

## Letter From the Rector

Dear Church family,

**A**lleluia. Christ is risen.  
The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Andrea and I will soon be embarking upon our sabbatical, which begins on April 9. As we take time for rest, reading, recreation and research we do so mindful of the privilege of having this extended time away. We are very grateful to the vestry and congregation for enabling us to have this opportunity.



*The Rev. Canon Jonathan Millard*

As we go, we do so knowing that Ascension will be in good hands. In addition to the hard working and competent clergy and staff team, Bishop Grant LeMarquand will be serving as Priest-in-Charge during my absence. Bishop Grant will be serving as our principal preacher on Sundays at Ascension, as well as being present on Tuesdays and Wednesdays during the week. He will be leading our staff meetings, attending vestry meetings, and providing an overseeing pastoral presence while I am away.

Though you will be out of sight, you will not be out of mind. You can be assured of our daily prayers while we are away. Often when you are parted from those you love you may notice some changes when reunited. I hope when we return you will see some changes in us. Please pray that we will be more Christ-like, more prayerful, as well as renewed and refreshed to lead and serve in the years ahead. I wonder, what changes might we see in you?

One of my longings for our church family is that we might increasingly be a community of Christians that is marked by: Deep Love, Deep Care, Deep Belonging, Deep Prayer, and Deep Dependency on the Holy Spirit.

### **Deep Love:**

St. Paul exhorts us to, “love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor.” (Romans 12:10) In the early Church, Tertullian tells us that pagans were struck by the witness of Christian love. “See how they love one another!” they would remark. I wonder how many people look at us and say the same. Jesus said, “By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another.” (John 13:35) This intense love doesn’t just cover over a multitude of sins, it’s a litmus test of faith. Deep love for God and our neighbor is also what compels us to share our Easter Faith with those among whom we live and work. ***I long for us to love deeply.***

### **Deep Care:**

A few years ago, Presbyterian Pastor, Tim Keller, tweeted: “The church is a hospital for sinners (where triage happens) not a museum for saints.” How true that is! As I look around our congregation and pray through the Church Directory I am struck not only by the giftedness and faithfulness of so many but also by the wounds and suffering that are borne by many. These categories, of course, are not mutually exclusive. How vital it is that we care for one another and “rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep.” (Romans 12:15) ***I long for us to care deeply.***

### Deep Belonging:

“People will come to church for many reasons, but they will stay for only one - friendship. People aren’t looking for a friendly church; they’re looking for a church where they can make friends.” (Nicky Gumbel, rector of Holy Trinity Brompton, London.) I love to meet with those who are becoming members at Ascension and hear their stories of why they want to make their church home with us. So often it is because of the warm welcome they have received. St. Peter writing to the early church said, “Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.” (1 Peter 4:9-10) *I long for us to experience deep belonging.*

### Deep Prayer:

“You do not have because you do not ask,” writes the Apostle James, (James 4:2). I wonder how often we pray only perfunctorily or as a last resort? What would it look like for us to “pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17)? When we get back I’m looking forward to leading our Parish Retreat (with Andrea and the Warrens) on the theme: “Lord, teach us to pray.” *I long for us to be a people of deep prayer.*

### Deep Dependency on the Holy Spirit:

“Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, says the Lord of hosts.” (Zechariah 4:6). I know how much we need the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Sadly, I also know how often I rely not on that power but on my own strength. I encourage you to read Romans 8:1-17 where you will find St. Paul reminding us of the power and presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of every Christian. Paul also exhorts us to live our lives according to the Spirit (v.4). *I long for us to be a people that practice deep dependency on the Holy Spirit.*

We will be praying for these things for ourselves and for you, our brothers and sisters in Christ. Finally, until we see you again, after August 18<sup>th</sup>, “Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power.” (Ephesians 6:10).

Affectionately, yours in Christ,

Jonathan +

Jonathan N. Millard  
(Rector)

### Lunch with Jonathan and Andrea Sunday, April 8 after the 11am service

This will be Canon Jonathan Millard’s last Sunday with us until he returns from his sabbatical leave in mid-August. Please join Jonathan and Andrea Millard for lunch following the 11am service. They will speak for about 30 minutes on their plans and hopes for this sabbatical leave. All are welcome.



# Explore Anglicanism

**Do you want to know more about Anglicanism?**

**Are you interested in being confirmed?**

**Would you like to explore membership at Ascension?**



*Bp. Grant LeMarquand*



*Rev. Jonathan Warren*



*Rev. Tish Warren*

If you answered YES to any of those questions, please read on! You are invited to join our EXPLORE ANGLICANISM classes which will be taught by Ascension clergy Jonathan Warren, Tish Warren, and Bishop Grant LeMarquand.

The classes will take place over 5 Wednesdays from 6:30 - 8:30pm beginning April 11th and concluding May 9th.

Those who wish to be confirmed or become members are encouraged to attend all 5 classes. Others are welcome to attend any classes that may be of particular interest. Details are to follow. Childcare will be provided. Please let us know you are coming by signing up on our website:

[www.ascensionpittsburgh.org](http://www.ascensionpittsburgh.org).

**5 Wednesdays from 6:30 - 8:30pm**

**April 11:  
Understanding Anglicanism  
(Part 1): Our History**

We'll begin with a crash course in Anglican history from the founding of the early church through the creation of the Anglican Church in North America.

