

BACK TO SCHOOL  
2016

# ASCENSION TIDINGS

Thank you Ascension. This summer was fantastic. Weeks on the road with my family; time to reflect in Houston; mountain time with my in-laws; and time to really meditate upon God purpose for my life have all prepared me to lead our congregation into our next season of ministry.

Sabbatical is meant to hit the reset button, not only for the priest, but also for the whole community. You all have stepped up in ministry this summer and have created new pathways to do the will of God at Ascension. I and the vestry thank you. I am ready, very ready to tackle our next season of ministry this fall.

During sabbatical, I have taken stock of our last five years together. The first year was a lovely honeymoon. In the second year, we continued to grow spiritually and numerically. The third year felt like things were really solidifying. The fourth year was a chance to live into new ministry initiatives, even as our attendance growth was beginning to flatten out. Year five has been challenging.



In year five, we lost some faithful members to death, moving, and transition. I really struggled in year five to be your bulletproof priest, but I often found myself less than invincible. There is an adage that says God does not give you more than you can handle - hogwash. The only person who can handle the challenges of our lives is Jesus. God has often given me more than I can handle, so that I can let God take over.

The deck is clear. We have a new start together. 2016 and forward will be even better than our honeymoon years. We are poised to get very clear on the love of God. This year, let's pray individually and as a church to be the love of Christ in new ways. This is the secret sauce for success in ministry and church growth. Love is the program that will draw first-timers and the decades long faithful Ascensionites to this house of worship.

## Icons of Christ

A big part of my job in our life together is to be an icon of Jesus. The body of Christ itself is made up of many different people; it has never been a mirror of the priest, unless the body is ill. The priesthood is supposed to a ministry of inspiration and collaboration where everyone finds that - in their own way - they are an icon of Christ too. Together we come closer to fullness of God (never quite complete and always needing more grace).

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## LETTER FROM THE RECTOR...(CONT.)

Ascension continues to live into what it means to be the body of Christ. Together we will make a difference for the world. Ascension continues to house so much pure talent and mutual support for ministry. Sabbatical reminded me that together we are stronger. I have a part to play, but it has never been up to me alone to be the icon of Christ; we come together as the face of Love.

### **Vision**

Now is the time recapture the fun of ministry. Late this summer I found inspiration from what Corey Boker said at the DNC. He quoted the African proverb "If you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together."

Your vestry and I have begun a conversation with a diocesan consultant to help us really dig into our mission and vision **together**. We have a great vision and mission; but now is the time to revisit it. It will be a process that goes throughout the fall and into the middle of the spring (if we are a good fit with the consultant).

My prayer is that God places good, fun work on our hearts. If this vision work implants into our DNA, we will have more participation in ministry and more investment in the future of our church. We will be inspired to invite, welcome, and connect others to this special place called Ascension.

### **My personal work**

#### ***Therapy***

Individually, I have worked with a therapist and life coach to think through how I can be more effective as a dad, husband, priest and follower of Jesus. I hope to bring clarity of purpose in everything we do together. I am committed and I challenge you to commit to your part in the renewal of our oasis.

#### ***Preaching***

One side effect of this sabbatical is in my preaching. I have played it safe for so long trying to speak to so many different perspectives. Sometime "Christ alone" has been a way to not speak clearly on important topics and at times I it seems that I just worked to avoid annoying anyone.

I was deeply convicted of this avoidance at the festival of homiletics that I went to at the beginning of the sabbatical. Raphael Warnock of Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, preached for 40 minutes about issues deeply important to him, and I felt convicted that God wants me to in my own way, speak my convictions as well.

So here is my preaching pledge to you - I will keep my eyes on Jesus in scripture study, sermon prep, and Sunday morning worship. But you are going to experience me as a more clearly opinionated preacher. Trust me - you will not like everything I say - but you will know that I have brought everything to God. Most importantly, my preaching will be an outgrowth of my prayers.

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One more thought about preaching - I hope you don't agree with me on everything that comes out of my mouth. If we are community of disciples, we will have honest disagreements. There has never been a time like in the days of Moses, King David, or even Jesus when everyone agreed. It is no different now. Disagreement in the midst of community can be powerfully healing, if we disagree **well**.

### *Politics of the Summer*

As I have been on sabbatical, I have not had my head in the sand. I am heart broken over the senseless police assassinations in Dallas of Lorne Ahrens, Michael Smith, Michael Krol, Patrick Zamarripa, Brent Thompson. Just when I thought the flags would stop being at half mast, I was forced to pray for officers Brad Garafola, Montrell Jackson, and Matthew Gerald of Baton Rouge. As lovely as my summer was, I am sick to death of mourning people losing their lives for no good reason.

My heart cries out at the deaths of Philando Castile, Alton Sterling, and the many, many deaths that occur every day on city streets - so many unnecessary. I can barely think of Tamir Rice, Travvon Martin, and India Beaty - young men gone.

So this summer I think it is time for me at least to enter the territory that makes some of you uncomfortable. I believe that blue **and** black lives matter. Both approaches offer witness to a world out of its mind. Trying to see both sides is an impossible task but something we must at least try to do.

I can barely write as I think about Orlando and the darkness visited upon that community and the horrible deaths of 49 LGBT people and their friends, not to mention Christina Grimmie, a young pop star's life cut short.

### **Love and Witness**

We have an obligation as people of God to be witnesses to the power of God to drive away darkness. We don't have an obligation to demonize those with whom we disagree. Even when we think they are flat wrong. I am very proud that one of my fellow clergy has tried something, anything, to change the conversation. Check out the Rev. Jeremy Lucas, the now controversial Episcopal priest in Lake Oswego, Oregon who won an AR-15 at a softball raffle. He now faces possible charges of illegal weapons transfer as he tries to destroy the gun. You may vehemently disagree with his methods, but I think he is trying to start a better, not perfect, conversation about violence based on his reading of Scripture. Google him and see what you think. By the way, I really like to make things go boom - like many of you.

