

The Ascent

JULY 2022

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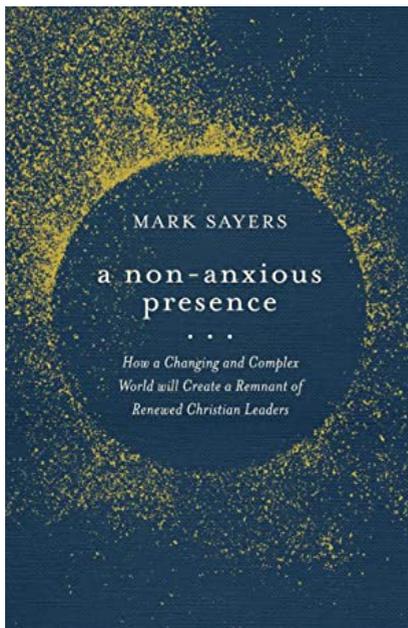
Summer
2022

Summer Reading: Recommendations from the Rector



By Jonathan Millard, Rector

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A Non-Anxious Presence: How a Changing and Complex World Will Create a Remnant of Renewed Christian Leaders by Mark Sayers, Moody Publishers, Chicago (2022)

I have just finished reading this excellent book and commend it to you. Though written with leaders in mind, I think there is much here that is important and relevant for all of us. Sayers observes that we are living in a “gray zone”, a time in between eras, a time marked by heightened anxiety. He brings hope and a challenge to live and lead as Christians who will be a non-anxious presence in the midst of the chaos. I found his insights into our current culture to be helpful and appreciated the way he points us back to being a people who will be utterly dependent upon God. It is precisely in the wilderness places, in the gray zones, that we are perhaps most likely to encounter life and growth if we will keep our eyes fixed on God.

Gentle and Lowly: The Heart of Christ for Sinners and Sufferers by Dane Ortlund, Crossway (2020)

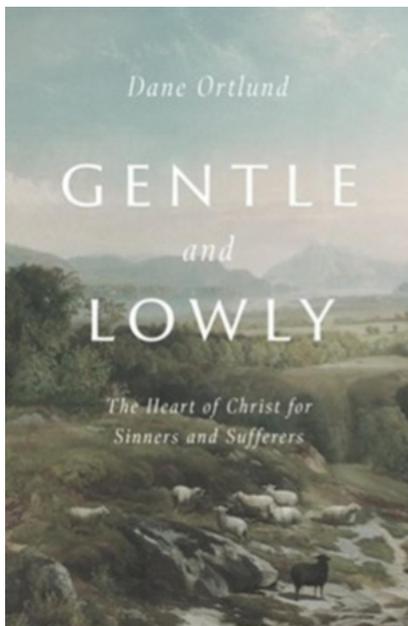
I hesitate to recommend a book that I have only just started to read but based on others’ recommendations to me and the first few chapters that I have read – I’ll take the risk!

This is a book about Jesus that seeks to encourage us with a fresh understanding of who he is, and what he feels toward us. The author, Dane Ortlund, takes inspiration from the writings of British Puritan writer, Thomas Goodwin, and draws closely on the witness of the Gospels.

Ortlund writes, “This book is written for the discouraged, the frustrated, the weary, the disenchanting, the cynical, the empty. Those running on fumes... It is for that increasing suspicion that God’s patience with us is wearing thin. For those of us who know God loves us but suspect we have deeply disappointed him... It is written, in other words, for normal Christians. In short, it is for sinners and sufferers. How does Jesus feel about them?”

Happy reading!

Jonathan +



A Letter to the Diocese from Bishop-Elect Alex Cameron

The consecration of Alex Cameron as the next Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Pittsburgh will take place at Church of the Ascension on Saturday, August 6. While seating for Ascension congregants will be limited, we need to recruit a host of volunteers for the service and luncheon to follow. A link to a volunteer form is found on the announcement page of Ascension's website. To follow is Bishop-elect Cameron's letter to the Diocese.

Just a few weeks ago we met together for the Special Electing Convention. I remain humbled and honored by the trust that has been placed in me by the Diocese. I look forward with joy to entering this partnership in the Gospel with you. May God impart his grace to us so that we might be empowered in that mission.

What's Next

The next major milestone in this process is the meeting of the College of Bishops the week of June 13. The election must be confirmed by the College at that time. I will be traveling to Virginia for that meeting and invite you to keep all the deliberations of the College in your prayers.

The end of that week Tamara and I, with two other bishops-elect and their wives, will be participating in a pre-consecration retreat sponsored by the College.

Then, as you are likely aware, the service of consecration is scheduled for August 6th (Church of the Ascension, Oakland). My prayer is that at this gathering of the Diocese the Lord will encourage us individually and corporately and begin to forge a solid pastoral bond between us for the months and years ahead.

