

Ascent

December
2018

Lessons & CAROLS

The service of Lessons & Carols weaves together a progression of scripture readings along with carols sung by the congregation and choirs that carry us from Old Testament prophecy to fulfillment in the Christ child. This is a great seasonal service to invite guests to attend. **This year we will have two opportunities to enjoy this service:**

9am service on December 16th

Childcare is provided for those aged 4 and younger. They should go directly to their classrooms when they get to church as there is no Children's Talk at this service. Children age 5 (Kindergarten) and older will be with us for the service. **Our 11am service of Holy Communion will follow the readings for Advent 3.**

11am service on December 23rd

Childcare is provided for those aged 4 and younger. They should go directly to their classrooms when they get to church as there is no Children's Talk at this service. Children age 5 (Kindergarten) and older will be with us for the service. **Our 9am service of Holy Communion will follow the readings for Advent 4.**

Wednesdays at Noon During Advent: December 5, 12 and 19

We invite members of the congregation to spend time in quiet reflection at our Wednesday Advent Noon Services. Childcare will be provided throughout Advent. In the rhythms of the liturgical year there are seasons of silence and periods of celebration; times for fasting and days for feasting. Advent is a season of silence. It's a time for reflection and is often referred to as 'Little Lent.' This has been the practice in the Eastern Orthodox tradition. Lent and Advent are both seasons of 'preparation' and 'anticipation.' Like Lent, there is a sense in which Advent is also penitential. As the days grow shorter and darkness comes more quickly, Advent is an opportunity to reflect on your relationship with God and what the coming of Christ means for you.



Christmas Poinsettia Memorials

Sunday, December 9 deadline



It is a longstanding Christmas tradition at Ascension to remember and celebrate those we love and those we have lost by donating to the poinsettias that adorn our altars from Sunday, December 16 (Advent 3) and following. If you would like to remember someone special or name a specific thanksgiving in this year's memorial bulletin insert, please contact Melita Carter at cartermpo@gmail.com or 412-736-3540 by Sunday, December 9.



Family Christmas Eve Service Eucharist at 6:30pm

All are invited to this warm service that is designed with children in mind. We will celebrate the nativity of Jesus with a children's tableau and sing the great carols of Christmas. *Childcare for children aged 4 and under will be provided. Children aged 5 (Kindergarten) and older are with us for the service.* Please remember to bring your bells to this service! It is a great joy to sing the great hymns of Christmas with congregational bells ringing out!



Greening of the Church

Saturday, December 15 at 9:30am

The Greening of the Church is a festive event and a great way to support our altar ministry. We will be hanging ornaments on the Christmas tree, attaching candle standards to the pews, putting up wreaths, setting out the crèche and more.

The children will be having a tableau rehearsal and are invited to make cards for those in the parish who are sick or homebound. Readers will be practicing for Lessons & Carols and choirs will be rehearsing. Plan to join us on this morning!

Coffee, bagels, pastries and juice will be served. Meet at the back of the church by the Christmas tree!

FESTIVAL Christmas Eve Eucharist at 10pm

Our late Christmas Eve service will feature a Festival Procession, incense, candles and the great music of the season in celebration of the birth of the Christ child. *Childcare is not provided.* Please remember to bring bells to this service also!



Christmas Day Eucharist at 10am

The lessons are different from Christmas Eve so that those who wish to make this their second service of Christmas may join those who prefer this quiet one to the festival celebrations on Christmas Eve. *Child care is not provided.*



Stewardship 2019: Abundance

November 1, 2018
All Saints Day

Dear Church Family,

I write with a heavy heart as we continue to grieve the hate-filled and deadly attack on our Jewish neighbors this past weekend. On Sunday evening 175 folks gathered at Ascension to pray and mourn. I know many more prayed around the city and in their homes. Let us continue to pray for those who lost loved ones, for our Jewish neighbors, our city and nation in these dark days.



On this All Saints Day I am reminded of all the saints who have gathered to pray and worship together at Ascension in generations past and present. I count it a great joy and privilege to be a part of our church family - in times of joy and times of sadness. As I have been writing in *The Ascent* these past couple of months, we are experiencing a time of **abundant blessing**. Whether measured by attendance, giving, people becoming Christians, visitors, or new members – we are growing. Thanks be to God!

