



THE PARISH PAPER

A PUBLICATION OF CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION

BACK TO CHURCH EDITION

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FAQ: WHAT IS THE TIMELINE FOR THE SEARCH FOR THE NEW RECTOR?

The vestry held listening sessions in the month of February, and one Sunday each in June and July. In the next several Parish Papers, many of the most Frequently Asked Questions will be answered.

“What is the timeline for the search for the new Rector”

The following timeline was shared at the parish meeting on May 5th. It is important to note that this timeline is my best guess on how the process may work. The Bishop and Canon to the Ordinary of the Diocese of East Tennessee are currently re-imagining the transition ministry process for the diocese. What you see below is a possible timeline given what we know at this time.

June 2019 through May 2020 - The Vestry continues work on ministry/mission re-organization, financial challenges, and building and grounds issues. Many of the issues that will prepare the parish for the search process and for calling the next rector are internal in nature. The Vestry has been reorganized in order to streamline and focus its work; the Building and Grounds Committee, Finance Committee, and Vestry have spent a great deal of time working on issues of being good stewards of our building. Over the last eighteen months, we have repaired or replaced most of the air conditioning systems in the building and undertaken a major nursery renovation. We also replaced the floor in two Sunday School rooms in addition to other work. The slate roof replacement will take place this fall. These are the kinds of things that need attention as we prepare to enter into a search process.

In addition, a Stewardship Advisory Group has been brought together to consider how our parish might again embrace generosity and gratitude as part of the mission and ministry of the church. Rally Day, Sunday, September 8, will see more information and work around this topic.

It is also important to remember that the next Vestry will choose the Search Committee. Our parish meeting on November 17th will be an important day in moving toward the next phase of Ascension’s life.

Everything we do in the next year to eighteen months will effect the search. In the fall of 2020, the search will go “live” and clergy will begin looking at the material that the Search Committee provides for prospective rectors. If the parish has its spiritual, emotional, and financial house in order, then more clergy will be interested in entering into a time of discernment with Ascension.

June 2020 - The Vestry works with the Office of the Bishop to begin the search process. The Vestry appoints the Search Committee. It is possible that the Bishop’s office may require parishioners to fill out an application to be on the Search Committee. This is becoming the norm around the wider church.

Summer/Fall 2020 - The Search Committee works on the Parish Profile, which is usually a dedicated website with a link from the parish website.

Fall 2020 - The opening is posted on websites (Diocese of East Tennessee, Transition Ministry Office of the Episcopal Church, others).

Late Fall 2020 - The Search Committee receives the names and credentials of interested priests. Usually the list is reduced after these names are received if some of the applicants do not meet criteria established by the Vestry and the Bishop.

Winter 2021 - Begin Skype interviews. Face-to-face technology at this stage has become the norm in recent years. Before, this step was called the “telephone interview.” Another reduction in names usually takes place at the end of this step.

Late Winter/Spring 2021 - Search Committee members make on-site visits to the cleric’s current church for interviews. The number of visits could be as many as nine or ten or as few as three or four. After this step, this list is reduced to a final group. The number of finalists could be as many as four or five or as few as two.

Late Spring 2021 - Final candidates come to Knoxville for on-site interviews/tour of church and city. Note: In some denominations it is the norm for clergy candidates to take part in a worship service in a leadership or preaching role when being considered for a call. The best practice in the Episcopal Church is that the process is kept as confidential as possible. Worship leadership style and preaching are evaluated by the Search Committee through on-site visits and video-audio recordings.

Late Spring 2021 - The Search Committee presents one name to the Vestry. The Vestry may ask to meet with the candidate, or the Vestry may have decided at the beginning of the process (with the counsel of the bishop’s office) to accept the name when it is given to them. The Vestry issues the call to the candidate.

Summer 2021 - The Interim Rector departs at least one month before the new Rector is on-site. The new Rector begins their ministry.

The Rev. Patrick J. Wingo

SCHOLARSHIP AND FAITH: WONDER AND LOVE

For the coming year, I will be serving Ascension as a *Scholar in Residence*. I am most grateful for this opportunity. This means I will get to keep doing more of what I have already been doing here: joining the preaching rotation as a Licensed Lay Preacher and teaching adult Sunday School classes. I will also share a few reflections with you in the Parish Paper along the way. For this first edition, Father Pat asked me a simple question: “How do you approach faith and scholarship?” Like most good simple questions, this one is complicated to answer.

There are many and varied ways that people approach scholarship of the Bible. Some do so as if going to war: either to defend the Faith (exactly as they understand it, that is) at all costs, or to cynically try to tear it all down. Some genuinely seek surety in all questions of belief but are often disappointed in that quest the deeper they dig. In my own development as a scholar and teacher of the Old Testament, I have wandered through various approaches and attitudes in different seasons of life. But these days I aspire most of all to find in my work an appreciation for what Old Testament scholar William Brown expounds as “transforming wonder.” If we approach life, the world, the Bible, Church, and God with open minds and hearts, we can find that there are reasons to *wonder* all around us. By wonder I mean a combination of curiosity, awe, fascination, gratitude, and more. Perhaps you wonder, as I do almost daily, at the very fact that all this—humanity and all Earth’s teeming life, the vast universe—exists at all. I hope you find times to wonder at the experience of beauty in the world. And I especially hope that we do not lose the capacity and space for wonder in the life of the Church, where we ought to (but often don’t) cultivate it the most. What do you experience each Sunday when the Scripture lessons are read? Do they seem inscrutable, irrelevant, or just downright strange? (Sometimes they certainly seem to!) But even so, can you hear them with a sense of wonder, fascination, curiosity, even imagination?

As a scholar of the Old Testament and a Christian (who seeks to integrate both these things), I do believe that we, as people of faith, can learn and grow from studying the

sacred texts of Scripture well. Sometimes we fall short, either through misguided biblical fundamentalism that becomes more harmful than helpful, or at the opposite end of the spectrum, through neglect of and indifference toward Scripture. Studying the Scriptures within a rich context of faith, tradition, and experience of the world, we can learn to authentically wonder at them while seeking deeper understanding. We can wonder at their subtle and surprising details, their strangeness, their intense dialogue with ancient contexts, their impact across the centuries, their stubborn proclivity for remaining relevant and provocative even today, and their enduring testimony to God’s revelation in the world.

As I consider how to approach faith and scholarship in the 21st century, I also think about guiding words from those in the past. Saint Anselm of Canterbury, nearly a thousand years ago, coined the memorable motto for his quest as a theologian: *fides quaerens intellectum*, “faith seeking understanding.” Those words have both inspired and haunted me for years. Origen, the most prolific of early Christian scholars, prefaced a reflection on the Old Testament book of Genesis with this admonition to

the student of the Bible: “Observe each detail which has been written. For, if one knows how to dig into the depth, they will find a treasure in the details, and perhaps also, the precious jewels of the mysteries lie hidden where they are not esteemed.”

“Ultimately it should cultivate those two highest goals of Scripture: the love of God and love of neighbor.”

Origen proceeded from this admonition to study one of the strangest and most challenging stories in the Bible: the tale of Abraham nearly sacrificing his son Isaac. Hidden mysteries indeed! Perhaps none have put it so eloquently however as Saint Augustine in his “rule of love” for understanding the Bible: “If it seems to anyone that they have understood the divine scriptures, or any part of them, in such a way that by that understanding they do not build up that double love of God and neighbor, they have not yet understood.”

