

Ascent

2018
February

Annual Congregational Meeting

**Sunday,
February 11
from 6 – 8pm**

Please attend our annual congregational meeting on Sunday, February 11 at 6pm in the New Catacombs. Childcare will be provided for infants – 5th grade.

Why come? As our rector, The Rev. Canon Jonathan Millard wrote in the January Ascent, “There are many ways to engage in our communal life and this meeting, though more ‘institutional,’ is an important part of our spiritual commitment to one another and our life together.” A progress report on the implementation of the mediation agreement with the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh will be given as well as other reports by the Rector and Senior Warden. The meeting is very informative and, while many matters of business are discussed, it typically has a very enthusiastic atmosphere.

The following three members of Ascension have been put forward by our nominating committee to serve on Vestry:

Susan Bailey



Susan Bailey grew up in Forest Hills and was a member of Redeemer in Squirrel Hill. Her 20 years of professional experience in communications includes television, radio, fund raising and public relations. Susan became a member of Ascension in 1996. She retired from her career when she married John in 1998. They lived in Erie for 15 years before retiring to Pittsburgh and reigniting their membership in Ascension. She currently serves as a member of Altar Guild.

Susan earned a BA from Penn State; an Associate of Theology from Christ for the Nations; an MA from Regent University; and is a member of the Phi Theta Kappa honorary society. She currently attends Trinity School for Ministry in their MAR/Biblical Studies program.

Susan and John share a love for family, dogs, gardening, traveling, and reading. Her desire is to continue to serve God in whatever way He leads as she embarks on this newest journey in her life.

Paige Forster



Paige Forster grew up in the Pittsburgh suburbs and met her husband, Jeff, during their freshman year at Yale. When they graduated and moved to the city as an engaged couple, they found Ascension and immediately knew it was their church home. They have been members since 1995.

Before going to law school, Paige worked in nonprofits, including Trinity School for Ministry and an organization that later became part of East End Cooperative Ministry. She is now an attorney specializing in appeals. After several years in private practice at Reed Smith, she recently

became a law clerk to a federal appellate judge.

Paige and Jeff live in Regent Square with their sons, Charlie and Teddy. Paige is an avid novel reader and an enthusiastic cook and baker. For much of the year, her family can often be found on and around ball fields: Teddy plays Little League,

Family News

February Birthdays

1. Moyo Adebajo, Daniel Kusbit
2. Paige Forster
3. Andrew Cummings
Tom Hillman, Andrea Millard
4. Gary Lewis, Isabella Very
5. Mike Peduzzi
6. Grant Martsof
7. Mike Prible, David Weeber
9. Juanita Forrest, Barb Franzen
Claudia Mulock, John Rankin
10. Cesar Schalm, Matt Swab
12. Jim Davison
13. Benn Wilson
14. Garrett Kimball
Bonnie Liefer, James Rankin
Jim Rankin
15. Owen Peduzzi
Charity Wahrenberger
16. Jolene Belferman
17. Karen Gowdy, Dennis Raufer
18. Jay Gilmer, Ann Tefft
Kavya Weaver
19. John Victor Banfield Hicks
Jack Harper, Ezezi Ogbo
Guy Tomcik
21. Eric Newhouse, Beckie Prible
24. James Crosby, Doug Spence
25. Stephanie Raufer
26. John Finnell, Becca Radcliffe
27. Kathy Barnard
Matthew Kissell, Aaron Sams

February Anniversaries

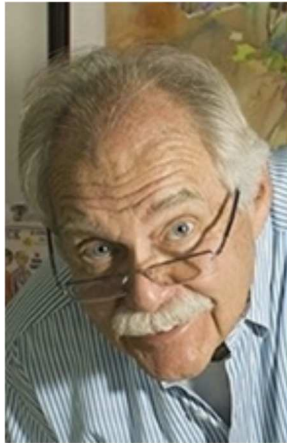
2. Nate and Erika Twitchell
26. Tim Lee & Kate Brainard-Lee

Not listed? Email Birthdays and Anniversary details to stacey.regan@ascensionpittsburgh.org

Continued from front page

Charlie is a Little League umpire and a member of the Allderdice Marching Band, and the whole family roots for the Pittsburgh Pirates.

Tom Hillman



Tom Hillman was born in 1948 in Charleroi, Pennsylvania and grew up in Oakland where he was raised by his mother, aunt, grandmother, and grandfather. While attending Schenley High School, he met his wonderful wife, Marcine. They have been married for 47 years and have two beautiful daughters, Amanda and Mara. They have also been blessed with three loving grandchildren, Judah, Eli, and Aiken.

Nine years ago, when Tommy retired from working full-time, he started working at Meadowink Golf Course as a starter and ranger.

His passion for the game of golf and love of meeting new people and socializing made this the perfect job for him. Prior to retiring, he worked for 37 years as an outside sales consultant for Broudy Printing Inc. In addition, he worked as the Director of Happening (a discipleship program for senior high teens) in the Anglican Diocese of Pittsburgh. Currently, he is on the Board of Directors of Earthen Vessels Outreach. He recently founded “The Tommy Hillman Project”, which is a partnership with Zoltun Design. This project helps small, non-profit organizations with their design and print needs.

Church of the Ascension has been “home” to him for 64 years. During this time, he has sung in the Choir, been on the Pub Club Team, served several terms on the Vestry, and been involved with the Junior and Senior High Youth Ministry for over 40 years. Currently, he serves with Children’s Ministry, the Parish Discernment Committee, Usher team, Welcome Table, Alter Prayer Ministry, and the OWLS Ministry.