One important way in which we can all participate in responding to God’s abundant provision is through the generous giving of our money. As you reflect on God’s abundance, give thanks to him and prayerfully consider how much you will give back to God from all he has entrusted to you. As we grow numerically as a church family so also do the opportunities and needs for additional financial resources.

How we use our money and what we give back to God, out of all he had given to us, is one way that we can respond joyfully to God. For followers of Jesus the tithe (10% of our income) is the basic standard we find in the Bible for monetary giving. It is both a duty and a joy to invest in God’s work through the ministry and mission of Ascension. Your pledge plays an important role in the process of tithing. It encourages us as individuals to be intentional about our giving and serves to keep us accountable. For those who are not yet tithing, Ascension’s pledge card also extends an opportunity to establish a schedule to achieve that goal within three years.

Please take time prayerfully to consider your commitment to tithe the treasure God has given you to the Lord’s work. Then, please fill out a pledge card and bring it to church on Christ the King Sunday, November 25th, or mail directly to the church office.

Let us give cheerfully, abundantly,
and with grateful hearts.

Yours in Christ,

Jonathan N. Millard
Rector

*Pledge cards are available
on all information tables.*

If you have not yet submitted a stewardship card
with your 2019 pledge,
please do so by the end of the year.
Besides training us to be intentional about our giving,
pledging helps our vestry create a realistic budget for the coming year.
Thank you for responding generously to God’s generosity!

II & Lunch: Sunday, December 9



The Rev. Ann Paton, Ph.D.

Dear Church Family,

I write to share the news that our beloved matriarch, Ann Paton, has decided it is time for her to step down from serving as a Liturgical Assistant at Church of the Ascension, a position she has held these past twenty years.

While we will miss having her in the pulpit or celebrating the Eucharist, so long as her health and strength permits, Mother Ann will continue to be in her usual pew to worship with us on Sundays. It is hard to believe that Ann turns ninety in December!

Please come and join us for 11 and Lunch on Sunday, December 9 after the 11am service.

Ann will speak briefly about the Nunc Dimittis and we will have a chance to celebrate with her and offer some words of thanks for her extraordinary ministry in our midst.

Ann is known and loved by so many in the Pittsburgh and South Western, PA community. Ann is an alumna of Geneva College where she returned to teach for 44 years. Still today Ann is Professor Emerita of English and earlier this semester she gave a guest lecture to a rapt class of students. Ann earned her Ph.D. in Medieval English Literature at the University of Colorado.

We all know that Ann is precious to us. What you might not know is that she was ordained here in Pittsburgh in 1991, and has been a priest of this diocese for more than twenty-six years. Ann served on the bishop's staff as Deployment Officer, on the Commission on Ministry, and as the Director of Formation for bi-vocational priests. Most recently Ann served on the Editorial Board for the new ACNA catechism.

Ann has been a treasured Spiritual Director for many and a much sought-after retreat leader. Ann loves music, theatre, books and missions. Ann is also a passionate advocate for full equality for women in the church.

To so many here at Ascension she is known and loved simply as "Mother Ann."

Do come and celebrate with us on December 9, as we honor Ann and give thanks to God for her life and ministry - thus far. Thank you, Mother Ann for your extraordinary ministry among us. We love you.

Yours in Christ,
Jonathan +
Jonathan N. Millard
(Rector)



Nunc dimittis

*The Song of Simeon
Luke 2:29-32*

Lord, now let
your servant
depart in peace, *
according to your word.
For my eyes
have seen
your salvation, *
which you have
prepared before
the face of
all people;
to be a light
to lighten the
Gentiles, *
and to be
the glory
of your people
Israel.

Senior's Ministry

Christmas Party

Join us **Thursday, December 13th** from 12:30 – 2:30pm. There will be a delicious catered lunch prepared by Denise Bozich, a wonderful presentation by John Bailey and we will end with carol singing led by Peg Anderson!

We thought we knew the Christmas story until Dr. Kenneth E. Bailey turned our ideas inside out. From his experience in the Middle East, Dr. Bailey took the Christmas story from Luke Chapter 2, identified some traditionally held myths surrounding the story, and brought some new cultural insights into our celebration of God's greatest gift to us. As he once said to his cousin John Bailey, "there was no inn." What? No Inn? John will bring Kenneth's teaching to the senior's group— so we can gain a richer understanding of what truly happened. Don't miss this exciting chapter in the birth of our Lord!

