

ASCENSION TIDINGS

NOVEMBER 2014

“His daughter is so curious, so resilient. There is the humility of being a father to someone so powerful, as if he were only a narrow conduit for another, greater thing. That’s how it feels right now, he thinks, kneeling beside her, rinsing her hair: as though his love for his daughter will outstrip the limits of his body. The walls could fall away, even the whole city, and the brightness of that feeling would not wane.”

All the light we cannot see by Anthony Doerr



I feel this way about my family often. The potential and power I see in my kids sometimes makes me saccharine weepy and at other times takes my breath away. But, more often than I would like, I just yell at them to stop yelling at each other! It is not too much of a stretch to say I feel this way about Ascension. There is so much potential and power within the Ascension community — potential and power individually, potential and power as a people. During our stewardship season I ponder what our power and potential is becoming.

What is God asking you to become? Potential and power remain just that until we “engage and become” I would like you to ask yourself: How does God want to shape me? How does giving my time and money generously allow me to be more “shapeable”? What difference does stewardship make? During this season we will talk about money for sure, but stewardship is a total package of engaging God, the world, the church, and our families. On Sunday mornings, speakers will share about how money translates to mission; how there is joy in giving; how giving plants seeds for the future; and why giving matters in the first place. You see, I believe that stewardship is about mission, discipleship, and financial commitment and when you put three together, then power and potential look quite becoming on us.

I hope you were able to pick up your stewardship packet. If not, you will receive it in the mail the week after Sunday October 26. Please give generously to Ascension and support our ministries. Look at our calendar for upcoming activities, It is not all stewardship at the end of October and early November.

See next page for the Advent Challenge:

LETTER FROM THE RECTOR...(CONT.)

Advent Challenge:

When we move in the advent (First Sunday of Advent is November 30th), I would like to challenge you. Each week we eat, probably at minimum, 21 meals. Will you share one meal a week with someone who is not connected to Ascension and not a close friend? You're going to have parties and gatherings anyway, so why not increase your circle of friends in late November and December?

So starting the week of November 23, will you share a meal with somebody not in your inner circle? Then I want to hear your stories starting November 30, during the Sunday school hour at 9:30am. I will teach for about 10 minutes, then I want to share the encounters that we've had the week before.

If you want to "prepare the way of the Lord make his paths straight," do it with dinner plate, or lunch plate or breakfast plate. And it would be nice if they came on Sunday morning but that is not the goal. The paradox of being Christian is that we are citizens of heaven, but the world is not a project for us to fix. Earth and heaven intertwined is our identity. Revelation tells us that God is marrying a new heaven to a new earth. Let's work on the marriage now.



Pastor Todd Bryant

Fall Calendar

- Oct 26 - Stewardship Team Member: Why I give Seedlings and bowling
- Oct 29 Crunch or Treat (Church Parking Lot)
- Nov 2 - All Saint's Sunday with Baptisms
 - Stewardship Team Member: Giving for the future
 - International day with African music
- Nov 8 DOK meets
Fall themed Parents' Night Out
- Nov 9 Youth Sunday
- Nov 15 Mission event at the Houston Food Bank
- Nov 16 - Stewardship ingathering
- Nov 23 - Begin vestry nominations
Children's Choir Sings at 10:30am service
 - Forgotten Seniors Kick-Off
- Dec 7 - Forgotten Seniors ingathering
- Dec 21 - Caroling (you may volunteer to host)
- Dec 24 - Christmas Eve, Wed 24th, 5pm, wassail and snacks afterward.
 - 9pm carols and 9:30pm brass service
- Dec 25 - Christmas Day, service at 10:30am, come in your pajamas
- Jan 18 - 2015 Annual Meeting

NEWCOMER CORNER

The bustling holiday season is almost upon us! As a church we are thinking of ways to connect missionally with the work God is doing with those around us, like Todd's encouragement toward a simple act of hospitality by sharing a meal near the end of November with someone you might not usually eat with.



We hope to connect in the communities around us, but also with one another here at the church. One way we can find those connections is by getting your photo taken! Opportunities to get your picture taken for the online pictorial directory are quickly waning. Official photography will end November 9th. That's just a few short weeks away! Approximately 65-70% of regular Ascension attendees have taken their photos, but there are still a lot of you out there who we'd love to get in front of the camera! The photos are coming out great, and the upload process is moving along steadily. You can see a few examples of the pictures here.

By allowing your photo to be included, you help others who may not know you well put a face to a name. This is especially helpful for newcomers as they look to connect with members of the Ascension family!