**April 18:  
Understanding Anglicanism  
(Part 2): Our Theology & Liturgy**

This class will take a dive into the Anglican Prayer Book as well as the Sacraments. The class will include an Instructed Eucharist - a guided walk through the different aspects of our weekly communion service.

**April 25:  
Understanding Ascension  
The Local Church and You!**

This class will look at the distinctives of Church of the Ascension, its ministries and staff. It will include a teaching on the Spiritual Gifts and any who want to will be invited to complete a Spiritual Gifts Inventory. An opportunity to meet one on one with a member of our clergy to discuss the results of the Inventory will be offered.

**May 2:  
Understanding Spiritual Practices  
How to Grow in Christ**

This class will explore topics including a Rule of Life; Spiritual Exercises: Lectio Divina, Examen, Contemplative Prayer; Community Groups; Spiritual Direction and Mentoring.

**May 9:  
Understanding the Commitments of  
Confirmation & Membership**

This class will look at the specific commitments being made in both confirmation and membership. A tour of the Nave will be offered and there will be an open forum to ask a priest any question that is on your mind.

# *Eastertide at Ascension*

**Adult Education:**

**An Introduction to the Book of Acts**

**Saturday, April 7**

**10:30am – Noon**

**Hunt Rooms**

**Childcare, coffee, and light snacks provided**

Luke-Acts is a single literary unit in which the protagonist is not Peter or Paul, but the Holy Spirit. Luke concludes and Acts begins with Christ's ascension into heaven, and Acts tells us that the Holy Spirit comes down upon the disciples in the upper room at Pentecost, turning them into the apostles, the sent ones, the first missionaries of Christ. The ministry that the Holy Spirit worked in Jesus is then diffused and continued through the apostles, their hearts are set on fire by his presence, and their lives become Christ-bearing as the gospel moves out of Jerusalem, into Judea and Antioch and into all the world. For that reason, in every generation this text has been read and preached as the charter of the church, and the church has been inspired, energized, and equipped to fulfill its mission by prayerful study of it.

Join Jonathan Warren as together we unpack the structure and major themes of this critical book of the New Testament!

## **Sacred Fire Preaching Series**

**Easter 2**

**Sunday April 8:**

Acts 3:12a, 13-15, 17-26

**Easter 3**

**Sunday April 15:**

Acts 4:5-14

**Easter 4**

**Sunday, April 22:**

Acts 4:23-37

**Easter 5**

**Sunday, April 29:**

Acts 8:26-40

**Easter 6**

**Saturday, May 5:**

Acts 11:19-30

## **MARATHON WEEKEND**

**Combined  
Worship Service  
Saturday,  
May 5 at 5pm**

**No Sunday  
Services**



**SACRED FIRE  
ACTS IN EASTERTIDE**





# Ministry Openings: Can You Help?

Several of our Sunday morning ministries need additional support. Serving on Sundays is a great way to assist our church family. If you would like to test drive one of these ministries, please email [marilyn.chislaghi@ascensionpittsburgh.org](mailto:marilyn.chislaghi@ascensionpittsburgh.org).

## 9am and 11am Greeters

We have greeters at two of our main entrances on Sunday mornings prior to the start of both services. We have need for more greeters prior to both services. You can serve on your own, with another individual or whole family groups can serve together. The task is easy – offer a smile or a handshake, open the door, and say ‘Hi’ to folks on Sunday mornings. If people are new, a few instructions on where things are located are helpful also. You serve one month per quarter before one of our services.

## 11am Ushers

The 11am service needs 5 additional ushers. Ushers serve on a team, one month per quarter. Each team has a captain who trains and leads the group Sunday mornings. Parents and children can serve together. It’s a great job for middle schoolers and their parents!

## 9am and 11am Welcome Table Hosts

Each Sunday we invite newcomers to check in at our welcome table and collect a gift. This is a critical ministry and we need a few more people willing to chat with newcomers after services, get to know them, and answer any questions they have. It’s about a 15-minute commitment. You serve one month per quarter after one of our services. The great thing about this ministry is the availability of chocolate when needed.

## Hospitality Hour Hosts

Remember how awkward it was when you were new at Ascension? Many of our newcomers join us for our continental breakfast between services. We are recruiting hospitality hour hosts to be on the ‘look out’ for those who appear to be new. The idea is simply to strike up a friendly conversation and get to know them a bit, helping them feel more comfortable. You serve one week per month (i.e. 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month).

## Altar Ministry

We have three terrific teams who work one month per quarter to prepare the Nave for worship. On a typical week it takes 8 ‘person hours’ to get ready for a Sunday service and 2 ‘person hours’ to clean up. So, the more people, the easier the job. Ideally, we like 8 people on each team, taking turns at set up and clean up. It’s also fun as camaraderie and friendship develops on teams. Some of the work takes place Saturday morning (but this can be flexible), and some of the work takes place between and after services on Sunday. Altar Ministry is open to men and women, older and younger.