TREASURER’S REPORT (by Nate Barrett)

Thank you to all who gave generously in 2017 and especially in response to calls for year-end giving. We had great momentum as we finished up 2017 and brought in \$1,189,000 of giving for the year which is \$30,000/2.6% greater than what our budget called for and \$110,000/10.2% greater than 2016! With these generous gifts and well-controlled expenses, we were able to end 2017 with a surplus of \$36,000. Having a surplus in 2017 is a great blessing as we are moving strategically to build our Vestry Reserve balance and fund other needs in 2018 and beyond.

Moving into 2018, we completed one of our strongest pledge campaigns ever and are able to budget for a 5% increase in giving from 2017. While we believe this is a realistic goal for our budget, it is certainly a challenge to all in the congregation to continue the positive momentum from 2017 and to remain prayerful and cheerful givers in 2018.

Welcome Ministries



I want to share, from personal experience what the power of a strong welcoming presence did for my son, Ben, and his wife, Brytani, who moved to Houston, Texas, at the end of July. They travelled by car and carefully planned their arrival for Sunday morning so they could attend a church they had scoped out in advance. Things went to plan, they rolled into town at 10:15am in time for the 11am service. During the service they were greeted by several people sitting near them, and after the service they were taken out to lunch by an “older couple” (my age...) who also invited them to attend their Community Group meeting later that week.



WHAT A WELCOME! Having been in Texas for less than a week, Ben and Brytani had a church to call home and a Community Group for ongoing friendship and growth together in Christ. During the floods that followed shortly after their arrival, that “older couple”, Julie and Keith, checked in on them daily. “Better stock up on water.” “Purchase batteries.” Ben and Brytani were fine in their apartment, but Julie and Keith found their home completely submerged and accessible only by boat. Still, despite their increasingly dire circumstances, Julie and Keith made those daily calls. They were a long way from home, but you bet that Ben and Brytani felt cared for!

Romans 15:7 reads, *“Welcome one another, then, just as Christ welcomed you, in order to bring praise to God.”* How do we foster this kind of welcoming culture at Ascension?

It starts with each of us. And, the good news is that we’re well on our way at Ascension to being a welcoming community. That said, we can continue to be intentional about it. You don’t need to be on a ministry team to extend a hand, offer a smile or to say “Hello, my name is” I recall the first person I ever saw at Ascension. His name was Bill Perkins. He had a tweed coat on, buttoned at the waist, and brown shoes. Most of all I remember his big smile and his genuine welcome. I also remember the family we met next – Bill and Nancy Rued. They said hello in the parking lot as we were leaving and extended an invitation to dinner that week - the start of an enduring friendship.

It also helps to have other ministries in place to make sure no one goes unnoticed. So, on Sunday mornings we currently have three official Welcome Ministries - Greeters, Ushers, Welcome Table - and we are adding a new ministry, Parish Hall Hosts. Here is a glimpse at each:

Greeters: Arrive 15 minutes prior to the start of the service to greet those who walk through one of our entrances, either at the education wing entrance or by the big red doors. If someone is visiting, answer their questions. You typically serve in pairs on a rotation that is made up by the Greeter Team leader. Currently we have gaps and don’t have folks to greet at all entrances each week.

Ushers: Arrive 20 minutes prior to the start of the service to greet people, answer newcomer questions, and help with service logistics. You serve quarterly for a month on a team that has a captain who will train you. Again, we have gaps, particularly at the 9am service.

Welcome Table: Chat with visitors who approach our church welcome table after the service is over. Find out who they are, what questions they might have, who they might connect with, and give them one of our chocolate bars as a welcome gift. We could use a few more welcome table hosts.

Parish Hall Hosts: Hang out in the Parish Hall after the 9am or 11am service and simply have conversations with people who might be new. Newcomers are often standing alone (by the bookshelves) or sitting alone at one of the tables. The task is to share yourself and to get to know them a bit too. Not really a task at all!

If you would like to discuss any of these opportunities further, please contact me, Marilyn Chislaghi, Director of Ministry. I can be reached at my extension at church (412-621-4361, ext. 219) or email me at marilyn.chislaghi@ascensionpittsburgh.org.



Come Quickly to
Help Us

The Psalms through Lent

LENTEN SERMON SERIES

February 18

Lent 1: Psalm 25:3-9

None Who Wait for You Will Be Put to Shame

February 25

Lent 2: Psalm 16:5-11

The Boundary Lines Have Fallen for Me
in Pleasant Places

March 4

Lent 3: Psalm 19:7-14

The Law of the Lord Is Perfect

March 11

Lent 4: Psalm 122

Let Us Go to the House of the Lord

March 18

Lent 5: Psalm 51

Blot out My Transgressions

Discussion questions will be provided each week and can also be found on the website under the calendar tab. Use these questions as a resource for your community group, family devotions, and other gatherings.

Digging Deeper — Saturday Morning Teaching

February 10, from 10:30am – Noon.

Jonathan Warren will teach on the Psalms, the basis of the series, providing background on their composition, as well as an overview of how they have been prayed by God's people over nearly 3,000 years. All who are interested are invited to this teaching.

A **Community Group Leader Meeting** will precede the teaching from 9 to 10:15am. **Childcare will be available for the entire morning.**



Ash Wednesday Services Wednesday, February 14 at Noon and 7pm

Please consider keeping 'a holy Lent' and join us on Ash Wednesday. We will have services at Noon and 7pm. Childcare will be provided at both services.

Ash Wednesday derives its name from the practice of blessing ashes made from last year's palm branches and placing them on the heads of participants to the accompaniment of the words "*Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return*".

According to the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, Jesus spent 40 days fasting in the desert, where he endured temptation by Satan. Lent originated as a mirroring of this, fasting 40 days as preparation for Easter. Ash Wednesday, a day of fasting, is the first day of Lent. It occurs 46 days before Easter (40 fasting days and 6 Sundays which are non-fasting days) and can fall as early as February 4 or as late as March 10.