I have had some sabbatical time planned for this summer and the Standing Committee and Diocesan Council have been gracious in seeking to honor that time. I will be on sabbatical from June 25 through July 31 and then again from August 8 to August 31. I will be in Pittsburgh the week prior to the consecration and will be available for any critical diocesan work during the weeks beginning June 20 and August 1. I have asked the Standing Committee and Diocesan Council to make me aware of what matters most and needs my attention in these weeks.

Bishop Martyn Minns has graciously agreed to be available for any emergency pastoral care for the clergy during my sabbatical time. I am grateful to him for his service both to the Diocese and to me in this kind offer.

I look forward to getting to know many of you in the days to come. I am looking forward to spending time with the clergy at the annual overnight Clergy Retreat (September 14-15). This will be my first opportunity to connect with many of the clergy face-to-face in a substantive way. I anticipate that time with joy.

Grace and peace to you,

Bishop-Elect Alex Cameron



“Todah Rabah”... or THANK YOU!



By Marilyn Chislaghi, Director of Ministry

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I want to extend my thanks to Jonathan Millard, the Vestry, and indeed the entire congregation for allowing me to enjoy a sabbatical for 2 months in April and May. It truly was a privilege as I know others share the sense of weariness I experienced before I left. Thank you.

I had just one goal on my sabbatical – to rest. I laughed when I saw a Facebook post in February promoting a book with 12 essential components for resting on sabbatical. The thought of cracking that book made me feel even more tired. So, with a very general and undefined goal in mind, and with 7 weeks accommodation and an 11-day tour booked, in late March my husband Charlie and I boarded a plane to Tel Aviv.

I find it difficult to find words that capture and communicate the way in which the Lord met me on my sabbatical. I was immersed in a multi-sensory 7-week experience that fed my soul, my spirit, indeed the very core of my being. I was refreshed from the inside out.

We spent our first week in ancient Jaffa (Joppa) near the Mediterranean, feeling the ocean breeze, smelling new aromas, seeing people dressed in colorful clothing, hearing new sounds from minarets and Sabbath horns, eating unfamiliar but delicious food, and enjoying chats with people who lived a different history than our own: a young Russian Jewish immigrant, an Arab woman whose family owned a coffee shop for 100+ years, a secular Jewish artist. We participated in an Erev Shabbat Service (Sabbath Eve) with Messianic Jews on a Friday, and then

worshipped in an Anglican Church on Sunday – left empty since 1948 when Israel won the War of Independence. While Christian Arabs left, pigeons unfortunately took up residence in the space for the 70+ years the buildings were empty. This fractured history notwithstanding, Jaffa was fascinating because Jews, secular and orthodox, mingled very freely with a more predominant Arab population. And yet police presence was heavy - IDF (Israeli Defense



Forces) on many corners, and reserves in plain clothes with automatic weapons over their shoulders even as they walked hand in hand with wives and girlfriends.

We met our tour group, 21 very nice Baptists from Connecticut, at Ben Gurion airport. We began an 11-day tour that took us from Bedouins and camels in the southern Negev to the foothills of Mount Hermon in the Golan Heights, very close to the Lebanese and Syrian

borders. We saw Samaritans and Druze along the way, and witnessed the impoverished conditions in the West Bank but enjoyed Palestinian hospitality nonetheless. Several in our group were re-baptized in the Jordan, but I decided to forego the experience because I was certain the Rector would not think well of this practice, and I wanted to remain gainfully employed upon my return to Pittsburgh! Qumran, the Dead Sea, Masada, the beautiful Judean hills, Capernaum, Nazareth, a morning boat ride across the sea of Galilee. It was fabulous.

We ended our time with our tour investigating the historic treasures of Jerusalem. We also spent our 4 remaining weeks there – at Christ Church Anglican Guesthouse which is in the old city, in fact atop the area where Herod’s palace would have been centuries ago. Our stay at Christ Church, namely the people we met there, was the highlight of our trip. Christ Church has an active Anglican church at its heart, and we celebrated Easter with that worshipping community. In fact, we celebrated two Easters because Orthodox Christians have their Easter a week after ours. We joined throngs of Orthodox believers on their Easter Saturday for a celebration of the ‘Holy Fire’. You have to see this celebration to believe it. What joy was in that crowd! Of course, there were other feelings in the city during our stay. A 1,000-person protest around the death of an Al Jazeera reporter took place just outside Christ Church gates. Our bedroom windows faced the Temple Mount and during Ramadan we heard rioting and stun grenades throughout the night. Jerusalem is a powder keg.

While at Christ Church we became very good friends with a 30-something man who came to Christ after years of Rabbinic training. Upon immigrating to Israel, while completing his IDF service, mandatory for Israeli citizens, he was assigned oversight and protection of Christian holy sites in the Galilee and wanted to know why places like Capernaum were important to Christians. In pursuit of this question, he read the Gospels for the very first time and had a growing sense that this Jesus – who he had thought was a generally bad guy – was indeed the Messiah. After many months of discussion with a priest, he was

baptized. This cost him a lot – his profession as a Rabbi, his standing in that community, his family. He is currently rebuilding his life as a Christian, and it was pure privilege to spend a lot of time with him.