There is a \$10 charge for lunch, but first-time friends are free!

RSVPs are necessary to Peg Anderson: 412-324-7000 or bfriendmp@aol.com.

Parking restrictions will be lifted for people to park on the streets, and the Neville Street lot will be reserved for seniors. We will meet in the Hunt Rooms which are reached through the Neville Street entrance to the church.



Kenneth Bailey with the nativity scene he created.

International Ministry

What's going on with internationals? This fall 119 students have come through Ascension's doors and have found a place to converse in English and learn about American culture. Some are preparing for a rigorous test and some are just beginning with numbers. There are 90 students that come regularly either Monday morning and/or Wednesday evenings and 37 shared Thanksgiving dinner with Ascension families. About 60 students enjoyed game night in November and 12 will take a Hartwood Acres Mansion tour this month. Another 10 will help Jonathan Sewell with the EECM homeless ministry meal preparation. One thing that is new is we are now offering childcare. We are asking that Ascensionites help purchase healthy snacks (to offset the cost of childcare) or bake cookies.

**We are also inviting everyone at Ascension to a
Christmas Dinner Party with Internationals
Wednesday, December 19th at 6pm in the Parish Hall.**

If you would like to help or come to the Christmas Party, please contact Luann at PittsburghEnglish4U@gmail.com.



New Global Mission Partnership



- By Marilyn Chislaghi

GAFCON – the Global Anglican Future Conference – took place last June in Jerusalem. Many leaders from our diocese, including our own rector, were in attendance. Bishop Jim Hobby reflected on GAFCON, writing:

“One of the most powerful and symbolic moments of the most recent GAFCON in Jerusalem happened at the beginning of the first day. The conference MC had us welcome each other by continent. They had those from Europe stand up (dozens stood) while the rest of the world said, ‘We welcome you in Jesus name.’ Likewise, others stood: those from North America (a few hundred); Oceania (a few hundred); Asia (dozens); South America (dozens). But, when Africa was invited to stand, half (or more) of the 1,950 participants stood up. This is Africa’s moment at the center of God’s mission. Over time, the vortex of the Church’s energy for mission has shifted from the Near East (Jerusalem and Antioch), to Europe, and then to North America. But in our day, the momentum of mission has shifted to Africa (and the Global South, more broadly). The days of mission being defined as white people taking the Gospel to people of color is over. We are living in a world where the Gospel is going from the nations to the nations. Former mission fields have become mission forces. ***That means that our model for mission needs to shift from paternalism to partnership.***”

(Trinity, Summer 2018)

In keeping with the thoughts expressed by Bishop Jim, over the past couple of years, one of the growing desires of Ascension clergy and staff has been to engage in a distinctively Anglican global mission partnership. The hope is that such a global partnership will enable Ascensionites to put ‘boots on the ground’ in a meaningful way, and as a secondary benefit, would also serve to build up a healthy global mission consciousness within our congregation. This desire was made a matter of prayer and, in late June, an invitation was extended to Ascension to partner with the Diocese of Singapore, specifically with the Deanery of Thailand that it established. We wanted to know more!

The Diocese of Singapore (a 20,000 member church with 27 parishes) is working in concert with the Province of South East Asia (which covers a population of 422 million people) to lay the foundation for missions in a part of the world where less than 1% of the population is Christian. Six deaneries, each with a unique language and culture, have been established in six countries - Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, Indonesia, Nepal and Vietnam. Churches, schools, as well as ministry and community centers have been established as a result.

Here is a description of the work of these deaneries written by the Rev. Yee Ching Wah, Dean of Thailand:

“In the last 20 years the first mission pioneers have been sent out from Singapore. But we cannot complete this mission alone. ***We need your partnership*** ... You are coming to a part of the world where we in the Diocese of Singapore and in the Province of South East Asia are still laying the foundation for missions. Some things are working but most things are a work in progress. We are not unaware of the cross-cultural challenges as we seek your partnership in mission. It is the grace of God for the glory of God that a multi-cultural team can work together in a third-culture setting for the sake of the gospel.”



Ascension is responding to the invitation to partner by sending a 5-person discernment team to Thailand in January. The team will be meeting up with the *Agape Year team* led by Nate Twichell, who will have already been in Chiang Mai for a week.