Biblical scholarship can serve faith if it brings us closer to understanding, appreciating, and wondering at God and God’s creation as revealed in our sacred Scriptures. It should proceed from and not inhibit honest curiosity, intellect, and reason among people of faith. Ultimately it should cultivate those two highest goals of Scripture: the love of God and love of neighbor. I value serious study of the Bible for all these reasons, and I know already that many others at Ascension do as well. I look forward to wondering with you this year!

Adam Bean



Clockwise from top left:

- Adam Bean, Scholar in Residence (pg. 4)
- Ascension Trekkers in the Forks of the River Sunflower Fields (pg. 12)
- Ascension shares its VBS decor with neighboring churches reaching four churches this year (pg. 13)
- Walter Law sits on the bench he recently refurbished at the Labyrinth Garden (pg. 6)

BENCHMARK OF SUCCESS

One afternoon I looked out my office window and noticed a man dressed in work clothes carrying tools climbing the steps towards the Labyrinth. Intrigued, I followed. The sound of a whizzing drill greeted me upon reaching the top. This man was hunched over tightening bolts on what looked like a brand-new bench facing the labyrinth. I recognized who it was. It was parishioner Walter Law.

We talked for a while. At first, I thought he'd purchased a new bench for the labyrinth. He told me it was the same old bench that had always been there, but noticed it was ragged and in disrepair. The wood was crumbling, and the metal wrought-iron siding was rusting. He was concerned it might collapse causing injury. He took on the project himself. The rust was sanded off and painted black with a high-end gloss finish. He then replaced the wood. The day I encountered him he was making some final adjustments: tightening bolts and straightening the wood slats. The end-product was beautiful.

No one asked Walter to do this. He observed a need and responded to it. This unassuming gift was tremendous. I thought of all the people who come to the labyrinth, for whatever reason, to pray and work out issues within the soul.

This refurbished bench literally upholds people while contemplating life and their relationship with God.

I don't mean to single out Walter Law. He didn't undertake the bench project for praise or accolades. He just did it. Yet his actions reminded me of what it takes for a healthy church to thrive. It takes people who not only support a wider mission but who immerse themselves in that mission. This means finding out the needs that exist and then responding to those needs. In this instance Walter noticed a dilapidated bench. He had the skills to fix it and so he did. Had I not looked out the window that day, I never would have known of Walter's contribution. It reminded me that there are countless other contributions here that are never recognized.

“May we not only support one another but also encourage one another to take part in God’s work”

I want to take a moment to thank all of you who contribute to the ministry here at Ascension. To the multitude of volunteers who quietly give by seeing needs and then responding to those needs, without a thought to any kind of acknowledgment. Many of you write cards, or send meals, or visit people in the hospital, or deliver flowers. Sunday morning could never happen without the multitude of volunteers who take care of every minute detail of the service. Many of you sit at the desk during the week, or run independent ministries, or put on programs. Many of you serve the wider community through outreach programs.

The list could go on and on. This is what makes our church healthy and strong. As we enter into a new program year, may we continue this trajectory. May we not only support one another but also encourage one another to take part in God's work here on this earth. The bench incident reminded me of what a privilege it is to serve here among a faith community who contribute their time and talents in many subtle, yet powerful ways. Thank you.

The Rev. Christopher Hogin

A FINANCIAL HISTORY OF ASCENSION

Much like a home mortgage, Ascension has long maintained debt associated with the construction of the Nave in the late 1980's. Over the years, the debt was refinanced several times to accommodate the need for maintenance and upgrades to our facilities, as well as to support the parish in financially challenging times. As the Vestry recently decided to replace the Nave roof, we again evaluated the parish's debt, both as a tool to fund this project, and for its long term impact on the financial health of Ascension.

In the case of the roof project, the Vestry was advised to proceed without delay on its replacement to avoid any further damage to the ceiling. They obtained preliminary estimates of between \$280,000 and \$390,000 for the project, and charged the Finance Committee with securing the necessary funding as quickly and competitively as possible. And the Vestry continues to evaluate the scope of work necessary to repair the Nave ceiling, along with cost and timeline.

Where ordinarily we would issue a Request for Proposals from multiple banks to secure the most competitive terms, that process typically takes 3 to 6 months; not enough time to pursue renovation under the desired timeline. Home Federal having been a valued and trusted lender these past several years, we inquired, and they agreed to extend credit, without the need to refinance or rearrange any of our other loans or accounts. And through informal inquiries to other financial institutions, we were able to confirm that their terms were competitive. These arrangements have been secured, and the bank is providing a one year “draw period” during which we can access funds only as needed according to construction progress, to avoid paying unnecessary interest.

Beyond the current situation, we know that additional context is helpful

to reassure parishioners that Ascension's finances are being managed prudently. The good news is that we have significantly reduced that original debt from the 1980's.

In early 2016, the parish had roughly \$650,000, in debt, financed through Pinnacle Bank, on an open ended line of credit, with a variable interest rate. The Finance Committee, Vestry, and Wardens successfully refinanced \$500,000 of the long term debt, at a low, fixed rate, and raised \$400,000 to fund the \$250,000 Sunday School Wing HVAC replacement, \$30,000 of nursery renovations, and \$120,000 of debt reduction. That process did involve soliciting offers from five banks, and ultimately resulted in moving our financial relationship to Home Federal, who provided the most competitive package.

Today, our total debt stands at roughly \$755,000, or about \$404,000 on the 2016 loan, \$323,000 on our loan from the Diocese last year to replace the Nave HVAC system, and \$28,000 on our operating line of credit. Our current monthly payments for the two larger loans total \$6,230 monthly.

Just as the Vestry has done through their listening sessions, so it is our goal not just to be transparent, but to make the parish finances accessible to all of you who make Ascension's mission possible. Look for more and regular updates on the roof renovation and finance, to include a more comprehensive financial report by the end of the summer.

Andy Oakes

INREACH AT ASCENSION

In The Book of Common Prayer, we are called to pray for our parish: “Almighty and everliving God, ruler of all things in heaven and earth, hear our prayers for this parish family. Strengthen the faithful, arouse the careless, and restore the penitent. Grant us all things necessary for our common life, and bring us all to be of one heart and mind within your holy Church; through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.”

The Inreach Ministries at Ascension are much like a sacred garden, and we are the stewards of that garden. On any given Sunday or weekday, we are reminded of the faithful of our parish who give of their time and talents to nurture the Inreach Ministries. This year's Sunday School and Wednesday evening programs have just concluded for the summer, and countless volunteers and leaders have been hard at work preparing for the upcoming Vacation Bible School. The Youth of Ascension enthusiastically embrace service projects, devotions, and fun. In the early mornings and evenings, the Daily Office is read by a cadre of lay leaders. Each Sunday, a host of dedicated Eucharistic Ministers, ushers, greeters, sound technicians, altar and flower guild members, musicians, choristers, and acolytes assist the clergy in creating a reverent and celebratory place of worship, amid our beautiful sacred space. The Stephen Ministry, the Daughters of the King, and Ascension Cares are examples of the important ongoing ministries to our parishioners.

This spring, Ascension parishioners enjoyed the annual weekend at Kanuga, and the Brotherhood of Saint Andrew experienced the relaxation and renewal of their annual retreat at Lake Logan. The Episcopal Church Women, newly reorganized this year, have focused on study, service, and sisterhood, and concluded its year with a visit and luncheon at the Knoxville Botanical Gardens. “The Sisterhood” has developed strong bonds of friendship through dining out and lively conversations.

