

Ascension Extension

Ascension is called to be a family of faith so reflecting the life of Christ, that we draw all people to him.

February 2021

Church of the Ascension
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Pastoral Transition Update

Bryan Lance, Senior Warden

When Father Samuel Nsengiyumva announced in early December that he had accepted an opportunity to become the Rector of another church and would be leaving Church of the Ascension, the Diocese of Maryland wasted no time in searching for a new Rector. Unfortunately, the number of candidates for a permanent Rector is very small. However, the Diocese was quickly able to locate a candidate who may be willing and able to serve as an Interim Rector until a new Rector is found. (Ascension had an Interim Rector after the retirement of The Rev. Ron Fisher in 2013.) I truly believe that God is in control and will lead us down the right path in finding someone to keep us uplifted and moving forward. As the Rev. Eddie Blue shared in his January 31 sermon, we are to have faith and be patient. Bishop Sutton encouraged the Vestry to schedule an introductory meet and greet with the Interim Rector candidate. A Zoom meeting was held with this candidate, and everyone on the Vestry is feeling optimistic and blessed. We have invited this candidate to come to Ascension to meet us in person and to see what we have to offer. This is, of course, a work in progress as the Diocese is still looking for additional Interim Rector candidates to choose from. Please keep the Vestry in your prayers during this time as we search to find the right Interim Rector for our church.

The Rev. Stuart Wright, Canon for Transitions and Director for Human Resources for the Diocese of Maryland, has graciously offered to be the Celebrant during the 10:15 am service on February 7. After the service, he will answer questions regarding the transition. I look forward to seeing everyone virtually on February 7.

A Prayer for the Pastoral Transition Process

O Lord our God, in you we live and move and have our being, and our trust is in you. We lift up our parish to you as we seek a new Interim Rector and Rector to be our shepherds in the years ahead. We pray that you will guide the Vestry in all their deliberations as they discern your will for our parish and the priest that you have chosen for us. We also lift up to you the new shepherds of our parish. We pray that our new priests will each have a discerning heart, a vision for the future of our parish, the desire to lead us in ministry, and a caring pastoral presence. Most of all, we pray that our priests will be passionate about you, devoted to prayer, diligent in studying your word, and open to the movement of the Holy Spirit. Trusting our future to you, we pray in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen.

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Senior Warden's Report for the January 24, 2021 Annual Meeting*Bryan Lance, Senior Warden***What the Vestry is About**

The Vestry is a legislative authority for the parish that works directly with the Rector to help manage the parish finances and campus. Vestry members are voted into these positions by the congregation, during our annual meeting which is typically held in January of each year. The basic responsibilities of the Vestry are to help define and articulate the mission of the congregation, to support the church's mission and ministries by active involvement and to ensure effective organization and planning.

Highlight's of our Ministry in 2020

- The Vestry has been supporting all our ministries such as Outreach, Discipleship, Worship, Stewardship, Membership, Healing Ministry (St Luke's Guild), Finance, Buildings & Grounds
- Bringing in new members to the church
- Finding a replacement for Kaily Cook (Parish Administrator); Terri Anderson replaced Kaily on or around 6/13/2020.
- Approved the 2021 budget
- Approval to starting the healing process, (early February 2020) called Reflect, Renew and Rebuild with Linda Crockett from Safe Communities. Unfortunately, this was cut short due to the COVID pandemic.
- Providing a CCTV system in the Holy Cross Hall to broadcast Sunday services on Zoom and Facebook.
- Sexton replacement added to our staff, Richard Hill.
- Proposals received and approved to replace the heating/AC units in the Stone Church.
- Upgrade of both restrooms (sinks, countertops, mirror in ladies' room)
- New roof installed at back of 30 North Court St.
- Repair of eaves/roof at multiple entrances.

