

Saying Goodbye

The Warrens

Goodbyes are usually hard. They are often bitter-sweet. Goodbyes may be accompanied by grief. Indeed, if we have loved and laughed, prayed and played together – how can we not feel a whole range of emotions? So it is with our dear friends Jonathan, Tish, Raine, Flannery and Gus. June 30th marks the last day for Jonathan as Associate Rector and Tish as Writer in Residence at Church of the Ascension. As I wrote to the parish when the news of their leaving was announced, the Warrens have become dear to us all.



I am sure I speak for many when I say that we love them deeply and have greatly appreciated their ministry among us. Jonathan's extraordinary intellect, love of Church history, encyclopedic knowledge of the Church Fathers, coupled with his understanding of contemporary culture, has informed his preaching and teaching and been a wonderful gift to us. Under Jonathan's oversight we have seen significant growth in the numbers of Community Groups and of those participating in them. Tish's writing has been a great gift not only to Ascension, but also to the wider church and world. Her winsome preaching, with powerful use of story to connect us to God's Word, has enriched our lives.

While I am sad and sorry to see them step down from leadership at Ascension at this time, I am very grateful to them both for who they are, all the good things they have done, and for accepting my invitation to stay on as Liturgical Assistants and to preach regularly in the coming months.

Let us continue to uphold Jonathan, Tish and their children in prayer as they seek further clarity regarding God's call on their lives.



Judy Yadrick

If you have ever phoned the church, or rang the doorbell over the last twenty-five years, there's a good chance you've heard Judy's voice greet you. Judy has also worked tirelessly to put together the *Ascent*, our monthly newsletter. She has also helped, behind the scenes, in a myriad of ways: shopping for food (we eat a lot of food at Ascension), decorating tables, and generally helping and supporting the ministry and mission at Ascension. Judy is retiring at the end of June after over twenty-five years of serving God, her church family, and many visitors along the way as our Receptionist/Secretary.

Thank you, Judy and well done, good and faithful servant! We love you! We'll miss you! And, we pray that you and Ron will enjoy a very blessed and well-earned retirement.

The good news is that the Warrens (at least for the time being) and the Yadricks will continue to be a part of our church family, so our relationships with them will continue as they stay among us.

Yours in Christ,

Jonathan +

Jonathan Millard
Rector

Saying Hello!

Rejoicing in being Together Again

Sunday, May 31st, as well as being a day of extraordinary sadness (given our national upheaval) was also the Day of Pentecost. Pentecost is a celebration of the life, love, hope and salvation we have as Christians who examine our own hearts, repent, and are filled with the Holy Spirit. In addition to the twenty-five people who attended our service of Holy Eucharist in person, an additional 160 people came to Ascension to receive the sacrament after the Livestream ended. It was very moving to see people of all ages come to receive the bread - many had tears in their eyes. There was also much joy and laughter on the lawn as people gathered and exchanged (socially distanced) greetings.

Moving Forward Together for Worship

We will be continuing with our 10:00 am Livestreamed Service of Holy Eucharist. We are gradually increasing the numbers of people who can be physically present in the Nave. Our Special Kids Church program will also continue at 9:30 am.

Walkthrough Distribution of the Sacrament

All baptized Christians, who have participated in the Livestream Eucharist via YouTube, are invited to come to Ascension to receive the bread between 11:45 and 1:15. **No registration required.**

All are welcome: We can accommodate as many people as come, observing safety protocols.

Be wise and considerate: Please do NOT attend if you feel unwell, have a fever, or any other Covid-19 symptoms. We will be observing the following protocols: social distancing, wearing face masks, and using hand sanitizer (provided).

In-Person Attendance for the Worship Service

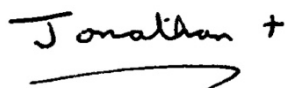
To be physically present at 10:00 a.m. **registration is required.** You can register by calling the church office (412-621-4361, ext. 219) or you can do so via our website (visit the News & Events page).

For Those Who Are Homebound

If you are not able to come to Ascension after the livestream service to receive the sacrament, we are continuing to offer home visits by a Lay Eucharistic Visitor on Sunday afternoons. Please send a request for such a visit via our website or you may phone the church office (412-621-4361, ext. 219) or you can do so via our website (visit the News & Events page)

Finally, I look forward to worshipping with all of you via livestream on Sunday at 10:00 a.m.

Yours in Christ,



Jonathan Millard
Rector

Building Renovations

Exterior work

There is nothing like ‘before’ and ‘after’ shots to capture the exterior cleaning and pointing work currently being done on Church of the Ascension’s historic Nave and Parish Hall. Work commenced the first week of May when Governor Wolf gave us the ‘yellow’ light to move forward. Ascension has contracted with Jendoco to manage the masonry work which is being done in compliance with best practices for prevention of the spread of Covid-19. Jendoco plans for the masonry work to be completed by the end of October.