# Family News

Page 5

## April Birthdays

1. Ian Mollenkof
2. Cole Van Ormer
3. Jessica Craft, Peter Holt  
Christy Martsolf
4. Benji Bayar, Megan Bibbs
5. Lucy Taylor, Linda Von Bloch
7. Catherine Buckingham  
Abi Fapohunda, Caryn McKenna
8. Micah Jabbour, Jim Stout
9. James Scannell
10. Denise Apple
11. Earl Glotfelty
12. Larkin Brown, Karl Crary  
Rumi Kauffman, Michael Mulock
13. Mandy Jabbour, Nicole Shirk  
Maria Thieman
16. Vivian Liang, Barbara Roberts
18. David Holt
19. Rachel Kornfield Becker  
Pursy Martsolf, Chris Massa  
Laura Very, Aunda Watters
21. Josh Gates, Andy Kohn
22. Andrew Fournaridis  
Timmy Podnar
25. Jenny Bell
26. Tricia McGough, Olivia Swab  
Wes Williams
28. Jackie McKee, Jonathan Sewall
29. Jon Turban

## April Anniversaries

2. Doug & Joanne Spence  
Terry & Nicole Shirk
6. Karl & Sue Crary
8. Adam & Brittany Gernhard
12. Eric & Jill Shook
13. Bob & Juanita Forrest
15. John & Lynn Schrott
16. Rodrigo & Christina Silva
17. Jolene & Kenneth Belferman
21. Alan & Linda Komm
29. Lictor Guzman & Dora Duque

# For Your Calendar

## Seniors Ministry

Thursday, April 12 12:30 – 2:30pm

The next meeting of our Seniors group will be Thursday, April 12<sup>th</sup>. Don McBurney will give a presentation on Ascension gardens. OWLS meetings take place on the second Thursday of each month in the Hunt Room. (Parking restrictions will be lifted for people to park on the streets and the Neville Street lot will be reserved for OWLS only.) There is a \$10 charge for lunch, but first-time friends are free! Please RSVP to Ann Tefft at 412-526-1107 or [tefft.ann@gmail.com](mailto:tefft.ann@gmail.com).



*Don McBurney*

## South Hills Potluck Fellowship

**Who:** If you live in the South Hills, you are invited to a monthly Potluck Fellowship

**When:** Kick off date is Saturday, April 14th, 5:30-7:30pm

**Where:** At the home of Christina & Rodrigo Silva

**More info:** Text or email Christina at 412-626-4485 or [csilva1231@gmail.com](mailto:csilva1231@gmail.com)



*Christina, Daniel, Sarah and Rodrigo Silva*

## Men's Breakfast:

### Facing Loss and Grief in Jesus Christ



Saturday, April 21 8:30 – 10:30am

Cost: \$10 (scholarship available)

Register: Sign up at [www.ascensionpittsburgh.org](http://www.ascensionpittsburgh.org)

Have you suffered loss in your life? A loved one? A job? Your health or well-being? One of the greatest challenges for men in our society is to accept the losses we encounter, and to find a way to live with them and grow from them. Fr. Joel Scandrett will lead us in a time of reflection upon the nature of loss and grief, the challenges of facing them as men, and the hope and help that we can find in Christ.

## Trinity School for Ministry: June Term

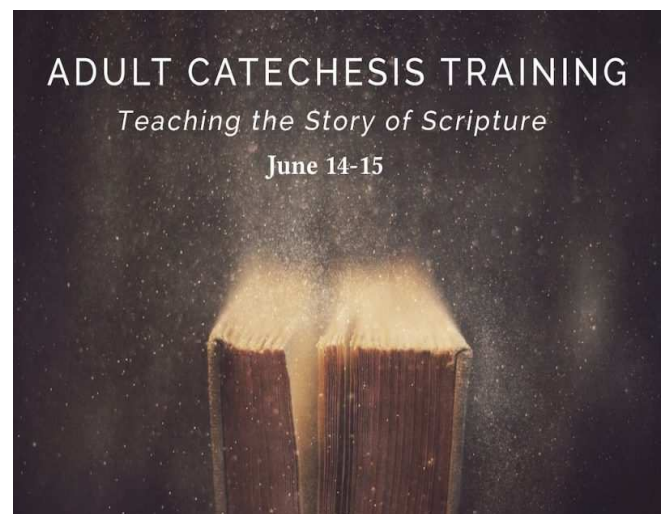
Brochures for the June Term at Trinity School for Ministry are available on our information tables. You can also see course offerings at [www.tsm.edu](http://www.tsm.edu). Here is a taste of one of the offerings. Please check it out!

**Who:** This 2-day conference is intended for pastors, Christian educators, Christian parents, and all other lay Christians who desire to teach the story of scripture to others.

**When:** Thursday & Friday, June 14 – 15, 2018

**Cost:** \$100 (\$120 for registrations after April 15)

**Where to register:** [www.tsm.edu](http://www.tsm.edu)



# Mission Focus: Church Plants

*Ascension has helped to plant two churches in the past 10 years: Jonah's Call here in Pittsburgh and St. Thomas in Ft. Collins, Colorado. Here are updates and ways you can pray this month!*

## Jonah's Call Turns 10!



In the Bible, Jonah was a prophet called to bring the good news of God's love to a city in desperate need of it. Jonah's Call is centered around the belief that Pittsburgh is a city worth loving, worth praying for, worth investing in, and worth raising families in. Worshiping God, loving neighbors, and shaping culture through daily work is how the congregation lives out this calling.



*Jay, Emma, Lydia and Catherine Slocum*

Gathering Sunday evenings in Ascension's Nave, Jonah's Call is celebrating its 10th anniversary. After crossing this important milestone, the congregation has entered a period of discernment and transition as the church seeks a new rector. The Rev. Jay Slocum, who founded and has led the congregation for the past decade, transitioned leadership after Easter.

