



The Ascendant

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

April 2019

Midweek Eucharistic Service

During Lent, we will have a Holy Eucharist in the Chapel every Wednesday at 7:00 PM. It would be a Contemplative Eucharist featuring alternative Eucharistic prayers, Taizé music and from a variety of sources. During these services we will have conversations about some of the important and famous women in the Bible. If you have questions feel free to contact Padre Javier at frjavier@ascensionmd.org

Holy Week and Easter at Ascension

Palm Sunday 14

8:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist and Blessing of the Palms—Main Church

10:00 a.m. Liturgy of the Palms and Eucharist—Entrance to High School

12:00 p.m. Liturgy of the Palms and Eucharist—Entrance to High School

Maundy Thursday April 18

7:30 p.m. Holy Eucharist with Foot Washing and Stripping of the Altar—Main Church

Good Friday April 19

12:00 p.m. “Stations to Go” - Main Church and Various Locations in Old Towne Gaithersburg 7:30 p.m. Prayer Book Liturgy—Main Church

The Great Vigil of Easter April 20

8:00 p.m. Easter Vigil—Main Church

Easter April 21

8:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist—Main Church

10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist—Main Church followed by an Easter Egg Hunt

12:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist—Main Church

Every Sunday just before the Prayer following Communion, the celebrant invites the Eucharistic Visitor for the week to the altar to receive the Communion Kit. The whole church says a prayer for sending forth the Eucharistic Visitor to the sick. The prayer follows:

Celebrant: We send you forth bearing these holy gifts that those whom you visit may share with us in the communion of Christ’s body and blood.

People: We who are many are one body because we all share one bread and one cup.

The Communion kit is stocked with the wine and the bread that were consecrated that Sunday. When the Eucharistic Visitor goes out to the sick parishioner, they carry the kit, the Sunday service bulletin, the church news and calendar of event, the Sunday readings and prayers and a very brief summary of the sermon. If you would like to check out the home service for the sick, open your Book of Common Prayer to page 453-461.

The history of the church’s care for the sick, the dying and those who mourn is biblically based and rests solidly on the healing ministry of Jesus and his sending of his disciples out to preach and to heal. Check out these scriptural citations: 2 Corinthians 1:3-5, Psalm 91, Luke 17:11-19, James 5:14-6, Psalm 23, Mark 6:7,12-13, I John 5:13-15, Psalm 145:14-22, John 6:47-51. These passages will be helpful in clarifying our imperative to care for the sick and dying. Turn to them in a time of personal need as well.

We visit the sick not only as a Gospel imperative, but as a sign that the sick who are physically separated from the congregation by illness are not truly separated from us in reality. Thus, the shared bread and wine from the most recent service, the shared time with a member of the congregation and the shared news from the life of the congregation are ways to demonstrate that the sick are not forgotten by us. With these actions, we demonstrate that we are “one body because we all share on bread and one cup.”

The following scriptures form the bedrock of our “Body of Christ” theology: Romans 12:1-8 and I Corinthians 12:12-27. Paul’s letters are rife with reflections on the Body of Christ, be alert and sensitive to these texts and reflect on them with the goal of understanding how Christians are to view their membership in the church, the community and their families. The Body of Christ is an analogue to our own bodies. Every member of our physical bodies are essential to our whole physical body, therefore each member of the church is essential to the Body of Christ. We are to rejoice with those who rejoice and mourn with those who mourn. Consequently, it is important to assemble all the ways we care for the whole Body of Christ. Everything we do for church, we do for each other in Christ with faithful attendance at worship services, by volunteering for the work of the church at every level, by sharing communion with the sick, dying and grieving in their homes or care facilities by remembering and honoring the deceased by attending their funerals, by serving and by remembering and advocating for the poor and those suffering injustice. Christ weaves us together as one and receives us to be as one in his body for our own good, the good of the world and in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Rev. Nancy Hildebrand

A Joyful Path—10:00 a.m.

The 10:00 Joyful path will learn about Mildred Norman Ryder who answered Jesus's call to leave family and friends and follow him by becoming a "peace Pilgrim". She walked across the United States several times in the 1950's, 60's and 70's teaching people about peace. For this service, all children will meet in the place of peace located in room 4 each week, and then separate by age groups.

A Joyful Path—12:00 p.m.

Escuela Dominical Para Niños. 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 the Chapel, 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

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. For the 10:00 service, all children will meet in the place of peace located in room 4 each week, and then separate by age groups.

