



Rejoice in the Lord! A *More Than Stones* update

St. Paul writes, “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.” (*Philippians 4:4*)

As of the beginning of the year \$4.75 million has been pledged to the *More Than Stones* initiative. Thanks be to God! And thank you to each of the 167 households who have so far contributed to this extraordinary investment in God’s work through Ascension. This amount is already well over three times our annual giving and more than twice the amount given in our last capital campaign 20 years ago that facilitated the building of the Education Wing.

We are doing all we can to finish the campaign well so that the vestry can take counsel together and make decisions about how the money should be spent. I plan to give a much fuller update to the congregation at our annual meeting on February 16, including how the unrestricted part of our Historic Endowment (\$2.1 million) can be used towards our *More Than Stones* goals.

In the meantime, we are continuing to work closely with our architects and engineering firms and expect, very soon now, to receive firm bids for the urgent work required to our walls and stained glass windows. We anticipate that work on cleaning and repairing our masonry will start this Spring. We hope and expect that work to be completed by the end of the year. In 2021, we hope to be able to complete the much-needed improvements and expansion to our parish hall and restroom faculties. The precise extent and scope of this work will of course depend on how the campaign finishes.

As St. Paul, reminds us, “Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.” (*Philippians 4:6*) I write to ask you to pray, with thanksgiving, for four things:

- First, for those who have not yet been visited and for the faithful visitors from our congregation who are reaching out to set up those visits.
- Second, for those who have been visited and are prayerfully considering their response.
- Third, for those 167 households who have pledged and have begun to fulfill them – may the Lord provide all they need!
- Finally, for wisdom for parish leadership as we seek to discern the best and right use of the portion of the *More Than Stones* initiative to be used for Ministry and Mission.

Yours in Christ,

Jonathan +

Jonathan N. Millard
(Rector)

INVITATION! The campaign chairs and I are hosting a *More Than Stones* informational event in the Hunt Rooms on Friday, January 31 from 7 to 8:30pm for those who are new to Ascension as well as those who would still like to find out more about ministry possibilities envisioned by the campaign. Hors d’oeuvres will be served and childcare will be provided.

Some Thoughts about Holy Communion

By Jonathan N. Millard, Rector

From time to time, the clergy at Ascension receive questions about various aspects of the Anglican tradition, and especially how it differs from both Roman Catholic and evangelical traditions. Some of these questions are of broader congregational interest and offer the opportunity for instruction. Recently, we have had a number of questions about Anglican eucharistic theology. In particular, we have been asked about our recent decision to have chalice bearers dispose of consecrated wine by pouring it directly in the ground rather than consuming it, as well as our decision to begin offering a non-alcoholic alternative to wine in the Eucharist. The following offers a brief introduction to the Anglican theology and practice of Holy Communion, as well some reflections on the recent changes to our practice.

What is Holy Communion?

Holy Communion, also known as The Eucharist (Greek for Thanksgiving), The Breaking of Bread, The Lord's Supper, or the Mass (typically the term used by Roman Catholics, from the Latin meaning "sent out") is one of the two sacraments that were specifically ordained by Christ. "A sacrament is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace." (Q. 121 from the Anglican Catechism *To Be a Christian*).

Why do we take Holy Communion?

Because Jesus himself instituted it for the continual remembrance of the sacrifice of his atoning death, and to convey the benefits of that sacrifice to us. (*Exodus 24:1–10; Psalm 23:5–6; Luke 22:17–20; John 6:25–51; 1 Corinthians 10:16–17*) (Q. 131)

How should we receive Holy Communion?

We should receive Holy Communion by faith in Christ, with repentance and thanksgiving. Faith in Christ is necessary to receive the grace of the sacraments, and obedience to Christ is necessary for the benefits of the sacraments to bear fruit in our lives. (*Mark 16:16; John 6:52–58; Acts 2:38–47; 1 Corinthians 11:27–32; 1662 Catechism; Articles of Religion, 28*)

Practically, the posture of our hands should reflect the posture of our hearts. We are to come humbly and reverently. We present our hands cupped open to receive the bread, as the fourth century theologian Cyril of Jerusalem says, "in approaching therefore, come not with your hands extended, or your fingers spread, but make your left hand a throne for the right, making ready to receive a King." We may retain the bread and dip it in the chalice (called intinction) or we may eat the bread and then take a sip of wine. Some prefer one way over the other. If you have a cold or are otherwise not feeling well, I suggest that whatever your usual practice you consider intinction on such occasions.

