



The Ascendant

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

May 2019

Mother's Day Food Drive: May 12



In honor or in memory of our mothers and those who mothered us on Mother's Day, Sunday, May 12, we invite you to donate a bag of groceries to replenish the food pantry at Gaithersburg HELP. There are forms/envelopes available on the welcome desk in the narthex where you can designate your contribution in honor of your mother (she will receive a letter notifying her of your gift). For donations in memory of your mother, we will add her/their names to a list for special prayers.

Baptisms on the Day of Pentecost June 9



Are you interested in receiving the Sacrament of Baptism for yourself, 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.

Yard Sale/Car Wash Ascension Parking lot June 1

Our Annual Summer Yard Sale and Car Wash will be held on Saturday, June 01, 2019 from 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. If you have furniture or clothes that you want to donate, bring them to the office. Bring your car to be washed! We also need help. If you are available, you are welcome to join us!

Things to do during the Fifty Days of Easter

Holy Week is such an intensive period of reflection, prayer and spiritual experience of Jesus' last days and his resurrection that we have little time for anything else. Many of the normal programs for spiritual growth that the church organizes and offers during Advent and Lent are absent during the Fifty Days of Easter. Come to think of it, these types of programs are not prominent in Epiphany either. My best guess is that Epiphany and the 50 Days of Easter are effective as natural rest periods where we give ourselves the time to absorb the divine triumphs we have just celebrated and which have made us Christians. In this vein and not wanting to add to everyone's "things to do" list, I hope to offer you a few ideas that might help you apply the Easter experience in the coming weeks of Easter.

Spend a little time thinking about where Easter is needed in your personal life, especially with your families, friends, colleagues and church community. Then take the next step from your Lenten examinations to create a personal action plan to address your new awareness what needs extra attention in your life.

Think of Lent as your spring cleaning and think of Easter as your renovation time. Whatever your implementation plan is for an Easter life, always pray for a life that is more fully in the present so that gratitude and awe may become aspects of your ordinary life experience. Think of ways to tackle things left undone in your life so that you have less anxiety. Plan for more simple happiness on a daily basis. Worry less, smile more and appreciate others more. Seek Christ in yourself and see Christ in others. Pairing the grace of happiness and presence in the moment will make us more able to cope with the griefs and losses that enter our lives. Being present to what is good always will make us more courageous and enduring and help others endure.

Reading a little poetry by Mary Oliver might just fit the bill during the Fifty Days of Easter. Her nature poems train the eye to see what is beautiful and profound all around us and right under our noses. Her New and Selected Poems, Volume One is a testimony of living in the present.

God Bless You in your Renovation Time

The Rev. Nan Hildebrand

A Joyful Path—10:00 a.m.

The 10:00 Joyful Path class will learn about Mildred Norman Ryder who answered Jesus' 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 the Joyful Path class will be learning how to concentrate our energy, using memory games and our stories of the week. Come join us in Room 2 during the 12 noon service.

Wednesday Morning Book Group

Ascension's book group is discussing the book, "Enlightenment Now" by Steven Pinker. This book claims that reason, science, and humanism have brought progress in the sense that health, prosperity, safety, peace, and happiness have tended to rise worldwide. We invite you to participate in our discussions. We meet on Wednesdays at 10:00 a.m. in Ascension's library.

Yoga Class

Yoga classes are offered on Thursdays at 10:00 a.m. 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 a.m. service, all children 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, 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 contact me at office@ascensionmd.org or stop by the office. Lin Keene

...and in addition to using Servant Keeper...

2019 Church Directories are available on the table in the Narthex. Please check your information and if there is any change let the church office know so it can be updated. Thank you.

ComfortCases

There is a bin in the narthex for collecting additional travel-sized toiletry items for ComfortCases. 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.

Pentecost Day Sunday Jun 9

The Christian holiday of Pentecost commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles and other followers of Jesus Christ while they were in Jerusalem celebrating the Feast of Weeks, as described in the Acts of the Apostles. Some Christians believe this event represents the birth of the Church. We will be celebrating Pentecost on Sunday Jun 9. Remember to wear red. After the service we will meet for our coffee hour. We need Gospel Readers in different languages.

Coffee Supplies

Our coffee-and-fellowship hours after each service at Ascension have been full of good food, good drinks and good conversation, with an average of 50 to 60 people per Sunday. But with success comes need. Could you help by donating coffee cups, dessert plates, or cream for coffee? Please bring your donation on Sunday or during the week during office hours. Thank you! Padre Javier

Summer Work Camp for Youth

Summer Work Camp for Youth work camp is from July 21st to 26th in Philadelphia, PA. Transportation, food and materials are provided in the \$350 fee. Scholarships are available! We need commitments to attend ASAP!

Help Wanted!