FRIDAY LENTEN DINNER SERIES



Four Directions of the Life Jesus Gives

Friday, March 2, 9, 16 and 23

Every year we look forward to a Friday dinner teaching series during Lent. This year our series will take place the first 4 Fridays in March, beginning Friday, March 2nd and concluding Friday, March 23rd. The dinner series is an all family event. While adults enjoy the talks, there will be childcare and programming for children that follows the same theme. There will also be a program for the youth. RSVP's are not necessary. We hope you will come!



The Rev. Geoff Chapman

We are pleased that the Rev. Geoff Chapman, Rector of St Stephens in Sewickley, will be our speaker at our Friday Lenten Dinner Series this year. Geoff has worked for years to help his congregants as well as churches like us embrace discipleship in a fresh and life-changing way. Central to this kind of discipleship is what Geoff calls the “Four Directions of the Life Jesus Gives”.

In successive weeks, Geoff will take us through each of the Four Directions.

What are they?

Upward: The ‘Up’ direction is a life of worship, where every disciple has made our triune God the first and greatest love of his life, of her life, so that everything we do is done for him, from the simplest things to the largest things.

Outward: The ‘Out’ direction is a life of love, first to our family and our fellow believers, and then our neighbors, and our co-workers... and even for our enemies!

Downward: The ‘Down’ direction is a life that is lost, where you lose your life in order to find your life. You let things go. You put yourself last. You think of others more highly than yourself. You make repentance a life habit. You learn to *‘humble yourself before the mighty hand of God.’* (1 Peter 5.6)

Inward: The ‘In’ direction is an attentive life, where you pay attention to your heart, because the heart is the center of your life. Everything you are flows out of your heart, so we guard it, keep it, attend to it. We seek the ‘Renovation of the Heart’ (Dallas Willard) from Christ.

The call to this kind of life would seem well beyond our reach, but Geoff will remind us that this is not only the life that Jesus himself lived, but is also the very life that Jesus gives to us by the Holy Spirit. What he asks of us, he gives to us, and as we walk with him, we become like him, with lives that share his beauty. Come and grow with us this Lent!

Friday Program:

6:30 Dinner

7:15 Worship

7:30 Teaching

8:30 Dismiss

Buffet Dinner

Suggested Donation:

\$7/adult

\$3/child

\$20 family maximum

Scholarships available!

POVERTY SIMULATION



is teaming up with
Church of the Ascension

**Friday,
February 2, 2018**

6:30-8:30pm

for a

Poverty Simulation ...

Part role-play,

part-monopoly,

part game of Life

(on overdrive).

During a simulation, participants role-play the lives of low-income families, from single parents trying to care for their children to senior citizens trying to maintain their self-sufficiency on Social Security. The task of each family is to provide food, shelter and other basic necessities during the simulation while interacting with various community resources staffed by low-income volunteers.

Though the simulation will be at Ascension, the New Catacombs will be transformed into a city (called Realville). The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette describes a recent Poverty Simulation: *It is set up with tables along the walls manned by people playing representatives of a bank, school, day care center, employer, homeless shelter, grocery, rent collector, payday lender, pawn shop, police station, utility company and welfare office.* Each participant will be assigned a role to play (and a packet with goals, instructions, “money,” etc.). Think of it like a real-life video game or immersive theater with your church family. Poverty Simulations raise our own awareness about poverty and provide a creative way for us to practice empathy as a community.

We will also get to hear about the important and redemptive work that the non-profit CIRCLES - directed by Ted Melnyk, who attends Ascension - is doing in our city and how we can join, support, and pray for them. According to their website, Circles connects “people across socioeconomic lines in an effort to move people and families out of poverty.” Instead of creating programs to “manage poverty,” they engage in the “longer term, harder work of moving people out of poverty. Good jobs, saving, investing and changing lives and families for good.”

Join us for this night together, which will be an imaginative, challenging, and thought-provoking time (and experiment!) for our community.

For more information, contact tish.warren@ascensionpittsburgh.org.

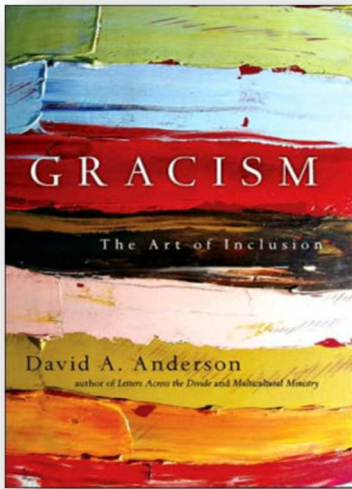


- Tish Warren, co-Associate Rector



Ted Melnyk

Recommended Reading for Epiphany: *Gracism*



A few months ago, we had the privilege of hosting the Rev. Dr. Esau McCaulley at our church for a Men's Breakfast and to preach on Sunday morning at Ascension. Fr. Esau electrified us with his own story of becoming an Anglican, with his deep appreciation for the liturgy and its formative power for making disciples, and he challenged us with the fact that the Anglican Church in North America does not, by and large, reach people of color. As an African American growing up in Huntsville, Alabama, Fr. Esau told us he had never heard of Anglicanism because Anglicans had not made a serious, enduring effort to create inroads into his community.

This is a problem because the kingdom of God is multi-ethnic. As it breaks down the dividing wall between Jew and Gentile (Eph. 2:14-22), so it also breaks down the dividing wall between all ethnicities. God, the Creator of all, made 'of one blood all nations of men' (Acts 17:26), and the future we look forward to is the gathering of all nations into a unity in Christ which is not a uniformity, in which all ethnicities will bring their own gifts and praise God in their own languages (Isa. 60:5-7; Rev. 7:9), as St. Augustine wrote: "Set in one place, [Adam] fell and, as it were, broken small, he has filled the whole world. But the Divine Mercy gathered up the fragments from every side, forged them in the fire of love and welded into one what had been broken."