Ascension cares about the spiritual, physical, and emotional nourishment of its parishioners. And we continue to petition God to “Grant us all things necessary for our common life, and bring us all to be of one heart and mind within your holy Church.”

Pat Rutenberg

GRATITUDE IS THE ALLELUIA TO EXISTENCE

Gratitude, indeed, for all the missions undertaken by our parishioners both here at Ascension, throughout our community, and into the world. We are called to love one another in God's name and that love has been abundantly clear as I have begun to work with Vestry and parishioners on coordinating our Outreach mission efforts across the many groups in our parish. The depth and breadth of your love for God's mission and your sense of call to mission has been palpable through meetings with many of you as we seek to create connections and improve communication between our parish and the Vestry.

When Pat reorganized the Vestry this past January, we divided up into Inreach, Temporal Business, and Outreach. At that time, Pat asked me to chair Outreach and to partner with fellow Vestry members Sylvia Peters (liaison for Local Mission), Marnie Page (liaison for World Mission), and Allan Willoughby (liaison for the Great Commission Commission). It has been good to work together to learn more about our many missionary activities. At the last three Vestry meetings, I have been able to provide a brief report as well as an updated spreadsheet on the Outreach mission work in our parish.

Here's a brief summary of just some of the activities we've been engaged in over the past few months. As liaison for Local Mission, Sylvia Peters is a passionate advocate for many and has been busy meeting with groups from Daughters of the King, FISH, Episcopal Church Women, and so many more. She and I meet regularly to see where we can be of service, to foster connections, and to encourage and support you all in your ministry. We certainly have appreciated the openness with which you have welcomed us to your meetings and have shared your dreams, your frustrations, and your plans for the future. Sylvia and I will continue to meet with you to see how the Vestry may support your ministry efforts.

GiGi Logan has met several times with Sylvia Peters and me to talk about the youth and local mission. We

are excited about the projects GiGi has identified (Seeds of Abraham and Rise Against Hunger) as local mission projects for the upcoming year to help build up our youth and their mission work as well as make connections within the Knoxville community. She and Sylvia Peters are working together to sponsor a night at the Change Center with the help of ECW. GiGi has a strong group of Middle School youth and hopes to build the numbers again for the High School youth events. GiGi says, "I see our youth as a vital part of our mission at Ascension and...not just "the future of the church," but also our present. I enjoy being a part of their growth through outreach and providing our youth opportunities to find out what sets their souls on fire!"

World Outreach focused this spring on the allocation of Mardi Gras funds. A check for \$7147.81 went to St. Elizabeth's to support the Bolivia Mission this year. Marnie Page is the liaison for World Mission; later this summer, we will meet to discuss World Mission possibilities whether through Episcopal Relief and Development or some other organization. We will announce that meeting in late July and hope that you will join us.

*Gratitude is the
alleluia to existence,
the praise that
thunders through
the universe as
tribute to the
ongoing presence of
God with us
even now.
—Joan Chittister*

Another check for \$1000 went to the White Oak Project in Campbell County that Megan Alden coordinates. Last May 18, a group of six kids and eight adults from Ascension traveled to White Oak to help renovate the playground for the Community Center. Phase II of the project will continue later this summer, so please do join us!

Lastly, the Great Commission Commission has recently been renamed the New-Comers Ministry Committee. Karen McKinney and Vestry liaison Allan Willoughby met recently with the renamed group to plan the next New-Comers reception. Pat will hold an "Inquirers Lite" class later this summer. A last piece of great news: the committee will have a completed Ministries Handbook available soon.

If you are interested in reading a fuller report of the activities of the various groups that fall under Outreach (Local Mission – Vestry Liaison: Sylvia Peters; World Mission – Vestry Liaison: Marnie

Page; New-Comers Ministry Committee – Vestry Liaison: Allan Willoughby), please email me at asrowcliffe@gmail.com. As part of my effort to keep the Vestry up to date with your mission work, I'm updating a spreadsheet once a month with reports from the various ministries.

Our hope, as your Vestry, is to improve communications and support of your great mission work.

Gratitude, indeed.

Amanda Rowcliffe

CEMENTS

ASCENSION WORKDAY

You can do it!! Set your clocks to be at the church at 8:30 am, on Saturday, September 21, to take part in the semi-annual Ascension Workday. Put on your grubbies and come prepared to work and clean. Starting Sunday, August 25, we will have a sign-up table in the foyer to let us know if you are coming because we plan on feeding you lunch before you head home. We will need a good head count to make sure nobody goes hungry. It's so hard to get Monty Harris to share his sandwich, we have to be prepared. We will provide some donuts first thing so if you decide to skip breakfast we have you covered. There will also be cold bottled water and protein bars to keep you going until lunch. You should be on your way around 1:00 pm.

We are finalizing jobs now that we hope to accomplish. At present we have mulching, trimming bushes, pressure washing, and cleaning the pews. There will be more choices of jobs to choose from, better keep an eye out for the one you wish to take part in. If you have any ideas, please share. Send them to Linda@knoxvilleascension.org.

MUSIC WORKSHOPS

This year, three music workshops will be held this month for Gregorian Chant and Handbells. We are excited to be working on a third year of offering these instructional workshops.

On Saturday, August 24, the Introduction to Gregorian Chant Workshop will be held in the choir room from 9:00-11:30 am. This course is for anyone interested in learning the history of Gregorian Chant and basics of reading and chanting Gregorian Chant. The Intermediate Chant Workshop, held the same day from 1:00-4:30 pm, is for those who have prior experience with chanting and want to sharpen their skills.

On Saturday, August 31, the Handbell Worship will be held from 1:00-4:00 pm for those who are currently participating in or would like to join the Ascension Handbell Choir.

For information on these courses or if you would like to see some sneak preview material of the chant workshop, see Bro. Andrew Aelred or email him at andrew@knoxvilleascension.org.

PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY

The Prayer Shawl Ministry is in need of additional needleworkers. Ascension's Prayer Shawl Ministry has a legacy of providing handmade prayer-stitched shawls for those in need. Each shawl is prayed over, blessed, and delivered to someone in need of comfort and solace. There is a continuing need for a supply of shawls at the church. So if you have skills, we need your help. The shawls may be knitted or crocheted and can be completed at your own pace and time. For more information, contact Karen Ladd at kladd@utk.edu.

THE SISTERHOOD

Ladies Night Out was held at Sullivan's Restaurant in July! We had 30 people join us for a great time. We got to visit with each other and meet some new members of Ascension. The Sisterhood is a gathering of women of the parish from all ages and all walks of life.

The next gathering of The Sisterhood will be on Monday, August 19, at 6:00 pm at Finn's Tavern, located at 9000 Kingston Pike, Knoxville (the corner of S. Peters and Kingston Pike). Finn's Restaurant is upstairs; however, there is an elevator to bring you up should the stairs prove a hassle. Please RSVP to Charlotte Wood, seebyrdfly@aol.com or 615-594-1781, by Friday, August 16. We look forward to meeting you there!

ARCHIVING VOLUNTEERS

Archiving work has been a fulfilling and successful endeavor the past few months. Thanks are due to John Seivers, Catharene Petty, and Lucy Dover for assisting with the archives. Should you be interested in working on the archives with tasks such as scanning documents, transferring audio or video, or scanning photos, contact Bro. Andrew Aelred to see if working on the archives is a fit for you! There are no required hours and no set target dates. Work at your own pace and your own time!