We are accepting applications from friendly folks to serve on the Welcome Teams at the 10:00 a.m. service. We will reveal everything you need to know, and you will work with practiced parishioners who enjoy their duties. The teams serve twice in each 13-week quarter. Speak to a current Welcome Team member to be part of something that is very rewarding.

Creation Care in the Episcopal Church

The online address for Presiding Bishop Curry's Creation Care project is <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/creation-care>. There is a brief video by Bishop Curry about his vision for this project. It includes resources for expanding our awareness of and engagement with environmental issues. There is also an opportunity to pledge to greater service in environmental stewardship. There are several questions associated with the pledge. Please consider taking the pledge. If the suggested responses don't seem to fit your vision, consider using local projects as a starting point.

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 May 19 at 9:30 a.m. Contact Edith at esekasi@gmail.com if you would like to help.

Montgomery Hospice

Montgomery Hospice is a nonprofit that has been serving the residents of Montgomery County for 36 years. It provides professional end-of-life care in homes, extended care facilities, and at Casey House, its 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

Ascension T-shirts

If you are interested in getting an Ascension T-shirt, please call or email Berenice at 249-281-3736 or berenice.rodriguez.84@gmail.com. T-shirts are \$10.

Immigration Consultations

Lucelia R. Justiniano has 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 every month. If you have questions or know anybody who needs legal advice she will be at the church library on Sunday, May 5, from 10:30 to 11:45 a.m. Contact Lucelia Justiniano at lucelia@jezicfirm.com or cell phone 240-565-5590.

Could You Tutor Someone in English?

The Literacy Council of Montgomery County is in need of English tutors to help adult learners gain a better understanding of the English language and improve their skills in reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Volunteers are asked to commit to two hours of tutoring each week and should plan on two hours of preparation each week as well. No experience is necessary. For more information, visit <http://www.literacycouncilmcmd.org/>.

Ascension's Adventurers to Visit Peony Field

All parishioners and friends are invited to join us on Saturday, May 18th, in visiting the Peony Field located in Seneca Creek State Park.

The building that now houses Gaithersburg's City Hall was once the home of Edward Schwartz who, in 1913, established a famous peony garden on five acres of land that stretched from the railway station to Hutton Street. The "World Famous Schwartz Peony Garden" boasted 410 varieties of peonies from all over the world. Each spring this garden was a tourist attraction visited by admirers, including President Woodrow Wilson. After the City of Gaithersburg bought the Schwartz house in the 1940s, many of the peonies were transplanted to a property on Clopper Road, which today is part of Seneca Creek State Park.

Richard Snay and others will be visiting the Peony Field from 11:00 to 11:45 am. All parishioners and friends are invited to join us for all or part of this time. Admission to Seneca Creek State Park is \$3.00 per person. All parishioners and friends, whether or not they visit Peony Field, are also invited to join us for lunch at noon at the Dogfish Head Ale House.

For more information about Peony Field, see www.waymaking.com/waymarks/WM6CGJ_Peony_Field_Seneca_Creek_State_Park_Gaithersburg_MD

For more information about the restaurant, see <https://dogfishalehouse.com>

Also, feel free to contact Richard (email: rssnay@aol.com ; tel: 301-977-5259).

Please let Richard know by Thursday, May 16th, if you plan to eat lunch with us, so that he may make appropriate reservations.

Directions to Peony Field in Seneca Creek State Park

Address of Seneca Creek State Park: 11950 Clopper Road, Gaithersburg, MD

- From the intersection of Clopper Road (Route 117) and Quince Orchard Blvd (Route 124), drive northwestward along Clopper Road for approximately 1.5 miles.
- Then turn left onto Seneca Creek Road to enter the Park
- After passing through the toll gate, turn left at the first stop sign
- Drive less than 100 yards and Peony Field will be on your right
- You may park your car in the field located on your left (directly opposite to Peony Field).

Directions from Peony Field to Dogfish Head Ale House

Address of Dogfish Head Ale House: 800 West Diamond Avenue, Gaithersburg, MD

- From Peony Field return to Clopper Road
- After turning right on Clopper Road, drive a little past Quince Orchard Blvd (Clopper Road now becomes West Diamond Avenue)
- Then turn left onto Bureau Drive
- The entrance to the Ale House's parking lot will be immediately on your right.

VESTRY MINUTES APRIL 2019

PRESENT: The Rev. Javier Garcia Ocampo, Senior Warden Betsy Hasegawa, Junior Warden Zadinga Ogada, Gordon Donnelly, Meredith Horan, Susan McLaughlin, Berenice Rodriguez, Luis Pedron, James Black, and Kristen Keating. **Absent:** Wadai Dennis.

The meeting opened at 2:11 p.m., with a prayer shared by email and check in around the table.

