the safety of their travel that day. Cancellations will be announced by way of e-mail and on the outgoing message line at 301.948.0122.

As a rule, we will follow Montgomery County Public Schools for closing and cancellation decisions. If there is a delayed opening our morning activities are cancelled. If schools are closed, morning and afternoon activities are cancelled. In this event, evening activities still may be scheduled, so check in with the committee chair or call the outgoing message line at the church to check the status of your meeting or activity.

## The Story of the Fourth Wise Man

We have heard of the Three Wise Men who went to see the Christ-child in Bethlehem, but according to a 19th century story by Henry van Dyke, there was a fourth, writes Marguerite Theophil.

In the mountains of ancient Persia, lived Artaban, whose study of the planets and the stars led him to predict the birth of the King of Kings. He sold his house and every possession and purchased a large sapphire blue as a fragment of the night sky, a flawless ruby redder than a ray of sunrise, and a lustrous pearl as pure as the peak of a snow mountain at twilight – which he intended to carry as tribute to the King. He then set out for Jerusalem where he had arranged to meet up with three other wise men, or Magi, to find the newborn.

After many weeks of difficult travel and frustrating delays, one night, he saw a man lying on the road. His haggard face, pallid skin and laboured breathing, bore the mark of the deadly fever. But, as he turned to leave, the man begged for help.

Artaban hesitated. If he lingered to minister to a dying stranger even for an hour, he could miss his three friends. But if he left now, the man would surely die. He turned to the sick man and carefully attended to him, leaving with him all that he had left of bread and wine, and his store of healing herbs.

“I have nothing to give you in return,” said the grateful man, “...only this: our prophets have decreed that the Messiah will be born in Bethlehem, not in Jerusalem. May the Lord bring you in safety to that place, because you had pity upon the sick.”

When he reached the meeting place, he received only this message: “We can delay no longer. Follow us across the desert.” Artaban backtracked to Babylon, sold the sapphire, and bought a train of camels, and provisions for the journey. He arrived at Bethlehem with his remaining ruby and pearl offerings, but it was three whole days after the three other wise men had found Mary, Joseph and Jesus, and had laid gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh at the baby’s feet.

In a little cottage, he met a woman with her son, who told him Joseph had taken his wife and child and fled secretly that very night; Herod was slaying all male children, afraid the promised ‘King’ would claim his throne. As she spoke, there was uproar in the streets as Herod’s soldiers searched each home to kill any male children they found. The terrified young mother clasped her child to her. But Artaban rushed to the doorway and held out the ruby to the soldier, who snatched it eagerly. “March on!” he commanded his men, “there is no child here.”

Artaban sighed: “Now two of my gifts are gone. I have spent for man that which was meant for God. Shall I ever be worthy to see the face of the King?”

But the woman, weeping for joy, said gently: “Because you have saved the life of my little one, may the Lord bless you and keep you and give you peace.”

Artaban wandered for 33 years in search of the little family from Bethlehem. Worn and weary, ill now, and ready to die, but still looking for the King, he had come for the last time to Jerusalem. Hearing of a great person who was to be put to death that very day, and hearing of his life and teachings, Artaban realised this was indeed his ‘King’, but as he made his way to Golgotha, hoping his priceless pearl could buy the great one’s release, he saw a troop of soldiers marching down the street, dragging a young girl in chains. “Have pity on me; save me! I am to be sold as a slave.”

The fourth wise man knew what he must do. He took the pearl from his bosom. Never had it seemed so luminous and radiant as it was now. He exchanged the girl’s freedom for the pearl. His grief at not being able to see the ‘King’ caused him to collapse, but in his half-conscious state he heard a gentle yet compelling voice: “Verily I say unto thee, inasmuch as thou hast done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, thou hast done it unto me.” His journey had ended. His treasures were accepted. The fourth Wise Man had indeed found the King.