Plans for 2021

- Replacement of A/C unit in Stone Church
- Hire an Interim Rector
- Hire a new Parish Administrator
- Work with Diocese of Maryland to find a permanent Rector
- Bring in additional members to our congregation
- Keep existing members
- Encourage clear and direct communication between the parish, the Vestry, and Interim Rector
- Maintain the budget

The Vestry		
Vestry/Officers	Term Ends	Ministry Liaison
Bryan Lance, Senior Warden	January 2022	
Titus Mataban, Junior Warden	January 2024	Buildings and Grounds
Nancy Starner, Treasurer	January 2022	Finance
Jill Horn, Registrar	January 2024	
Liz Lowe	January 2022	Worship
Rick Reinders	January 2022	Finance
Susan Considine	January 2023	Worship/Altar Guild
Ron Cox	January 2023	Finance
Donna Hansen	January 2023	Mistletoe Mart/Country Breakfast Buffet
David Kreider	January 2023	Worship
Katie Corbin	January 2024	
Jackie Weschler	January 2024	

Please Pray for the Vestry:

Heavenly Father, give to our leaders, a daily renewal in your presence, uphold them with your peace, a peace that passes all understanding, enlighten them with your word, and strengthen them with your grace. Give them a new vision of you, of your love, of your grace and power; and then, give us a new vision of what you would have us do as your church in this congregation at this time. Give us an awareness that in the strength of your Holy Spirit we can do it to your glory. In Jesus' Name we pray. Amen.

Vestry Highlights from the January 12, 2021 meeting

- The 2020 budget deficit, estimated to be \$50,000, has been reduced to \$8,000. Additional 2021 pledges are welcome.
- The vestry will meet on January 21, 2021 to review the proposed 2021 budget.
- The Buildings and Grounds Committee has chosen a company to install new heating and air conditioning in the Stone Church. Cost will be paid by donations already received including one very generous donation.
- Parish Administrator, Terri Anderson, will soon transition to a full-time job elsewhere. A search is underway for her replacement.
- Digital Ministry Associate, Grace Imanaryo, will depart on January 31. A search is underway for her replacement.
- The vestry approved hiring Lynn Lyon-Vaiden to be Interim Communications Associate. She will work virtually to support the church office and facilitate communications (bulletin, newsletter, Enews, etc.) during the transition as well as Proclaim slides and the church website.
- The vestry approved allowing in-person voting, in addition to Zoom voting, for the January 24 election of new vestry members.

Church Staff	
Terri Anderson	Parish Administrator
Lynn Lyon-Vaiden	Interim Communications Associate, Handbell Choir Director
Mary Butler	Organist, Choir Director
Allison Lord	Digital Ministry Associate
Richard Hill	Facilities and Hospitality Assistant
Suzanne Walter	Nursery Attendant
Donald Chepko	Night Sexton

Thank you, Thank you, Thank you!

"For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers." (Ephesians 1:15-16)

Dear Ascension Family and Friends:

As you can imagine, Rose and I first heard/read about your faith and your love before I offered myself for consideration as your priest more than six years ago. Our time together has simply confirmed what we had only heard or read before we came. We have experienced, firsthand, your extraordinary faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people.

Words cannot fully express how grateful we are for the extraordinary expressions of love we've experienced during this time of transition to our next assignment. The cards, the letters, the gifts, the flowers, the cookies, the snacks, the music, and numerous other expressions of love and best wishes have been overwhelming. To God be the glory!

All we can promise is to continually give thanks to God for you; and remember you in our prayers. Our prayer is that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, will continue to fill you with His love and give you *"the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe."* (Ephesians 1:17-19).

It is our hope that you will also keep us in your prayers as we begin our next assignment at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church and School in Fruitland Park, Florida, effective February 1.

Until we meet again, may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all, now and forever, Amen.

Your brother and sister in Christ,

Samuel+ & Rose Nsengiyumva



Church member donates \$42,000 toward a new Heating and Cooling System for Stone Church

A longtime member of Ascension, after hearing about the Stone Church's aging Heating and Cooling system, challenged us to raise \$10,000 and promised to donate the remainder of the cost of installing a new system. Thanks to the generosity of many, including one \$10,000 donation, we were able to meet and exceed the challenge in two weeks. With the cost of the new system estimated to be around \$52,000, the donor was pleased to fulfill her pledge and invited Fr. Samuel to pick up the check.

This effort is not just another fundraiser for a worthy cause, but a demonstration of what God is doing at Ascension. He is working in and through his faithful people to ensure that the Stone Church, where many have worshipped for over 176 years, remains available for many more generations to come. God indeed knows the plans He has for this place we call Ascension - plans to prosper it; to give it hope and a future.