What if love and respect were the filter we used for everyone with whom we talked or listened to. The culture around us has no investment in love; and in fact, actively pushes against kindness and understanding. We have an obligation to be martyrs for Christ (μάρτυς, *mártys*, "witness") and take that word away from those who corrupt it for their own purpose by killing, breaking, and destroying. To be a martyr is to be a living example and witness to love in thought, word and deed.

As I reflect on a summer so bright and so full of joy, I hold that in tension with the families of loved one whose sorrowful cries of loss reach heaven's ears. May the souls I mentioned and the souls of the departed through the mercy of God rest in peace.

### *My calling*

That is what I am called to do with you. I am not here to convince of the rightness of my perspective, but invite you to put down your easy, media inspired contempt. Love is so much harder and so much better. A life of Christ calls you to open your *spleen* to the aches of the world as an honest prayer to God. Yes, I said spleen. In John's Gospel σπλάγχνα is the root word for gut level compassion. Splagchna is the spleen (where the ancients thought emotions live). In most translations σπλάγχνα is translated as 'heart'

Read God's word a little differently

1 John 3:17:

*But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes **their guts** (their heart) against him, how does God's love abide in him?*

Your **gut ache** might be closer to the will of God than even your heart.

I commit to give you my heart and spleen for the sake of Christ and the needs of the world. I pray you will do the same. It will be hard, but there is no other game in town that leads to life. I will work alongside you to make Ascension a light of Houston. I will do everything I can to do, as Corey Booker said to go far and go together (for the sake of Christ). We are going to strive to see clearly God's mercy at Ascension, find a new groove, and live out the love of God in this place.

Peace,



Pastor Todd Bryant

### Looking forward to our Sermons:

- Aug 28 - Starting dinner a little bloated. Luke 14
- Sept 4 - Anger is part of love not its opposite. Deut 30/Luke 14
- Sept 11 - we've already been "found out" love helps us accept it. Luke 15
- Sept 18 - weights and measures and justice. Amos 8
- Sept 25 - how will you relate to the busboy in heaven? Luke 16
- Oct 2 - Jesus is better than your faith in him. Luke 17
- Oct 9 - being made well and being made whole - it's as simple as a Twinkie diet. Luke 17

### and Sunday school topics:

- Sabbatical Open Forum Aug 28 and Sept 4
- Old testament Rabble-Rousers Sept and Oct.
- Psalms - the politics of devotion Nov and Dec

## REACH OUT

In July of this year, I quietly celebrated my first year of ordination as a Deacon and my assignment to Ascension. It has been a wonderful year of learning for me while getting to know you and the general community. I feel very fortunate to be assigned to one of the warmest, welcoming parishes I have ever been in...as well as one with loving, giving hearts. I appreciate your training, suggestions and honesty-and I pray we can continue along this same path of support. For me, the church (and that is you by the way) is all about relationships and sharing. And like most families, sometimes the sharing is a celebration and sometimes it is collaboration and negotiation. I welcome them all.



First-let's celebrate! Father Todd is returning after a 3 month Sabbatical! Personally I am preparing for a house afire with lists dripping out of his pockets...or cell phone (we know how he rolls). Nonetheless, I look forward to having him back in our midst. While he was away, he had expectations for himself and the Bishop told us we had some work to do too. I certainly found myself growing and working on perspectives during this time. We had a wonderful group of three visiting priests this summer and we learned from all of them. I certainly picked up a lot working with three new bosses. I also celebrate the absolute best Senior and Junior Wardens around and a hard working Vestry. Every person stepped up to do their part and more-all of us growing as we did this. The Mike and Mary Show during the Sunday School hour was wonderful! We became a community along the way and I think we all asked ourselves some very important questions. Thank you especially to the Mike part of the team-he did a great job! And thank you Father Flick for 2 classes on Franciscan Spirituality...he teaches this in seminary and really knows the topic.

Outreach plans have been on my heart this summer. We have many things ready already and some developing. One of our largest efforts is our partnership with Walnut Bend Elementary. Thank you!!! for making the recent uniform drive for them a big success. We raised \$2,500.00 which is more than last year. The uniforms are ordered and on their way to them. In the last couple of weeks I met with the principal and assistant principal of Walnut Bend as well as our new representative for Making It Better (they are the foundation who organizes the activities). The principal mentioned how appreciative she was for the things we made for the teachers and students during the STARRS tests. In the narthex of the church I have a sheet with details of the opportunities we have for weekly volunteering this year as well as a sign up sheet for interest. The opportunities will also be on the church web site under our fancy button for Outreach. After those discussions, we are working on some additional activities which will be one time events. On the list are events for this Christmas and Easter of next year. As we finalize the plans, they will be announced. Working with youth is a real love for me and these children are so open and ready to adopt you. We have the opportunity to make a real difference in their lives with a little time.



We are continuing to support WHAM (West Houston Area Ministries) by sending a team of volunteers to repackage bulk items on the third Saturday of the month. This effort frees up other staff to work with customers in the Pantry. We work in a nice workroom with time to chat with the rest of the team. The hours are 9-12. Sign up sheets for each month are in the Volunteer Sign Up notebook in the Narthex. Grab some friends and sign up to work together.

In July, we sponsored and held an Ice Cream Social for the residents at the Tremont Retirement Center. Fred Meyers did a wonderful job planning and big thanks go out to the team who went with him to help scoop, greet and chat. We are working on a holiday event with their staff...details will be forthcoming.