Who may receive Holy Communion?

All baptized Christians may take Holy Communion. We invite all to participate in our liturgy and if not baptized to fold arms and receive a prayer of blessing. Children who are baptized are welcome to receive communion. The decision as to when a child is ready to take communion is ultimately left up to the parents. We offer instruction about communion to the children and their parents on a regular basis through our Children's Ministry Program.



Are there circumstances when we shouldn't take Holy Communion?

Yes. Part of the reason we always have confession in our liturgy is to provide an opportunity to confess our sins before we come to communion. Of course, confession needs to go further than merely feeling sorry for our sins. Amendment of life needs also to be desired and pursued. The Scriptures teach us “when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift.” (Matthew 5:23-24)



We share the Peace immediately before Communion as a symbolic way of being right with one another before we take the bread and the wine. Of course, merely shaking someone's hands is likely insufficient if there is a substantial break in relationship between a brother or sister in Christ.

Rarely, a person may be refused communion. The purpose of such a refusal by a priest is not to judge or condemn someone but to call them to repentance and out of a genuine concern for their soul. If a person is refused communion the priest is duty bound to inform the bishop. The goal is always that a person be restored to communion.

How does the Anglican view of Holy Communion differ to that of other Christian denominations?

Anglicans believe that when we receive the bread and the wine that we are partaking in the body and blood of Christ. I'm sometimes asked, “But how do we partake?” or “Is Christ really present?” We may not have the level of preciseness that my interlocutors may desire. We believe that it is a mystery. Is Christ present? Yes, absolutely – in the heart of the believer, *and* in some way in the bread and the wine, but exactly *how* I cannot say. We do not believe in the Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation. But we do believe that the sacrament is more than merely a symbol. Lancelot Andrewes, one of the great seventeenth century Anglican theologians, characterized Anglican eucharistic theology as a whole when he wrote, “Christ said, *this is my body*. He did not say, *this is my body in this way*. ” That God accommodates himself to us and has given us such a tangible way to remember his death, and be partakers in what he has done for us on the cross, is a wonderful mystery, a means of grace, and a very real comfort. O how we need to feed on him.

Other Considerations

At Ascension, in addition to the usual wine and wafers, and with the bishop's permission for pastoral reasons, we offer gluten free wafers and non-alcoholic grape juice. We are mindful that some people have various degrees of intolerance towards gluten and some towards wine. It seems right to make accommodations for these things. Being mindful of the Scriptural injunction warning against stumbling a weaker brother or sister (Romans 14:13), we don't want anyone to be unnecessarily tempted if they have a problem with drinking. Over the years, we have received requests to offer an alternative to wine, although it is only recently that we have made an alternative available.

Roman Catholics tend to handle this issue by encouraging communicants to receive only the bread. However, one aspect of the Reformation that was central to both Anglicans and other Protestants is the belief that all communicants should receive both of the elements after the scriptural pattern (John 6:54), a practice historically called “*utraquism*.” We continue to uphold this historic eucharistic practice at Ascension. Further, at my request, the bishop has authorized and directed that any wine that is not consumed or reserved for taking to the sick, be reverently poured into the ground rather than consumed (This practice is also envisaged and authorized in the 2019 BCP).

This practice is not a historical innovation. Anglicans have always been concerned to ensure a reverent disposal of consecrated elements, and have judged pouring the wine into the ground to be a legitimate way to do so. There is patristic warrant as well for disposing of the remainder of the consecrated elements in this way. William Lockton, an Anglican theologian from the 19th century, notes that in the ancient Coptic church, the remaining elements “should be reverently buried somewhere, but not burnt; for the honor due to the holy bodies does not allow them to burn them: but they bury them.”

And finally,

If you have more questions about Holy Communion or indeed anything else, please don't hesitate to be in touch with any of the clergy at Ascension.