I spent my days in Jerusalem having extended times of scripture reading, meditation and prayer in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. This is the oldest existent church in the world and the likely site of the crucifixion and perhaps also the burial site of Christ. I found myself a perfect nook in the wall of a small chapel where I could settle each day. It was so tucked away that I startled a few priests who came to the chapel censuring the altars, but they got me back with clouds of strong incense!

With all I had seen, tasted, smelled, and touched in the weeks previous, I came to scripture with new eyes and a new hunger. I decided to do a different kind of Lectio Divina, taking much larger portions of scripture than usual – complete books at a time – asking the Lord to give me one invitation from my reading that day. It took me a month to read through the books of the New Testament and God was faithful each time to give me such welcome and simple invitations from each book: I invite you, Marilyn, to come to me. I invite you, Marilyn, to serve. I invite you, Marilyn, to a deep life of prayer. I invite you, Marilyn, to love. I invite you, Marilyn, to stay awake. I invite you, Marilyn, to be part of the story of the Holy Spirit. It was such a rich time.

So, thank you Ascension for allowing me a sabbatical. While the tale I have told may not sound like ‘rest’, it was deeply refreshing. Some have asked if we were ready to come home. Well, in some ways ‘No.’ Both Charlie and I could have soaked it all up for even longer, not to mention that we ate date pastries and hummus almost every day. But in other ways ‘Yes’. One of the invitations from my time at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher – this one from Thessalonians – was to rejoice in the church family that the Lord has given me. That’s all of you! So, we returned with that joy. It’s good to be back and to be with you and to do the work that I know God has given me to do. My spirit says “Baruch HaShem” or BLESSED BE GOD!

Refugee Ministry



By Daniel Behrens, Ascension Missionary in Residence
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I want to introduce you to the Gomez family. They are from Cuba and arrived in Pittsburgh this spring. I got to know them through the International Ministry since they came to the church for English classes. The parents are middle-aged, with three young adult children and a distinctively Cuban accent.

According to the family, in the last several years the Cuban government has taken almost absolute control of the people's lives. The Gomez family decided they had to flee, in part because of their involvement in ministry and their connections to Christians in the United States. They flew to Nicaragua and made it by land all the way to the California/Mexico border, putting their lives in the hands of armed, sometimes visibly intoxicated, people-smugglers. Even after crossing into the U.S. and asking for asylum, they were held in an overcrowded, standing-room-only cell for days.

One of the hardest moments of their journey came when one of their sons was pulled from the cell in the middle of the night and deported onto the street in Mexico with no explanation. He once again put his life in the hands of the people-smugglers, who moved him through northern Mexico to a different border crossing. The other migrants came to recognize this young man's strong faith, and even asked him to pray before they attempted the crossing of the Rio Grande. All of his possessions were confiscated by the cartel, except for his Spanish Bible which shows the wrinkled water damage from the crossing.

Now reunited and staying with a host family in Pittsburgh, they are tackling the monumental task of navigating their asylum case and trying to build a new life.



It has been a blessing to see Pittsburgh, my hometown, through their eyes. They are amazed by the everyday luxuries and endless choices surrounding us. At Five Guys Burgers and Fries after English classes one day, I tried to explain that the 8 items on the left side of the menu were all different kinds of burgers (Burger, Bacon Burger, Bacon and Cheeseburger, Little Bacon and Cheeseburger...) and that the middle of the menu showed the 25+ free toppings from which to choose. They survived that test, ordering their burgers "All the Way." But around the counter at the glimmering Coke Remix machine, they battled the dazzling touchscreen of options in search of Original Coca-Cola.

As we ate, they explained that in Cuba the government forbids the sale or consumption of cow meat, at the threat of years in jail, leaving all of the precious import to government elites and tourists. I suddenly saw this "ordinary" lunch as simultaneously an act of protest and celebration for them, and proof of the liberties I enjoy every single day.

There is much more to the Gomez family's story, but I hope you can see both the complexity and difficulty of a journey like theirs, and how good it is to meet them and see Pittsburgh through their eyes.

If you are not already, would you consider serving as a tutor, conversation partner, or assistant for a beginner class this fall? By spending time together, in-person or on Zoom, during the day or in the evening, you can get to know someone like the Gomez family and be a part of welcoming them to Pittsburgh. Many new Afghan refugees are already here, and a new wave of Ukrainian refugees is just beginning to touch down in Pittsburgh. I would love to have a corps of conversation partners, tutors, and assistants ready to meet them, help them, and be blessed by them!