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

OLD BUSINESS

Facility Committee. Waiting on estimates for the Chapel as Ted is out of the country. The A/C broke last summer. Javier mentioned Precision is coming for Spring clean-up and will be asked to check the A/C. Gordon continued, stating the problem with the Chapel is humidity that required dehumidifiers to be run and emptied. Hymnals and prayer books had mold as a result. Now that it is being used, it needs to be addressed ASAP. The dehumidifiers haven't required emptying recently. Susan explained that Gary has inspected and fixed all of the chairs in the Chapel. There may actually be too many chairs the Chapel. A file cabinet is in the Chapel as well and no one knows whose it is. Gary also went to fix the bathroom door, which has been stuck, but didn't want to disturb the activities of the 7th Day Adventists who were using the Chapel at the time. He intends to return.

Vestry Elections/Next Annual Meeting Date. Questions arose from the congregation about the methodology of elections. People asked why did it change to the current process. Briefly rehashed that the old process created hurt feelings and other problems that resulted in people leaving the church back when anyone could nominate themselves or another. St. Timothy's was consulted for their method. They allow people to put forward names then they all answer a set of questions. The nomination committee accepts the names then all vote on those candidates.

VESTRY MINUTES

April 2019

We need to create a committee/work group and develop more specific questions for the candidate forum. Gordon reminded the group that the bylaws need to be changed accordingly. They currently say we have a nominating committee. We also need to move toward proper parliamentary procedure. We accept our shortcomings and commit to improving. General discussion followed about how and why the meeting went as it did and that everyone was glad people were engaged. The Vestry will be better prepared next time. The bylaws were shared among the Vestry. Everyone should read them and be prepared to discuss at the next meeting.

Kristen asked what effect the meeting timing has on the delegates. Should we consider moving the annual meeting to a different date so delegates know who they are during that year? Betsy asked for Kristen's opinion on the term length as she's been a delegate; the bylaws say it's a 2 year term. Kristen explained that it takes about 3 years to understand the processes. It would also look strange for someone to attend the Regional meeting but not the Annual Meeting. Ascension never had the budget ready in time to have themselves mentioned at the meeting for their donation. Moving up Ascension's Annual Meeting would help. The new Finance Committee will work through the year to have the budget ready on time. People from the diocese will come give a workshop on how to run the annual campaign. There are five people on the Finance Committee with Avin as the Chair and Betsy as the Vestry Liaison. The first meeting was 25 March and the next is 24 April. The intent is to keep the annual giving campaign in mind all year and get volunteers to help starting 1 September and for the subsequent few months.

April 25 Meeting at Ascension: NoMoCo Parishes. All Vestry members will attend. Javier needs the Vestry to help welcome everyone to Ascension. The details regarding food for the meeting had not been provided yet. A call is scheduled with the Bishop that will solidify the plan. Spanish language service members have the option for simultaneous translation of the proceedings if there will be more than five people that would use the translator. [At this time it was asked if such translation services could be made available during the 1A services; no further discussion took place as other business was being attended to.] Those Vestry who attend the Spanish Language service have already and will again reach out to those in attendance to ensure they are aware of the translator. All congregations within Northern Montgomery County are invited to attend; this was expanded from just the one person per church that was initially invited then just the Vestry. Susan suggested each member of the Vestry directly invite someone to attend and encourage them to come. The meeting continues to be announced in the bulletin.

The meeting will take place in the undercroft. Sandy Ridge will be notified that setup will take place down there.

Contracts Update/Shared Spaces Agreement. Sandy Ridge has signed their contract and paid. They also obtained proof of insurance; it shows that it started in April 2019. Now we are working on an agreement with Dr. Tina. A 5% increase has been included in her contract. Berenice explained that without a contract she is providing a donation that was seemingly optional. Berenice has reached out to set a meeting with her but hasn't yet received a response to the email requesting the meeting. Berenice went on to explain there is no storage space for her if she asks for it. Regarding her clients, they are supposed to ring the Doctor for her to them in at that time. It is included in the contract that she can't provide the key code to anyone. [This brought up security concerns and current practices.] In exchange for building use Ascension currently receives monetary support. She is also supposed to provide some ministerial services, preaching once a year, and pastoral care. Javier can provide referrals to her if members need more assistance than he is trained to provide.

A contract to be used with 12 Step Programs is in progress as well. As Junior Warden, Zadinga will have regular meetings with Sandy Ridge, with the first meeting coming up shortly. Betsy recommended that they get Lin invited or at least keep her in the loop going forward. Some groups that use the church facilities provide a small donation but most do not. Not everyone covers even their hygiene usage. While it has been determined that this is not important, helping is. The bigger problem is available storage.

NEW BUSINESS

Unstuck Church. Javier asked if anyone has read the book. What followed were questions regarding what exactly the Vestry should be doing at the site, a quiz only, or more? Berenice re-sent the link to everyone. Javier asked that everyone take the quiz before the 25th and to bring the results to that meeting and the next Vestry meeting. Email him with confirmation once the task is complete. Everyone can share the book.