AUGUST CALENDAR

DAILY OFFICE EACH DAY

- 7:00 am Morning Prayer (Chapel)
5:45 pm Evening Prayer (Chapel)

CENTERING PRAYER

- Sunday 9:00 am in Library
Monday 5:15 pm in Chapel
Thursday 4:30 pm in Library

1 THURSDAY

- 7:00 am Brotherhood of Saint Andrew (Old Transept)

2 FRIDAY

- 10:00 am Stitch in Time (Parlor)
5:00 pm Bro. St. Andrew Dinner (Parish Hall)
6:00 pm Date Night (Education Wing)
6:00 pm TWEENS (Education Wing)

3 SATURDAY

- 10:00 am Community Chest Drop-Off (Side Parking Lot)

4 SUNDAY

- Last Sunday for "Choose Some Shoes" Drive
9:00 am Family Ministry Pancake Breakfast (Parish Hall)
10:00 am Blessing of the Backpacks Sunday (Nave)

5 MONDAY

- 1:00 pm Play Bridge! (New Transept)

6 TUESDAY

- 7:00 am Men's Bible Study (Parlor)
1:30 pm Stephen Ministry Leaders (Library)
5:30 pm Finance Committee (Room 209)

7 WEDNESDAY

- 9:00 am Ascension Trekkers: West Prong (Parking Lot)
12:00 pm Healing Service (Chapel)
5:00 pm Building and Grounds Committee (Room 209)
6:30 pm Middle School Youth (Youth Room)
6:30 pm Walking with Jesus (Library)

8 THURSDAY

- 7:00 am Brotherhood of Saint Andrew (Old Transept)

11 SUNDAY

- 12:00 pm YAT Meeting (Youth Room)
12:30 pm Safeguarding God's Children (Room 209)
5:00 pm High School Youth Group (Youth Room)

12 MONDAY

- 11:00 am Icon Guild (Room 101 and 102)
1:00 pm Play Bridge! (New Transept)

13 TUESDAY

- 7:00 am Men's Bible Study (Parlor)
6:30 pm Vestry Meeting (Room 101)

14 WEDNESDAY

- 10:00 am Wilderness Weavers (Room 209)
12:00 pm Healing Service (Chapel)
6:30 pm Middle School Youth (Youth Room)

This sheet of paper is designed to be pulled out of the
that you may post it where you need. Just grab hold
The online version of the Parish Calendar is available at [www.saintandrew.org](#)

15 THURSDAY

- 7:00 am Brotherhood of Saint Andrew (Old Transept)
9:00 am FISH Pantry Day (FISH Pantry and Office)

17 SATURDAY

- 8:30 am Ascension Trekkers: Flat Creek Trail (Parking Lot)

18 SUNDAY

- 11:30 am Chelsea the Chicken Fun Day (Playground)
11:30 am Daughters of the King (Room 209)
5:00 pm High School Youth (Youth Room)

19 MONDAY

- 8:30 am Ascension Trekkers: IC King Park (Parking Lot)
1:00 pm Play Bridge! (New Transept)

20 TUESDAY

- 7:00 am Men's Bible Study (Parlor)
6:30 pm Stephen Ministry (Parlor and Library)

21 WEDNESDAY

- 12:00 pm Healing Service (Chapel)
6:30 pm Middle School Youth (Youth Room)

22 THURSDAY

- 7:00 am Brotherhood of Saint Andrew (Old Transept)
9:00 am FISH Pantry Day (FISH Pantry and Office)

24 SATURDAY

- 9:00 am Introduction to Gregorian Chant (Choir Room)
1:00 pm Intermediate Gregorian Chant (Choir Room)

25 SUNDAY

- 11:30 am Nursery Staff Class (Room 209)
4:00 pm Tweens Group (Room 105)
5:00 pm High School Youth (Youth Room)

26 MONDAY

- 11:00 am Icon Guild (Room 101 and 102)
1:00 pm Play Bridge! (New Transept)

27 TUESDAY

- 7:00 am Men's Bible Study (Parlor)

28 WEDNESDAY

- 12:00 pm Healing Service (Chapel)
6:30 pm Middle School Youth (Youth Room)

29 THURSDAY

- 7:00 am Brotherhood of Saint Andrew (Old Transept)
4:30 pm Centering Prayer (Library)

31 SATURDAY

- 1:00 pm Ascension Handbell Workshop (Choir Room)

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ble at www.knoxvilleascension.org/calendar.

SEPTEMBER CALENDAR

DAILY OFFICE EACH DAY

- 7:00 am Morning Prayer (Chapel)
5:45 pm Evening Prayer (Chapel)

CENTERING PRAYER

- Sunday 9:00 am in Library
Monday 5:15 pm in Chapel
Thursday 4:30 pm in Library

1 SUNDAY

Labor Day Holiday Weekend

2 MONDAY

Parish Office and Building Closed for Labor Day Holiday

3 TUESDAY

- 10:00 am Kindermusik (Room 210)
5:30 pm Finance Committee (Room 209)
6:30 pm Stephen Ministry Training (Room 101 and Parlor)

4 WEDNESDAY

- 8:30 am Ascension Trekkers: Twentymile (Parking Lot)
10:45 am Lectionary Study (Library)
12:00 pm Healing Service (Chapel)
5:00 pm Building and Grounds Committee (Room 209)
6:30 pm Middle School Youth (Youth Room)
7:00 pm Parish Choir (Choir Room)

5 THURSDAY

- 7:00 am Brotherhood of Saint Andrew (Old Transept)
7:00 pm Ascension Schola (Choir Room)

6 FRIDAY

- 9:00 am EfM Weekly Study (Library)
10:00 am Stitch in Time (Parlor)
6:00 pm Date Night (Education Wing)
6:00 pm TWEENS (Garden Room)

7 SATURDAY

- 10:00 am Community Chest Drop-Off (Side Parking Lot)

8 RALLY DAY

- 11:30 am Lunch and Mission Project with
Rise Against Hunger
5:00 pm High School Youth (Youth Room)

9 MONDAY

- 11:00 am Icon Guild (Room 101 and 102)
1:00 pm Play Bridge! (New Transept)
6:45 pm Handbell Choir (Choir Room)

10 TUESDAY

- 7:00 am Men's Bible Study (Parlor)
6:30 pm Vestry Meeting (Room 101)

11 WEDNESDAY

- 10:00 am Wilderness Weavers (Room 209)
10:45 am Lectionary Study (Library)
6:30 pm Middle School Youth (Youth Room)
7:00 pm Opera 101 (Parish Hall)
7:00 pm Parish Choir (Choir Room)

12 THURSDAY

- 7:00 am Brotherhood of Saint Andrew (Old Transept)
8:00 pm FOMA: City of Ashes (Nave)

13 FRIDAY

- 9:00 am EfM Weekly Study (Library)
8:00 pm FOMA: City of Ashes (Nave)

15 SUNDAY

- All Sunday School Classes Resume and New Service Schedule
8:00 am Holy Eucharist Rite I (Nave)
9:15 am Sunday School Hour (Various Rooms)
10:30 am Holy Eucharist Rite II (Nave)
12:00 pm Daughters of the King (Room 209)
5:00 pm High School Youth (Youth Room)

16 MONDAY

- 9:00 am Ascension Trekkers: Botanical Garden
(Side Parking Lot)
1:00 pm Play Bridge! (New Transept)