Please pray for wisdom, discernment, and grace as the congregation seeks a new Rector. Pray also for Jay and Catherine Slocum and for their family as they enter a time of transition. To find out more about Jonah's Call, visit [www.jonahscall.org](http://www.jonahscall.org).

## St. Thomas Church - Fort Collins, CO



*The Rev. Josh Miller*



**ST. THOMAS  
CHURCH**

*Start Small, Go Deep, Think Big, and Pray that God causes growth in us and others.* With this approach St. Thomas Church was established about 4 years ago under the leadership of the Rev. Josh Miller.

For those of you who are newer to Ascension, Josh Miller served as our Associate Pastor for five years, from 2008 - 2013. During that time Josh also served as a chaplain at The University of Pittsburgh and helped start Pub Club.

In 2013 Josh moved to Ft. Collins, Colorado as a church planter, founding St. Thomas Church. Since then, St. Thomas has built a community of authenticity and friendship centered around Jesus. The future looks bright and there are good things in store for St. Thomas in 2018 and its mission to reach the lost sheep of Ft. Collins.

What's new at St. Thomas? No more bus driving! After three years of working 60-70 hours a week, and driving city bus to make ends meet, Josh was able to resign from his bus driving career to focus all of his energy on his role as rector of St. Thomas Church.

The congregation continues to grow but not without its challenges. Some of this growth has stemmed from painful conflict at two nearby churches. Helping these individuals heal and forming one unified community from different groups has required wisdom and grace.

Please pray for those in the church who are healing from old church wounds and encouragement for Josh as he ministers. St. Thomas also requests Ascension's prayers for a new worship leader to replace their previous worship leader who moved to North Carolina this fall. For more information on Josh and St. Thomas Church, visit [www.saintt.org](http://www.saintt.org).





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

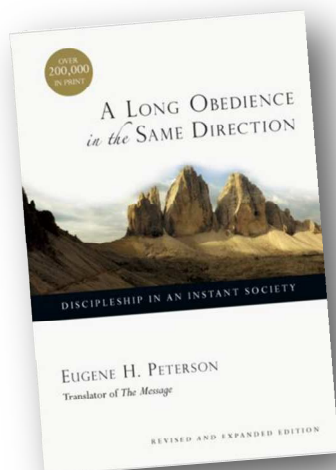
*This month's review features an interview with Brandon Daily who attends the 9am service.*



*Brandon Daily*

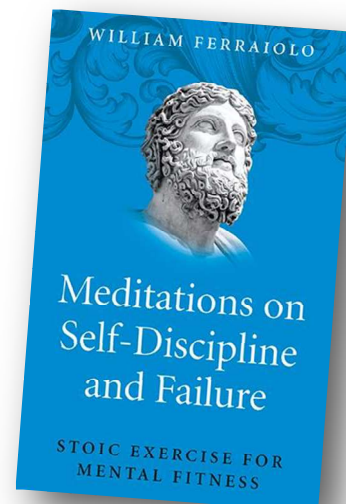
## What books are you reading right now?

I once had a pastor friend tell me that the difference between our present selves and future selves are the people we meet and the books we read. It's probably an oversimplification but I do think there is a lot of truth in it, so I try to make reading a priority. I have a wide variety of interests and love reading about economics, history, philosophy, psychology, theology and more. I generally go through spurts in each topic. Currently I'm reading *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction* by Eugene Peterson and *Meditations on Self-Discipline and Failure* by William Ferraiolo. I haven't read anything by Peterson since college although I remember liking him then. Picking up this current book has reminded me of how pastoral his writing is. Reading Peterson feels like grabbing coffee with a Saint out of Hebrews chapter eleven. Someone who has been there and has encouraging words to strengthen your heart.



In *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction*, Peterson offers wisdom from the Psalms of Ascent (120-134) and pushes back on our current cultural attitude that assumes that anything worthwhile can be acquired at once and that if something can be done at all, it can be done quickly and efficiently. A Christian of any maturity, however, will know that there are no shortcuts to living out the Faith. What is required is what Nietzsche once said, "The essential thing 'in heaven and earth' is. . .that there should be long obedience in the same direction; there thereby results, and has always resulted in the long run, something which has made life worth living." The Christian Faith is not so much about being a distant academic pupil as it is becoming an apprentice to our master, Jesus Christ. This is a shop class which there is no graduation from and which results not in a carefully carved sculpture but rather a fastidiously formed life. By unpacking the Psalms of Ascent, Peterson helps us move from being uninvolved tourists to being people that set our hands to the plow and never look back.

*Meditations on Self-Discipline and Failure* has been a great companion to Peterson's work. In it, Ferraiolo models Marcus Aurelius's *Meditations* and echoes the Stoic's belief that life involves constant practice and training. In presenting all the meditations in the book in the second person, Ferraiolo writes both for himself and all readers imploring them to live out the four major virtues of Stoicism: wisdom, courage, justice and temperance. I generally fall asleep reading Ferraiolo's meditations and he consistently helps eliminate any self-pity or self-indulgence I may be leaning towards. He helps bring my focus back to the things in life I have control over, namely myself. "That which is beyond your will must be allowed to slip beyond your concern. It should not recede from your notice, but you must not tether your peace of mind to it." When I find in myself a desire to complain about the world not being as it should be, Ferraiolo's *Meditations* remind me that *I* am not as *I* should be and that my concern should rest there, not on the things I have no control over.