We are debuting soon an exciting new ministry-not only for Ascension, but also the Diocese of Texas. This summer, John Searle and I attended informational meetings about Open Table. After prayer and study-we approached the Vestry and now have their support. This ministry involves a small group of people (6-8) who will as a group to mentor someone for a year-in our case someone coming out of the foster care system. These youth have no support system and usually need help figuring out how to do the things an adult needs to do to make it in our society. The mentors will help with practical as well as emotional support. If you have any interest in being a part of this team-as a mentor or administrative help-please contact me or John Searle. This program has been very successful in other locations, including other dioceses in Texas. We have the opportunity to make a significant difference in one life-giving hope, support and healthy direction.

This week on an early Thursday morning, 8/18, we are taking a team to work at the Beacon downtown. The Beacon is the ministry the Cathedral sponsors for the homeless. They are one of the few day shelters that offers shower facilities and laundry done by volunteers in the city. Meals are served all day, Bible studies and chats with Father Jim Morgan-the chaplain there plus many other areas of support. I am excited we will be supporting them formally as a church. Hopefully we can consider going down a couple of times a year.

There are several other efforts in development-the next issue of the Tidings will begin to share them.

Thank you for your patience with my surgeries and complication this summer. I am getting more and more back to my old Tigger self every day. Gym trips are bringing back the lost muscles and I am back on the trail searching for ways to grow personally as well as suggestions for Ascension. If you have any ideas-please contact me and we will go over them. For those of you who do not know...my "office" at Ascension is a small closet, so I do not keep office hours there. But there are wonderful places in the area where we can meet for coffee-so please email me and we can set up a meeting.

Blessings and hugs-

Deacon Mary

### **Pledges and Statements**

Thank you to everyone who has pledged to the ministries of Ascension Episcopal Church. Third Quarter Statements will go out near the beginning of October. A note of caution, cash in the plate is more secure than cash sent through the mail. I am especially grateful to those who helped me to make corrections in our records. We need your input if we are to stay up-to-date. Ascension is a community and in order to reach out and support each other it is important to have current contact information. Please take a moment to give us changes in address, e-mail, and/or telephone number (s) by contacting Leslie through a phone call the office or emailing her at [membership@ascensionepiscopalchurch.org](mailto:membership@ascensionepiscopalchurch.org). You may also put the information on a Newcomer's Card and drop it in the plate any Sunday.

### **Baptisms**

All Saints Sunday, the first Sunday of November is our next day of baptism. If you or someone you know is interested in learning about baptism and what it means liturgically, go online to <http://www.ascensionepiscopalchurch.org/baptisms.html> for an explanation. If you have questions that are not answered by the online information, Pastor Todd is eager to answer any questions for your baptism or that of your child. If you are ready to be baptized, there is an online application that maybe downloaded and printed. Just go to the church website at the above address and click on the pdf at the bottom of the article, print out and complete the Application for Baptism. You may send it snail mail, scan and email it to [membership@ascensionepiscopalchurch.org](mailto:membership@ascensionepiscopalchurch.org), or simply drop it in the plate on Sunday morning. We wish to welcome you to a life of grace through Christ our Lord.



## **Why do we baptize on All Saints' Day?**

From: The Hilltop Shepherd's Watch

(<https://hilltopshepherd.wordpress.com/2011/11/01/why-do-we-baptize-on-all-saints-day/>)

Why do we baptize on All Saints' Day? Because, on All Saints' Day, we acknowledge all of the members of the covenant community, known and unknown to us, into which we are being welcomed. The newly baptized is not just entering a covenant community with the members of his or her local parish. Likewise they are not just entering a covenant community with the members of his or her own denomination. They are not entering into a covenant community with all Christians worshipping God today. Rather, the newly baptized Christian enters a covenant community with all faithful believers who have ever lived and worshiped Jesus Christ. The community is not just the faithful we see, but also those who stand before the throne and worship Our Lord face to face. We are one community, "one body" as St. Paul tells us, not only with those alive today, but with the saints, confessors and martyrs, whose names are known to the Lord alone.

We baptize on All Saints' Day because when the newly baptized rises from the water he or she finds himself not only in a permanent relationship with Jesus Christ, but also in a covenantal relationship with All Saints who have ever lived and worshiped Jesus Christ. As we join their glorious company, it makes perfect sense to baptize on the day we honor their faithful commitment to Our Lord.

# ASCENSION SCHOOL

Dear Parishioners,

We are about to start the 2016-17 school year and have much to be thankful for. Our enrollment is steady even in this time of economic downturn in Houston. We will have the largest 5<sup>th</sup> grade class we have had since I have been here (7 years) with 15 graduates.

We have created a new playground behind the parish hall for our 2 year old students. This gives them enough space to run, play, and dig in the sand.

We have also adopted a new math curriculum for grades 3-5. EnVision Math will be our core math program for these grades. We feel this will keep our students performance at the level needed to succeed in middle school.

We look forward to the school year with Back to School Bash on the big field in September, a new year for Student Council, AESOP (our parent organization), and new classes for all from 3 months to 5<sup>th</sup> grade.

In October, we have our Fall Book fair, Grandparents Chapel, while November brings a salute to Veterans in our Veteran's Day Assembly.

We go into Thanksgiving with Community Service Day when the entire campus works to help those in need with folded newspapers for CAPS, gently worn winter clothing for Mission of Yahweh, toiletries and bottled water for Lord of the Streets, and gift boxes for the Seafarers.