Please talk to LuAnn Pengidore (pittsburghenglish4u@gmail.com) or me if you would like to learn more about this ministry! I would love to grab a coffee or lunch to chat. My cell is 412-352-6643.



Fearfully and Wonderfully Made



By James Scannell
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For this issue James, a young adult at Ascension who has autism and communicates via a spelling board, is interviewing Holden Gerlach. Holden's parents, Heidi and Jeff, were married by Doug McGlynn at Ascension! Holden's grandparents, Earl and Susan Glotfelty, are regulars at the 11am service. Holden was confirmed on May 22!

I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.
 —Ps.139:14

I'm thrilled to interview my friend Holden Gerlach. I have known Holden for years but only in the last few have we been able to really communicate. Holden is the reason I learned to spell to communicate. He has a big heart and loves Jesus. He wants to serve the church. I'm so glad he is part of our community. He is a living example of God using the weak and lowly to show His glory.

J: How did you come to Ascension?

H: My grandparents brought me to WINGS when I was non-spelling. It was my first experience as a Christian. This made me feel included in my aloneness. I'm so glad I have my Ascension family.

J: I'm so happy for that. I thought you were here before then.

H: I did come, but not on a regular basis.

J: How do you spend your days?

H: I'm attending school at Sunrise in Murrysville. This is my last year. In my spare time I do art, yoga, and therapeutic horseback riding. Doing more (like having a job) would make me whole. Having my friends is important.

J: What is your disability and how does it affect your life and relationships?

H: I have nonspeaking autism. It makes me misunderstood. People think I'm being rude by not looking at them and making weird sounds. I can't make my body do what I mean. I go into my shell because I can't behave normally and it's hard to connect with people.

J: That is so hard. Thanks for being vulnerable. I think people need to hear your story to learn to relate to people with autism. What helps you belong in community?

H: My faith helps me connect with people. I'm so grateful for how this church has embraced all the people with different disabilities.

J: How do you envision the church including people with disabilities?

H: They do a good job already. More education about how to support people who have different needs would be helpful.



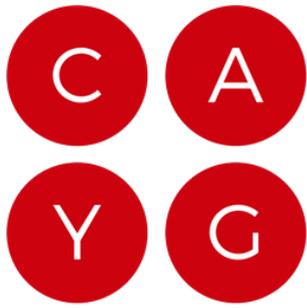
J: I'm wondering if God shows Himself to you. I'm asking because I see Jesus in the nave.

H: God is in my mind all the time. He shows Himself in song. I love the music.

J: Is there anything else you'd like people to know about you?

H: I am a good listener.

J: So true. Thanks, Holdie!



Church of the Ascension Youth Group: Summer of Service



By The Rev. Jess Bennett, Deacon/Ascension Fellow

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As school finished up and our students transitioned to summer (and Father Alex Banfield-Hicks and his family enjoyed a well-deserved sabbatical!), we held a 3-week “mini series” of CAYG Sunday evenings, with the theme of “SERVE(d)” — considering how God in Christ emptied himself to serve us, and calls and empowers us to serve the world.

While normal weekly CAYG takes time off during the summer, we are looking forward to putting this concept into practice! Throughout the month of July, we are looking ahead to a few upcoming service projects, both at Ascension and out in the community (exact details forthcoming). Youth (and parents) are encouraged to participate and can register at www.CAYGonline.com.

In addition to local service projects, our summer will hit its pinnacle with our youth service trip to Harrisburg, PA in late July! Thirteen students and four adult leaders will be heading out Sunday, July 24th and returning Friday the 29th for a week of service and community engagement in the city of Harrisburg. We’re partnering with YouthWorks, a fantastic Christian organization that hosts short-term trips all across the country and has a consistent community presence in Harrisburg. We’ll spend the week serving with local nonprofits and projects such as food banks, community gardens, and summer camps for kids, with some just-for-fun activities along the way! Some of the students on our team participated in the trip last year and are eager to return, and some are first timers. Please pray for us as we go!

SATURDAYS SERVING TOGETHER IN JULY

9-12am

July 2 Clearing Old Catacombs

July 9 Locations pending. Check www.CAYGonline.com

July 16 for updates!

CAYG PARENTS ARE INVITED TO SERVE AS CHAPERONES! FRIENDS & ASCENSION MEMBERS WELCOME!

Prayer Points:

In addition to prayer for safety and travel, we invite you to pray for us along the lines of YouthWorks’ vision statement:

“Providing Christ-centered mission trips is our way of serving God’s multid denominational Church. We want to help empower every teenager to know God and be like Jesus in the ways they love and serve others, and our desire is the same for churches, families, staff and communities. We aim to create experiences that broaden perspectives, ignite passions, expose possibilities and inspire pursuits.”

It’s our hope that through this trip, our students experience the empowering of the Holy Spirit to serve even when it’s hard, and to return with open eyes to see God at work in their hearts and in the places where we live, work and play. To the glory of Christ!