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

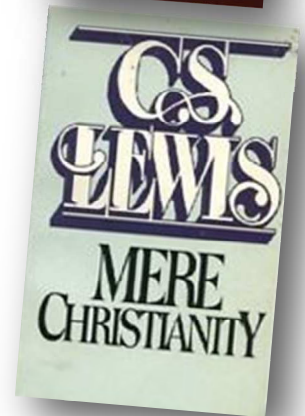
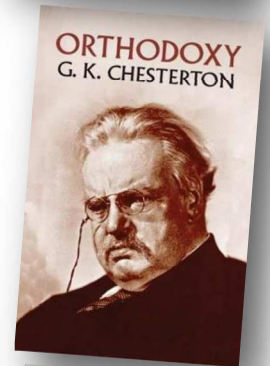
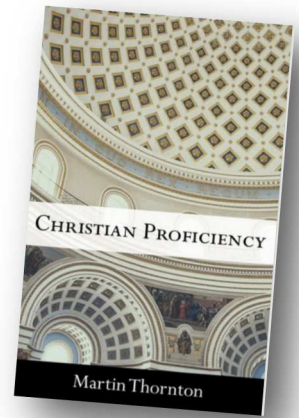
Most recently, I read *Christian Proficiency* by Martin Thornton in which I found very practical disciplines and perspectives for seeking the Lord. Thornton gave a certain framework particularly in developing a Rule of Life for myself which was extremely helpful. Sometimes it can be hard to connect to certain spiritual or theological works because the ideas are so lofty. I still enjoy those types of reads but when what I need is something in which the rubber meets the road in a tangible way, *Christian Proficiency* is one of the best I've found by far.

While I don't have one specific book of his to mention, Robert Farrar Capon's writings have also been instrumental in my Christian life. While he can at times come across as brazen, I discovered him at a season of spiritual drought in my life. Towards the end of my time at Bible College, God had increasingly become a topic of dry theological debate that lacked all life and mystery. Capon helped revive in me a passion to know the Lord and to embrace the Mystery that is Jesus Christ by making theology fun again. He was a breath of fresh air in the midst of finishing Systematic Theology classes and book reports on Wayne Grudem.

## What books do you regularly re-read and why?

Again, I'm not sure I can list specific books as much as I can list authors who I am constantly reading and rereading. The two that most easily come to mind are C.S. Lewis and G.K. Chesterton. I don't think a week goes by that I don't read something by either of these two authors. Lewis has a way of writing that often revolutionizes the way I'm thinking about a topic. And I have always said that when I read Chesterton, I initially feel as though I'm hearing from someone who is standing on their head and looking at the world. But in my experience, I often come to find that it is most likely I who has been standing on my head. I also think it is important to surround oneself with solid books and authors that are not in your immediate cultural context. There are blinders we inherit that come from being a child of our particular age and culture. C.S. Lewis said, "Every age has its own outlook. It is especially good at seeing certain truths and especially liable to make certain mistakes. We all, therefore, need the books that will correct the characteristic mistakes of our own period. And that means the old books."

For Lewis, start with *Mere Christianity*. For Chesterton, start with *Orthodoxy*. And if you're interested in reading old books in a new way, all of Chesterton's works can be had on the Kindle for \$2!



## Security Task Group

Ascension's vestry recently commissioned a task group to examine and address security vulnerabilities, both on Sundays and during the week. While we actively pray and hope that we never suffer gun violence nor any other kind of violence on site, we are taking steps to be as prepared as possible. The task group has been hard at work, implementing a security review that was completed on our behalf by the Pittsburgh Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security.

One of the recommendations of the report is to increase congregational knowledge of what to do in case of an emergency. With that in view, on Saturday, April 28<sup>th</sup> we are hosting an ALICE training (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate). We have space for 50 participants, preferably 25 from the 9am service and 25 that primarily attend the 11am service. All staff, ushers, security personnel and other interested parties are encouraged to attend the training. Other interested persons are invited as well. We ask that just one adult per household attend. This training will focus on security in the Nave during worship services. We will have a subsequent training that focuses on the education wing.

To sign up, please email Marilyn at [marilyn.chislaghi@ascensionpittsburgh.org](mailto:marilyn.chislaghi@ascensionpittsburgh.org). Once the registration limit of 50 has been reached, registration will be closed. The training will begin at 9am and will conclude at 12:30pm. Participants are asked to wear comfortable shoes as well as a hoodie or protective jacket. You must be at least 18 years or older to participate.

# Congregational Care



Did you know we have a team of people praying for our congregation every week? We continue our look at the Congregational Care Team with an interview Tish Warren had with Jeanne Kohn, who heads the **Intercessory Prayer Team Ministry**.



*Jeanne Kohn*

**How long have you been at Ascension and how did you find out about Ascension?**

**Jeanne:** I have been on staff at Ascension since July of 1993. I found out about Ascension when Andy and I were moving to Pittsburgh in 1990 – Doug McGlynn, the rector then, had been rector of the parish to which my Baltimore rector had gone when Doug came to Pittsburgh.

**What is your favorite kind of ice cream?**

**Jeanne:** Maine Blueberry

**If you had a completely free afternoon and could spend it anyway you'd like, what would you do?**

**Jeanne:** Either go hiking or to a museum with my husband.

**How did you end up leading our intercessory prayer team?**

**Jeanne:** I ended up leading it when the priest who had begun it (Jean Devaty) responded to a call to another parish.

**What does this ministry look like or do?**

**Jeanne:** The ministry sends out prayer requests that are submitted either through the prayer sheets in the bulletins on Sundays or via email – sometimes, but rarely, also through word of mouth.