In addition to the masonry work, we will also be replacing several of our 19 roofs. Fresh leaks have sprung in the Gordon Chapel and other areas of the facility, so these repairs cannot come fast enough. New windows are also being fabricated for the tower. We are currently evaluating bids for the repair of our historic stained glass. Our many stained-glass windows have been professionally evaluated and given a grade on a spectrum from ‘in good shape’ to ‘in need of urgent repair’. This project will not commence until the exterior masonry work is complete.



Interior work

The interior of the Nave will also be refurbished. There are no radical changes planned and the look of the Nave will remain much the same, but we must address needed repairs and we want to improve functionality as we do so.

We will soon be replacing or refurbishing the pews in the Nave. Having been bolted together several times, the backs of our current pews are beyond repair, so they will need to be replaced in some way. We will either replace the backs and refinish the current ends, or purchase all new pews, perhaps with custom made ends to match what we currently have. We will also purchase new cushions and custom-made fold down kneelers. The pews will be spaced a bit further apart, the first pew will be a bit further back from its current location giving more space for communion, and we hope to have better wheelchair accessible seating available. We are also evaluating the existing choir pews and will repair and refinish as needed. We are purchasing a much-needed new sound desk to match the pews as well as a video desk that will be positioned near to the back of the Nave.

The wooden floor in the Nave is badly in need of refinishing. Earlier last year a test patch was done in the Gordon vestibule area and we were pleased with the results. Floor refinishing will be done in sync with the placement of new or refurbished pews. We will also examine the floor in the Gordon Chapel and either replace the carpet or refinish the flooring. We are purchasing chairs to replace the wicker chairs in the chancel and for use in the Gordon transept. We may also add a custom-made storage cabinet to the Gordon vestibule area.

In the next two years we hope to repaint the Narthex and possibly adjust the lighting and seating in that space. If you haven't noticed, the Narthex has a beautiful ceiling – take a look! A suggestion we are considering is the relocation of the tapestries from the chancel to the Narthex so they can be seen and perhaps help reduce the echoing in that space which makes it very difficult for groups to meet there.

Once the masonry project is complete, we will also replace the doors to the Nave and the Gordon vestibule, pouring new cement steps in keeping with code regulations. The

new glass doors will be fitted with push bars for easy egress. They will also be much easier to lock and unlock. This upgrade was recommended to us for greater security when we had an assessment by the Pittsburgh Department of Homeland Security completed several years ago. Our architects have created a design that both enhances security while maintaining some of the traditional 'red door look' that many Ascensionites have come to love.

If you have any questions about current and planned construction and refurbishment, please contact our Director of Administration, Karen Gowdy (karen.gowdy@ascensionpittsburgh.org) or our Director of Ministry, Marilyn Chislaghi (marilyn.chislaghi@ascensionpittsburgh.org). Thank you!

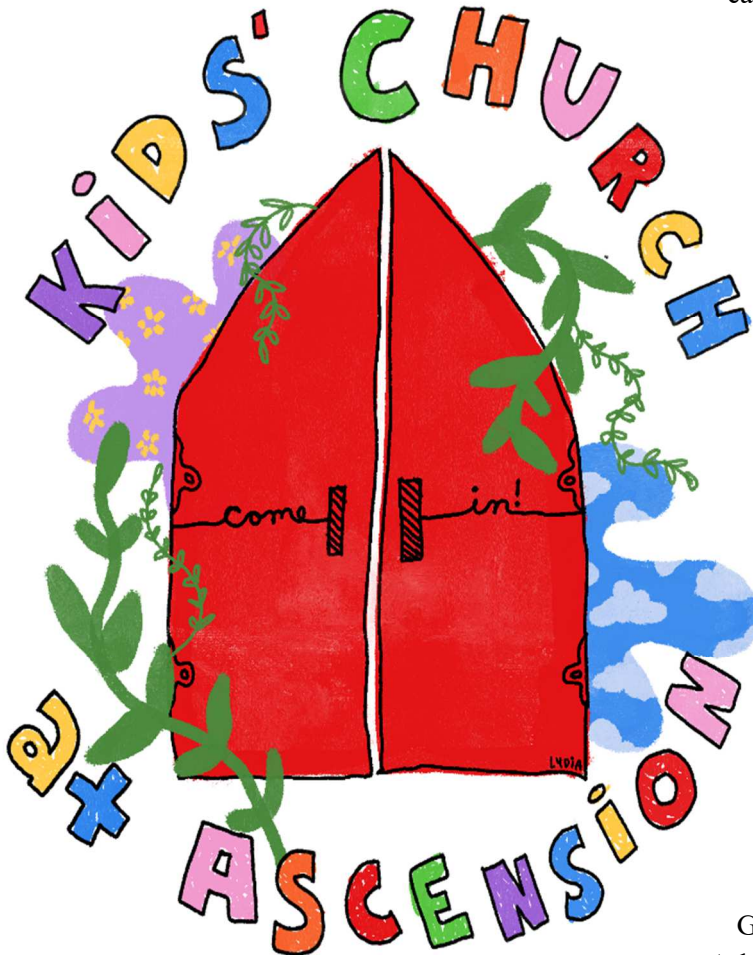


Explore Ascension – by Zoom!