Growing God's Kingdom is THE BEST!

Lessons Learned in Kids' Church



By Catherine Slocum, Director of Children's Ministries
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The unscheduled days of summer can bring new freedoms for our children; think fireflies, roasted marshmallows, and spontaneous bike rides. But summer can also be a time when we hear our kids cry out those dreaded words "I'm bored!" As we prepare for the summer season, I want to share one of our Kids' Church lessons that directly addresses the issue of boredom. In this lesson, we were reminded that when we just receive things, or watch things, or eat things, we can get bored. However, when we make things, do things, and share things, to love God and others, our lives become dynamic and meaningful. During our time together in this Kids' Church lesson called "Bored or The BEST" we acted out the fictitious story of "Bored Benjamin and His Bubble Wrap Blues."

The children had a lot of fun popping their pieces of bubble wrap (symbolic of an overly insulated life) at the end of the story as they engaged their minds and bodies in this imaginative lesson. I hope you enjoy reading this fun children's story written by Jay Slocum for Kids' Church.



Bored Benjamin and His Bubble Wrap Blues

After playing video games for six hours straight, Benjamin felt fidgety and kind of had a headache. He started feeling bored and could not figure out what to do next.

So, he called out to his dad who was upstairs doing some work on his computer,

"Dad, I can't figure out what to do now that my six hours of video gaming has ended."

His dad, said, "Use your imagination, Benjamin."

Benjamin sat down in a comfortable chair in his living room and tried to use his imagination, but nothing came into his head. So, he called out again. Dad, "I am so bored. Can't you just help me find what to do for the next few hours. My imagination seems to be frozen right now. I AM BORED!"

At these words, the bubble wrappers came into the room and began to wrap bored Benjamin in bubble wrap. As Benjamin sat comfortably in his first layer of bubble wrap, he began to feel hungry. He knew he could go to the kitchen and get a snack if he asked, but he was feeling warm and cozy in his bubble wrap and he also really didn't know what he wanted for a snack since his imagination was frozen. So, he called out to his mom, "Mom, I am SO HUNGRY. I AM SO Hungry I am getting Hangry (That's Hungry plus Angry). Can you get me a snack?"

Bored Benjamin's mom called out from the kitchen, "There are lots of snacks in the kitchen, Benjamin. Please go and decide what you want for a snack. You have my permission."

So, Benjamin went to the kitchen and looked into the fridge. He really wanted someone to get it for him, especially since his imagination was frozen and he was comfortably wrapped in bubble wrap. He looked and looked and looked. And, then he said to his mom, "We don't have anything to eat. All our food is so boring. I am so bored with cheese sticks and celery sticks and carrot sticks. Our food is boring."

At these words, the bubble wrappers came into the room and began to wrap bored Benjamin in more bubble wrap. Now that Benjamin was covered in another layer of bubble wrap, he began to feel very warm and tired. So, he went back to his comfortable chair to think about his grumbling stomach and what to do next. As he sat, trying to get his imagination to un-freeze, he thought he might play with one of his Trucks. But his frozen imagination and all that bubble wrap were making it very hard.

So, Benjamin called out to his older sister and said, "Sister, sister, please help me. I am in a real bind. My imagination is frozen, and this bubble wrap has me feeling like I will never get to play ever again. Could you please hand me my favorite trucks? They are up on top of my dresser."

His sister was watching YouTube videos about puppy dogs on her tablet and said, "You know I am not allowed in your room after you banished me last week from going in there. You will have to get them yourself."

Struggling, Benjamin waddled up the stairs. He had all he could do to get into his room because the bubble wrap was making him feel so sleepy. But he managed to get his bedroom door opened and in a desperate reach to the top of his dresser, he grabbed his favorite trucks. Holding them, his imagination began to thaw and for a second, he imagined that his bedroom carpet was a huge field that he was going to plow and then plant with wild sunflowers. The more he thought about this, the more his imagination thought and before he knew it, he was playing. Zooming his trucks, he whispered to himself, "I am not bored."

At these words, the bubble wrappers came into the room and began to unwrap Benjamin until he was completely free of bubble wrap. Boy did Benjamin feel good after that. He turned his bubble wrap into an exploding desert floor and used his truck to make all of the bubble pop.

THE END

This summer our children's ministry program will include a "Summer Celebration" series during our Kids' Church time in July and August. We will invite special guests from our congregation and beyond to share with our children how following Jesus brings a grace-filled, beautiful, well-ordered life, encouraging us to celebrate and live into the life that He has given us through His death, resurrection, ascension, and rule.

Music & Worship Arts

Summer Arts Series:



By Wes Williams & Elise Massa, Assistant Director of Music and Worship Arts
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Last Summer, Ascension hosted its first Worship Arts Series under the tent. The purpose of this series was two-fold: 1) to love our neighbor by showing Jesus' hospitality through the arts, and 2) to hear from Ascension-based artists about how their work intersected with various spiritual themes.