2021 Pledges

If you have not yet submitted a financial pledge for 2021, it is not too late to do so. You may mail your completed card to the church office, or you may send your pledge via email to:

churchoftheascension@gmail.com

OR

ascension.treasurer@westminster@gmail.com

FINANCE REPORT ANNUAL MEETING (1-24-2021)

Income and Expenses FY 2020				
		Budget	Actual	Difference %
Income:				
General Giving	\$ 234,526.00	\$ 229,645.34		97.9%
Fundraisers	\$ 21,410.00	\$ 11,927.68		55.7%
Rental	\$ 17,100.00	\$ 15,675.00		91.7%
Miscellaneous	\$ 21,740.00	\$ 10,058.83		46.3%
TOTAL INCOME	\$ 294,776.00	\$ 267,306.85		90.7%
Expenses:				
Staff and Staff Support	\$ 179,214.12	\$ 152,587.64		85.1%
Buildings and Grounds	\$ 93,476.00	\$ 79,278.27		84.8%
Diocese	\$ 45,834.00	\$ 34,375.50		75.0%
Office/Business Expenses	\$ 13,540.00	\$ 7,929.90		58.6%
Ministries/Worship	\$ 12,783.87	\$ 1,890.85		14.8%
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 344,847.99	\$ 276,062.16		80.1%
NET INCOME	\$50,071.99	-\$8,755.31		

FY 2021 Budget (Pledges as of 1/15/21)
\$ 178,508.00
\$ 15,850.00
\$ 17,100.00
\$ 17,310.00
\$ 228,768.00
\$ 130,755.75
\$ 78,915.00
\$ 40,698.00
\$ 9,450.00
\$ 13,050.00
\$ 272,868.75
-\$44,100.75

Staff and Staff Support = Human Resources+Meetings+Equipment+Workers Comp
Buildings and Grounds = Utilities+Maintenance+Prop Insurance+Rental Prop Exp

Office / Business Expenses = Admin Office+Business Expenses
Ministries / Worship = Worship+Prof Supply+Stewardship+Christian Ed+Membership

Sunday Morning Worship Service

10:15 am – Holy Cross Hall (This service can be viewed via Zoom and Facebook.)

Indoor Worship Suspension Continues

Due to the continued rise of COVID-19 positivity rates and case rates in almost all municipalities of the Diocese of Maryland and the projected further increase due to the holidays and the lag in infection symptoms and reporting time, **the Diocese made the difficult decision to suspend all indoor worship until further notice.** The Diocese regrets the inconveniences caused by these actions. Please stay calm, stay connected, stay church.

Church of the Ascension will continue to offer one livestreamed online service via Zoom and Facebook at 10:15 am each Sunday. Consecrated bread and wine are available for home communion during online worship and are available for pick-up.

Consecrated Home Communion

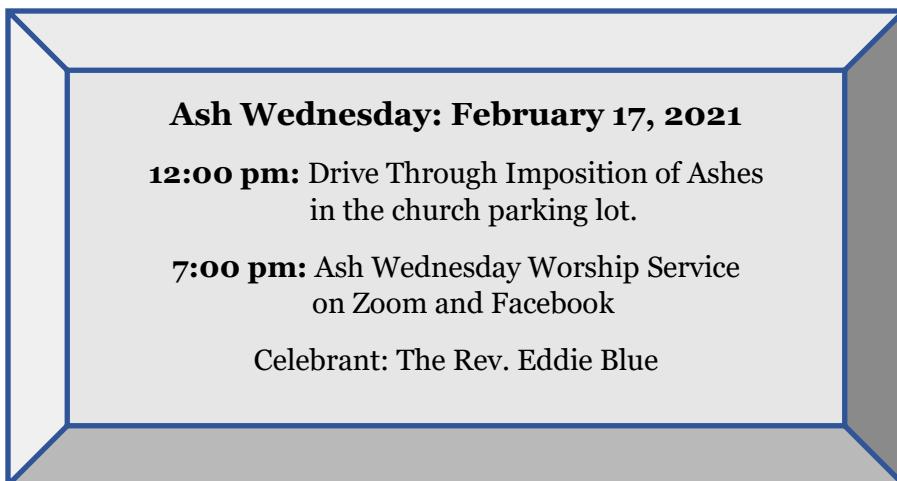
Those who attend on Sunday mornings via Zoom or Facebook, may request consecrated, prepacked bread and wine or juice which they can take from the safety of their home during the Eucharist for one Sunday a month. To receive prepacked bread and wine or juice, please contact the church office with the number of people who need communion in your home. (churchoftheascension@gmail.com)

Worship Assistants Needed

Volunteers are needed as audio/video assistants and readers. Please contact the church office to select a date and time to serve in February or March.