Marilyn Chislaghi



Denise Cox



The Rev. Canon Dr. Andrea Millard; and The Rev. Canon Jonathan Millard



The Rev. Dr. Joel Scandrett

The Ascension Discernment team:

Marilyn Chislaghi

Director of Ministry, responsible for implementation of discernment decisions upon return to the States.

Denise Cox

Ascension Mission Committee, responsible for trip logistics.

The Rev. Canon Dr. Andrea Millard

Co-leading all devotions and prayer ministry.

The Rev. Canon Jonathan Millard

Leading team discernment and also discerning partnership possibilities for the Anglican Diocese of Pittsburgh.

The Rev. Dr. Joel Scandrett

Co-leading devotions and also discerning partnership possibilities for Trinity School for Ministry.

Departing on **January 10**, the team will fly via Seoul to Chiang Mai, landing January 11. Several days will be spent in Chiang Mai visiting the church, with small groups and church leadership, and observing ESL classes and children's programs at the Community Center and Anglican school. The team then heads to Bangkok to visit the Lat Krabang church and visit the Cornerstone Center, a hub for campus ministry and ESL classes. Following two days in Bangkok, the team will travel to Singapore to have discussions with diocesan leaders. The team will then return home to Pittsburgh on **January 19**, flying back via Tokyo.

How to find out more?

To find out more, visit the website of the Diocese of Singapore and go to the page about the Deanery of Thailand (www.anglican.org.sg/Thailand).

An excellent informational video is available there. You can also speak with any team member.



How can you be in prayer?

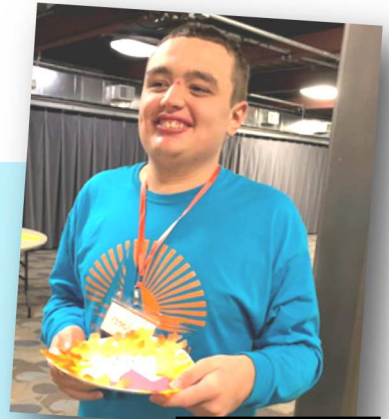
- Pray for the health of team members (Marilyn, Denise, Andrea, Jonathan, Joel)– before, during and after the trip
- Pray for travel, rest and team stamina – the flights are lengthy (the out-bound journey is 24+ hours) and the agenda is full!
- Pray that the church in Chiang Mai, Bangkok and Singapore is encouraged by our visit
- Pray for godly discernment of a future partnership in Thailand. What specific shape might a future partnership take? ESL classes? Children's ministry? Prayer Ministry? Theological education?
- Pray about the biggest question of all - What might God want to do??

Special Needs Ministry

Last month our Capernaum Friends Club celebrated being thankful for the gifts that God gave each one of us! Our Duquesne University volunteer, Jeanne Marie Schierling, led the lesson based on 2 Corinthians 9:11. When asked what that means for us? Holden said, “We should be kind to our friends and family.” During our craft time, Stephen said he was thankful for the gift of Jesus. Hannah said she was thankful for her nieces and nephews and Eileenika said she was thankful for her dad.

“You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.”

2 Corinthians 9:11



Holden



Stephen

In WINGS we completed our lessons on the Fruit of the Spirit and are now fully engaged in Advent and preparing for Christmas. We sing Silent Night all year... but finally it is the season! We are thankful for all who make our Saturday Club, Capernaum Friends, and our Sunday School Program, WINGS, possible!

We will celebrate the birth of Jesus and His gift to us at the next Capernaum Friends gathering: Saturday, December 8th, from 2 – 4pm.

To find out more about Saturday Club, Capernaum Friends and the Sunday School program WINGS, please contact: Christina Carlucci at carlucci.christina@gmail.com

Young Adults

A promotional graphic for a Christmas party. It features a photo of Charlie Chislaghi wearing a Santa hat. The graphic includes the Chipotle Mexican Grill logo, the text "DINNER AND COMPLINE Thursday December 6th 6:30-8:30pm", and the Church of the Ascension logo. The main text reads "CHRISTMAS PARTY WITH CHARLIE CHISLAGHI".