This two-fold purpose is tied together by the power of the arts. The arts are an invitation to know artists more deeply who have created something which expresses outwardly to those around them what previously had only been known inwardly, and only to themselves. The arts are a hospitality of the soul, an invitation into the inner life to know artists on a deep and personal level. Our Worship Arts Series was not just an invitation into our community space, but an invitation into the hearts and minds of artists who created works reflecting their own lives of worship through their creations.

This year, our Arts Series will have a different twist. Instead of focusing on inviting others in, we are inviting you to go out into the community. Why is this important?

A key hope of the Gospel, as Paul writes, is to "know fully, even as [we] have been fully known." (1 Cor. 13:12b) The question then, is how we can communicate what it means to be known by God to those around us. If the arts are a pathway to deeper knowledge of another person, then accepting their invitation to know is not only a

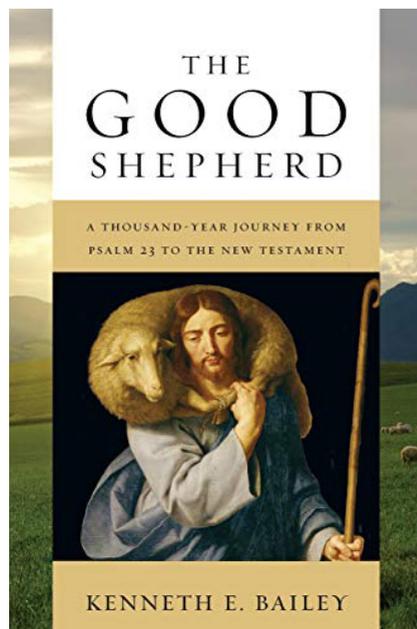
kindness, but an incarnational reflection of how our Father knows us fully. More than this, to know and then also to love is what it means to be the Body of Christ in the world. Especially in times of distress and isolation, such as this very time we all share, when the communities around us are shouting to be seen and heard and known, one of the greatest gifts we can provide is to simply witness, and listen, and be present as they open themselves to that hope.

When we end our Sunday worship service, we are encouraged to “go out into the world, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit!” Christ has called us to be His witnesses in the world by our joy, by our hope, by our love, and by our rejoicing that we are fully known. When we go out into the world with this joy, we are an invitation to others that they may join in the hope of knowing fully, even as they already are fully known.

Here are some upcoming community arts events that are happening around our various neighborhoods:

- **Bloomfield:** Hemingway's Summer Poetry Series at White Whale Bookstore - Tuesdays, May-August at 7:00 pm
- **Wilkinsburg:** Summer at the Station - June 25, July 16, August 27 from 3:00-6:00 pm, 901 Hay Street
- **Lawrenceville:** Art Crawl 2022 - Saturday, July 9 from 2:00-9:00 pm, Butler Street 36th to 52nd block
- **The Hill District:** The Hill District Arts Festival - Saturday-Sunday, July 30-31, 2022 from 12:00-8:00 pm
- **North Braddock:** Ascension member Nathan Van Patter's Art Gallery Opening - Saturday, August 6 at 6:00 pm - UnSmoke Art Gallery, 1137 Braddock Avenue
- **Swissvale:** Swissvale Carnegie Library's Music Under the Tree: Summer Concert Series 2022
- **Highland Park:** Reservoir Jazz - Sundays in August from 5:00-7:00 pm
- **Squirrel Hill/Shadyside:** YART Sale - Saturday, August 27 from 10:00 am-4:00 pm, 1047 Shady Avenue
- **Oakland:** St. Paul's Cathedral 2022 Organ Summer Series - Sundays at 3:30 pm

OWLS Update



Ascension's Seniors Ministry, OWLS, is taking a break for the summer but our team is busy planning for the fall.

Plan to join us on Thursday, September 8 for our fall kickoff luncheon. This fall we will also be studying *The Good Shepherd* by Ken Bailey. Please pick up a copy and use the summer to read this wonderful volume. If you would like to be on our email list, please reach out to Kate Fisher at kafisher208@gmail.com.

Uniquely Summer Events!

Parish Day Away

Saturday, August 20 from
12:00-4:00 pm

Join us for a day of sunshine, swimming, and conversation. We'll gather around the pool at Laurelville Retreat Center, about an hour from Pittsburgh. Bring a picnic lunch. A canteen is also available for hotdogs and other summer delights – nachos, mini pizzas, ice cream!



Gregorian Chant Workshop: Sing unto the Lord a very old song!

Thursday, July 7 at 7:00 pm

Ascension's Music and Worship Arts program is distinctive for our commitment to worship with music from across Christian history, whether it was composed centuries ago or by an Ascensionite last month. In doing so we worship within the Communion of Saints, across the centuries and around the world.