Worship Notes: February 2021

The Rev. Stuart Wright, Canon for Transitions and Director for Human Resources for the Diocese of Maryland, has graciously offered to be the Celebrant during the **10:15 am service on February 7**. After the service, he will answer questions regarding the Pastoral Transition.



Baptisms

Aislynne was baptized on Sunday, January 3 by Fr. Samuel Nsengiyumva. Aislynne is the daughter of Patrick and Amanda. Patrick and Amanda were married at Ascension in 2014. They live in Hanover, PA. Amanda's family attended Ascension during the 1990s.

Roan was baptized on Sunday, January 10 by Fr. Samuel Nsengiyumva. Roan is the first-born son of Kevin and Jackie. His God parents are Mike and Katie.

We rejoice and pray for Aislynne and Roan that as they grow up, God will grant them an inquiring and discerning heart, the courage to will and persevere, a spirit to know and to love God, and the gift of joy and wonder in God's creation. We also pray for their parents and Godparents, that God will grant them the grace to fulfill the pledges they made on behalf of the children.

Confirmations

Ashley was confirmed on Sunday, January 24 by Bishop Eugene Sutton. Ashley is the daughter of James and Michele and the granddaughter of Tom and Sharon.

Marilyn was also confirmed on Sunday, January 24 by Bishop Eugene Sutton. Marilyn and her husband Michael have been part of our church family for about two years. She is involved in the music ministry and is interested in serving the Lord in several other ways. (See page 8.) Marilyn was originally confirmed in the Lutheran Church (Missouri Synod) but has recently found a home within the Episcopal/Anglican branch of the Jesus Movement.

We congratulate Ashley and Marilyn upon their confirmation and pray that God will continue to fill them with the Holy Spirit to empower them for the work of ministry.



St. Martha's Corner

2021 SHROVE TUESDAY PANCAKE SUPPER: CANCELLED

Because of the restrictions of the COVID virus and the indefinite future of the pandemic, the Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper is cancelled. We look forward to hosting this event in 2022.

ST. MARTHA'S GUILD NEEDS NEW MEMBERS

Would you consider joining us in our mission?

We have lost many members these past years due to health problems, relocation and passing. At this time, we have been reduced to 7 active members in the Guild. We know the church is not operating at normal capacity at this time, but as the church activities and ministries begin to resume, as we expect they will, so will we, with your help.

How does St. Martha's Guild serve the church?

We consider ourselves to be the 'Rector's Guild'. We support the Rector in his/her endeavors. We work at the Rector's direction serving as his/her hostesses at receptions and contribute to members of our church who are involved in religious studies and missions.

What does our ministry do?

- Provide financial aid to seminarians and aids others that are engaged in religious studies and missions
- Host Ministry Fairs
- Plan and host the Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper
- Host receptions for Confirmation, the Bishop's Visitation and other receptions needed by the Rector
- Host the "Women of the Bible" Teas
- Communicate at Thanksgiving and Christmas with members of the church who are shut-ins and nursing home residents with cards and gifts
- Manage the United Thank Offering (UTO) outreach program during Lent
- Contribute, as asked, to other ministries in the Church

Our members have a variety of talents and strengths that we draw on. We work as a group with friendly hearts; no specific skills or talents are required. We meet once a month, September through June, for a time of devotion, fellowship, and discussions about how to play our part in the work God has called us to at Ascension and beyond. Please consider joining our ministry.

If God is calling you to share your faith, time and talents with St. Martha's Guild, or if you need more information about our ministry, please contact Cathy at creese357@qis.net or call at 410-876-2198.