For our final Dinner and Compline of 2018, we are throwing a Christmas Party! While we will certainly be celebrating the Christmas season and the birth of Jesus Christ, we will also be celebrating how far the Young Adult Dinner and Compline has come in just one short year. We will be officially welcoming the Dinner and Compline Team for 2019—Clare Clifton, Elizabeth Ruscitti, Morgan Mitchell, and Wes Williams—and saying goodbye to our beloved Dinner and Compline founder and leader, Alex Banfield Hicks. (Disclaimer: Alex is not leaving Ascension; he’s simply passing on the supervision of this event to his Associate, Leah Hornfeck, to free up more time to develop college ministry with her in 2019). The vision for Dinner and Compline has always been an event for young adults by young adults, and we’re happy to say this is something we’ve achieved.

This Christmas Dinner and Compline will also be special as we are splurging for a meal from Chipotle, and we will be hosting Charlie Chislaghi as our honorary speaker for the evening. So, join us on **Thursday, December 6th at 6:30** for Dinner and Compline during the most wonderful time of the year! It will be Chipotle and Cheesecake with Charlie! For more information, contact Leah Hornfeck @ leah.hornfeck@ascensionpittsburgh.org or 724-630-0167.

Ascension Campus Ministry

New Year: A New Vision for College Ministry



You are warmly invited to join Alex and Leah for lunch on Sunday, January 6 from 12:45-2pm. As we have been praying and learning about how best Ascension and the CCO can bring a distinctive dish to the feast of college ministry in Oakland, we feel it may be time to try something new. A couple from San Francisco who visited Ascension recently shared how they wish they had known that there was an awesome Anglican church within walking distance from CMU when they were students there. So, how can we build

a better bridge from Ascension to the student world around us? We have some ideas, but we would love to hear yours too. Join us for a bite to eat in the Conference Room before we gather to think, talk, and pray in the upstairs Prayer Chapel. Please contact us at alex.banfieldhicks@ascensionpittsburgh.org or leah.hornfeck@ascensionpittsburgh.org if you plan to be there!

Transforming College Students to Transform the World

Ascension is happy to partner with the CCO as we join together to reach college students in Oakland for Jesus Christ! Every year, the CCO brings together thousands of college students to experience powerful worship, incredible speakers, and engaging workshops through the Jubilee Conference. The overall vision of this conference is to help students discover what it means to live faithfully to Christ in every area of life.

This February, Ascension's college ministry will be attending Jubilee, and we would like to subsidize the cost for these students. On Sunday, January 20th we will be holding a fundraising lunch after the 11am service to get students to Jubilee. This lunch is free for anyone who would like to come, and we ask that you bring a check with you and be ready to give! For more information about Jubilee, this fundraiser, or Ascension's college ministry contact Leah Hornfeck @ leah.hornfeck@ascensionpittsburgh.org or 724-630-0167.



Youth Ministry

Weather Gets Worse. CAYG Gets Better.



Goodbye warm evenings. Hello walking in the gloom at 6pm as cold rain runs down my nose. But as the weather gets worse, CAYG (Church of Ascension Youth Group) seems to get better! It has been heartwarming to hear new friends express how kind and welcoming everyone is, and one new arrival to the high school group liked the ‘good energy’. What do you mean? “It seems like everyone wants to be here, not like other youth groups where their parents make them go.” I tried not to grin. But one clear

advantage of the bad weather is that Tom Hillman, Ascension legend and youth ministry veteran, is not required to work at the Golf Course on a Friday night and can join us instead. Is he good with kids? See below! And we have had over 80 involved these last two weekends! Do pray for new recruits for the volunteer team! As numbers grow, so do the responsibilities. Contact Alex (412-652-3137) if you like one or more of the following: laughing, praying, listening, singing, leading camp-style games, being a life-long influence, or practical administrative work.

Youth Confirmation

We had our first youth confirmation lunch (pictured) at the beginning of November. I am incredibly thankful for Tom Hillman and Zach Wilson who host the monthly meetings, for Paul and Linda Von Bloch who take care of catering, for Jen Hemphill who is administrating the mentors’ clearances, for the fourteen mentors who pray for, meet, and complete the confirmation assignments with their confirmands, for the supportive families, and for the fourteen brave confirmands themselves! And all had to put up with the first guest presenter (yours truly). Do pray for all involved in this two-year process, and for the next lunch on December 16th. It takes a church to raise a Christian and it is my joy to see this happen here!



