



Fall 2020

Dear people of Ascension,

As you know, the Christian tradition of *financial* giving is inspired by both Scripture and the witness of the Church from one generation to another. All we are and all we have comes from God. We offer to God in Thanksgiving a portion of the blessings that have already been given to us.

Our discipline of gratitude is especially important during these challenging times. Many of us have been unable to gather at Ascension – to hear the choir, smell the incense, kneel in quiet, greet and visit with others in Wheeler Hall – for over eight months now. Giving in faith is also a greater challenge for those of us faced with employment and financial uncertainties.

Even so, we ask for your faithful financial support of Ascension’s mission, ministries and, yes, considerable operating budget, for the year to come. **As you weigh your commitment, please consider not only the challenges of 2020 but also our many blessings,** some of which are shared on the back page of this letter.

In addition to asking for your financial pledge for 2021, **we also ask you now for a one-time gift toward new technology** that will allow us to continue live-streaming masses, the Daily Offices and more through and after the end of the pandemic. The system will:

- ease your access from home (or wherever you may be);
- better capture our treasured organ and choir offerings;
- include hearing-assistance units for those in the pews who can benefit from them; *and*
- continue to share the richness of our worship with the world beyond our walls.

Separate response cards are included for your 2021 pledge and for a year-end 2020 gift toward our coming new technologies. Please let us know if you have needs for pastoral care or prayers, and thank you for your faith and for all of the ways you take part in and support the Church of the Ascension.

With thanksgiving,


Gary Alexander,
Senior Warden


Cheryl Peterson,
Junior Warden


The Very Rev. Patrick Raymond,
Rector

2020 Bright Spots and Thanksgivings

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I WAS GLAD when they said to me,
"Let us go to the house of the LORD."

Now our feet are standing
within your gates, O Jerusalem.

Jerusalem is built as a city
that is at unity with itself;

To which the tribes go up,
the tribes of the LORD,
the assembly of Israel,
to praise the Name of the LORD.

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:
"May they prosper who love you.

Peace be within your walls
and quietness within your towers.

For my brethren and companions' sake,
I pray for your prosperity."

– Psalm 122:1-4,6-8

PS Please read on and learn more from the information on the back of this letter and on the pledge cards, and reach out to us, or to our Treasurer, Susan Schlough, if we can answer your questions.

Bright Spots & Thanksgivings in 2020

Young adults began showing up in significant numbers in the fall of 2019. By Lent 2020, many were taking part as acolytes for the Solemn High Mass. As the pandemic hit, they were leading our best-attended Lenten program in years. Many have returned since our in-person worship resumed in September.



We began live-streaming from the first Sunday of quarantine in March 2020, and have missed only one Sunday of masses since. (There was that other Sunday when Fr. Raymond live-streamed a mass to the wrong Facebook page – but those viewers were very grateful!) Quality has steadily improved, and we hope to make a quantum leap forward by year's end.

Our food pantry has continued uninterrupted, even if not on the usual basis, thanks to leadership by Deacon Charles Farrell and one intrepid volunteer.



We've welcomed Deacon George Arce-neaux and look forward to his ordination as priest in 2021. **Seminarian Bonnie Scott** has joined us for the present academic year. Our assisting priests – Fathers Lawler, Petite and Pruitt – and Deacon Farrell continue to contribute to our ministries in various ways.



Our Organist, Choirmaster and Verger have all stepped up, adapted and continued to serve and lead under extraordinary circumstances. Sacred music has been recorded remotely by our gifted choir members and has recently been incorporated into both live-streamed and in-person masses.



Participation in the Daily Office (via Zoom and Facebook since pandemic) has markedly increased, thanks to both veteran and new lay leadership.



A six-session conversation on reconciliation was convened by Junior Warden Cheryl Peterson and co-led by a number of the half-dozen regular participants. The group is now exploring how more of us can examine and discuss, from the vantage of faith, matters of race, class, culture and more.



Roofing projects continued – the last such projects for a long time, we hope. The coach house got a new roof, and re-roofing of the parish house, started a year ago, was finished.

Four weddings have been celebrated in 2020 – more than in any recent year, and all with social distancing ... except for those being wed.