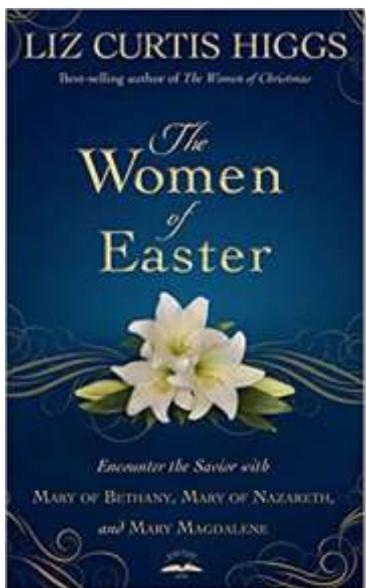


The Order of the Daughters of the King (DOK)

The DOK is a 135-year-old international group of lay and ordained Episcopal women. It is the sister association to the Brotherhood of St. Andrew. In conjunction with the Diocese of Maryland, we are investigating the possibility of forming a chapter at Ascension in 2021. The DOK focuses on prayer, service and evangelism. It is important to know that this group is an order, not an organization. For detailed information on the DOK, its mission and membership, [please visit their website](#).

If we have at least three interested women, we can move forward. Having a group would also allow us to complete the discernment process together; something that could be individually uplifting and mutually beneficial. If after prayerful consideration you feel that you might be called to the DOK, please let me know as soon as possible. If we have sufficient congregational interest, we will work with the President of the DOK-Maryland to determine next steps. They are eager to help us! A show of interest at this point is not a commitment to pursue membership but will help determine if this is something that will benefit Ascension moving forward and if we have enough initial interest to develop a startup plan.

If you would like to help advance this important project or would like to discuss it personally, please call/text Marilyn at 443-340-3709 or hanchett14@comcast.net.



Thursday Night Bible Study: Lent 2021

The Women of Easter: Encounter the Savior with Mary of Bethany, Mary of Nazareth, and Mary Magdalene

This eight-week Bible study for the Lenten season explores the stories of three women who played a vital role in the life and ministry of Jesus. Follow in their footsteps as they journey with Jesus through Holy Week. With unforgettable insights and powerful life application, the author digs into the biblical text to help us view Easter through the eyes of

Mary of Bethany, who prepared the way before the cross; Mary, the mother of Jesus, who was addressed from the cross; and Mary Magdalene, who proclaimed Christ's resurrection after the cross.

When?: This study will begin on Thursday, February 18 at 7:00 pm.

Complete Schedule:

Thursday, February 18 through Thursday, April 8 at 7:00 pm. **Please note that we will not meet on April 1 (Maundy Thursday).** During Holy Week, we will meet at 7:00 pm on Wednesday, March 31.

How?: We will meet via Zoom.

Books have already been ordered, but it is not too late to participate in this study. Please contact Lynn (lynn.lyonvaiden@gmail.com) for more information.

In Loving Memory of Betty Bath

Another long time and faithful member of our church, Betty Bath, departed this life on Friday, January 15, at Sunflower Assisted Living Facility in Westminster. She was 93.

Betty regularly attended the Wednesday morning service until her declining health prohibited her from doing so. A graveside service was held on Thursday, January 21, 2021 at Greenwood Cemetery in Hamilton, NJ.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made in Betty's memory to Church of the Ascension, 23 N. Court Street, Westminster, MD, 21157.

Meanwhile, please continue to pray for her family - David her son, Terri her daughter in law, and Jeb her grandson, as they grieve the loss of Betty.

Rest eternal grant your servant Betty, O Lord; And let light perpetual shine upon her. May her soul, and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

Mercy 21-Day Bible Reading Plan

- Matthew 9:10-13
- Matthew 12:1-8
- Psalm 25:6-7
- Matthew 5:7
- Matthew 18:23-35
- Hebrews 10:26-31
- James 2:12-13
- Matthew 23:23-24
- James 3:13-18
- Romans 9:14-18
- Romans 11:29-32
- Ephesians 2:1-10
- Titus 3:1-7
- Mark 5:18-20
- Luke 1:46-55
- Proverbs 28:13
- 1 Timothy 1:12-17
- Psalm 123
- Hebrews 4:14-16
- Micah 6:8;7:18-20
- Zechariah 7:9-10

FOR EACH DAY'S READING:

1. Summarize the passage in your own words.
2. What does this passage teach you about God?
3. What does this passage teach you about mercy?

AFTER EACH DAY'S READING:

1. Examine your beliefs. Are you being led astray by any beliefs that contradict God's Word?
2. Examine your lifestyle. Are there any words, actions, or attitudes in your life that contradict what you just learned?
3. What steps are you going to take to grow in what you just learned?
4. Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to help you walk in obedience to this passage.



Made to give life!
by Leigh Ann Dutton