That unity is to find expression in the midst of our local churches now as a sign of our hope for the resurrection. The apostles labored hard to forge and sustain this unity in the earliest churches (Col. 3:11-14; Gal. 3:28; Eph. 4:3-6; 1 Cor. 1:10; Acts 15:1-21). This conviction was not a piece of airy-fairy social engineering dreamed up by the apostles, but a central part of the apostolic faith which they had received from Christ (John 15:9-14; 17:9-26; Mt. 28:16-20). The fourth century father John Chrysostom witnessed to the power of the gospel to overcome historic ethnic divisions: "Of one and of the other, Christ makes a single body. Thus he who lives in Rome looks on the Indians as his own members. Is there any union to be compared with that? Christ is the head of all."

Fr. Esau is one of the co-founders of the Anglican Multi-Ethnic Network (AMEN), which "exists to help Anglicans in North America better reflect the diversity of the body of Christ in local churches so that our churches' ethnic make-up manifests the universal saving power of the gospel and its ability to unite all people under the lordship of Christ." AMEN recommends resources designed to help the churches in the Anglican Church of North America to understand and overcome the sources of historic and present divisions between different ethnic groups.

AMEN's recommended reading for Epiphany is David Anderson's *Gracism: The Art of Inclusion* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2010). As a church that places our hope in Christ and which lives in expectation of the powerful work of the Holy Spirit to overcome divisions in our city, our country, and in the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church of Christ, we will join our province in prayerfully reading this book during Epiphany, when we remember the nations joyfully bringing their gifts to the Christ-child, and the light of his incarnation becoming known to the world (Mt. 2:1-11).

- Jonathan Warren, co-Associate Rector

Book
Discussion
Group

Want to read and discuss this "Gracism" with others?

Join Jonathan and Tish Warren as they lead a discussion of the book near the end of Epiphany, on Friday, February 9, from 7 – 8:30pm in the Parish Hall. We will have childcare available, as well as tea and coffee. Please join us in reading this book during Epiphany and for our discussion on February 9.

This month we are delighted to highlight two ministries in Africa for children and adults who have experienced much loss and hardship. Both ministries have deep Ascension roots and continue to have vibrant ministries today!

Sylvia Tamusuza and the Love and Care Family

written by Ascension member, Denise Cox



Dr. Sylvia Tamusuza

Since 2000 members of the Church of the Ascension and several other organizations and churches in Western Pennsylvania have been supporting the ministry of Dr. Sylvia Tamusuza to orphaned and abandoned children in Uganda through the *Love and Care Family* in Kampala, Uganda. In particular the children's Sunday School has been instrumental in developing relationships with Dr. Sylvia and the children she ministers to.

While pursuing her Ph.D. in Ethnomusicology at the University of Pittsburgh, Dr. Sylvia was a regular attender at Ascension. At age 10 she was abandoned by her father, miraculously rescued by a missionary nun, and given the opportunity to develop as an international scholar in her field of study. Dr. Sylvia's own history compelled her while still a young unmarried woman to establish the *Love and Care Family* and provide a home for orphaned or abandoned children. Later as she married, her husband and her own children followed her into this ministry.

Ascension provided a substantial donation towards the building of the *Miriam Duggan Home* where the children live. The home was named after Sister Miriam Duggan, the woman who rescued Dr. Sylvia. The home recreates the traditional Ugandan extended family structure. In the home children have a chance to experience family life even though they may have lost their biological parents through abandonment or death. Further, widows are employed to serve as mother of the home, nurturing any children of her own as well as children who are either orphaned or abandoned. Widows willing to act as mothers receive the benefits of a home to call their own.

Like in any family, the children are given shelter, offered services including: education (formal and informal), medical care, clothing, food, mentorship, counseling and Christian fellowship. Additionally, as in a healthy family, children who become youth and later adults, are supported in transition to adult life. They are offered pre-marital counseling when they are ready for marriage. So far, there have been 3 marriage ceremonies. To date, 27 children have been nurtured in the *Miriam Duggan Home*. One of these children, Simon Peter, is now an Anglican pastor and has received notice that he has a scholarship to attend Trinity School for Ministry in pursuit of a Doctorate of Ministry next year. It will be exciting to introduce Simon Peter to the Ascension congregation, to the Sunday School children, and to his sponsors.



Introduced in 2005, the Olive Kinship Program of the *Love and Care Family* provides education to orphaned and abandoned children who can be hosted in the home of a relative. This program provides only education and the hosting families take care of the other needs. This program has supported 23 children with 7 of these children attaining University degrees. The program presently supports 7 children.

What a blessing that this ministry, supported by many members of Ascension, continues to provide support for at risk children in Uganda!

The Orphaned Heart Ministry



written by Ascension member, Janet Helms

The ministry that God called me to launch is something I would never have dreamed of! It all began when my husband, Worth, and I traveled to Uganda back in 1999 with a mission team from a local church. On that trip we visited an orphanage called the *Mustard Seed Babies' Home* and it was there where we met Olive, our daughter from Africa who now comes to Ascension. She was 7 years old. God connected our hearts, and in that moment, our spirits were kindled to try to adopt her. While we were ultimately unsuccessful in legally adopting her, we found a good boarding school for her in Africa and have been her spiritual parents since that time. She finally came to the United States in 2012 and graduated from college this year! We are so proud of her!

Sylvia Tamusuza of the *Love and Care Family* took Olive into her home to spend her breaks from boarding school. But Sylvia and I felt called to help more children, especially since 2.5 million children were orphaned due to the AIDS virus back in the early 1990's. This experience opened my eyes and heart to the many children of East Africa whom I learned suffered from a deep emotional wound. I have come to call this wound "The Orphaned Heart", to which the spirit of rejection and abandonment attach. It does not get better over time, but festers and affects all relationships and decisions a person makes.