17 TUESDAY

- 7:00 am Men's Bible Study (Parlor)
11:30 am The Lunch Bunch (Parish Hall)
6:30 pm Stephen Ministry (Parlor and Library)

18 WEDNESDAY

- 10:45 am Lectionary Study (Library)
12:00 pm Healing Service (Chapel)
6:30 pm Middle School Youth (Youth Room)

19 THURSDAY

- 7:00 am Brotherhood of Saint Andrew (Old Transept)
9:00 am FISH Pantry Day (FISH Pantry)

20 FRIDAY

- 9:00 am EfM Weekly Study (Library)

21 SATURDAY

- 8:00 am Ascension Work Day (Campus Wide)
9:00 am Ascension Trekkers: Chimney Rock
(Side Parking Lot)

22 SUNDAY

- 4:00 pm TWEENS (Room 105)
5:00 pm High School Youth (Youth Room)

23 MONDAY

- 11:00 am Icon Guild (Room 101 and 102)
1:00 pm Play Bridge! (New Transept)

24 TUESDAY

- 7:00 am Men's Bible Study (Parlor)

25 WEDNESDAY

- 10:45 am Lectionary Study (Library)
12:00 pm Healing Service (Chapel)
6:30 pm Middle School Youth (Youth Room)
7:00 pm Parish Choir (Choir Room)

The remainder of the September calendar will be published in next month's Parish Paper.

I FORGOT I NEED A ROOM!

Having a meeting or event and have not scheduled a room, no need to panic! If you need to place an event or meeting on the calendar and want to be sure there is a room available, please contact Virginia Branum in the office (865-588-0589, virginia@knoxvilleascension.org). Virginia will be happy to check on the availability of rooms for you, assist you with the building request form and make sure your meeting is placed on the calendar. You can also go to our website, www.knoxvilleascension.org, and look under Welcome, find Calendar and look to your left. You will find a building request form you can complete online.

Here are the items Virginia would need to help you with a successful event:

- Date and time
- Room you prefer to use
- Type of setup – for how many and what configuration of tables and chairs you need
- Audio-visual equipment needed or any special needs.
- Will you be using a caterer, or do you have a setup and cleanup crew that is providing food
- Contact person and contact info.

Presently we have approximately 23 Ascension groups that meet in the church on a regular basis plus 5 community non-profit groups that meet here regularly and a few on an as needed basis. Ascension is a busy place and we work hard to accommodate all groups. Everyone likes meeting at Ascension!

BROTHERHOOD OF ST. ANDREW

The Brotherhood of Saint Andrew is open to men of the parish of any age interested in joining the Brotherhood. Meetings are regularly held on Thursday mornings at 7:00 pm. Breakfast is provided by one of the members and a study topic, book, or presentation is offered during the hour. The Brotherhood also engages in a variety of ministries, including the Circle of Friends (ministry to homeless men), dinners at Tyson House, Volunteer Ministry Center dinners, Family Promise setup, retreats, and the Smokin' Brothers. To find out more, come visit a Thursday morning meeting!

ASCENSION TREKKERS

Hiking in August can be miserable! So, the two scheduled hikes in August will involve water and earlier departure times to avoid peak heat and humidity:

- On Wednesday, August 7, we'll leave the church at 9:00 am for the West Prong Trail near Tremont. This trail is a 5 mile moderate hike with a relaxing stream and respite at the turn around point.
- On Saturday, August 17, we'll leave the church at 8:30 am and drive about 2.25 hours to the higher elevation of Balsam Mountain off the Blue Ridge Parkway near Waynesville, NC. Flat Creek Trail is 5.3 miles round-trip and is rated moderate with dense woods, stream crossings, and some scenic views.
- The “easy Monday” hike plan is yet to be determined because the perfectly short, easy, and not-too-humid place hasn't presented itself just yet. Any ideas are welcome.

Consider putting our September hikes on your calendars:

- On Wednesday, September 4, we will hike the 7-8 mile Twentymile Loop which is in NC via Maryville and US-129. It is about an hour and 45 minute drive. This trail is described as having lots of small waterfalls along Moore Spring Branch and much of the trail is on old road. There is an elevation climb of 1000ft but is “so mellow you won't even break a sweat” so the story goes. Seems like the moderate rating has mostly to do with the length and in recent months there have been some downed trees; otherwise, the trail is reported to be in good condition.
- The “easy Monday” hike on September 16 will be at the Knoxville Botanical Garden and Arboretum for a 2 mile stroll through those grounds in east Knoxville.
- We are currently evaluating the Saturday, September 21, plan and we welcome any feedback. The original schedule has us hiking the 6.5 mile round-trip loop on Chimney Rock Trail-Paint Mountain that has an initial steady climb before up/down and return to parking lot. This trail starts from near Newport. The other consideration is the previously scheduled but weather-cancelled shuttle hike from the top of Sugarland Mountain down to Huskey Gap trailhead, ending on NFG Road near Sugarlands Visitor Center for 9 moderate miles.

Send any questions or comments to Emily Vreeland at emilyvree@aol.com

AYG: ASCENSION YOUTH GROUP

We welcome our youth Back to School and Back to Church! **Regular AYG** (Ascension Youth Group) programming will be returning in August this year! Middle School Youth (Grades 6-8) will return on Wednesday, August 7, and High School Youth (Grades 9-12) will return on Sunday, August 11. Please note that the High School Youth meeting time has changed to 5:00-7:00 pm in an effort to allow for more family and/or homework time on Sunday evenings. Youth Sunday School will resume on September 15 at 9:15 am.

Our **Dinner Angels** program will return this year as well! Dinner Angels is a program in which parents and other parishioners are invited to sign up to provide dinners and share in fellowship with our youth. Want to try out a new recipe? Have a flair in the kitchen? We welcome home-cooked or catered meals. We also encourage our dinner angels to stay for our program. You can sign up now by going to your latest copy of The Heavenly Post and finding the Dinner Angel links there.

Another support program for our youth is the **Prayer Partners** program. It is a ministry that pairs an Ascension teen with an adult in the church who will pray for that teen, exchange monthly letters, and hopefully build relationships between our youth and the wider church. Last year we had three pairings of Prayer Partners and teens. This year we hope to double that! This is a wonderful opportunity to connect with a young person and support our youth one-on-one. To sign up, visit the sign up sheet at the reception counter in the parish office.

The annual **Middle School Retreat** will take place on October 18-20, 2019 at Grace Point. The cost is \$100 per person. Scholarships are available. Please make sure to mark your calendars for this excellent spiritual experience for your middle schoolers.

While we continue to support the youth, parents of teens need their own support. **CUSTOS** is a newly created group for parents of teenagers seeking connection and support. The latin word “custos” means “guardians” or “caretakers.” We have been entrusted by God with raising teenagers and it takes a village. This is a way to crowd-source teen parenting wisdom in a modern context by pairing social media with face-to-face meetings. We plan to meet monthly. Dates and more start up information will follow in the coming weeks. To get connected, contact Marianne Benson, benson.marianne13@gmail.com.

For any questions about any of our Youth Ministry programs, email my at GiGi@knoxvilleascension.org.

GiGi Logan

RALLY DAY 2019

This year's Rally Day (Sunday, September 8) will see a different focus and intentionality. In sharing our gratitude, we are partnering with Rise Against Hunger to package over 10,000 meals in under 2 hours.