VESTRY MINUTES

April 2019

Liaison Assignments. Liaisons were assigned or re-confirmed for each committee. The liaison's responsibility is to ask how the vestry can help the committee. An explanation was provided for what Christian Formation for Adults is.

Committees	Vestry Liaison	Chairperson
Christian Formation for Children	Gordon Donnelly	Megan Didavi
Christian Formation for Youth	TBD	Angie Hight-Walker
Facilities	Luis Pedron	Ted Bedell
Operations and Finance/Stewardship	Betsy Hasegawa	Avin Lalmansingh
Parish Life	Susan McLaughlin	Janet King
Pastoral Care	Zadinga Ogada	Javier Ocampo & Nan Hildebrand
Personnel	Wadai Dennis	Rose Buck
Worship	Meredith Horan	Gary McLaughlin & Curt Lindsay
Outreach	Kristen Keating	TBD
Christian Formation for Adults	James Black	TBD
Health and Wellness	Berenice Rodriguez	Danielle Allen

OPEN MIC

Meredith provided some suggestions to continue the Wednesday services. She spoke highly of a ½ day session on music and connecting with Ana Hernandez. The Bishop said she would support. We would need a promise of 5 people per church with a cost of \$15-\$20 per person. We could get the instructor while she's visiting in DC.

Berenice shared that the downstairs Atrium area would be cleaned. Coffee pots need to be removed or at least moved out of the reach of children. Evelyn asked that the things by the stairs be moved for ADA reasons. There's not enough room for people to move through that space.

Kristen attended Security at Your Worship Center Workshop on how to get money for improvements and was similar to last year's Active Shooter training. Recommendations included publishing evacuation routes. Our plan for medical emergencies is given to the Welcome Team.

Luis spoke further about the Wednesday services. There was high praise for the series and people would like such mid-week worship opportunities to continue if possible. Peg is an option to lead such services. Berenice suggested short cycles, much like Lent's several weeks long series. Perhaps include different types of services that would focus on or include music, dance, etc. This will be discussed with the Worship Committee.

Javier reminded everyone of their homework and asked what inputs they had for this week. Berenice suggested sending postcards to people in the directory that haven't attended in a while. Betsy asked about a bulk mailer to the local community. Berenice said she would keep one of the cards she's been receiving from churches near her; James passed

around one he brought. Have we considered Facebook ads or other Social Media advertisement (ownership of our address on Google, or Yelp site, etc.)? Another banner that faces people on the Southbound side of 355 could be helpful. Perhaps reaching out to High School cars that go by the church each day.

Everyone needs to email Javier letting him know how many people you've contacted saying thank you for attending services.

Javier also brought up the possible need for security cameras for the building. Mary Magdalene had a recent problem. Recommendations for Nest/Ring for buzzing and screening people into the building were offered. Possibly electric door locks that allow different codes for different people so you know who entered. The Facilities Committee will look into it. Meredith wanted to point out that the landscaping has been noticed and that it looks wonderful. It's nice to see what hard work Fredy has put into maintaining the grounds. She suggested we send him a thank you note. Javier did thank him. Meredith went on to motion as follows: "As a Vestry, can we please send a thank you note to Fredy for his landscape work?" Kristen seconded and it passed unanimously. Betsy will write the note if everyone wants to then sign it. Zadinga suggested we ask him to lead the congregation on another beautification campaign.

ADJOURNMENT: At 4:57 p.m., the meeting ended with a closing prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Danielle Allen
Clerk of the Vestry

CURRENT FINANCIAL STATUS



PARISH FINANCES

Budget Development and Implementation

The newly formed Stewardship committee met on April 24th, 2019 to review the church financials. A summary of Income and Expense figures for March 2019 is provided below.

March Financials

Total revenue for March was \$35,613. The Monthly Profit & Loss statement shows that Ascension received \$3,333 in Plate receipts, \$27,358 in Pledge income, \$4,394 in Building Use Donations, and \$528 in Miscellaneous Unrestricted Income which includes Trust Income.

Total expenses for March were \$34,688. The Monthly Profit & Loss statement shows that most expense categories were lower than the budgeted amounts. The monthly projected Diocesan Pledge will be paid upon receipt of Diocesan invoice next month. Utilities were higher than expected due to Pepco bills.

Taken together, we had net positive revenue for March of \$926 based on the revenue and expenses figures just described. The Balance Sheet shows that the checking account balance is \$142,232. The savings account balance is \$52,516.

The Restricted Special Offering balance sheet lists all restricted accounts, including the Endowment Fund that has increased to \$316,137 and the Facilities Reserve Fund has decreased to \$7,014 due to HVAC Precision Services totaling \$9,000.



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May 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

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.