Children's Ministry

Christmas Tableau on Christmas Eve at the 6:30pm Service

All children are invited to participate in this year's Christmas Eve Tableau. This is a lot of fun and a great opportunity for kids to be involved in our worship service. If you plan to be in town for the holiday, you are encouraged to participate! Talk to Matt if you have not yet signed up!

Costumes fittings will be schedule by character/family grouping between the Sunday services on December 9, 16, and 23. The mandatory rehearsal will occur in conjunction with the Greening of the Church; 11am - Noon on Saturday December 15. On Christmas Eve, kids should arrive at 5:30pm to get into costume.



Resources for Advent at Home from Children's Ministry

On Sunday, December 2, stop by our display in the Parish Hall to pick up a very simple set of resources for celebrating Advent this year in your home. During the four Sundays of Advent our liturgical calendar invites us to go "on a journey to Bethlehem" with the prophets, the Holy Family, the shepherds, and the Magi, as a way of preparing for coming close to the mystery of Christmas. Together with this set of resources, and perhaps adding your own Nativity scene figures, Advent wreath or candles, you will be equipped for setting aside moments at home to further explore the scripture readings that our children also learn during Sunday school in Advent. This gift from Children's Ministry is for everyone in our congregation, all the way from the very young on up to the very seasoned young-at-heart.

Matt Ulrich, Director of Children's Ministry
matt.ulrich@ascensionpittsburgh.org



Saturday, December 8

9am – lunch

Ascension Hunt Rooms

Our next Explore Ascension class will be Saturday, December 8. This class is for all those who are new to Ascension, who wish to find out more about Anglicanism in general or Ascension in particular. It is also part of the pathway to membership. So, mark your calendars! The class is co-taught by all Ascension clergy. We begin with breakfast and conclude with lunch. Childcare is provided.

If you would like to register there are a couple of options:

- (1) Visit www.ascensionpittsburgh.org and sign up there;
- (2) Email Marilyn that you plan to come at marilyn.chislighi@ascensionpittsburgh.org.

Agape Year: Prepare Him Room

A Story to Believe In, A Family to Belong To, A Kingdom to Build Up

As we enter into the season of Advent as a church family, we are reminded of the longing we experience as we wait for the Kingdom of God to come in all fullness and glory. Just as the prophets of old and the people of God waited for the Incarnation to usher in a new order, we wait with ready hearts and active hands to see Jesus come again as King. As we live into our value “The Kingdom to Build Up”, the Fellows of Agape Year have seen God’s Kingdom come in small and remarkable ways. One way the Kingdom unfolds is through their participation in Open Hand Ministries, an East End non-profit committed to help local families become homeowners through rehabilitating vacant properties and providing supportive relationships.



Kieran reflected: “I can see the Kingdom being built by us through literally building a house with Open Hand Ministries. What’s more, we’re not building up a castle for kings or anything. No, we’re building it for a family who needs it, who may have been outcasts. That’s how I imagine God is building his Kingdom up as well. From building up relationships with children, the homeless, one another, to building up a healthy garden to even building up our bodies through embodied spiritual disciplines.”

As our fellows serve once a week with Open Hand Ministries, they get to participate in this longing of Advent and the Kingdom to come. A house - dusty, bare and exposed to the studs - takes on the shape of a shelter one wall at a time. This is not an overnight process. No extreme home makeover here! A finished house is the result of thousands of hours of volunteer labor, community advocacy for the family or individual, and a lot of shared lunches. Slowly and steadily, the structure becomes a home filled with warmth through the incarnational presence of God’s people. As we prepare room in our hearts and world for Jesus’ coming, let us not grow weary in building the Kingdom daily.

Interested in Open Hand Ministries? Join us for a Saturday work day, December 1. Contact Ascensionite Tim Raufer at traufer@openhandpittsburgh.org for more information about work days and the mission of Open Hand.

Know a young person who desires to grow in building God’s Kingdom? Agape Year is accepting applications for Fall 2019-2020! Talk to Nathan or Erika Twitchell or check out www.agapeyear.org/apply.



**OPEN
HAND**
ministries

Tim Raufer



*The Twitchell Family
Henry, Erika, Nate and Anna*



Bits and Pieces

Advent Devotionals

Each year Trinity School for Ministry produces an Advent Devotional that lists the daily office readings from *The Book of Common Prayer (1979)* and features a devotional written by current or former faculty and students. If you are new to Anglicanism and are unfamiliar with the daily office readings, this is a terrific opportunity to take a dive into this particular way to read through scripture. Please be sure to pick up a copy of the devotional. They are available on information tables free of charge.