Youth Ministry

By Alex Banfield Hicks

Director of Youth & Young Adult Ministries

Ski Trips

I am very thankful that Rhonda Smith has offered to lead and host not just one, but TWO ski trips this January! Do pray for the middle schoolers enjoying a Saturday on the slopes on January 18 and the high schoolers enjoying an overnight near Hidden Valley followed by a day of skiing on MLK Monday. Pray for safety, growing friendships and a good day of delighting in God's good creation! (Group pic from 2018!)



SKI TRIP

For more information about Church of the Ascension Youth Group
visit www.caygonline.com!
Thank you!



In Exodus 19:4-6 we read: Then Moses went up to God; the Lord called to him from the mountain, saying, *“Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the Israelites: You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself. Now therefore, if you obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession out of all the peoples. Indeed, the whole earth is mine, but you shall be for me a priestly kingdom and a holy nation.”*

Jumping forward to the next chapter, we then read in Exodus 20: *Then God spoke all these words: “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; you shall have no other gods before me.”* This is the first of the ten commandments. But these commandments aren’t given as burdens for us to bear, or standards for us to feel guilty about, or tests we need to pass to prove that we belong to God.

The context in which the ten commandments are given is clear; the people already belong to God, and they have been set free. By observing these ten commandments God’s people both demonstrate what belonging to God looks like, and will continue to enjoy the freedom and flourishing that life with God brings, avoiding falling back into various kinds of slavery and idolatry.

Do pray for the youth ministry volunteer team, the middle school youth group (Friday nights) and the high school youth group (Sunday nights), as we look at each of the ten commandments this Spring, exploring how belonging to God and enjoying freedom with him cultivates the characters and the kind of society that we all long for.

Love Canva?

So do we! But we would also love anyone who would enjoy volunteering an hour a week to design posters, flyers and various other communication pieces for our youth and college ministries to get in touch! You would be free to work in your own time, and would enjoy seeing your creations online and displayed at Ascension, on walls and in print! Email alex.banfieldhicks@ascensionpittsburgh.org to find out more.

Parenting in a technological age

Saturday Jan 25. 5:00-7:00pm. Talk and discussion.

Food and child-care. \$10 suggested donation.

Limited places. Sign up online

Part 2!

CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION

Something to Behold: The Children of Ascension

By Catherine Slocum, Director of Children's Ministry

We beheld our children on the day they returned from their first day at school. "She did it", we exclaimed. From the day a parent gives birth to the day we see them marry or start a new job, or give birth to children of their own, there is opportunity to behold our kids. So much work goes into parenting. And, when we see a child, whether our own, or a child we love and invest in, succeed, transition, or thrive, a feeling of the remarkable can come upon us.

Watching the 40 children that took part in the Christmas Tableau this year caused me to have that cherished feeling of the remarkable as each child, in costume, orchestrated their part. I beheld them and was filled with joy because so much work had gone into bringing this special day into existence; from the commitment of their parents to the hard work of the staff who led and directed, to the volunteers that put everything so neatly in order.

As I reflect upon the past six months of ministry at Ascension, there is much to behold. I think this is because so much work has gone into this ministry by so many people. Remarkably, in the past six months we have doubled our caregiving staff team, growing it from 10 to 20 quality caregivers. We have also grown our Sunday Morning Volunteer team to 50 dedicated leaders who help run our Sunday School and nursery/toddler rooms from month to month. Equally remarkable are the many special projects and events that have required love, care, and commitment in order to "pull off." These include:

- The wonderful effort that went into the Parish Retreat, which included 12 hours of Gospel focused programming in a period of 48 hours for 75 children,
- The deeply meaningful Parenting in a Technological Age Dinner Event attended by more than 50,
- Our Light of Life Rescue Mission stocking project resourced by generous donations from Ascension members and led by a team of volunteers (Lucille Campbell, Evan Burns, Tom Hillman, Nancy Drew, Jen Hemphill, Tim Lee, Kate Brainard-Lee, Jay Slocum, Gabbie Stout, Denise Cox and Soren Stout).
- The Advent-Take-Home resources that enabled 50 families to participate more fully in the Advent season. A special thanks to Keira Fuener who handmade the Advent underlays for our families.
- *The Christmas Tableau*, directed by Deacon Mark Stevenson. A heart-felt thanks to Rhonda Herman who volunteers weekly with the children's ministry and spent much love and care on our Tableau costumes by laundering each and every one in preparation for the Tableau!
- The "Room 105 Make-Over" that included new shelving (donated from Pittsburgh Leadership Foundation) that allows this space to be more usable for children's ministry along with the other seven groups who regularly use this room! We are also grateful to Father Jay Slocum who helped to install the shelving and lead the re-design,