The day will begin with worship services at 8:00 and 10:00 am. A catered sandwich box lunch from Honey Baked Ham will follow. Three options are available: Ham, Turkey, or Vegetarian Garden Salad. The box prices are \$5/box with a \$20/family maximum. For individual lunch tickets, visit www.knoxvilleascension.org/rallyday or, if you need a 5+ box order, visit the table in the foyer beginning August 11 or call the church office.

Following the lunch, parishioners ages 5-105 are invited to participate in the Rise Against Hunger meal packing event. Younger volunteers can serve as runners. Adults and teens will serve at funnel stations, unloading food, boxing food, and weighing packages. There are even sit-down jobs at the sealing stations for those who cannot stand for long periods of time. Childcare is available for kids under age 5.

To sign up to volunteer, email GiGi Logan at GiGi@knoxvilleascension.org. To sign up for lunch, email Bro. Andrew at Andrew@knoxvilleascension.org. To RSVP for nursery care for your children, email nursery16@knoxvilleascension.org.

ASCENSION GEAR 2.0

AscensionGear 2.0 will return for Rally Day. As a fundraiser for the Rally Day mission project, the youth will be selling Rally Day t-shirts in a choice of colors: coal gray, peacock green, walnut, and neon coral. Adult and children's sizes are available (children's sizes are not available in the walnut color). We have set a goal of selling 300 t-shirts! Shirts will be \$15 each. The profit from any shirts sold above the fundraising need of our Rise Against Hunger meal packing event will benefit the Youth Mission Fund. The deadline to order a shirt will be August 20. Shirts may be picked up on Rally Day following each service. If you wish to support our fundraiser without the purchase of a t-shirt, we welcome any donation as well. Look on the back cover for a sample of the t-shirt art!

CITY OF ASHES: OPERA AT ASCENSION

For its opening event on the 2019-20 calendar Friends of Music and the Arts will be venturing beyond its normal métier to collaborate on a presentation of *City of Ashes*. The subject matter of the opera is serious, and because the libretto was written by parishioner Emily Anderson I wanted to give her an opportunity to introduce her work in her own words. – **Jim Garvey**

The 2019-2020 season of Friends of Music and the Arts opens at 8 PM on 12 and 13 September with a spectacular new production by Marble City Opera: the North American Premiere of *City of Ashes*, a sixty-minute chamber opera set in war-torn Berlin in 1945. Dual themes of love and redemption propel this poignant story, as the lives of German girlfriends Lotte and Lili and Lotte's Welsh lover, Owen, intertwine in unexpected and unexpectedly human ways.

City of Ashes begins as a tale of survival. Berlin after Hitler's fall is untenable for women. Starving, scorned by a world appalled by Nazi atrocities, Lotte and Lili toil by day as Trümmerfrauen, long lines of women in blue aprons passing buckets of rubble hand to hand to clean up the city. By night, they are at the mercy of the Russian Army. Raped more times than they can count, haunted by suicides of neighbors and friends, they vow to survive and they do. What they fail to consider is love.

Love in *City of Ashes* takes many forms: love of friends; love of home and music; reluctant lovers, terrified by the advent of joy. In Lotte and Owen, we see a not entirely welcome affirmation of life amidst ruin. Neither seeks love. Lotte shamelessly uses Owen as a 'wolf' to protect herself and Lili from the Russians. Owen, reeling from the deaths of his wife and son, expects never to love again. From the moment they meet on the rubble site, however, they are at love's mercy. Owen embraces all that is Lotte. For love of him, she shields his generous heart. For love of them both, Lili becomes Lotte's strength.

In the end, these characters leave us with hope for a world gone mad. The tragic cruelty in *City of Ashes* is at the same time ancient and disturbingly new. So, happily for us, is the power of love.

The opera, originally commissioned by Paris's Opéra de Poche, had its World Premiere in 2015 in an Art Deco theater near the Eiffel Tower, five days after the terrorist massacre of 130 young Parisians. The sold-out audience, spellbound by the characters' courage and resilience, laughed and cried and cheered. One year later, it was performed in Beijing to an all-Chinese audience who wept.



CITY OF ASHES
SEPTEMBER 12 & 13, 2019



Marble City Opera

MARBLECITYOPERA.COM

  

The music, set by composer Evan Fein of New York's Juilliard School, is gorgeous and stirring. He will be here for both performances. I wrote the libretto. The spectral backdrops, one of which is seen in the graphic above, were painted by Barry Spann. Marble City's roster is wonderfully talented:

Soprano: April Martin (Lili); **Mezzo:** Aubrey Odle (Lotte); **Baritone:** Brent Hetherington (Owen); **Pianist:** Brandon Coffer; **Executive Director:** Kathryn Frady; **Director:** Marya Barry; **Stage Manager:** Kathryn Shepas; **Lighting Designer:** Jeff Pless

Tickets will be available beginning August 1st on the Ascension website knoxvilleascension.org/boxoffice and at marblecityopera.com or at the door. FOMA will host a wine and cheese reception at 7:15 PM prior to each performance. I look forward to seeing you in September, **Emily Anderson**.

BACK TO CHURCH WITH FAMILY MINISTRY

Family Ministry will explode back into action at the beginning of August with the first meeting of **TnT (Tweens in Transition)**. If your child is in grades 3-5, please join us as we kick-off the school year on **Friday, August 2, from 6:00-9:00 pm**. We have a lot in store and look forward to seeing some familiar faces and a bunch of new ones! Dinner will be served with a side of FUN. Our new Tween Assistant, Rebekah Wright, will be with us as well. We will also hand out the Fall Schedule.

The fun will continue as we head **Back to Church and Back to School on Sunday, August 4**. Families with youth and kids, join us as we have our first **Pancake Breakfast** for kids, youth, and parents from 9:00-9:45 am. Come to the parish hall and enjoy relaxing with family and friends as you prepare to go back to school. We will have a simple breakfast of pancakes and sausage. Then stick around for the **Blessing of the Backpacks** at the 10:00 am service. Bring your book bags and backpacks to be blessed and get your school year started on the right foot. Plus, pick up a cool Backpack Blessing Tag to hang on your book bag all year long. It is a tangible sign that you are thought of each day.

To top off going back to church and back to school, the **White Oak “Choose Some Shoes” Drive** concludes on Sunday, August 4. We are going excellent in the shoe drive for the kids at White Oak Elementary in Campbell county. Thank you to everyone who has donated thus far. These kids are immensely appreciative and LOVE getting their new shoes. Often in this low-income area, kids do not have the correct sizes to wear. Sometimes they wear shoes that are not appropriate for the colder weather that is coming at the end of the semester. This is our 3rd year helping. Let's make it the best year! Some of the most popular sizes include 13, 1, 2, and 5. This is a PreK through 8th grad school with close to 160 students.

**“The fun continues
as we head
Back to Church
and
Back to School!”**

Safety is a top priority at Ascension. You may notice some changes around the Education Wing as we work hard to address safety issues and concerns. All of this is to ensure the best possible care for your children. In maintaining safety for your child, the fall session of **Safeguarding God’s Children** will be held on **Sunday, August 11, from 11:30 am to 2:30 pm in Room 209**. If you work with children or youth (or plan to in the coming year) you are required by Ascension and the Diocese to complete this course. You must pre-register by Friday, August 9. Email me at megan@knoxvilleascension.org.