Community Groups – Advent and January launch dates

Not in a group? You're missing out! New community groups are constantly being formed, some with a Rule of Life and Christian practices focus, while others are more Bible study focused. Will you consider taking the plunge? For more information, or to join or start a group in your neighborhood, contact jonathan.warren@ascensionpittsburgh.org.

Can we take your picture?

Ascension has an online pictorial directory accessible on our website. The directory is password protected and only a photo image and related names are used. This has great potential to help our growing church family put faces and names together. Participation is as easy as emailing a good quality digital photo *and if that is a challenge*, we will have a **photographer available to take pictures in the parish hall after the 9am and 11am services December 16 and 23**. Please call or email our receptionist to learn the password or send her your digital photo. Reach Judy at 412-621-4361 or via email at judy.yadrick@ascensionpittsburgh.org.

Christmas Cards

Ascensionite Bonnie Liefer has designed a line of Christmas cards that may be purchased to support the ministry of the Coalition for Christian Outreach (CCO), an evangelical campus ministry that serves students in Ohio, PA, WV and beyond! Look for the brochures with order forms available on our two information tables; one in the glass hallway of the Education Wing and also just outside the Parish Hall. You may also order online at <https://cards.ccojubilee.org/collections/christmas>.

Church Office Closings and End of Year Donations

Please be aware that the church offices will be closed December 25th and 26th as well as January 1st. End of year donations must be received or post-marked no later than December 31st. The church will be closed at 4pm on the 31st. If you would like to receive an update on your giving record, please contact our bookkeeper, Linda, at linda.mclane@ascensionpittsburgh.org.

Adopt a College Student

Impact the life of a college student simply by intentionally including one in your everyday life. The rewards are incalculable. Adopt a College Student pairs college students with Ascensionites and invites you to disciple and mentor just by including a student in your everyday life: chatting over coffee, putting up your Christmas tree, even tackling a puzzle. Email leah.hornfeck@ascensionpittsburgh.org to sign up or for more information.

Services of Baptism

Sunday, January 13

We will have services of baptism at both the 9am and 11am services on Sunday, January 13th when we remember the Baptism of Christ. If you would like to be baptized, or if you would like to have your child baptized, please contact Stacey Regan at stacey.regan@ascensionpittsburgh.org.

Annual Meeting

Sunday, March 3 after 11am service

Please mark this date on your calendar and plan to attend our 2019 Annual Meeting.

MISSIONS: Focus on Africa

Love and Care Family in Uganda

(by Denise Cox)



Dr. Sylvia Tamusuza

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



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

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

Like in any family the children are given shelter, offered services including: education (formal and informal), medical care, clothing, food, mentorship, counseling and Christian fellowship. And as in a normal family, children who become youth and later adults, are supported in transition to adult life. They are offered pre-marital counselling when they are ready for marriage. So far, there have been 3 marriage ceremonies. To date, 27 children have been nurtured in the Miriam Duggan Home.

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

What a blessing that a ministry formed at Ascension with many members participating continues to provide support for at risk children in Uganda. Prayer requests include the following:

1. Pray for the spiritual formation of Uganda's youth as they are bombarded with secular values;
2. Pray for godly teachers and good role models for the children;
3. Pray for good health and protection for Sylvia, her family and the children.

Orphaned Heart Ministry

(by Janet Helms)

My husband and I have been members of Ascension for many years, and it has been a joy to grow and serve in this congregation. This past October I was invited to present my ministry to Ascension's senior's group. Here is a summary of "Orphaned Hearts Ministry" for the rest of the congregation.



"HOPE" is the acronym the Orphaned Heart Healing delegation in Uganda uses for their Fellowships. It stands for Healing, Overcoming, Prayer and Empowerment.