**What is your favorite part of leading or being on this ministry team?**

**Jeanne:** Do I have to choose just one thing?? I feel really honored to hear the vulnerability and faith expressed through the prayer requests and it is so exciting to learn of prayers answered.

**What are the current needs of your ministry?**

**Jeanne:** As I muse some on this question I find that I would love it if there were some people who might intercede for the intercessors. This might sound odd, but for those who receive the prayer requests and who pray there is often a deep sadness over the suffering that people are enduring. It would be a great thing to just know that a few people were committed to asking God to strengthen the intercessors in prayer, to fill them with faith and hope as they pray.

**How does this ministry help Ascensionites to “do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith” (Gal. 6:10)?**

**Jeanne:** I think this ministry calls forth compassion in hearts, and compassion is often translated to a desire to reach out with kindness to those around us with appropriate actions.

**Is there anything else you'd like us to know about this ministry?**

**Jeanne:** Yes! I would love for people to know that there is a commitment to not only keep prayer requests confidential, but even a commitment not to ask the people who have asked for prayer how things are going. That's why its important if anyone wants help in addition to prayer, or wants to talk to someone, that they check the box asking for a member of the congregational care team to contact them. Also, sometimes I am concerned that people don't realize the difference between checking the box that says “please share with all prayer intercessors” and the box that says “for staff only”. If it goes to staff only, that means that it goes to the entire Ascension staff, who treat the request very confidentially.



# International Ministry

If you ever walk through the Education wing on a Monday morning or Wednesday evening, you may see between 18-60 internationals participating in some of these activities: watching fun videos and singing along in the idioms class, pronouncing new vocabulary in the beginner class, learning Bible lessons in the mornings, writing a short essay, giving a speech, meeting a volunteer with Shepherd's Heart, the Agape Year Ministry, or Immigrant Services. Other internationals are getting pronunciation practice with a retired speech coach, speaking about their personal values in the intermediate class, or eating a delicious meal at Alpha and discussing their questions about God. Most of the students are munching on cookies made by parishioners, eating snacks that your generous giving has provided, or attending the end of semester party with music, plays, or games. Some students attend our Sunday services and have even met with staff for prayer.

Other things are going on off-site: Internationals join members and friends of Ascension to visit a museum or garden, eat Thanksgiving dinner, hang out at Christmas. Still others are meeting for a children's play date, meeting weekly for coffee with conversation partners, having a dinner with families, enjoying meals provided by Ascension meal ministry after the birth of a child, living in homestays, going to a Monday night Bible study in the home of one of our church families.



LuAnn Pengidore

These are just some of the ways that the international ministry is making a difference each week! I want to take this opportunity to thank the wonderful teachers and assistants who come each week through rain or snow. Some drive over an hour! I want to thank the cookie bakers, conversation partners, special speakers, homestay families (especially!), large dinner makers for holidays, and every one of us who takes the time to welcome internationals and sit and chat with them on Sundays. You are certainly making a difference. If you have any ideas of how you want to serve, or want to reach out after Easter, please do. You may email LuAnn at

[PittsburghEnglish4u@gmail.com](mailto:PittsburghEnglish4u@gmail.com)

## Special Needs Ministry

On Saturday, March 17 the Special Needs Ministry had their social club, Capernaum Friends! Everyone had a wonderful time actively singing songs led by our dear Timmy Podnar. She is a gift to our ministry! It was St. Patrick's Day, so our lesson and craft centered on the trinity - God the Father, God the Son and the Holy Spirit are like a Shamrock... three parts but all in one.

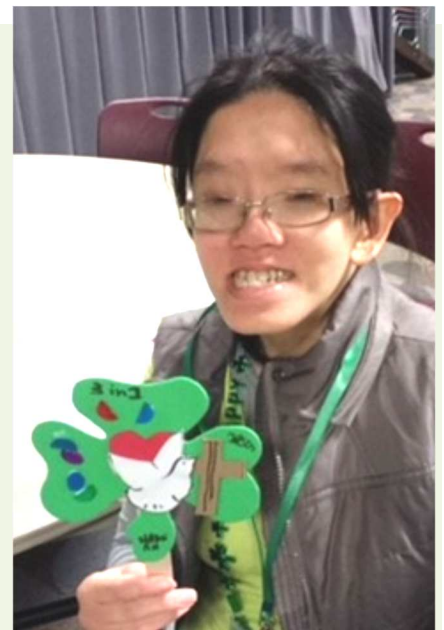
In WINGS, our 9am Sunday School program, we stuffed Easter Eggs with candy in anticipation of the Easter Egg Hunt on Easter Sunday. Our Friends enjoy doing work for their church!

Our next Capernaum Friends Club is April 14 from 2-4 pm.