Wednesday, June 24th 7 – 8:30pm

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. This is the first time we'll do the class by video and Zoom. Those who wish to participate will be asked to watch 10 newly produced video clips on Ascension's YouTube channel entitled "The Top 10 on Anglican History." The 1.5 hour Zoom call will be led by our Rector, Jonathan Millard, and will walk through Ascension and Anglican distinctives. Those who wish to become members will be required to fill out necessary paperwork and have a brief follow-up conversation with Jonathan Millard over Zoom. If you would like to attend, please email Marilyn at marilyn.chislaghi@ascensionpittsburgh.org.

Welcome to Kids' Church



We're excited to have launched the new video series called "Kids' Church" on Pentecost Sunday.

This new medium for connection expands opportunities for children and parents to participate in the life of the church. We will learn, laugh and worship God together in these carefully crafted 20-minute segments.

Each episode will include a time for bible memory, learning from an artist, and singing a song. Our new special friend, Sally Lolly, and Father Jay will accompany Ms. Catherine as we explore the theme of each Sunday together. We are grateful to all who are serving on the Kids' Church team. Many thanks to those serving behind the scenes: Elise Massa who is helping to recruit our artists, Lydia Slocum for creating our graphic, and Ben Wilson for helping with editing and filming. We have created two episodes so far and are in the midst of recruiting folks to help with our future videos. Thanks to all who have contributed to the videos thus far: Father Jay Slocum, the Banfield-Hicks family, Megan Markley, Jay Gowdy, Tyler Marwood, Jill Kuhlman, Millicent Arlene Smith, Caleb Massa, Jeanne and Andy Kohn, Greg and Rebecca Sparks, Clare Clifton, Christina Silva, Nina Deng, Albert and Melody Zhang. Looking forward to seeing how God will use these videos to bless and grow His church during the summer months.

If you have any questions or if you would like to help with Kids' Church in some way, please reach out to me at catherine.slocum@ascensionpittsburgh.org. Thanks!



Youth Ministry

Thank you Livestream and 'virtual CAYG' team!

Like many others, Church of the Ascension's Youth Group had to pivot quickly and go online this spring. You can see the results on our YouTube channel!

We wrapped up the "TEN" commandments series and launched a new series inspired by the verse in James 4:8 "draw near to God and He will draw near to you." Given that we couldn't gather in person to encourage each other, we wanted to resource each isolated teen so they might draw near to God by themselves.

It was a nine-week series, looking at nine different 'sacred pathways' to draw near to God, and the series was called "NEAR" (we like one word series titles...). Thanks to Kelsey Regan for suggesting the book by Gary Thomas as our main resource as each leader prepared.

Thank you also to the amazing team who both starred in the livestreams and led Zoom small groups that followed the 'show' on YouTube every Sunday night: Alex Randall, Asher Bernardi, Austin Everett, Bailey Nichols, Carli Watson, Gabbie Stout, Jess Smith, Kelsey Regan, Leah Hornfeck, Lucca Spence, Mari Gowdy, Matthew Jones, Molly McGill, Natalie Mayberry, Olivia Skal, Sam Ferguson, Tom Hillman, and Wes Williams.

And I would like to share a particular shout out to Wes Williams who combined theologian, artist, comedian and movie director in one person during this YouTube series. He did a brilliant job shaping a lot of the creative content, editing, directing, and producing, while solving many of our technical problems. #MVP award!



Back Yard Small Groups this Summer

Tired of Zoom meetings? Yup. Wanna go outside in the sunshine? Yup.

Having wrapped up the NEAR series for 'virtual CAYG', June sees us launch a network of CAYG back yard small groups that will be meeting throughout the week and across the city to study six highlights in the book of ACTS. What better time to refocus on God's undeniable power and the early church's remarkable courage?

These six sessions will be outside, social distancing will be expected, and folks are invited to bring a Bible, portable seating, bug spray and an umbrella in case of rain! They will occur on various nights of the week, in the last three weeks in June and the three weeks in July after Independence Day. Due to limits on space, the groups are invitation only but do contact me if you or someone you know want to join one at (alex.banfieldhicks@ascensionpittsburgh.org)