As a board member of the *Love and Care Family*, I started a ministry in 2009 in East Africa to address this deep heart-wound, called *Orphaned Heart Ministries (OHM)*. I began to see the theological thread in Scripture from Genesis through Jesus' statement, "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you" (John 14.18) from my studies at Trinity School for Ministry while getting my M.A. in Missions. The book I wrote in 2016, *Healing the Orphaned Heart—Restoring the Heart of a Child of God*, plus my study and training, plus my work in Africa, have given me and my Ugandan team the insights to teach this subject throughout Kenya, Uganda, and Rwanda where the internal scars of genocide still abound.

This ministry has exploded!! The Uganda OHM leadership team plans budgets, organizes conferences, teaches the subjects, holds Hope Fellowship Conferences, and uses inner-healing prayer to heal the memory and soul-level of those who suffer. The leadership team is a powerful and gifted group of graduates from Uganda Christian University. To give a taste for their work, in 2017 this leadership team brought healing to 5,120 people who participated in thirty-seven OHM events!

As of January 15th I will be in Uganda doing trainings, meeting with my team, conducting two Diocesan conferences, and will be a featured speaker at the Diocesan Conference of Lango on January 17 and 18 where we expect 60,000 attendees! God has surely blessed this message to help anyone suffering this deep hurt. I am also doing more in the United States, having conducted 3 conferences in Aliquippa and 3 workshops in Stuart, Florida in 2017. I thank God for the opportunity to do such meaningful and transformative work for His Kingdom. It is my calling and my greatest joy.

If you feel called to support this life transforming ministry, checks may be sent to:

Orphaned Heart Ministries
(OHM)
PO Box 1223
Wexford, PA 15090

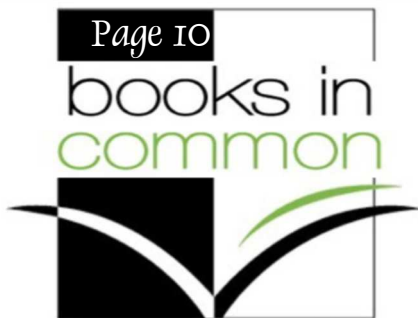
OHM is a 501©3
and contributions are tax
deductible.

Thank you!



Janet Helms





Books in Common is a monthly column focusing on the reading life of Church of the Ascension. Each month we will feature an interview with a parishioner about books that they are reading or have influenced their Christian life. The column will also feature occasional book reviews. If you are interested in being interviewed or reviewing a book, please contact Grant Martsolf (grantmartsolf@gmail.com) or Bonnie Budzowski (Bonnie@IncredibleMessages.com)

This month's review features an interview with Sam Dickerman who attends the 9am service.



Sam Dickerman

Can you tell us a bit about yourself?

I live with my family, Kristin and Lydia, in the hilly neighborhood of Beechview in the southside of the city. I love regional history and learning about this area generally, and enjoy exploring the cities, towns, and of course beautiful nature of Southwestern PA. I am originally from Columbus, Ohio but fell in love with this area when I attended Geneva College in Beaver Falls.

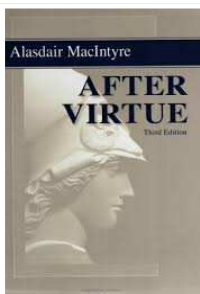
What books are you reading right now?

Currently I am reading through Shelby Foote's *Civil War* trilogy, and I just finished reading Faulkner's *Go Down Moses*. I've long been interested in the Civil War, even as a little kid. In fact, my first trip into Pennsylvania was as a ten-year old with my family to visit Gettysburg. However, as I've developed a passion and interest in American History more generally, I find myself constantly looking back at the Civil War as such a central part of our history. It was a defining moment of our history and its impact and after-effects continue today, and much of American history before and since relates in some way back to that war. *Go Down Moses* traces four generations of a Mississippi family, from the Antebellum period up through the Depression, and Faulkner uses the family to illustrate changing race relations and a changing relationship with nature in America, and in particular the South. I'm attracted to Southern writers specifically because of the sense of tragedy within their writing; there seems to be an awareness of the complexity of human nature, and its capacity for both good and evil aligns well with a biblical perspective on life and human nature.

What books have most deeply impacted your Christian life and why?

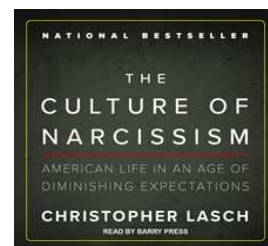
Alasdair MacIntyre, a Catholic philosophy professor at Notre Dame, wrote a book called *After Virtue* that has had a huge impact on my own Christian Life. It's a dense read, but essentially his aim in the book is to show how, in the Modern Age, secular thinkers have tried and failed to establish a secular foundation and reason for acting ethically, for practicing good behavior instead of bad behavior. MacIntyre explains that all such attempts by secular thinkers have ended up with

“emotivism” as a foundation for moral behavior. Emotivism essentially means that one thinks something is right because it makes them feel good, or that something is bad because it makes them feel bad, completely based on emotional response and not on any objective standard for morality. Alasdair then posits that Christianity provides the only reasonable objective standard for such morality. I particularly love this book because it explains so much how we determine moral behavior in our culture today. Watch how the media attempts to explain good or bad behavior, and it's all emotivism. As Christians we are incredibly blessed to have the ethical standard provided in the Bible, and we don't need to base our view of right and wrong on the shaky, shifting grounds of emotivism.



What books do you regularly re-read and why?