Check us out and come join us! For more information contact:

Christina Carlucci / Cell phone 412-414-5630 / [carlucci.christina@gmail.com](mailto:carlucci.christina@gmail.com)

or Dana Kaasik / Cell phone 225-921-8349 / [dana.kaasik@gmail.com](mailto:dana.kaasik@gmail.com)



Hannah Lam



# Young Adults

## Service

Last month we spent a Saturday serving with **Open Hands Ministry (OHM)**! Here is what one of our Community Group Leaders, Daniel Kusbit, had to say about the day:



Daniel Kusbit

*"Last month our community group spent the day volunteering with Open Hands Ministry in East Liberty, an organization that works with neighborhood residents to rehabilitate homes to create first time homeowners. Our 3<sup>rd</sup> time volunteering with the organization in the past year, it was rewarding to see the progress that had been made on the home under construction since our first workday last spring. We spent the day serving with other Christians from across the region, moving and leveling dirt around the foundation of the house. These workdays have been a great opportunity for us to grow closer to one another in our community group as we work and to commit a day to serve God in a very tangible, sweaty way. We spent the last few service days in the same house and it will be exciting to start on the next house!"*

**Our next OHM service day will be Saturday, April 7th**

## Community Groups

Over the past few months our two Young Adult Community Groups have grown quite a bit! It's amazing to see all of the different people God has brought to Ascension and the many different talents and gifts they bring with them. Due to our increasing size, we need to start a 3rd Young Adult Community Group. Certainly not a bad problem to have!

Meet one of our new Wednesday night Community Group leaders, Bailey Nichols! Bailey will be joined by Sarah Gilmer and their group will start on April 9th as they attend the Explore Anglicanism classes together. Join them for pizza before the class starts! Here's an interview with Bailey:



Bailey Nichols

***How long have you been coming to Ascension?***

***What brought you to Ascension?***

*"I came to Ascension because I grew up in the Anglican church. For the past 8 years, I haven't regularly attended an Anglican church and have missed it so much! Knowing that there were awesome Anglican churches (and the Anglican seminary nearby) was a huge factor in why I've chosen to do my social work graduate degree at the University of Pittsburgh starting this August. When I visited Pittsburgh prior to moving, I went to services at Jonah's Call. However, because there were not very many young singles at the church, I wanted to try Ascension to see if there were folks I could connect with in the same stage of life. I came to Ascension the first Sunday after I moved and everyone was so welcoming! I immediately got plugged into the young adult community and the youth leadership group. I'm so grateful for the community God has already provided through Ascension."*

***What are you most looking forward to as you lead this new community group?***

*"Because God has loved me so well through the Ascension staff, leadership and members, I look forward to sharing that same love within the context of the new community group."*

***What is your favorite thing about Ascension?***

*"Anglican liturgy, but most importantly...the people!"*

***What is your favorite thing to do in Pittsburgh?***

*"I love going on walks in the city. I can walk to church, which is one of my favorite things to do (when I am not strapped for time!)"*



## Dinner and Compline

Thanks to everyone who came to our last dinner and compline service! It was a great evening spent eating delicious potato themed food made by Gabbie, Natalie, Daniel and Elizabeth! Thanks to Amy and Lorna for the great trivia; Wes, Sarah and Kelsey for being a part of the worship team; and to Peter for his great stories about St. Patrick and for leading compline!

**Our next Dinner and Compline  
will be Wednesday, May 16!**

## College and Home: Ascension Reunions

How can we help those who have grown up at Ascension and gone off to college, feel right at home in the congregation when they come back to visit? Apart from the individual efforts of congregants, one opportunity is to nominate a 'peer leader' from each graduating class who, in partnership with an Ascension family, can organize reunions when folks are back during the vacations. Do pray that the right leaders and families can step forward, and that through these reunions, encouraging networks of friendships can grow. Contact Danyel (info below) or Alex (info coming up in next article) to discuss further!



*Elena Gowdy, Clare Clifton, Merryn Spence, Juliet Millard  
as pictured in high school.*

These four young ladies have known one another through Ascension's Sunday School & Youth Group. In 2018 many of them are graduating college and will be back among us as they enter the professional world. Clare Clifton, second from the left, has agreed to be their "peer leader." She is graduating from Grove City College and will be working with Allegheny Health Network as a Clinical Research Coordinator.



## Want to know more?

Contact Danyel Johnson  
at [danyelj10@gmail.com](mailto:danyelj10@gmail.com).

Please pray for Danyel as she prepares to leave her current role as Intern for Emerging Adults on May 31st. We are soon to welcome Leah Hornfeck who has been hired as Associate Director of Youth and Emerging Adults. Leah begins June 1st. Please keep Danyel and Leah in your prayers.



*Leah Hornfeck*



# Youth Ministry

## Too much growth?

This last month saw record attendance, most encouragingly in the high school youth group, where 21 students on a Sunday is three times as many as would come two years ago. I'm honored that their trust in me has reached such levels that non-Christian friends are invited! One consequence is a need to buy more Bibles, so we are raising money to do so, as well as money for a ping-pong table and to commission an artist to produce a Mosaic for our space that helps us situate our lives in the liturgical calendar and in church history.

My wife and mother also suggest that my hair has experienced too much growth!

**Thus the FUNDRAISER FOCUS;**  
should my 'man-bun' be cut off, or not?  
Folks are giving towards either  
**'SAVE MAN-BUN' or 'LOSE MAN-BUN.'**

You can do so **too**, via the GIVE page on  
[www.ascensionpittsburgh.org](http://www.ascensionpittsburgh.org)

Want to know more?  
Contact Alex at [alex.banfieldhicks@ascensionpittsburgh.org](mailto:alex.banfieldhicks@ascensionpittsburgh.org).