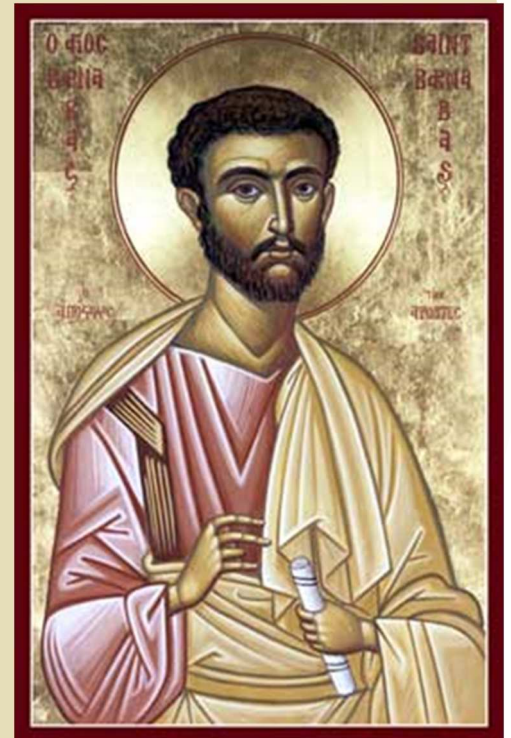
OWLS FELLOWSHIP

Come ZOOM with us!

OLDER
WISER
LIVELY
SAINTS

OWLS is being reconfigured to keep up with the times! While hopefully things may be "back to normal" by September, we are not going to wait any longer to get together and enjoy our fellowship. So, on **Thursday, June 11th at 11:00** we will meet on the internet to see one another and celebrate the life of Saint Barnabas the Apostle. Acts 11:24 describes Barnabas as "a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith".

Zoom in and enjoy a dramatic interpretation and discussion about this wonderful man of God led by the Rev. Ann Tefft and the Rev. Mark Stevenson. Check out especially Acts 11:19-30; 13:1-3 and share with us those things about Barnabas you would hope to emulate.



"The righteous shall be kept in everlasting remembrance."
Psalm 112:6

The Rev. Mark Stevenson



The Rev. Ann Tefft



Ann Tefft
tefft.ann@gmail.com
412-526-1107

Ascension Community Groups

Eastern Suburbs Group

In non-Covid time, our group meets every third Sunday evening in Monroeville for a meal, Bible study and prayer. The group is comprised of mostly older adults, although all are welcome. During Covidtime, the group meets via Zoom monthly to catch up with one another, chat, and share prayer requests. Group Leader: Marilyn Chislaghi (marilyn.chislaghi@ascensionpittsburgh.org)



Edgewood Group

Our group of middle-age couples meets every other Sunday evening for food, Bible or book study, and evening prayer. While at home during the Covid-19 outbreak, the group has been meeting weekly by Zoom. We share how our families are doing, spend time discussing the morning's sermon and Scripture readings, and conclude with prayer. Group Leader: Fr. Joel Scandrett (jscandrett27@gmail.com).



Oakland Group

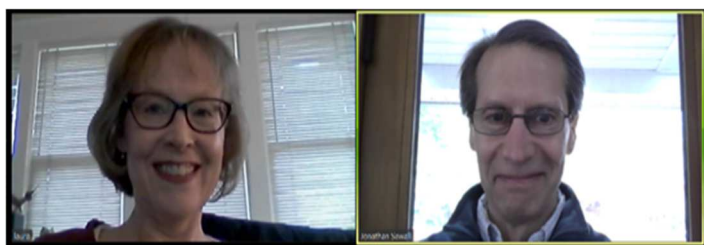
Our group meets every other Sunday evening beginning with light snacks and fellowship. This is followed by worship, prayer, Bible study, and sharing prayer concerns. At least twice a year, the group meets for a potluck supper. During this time of isolation, the group meets every week via Zoom. One week is devoted entirely to prayer for the world, the country, the church, and our own needs. The alternate week is devoted to Bible study. Each week includes a time for "catching up with each other" and sharing prayer requests. Group Leader: Barbara Franzen (b.neznarf@gmail.com).



Squirrel Hill Group

Our group presently consists mainly of adults with children attending occasionally (Children are quite welcome!) We meet every Monday night for Bible study and prayer. We share a meal together typically on a Sunday four times a year. During this pandemic time, the group has been gathering via Zoom on Sunday after-

noons. The focus has been on catching up with each other, addressing concerns, and praying. We hope to begin a study on prayer in the next week or two. This will also occur via Zoom and will be in addition to the present Sunday gathering. The time is yet to be determined. Group Leaders: Jonathan Sewall (jonathan.sewall@gmail.com) and Laura Irvine (laurairvine56@gmail.com).



Women's Group - Regent Square

Our group normally meets every other Monday evening to share, study Scripture and pray. On the fifth Monday we go out for dinner together. During this time of social distancing, the group is meeting every Monday by teleconference. Group Leader: Melita Carter (cartermpo@gmail.com).



Women's Group Ascension

Our group meets weekly on Wednesday mornings from 10am – Noon to share our lives with one another, enjoy snacks and hot drinks, study Scripture and pray together.