As many of you know, **Chelsea the Chicken** has been our special guest this summer and we have loved having her. She has kept everyone on their toes. However, it is time to send her on her way and to her new roost. So, come join us on **Sunday, August 18**, as we wish her well on her next adventure. We will meet after the 10:00 am service on the playground. We will have special games and families can chat and get to know each other. We will end by 12:30 pm. Kids! Don't forget to bring back all your collected eggs with your messages!

This Fall will see the return of Sunday School and Kindermusik. Stay tuned for more information in your bulletins, weekly Heavenly Post, and Parish Paper about **Kindermusik** in the fall. Classes will begin in September. If you are interested in these classes email me at megan@knoxvilleascension.org.

Children’s Sunday School classes will resume on **Sunday, September 15, from 9:15-10:15 am**. We will offer Godly Play I for PreK (ages 4-5), Godly Play II for Grades K-2, and Connect for Grades 3-5. Both Godly Play classes are upstairs in Rooms 202 (GP I) and 203 (GP II). Our Connect class is downstairs in Room 105. All of our Family Ministry programs thrive because of our amazing volunteers for whom we are immensely grateful. Our programs wouldn't be the same without you! Help us teach God's story to our youngest parishioners by becoming a Sunday morning classroom teacher. Seeing the world through children's eyes can be very enlightening.

Chidren's and Junior Chidren's Church are always offered throughout the year for our children during the later service. Junior Children's Church is designed for kids age 4-Grade K and meets in Room 213, the Garden Room. Children's Church is focused on Grades 1-5 and meets in Room 211. The kids follow the cross out of the service and return at the Peace.

Nursery Care is always there for you year round. We offer a wonderful nursery facility with well-qualified staff. The nursery is open 9:45 am to 12:00 pm in the summer and 8:45 am to 12:30 pm during the school year. Our staff have taken CPR and Safeguarding God's Children. Many are seeking higher-level degrees in nursing and speech pathology, just to name a few.

If you have any questions about Family Ministry at Ascension, email me at megan@knoxvilleascension.org.

Megan Alden

FAMILY PROMISE SUNDAY

Sunday, August 18, is Family Promise Sunday. Mary Thomson LeMense, Executive Director of Family Promise and longtime member at Ascension, will share her journey working with the homeless families of Knoxville for the past 6 years. Family Promise Sunday is our annual fundraising event for Family Promise. This year it coincides with the 13th Annual Pasta and Bluegrass Festival, held at Sacred Heart School GYM on Saturday, August 24, from 6:00 to 8:00 pm. A great way to donate this year and show the mission spirit of Ascension would be to become a sponsor. Information about sponsorships is included herein.

Family Promise of Knoxville is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that unites with the interfaith community to provide non-emergency housing to families with children who are experiencing homelessness. The Church of the Ascension began sheltering families in 2005 as a founding partner. The mission of Family Promise is “To help homeless and low income families achieve sustainable independence” and our vision is a community in which every family has a home, a livelihood, and a chance to build a better future together.

Family Promise is the only program in Knoxville that can serve all family configurations. These family units include single mothers, single fathers, two parent families, multi-generational families, and expectant parents. We believe that the

best way to return families to sustainable independence is to keep the family unit intact to face the challenges of regaining housing and working toward a better life. By partnering with the interfaith community to provide shelter, meals, and volunteer support, Family Promise is designed to provide high quality programing at a fraction of the cost of traditional shelter programs.

“We believe the best way to return families to sustainable independence is to keep the family unit intact”

Ascension, along with sixteen other congregations, serve as hosts to our family guests four times a year for one week at a time. Ascension is supported by The Table and Church Street UMC. Twenty-four other congregations also serve as supports for hosting congregations. Volunteers cook and serve meals, play with children, help them with homework, and stay overnight. Most importantly, they are the human spirit of hospitality, personal support, and compassion that families need.

The “In-Kind” value of Ascension’s partnership with Family Promise and with the faith community in providing meals and overnight shelter is \$125,454. If we were to add a monetary value for the volunteer hours, then the amount would increase to over \$200,000!

Family Promise operates a day center with a home-like environment for the families to spend the day, including space for parents to care for pre-school children, access laundry and shower facilities and search for housing and employment. More than just a place to spend the day, Family Promise provides intensive case management through its social work staff. Family Promise works holistically with each family to achieve sustainable rehousing and lift families from poverty. The root causes for family homelessness must be redressed to find a sustainable way forward. Through collaborations with the University of Tennessee Agriculture Extension, and community professionals and programs such as Bank-On, Project Hope, and Strengthening the Family Bond, families attend key life-skill classes and workshops. Recently we have intensified our focus on financial stability.

Our work with families only begins with finding housing. Family Promise is committed to staying involved in the lives of graduate families for up to two years after they move into housing. Individual family needs and values dictate the case management plan that is developed; most often, this plan looks at maintaining housing, education and employment goals, developing a realistic budget, and crisis intervention. This program, known as the Going Home, Staying Home program, is designed to enable families to achieve and maintain sustainable lifestyles. Through the Going Home; Staying Home program families who have moved into permanent housing are able to continue to receive intensive case management services and are encouraged to continue participation in life skills workshops.

For more information go to www.Familypromiseknoxville.org or call me at 584-2822.

Mary LeMense

FAMILY PROMISE PASTA AND BLUEGRASS FESTIVAL

Date: Saturday, August 24, 6:00-8:00 pm, Sacred Heart Gym

Tickets: \$10/adult & \$5/kids

With 15 tastings of competition pasta, kids carnival, Italian market, and bluegrass music by *The Foothills Quartet* and *Rescued*, this evening will support the work of Family Promise and entertain the whole family!

GRATITUDE SPREADS THROUGH KNOXVILLE

Thank you to everyone who helped with our VBS here at Ascension back in June. But I wanted to share with you some back story. We share our decorations and ideas with another church here in Knoxville, Beaver Creek Cumberland Presbyterian, and we have for 3 years. This partnership saves us time and money and leaves us feeling lots of goodwill. We love sharing ideas and helping each other make the best possible events for all our kids. Plus, we love visiting each other's churches during our respective dates and seeing everything decorated in different spaces. This year we shared with another church, Rogers Memorial Baptist. Their VBS was for inner city kids that were bused to them. Part of their evening consisted of feeding the kids a good meal. A lot of their budget goes towards food. So borrowing decorations allows them to feed more to the kids. For many this was their first meal of the day. As one person in our group pointed out, our partnerships "touched around 250 kids" plus over 90 volunteers in our 3 churches! Someone else in the group thought maybe next year we could make food bags for these kids to take home overnight. It's these ideas and thoughts that make VBS so worthwhile and spreads so much love across Knoxville!

Megan Alden

ABOUT THIS ISSUE

As you have noticed by now, this issue of the Parish Paper is different from other issues. While our usual format stresses brevity and succinctness to deliver the most information in the most economical layout, this issue beckons you to spend more time with the writers and subject matter. In an age of snippets and storms of information, we invite you into what may be called "slow-information," a sustainable format of reading and digestion of what our community is trying to communicate. We've also designed the inside spread to be removed, hence the odd layout of the back page of the calendar. We want to you literally and figuratively take hold of this issue packed with themes of "Back to School and Back to Church" and "Gratitude." Let us know how you like this type of layout by emailing Bro. Andrew at andrew@knoxvilleascension.org. The deadline for the September Parish Paper is August 15.

GLADNESS AND SINGLENESS OF HEART

It was Rally Day twenty-three years ago when I first came to Ascension. The sanctuary was full of life and laughter as the annual Rally Day Skit poked fun at the long search for a new rector. Somehow, I knew I was home. My family joined Ascension; a decision I shall never regret.