Our Blessings to you all,

Nancy Clausey  
Head of School



## AES HAPPENINGS

### Calendar of Events:

Aug 15.....School Open House	Oct 17-21 .Book Fair
Aug 16 .....Ascension School Starts	Oct 18 .....School Chapel with Grandparents and Special Friends
Aug 25 .....Parent Convocation 6:15pm	Oct 20 .....School hosted Spaghetti Supper
Sept 14.....Student Council Assembly 8:30 am	Oct 26 .....2nd grade Assembly
Sept 16.....Back to School Bash	Oct 31 .....School Closed for Parent/Teacher Conference
Sept 27-30 5th Grade goes to the Outdoor School	Nov 9.....Veteran's Day Program in the Church, 9am.
Oct 10 .....No School for AES	Nov 18 .....AES Community Service Day (Half day)



## DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Here we are, at the beginning of another school year. While I'm usually excited about the start of the new year and all the anticipation and promise that it brings, this one finds me with lots of mixed emotions as I will be leaving Ascension right as things get under way. I'm excited because I'll be joining my husband and kids who have already relocated to Louisiana, allowing us to actually live under the same roof for the first time in four years. But in order to wrap things up so that I can get there, I have to say good-bye to a church family that I have truly come to love. I have so enjoyed getting reacquainted with those of you who were here when Doug served his curacy several years ago, and meeting all of the newcomers who have come since that time. I have loved working with your children, and thank you for the opportunity to do so. Ascension has the absolute best group of kids anywhere, and they are so fortunate to have parents who make God a priority in their homes. I am grateful for the dedicated group of volunteers who come each week armed with stories, games and crafts that bring Jesus to life for their students and help them to better understand just who He is and how great His love is for them. I am thankful that I had such an amazing church staff to work with. Father Todd, thank you for all of the support and guidance you have given me over the past 3 ½ years. You have such a heart for our kids and were always 100% behind any project or idea I had that enabled our children to learn and to serve. Samantha, thank you for your friendship! I always appreciated being able to run things by you, because you have such a brilliant and creative mind that could always "tweak" things and make them better. Thank you also for your immense patience for my always late Tidings articles (yes, including this one!) Thank you Leslie and Ann for being great office neighbors and friends, and of course, for all of the chocolate! Suzanne, I am grateful for the ideas you shared that I was able to incorporate into activities for our kids, including the locking away of the "alleluias" into the chest at the start of Lent. I'll be taking that idea along to my new church! And to all of the rest of you, thank you for embracing me as one of your own, even though we knew my time here was somewhat limited. No matter how many churches are in my future, Ascension will always be one that I call "home". I still have family here in Houston, and I plan to occasionally come to Sunday services so that I can see everyone. So....this is not a good-bye, it's really a thank you for everything, and I'll see you soon!



### Sunday School

Are you looking for a meaningful ministry that is also fun?? Join our Sunday school team! We have openings in both age groups (3 – 5 years, Kindergarten thru 2nd grade, and 3<sup>rd</sup> thru 5<sup>th</sup> grade) for teachers and assistants. Teachers generally work on a rotating basis, teaching one time each month. All curriculum and materials are provided. The time commitment is about an hour prep time during the week you are to teach, and 45 minutes on Sunday. Assistants are needed in all classes as well, to help the teacher manage materials and activities. No prep time is needed for assistants. Both positions allow you to get to know the fabulous children of Ascension, and make a lasting impact on their formation as Christians. If you would like more information, contact Robi Lasiter at [robilasiter@gmail.com](mailto:robilasiter@gmail.com)

## NOTES FROM THE CHOIR LOFT



I'm a hymn nerd. I love discovering hymns that are new to me and discovering new levels of depth in familiar ones. Corporate hymn singing is priceless. We share a connection when we sing together and when we listen to others singing. We engage in a sort of gift exchange. We respond to those who give us music when we listen. Not only do we give our joyful noise to God when we sing, but we also give ourselves back to ourselves. We feel the unity in singing together. We combine generosity in sharing and a mutual kinship in our music. There is no competition, no strings attached. God's gift of music is a truly gracious gift that always gives.

Our hymnal is a treasure trove. We have hymns that praise, comfort, invite reflection, reinforce Bible texts, and express joy. There are surprising hymns that give us insight that we do not expect. Now, after 35 years, our hymnal is still fresh. In most main-stream Protestant denominations, hymnals are expected to have a life of 20 years. There are always old familiar hymns in every hymnal, and some which were new at the time of publishing.

There is an ongoing search for new hymn texts which are attuned to today's needs. We have a flood of new hymns which address certain aspects of life. There are texts about the grief of Alzheimer's and texts for coping with world strife. Hymnists are writing texts to reinforce Bible passages which are not referenced in current hymnals.

Feel free to share with me why your favorite hymns are dear to you.

See and hear you in worship,

Suzanne

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### **Choir Practice returns**

"Come and join the chorus"....or choir that is!! The only thing our choir is missing is you!! Starting August 17, the choir returned to Wednesday evenings rehearsals at 7:00 pm. Come to learn new songs, practice the ones you know, and sing in Sunday's choir. Practice lasts about two hours.



## ACTIVITIES AND OFFERINGS



### Welcome Back Bryants!!

Pastor Todd will be returning to church and will be preaching on August 28th. Join us in the Parish Hall for a welcome home party after the 10:30 service. Bring your favorite desert to share. We will be providing a light lunch as we visit with the Bryants. Be sure to attend, spread the word, and let's have a fantastic turnout. I am sure they are just as happy to be home as we are to have them back!