Spanish Class

Come and take part in Ascension's Spanish Class on Mondays from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at Room 2. 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 ocampo@ascensionmd.org.

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. The organization is housed at 15825 Shady Grove Road, Suite 60, Rockville, MD 20850; phone: 202-253-0402.

Kitchen is Now Open

Some rules to follow:

- Keep all surfaces clean and clear after use.
- Do not leave any dirty dishes in the sink.
- Any food left in the fridge must have a date on in and will be thrown away after three (3) days of date. If it isn't dated it will be thrown away immediately.
- Someone with a Food Handler's certificate must be present when food is being prepared and/or served.
- Please use gloves when serving.

If you have taken the Food Handler's course, would you please give a copy of your certificate to the office to be filed, thank you

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

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

Ministerio Felicidad

Ascension members prepare lunches and send love and prayers to day laborers in the neighborhood of the church. Join Javier at 6:00 a.m. on Saturday, April 27 in the church kitchen. If you have any questions, Contact him at ocampo@ascensionmd.org

12-Month Evaluation for Father Javier

It has been 12 months since Javier accepted the position of Priest-in-Charge at Ascension. Therefore, it is time for the second formal evaluation between Father Javier and the Church. This time, the Vestry will start the process by hosting a series of small meetings to review what we've been working on over the last year, progress made, and to answer your questions. Hopefully this information will help you to fill out an honest and complete evaluation for Padre Javier. The first meeting was at 9:00 a.m. on Sunday March 31. More meetings are taking place throughout April, times and locations to be announced. For Javier's evaluations, we are using a paper form that you may fill out and return to the green and gold box in the narthex. As before, they will be absolutely confidential and used to make Ascension stronger for all of us. Please participate in this important process for Ascension. Thank you. Betsy Hasegawa, Senior Warden

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 April 21 at 9:30 a.m. Contact Edith at esekasi@gmail.com if you would like to help.

Immigration Consultations

Lucelia R. Justiniano worked at several immigration law firms as a law clerk assisting clients in removal defense cases and family-based applications before the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. Lucelia interned at the Executive Office of Immigration Review in Baltimore, Maryland drafting decisions for three of the immigration judges. She also interned at the Board of Immigration Appeals in Falls Church, Virginia where she worked alongside Board Attorney Advisors in drafting Board decisions. She has been part of Ascension for a long time. She is exceptionally dedicated to giving back to the community. Now, she is offering immigration consultations every first Sunday of the month. If you have question or know anybody who would need some legal advice she will be at the Library on April 7, from 10:30 to 11:45 AM Contact Lucelia Justiniano at lucelia@jezicfirm.com or Cell phone (240)565-5590

2019 Lenten Offering (Rice Bowl Recipient)

A Lenten tradition since the tenure of Rector Harry Dalzell (1970-1980), your offering, placed in the wooden bowl in the front as you come forward for Communion, goes toward an outreach ministry. Typically, we alternate between local and domestic or international causes.

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

VESTRY MINUTES

MARCH 2019

PRESENT: The Rev. Javier Garcia Ocampo, Senior Warden Betsy Hasegawa, Junior Warden Zadinga Ogada, Gordon Donnelly, Meredith Horan, Janet King, Bob Waters, and Susan McLaughlin, Berenice Rodriguez, and Luis Pedron. Absent: Rose Buck, John Pruessner. Others in attendance: Ascension Minister of Music Andrew Kullberg.

The meeting opened at 2:08 p.m., with an opening prayer and check in around the table.

CONSENT AGENDA: Zadinga moved that the consent agenda be adopted, Bob seconded the motion, and it passed.

OLD BUSINESS

Facility Committee. Luis explained that with the completion of the roof, the office could be repaired. On Saturday, the flotsam from the roof was removed from that space in addition to the carpet being cleaned. 99% of the rust was also cleaned. The remainder would be covered by paint on Friday/over the weekend. The office should be ready for use pending some minor cleanup of debris on the desk. We need to consider replacing the carpet in the office and start considering replacing the carpet in the Sanctuary as well.

Emails from Sandy Ridge indicated they still had a heat problem. Javier changed the HVAC company from Parker Pearce to Precision HVAC. Background: Parker Pearce eventually fixed the Chapel heat visiting three weeks in a row and not completing the task while charging for each visit. They left holes in the wall when replacing the thermostats with smaller units. They could not diagnose the problem downstairs in the church. The new company, Precision HVAC, fixed the heat in Ascension House immediately. They also diagnosed the problem in the church, a box was turned off and turning it on resolved the problem. They also plugged in a cable that was the cause of heat not working downstairs. Precision HVAC works with others in the diocese. Susan asked if the company will report the other problems with the building; they will. Parker Pearce was supposed to do a similar report but did not; they were also contracted to replace the air filters on a regular basis. According to Precision, the air filters had not been changed in over a year.