For much of Christian history, the sound of sung worship was Gregorian Chant. On festival days, we still sing the Sursum Corda ("Lift up your hearts...") in the Eucharistic prayers. During Lent this year, the Choir chanted the thousand-year-old Lent Prose on alternate Sundays. Even without harmony, these ancient melodies, with their free form ebbing and flowing, have a haunting, mystical beauty all their own.

On Thursday, July 7 at 7:00 pm, musicologist and Ascension parishioner Dr. Andy Kohn will be leading a Gregorian Chant workshop at Ascension. In addition to singing together, we will learn to read neumes (the square notes on a four-line staff) and will take a stab at reading from copies of a medieval manuscript. Come make marvelous melodious medieval music! All are welcome.

Newcomer and "Get-Connected" Cookout

Sunday, September 4 at 5:00 pm

Newcomers to Ascension are invited to a cookout under our tent on Sunday, September 4. You can come if you have been at Ascension for just one week or more than five years – if you still feel new and unconnected this event is for you! Please bring a side dish to share! One of our staff members is also new – Daniel Behrens who is spearheading a new initiative to refugees and immigrants. This will also be a chance to get to know him and his wife Rebekah.



Summer Soul Care

Saturday, August 13 at 9:30 am

Holy Day: St Mary the Virgin

The Anglican Church has a rich history of observing Holy Days throughout the calendar year. On August 13 the church honors the Virgin Mary, Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ. In recognition of this feast day, we invite you to a morning of quiet reflection in the Gordon Chapel on Saturday, August 13, 9:30-11:00 am as we explore the life and legacy of this remarkable woman. Eucharist will be celebrated.

Meeting in the Gordon Chapel is an intentional part of our reflections on Mary as mother and disciple as it is what we call a “lady chapel.” A lady chapel is identified by its artwork and color scheme designed to bear witness to the role of the Virgin Mary in the story of Jesus.

Register for this event on our website. Childcare is available for those who register by Friday, August 5.

MACEDONIA
CHURCH OF PITTSBURGH

ATTENTION YOUNG ADULTS AGES 18-40ISH! **BLAZE**

ACOUSTIC SOUL

You are officially invited to **Acoustic Soul** - a young adult gathering with live entertainment, food, and Biblical discussion. The next Acoustic Soul will take place “under the tent” at the Church of the Ascension on Friday, July 29 at 7 PM.

July 29, 2022 @ 7 PM / Doors open @ 6:30 PM
Under the tent at the Church of the Ascension

Since the first Acoustic Soul in October 2019, the worship experience has brought together young adults from local churches including Macedonia, Amplify, ACAC, Bethel AME, and others. Acoustic Soul was created as an initiative of Macedonia Church of Pittsburgh’s young adult ministry, BLAZE (Believers Living A Zealous Existence), to bring together young adults from all over Pittsburgh to fellowship with one another outside of a church building. Throughout the night there will be fellowship, live music from artists around the Pittsburgh area, prayer, and discussion around a designated scripture or Biblical topic. You do not want to miss out on this!

If you’re interested in volunteering the night of, email Sarah Gilmer at sarahjgilmer@gmail.com.



VENITE

Venite: Out and About in Oakland



By Leah Hornfeck, CCO Director of Campus Ministry
leah.hornfeck@ascensionpittsburgh.org

“You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” - Acts 1:8

It’s all too easy to fall into the normal routines and rhythms of our lives without giving much thought to why we’re doing the things we do or where these things are taking us. If we’re fortunate, there’s enough good in our lives to make us okay with the bad, but even in this, we can’t seem to shake feelings of being stuck and the temptation to let hopelessness creep in. Deuteronomy also warns us of the spiritual dangers of becoming too set in our ways and secure in our circumstances, saying **“When you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied, then your heart will become proud and you will forget the Lord your God” (Deuteronomy 8:12-14).**

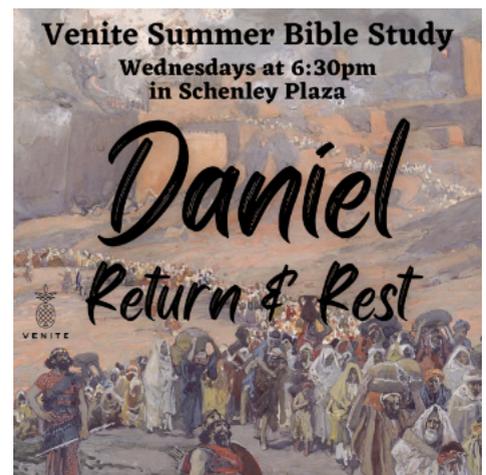
In his book, *Disruptive Discipleship*, Sam Van Eman talks about “the power of breaking routine to kickstart your faith.” He encourages people to make choices in their daily lives that intentionally create a “productive zone of disequilibrium,” but sometimes we simply find ourselves in these disruptive places or seasons. In these cases, we have to decide whether we’ll reach and grasp for any straws of normalcy in our lives or choose to courageously embrace the uncertainty of the new.