**Lifeline** is a nondenominational social and support group for widows and widowers. Meetings are the first Thursday of each month in the Parish Hall at 7:30 PM. The current contact, Jackie Clift, would love to answer your questions. Please feel free to email her or you can get more information online at <http://houstonwidows.com>. Meeting Dates: September 1st, October 6th, and November 3rd.



### DID YOU KNOW?

It's Bring a local Hero to Church Day, September 6 (Labor Day Weekend) at the 10:30am service. Please invite and if possible bring a police officer, EMT, firefighter, Constable, or other Hero so we can thank them. Father Todd will bless them during our service, too. If you see one driving around or out in the community, please tell them how much the Ascension Church would like the opportunity to thank them and bless them for their service in protecting us! Thank you for spreading the news.



### Daughters of the King

DOK dues are due, and must be received by National by September 1st. If you received an invoice by email, please pay it online by credit card. Please contact Libby Vester if you are unable to pay on line. She can assist you in mailing them.

The Daughters of the King will not hold their regular meeting in the parish hall on Saturday, September 12th. Instead, they will attend the Diocesan Fall Assembly to be held on September 11-12th at Camp Allen. For more information and registration forms, go to the website at [www.dokdot.org](http://www.dokdot.org).

**Reminder:** There is no Sunday School or Breakfast on Sunday September 4, in observance of Labor Day. AES, the ELP Program, and the church office will all be closed on Monday, September 5.

### **Memorial Walkway Pavers -**

This year we would like to rededicate the Memorial Walkway as a part of our All Saints Day celebrations. If you would like to purchase a paver as a memorial or to honor a birth, baptism, anniversary or favorite person, we are taking orders. Complete the form available in the Narthex and return it to the church office or email [membership@ascensionepiscopalchurch.org](mailto:membership@ascensionepiscopalchurch.org) to have a form sent to you electronically. Dedications are limited to 16 characters per line. The cost is \$100.00 per paver. Who will you honor? What event might you commemorate. If you have questions, please call the church or send Leslie an email. Orders must be received by Thursday, October 6, 2016.



**SEPTEMBER 11TH**

### **Ministry Leaders Luncheon**

Save the Date!! We will have a gathering for ministry leaders following the 10:30 service on September 11th. We would like to thank you for your dedicated service. This is also an opportunity to relate to one another, discuss success of the year and answer any questions regarding the ministry fair. Please RSVP for the luncheon or if you have any questions about ministry fair, please contact Samantha in the office.



### **Come back to breakfast!!**

Hot breakfast returns in the regular Sunday morning rotation on September 11th. Each breakfast team does something a little different from pancakes, to French toast, to grits, but all of them serve eggs and yummy bacon. Please remember to support this ministry with a recommended \$3 donation for adults and \$2 for children. If there is anything you would like to see us serve, please let us know. We are always open to new ideas!

### **Sunday School Kick-Off**

#### **Adult Sunday School:**

Officially there is no Sunday School on Labor Day Sunday, September 4th, but Pastor Todd will be holding a Sabbatical open forum on Aug 28 and Sept 4. Then on September 11th we Kick-Off Adult Sunday School with eight weeks of Old testament rabble-rousers for the months of Sept and Oct and then we move in to "Psalms - the politics of devotion" for November and December. Pastor Todd looks forward to seeing you attend.

#### **Children's Sunday School:**

Children's Sunday School returns to its two class curriculum base during the 10:30 service. If it's been a while, check out the next page for a refresher on the children's Sunday School format. We would like to thank all the teachers who have stepped up to help hold this program in place while we search for a DRE. And of course a big thank you to Robi for setting it all up before she leaves.

Arrive at 9:30

**Under 5**—Children 3 up to 5 can have playtime in the Nursery.

**Ages 5 & up** may choose from the following:

**Drama Club**—These children will meet in the church library and work on dramas that will be presented periodically throughout the year during the 10:30 service

**Service Club**—These children will meet upstairs in the Primary Sunday school room, where they will work on various service projects for the community.

Then at 10:20

**Children in Drama or Service Clubs** will be escorted to their Sunday school rooms unless picked up by parent.

**3 & 4 year olds in the Nursery**—Children whose parents indicate on the nursery sign-in form that they should attend Sunday school will be escorted to their Sunday school room. ***Parents should also indicate whether children should be escorted to church at the end of Sunday school, or returned to the nursery.*** Children whose parents do NOT check the box for them to attend Sunday school will remain in nursery.

If you arrive 10:35

**Children 3yrs. Through 5th grade** in attendance at the 10:30 service who would like to attend Sunday school will be invited to follow the Jr. Acolytes to the parish hall and join their class. (Children who prefer to remain in the church are welcome to do so).

At 11:05

**All children** (except those whose parents have requested that they be returned to the nursery) will be escorted to the church, and join their parents for Communion.

## First Session of Drama/Service Club

On September 25, at 9:30 am, Carrie Durham will start working with those children ages 5 and up, who wish to participate in the Drama Club. They will present on All Saints' Sunday. For those children who are 5 and older who do not want to act, we have service club available. These activities are centered around service for the community and activities can range from braiding dog bones, coloring lunch sacks, to other fun and rewarding service projects. Both of these programs are designed for children 5 and older. Those children who are under five may attend the nursery for play time, during the adult Sunday School hour.

## Get-to-Know-Ascension Classes, Sept 21st & 23rd

This is an exciting time to be a newcomer at Ascension. We are starting the upcoming fall season with a flurry of activity church-wide, including our Get-to-Know-Ascension Classes (GTKAW) on September 21st & 23rd. We will meet around great food and conversation for an informal time that will help you get to know the church better and learn how you can get more connected. These classes also serve as our adult membership class. The Sunday directly after, on the 25th, we will hold a special liturgy of belonging if you should choose to join the church. We will provide dinner on Wednesday and Friday. Childcare will be available the entire time upon request. Please speak with Pastor Todd if you have any specific questions, or sign-up by email with Leslie at [membership@ascensionepiscopalchurch.org](mailto:membership@ascensionepiscopalchurch.org). This will give us a head count, so we have an idea how much food to provide. Be on the lookout for more detailed information in the coming weeks.