## A Joyful Path—10:00 a.m.

The members of A Joyful Path are making discoveries about Vietnamese peace activist Thich Nhat Hanh. He believed sharing his beliefs in practicing inner peace and mindfulness would bring peace to others and the world. Come join us in Room 2 during the 10 a.m. service.

**A Joyful Path—12:00 p.m.** Escuela Dominical Para Nin@s. The members of A Joyful Path will be learning how to concentrate our energy. We will use memory games and our story of the week “Sam digs a well.” Come join us in Room 2 during the 12noon service.

## Wednesday Morning Book Group

Ascension’s book group is discussing the book, “Sapiens: A Brief History of Humanity”, by Yuval Noah Harari. This book explores the ways in which biology and history have defined us and enhanced our understanding of what it means to be “human”. We meet weekly at 10:00 a.m. in Ascension’s library on Wednesdays. All people are invited to participate.

## Yoga Class

Yoga classes are offered on Thursdays at 10:00 AM in Room 6, 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.

## Tai Chi Class

Tai Chi class is at 4:00 p.m. on Thursday afternoons in the Chapel; a good time of peace and balance in a lovely place. Please come and join us. Tai Chi will be cancelled any Thursday that schools are closed for bad weather this winter. Contact Claire Rosser at 301.275.0617 or Cjrosser@aol.com if you have any questions

## Spanish Class

Spanish Classes will restart after January 21st. Come and take part in Ascension’s Spanish Class on Mondays from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at Ascension House. You don’t need to know Spanish to come, because we get together to learn and/or practice. For more information, contact Fr. Javier at ocampoj@ascensionmd.org.

## Godly Play

This is a Montessori-based method, presenting the stories of the Bible within a sacred space. Children experience these stories, wonder about them and then are allowed open-ended opportunities, usually with art supplies, to explore the stories. Godly Play classes meet downstairs in Room 6.

## Servant Keeper—We see the Change

Thank you for updating your information and becoming familiar with Ascension’s database, Servant Keeper. We can see the changes you’ve made to your addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses; we can also see that some of you have uploaded pictures of yourselves. This is amazing. Let me encourage you to continue to spread the word to others on how easy it is to get into the database and navigate it. I’m sure you’ve discovered how to see your contributions and print statements as needed. I hope you have found this to be a valuable tool and continue finding yourself entering the portal. If you have not had the opportunity to log into Servant Keeper or are having difficulties logging in, please let me know. Here is the link again:

<https://servantkeeper.com/member-portal/ECOTA/registration/email>

If I can be of any assistance, please feel free to contact me at office@ascensionmd.org or stop by the office.

Lin Keene

## Continuing the Collection of Items for ComfortCases

The inspiring sermon in September by Robert Scheer, founder of ComfortCases, has prompted many congregants to ask what more we can do to help this local non-profit organization bring dignity and hope to youth entering foster care. We will continue to have a bin in the narthex for collecting additional travel-sized toiletry items. Further information on ways to help the organization—from donating pajamas to helping pack comfort cases—can be found at [www.comfortcases.org](http://www.comfortcases.org). The organization is housed at 15825 Shady Grove Road, Suite 60, Rockville, MD 20850; phone: 202-253-0402.

Our Choir is Recruiting New Members!

## Our Choir is Recruiting New Members!

A new and exciting musical opportunity awaits you! The Ascension Choir is currently recruiting new members. Singers of all ages, abilities, and voice parts are welcome to participate. If you’re interested, come visit our weekly choir rehearsals on Thursday evenings at 7:30 pm in the Choir Room- no audition required and no strings attached.

We’d love to see you there!

Questions? Contact Andrew Kullberg, [music@ascensionmd.org](mailto:music@ascensionmd.org)

## Coffee Supplies

During one of my Colleague Group meetings, I shared with the others the success of our coffee hour at Ascension. We have had an average of 50 to 60 people per Sunday. In light of the popularity of the coffee hour, I am asking people to volunteer to bring coffee cups, dessert plates, and cream for coffee. Please bring your donation on Sunday or during the week during office hours.