It is precisely in this place that Venite—along with many other ministries at Ascension—is located as we begin more construction on the church building. Over the past few years, basing our ministry at the church has been crucial to developing a strong foundation. However, now that we have established this, we’re ‘embracing the displacing’ as an opportunity to move onto campus for the foreseeable future. As we spend time out and about in Oakland, we hope to reach more students, make more connections on campus, and guide students to see how they can live out

their college lives, their majors, and their future careers all for the kingdom of God.

However, this comes with great risk and challenges. Sam Van Eman says, “[We] believe that what we have now is not worth giving up to get the better thing we could have. Is growth really worth the hassle? If we’re convinced that maturity is worth pursuing and that faith leads to maturity and that moving toward risky surrender tests our faith, then despite our mental wiring, we must begin to practice letting go of the familiar.” This exercise of trust is not based on a holy hoping for the best, but in His Word, as we’re reminded in this season, in our recent celebration of Pentecost, of others who were called—or forced—from their place of comfort and familiarity for the gospel to go forth to those who would not have heard it otherwise.

We don’t know what all these changes will bring, but we trust it will be growth in maturity and faith if nothing else. Whether or not God provides ministry growth, we will choose to trust in His provision and the things He has for us rather than the thinking we know better. This summer, we’ve already begun taking small steps of faith in this direction as our college students have been gathering in Schenley Plaza for our weekly Bible study. And we have plans to continue establishing our presence in Oakland as students arrive back on campus for the Fall semester. We ask that you pray for us and the work that God is doing in these Oakland college students. If you’d like to offer more than prayers, we’ll be looking for people to provide treats for students, hang out with students on campus, and join students in fun adventures, exploring the city around Oakland and beyond. Interested? Let me know!



Finishing Summer & Preparing for the Fall: WE NEED YOU!



By LuAnn Pengidore, Director of International Ministry

PittsburghEnglish4U@gmail.com



This past spring (May and June) we had a flurry of classes and events:

- We had a wonderful Latino picnic under the tent with food, art and fun
- We hosted 14 English classes that served 62 students
- We hosted four Bible studies that served 20 students
- A group of internationals and volunteers met Monday mornings in person and Tuesday evenings online to read through the Jesus Story Bible and the Gospel of Luke
- Another group of internationals with volunteers met Thursday nights to review the previous Sunday readings and sermon.
- We had field trips to the Heinz History Museum, the Carnegie Library in Oakland, and a “Doors Open” tour event of the Northside.
- We enjoyed outdoor activities including a hike and picnic at Ohiopyle as well as kayaking and biking at Raccoon State Park
- A group of students and Ascension volunteers volunteered with Open Hands Ministry, weeding and cleaning up a house on Collier Avenue
- Ascension’s legal clinic for immigrants (CIAC – Christian Immigration Advocacy Center) has continued to meet up with clients regularly on Wednesday evenings

How does all this happen? There are invites to send, appointments to make, food to be purchased, drivers to be

recruited, and coordination for all events. We are so fortunate to have a host of volunteers of various ages and at various stages of life – young adult and middle-aged professionals, retirees, stay at home moms, to name a few! And, they have all kinds of backgrounds – teachers, actors, engineers, lawyers, chefs, nurses - again just to name a representative few.

Would you consider volunteering with International Ministry? As you consider this request, keep in mind that Daniel Behrens is beginning a whole new outreach to immigrant and refugee populations in Pittsburgh and our legal clinic could use personable administrative helpers on Wednesday evenings. This summer we have a few field trips. In September we relaunch our regular ESL classes and Bible studies as well as regular Monday 10/4@4 prayer time for internationals. Here’s what we need:

- Drivers for field trips and to take immigrants to appointments
- Conversation Partners
- ESL Teachers and Assistants
- Help with our CIAC clinic

If you want to know more, please email LuAnn (email above) or Daniel Behrens with our refugee/immigrant ministry (behrensdj1@gmail.com) or Jen Tinker who coordinates our legal clinic (jennifer.bright.tinker@gmail.com).

So, This All Happened...



Baptisms on Pentecost Sunday!





Confirmations with Bishop Martyn Minns



Ordination of Josh and Jess Bennett



Ukraine Donations - thanks to Aaron Sams for coordinating this project!



THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Laurelville Parish Retreat

September 30 – October 2, 2022



CHURCH OF THE
ASCENSION

Worship Services Sunday 9:00 am, 11:00 am Nave Services with [YouTube](#) live stream.

Website www.ascensionpittsburgh.org

Address 4729 Ellsworth Avenue Pittsburgh, PA 15213

Phone/Fax (412) 621-4361 / (412) 621-5746

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CHURCH OF THE
ASCENSION

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