- The successful hand-off of Jill Amber Graham's volunteer work during my transition, which in many ways, allowed for so many needed projects to be completed. We are so thankful for Jill whose love, dedication and steadfastness to Sunday morning children's ministry allowed for consistency and stability throughout our summer and fall seasons.

Looking ahead to 2020 – we plan to:

- Continue to grow our core values of Kindness, Beauty, Attentiveness, Prudence and Grace into the way we order our life together within the children's ministry.
- Build a curriculum review team and write Summer Sunday School curriculum (led by Father Jonathan Warren).
- Recruit a Children's Ministry Steering team with plans to meet quarterly. We will also recruit other steering teams for our Lenten Children's Program and Summer Sunday School Teams.
- We hope to add another class (in response to our growth) to our Sunday morning children's ministry offerings in the fall of 2020 and provide training during the summer months.
- Offer parenting seminars three times per year with our first one in 2020 to be held on Saturday, January 25 from 5 – 7pm (led by Father Jack Gabig). We will learn and discuss ways we can love and lead our kids intentionally, while living in a digitally driven age.

Let's join together in 2020 and behold the children of Ascension! Prayerfully consider being a part of children's ministry. Each and every member of Ascension can have a role from actively praying for our families to joining a specific team. If you are interested in participating, please contact Catherine Slocum (catherine.slocum@ascensionpittsburgh.org).



Special Needs Ministry

WINGS

(meets each Sunday during the 9am service)

We have completed our visual study of John's Gospel and will be moving on to experience Jesus' parables using Godly Play parable boxes. These visual parables are designed to spark our spiritual imagination, and allow us to explore Jesus' teachings through imagery, sound, smell, taste and touch! Join us as we worship together, open to God's Spirit among us!

Capernaum Friends Club

(meets one Saturday per month from 2-4pm in the New Catacombs)

Join us for fun and fellowship! Bring a friend, as we hang out together, learn a short lesson about God, make a craft and of course, eat pizza! The pictures in this month's article are of our Capernaum Friends Christmas Party in December. Much fun was had by all! Remaining dates for the year are:

January 11: Snowflakes-- God our Creator makes us unique

February 15: Valentine's Day Dance-- Celebrate God's Love

March 14: Jesus always loves us

April 18: The Story of Easter Week

May 9: Special program for Parents and Caregivers

To volunteer, participate, or with any questions, please contact Keira (412-638-3057; keirafuener@gmail.com)



OWLS FELLOWSHIP OLDER WISER LIVELY SAINTS



Thursday, February 13
Valentine Party
 12:30PM – 2:30PM

Have you ever thought of going to a counselor?

The Rev. Connie Hughes will share with us what she has learned from being a counselor. Connie is Pastoral Care Minister at Christ Church Fox Chapel. She came to faith at a Young Life ranch in 1965. After raising her children and teaching 7th and 8th grade English, she obtained a Masters in Counseling from Duquesne University. She has worked for eleven years as a Licensed Professional Counselor specializing in trauma, addictions, and depression. Connie graduated from Trinity with an Master of Divinity in 2010. Following graduation she joined Christ Church Fox Chapel as Assistant Rector where she was ordained priest in January, 2011. She enjoys fiber arts of all kinds, especially traditional rug hooking, and spending time with her seven grandchildren.

The OWLS
at Church of the Ascension
 extend an invitation to the
 OWLS Luncheon and Presentation.
 Enjoy Lunch, Fun and Fellowship!
 All are warmly welcomed!



COST: \$10 charge for lunch,
 but first-time friends are free!