Thank you! Padre Javier

## Three Kings Day (Día de los Reyes) is January 6th

Everyone is invited for this special gathering after the 12 o'clock service on January 6th. Traditional treats will be served including the King's cake which contains tiny figures of the baby Jesus. Tradition says that anyone who gets a slice with the baby Jesus inside must bring food to the next big celebration! That will be Candlemas (Dia de la Candelaria), which we will observe on Sunday, February 3rd after the 12 o'clock service.

## Baptism Day is January 13th



Are you interested in receiving the Sacrament of Baptism for yourself or for your baby or other family members young or old? Speak with Fr. Javier during coffee hour, or contact him at the office at 301-948-0122.

## Diocesan Convention

Diocesan Convention is the yearly legislative meeting presided over by the bishop and consisting of the clergy of and elected representatives of its congregations. It considers the diocesan budget and other matters regarding the mission and ministry of the diocese.

The 124th Convention will be held on January 26, 2019 at Washington National Cathedral, located at 3101 Wisconsin Ave NW, Washington, DC 20016. Information on registration and attending Convention will be available on the Diocese's website.

## Día de la Candelaria

February 2nd may be Groundhog Day in the United States, but in Mexico, there is a completely different celebration on this date. This is the religious holiday known as Día de la Candelaria (or Candlemas in English). Throughout Mexico on this date, people dress up figures of the Christ Child in special outfits and take them to the church to be blessed, and they also get together with family and friends to eat tamales, as a continuation to the festivities of Three Kings' Day on January 6. Come and join us to celebrate Dia de la Candelaria after the 12:00 p.m. services.

## Men's Shelter Lunch Program



The Men's Shelter lunch program provides bagged lunches for homeless men. Lunches are assembled in the Undercroft once a month. Generous Ascension members donate the supplies. Depending on the season, we provide 40 to 80 lunches each month. The next program is January 20th at 9:30 a.m. Contact Edith at [esekasi@gmail.com](mailto:esekasi@gmail.com) if you would like to help.

## 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, January 26 in the church kitchen. If you have any questions, Contact him at [ocampo@ascensionmd.org](mailto:ocampo@ascensionmd.org)

## Montgomery HOSPICE

Montgomery Hospice is a nonprofit that has been serving the residents of Montgomery County for 36 years. They provide professional end-of-life care in homes, extended care facilities, and at Casey House, their acute care facility. They are looking for new volunteers. The 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](http://www.montgomeryhospice.org/volunteer)

## CONNECT WITH US ON SOCIAL MEDIA



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



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



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



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

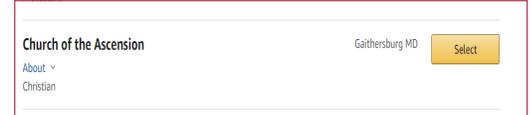
## Amazon Smile

AmazonSmile is a website operated by Amazon with the same products, prices, and shopping features as Amazon.com. The difference is that when you shop on AmazonSmile, the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price of eligible products to our church.

On your first visit to AmazonSmile (smile.amazon.com), you are prompted

- ◆ to login with your Amazon Account
- ◆ Then Search for “Church of Ascension” and select Church of Ascension from the list with Location “Gaithersburg, MD”.
- ◆ That is all. It will be connected to your account and every time you want to shop and when you go to smile.amazon.com, your selection will be there and will track your purchases.

Just make sure you select the right “Church of Ascension” at Gaithersburg MD as below:



### Ascension Adventurers to tour the Newseum

All Ascension parishioners and friends are invited to tour the Newseum in Washington, D.C. on Saturday, January 19<sup>th</sup>. The Newseum is a unique museum established by the “Freedom Forum” to champion the freedoms provided to U.S. citizens via the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. This extensive museum features numerous exhibits that especially emphasize free press, free speech, and free spirit.