Janet Helms

In 2007, I performed my musical testimony, "Lord Make Me the Person You Want Me to be" in Uganda. I was invited to do this in the town of Hoima for 1,500 residents and also at Uganda Christian University (UCU) for nearly 2,000 students. It amazed me how deeply it touched the souls of those in the audience. For some time, having worked with Dr. Sylvia Tamusuza, the founder of Love and Care Family, I found that few orphans talked about their lives. In fact, many did not know the *truth* of what happened to them as children. To be called an "orphan" is the same word in their vernacular as the word for "garbage". They felt shackled to share their painful life stories of rejection and abandonment, They were filled with shame just because they were orphans. They also were filled with shame if they were HIV positive. The Holy Spirit began to infuse me with the importance of having a "safe" extended family to share their emotional pain, festering in their hearts and souls.

God also began to open my heart with ideas about *how* to heal from this heart wound of being an orphan. After my performance at UCU, Sylvia and I asked people to get in groups of 8 or more for sharing and praying. I asked them to lift their prayers up for the plight of orphans in Uganda like incense to the "nostrils" of God. It was rare for prayer for orphans to be publicly done. The AIDS crisis in the 1980's left Uganda with 2.5 million orphans, yet there was nothing evident in the culture to directly help heal their hearts and souls. After the group prayers, I asked anyone who wanted to be a part of a fellowship group of orphans at UCU to stay, and about 300 students remained. They were the first of what is now the Fellowship of Orphaned Heart.

From that original group of students at UCU, God has created a great leadership team in Uganda, called the "Healing Delegation". With offices right outside the main gate of UCU they continue to attract students who need inner-healing prayer over their emotional wounds and memories. They are led by Paul Agaba, and Simon Peter Dembe, Sylvia's nephew, both graduates in law. The team is so dedicated and well-trained that they continue to lead this ministry, now having shared it in Rwanda and parts of Kenya. Through their inspired leadership in East Africa, they have led and organized over 250 conferences and have brought inner-healing to the memories and souls of over 20,000 people since 2012. East Africa is ablaze with the healing fire of the Holy Spirit.

Many wonderful alliances have been forged with churches, dioceses and other colleges. A more recent focus is healing of local evil strongholds resulting from atrocities, such as genocide, war, early slavery and wounds left from Joseph Kony and the LRA in Northern Uganda. God is expanding and deepening our message and freeing many from the shame of being an orphan into the light of day of what it means to be a child of God! I wrote and published a book on this entitled, *Healing the Orphaned Heart; Restoring the Heart of a Child of God*. It can be purchased by following the link: www.createspace.com/6163492.

If you feel led to support this life-changing ministry, checks may be sent to Orphaned Heart Ministries. OHM is a 501©(3) organization and contributions are tax deductible within the limit of the law.

Orphaned Heart Ministries
P.O. Box 1223
Wexford, PA 15090

Jubilee Professional 2019:

From Toil to Joy

Friday, February 22 from 11 am – 6:30pm

Westin Convention Center, Pittsburgh

Jubilee Professional is a half-day conference to learn how to apply biblical truth to your everyday professional life. At Jubilee Professional, hundreds of people from a variety of sectors come together to grasp a greater vision for how their work contributes to the flourishing of their community, city, and world.

Each year Jubilee Professional features powerful talks from local and national speakers who walk the walk and have a story to tell. In fact, for ten years, the [Pittsburgh Leadership Foundation \(PLF\)](#) has partnered with the [CCO \(Coalition for Christian Outreach\)](#) to produce this unique event for men and women who are one, five, 20 or 50 years out of college.

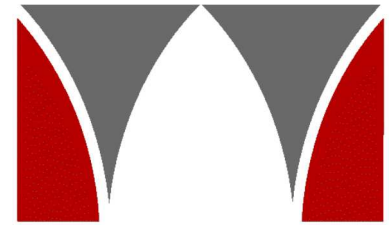
Just Work: From Toil to Joy

This year Jubilee Professional will address how we move from the toil of work to the joy of work restored.

Is work “just” work? Or could it be that it is primary to God’s redemptive plan- that it is in and through our everyday work that justice is realized for the common good and the flourishing of all? If you believe that you are “just” a sales executive, “just a pastor” or “just an Uber Driver”, Jubilee Professional has a message of hope for you. If you have ever thought that discovering your calling is far away and impossible to realize, this year’s Jubilee Professional will deliver practical ways to make your daily work, from doing dishes to setting strategy for your team, from starting a business to volunteering at your child’s school, an integral part of God’s call on your life.

Registration

Visit <http://professional.jubileeconference.com>.



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

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