RSVPs are necessary to Rev. Ann Tefft:
 412-526-1107 or tefft.ann@gmail.com.

Parking restrictions will be lifted for people
 to park on the streets, and the Neville Street lot
 will be reserved for seniors. We meet in
 the Parish Hall.

Ascension-Supported Missions in Africa

Love and Care Family International Celebrates 20 years!

by Denise Cox,
denisecox@sams-usa.org

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 Kampala, Uganda through the Love and Care Family International. 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 attendee 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 found 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 Sr. 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.

I was able to visit Uganda last February for the 20th year celebration of the Love and Care Family. I was honored to meet with the Love and Care Family Uganda (which is a registered non-profit in Uganda) Board during my stay. They shared with me their vision for the future. I am pleased to report that over 50 children have been helped by the Love and Care Family either in the residential program (Miriam Duggan Home) or the foster care (Oliva Kinship) program.

On Sunday February 10, 2018, there was a large fellowship with both current children and those who consider the Love and Care Family their family of origin but now are employed or have families of their own. As an example, one of the recent graduates married a pastor. He was surprised that she had over 40 members of the Love and Care Family present for their engagement introductions. This couple travelled over 8 hours to join us for the Sunday fellowship. During this time of fellowship there were testimonies of thanksgiving to God, songs of praise to the Lord, and exhortation and preaching by Simon Peter Ddamba. Simon Peter grew up in the Love and Care Family and is the spiritual director of the Family. Simon is now an Anglican priest, married with 2 children.

An amazing feast was prepared with much of the food coming from the 4 acres of fertile ground that the home sits on. The day ended with additional songs and prayers. I wish every one of you could have stood by my side and witnessed that amazing day.



Orphaned Heart Ministry Continues its Work

by Janet Helms, Director;
jhelms1220@hotmail.com

The 'spirit of the orphaned heart' is unfortunately alive and flourishing in Africa. Hundreds of thousands of young people suffer from the crippling pain of rejection and abandonment that results from polygamy, genocide, war, child slavery, parental abuse, AIDS, poverty, and other causes. Orphaned Heart Ministries is an outreach mission whose staff actively uses the love of God to heal the hearts of those afflicted with what the ministry refers to as the 'orphaned heart spirit'. Janet Helms, member of Ascension, is founder and director of this ministry which has expanded to include a large indigenous African clergy/staff team.



Miraculous stories abound of the healing effects of this ministry:

- In 2019 we facilitated 5 three-day Conferences in 5 locations in Uganda, and 31 one-to-two day Clinics.
- We have introduced 'Hope Fellowship Skills Day' where members of the Hope Fellowship learn hand skills to help them earn extra income after school.
- An exciting development this year is the recognition by dioceses and churches of the value we bring to their constituency and their willingness to cost share with us.
- Through our conferences, we have seen a mighty move of God as many people received Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior and also testified about the Holy Spirit's presence
- From all our activities in Uganda in 2019, we were able directly to reach 15,000 people in our different speaking engagements.

Here are a few testimonies of healing from some participants of the Orphaned Heart Ministry:

- John testified of strong hatred towards the matron at Mustard Seed Babies Home Hoima where he was raised from childhood after his parents abandoned him. God touched his heart and he was able to forgive.
- Charles testified to how his life was transformed after he saw his mother-in law get miraculously healed. She had been lame for over 10 years and during a prayer session she was able to walk again without the help of crutches.
- Esther testified that she had hated the church and she had also hated her husband because of marital unfaithfulness. Through Orphaned Heart Ministry she was able to be reconciled to her husband and to the church.
- Susan was sexually abused by her cousin brother and as a result she developed a sexual addiction from the age of 15. She came to understand the root cause of the sexual addiction, recommitted her life to Christ, and is now serving as a Christian music director.
- Patience hated her father because he was an alcoholic and was the cause of family breakdown. She learned about the power of forgiveness and was able to be reconciled to her father.



An Invitation for 2020: Community Groups at Ascension

Ascension's Community Groups are THE BEST WAY of getting relationally connected that Ascension clergy and staff can commend to you. They offer a place to find friends who will 'do life' with you. Ascension's 28 Community Groups meet on different days at different locations throughout the greater Pittsburgh region.