Participants in our visit may explore the Newseum’s exhibits individually at their own pace, or they may explore together in small, self-organized groups.

Many of us will be travelling to the Newseum via Metro Rail. If you wish to travel with us, then please meet us at 9:30 a.m. near the information kiosk located in the Shady Grove Metro Station. Otherwise, people may travel to the Newseum however and whenever they wish. (Note that the Newseum has parking facilities that cost \$15 per day on Saturdays.)

Also, many of us will be eating lunch at 12:30 p.m. at “The Source by Wolfgang Puck.” This restaurant is located inside the Newseum. All parishioners and friends are welcome to join us for lunch.

Weather permitting, the Newseum will be open from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on January 19<sup>th</sup>.

The cost of admission depends upon whether you purchase your tickets at the door upon arrival or purchase them online beforehand. Online tickets cost 15% less than their corresponding tickets purchased at the door, as shown in the following table.

Category	Cost at door	Cost online
Adults (19 - 64)	\$24.95 + tax	\$21.21 + tax
Seniors (65+)	\$19.95 + tax	\$16.96 + tax
Youth (7 - 18)	\$14.95 + tax	\$12.71 + tax

Note that the Newseum offers a 60-minute docent-led tour at several times during the day at a cost of \$10 per person over and above the cost of admission.

For additional information about the Newseum and/or to purchase tickets online, please see [www.newseum.org](http://www.newseum.org).

Also, feel free to contact Richard Snay via email ([rssnay@aol.com](mailto:rssnay@aol.com)) or phone (301-977-5259).

Please let Richard know by Thursday, January 17<sup>th</sup>, if you plan to meet other participants at the Shady Grove Metro Station to travel to the Newseum together and/or if you plan to eat lunch with us at the Newseum.

### Directions to the Newseum via Metro Rail

Address of the Newseum: 555 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C.

Take a Red line Metro train from the Shady Grove Station to the Gallery Place Station

Take either a Yellow or Green line Metro train from the Gallery Place Station to the Archives/Navy Memorial Station

Walk southeastward along Pennsylvania Avenue toward the U.S. Capitol for one and a half blocks. The entrance to the Newseum will be on your left.

# PLEDGE UPDATE



119 Pledges for the total of \$277,300.00; 8 Facilities Reserve Fund donations for \$4,848.00, and 1 Music Ministry for \$500.00 have been received.

Thanks to those below who have pledged to the annual giving campaign:

- Abraham & Christine Kroma
- Adeline Hedd-Williams
- Adoma Baffoe
- Alexander Langley & Letina Gray
- Algernon Thomas
- Alice Padmore
- Aloysius & Frances Farrah
- Andrew Kullberg
- Anthony & Florence Chukwurah
- Arturo & Maria Rodriguez
- Avin & Anika Lalmansingh
- Barbara Mansfield
- Berenice Rodriguez
- Betsy & Guy Hasegawa
- Betty Knight
- Beverly Stennett
- Bob & Linda Waters
- Bob Wilkinson
- Brenda Gumula
- Carolyn Dowling & John Bjerke
- Ceda & Zadinga Ogada
- Charles & Rimie Sicard
- Charles Dickson
- Christopher & Susan Ahalt
- Christopher & Rachel Ruggeri
- Claire Morin
- Claire Rosser
- Clay & Kay Kolle
- Curt Lindsay
- Cynthia Perley
- Daniel & Sarah Gallagher
- David & Laurie Yelle
- David & Stephanie Mitchell
- Don & Jean Cohn
- Don & Marty Marks
- Doret Sutherland
- Emmanuel & Gloria Nwankwo
- Enid Cole
- Esther Tellu
- Fayemi & Christina Johnson
- Fe Wlotzko
- Florence Sasu
- Frances Spina
- Frank & Leslie Sanya
- Gail Unterberger & Randall Adams
- Gary S & Susan T McLaughlin
- Gayah & Semera Fahnbulleh
- Georgana & Henry Maines
- Gina Fera & Olive Rivera
- Gordon Donnelly
- Gregory & Peg Donnellon
- Howard & Margaret Holland
- Isaac & Josephine Clarke
- Ivan Flores
- Jacob & Sciou Broderick
- Jake & Ophelia Yalley-Ogunro
- James Black
- Janet King
- Javier Garcia Ocampo
- Jemima Carr
- Jennie Cargill
- Jerry & Dotty Pfadenhauer
- Jesse Velazquez & Yanira Servano
- Jim & Toni Babcock
- John & Kelly Ten Hagen
- John Pruessner
- Julio Flores & Flor Ortiz
- Kathleen Bainbridge
- Kathy Froelich
- Kevin & Lisa Blanc
- Kevin Conway
- Kirk Davies
- Kirk Fitch & Alice Benson
- Kristen Keating
- Kristin & Terry Johnsen
- Lauren Kingsland
- Liz Lennon
- Lovetta Willie
- Mardia Dennis
- Margaret Donnellon
- Margaret Mirin
- Margaret Tellu
- Marion Dossen-Rice
- Martha Lubet
- Mary Waldron
- Megan & Coiffi Didavi
- Melanie Mitchell
- Meredith Horan
- Monica Koenig Caphart
- Monty Petersen
- Nancy Carman
- Natalie Wilson
- Neil & Nathalie Scott
- Pamela Novel
- Paul Whitmore
- Peggy Ruppel
- Pete & Ellen Minderman
- Peter & Kathy Wendolkowski
- Peter & Nan Hildebrand
- Peter Maroulis
- Pflanzbaum, Bubba
- Phyllis Eddy & Joe Deffenbaugh
- Robert, Roberta & Esther Taylor
- Raymond & Doris Chin
- Richard & Sue Snay
- Ron & Jan Hauber
- Ruby King
- Russell Weber
- Ruth Anna Skowronski & Luis Pedron
- Sari Stoddard
- Shirley Allen
- Steve Heinig/Michelle Wood
- Stewart & Lavina Williams
- Swithin & Ama Kwamena-Poh
- Ted & Kelly Bedell
- Tom & Denise Lionetti
- Tom Hall
- Vergel Escobar
- Wadai Dennis
- Winsome Palmer

# VESTRY MINUTES

## December 2018

**PRESENT:** Rev. Javier Garcia Ocampo, Senior Warden Betsy Hasegawa, Junior Warden Zadinga Ogada, Rose Buck, Gordon Donnelly, Meredith Horan, Janet King, Susan McLaughlin, Luis Pedron, John Pruessner, Berenice Rodriguez and Bob Waters.

The meeting opened at 2:07 p.m. with a short prayer and check in around the table.

**CONSENT AGENDA:** John moved that the consent agenda be adopted, Gordon seconded the motion, and it passed.

### OLD BUSINESS

**Annual Giving Campaign update.** Susan reported on progress. To date, we have around 115 pledges for around \$250,000. Emails were sent this past week to those who have pledged previously and those who give regularly but don't pledge. It was noted that Susan had made it easy for vestry members to send out the emails, since she had ghost-written the content. The next go-round will be shorter and stronger emails, then texts. We all hope for continued pledging.

**Office computers.** Avin Lalmansingh, church treasurer, had researched our needs and the costs thereof and had sent a report to the vestry. He had worked with EDOW IT specialist Peter Turner, who made several recommendations. Instead of replacing our rickety server, Peter would like to see us use the cloud. John volunteered to contact Peter and/or his assistant John White and work with him. Susan asked that costs be clearly outlined, and that details be fully understood; more information is needed, including the source of funding for this effort.

**Emergency lighting.** Ark Inc. had submitted a proposal to replace/update our emergency lights. Some have burned out; having operational emergency lights is a legal requirement. Gordon moved that we approve Ark's proposal to spend \$1,467 for emergency lighting, using funds from the facilities budget and/or FRF funds. The motion was seconded by Janet and passed.