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SEPTEMBER 18TH!!



## Ministry Fair

September 18th!! Ministry fair will be amazing. Each ministry will have a booth set up, decorated however they please. Each booth will also be serving a yummy breakfast/brunch item. So in lieu of breakfast on this morning, you will travel from booth to booth to learn about the different ministries, all the while sampling what they have to offer. There will be a competition to determine who had the yummiest treat, the most creative booth, and other such categories. Come to church, sign up for a ministry, and find out where you fit in!!

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## Hat Day!

The ladies of the Ascension wear many “hats” during their life of Christian Ministry. They serve the Lord in a wide variety of ways from Prayer Teams to Altar Guild, to Parish Life. So on Sunday, September 18th, we invite all ladies to wear a hat. Please wear your loveliest hat, a baseball hat, a gardening hat, or any other hat you may choose to celebrate all you do for the life of the church and in the service of Christ.





*Come explore faith with us.*

**ASCENSION  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH**

2525 Seagler Rd  
Houston, TX 77042  
713-781-1330

*Invitation Sunday*

**Sunday, Sept. 18<sup>th</sup>**

Service times  
8:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.

## “Invitation Sunday”

September 18th is Invitation Sunday. Ask your friends, neighbors, or a complete stranger to Ascension this Sunday. Sometimes all it takes is being asked. Postcards like the one seen on the left will be available in the narthex every Sunday through September 11th. Please take a few and pass them out to anyone and everyone.



## Seafarer’s Kick-Off

Ascension Episcopal Church and Ascension Episcopal School are sponsoring our traditional Seafarers’ Ministry Christmas Box Program starting September 18th and running through October 9th. The church participates in this program every year and with the help of our school we will continue to build this wonderful outreach effort. Look for the “drop off” boxes in the Narthex and Parish Hall. Your gifts will be collected, sorted, and packed by students from Ascension Episcopal School on Community Service day which is November 18 and delivered to the Episcopal Ministry at the Port of Houston for distribution on the boats. Please see their letter on the next page.

# Ministry to the Port of Houston – [www.houstonseafarers.com](http://www.houstonseafarers.com)

## HOUSTON INTERNATIONAL SEAFARERS' CENTERS



### HOWARD T. TELLEPSEN SEAFARERS' CENTER

9250 High Level Road (Upper Wharf 23); Houston, TX 77029  
P.O. Box 9506; Houston, Texas 77261-9506 (Exit 29 off East Loop I-610)  
PHONE: (713) 672-0511 FAX: (713) 672-2444

### LOU LAWLER SEAFARERS' CENTER

1700 E. Barbours Cut Blvd.  
P.O. Box 1434 ; La Porte, Texas 77571

## Christmas Gift Box Program 2016

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

A toothbrush and toothpaste, shampoo and a bar of soap, a Texas souvenir and Jesus; what do these things have in common? ... They are all gifts.

For God so "loves" the world the he gave his only Son ... A Christmas box well filled, given to a seafarer to remind him or her that they are not forgotten or ignored shares a similar love. Simple things mean a lot to men and women at sea. Maybe the best gift is to be remembered and honored by receiving a gift from someone you will never meet. Maybe the best gift is to honor someone with a gift without knowing who will get it. God's Love is freely given to us, so let us love one another and honor the sojourner/seafarer while he or she visits our shores.

Crew sizes vary between 8 and 30, with an average number of 22 seafarers to gift per ship. In 2015, we placed 12,278 gifts on board 538 ships which had seafarers from 65 different countries! These gifts had been donated to the seafarers by 246 churches and organizations! The Christmas boxes are personally carried to each ship by your staff of Port Chaplains—"your staff of chaplains" because we are funded by denominational mission funds in this ecumenical ministry. We begin shortly after Thanksgiving and continue gifting seafarers until all the gifts have been distributed! We are gratefully prepared to receive your gift boxes anytime—you can't be too early or too late to bring your gifts to one of our two Seafarers' Centers!

Please try to pack a shoebox **FULL** with items such as these:

ADDRESS BOOK  
BAND-AIDS (FABRIC)  
BASEBALL CAPS  
2015 CALENDAR  
COMB  
DENTAL FLOSS  
DEODORANT

DISPOSABLE RAZORS  
FLASHLIGHT W/ BATTERIES  
KLEENEX  
LIP BALM  
LOTION  
NAIL CLIPPERS  
GOLD BOND CREAM

GOLD BOND POWDER  
HOT CHOCOLATE  
NEEDLE & THREAD  
Q-TIPS  
SHAVING CREAM  
SOAP & SHAMPOO  
TOOTHBRUSH

TOOTHPASTE  
GUM & HARD CANDY  
KEY CHAINS  
POCKET-SIZE NOTEBOOKS  
MECHANICAL PENCILS  
PENS  
PLAYING CARDS

POPCORN  
SOCKS  
SUDOKU  
TEXAS SOUVENIRS  
T-SHIRTS  
USB FLASH DRIVES  
WORD SEARCHES

The seafarers appreciate these items tremendously. Please be sure your gift box is packed full of items! **As there are very few women and children onboard the ships these days, we would request that the gift boxes primarily be packed for male seafarers.** Please avoid including items that will melt or break, and pack batteries separately from the items they are powering.