Teaching Sunday school was my passion. I guess not many newcomers want to commit to teaching, especially the older kids. I found my place teaching 5th grade. That class included Caitlin Bibb, Amanda Harb, Ben Stratton, Tyler Henry, Joey Vrba, Stephen McLaurin, Bryson Bosson. Soon I joined the Ascension Singers, the small group of adults who filled out the children's choir at the 9 o'clock service. Still, my presence at Ascension was quiet, mostly behind the scenes.

Then on 9/11 things changed; as they did for so many. I was no longer willing to sit quietly in Church. I felt we had more to do at Ascension. I ran for Vestry and was elected. Little did I know at the time what lay ahead. Those were contentious years and I landed a leading role right in the middle of it all as Junior Warden. Yet, as we worked through issues and grieved as dear friends left for new church homes, I never wavered. Somehow, after all Ascension had given me and my family, I was in the right place with the right skills for the time to give back. I would never be happy in a congregation that held but one point of view and all believed in lock step. Being Episcopalian means the freedom to question, studying, listening, being open to the holy spirit, and praying for guidance.

My children came through our Sunday school; Sarah from kindergarten and Thomas from first grade. There were years of choir, vacation bible schools, acolyting, and pilgrimages to Ireland and Spain. There was personal loss; my mother and my 25-year marriage. There were also times of celebration; Christmases, Graduations, Mardi Gras, and the marriage of my daughter. There were life changing experiences such as my own pilgrimages, first to Greece with many of those mentioned from that 5th grade class I taught so many years ago, and then to the Holy Land with many fellow pilgrims from Ascension. For this I am forever blessed.

Ascension, for all that it is and all that it offers, has given me great gifts; Music, the opportunity to teach, the opportunity to learn, a place to raise my children, comfort, food and fellowship, prayers, and love. For these reasons, and more I give—I pledge—to Church of Ascension with gladness and singleness of heart.

Mary LeMense

Clockwise from top right:

- A team gathers to prepare what we hope to be a winning pasta recipe (pg. 12)
- Ascension Children assist with the playground cleanup and repair in White Oak, TN (pg 8)
- The Sisterhood gathers at Sullivans for a fun time!
- Fresh backpack tags are ready for Blessing of the Backpacks (pg. 11)



FORMING NEW HABITS

"In all times and places, the Eternal One calls forth souls to help creation realize its destiny. God so calls us, believers from many Christian denominations, to come together into the Ecumenical Order of Charity (EOC). Through living out the principles embodied in our rule of life, The Founding Document, and through the profession of our five unique vows, we dedicated ourselves to becoming active conscious participants in the unfolding of the Reign of God on Earth, co-workers with Our Lord, Jesus Christ, for the sake of the Kingdom." *The Founding Document*, Preamble

And so begins the preamble of *The Founding Document*, the rule of my community, the Ecumenical Order of Charity (EOC). It is a religious community bound to no one denomination but beholden to all people in all places. The five vows of the community are: Simplicity of Life, Purity of Heart, Obedience, Non-Violence, and Universal Citizenship. As the preamble continues, "we come from all walks and states of life; we are men and women; single or married; widowed or dating. We are lay or ordained. We are high school and college graduates, or neither. We come from all professions and experiences." We are called to be the living embodiment of three particular charisms: Charity, Availability, and Ecumenism.

As of June of this year, I was clothed as a novice in the EOC after a period of postulancy (dipping your toes in the monastic waters). For some, the question has been, why so sudden? For those who know me, it has been, finally!

We all have longings in our lives. Longings for relationship, for fulfillment, for...you name it. Mine has been a long longing for communion with the Divine within a community of shared desire with shared rules (i.e. vowed religious life). All communities have an identity, something that makes them unique. When searching for a religious community, I was advised to explore and read the different rules of the communities if not adopt them for some time in a trial run. It was there that I would find their identity. Explore I did! After some considerable time, none stood out as resonating with my longing. Not that any were particularly problematic, I just didn't feel any of them call to me.

When I read *The Founding Document*, it felt as if I had arrived at home. I knew that the community guided by this document was the community that I belonged to. This was a living community guided by a living document. When I went to the General Assembly in June, I walked into the community as if I was walking into my own living room.

So what does this all mean? Nothing drastic has happened. I still keep the Daily Offices of Morning Prayer, Noon Prayer, Evening Prayer, and Compline. I have picked up Centering Prayer and am exploring the riches of that practice. I am currently in the Formation Program of the community, which involves reading books on New Monasticism and reflecting on the five vows of the community, which, God willing, I will take next summer. Most importantly, I am striving each and every day to be an active and conscious participant in the realization of Christ's Kingdom here and now.

This coming year is a period of intense reflection and formation, but I suspect that the journey beyond that will be one of continued and unending conversion. It is a particular and poignant concept of my community that we and our work is never finished. It is important to note that I am still Episcopalian if not even more deeply so. My community calls each of us to be firmly and securely grounded in our respective traditions, bringing our unique perspectives to the community. Episcopalianism is particularly congruous and supportive of vowed religious life with its own rich history of monasticism. Ascension has its own history of vowed religious members. I'm certainly not the first!

For many years you have all known me as Andrew or, as the Boys and Girls' Choir would know me, Mr. Morehead. In reflecting upon a monastic name to take when joining the EOC, I found one little hitch. I was already being called Brother Andrew by friends, acquaintances, and members of the community. Who could give up Andrew when he was the first-called apostle? I decided to add Aelred as my additional name. He was a Cistercian abbot from the 12th century who is counted among the top three Cistercian theologians. He fostered community through his rich understanding of charity and friendship (see *The Mirror of Charity* and *Spiritual Friendship*). Thus, my new name is Brother Andrew Aelred. However, you can call me either Brother Andrew, Brother Aelred, or Brother Andrew Aelred.

While *The Founding Document* does not require it at all times, I choose to wear the habit of my order as often as possible as a continual sign to myself and to others of my call to religious life, of the Divine reality that my life points to day in and day out. Yes, it produces some interesting questions, but it has brought a surprising number of joyous reactions from strangers (and animals that like to play with my cincture and scapular!).

I invite you to visit ecuorderofcharity.org for more information on my community. There you will find a full copy of *The Founding Document* and historical information. I also invite you to get in touch with me at any time at andrew@knoxvilleascension.org, or to stop into the office for a cup of coffee and a chat!

Much love and blessings,

Bro. Andrew Aelred



The Episcopal Church of the
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RALLY DAY 2019 SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 8

Rally Day 2019 is Sunday, September 8. We will be partnering with Rise Against Hunger to package over 10,000 meals to feed those in need overseas.

Lunch will be catered sandwich boxes from Honey Baked Ham for only \$5/box with a \$20/family max! Turkey, ham, and vegetarian garden salad options will be available. You can go to www.knoxvilleascension.org/rallyday (no surcharge) or visit the table in the foyer beginning Sunday, August 11, to buy your lunch ticket. Lunch orders need to be completed by Tuesday, September 3.

Special Rally Day 2019 t-shirts will also be available for \$15. Proceeds from t-shirt sales will go to fund our Rise Against Hunger project and Youth Mission work. You can visit the table in the foyer to pre-purchase your t-shirts. Orders for t-shirts need to be completed by Tuesday, August 20.

RALLYING THE CHURCH TO MISSION 2019