I've re-read *The Moviegoer* by Walker Percy, another southern writer, a number of times. It's a short novel but full of wisdom about human nature and life in the modern world. The main character is a Louisianan named Binx Bolling who is lonely and struggling to find meaning in life, and it follows him in his attempts at “discovering” meaning in life. I also often re-read anything by Christopher Lasch, an American intellectual historian who wrote books such as *The Culture of Narcissism* and *The True and Only Heaven: Progress and Its Critics*. Lasch himself never professed to be a Christian but had a keen, Christian-like awareness of the ways in which our culture was and is following the false gods of consumerism and technology. In *The True and Only Heaven* Lasch traces how, in America, we have increasingly followed the belief that consumerism and technology will lead to progress. Lasch charts how this has negatively affected our sense of community and meaning in life, issues we can relate to as Christians we struggle to maintain a Christian worldview, lifestyle, and community in an increasingly secular and materialistic culture.



As we have opportunity ...

“as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.”

Galatians 6:10

By Tish Warren, co-Associate Rector

We have told you in past editions about our great Congregational Care team, which consists of Ascension members who coordinate meals, work with kids with special needs, provide counseling, serve new moms, and other ministries. But we also want to remind you of a very important part of Ascension’s Congregational Care team: YOU.

We have ministry teams devoted to specific populations in order to do our best to care for those in our church, but beyond any programmatic ministry, the most vital part of a congregational care is the goodness and kindness in organic relationships that form as we as congregation share life together.

So if you see a friend at Ascension who you think needs a meal, let our Meal Ministry Coordinator know, *but also* feel free to drop a casserole off at your friend’s home. If you see a church member who is struggling, seek creative ways to encourage them--perhaps send a card or some dark chocolate or ask them out for coffee. If you know someone needs prayer, ask if you could pray with them after the service on Sunday. Your own quiet ways of loving each other as a congregation are often more valuable, beautiful, and redemptive than anything we could ever programize or organize.

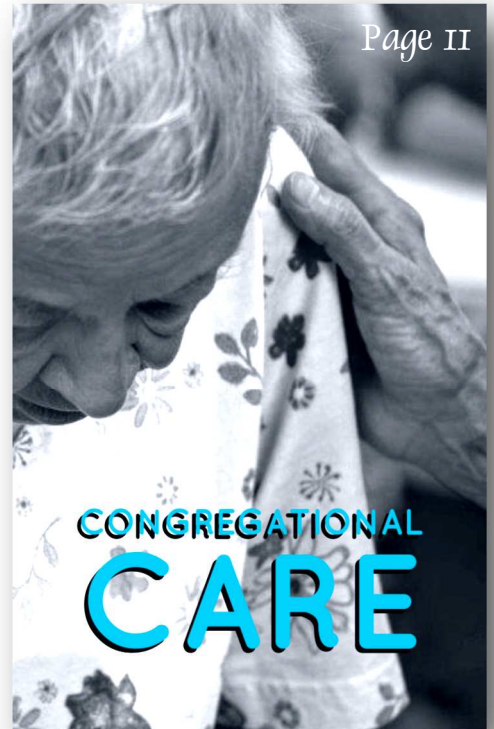
In the same way, if you have practical needs or other struggles that you could use help with, let others know. It always feels vulnerable to admit your own needs, but there is great courage in telling your community how you need support. Please communicate your needs with us (to us priests or others in the congregation) and invite your community to walk with you.

Our focus as a Congregational Care team is Galatians 6:10, which says, “So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.” This is our call. I love that little phrase, “As we have opportunity...” We cannot meet all people’s needs. We are not called to be anyone’s savior. And, for all of us, our ability, capacity, and time are limited, but God will give us opportunities to do good for those around us, often in quiet, unsung ways, and I urge you to pray for and take up those opportunities for good that flow from the warp and woof of life together.

In an article for *The Point Magazine*, where they asked me to write about what the church is and why I remain in it, I wrote this about you at Church of the Ascension:

“Yet it’s not humanitarian aid where I find the most astonishing goodness in the church. I am glad that the church builds wells in developing countries—but secular NGOs do that just as well. For me, the allure of my Christian community is in its quiet, ordinary goodness, the silent ways I watch people care for each other, week in and week out: the young man who gives an elderly friend a ride, the women who meet over coffee to pray and talk, the new mother I visit to bless her newborn and drop off a baby blanket from an older lady in our church, the meal team who will drop by her house with soups and casseroles, and her fellow church members who will check in to see how she’s doing. These small stories of love are what make a life, a family and a community, but they are also the course of an average week.”

Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote that, “The person who loves their dream of community will destroy community, but the person who loves those around them will create community.” We are an imperfect community --and I’m certain that Church of the Ascension is not a complete and perfect picture of all of our “dreams of community.” But everyone in our church—every single one of us - is called to be a “community creator.” So, as we have the opportunity, let’s get creating ...



Children's Ministry

Friday Lenten Dinner Series

Our Lenten Dinner Series will take place the first 4 Fridays in March from 6:30 – 8:30pm. Kids will eat with their parents. Following the meal there will be kids programming that will align with the adult program, but on an age-appropriate level. We are looking forward to that time together! Childcare will also be available 0-4.

Communion Class on Sunday, March 18



On Sunday, March 18 we will use our Sunday School time to teach on the Sacrament of Communion. The aim is to help the kids grasp why we do what we do, so that they can have a deeper reverence for Christ in worship. We also desire to equip parents with tools to talk with their kids about what they see and experience in worship. Matt Ulrich and Jonathan Warren will co-lead this time, and parents are encouraged to attend with their child.

A Multigenerational Workshop—Sharing Lent Together at Home

Saturday, February 17 from 9:30-11:30am, Room 103

Are you looking for Lenten resources, accessible to all ages, that will deepen your times of devotional bible reading and prayer as a group? Would you want something fun, colorful, and creative for Lent? Children's Ministry will be offering a multigenerational workshop. Childcare will be provided. We will be previewing the lesson series that will be used in the Children and Worship Sunday School lessons during Lent, with adaptations for people of all ages to be used at home. We will also introduce Sybil MacBeth's visual and embodied approach to connecting with God from her book series, *Praying in Color*.