Women of all ages welcome. It's a particularly good group for those with young children. Childcare is provided when we meet at Ascension. During the pandemic we are doing two Zoom meetings on Wednesdays every week to accommodate different family needs of members. Some of us meet from 10am -Noon. Others meet from 7-9pm. Both groups are studying Esther. We are using the *Bringing the Bible to Life* study by Karen H. Jobes and Janet Nygren, based on the *NIV Application Commentary: Esther* by Karen H. Jobes, PhD. We also have an email list to which members can send prayer requests and praises. Group Leaders: Keira Fuener (keirafuener@gmail.com) and Jen Newhouse (niferm@hotmail.com).



East End Group Morningside

Our group, a second cell of the East End group, meets at a home in Morningside. We are comprised mostly of young adults but are open to anyone looking for community. Once a month the two cells of the East End Group gather for fellowship. Currently, the group has been meeting weekly using Zoom to share resources, sermon questions, and has been able to have community together even through the distance. We finished up our study of "Surprised by Hope" by N. T. Wright before moving on to discussing the sermon with the question prompts provided by Ascension. Group Leaders: Sam Kenney (samuel.kenney48@gmail.com) and Nancy Kenney (nancykenney@gmail.com).



East End Group - Point Breeze

Our group meets in Squirrel Hill/ Point Breeze for Bible study and prayer weekly on Tuesday night. Every other month we gather for a potluck meal and fellowship. During the pandemic our group has continued to meet weekly over Zoom to check in with everyone and pray.

We have tried our hand at a few virtual game nights as well! We recently started a study on Acts and look forward to celebrating in person with a potluck meal! Group Leaders: Lorna Williams (lorna_m_williams@yahoo.com) and Caelan Mayberry (cdmayberry1@gmail.com).



Ascension Men's Group Wednesday

Our group normally meets every Wednesday morning at 7am to share our lives with one another, study Scripture, and pray together. Men of all ages and stages of life are welcome! We continue to meet virtually on Wednesday mornings using Zoom. We meet together for the first half hour and then use breakout rooms to split into two rooms (smaller groups) for sharing and prayer. Group Leader: Allen Burnett (ajburnett4@gmail.com).



Ascension Men's Group - Saturday

While in normal time this group meets at a café in Homewood on Saturday mornings, this men's group now gathers virtually by conference phone call every Saturday morning at 7:30am to study, pray, and share their lives with one another. Men of all ages and stages of life are welcome! Group Leaders: David Hall (dghall@elfhcc.com) and Jay Gilmer (jaygilmer@verizon.net).



Internationals Group

International students and visitors are specifically invited to this group. It is an opportunity for non-Christians to discover what Christians believe and for Christians to grow in their faith. This is achieved through studying the Bible, open discussion and developing friendships. It is also an opportunity to practice English. Any level of English speaking is welcomed. The evening always begins with light snacks and a time for getting to know each other. The group meets Monday evenings from 7-8:45pm at a home in Oakland.

Currently, the international group is meeting via google hang outs. Surprisingly, we have really enjoyed reconnecting with some who have moved away!! Group Leader: Barbara Franzen (b.neznarf@gmail.com) Co-leader: Timmy Podnar (tnpodnar@gmail.com).

Young Adult Group - Thursdays

Our group is comprised mostly of post-college young adults and meets on Thursday nights for a community meal, Bible study, prayer, and worship. During the Covid crisis we have been meeting weekly via Zoom, continuing in our Bible study in the book of Revelation, aided by a solid commentary from N.T. Wright. We have an open time of sharing for the first 30 minutes to check in and encourage each other toward healthy hearts, minds, and bodies. As we learn about the different struggles with finances and work and housemates and education and the mental health crisis that isolation and loneliness often bring, we are better informed and equipped to support each

other in prayer and conversation throughout the week. Our goal is to keep growing each other to be worshippers of Christ, following him step by step and loving him with all of our heart, soul, brain, and body. Group Leaders: Greg Sparks (gregsparks1@gmail.com) and Rebecca Ed Sparks (rebecca@thesparks.com).





Highland Park/Morningside Group

Our group is an intergenerational group that meets every other Thursday night for Bible study and prayer. Since mid-March our group has been meeting on the regular meeting dates and at the regular times using an online platform. It took us a few meetings to get oriented to this way of meeting, but we have adjusted well and just finished our study of the book of Hebrews. Our next study will be on James. We have continued to pray during the meetings for the needs of the group and the world. We have made our prayer time more effective for the online setting by sending detailed praises and prayer requests through an email thread that is then compiled into a Word document. The Word document is shared on the online “white board” so that we can recall all praises and prayer requests. We are also adding an every other Thursday night prayer time for those who want to meet more frequently to focus on prayer needs of the group members and others. Several other strategies are being used during this time including assigning of “buddies” who check in once a week and the assignment of prayer partners who connect between group meetings to pray for any personal needs. Group leaders: Rob and Donna Martsolf (martsoda@ucmail.uc.edu) or drmartsolf@roadrunner.com).