Betsy recommended files on the work be kept by Lin and it is suspected that she is already doing so. Luis stated we need to ask Precision to check the AC. Gordon followed up with asking if we should get a preventive maintenance contract with Precision. Javier stated he did sign such a contract with them prior to the repair work they've already completed. This reduced the costs of their other visits. The contract is ~\$300 more than the previous contract.

Candidate Forum/Annual Meeting/Retreat. March 15th will open the Retreat at Ascension, 6:00pm in the Library for a potluck. Janet won't be available to attend. Meredith and Betsy volunteered to create a signup sheet for what to bring. On Saturday the 16th, meet at St. Luke's to begin the retreat at 8:30am. Brown bag lunches should be brought and breakfast is TBD.

Good turnouts for the 8am and 10am services during the candidate forum weekend. nly one person was present for the 12pm service (it was a snowy day). Suggestions were made including for small groups and social activities outside of church. Betsy suggested having open opportunities for people to speak to the Vestry now and then.

Contract Status. Currently waiting for St. Barnabas to return their signed contract.

Sandy Ridge: A recent version of the lease was sent on February 3rd with Ascension's view of outstanding issues. Sandy Ridge has asked to meet and they have been invited to speak at the Vestry meeting. Ascension received a written response, but no meeting confirmation. Negotiations are derailed by the heating problems. Sandy Ridge claims it has been a problem for two years. They also outlined a toilet plumbing problem. The fire marshall pointed out that fire exit signs haven't been working since the last inspection and are not yet remediated. Sandy Ridge wants a one year contract. Montgomery County will offer free preschool for three year olds and Sandy Ridge expects that will compete with them. Sandy Ridge has also expressed some problem with tables and chairs in Room 6. This is something that was agreed to years ago.

Room 6 is in Sandy Ridge's space (with the connotation that the space belongs to them and not that they are using a space that belongs to Ascension) and ask that Ascension not make it available to others during school hours. The

VESTRY MINUTES

March 2019

Vestry agreed that this is a reasonable concern.

A 5% increase in Facility Usage per year is typical. Sandy Ridge is asking for only a 2% increase. Ascension countered with 4%. Sandy Ridge doesn't want to pay for additional cleaning and paper supplies. The original contract stated additional supplies would be billed to Sandy Ridge but this has never occurred. They've asked for a reprieve for a year; Ascension has offered three months since they have not yet signed the lease (it would have been six months if they signed sooner as they only have the space until July). They want to include a clause allowing them to make repairs if Ascension doesn't make them upon request. This sparked discussion regarding why that is not acceptable.

Luis asked what the due process is without a signed agreement. Zadinga explained that until a new lease is signed the old lease is still in effect even if it is expired. Javier stated that the costs paid by Sandy Ridge approximately covers the cost of what Ascension is paying to fix things for them. Berenice said if they don't sign a new contract that we need to tell them that, without signing it, they can be asked to leave at any time. They don't have proof of liability insurance and they broke the original lease by not having it.

A discussion followed regarding their likelihood of them planning to leave at the end of the year and if we should begin looking for another group that could use the space. Susan asked if the diocese can help find potential tenants. Zadinga confirmed that they can and she has reached out for this. Luis asked if we should consider hiring a professional to advise Ascension from the perspective of a commercial realtor since this has become a rather complex situation. Betsy asked that all read the correspondence and respond to Zadinga and Berenice on their thoughts for what to do next with Sandy Ridge.

Pancake Supper and Light Breakfast for Annual Meeting. 60 people signed up to attend the Shrove Tuesday dinner. We have enough volunteers and plenty of decorations.

Regarding the annual meeting, bring enough of your food item for 12 people. Janet will become Chairman of the Parish Life Committee.

Strategic Planning Meeting with Bishop. 23rd of March NoMoCo (Northern Montgomery County) meeting will take place and every Vestry must attend. This will take place at St. Barts from 9am-2pm.

Thursday 25 April is a Strategic Plan meeting taking place at our Ascension from 6pm-9pm. All Vestry must attend.