While each group is committed to sharing life together, they all have their own character and particular emphases. The vision for Community Groups at Ascension comes from the description of the early church's practice in Acts 2:42-7. The church devoted itself to four core practices: devotion to the apostles' teaching, fellowship, sharing meals, and prayer.

As we enter this new year, we would like to extend an invitation to join an Ascension community group if you are not already part of one. Please visit our Community Group page on Ascension's website (www.ascensionpittsburgh.org) for a map and full listing of groups throughout the city. If you are not certain what group is right for you, please feel free to contact Associate Rector, Jonathan Warren, at jonathan.warren@ascensionpittsburgh.org.

Happy New Year From Ascension Staff



For Your Calendar

EXPLORE ASCENSION

New Member Class



Explore Ascension

Saturday, February 15 from 9am - lunch

Our next Explore Ascension class will be Saturday, February 15. This class is for all those who are new to Ascension, who wish to find out more about Anglicanism in general or Ascension in particular. It is also part of the pathway to membership. So, mark your calendars! The class is co-taught by Ascension clergy. We begin with breakfast and conclude with lunch. Childcare is provided.

Annual Meeting

Sunday, February 16 after 11am service

Please mark this date on your calendar and plan to attend our 2019 Annual Meeting. We will vote in new vestry members, be given a 2019 financial report and update on the 2020 budget. We will hear from our Senior Warden and the Rector, and will be given a full update on the *More Than Stones* Capital Campaign. It's a great way to engage with Ascension. Childcare and lunch will be provided.



Newcomer Lunch

Sunday, March 15 after 11am service

Mark your calendars!! Join clergy & staff after the 11am service for Lunch. Are you new or still feel 'newish' after having been here for a while? Interested in joining a Community Group? Interested in finding a ministry to serve? Bring yourselves, your kids (if you have kids!) and your questions - and church leaders will provide conversation and lunch!

2020 Lenten Series

Fridays, March 6, 13, 20 and 27

Join Ascension clergy as they host several 'Hard Conversations' on Fridays in Lent, looking at Race, Politics, Sexuality and Gender. The Series will take place from 6:30 – 8pm and will include teaching, testimony and time for questions. Childcare will be provided. Please mark the following Fridays on your calendar and plan to attend: March 6, 13, 20 and 27.



Venite 2020: A Look Ahead



Venite: Ascension Campus Ministry

Venite is a ministry where college students are invited to come, find a community of peers pursuing Christ, and make a home among them at Ascension. Want to know what's happening in the world of Venite as we begin a new year and a new semester? You've come to the right place! Check out all the things we have coming up, and for more information reach out to Leah Hornfeck (leah.hornfeck@ascensionpittsburgh.org) or Alex Banfield Hicks (alex.banfieldhicks@ascensionpittsburgh.org).

Weekly Fellowship Gatherings:

Wednesdays at 8:30pm in Ascension's Old Catacombs

Venite's weekly gatherings include times of worship, teaching, discussion, and prayer. *Weekly gatherings for the Spring 2020 semester begin Wednesday, January 8th at 8:30pm!*

Sunday Student Brunch:

Our next Brunch is Sunday, January 26th at 12:30pm!

Throughout the semester we will be having 3 Sunday Brunches at Ascension following the 11am service at 12:30pm. This is a great opportunity to connect with other students as well as other members of Ascension's wider community. It's also a great opportunity to bring friends along and introduce them to Venite. *Our next brunch will be on Sunday, January 26th at 12:30pm!*

Midday Prayer:

Each week we meet on campus (at Pitt in Bellefield Church and at CMU in the UC Chapel) to pray together for each other and for the stresses that come with student life. *The day and time of these meetings are TBD so stay tuned!*

Jubilee 2020:

Join us for a weekend of powerful worship, incredible speakers, and engaging workshops, and discover what it means to live faithfully in every area of life alongside thousands of other college students from across the country at the CCO's Jubilee Conference. *The conference takes place in February from Friday, the 21st to Sunday, the 23rd. For more info, check out the website at <https://www.jubileeconference.com/>.*