Community of St. Andrew - Morningside

Our group is focused on introducing and practicing Anglican spiritual disciplines. Members agree to a communal rule of life (a holistic pattern of Spirit-filled practices to deepen one’s faith in shared community) and make a year-long commitment to the group. Guests can visit the group prior to commitment. This cell meets the first and third Tuesday evenings of the month, with discipleship groups meeting on the other Tuesdays (2nd - men, 4th - women) for all St. Andrew members. Currently, our group uses Zoom for all gatherings, in addition to Slack for various conversation topics. As an entire community, we have bi-weekly movie/game nights and celebrate the Anglican feast days! Monthly prayer partners are established to check-

in, pray and assist as necessary through the month. Group leaders: Chris Massa (chris.massa@gmail.com) and Elise Massa (elise.massa@gmail.com).



Community of St. Andrew – O’Hara Township

Our group is focused on Bible study and spiritual disciplines. Members agree to a communal rule of life (a devotional discipline that intentionally orders one’s time and activities so that one can deepen in the faith) and make a year-long commitment to the group. This cell of Community of St Andrew meets every other Tuesday (the other cell meets in Morningside). Men’s and women’s accountability occurs once a month with both cells combined on Mondays. During this pandemic, our usual meetings occur on Zoom, and we have been staying in contact through Slack and optional Zoom-facilitated events (usually every couple Friday evenings). Group Leader: Scott Bowles (shbowles@gmail.com).

Ascension - CAYG Parent Sunday Group

Pre-pandemic this group met once a month at Ascension during the same time as CAYG high school for the Evening Office and extended prayer. This group is primarily for families with teenagers in the Ascension High School Youth Group which meets on Sunday nights, although we continue to be an open group. During the pandemic we have been keeping in touch using email and sharing prayer requests that way too. Group Leaders: Jim (jimbokun@me.com) and Tiziana Rankin (tizia@me.com).





Omnia Nova

In normal time, our group meets every Sunday at Church of the Ascension during the 11am service. The group is focused on growing in prayer through spiritual disciplines, being in fellowship with one another, and understanding vocation in the world as ministry. The group requires a one-year commitment and is open once a year to new members in September. The group is kid-friendly. During this period of physical separation, the group meets weekly for evening prayer. The women also meet once a week to check in with each other and pray, and the men meet when the Spirit moves them. Group Leaders: Mari (macstout@gmail.com) and Jim Stout (jmstouts@gmail.com), and Brian Janaszek (bjanaszek@gmail.com) and Jen Hemphill (jen.hemphill@gmail.com).

Ben Avon/ North Hills Group

Our group meets for a simple meal, Bible study, family worship (Compline), and fellowship and prayer one Friday night and one Sunday night a month. This is a very kid-friendly group, and many families have children who attend the middle-school or high school youth group while the group meets. Younger children play in a different part of the house while the adults study scripture and pray. In addition, once a month the men and women meet separately for prayer, men on the first Sunday of the month, women on the third Sunday. During the pandemic the women have increased the number of times we have gotten together via Zoom in order to pray with and support one another. We have also met as a whole group on Zoom, finding a way to include our children for the worship and the sharing of thanksgivings. Group Leader: Jeanne Kohn (jeanne.kohn@ascensionpittsburgh.org).



Point Breeze Group

Our group normally meets twice a month for Bible study and prayer. During the pandemic, we are meeting weekly by Zoom on Wednesday evenings. The group has a time of reflection on the previous Sunday's gospel and sermon using questions from Ascension's website, followed by prayer requests, and ending with Compline. The formal program is organized to adjourn after one hour, but the Zoom call remains open for participants who wish to continue in conversation. Group facilitators: Jim

(JFoster@greycourt.com) and Nancy Foster (nancy.foster316@gmail.com).

Ambridge Group

Our group meets every other Sunday for bible study and prayer. Currently the group is learning about the value of the spiritual disciplines in forming and freeing us as followers of Christ. Matthew typically guides our discussion as we work our way through Sacred Rhythms (Ruth Haley Barton). As a new group, it is kind of funny that we only met once in person before the pandemic hit. So we've only had the chance to "go deeper" through Zoom. That's been a challenge, and we're looking forward to being "live and in person" whenever it is safe ... Hopefully over a meal! With wine! Group Leaders: Matthew Crutchfield (mcrutchfield0@gmail.com) and Kirk Wadsack (kirk.wadsack@tsm.edu).



Edgewood/Forest Hills Group



This group is family-oriented including a short children's lesson with every in-person meeting. In non-covid times, we meet every other Saturday from 5pm-7pm. Various families host in the Forest Hills, Edgewood and Wilksburg area. During covid we are doing an adult Zoom time from 8pm-9pm every other Saturday. We alternate between different areas of study. Most recently we have been using Jonathan Warren's questions based on the sermons. Early in covid, we created a group chat where we keep each other informed of prayer requests and other goings on. It has been a great source of support. Group Leaders: Rachel Kornfield Becker (racheldkbecker@gmail.com).