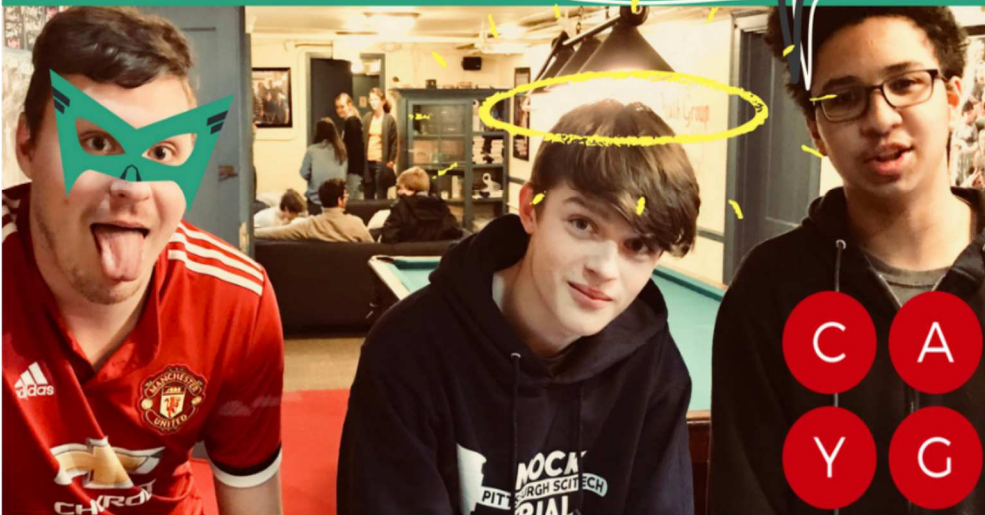
## Alex's Man-Bun



## A St Patrick's Theme

Also, on Sunday nights,  
join us at Ascension  
6:30-8:30pm  
4729 Ellsworth Ave

And yes  
there is pizza



Call Alex BH with any Qs: 412-652-3137

CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION  
YOUTH GROUP

The green decorations for the March Emerging Adult Dinner and Compline were reused at Wednesday's after-school gathering! Lucca Spence's high school friends planned and led a St. Patrick's Day trivia quiz, and before the results were revealed I gave a short talk on St. Patrick, identifying his prayerful relationship with God as the source of his courage going into the threatening unknown. We also recruited for Sunday night's youth group!



# Marathon Overnight and Lasagna Dinner Fundraiser

The first Sunday in May is the Pittsburgh Marathon. Given Ascension is on the route, and all the streets are closed, we hold a combined worship service on **Saturday** night at 5pm instead of Sunday services. After the Saturday service this year ...

**WE will be hosting a**

## **Lasagna Dinner Fundraiser**

so the congregation can stay to eat while also giving towards ...

- ♦ **new Bibles**
- ♦ **ping-pong table**
- ♦ **art work**

After dinner many from the middle and high school youth groups will stay for evening programming, before 'sleeping' overnight at church and waking bright and early to serve at an official Marathon Fluid Station, distributing water and Gatorade to the passing runners.



**Saturday, May 5th**  
**Pittsburgh Marathon Weekend**

## **Lasagna Dinner Youth Fundraiser 6:30pm**

**Plan to come!**

**Plan to bring a check!**

**Plan to bake a lasagna!**

**Plan on great table conversation!**



# Children's Ministry

## We need more Sunday School Volunteers!

Do you have a love for kids and a desire to see them grow up in the knowledge and love of Jesus? Children's Ministry needs your help!

We are especially looking for teachers and assistants to serve on a rotation with our elementary age classes during the 11am service. There are other ways to get involved too! Matt would love to talk to you more about how you could use your gifts in ministry with our kids!



## Communion Class –

### A Great Opportunity to join your kids in Sunday School!

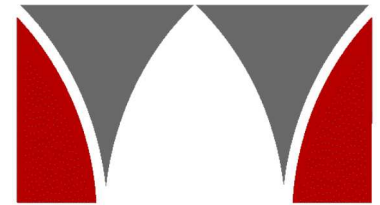
The Children and Worship classes (aka Godly Play curriculum) will be doing a series of lessons during Eastertide that reflect on the season and the sacrament of communion. On Sunday, April 22 Jonathan Warren and I will be participating in this class and available to answer questions kids and parents may have. We'll also make available some resources for talking further with your kids at home about the sacrament of communion. Kids worship with their parents on Easter Sunday. This is your chance to worship with your kids! Come join your kids for the Sunday school hour!

## Parent Meeting: Saturday, May 5 at 3:45pm

One of my goals is to keep you in the loop about how your kids are being formed through the children's ministries at Ascension and when possible to equip you with resources you can use at home for the discipleship of your kids. To that end, I'm inviting you to a parent meeting! This meeting will take place on May 5 ahead of our special 5pm Saturday night service. We'll meet at 3:45pm in the Hunt rooms. Childcare will be provided!

## Want to know more?

Contact Matt at [matt.ulrich@ascensionpittsburgh.org](mailto:matt.ulrich@ascensionpittsburgh.org).



CHURCH OF THE  
ASCENSION

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

## Worship Services Sunday

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

## Wednesday

Noon  
Holy Eucharist  
in the Gordon Chapel

## Address

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

## Website

[www.ascensionpittsburgh.org](http://www.ascensionpittsburgh.org)

## The Ascent

Published monthly by the  
Church of the Ascension.  
*Marilyn Clifton Chislaghi, Editor*  
*Judy Yadrick, Publisher*

## Ascent Deadline

Articles for the May Ascent are  
due April 15 and will be  
available April 30.