Testimonial from Sunday School Teacher Gary Holt

During the week Gary works with Google. On Sundays he works with Ascension's Children's Ministry.



When we moved to Pittsburgh, I wanted to do something useful for the Kingdom, to have an impact. I never once considered working with children. At least, not until our family grew - one, two, three, four! I started to be afraid the children's ministry would have a core meltdown and break containment from our influx.

I first volunteered as an assistant, mostly watching the Sunday School teacher and helping where possible. I didn't have to know anything, or plan anything; I just had to be available. I got to know the kids' names and how much they already knew, and to learn the routine of the Sunday School and what was expected.

Then the day came that I would pretend to be the adult who really knew what was going on. That first time was certainly stressful, since I never had taught kids before. But I felt like God was with me, and I knew that (as he did for Daniel) he could rescue me from the children's den. And in fact (like Daniel) I was not torn apart at all. I actually had a rather good conversation with the kids.

Over the next few weeks we were able to talk about a surprising range of topics. Wouldn't Jesus have been more effective if he'd been rich and powerful like Batman? Why didn't God send a superhero? How is the true creator different from the gods of mythology? Would you want to live in a world run by them? I found that children from this age group have begun to know enough about the world to understand how Christianity fits in, and how it is different. Sometimes, too, they ask deep questions that are really bothering them: "Why did God let the serpent in the garden? Why do we believe this stuff? And when's snack time, anyway?" (Jesus got the same question from the adults, John 6:26.)

Even in those times when the kids seem distracted and unteachable, I feel it's important - important enough that I've continued to do it for I don't remember how many years now. The children really do need to know what the kingdom of God is, what we believe about Jesus, what God wants from them, and what He has for them. We only have so many opportunities to reach them in a way they can understand. Jesus said, "Make disciples." This is one way you can do it.

Youth Worship Band

Thanks for praying for our Christmas Overnight! As Director of Youth Ministry, it was one of my favorite events so far since starting at Ascension. We had over 100 eating dinner (parents, youth and leaders), enjoyed Christmas Movies made by the high schoolers (check it out on the church Facebook page), distributed attendance and leadership awards, and sang Silent Night together to close. The Youth Band led us in a good worship set later that evening, and here they are



practicing again last Sunday. Do pray for **Sarah Gilmer** as she coaches them to new heights, and for their increased worship leadership in 2018. Pray also for the emergence of a **middle school** youth worship band!

Ski Trip

I'm very thankful that one of the youth group families generously shared their ski lodge with our youth group! About 25 of us (youth, parents and volunteers) drove up on Sunday, January 14th (my birthday!) and spent Monday skiing. It was a great time for team building time and we also developed our partnership with St Stephen's youth group, as their two main leaders brought a nice cluster of high schoolers to join us. Respect goes to Riley Harper, Oren Janaszek and Zeke Sams who had never gone skiing before but ended up gliding gracefully down the green slopes. Respect mingled with awe goes to James and John Rankin who had never been skiing before but ended up rocketing down the black runs. I tried to follow but lost courage and slid into the tree-line instead.



Youth Spring Series

As part of our three-year plan, the Spring series in youth ministry focuses on evangelism. We will be 'Learning Evangelism from Jesus' (and from Professor Jerram Barrs, whose book of the same name provides the content and inspiration). Please pray that this ten-week series will serve both middle schoolers and high schoolers so that they not only have a new encounter with Jesus, but that through them, Jesus is at work transforming the lives of their friends at home and in school.

What happened when people met Jesus?

ENCOUNTERS

How do we present ourselves to others?

How does he transform us today?



FROM JAN 19/21 UNTIL MAR 23/25

www.caygonline.com



Campus and Young Adult Ministry

By Danyel Johnson, Intern for Emerging Adult Ministry

Thanks so much for all your prayers last semester, particularly as I dealt with a concussion from a swim accident. This spring I look forward to seeing how God works in my life, in the lives of our college students, and in the lives of our many young adults who have graduated from college and are pursuing other endeavors. I think it's going to be an exciting few months!

Ascension Campus Fellowship (ACF)

Last semester we welcomed many college students into our church family. It's been such a blessing getting to know these young people, watching them grow and lead in the various areas of ministry that they have been involved in. We have college students involved in the youth, children's ministry, and music ministry here at Ascension. It's so cool to watch them use the many gifts they have been given to love and serve others.

Gabbie, our student leader, shares her experience moving from Alabama to Pittsburgh last summer to begin college at Pitt:



"Starting college is a daunting task; you have to acclimate to harder classes, living away from your family, and being more responsible for yourself. When you add moving 700 miles away to that list, it can be overwhelming. Looking back on my first semester at the University of Pittsburgh, I know that the one thing that kept me together was the college ministry at Church of the Ascension. The church became my

home, and the members became my family. With the help of church staff members, I was able to connect with other church-goers my age and join a weekly community group and Ascension's club at the University of Pittsburgh (Ascension Campus Fellowship). These experiences gave me the opportunity to create relationships with other Christians in the Pittsburgh community, and the friendships that have developed are some of the strongest that I have in Pittsburgh. Church of the Ascension strives to create a space for young adults to deepen and explore their faith, and with all of the fellowship opportunities and different services like Lessons in Carols, I have had the chance to strengthen my relationship with God and grow confident in my faith and future."



Church of the Ascension
Campus & Young Adults
Compline & Dinner
Tuesday, Feb 13th
6:30 - 8:30 pm
Old Catacombs
danyelj10@gmail.com



As we look ahead to this spring semester, we ask that members and friends of Ascension would continue to pray for these college students, that they would continue to see God working in their lives and that they would continue to love and serve our church, their campus, and our city. If you are a college student and would like to get connected at Ascension, please contact me, Danyel Johnson, Intern for Emerging Adults, at danyelj10@gmail.com. You can also message me at 585-905-5260.