North Hills Group

Our group meets every other Monday evening for a meal, Bible study and prayer. During the pandemic, we have been meeting via Zoom to pray together, encourage one another, and play games. Our group never disappoints in the meals we put together at our meetings, so we've exchanged some recipes to try while we can't meet in person. We are grateful for the technology that allows us to stay connected during this trying time for all of us. Group Leaders: Philip Motes (pjmotes@gmail.com) and Jenn Motes (jennifer.motes45@gmail.com).



Brighton Heights Group

Our group meets 6:30-8:30pm via Zoom the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month to study the book of Revelation and pray for one another. Members may opt in on an additional Tuesday for accountability to a Rule of Life (a devotional discipline that intentionally orders one's time and activities so that one can deepen in the faith). Group Leaders: Stacey Regan (stacey.regan@ascensionpittsburgh.org) and Dan Hartling (dghartling@gmail.com).



South Hills Group

Our group meets every Saturday evening for Bible study, prayer, and fellowship. During the pandemic we are meeting via Zoom. This group is kid-friendly, and some of the families involved have teenagers. Group Leader: Mark Bailey (txdadmark@gmail.com)



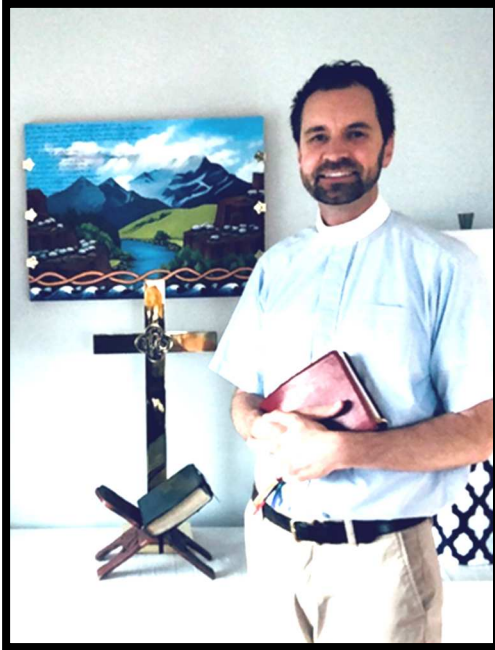
Greenfield Group

Our group meets every other Tuesday evening for Bible study and prayer. We are a mixed group with couples (some with kids and some without) and singles. During the pandemic we are meeting via Zoom. Group Leaders: Jordan (markleyja1@gmail.com) and Brenna Markley (brennamarkley@gmail.com)



Mission Partner St. Thomas Church

FORT COLLINS COLORADO



Josh Miller was Associate Rector at Ascension from 2008 – 2013. After he left Ascension, he moved to Fort Collins, Colorado, to plant St. Thomas Church. Editor's Note: For this article, Josh Miller interviewed himself.

Q: What have things been like at St. Thomas during quarantine?

A: We've had 4 members (out of 80) get Coronavirus. Thankfully they've all made complete recoveries. We do a full video service each week. I've been surprised how much the congregation connects with God during the service. I feel like we're growing stronger and more committed to each other during this time.

Q: What's been a highlight of quarantine for you?

A: I've always wanted to do an in-depth discipleship experience, with others, on the Sermon on the Mount. Since many folks have more flex-time than before, we started two of these groups. Participants

read through Fredrick Dale Brunner's Commentary on Matthew and submit written reflections prior to our Zoom meetings. It's been immensely rewarding to see how all of us are growing.

A virtual happy hour with Sarah Laribee and Jonny Cagwin was a highlight too!

Q: What's your hair status? Are you going to do a DIY haircut or grow it out?

A: No DIY cut for me! I've long been a fan of Jonathan Warren's hair from afar. I thought, this is a great opportunity to grow my hair out and see what happens.

Q: What have you been thinking about personally during this time?

A: Since I left Ascension, I feel like I've lived in this near-constant state of uncertainty as a church planter. I've gotten used to that. The intensity of it ebbs and flows, but it's still not my favorite zip code to live in. But now, everything is up in the air, for everyone. There's a solidarity in the uncertainty – that to me at least, is comforting.

Q: Any final thoughts?

A: I think fondly of Ascension and its people more than you would ever imagine and more than my infrequent communications convey. My love for you is deep and I'm grateful for your love and friendship. In the midst of all the anxiety and chaos, I hope you will have an ever-deeper assurance that this year of our Lord, 2020, belongs to him. No matter what happens, he has the final veto to recycle and repurpose the events of this year anyway he wants. It all belongs to him. And so do you.

Mission Partner:

Trinity

School for Ministry

an evangelical seminary in the Anglican tradition

By Jack Walsh, Director of Planned Giving (TSM) and member of Ascension



Trinity School for Ministry and the Church of the Ascension have a long and rich history, and these two beloved organizations may be more intertwined than you realize.