These gifts of love should be packed shoebox size, **WRAPPED SECURELY** as one unit in Christmas paper. **PLEASE DO NOT WRAP LID AND BOX SEPARATELY.** Please do not place bows on the boxes. Plastic shoeboxes become an extra gift for the seafarer! You may want to include your email address, name and address, or the name and address of your church or group, inside each box. You may receive a thank you note from a grateful seafarer!

You are encouraged to visit the Seafarers' Center and bring your boxes to either center (see maps on back). Year around we appreciate donations of the timeless National Geographic & Reader's Digest magazines; current news, entertainment, auto, sports, and technology magazines; jigsaw puzzles and other games; and DVD's. Questions? Call 713.672.0511 or email [houstonchaplains@yahoo.com](mailto:houstonchaplains@yahoo.com)

### Howard T. Tellepsen Seafarers' Center

Monday – Saturday: 10:00 a.m.–10:00 p.m.

Sunday: 1:00 p.m.–10:00 p.m.

### Lou Lawler Seafarers' Center

Monday – Friday: 10:00 a.m.–7:30 p.m.

Saturday & Sunday: 2:00 p.m.–7:30 p.m.



## **We also need Shoe boxes!!**

In addition to the items collected in the Seafarer's Christmas Box Program, please give shoeboxes. It is these boxes that the children use to package the items. They may be dropped off in the narthex with your donated goods.

**DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO MAY BE A GOOD:**

**NEWCOMER MINISTER**

### ***Scope of ministry***

We are looking for a follower of Jesus Christ with a passion for making visitors feel comfortable and welcomed at Ascension. The Newcomer Minister will be the first point of contact for all visitors and will help interested visitors join our church and become incorporated into the congregation. This position reports to the Rector.

### ***Responsibilities***

- Welcome all newcomers as they enter the church.
- Make follow up contact with every newcomer by the Tuesday after their first visit.
- Maintain a secure spreadsheet of all newcomers with contact information and any ministry notes about them.
- Create individually tailored plans to incorporate newcomers based on their gifts and talents.
- Weekly maintenance of newcomer bags and pew cards.
- Two or three times a year, manage logistics of Get-to-know-Ascension classes.
- Recruit and direct volunteers as needed to assist in the incorporation of newcomers.
- Maintain part of Ascension's website.

### ***Essential skills***

- Excellent verbal and written communication skills.
- Enjoys getting to know new people.
- Relationship and network builder.
- Outgoing personality.
- Connects easily with a variety of people.
- Comfortable with using a variety of media – Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.
- Familiar with cloud resources like Google Drive and Dropbox as well as Microsoft Office.
- Knowledge of graphic design to help create roadside banners for special events and seasonal offerings.
- Physical requirements include climbing stairs, walking, and moving and setting up chairs and tables.

# OR PERHAPS A:

## DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

We are looking for a follower of Jesus Christ with a passion for the Christian formation of children. The right candidate will support a comprehensive children's faith program with a primary focus on Sunday School. This position reports directly to the Rector.

### Ministry

- Coach, develop, and recruit volunteer Sunday School teachers and other volunteers as needed.
- Oversee and schedule Sunday School. (preK to 5th grade – 10:20am to 11:30am)
- Provide pastoral support for volunteers.
- Support Children's Drama leader as needed.

### Administration

- Maintain classroom resources.
- Write monthly newsletter articles.
- Choose a curriculum and adapt it as needed.
- Recruit and lead the Christian Education Committee.
- Use Facebook, church website, and Constant Contact to communicate with parents and parishioners.
- Train volunteers in Safeguarding God's Children and maintain training records.
- Attend weekly staff meeting.
- Submit budgetary needs annually for review by Finance Committee.
- Recruit, screen, train, supervise, and schedule caregivers for all worship services and any other times that child care is required. (You need not be present at every event.)

### Special Events

The DRE will coordinate with the Parish Life Committee for special events throughout the year such as:

- Lenten programs
- Christmas Pageant
- Easter Egg hunt
- A "Happy Birthday Church" celebration on Pentecost Sunday
- Vacation Bible School in tandem with the current Kidventure program in the summer

### Skills, Knowledge and Abilities

- Bachelor's degree is preferred.
- Requires working on Sunday mornings; remainder of schedule is flexible.
- Must be proficient with social media.
- Excellent written and verbal communications skills.
- Able to pass a background investigation and drug screening.
- Relates well and has prior experience working with young children and youth.
- Physical requirements include lifting and carrying objects weighing up to 25 pounds, climbing stairs, and walking activities.



# *West Houston Assistance Ministries*

*Invites you to our Annual Benefit  
Thursday, September 29, 2016*

*Lakeside Country Club  
100 Wilcrest Drive  
Houston, Texas 77042*

*Social Hour: 6 pm • Dinner: 7 pm*

*Chamber Music by Virtuosi of Houston*



*Keynote Speaker  
Jim "Mattress Mack" McIngvale*



*Master of Ceremonies  
Peter Remington, Publisher  
Houston Magazine, & Author*

## *Sponsorships*

- \$1,000*
- \$5,000*
- \$10,000*
- \$20,000*

*\$125/Person ~ \$1,000/Table of 8*

*For Reservations call: 281.684.2752*

*-or-*

*Visit our Website @ [www.whamministries.org](http://www.whamministries.org)*

## **WHAM has a special request**

Ascension is very generous with their food donations, however with children back to school, their pantry is being depleted of specific items. They will, of course, accept all non-expired food donations, but are asking parishioners to pull out all the stops and donate the following five most needed items (in no particular order):

1. Canned Soup
2. Canned Vegetables
3. Rice & Beans (Bags or boxes)
4. Tuna Fish
5. Jelly/jam any flavor in plastic jars if possible (for the homeless clients)  
They will not refuse glass jars.