Also Upcoming

International Ministry

English Classes and the Alpha Course began in January and continue through spring

If you would like to make a dinner for the International Alpha Course and/or cookies for the Wednesday night English Classes, or if you would like to attend the English classes one time and see what they're like, or if you have a talent to share or something you could present for a class, please email Lu Ann at PittsburghEnglish4U@gmail.com and we will set up a date.



Seniors Ministry: OWLS (Older, Wiser, and Lively Still!) Fellowship

Thursday, February 8 from 12:30 – 2:30pm



In February we will enjoy a visit from Animal Friends. This should be a fun and relaxing visit with “Therapets.” Since our animal friends need uncarpeted space we will be meeting in the Parish Hall. Join us from 12:30 -2:30pm for a delicious lunch. OWLS meetings take place on the second Thursday of each month in the Hunt Room. Parking restrictions will be lifted for people to park on the streets and the Neville Street lot will be reserved for OWLS participants. There is a \$10 charge for lunch, but first-time friends are free! Please RSVP to Ann Tefft at 412-526-1107 or tefft.ann@gmail.com.

Special Needs Ministry: Capernaum Friends Club

Saturday, February 10 from 2 – 4pm

Our special needs friends will enjoy music, dancing, and Pizza in celebration of Valentine’s Day. New volunteers and dance partners all welcome! For more info, please reach out to Christina at carlucci.christina@gmail.com.



Exploring Ascension: New Member Class

Saturday, February 17 from 9am – Lunch

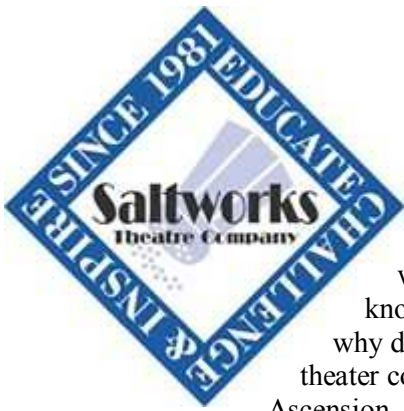
EXPLORE ASCENSION

New Member Class



Interested in learning more about Ascension? Want an overview of Anglican history? Please join us for an informative and fun morning designed both for those who are brand new and just want to know a bit more about the church, as well as for those who want to become members. At the end of our morning together, participants will have a great overview of Anglicanism and Ascension (which includes a quick tour of the Nave), will have a clearer notion of where they can connect and serve, and will have met several members of the staff team. A light continental breakfast will be served at 9am. Childcare will be provided

throughout the morning. We’ll end our time together as adults and kids gather for a pizza lunch. To register, please email marilyn.chislaghi@ascensionpittsburgh.org. Mark your calendars and plan to come!



Saltworks

Some of us have become so accustomed to passing the Saltworks offices in our education wing hallway that we forget that many don't know what Saltworks is. So, what is Saltworks and why do we promote what they do? Saltworks is a theater company for kids that was birthed by members of Ascension, notably the Archdeacon of our Diocese, the Rev.

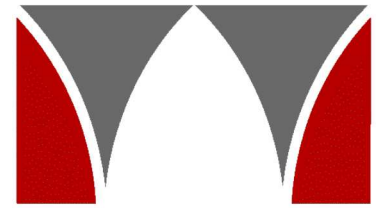
Mark Stevenson, in 1981. The company has been headquartered in various places since then, but in 2005 Saltworks returned to Ascension.

Here is a glimpse into some of what Saltworks does:

School Assemblies – Saltworks has a yearly troop of 5 young adult actors that perform in elementary, middle and high schools throughout the Western Pennsylvania region on a DAILY basis, including Pittsburgh Public Schools and many other districts. The big white van in our parking lot is used for that purpose as the troop goes out to perform live theater on topics such as bully prevention, abuse of opioids and heroin, internet safety, substance abuse and peer pressure. Performance video clips can be found at www.saltworks.org. They're good!

Young Actor's Studio – This is an opportunity for young actors (school-aged kids) to stretch their performance skills to new levels. Saltworks offers evening acting classes for kids (spring and fall), with opportunities to perform classic musical theater, adaptations of popular children's books, and even original works. Typically, the Young Actor's Studio has a fall and spring production. *Stuart Little* is the 2018 spring production.

Saltworks Players – Seasoned actors are brought together to present stories of faith that are performed in churches throughout the region, including here at Ascension. In the past few years the shows have included *The Gospel of Mark*, *The Book of Ruth*, *The Foolish Wiseman*, *The Book of Jonah*, and several others. As the Saltworks website states: "We view Scripture as the best and foremost script for telling a story and we have enjoyed our adventure in performing it." Several years back a powerful performance entitled 'Shadowlands', a story about C.S. Lewis' experience of God as he walked through the loss of his wife, was performed here at Ascension. It starred Tim Hartman and included our own Jim Wilson (whose daytime job is with the Department of Justice) in a lead role.



CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION

A Worshipping Community;
Equipping God's People;
Sharing Christ's Healing With a Broken World

Worship Services Sunday

9:00 a.m.
Holy Eucharist
11:00 a.m.
Holy Eucharist

Wednesday

Noon
Holy Eucharist
in the Gordon Chapel

Address

4729 Ellsworth Ave.
Pittsburgh, PA 15213
Phone: 412-621-4361
Fax: 412-621-5746

Website

www.ascensionpittsburgh.org

The Ascent

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Marilyn Clifton Chislaghi, Editor
Judy Yadrick, Publisher

Ascent Deadline

Articles for the March Ascent are due February 15 and will be available February 25.

SALTWORKS Young Company presents:

E. B. White's

Stuart Little



Friday, February 23 at 7pm and
Saturday, February 24 at 2pm & 7pm

Tickets: \$8 at the door

Kids doing theater for kids

www.saltworks.org
412-621-6150



569 N. Neville Street
Pittsburgh 15213