**2019 Vestry.** The vestry continued the process of discerning candidates for the next vestry.

### NEW BUSINESS

**\$47K tax reimbursement.** Ascension received a windfall from the Baden trust of over \$47,000. The vestry is responsible for deciding what to use it for; Javier strongly recommended that we save a significant amount of it for emergencies, and that anything to be spent be clearly defined. The immediate question was – where should the money be put. After discussion, Luis moved that the vestry delay a decision on what to do with the money, and that it be placed in a savings account for now. The motion was

seconded by John and was passed.

**Columbarium report.** Gordon and John briefed the vestry on columbarium activity; there has been an uptick in use recently, as well as a recent in-ground interment in the garden area. Several of the St Barnabas congregation are interested, also. The weather recently has caused problems in the niches. The columbarium should in the future be scheduled for annual maintenance, maybe under the aegis of the Facilities committee. John and Gordon have themselves been trying to maintain it to date.

**Christmas services and Epiphany pageant.** The schedule of services for Christmas Eve and Christmas day has been published. The Epiphany pageant will be on Sunday, January 6 – the afternoon of the next vestry meeting. The vestry agreed to hold the meeting instead on Wednesday, January 9 at 7pm.

**Matthew Watson Eagle Scout project.** This discussion was deferred to a future meeting.

### OPEN MIC

**Janet** reminded everyone that our next One-Ascension Sunday is on December 30. The theme will be a New Year's celebration, with party hats, blowers, balloons, etc. The main course is chili, in many varieties. Sign up slips were put in the bulletins for side dishes and desserts. There will be a children's table with crayons and other items. Janet and her committee plan to have an easel set up where everyone can write their wishes for 2019.

**Javier** relayed that Fr. Robert from the diocese will lead the traditional new-vestry retreat one week after the election. His only availability is Friday 3/15 and Saturday 3/16. Therefore, the annual meeting and election will take place on Sunday 3/10.

**Betsy** closed the meeting by thanking the clerk, now retiring, for her years of dedicated service.

**ADJOURNMENT:** At 4:47 Meredith moved that the meeting be adjourned. Rose seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Sari Stoddard  
Clerk of the Vestry

# CURRENT FINANCIAL STATUS

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## Parish Finances

### **Budget Development and Implementation.**

We are in the process of closing out 2018 finances and drafting a set of scenarios for the 2019 budget based on the pledge campaign results. Below are the November 2018 financials.

### **November Financials**

Total income for November was \$89,531 which was significantly higher than expected. Ascension received \$2,700 in Plate receipts, \$29,264 in Pledge income, \$3,928 in Building Use Donations, and \$53,639 in Miscellaneous Unrestricted Income. Income categories were in range with observed figures over the course of the year, except for Miscellaneous Unrestricted Income which includes unanticipated Trust Income of \$53,511.48 for November.

Total expenses for November were \$30,707. All expense categories were below the budgeted amounts. Our monthly projected Diocesan Pledge of \$ 2,214 continues to be paid in full.

Taken together, we had net positive income of \$54,954 based on income and expense figures just described and taking into account our Church's November mortgage payment.

The Treasurer's Report shows that the balance in the Endowment Fund is at \$304, 070. Our Unrestricted Cash Reserves is at \$122, 274. The Facilities Reserve Fund is at \$39, 300. Other fund categories can be found on the Treasurer's Report.



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*er by and for Members and Friends of Church of the Ascension*

**December 2019**

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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*

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**Contact Us**

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

**Parish Staff**

Priest in Charge  
Pastoral Associate  
Deacon  
Minister of Music  
Parish Administrator  
Communications

Javier Garcia Ocampo  
Nan Hildebrand  
Eugene Wright  
Andrew Kullberg  
Lin Keene  
Jesse Velazquez

**Sunday Services**

8:00 a.m. – Holy Eucharist  
10:00 a.m. – Holy Eucharist  
12:00 p.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.