**Let's Fill the Narthex!!**



## LOOKING AHEAD:

Please see the tentative dates below. As always watch future publications and weekly bulletins for possible changes in dates, times, and locations.

- Aug 21 - Father Flick Send off in Parish Hall after 10:30 service
- Aug 25 - Parent Convocation 6:15pm
- Aug 28 - Todd preaches
  - Welcome Back Party
- Sept 1 - Lifeline Meets 7:30pm in the Parish Hall
  - Daughters of the King Dues are due at Nationals
- Sept 4 - Labor Day Sunday, No Sunday School, No Breakfast
  - Local Hero Sunday
- Sept 5 - Labor Day, No School, Church Office Closed
- Sept 10 - Daughters of the King Will NOT Meet this month, Fall Assembly
- Sept 11 - Hot Breakfast Returns
  - Ministry Leader Luncheon (Please RSVP) 11:45am
  - Sunday School Kick-Off @10:20
- Sept 16 - AES Hosts Back to School Bash
- Sept 18 - MINISTRY FAIR!! Parish Hall 9:30 - 10:15 (Since Ministry Fair has treats at each table, breakfast team is responsible for drinks.)
  - Invitation Sunday, Invite a friend to Church
  - Hat Day
  - Seafarer's Kick-Off
- Sept 21& 23 - Get To Know Ascension Classes
- Sept 24 - Parish Hall in Use, See Secretary
- Sept 25 - Begin Drama/Service Club
- Sept 29 - WHAM's annual benefit dinner, "Mattress Mack" guest speaker
  - Contact John Edel for information
- Oct 1 - Social Night - Spaghetti Cook off/Church Family Reunion
- Oct 2 - Blessing of the Animals, at Ace Hardware.
- Oct 6 - Lifeline Meets 7:30pm in the Parish Hall
- Oct 8 - Daughters of the King Meet 9:30-11am
- Oct 9 - Deadline for pavers
  - Seafarer's Ingathering & Blessing
  - Guest Organist: Sharon Leyerle
- Oct 10 - No School for AES, Church Office Closed
- Oct 16 - Stewardship Kick off - Pick up Packets in Narthex
  - Book Fair Sunday - runs to Friday, October 21.
- Oct 17-21 - Book Fair
- Oct 18 - School Chapel with Grandparents and Special Friends
- Oct 20 - School hosted Spaghetti Supper

**Remember Ascension Episcopal Church and School in your will.**



Contact: Leslie Nirider at  
[membership@ascensionepiscopalchurch.org](mailto:membership@ascensionepiscopalchurch.org)

**Lifeline** is a nondenominational social and support group for widows and widowers. Meetings are the first Thursday of each month in the Parish Hall at 7:30 PM.

For more information please contact  
Jackie Clift

281.497.2663 or email [jackieclift5@hotmail.com](mailto:jackieclift5@hotmail.com)

**Disaster Response**

The Disaster Response Committee wishes to remind all parishioners of the forms now available on the church website:

<http://www.ascensionepiscopalchurch.org/disaster-ministry.html>

On that page are two downloadable forms:

1. An Equipment/Service sign-up sheet – these volunteers only to be called upon during a disaster response situation.
2. A Member Assistance form for those who may have special needs – due to physical handicaps, living alone, or lack of proximity to friends and/or family. If you do not have computer access, please contact the church office and these forms will be provided.

**Ascension Disaster Response Committee**

Lee Nirider	713-464-8544
Jim Jackson	713-785-6909
Faye Armstrong	281-558-6817
Suzanne McMath	832-687-0864

**WHAM Food Drive...**

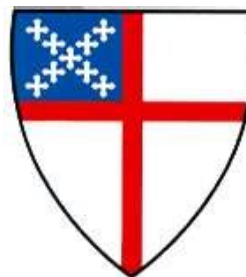
We have a drive **once** a month on the First Sunday and on the 3rd Saturday of the month we go over to WHAM to work to prep food for distribution in the Food Pantry. So bring your non-perishable goods on the First Sunday and please Sign up in the Volunteer Sign Up Log in the Narthex to help on-site. If you have questions or would like more information please contact Deacon Mary at [deacon@ascensionepiscopalchurch.org](mailto:deacon@ascensionepiscopalchurch.org)

**Staff**

The Rev. Todd Bryant, Rector; The Rev. Mary Reddick, Deacon; Robi Lasiter, Director of Religious Education, Suzanne Anderson, Organist Choirmaster; Leslie Nirider, Membership; Samantha King, Secretary; Ann Seitz, Bookkeeper

**The Vestry**

Mike Black (Sr. Warden), Miranda Griesbaum (Jr. Warden), Jim Anderson, Cindy Breton, Cheryl Coppock, Clement Falayi, Carol Goulet, Doug Meyers, Matt Murphy, Lee Nirider, Dick Stabell, Tom Sutton, and The Rector.



**The School Board**

The Rev. Todd Bryant, Todd Breton (President), Jim Anderson (Vice President), Thom Fenner (Treasurer), Amanda Candler (Secretary), Shay James, Diego Parra, Patrick Gallagher, Tom Konitzer, Tim Gilheart, Marike Owen, Kevin McNulty, and Ex-officio members: Vestry Reps, Mike Black and Miranda Griesbaum, and The Head of School -Nancy Clausey

**The Mission of Ascension Episcopal Church**

Our Mission as faithful followers of **Jesus Christ** is to love the **Lord** and one another unconditionally. We proclaim **God's** truth found in Holy Scripture and make disciples through Evangelism and Christian