NEW BUSINESS

Rice Bowl/Rise Against Hunger Meal Packing. Javier began by asking if we should call it the Lenten Offering vice Rice Bowl, then the history of the Rice Bowl term was provided so he would have the background on why it is the Rice Bowl. Janet explained that traditionally alternate years a local then international organization is supported. It hasn't been an international organization in many years. Will we support an international organization this year? Other charity options were explored followed by Zadinga detailing her experience with St. Francis and Rise Against Hunger and what Rise Against Hunger does. The meals go all over the world. You need 40 people, a location, and to produce 10,000 at \$.34 per meal requiring a total of \$3,400. For every 1000 meals prepared, a gong/bell is rung to mark the accomplishment. Andrew spoke highly from past experiences.

Janet motioned that, "The Lenten Rice Bowl go toward alleviating hunger." Berenice seconded and it passed unanimously.

AIM Membership. Javier asked if we want Ascension to remain a part of AIM. There is a minimum membership fee of \$1,500 and the bill will come soon. Explanations of what AIM does was given by Betsy. Their intent is political action through congregations. They pick four initiatives per year. Those Ascension members that have participated in their activities don't have a good feeling about the organization. The decision to not rejoin AIM is the recommendation of the Vestry.

VESTRY MINUTES

March 2019

Padre's 12 Month Evaluation. This began with a reminder that he also gets to evaluate the congregation. The last evaluation came from an evaluation available on the diocese website. The worship survey will go out at the end of March. Zadinga suggested having small group discussions after the services. Will there be an online survey component? Betsy shared that only 6 surveys were done online for the last evaluation. Another survey with the same questions as the Worship Survey might not go over well. Bob asked about cottage meetings. Betsy explained that to do so we would need similar questions to ask to lead such discussions. Susan asked if this time just the Vestry should evaluate Javier. Betsy explained that with this process the entire congregation needs to weigh in. Meredith reminded everyone that if we attempt to have open discussions we need to consider privacy of those respondents to ensure the openness of member responses.

OPEN MIC

Betsy shared that the Eagle Scout project has received \$600 in donations. This week he will buy shelving and begin building them next week. He hopes to be done by the end of March otherwise, by Easter. Gordon stated that we were informed everything needs to be removed from the room for it to be painted and that it will be painted on the 23rd. Where everything will be moved is in question as is if everything needs to be removed.

Meredith brought up the question of moving the organ. Betsy suggested we need more time to discuss it. Andrew said he would put together some options.

Susan volunteered to take the place as liaison to Parish Life in Janet's place.

Javier asked that everyone bring ideas of how to grow the size of the church. Luis recommended Invitation Day in which you invite someone to come with you. Bob suggested holding some events. Andrew chimed in with a suggestion to have the services shown online.

ADJOURNMENT: At 4:19 p.m., Meredith moved that the meeting be adjourned. Zadinga seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Danielle Allen
Clerk of the Vestry

CURRENT FINANCIAL STATUS



PARISH FINANCES

Budget Development and Implementation

A summary of Income and Expense figures for February 2019 is provided below.

February Financials

Total income for February was \$40,317. The Monthly Profit & Loss statement shows that Ascension received \$2,535 in Plate receipts, \$32,033 in Pledge income, \$4,248 in Building Use Donations, and \$1,501 in Miscellaneous Unrestricted Income which includes Trust Income.

Pledge contributions and Building Use Donations were higher than expected, and helped to balance out lower Miscellaneous Income and Plate contributions.

Total expenses for February were \$29,930. The Monthly Profit & Loss statement shows that most expense categories were lower than the budgeted amounts. Facilities Management was higher than expected with snow removal services, HVAC, and toilet/plumbing issues being some of the highlighted expenses within this category. The monthly projected Diocesan Pledge was increased to \$2,451 based on the 2019 budgeted Diocesan Pledge.

Taken together, we had net positive income for February of \$10,387 based on the income and expenses figures just described. Significantly lower expenses for February helped to drive up net income. The Balance Sheet shows that the Checking account balance is \$148,383. The Savings account balance is \$52,515. The Restricted Special Offering Balance sheet lists all restricted accounts, including the Endowment Fund that has increased to \$309,822 and the Facilities Reserve Fund that has decreased to \$15,626 due to Parker Pearce facility services.



The Ascendant

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

April 2019

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

Address Service Requested

*"We Represent Christ Wherever We May Be."
"Representamos a Cristo Donde Quiera Que Vayamos."*

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

Wednesday

7:00 p.m.—Holy Eucharist

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.