When I arrived at the Church of the Ascension in 1980, the church was searching for a new Rector. The last Rector, the William J. Bradbury, had just died, but it had been his hope in retirement to teach Greek at the new seminary which had just been founded in Ambridge, PA: Trinity School for Ministry. During the period after this, while Ascension was seeking new leadership, several Trinity School professors and students stepped in to help at Ascension. One of these was a powerful preacher named the Rev. Mike Henning. Mike's preaching had a great impact on me and laid a solid foundation for my own journey to Christian faith.

In the mid-1980s, during a difficult time, Trinity School allowed Terence (Terry) Kelshaw, a leave of absence to serve Ascension with skill as Interim Rector. Throughout the years, too many seminarians to count have come from Trinity School for Ministry to Ascension both to train and to serve.

All of Ascension's Liturgical Assistants have significant Trinity connections: Grant LeMarquand, Joel Scandrett, Jack Gabig and Ann Tefft. Also, our Deacon, Mark Stevenson, is an alumnus and was Academic Dean. Mark's wife Karen is an alumna. Andrea Millard earned her doctorate at Trinity. Frank B. isn't just a missionary but is also a Trinity graduate. Scott Bowles, Mike Radcliffe, Janet Helms, Erika Twitchell, Renee Smith, Wes Williams, and Sharon Forrest (and possibly others!) are graduates as well.

Our beloved Ann Paton is an alumna of Trinity School for Ministry.

Before Jonathan Millard, our Rector for 14 years was Doug McGlynn, who was called to Ascension from the faculty of Trinity.

Jonathan Warren was a candidate to join the Trinity School for Ministry faculty a few years ago, and, since he and Tish have moved to Pittsburgh, both of them have taught at the school. Ascension's Assistant Rector until 3 years ago was David Trautman and both he and his wife Megan are graduates of the school.

There are people at Ascension right now who you may not be aware are current or very recent Trinity students: Justin & Janessa Fisk (with baby Caleb), Josh and Emily Misner, Aaron and Risa Pelot (with baby Sophia). Also, Brandon Daily is a current student, as are Matt Ulrich, Kirk and Kim Wadsack, Robin Capcara, as well as Kurt and Katie Grossman (and possibly others!)

The point of this is to give you a sense of the deep and long extent to which Trinity School for Ministry has been used by God to bless the Church of the Ascension.

The school is deeply dependent on the wider church for help in recruitment, placement and financial support. In turn, the school, by God's grace, participates in forming outstanding Christian leaders, many of whom have blessed Ascension and the wider church.

I hope you can see that Church of the Ascension and Trinity School for Ministry have blessed each other in many ways, and for this, I encourage you to join me in giving thanks.

Mission Partner: *Jonah's Call*

Jonah's Call was planted by Church of the Ascension over a decade ago. Today it meets for services at the Union Project in Highland Park. Andrew Defusco is rector, and he sent us this article.

These have been eventful months for Jonah's Call! In January we made the historic move out of our beloved "childhood home" at Ascension and into our new worship location at the Union Project in Highland Park. And things were going great – we were getting used to the new space, finding new rhythms, and having fun getting to know our new neighbors. We were so excited to be meeting in a place that fits our mission so well. And then COVID-19. Like every church we had to learn fast what it meant to continue being the church, to continue worshipping together and continue living out our vision given a very different set of circumstances.

We landed on a format for Sunday worship that seemed to best fit our culture and aesthetic as a church. Rather than live streaming our familiar liturgy minus the congregation, we decided to pre-record each week's worship service and release the videos on Vimeo in time for the congregation to worship together on Sundays. In order to encourage as much participation as possible at home, most of the recording is a static image of us worshipping at Union Project with a participatory audio recording behind it. The sermon is a video of our Rector Andrew preaching conversationally from his living room, helping us to reflect together on the book of Acts throughout Easter season.

Our small groups are meeting via Zoom and that has been hugely life-giving. Our outreach is taking a very different form, but we have offered suggestions and invited the congregation to participate in shared ways of reaching out (safely) to our neighbors. Our daily participation in Common Prayer has continued throughout the day as it always does for us, but it has taken on an even deeper significance these days. It's been a fun project—with a steep learning curve—but we are all very eager to be together in the same room again as soon as we can.

One of the most significant things that has come out of the COVID-19 moment at Jonah's Call is our decision to shift our Sunday worship to the morning upon our return. When we resume gathering in the flesh, it will be at 10:00 a.m. at Union Project and continue that way at least through the summer as we discern what time of day best suits our mission in the city. Please pray that this big change bears fruit for the kingdom of God and creates a space where people not currently connected to the church may find a home among the people of God at Jonah's Call.

Much love to you all!

- The Rev. Andrew Defusco



CHURCH OF THE
ASCENSION

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

Worship Services

Sunday

10:00 a.m. Livestream
with walk-through Eucharist
to follow (See page 2 for more
information.)

Morning Prayer



Join us on YouTube!

Monday through Friday

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