International Ministry

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*By LuAnn Pengidore,
Director of International Ministry*

**“Thank you Ascension for making
our stay in Pittsburgh
such a good experience!”**

This is what Annie Wang said to me before leaving the area. Why do we consistently receive warm thanks from our international friends? Here are some of the reasons from the past couple of months:



- Many of you generously opened your homes for Thanksgiving – internationals love celebrating this American holiday in American homes!
- For Advent, a group of internationals enjoyed our Lessons and Carols Services and several students watched and discussed the Nativity Story film with Ascension members before Christmas.
- A small group came to the Christmas Eve services and continues to visit the 11am service (primarily) but also the 9am - you may wish to look out for them.
- On New Year's Eve, eighteen students toured the Carnegie Art Museum's creche and tree display as well as chosen paintings by our docent. I hosted a New Year's luncheon.
- Two of our male ESL students – one from Colombia and one from China and both with professional backgrounds - participated in the Twelfth Night Newcomer Party festivities at the Millard home.
- On January 8th lots of English was practiced while chopping food with Jen Conlon in Ascension's kitchen. Another large group practiced pronunciation. Others had the opportunity to speak with Ascensionite Jen Tinker who is an immigration lawyer.
- On January 9th, Shakespeare was brought to life by Alan Irvine and internationals learned about the Literacy Council's career programs.

How can you be in prayer?

- The regular English classes for levels 1-5 begin the week of January 13th on Monday mornings, Wednesday evenings and Thursday evenings.
- This year we have six Bible studies meeting weekly led by Ascensionites Meg Sateia, Timmy Podnar, Robin Capcara, Chris Thieman, Diane Stadelmeier, Christina Hyland, Ann Tefft, Kirk and Kim Wadsack, Donna Wilkes, Denise Bozich, and Jim and Barb Franzen.

How can you volunteer?

- It would be great to have families or individuals “adopt a student” (contact them once a month, share a lunch and just check in with them).
- We have three international families with young children coming now that would love to meet other families.
- Men participating in Bible studies is always great.
- If you would like to participate somehow but are not sure how, you may contact LuAnn at PittsburghEnglish4U@gmail.com.

Families: Parenting in a Technological Age

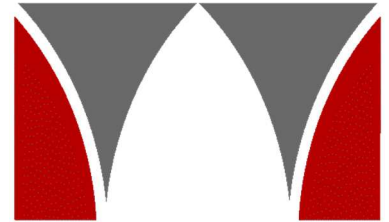
An important conversation was had – *let's keep talking*

On Saturday evening, October 12, about fifty of Ascension's friends and family gathered in the Parish Hall to eat pizza and delicious side dishes, served up from Denise Bozich's catering company, while enjoying jazz music that played in the background. After the children and youth were dismissed for their program, the adults gathered to hear Dr. Grant Martsolf present a trenchant analysis on the way the digital world affects us through the use of our phones and our social media. A highlight of the presentation included an image of a Greek Structure with five doric columns representing the five inherent motivations and desires we all have as persons – material stability, health, love, meaning and character. Grant's important question to us was, "How does the use of our technologies contribute to these five core human motivations and desires beyond the ease, convenience and efficiency that our technological tools offer?"

We are grateful to the team of folks who helped make this successful event happen. A special thanks to Grant and Christy Martsolf for their vision and energy. A thanks to the four couples who served on the parent panel: Brian Janaszek and Jenifer Hemphill, Aaron and Kelsey Sams, Charlie and Marilyn Chislaghi, Jay and Catherine Slocum. Thanks also to those who helped with the meal and programming for our children and youth during the event. What an enlightening night we had!

Many participants have asked if we can continue the conversation. Hence, we would like to gather again in the new year to offer "Parenting in a Technological Age Part II." Mark your calendars for **Saturday, January 25th from 5 – 7pm.** If you are interested in helping with this next gathering please contact Alex Banfield Hicks alex.banfieldhicks@ascensionpittsburgh.org or Catherine Slocum catherine.slocum@ascensionpittsburgh.org.

**A person is an integrated body/spirit
with specific, inherent motivations and desires**



**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

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