If you cannot have your picture taken before November 9th, let Newcomer Minister Paul Belk know and we can make arrangements for another time. If you already have a photo you would like us to use, simply email it to Paul at newcomers@ascensionepisopalchurch.org. Also, if you would like a copy of your photo, email Paul as well, and he will send it to you. Help us get your face out there, Ascension!



Just a reminder: Date Change for the Mission Event

There has been a change in dates regarding our mission work at the Houston Food Bank. Please join us on **Saturday, November 15th**, at noon here at the church to carpool or meet us at the Portwall location for our 1pm – 4pm shift. This event is open to all adults and children who are 6 and older. If your child is younger than 10, we ask that you attend with them. You are asked to sign-up through Robi or the office and you will be emailed a link to the Food Bank to electronically sign a waiver. You will get a complimentary Ascension Mission Outreach T-shirt for attending and it can be worn on all future Ascension Mission Events. Please include your T-Shirt size, when you sign-up. T-shirt sizes are first come first serve, so clear your calendar and sign-up to come!!



Welcome our New Choir Director

Dr. Nancy Taylor Ginsburg, Choir Director / Music Ministries, has recently joined the Ascension Episcopal Church staff team. Professionally, Nancy specializes in worship, music ministry with individuals of all ages and instruments of all kinds, planning and analysis...and welcoming all who have worshipful artistic gifts to offer.

Nancy and Roy, her husband of nearly 37 years, have lived in Houston for more than three decades. In their spare time, they oversee a wildlife management area in Somerville, TX – and enjoy the company of two yorkies.

Children's Choir

Practice for the Children's Choir starts October 26. They will sing in thanksgiving at the 10:30am service on Nov 23rd. This 30 min practice runs from, 11:45-12:15, in the school music room. Children grades K-7th are welcome. We need two parents to please attend the practices and help corral the children from church to the music room to get started on time. The remainder of the waiting parents are welcome to sit in the Parish Hall and enjoy a cup of coffee. This choir will only work with parental commitment, so please bring your children to each practice.

Stewardship Ingathering Celebration

In thankfulness for the generosity of all our Ascension members and their gifts during our stewardship drive, we invite you to join us November 16th for an international potluck celebration. We are providing the main course and are asking everyone to prepare a potluck side dish that represents their culture or heritage. Michael and Sayle are making a chicken and sausage gumbo and can't wait to see y'all there!

Last Day to pick up your Stewardship Packet, October 26th

The stewardship team will be distributing your packets in the narthex at both services. Please be sure to pick up your packet.

Those packets not picked up will be mailed the on Oct 27th. Please look forward to guest speakers for the next few Sundays as they express to us what giving means to them.

First Fruits Worship on November 2nd

The International Feast of First Fruits celebration is on November 2nd. There will be two offerings - the general and an offering immediately following in which parishioners will dance down the center aisle and leave a gift of "first fruits" at the altar. The Feast of First Fruits is an annual African tradition symbolizing a time of blessing, sharing and renewal. This second offering will be split 50/50 between the church's general fund and Samaritan's Purse - a Christian relief program; this offering will specifically go to help those people affected by Ebola in West Africa. Music will be African style and those who wish to practice the songs that we will be singing are encouraged to show up at choir practice on 10/29 beginning at 7:15pm and a final practice the morning of Nov 2nd beginning at 9:30am.

DOK

The Daughters of the King will hold their next meeting on Saturday, November 8th, from 10:00 a.m. till noon in the church library. Our study of the Women of the Old Testament will continue with The Shunammite Woman. We will conclude with a time of prayer. All ladies of the parish are invited to join us!

ACTIVITIES

Seedlings are going Bowling

The Seedlings group (2nd through 5th grade) is going bowling on Sunday, October 26 from 1:00 to 2:30 at Bolmor Lanes on Bunker Hill. Cost per child is \$12.50, which covers 1 ½ hours of bowling, shoe rental, pizza and drinks. Parents and siblings are welcome to join us! Please RSVP by Wednesday, October 15th with the number of people attending from your family. Email me at robilasiter@gmail.com



CRUNCH or TREAT!!

Would you like to take your kids trick-or-treating, but don't enjoy the effects of food dyes and preservatives in their candy? Come to the CRUNCH-OR-TREAT! This is a trunk-or-treat but with NO food dyes or preservatives allowed! So bring your little hippies, your all-natural candy, fruit, snacks (granola?) or small prizes, decorate your car trunk, wear your costumes and be ready for an evening of trick-or-treating, hippie style. Wednesday, October 29 from 6 to 8 PM in the church parking lot. See you there!

Senior Bus Trip

Join our Senior Bus Trip on Friday, December 12 departing from Ascension at 1:00PM to view the historic Christmas decorations at Bayou Bend. Then an early dinner at Pier 36 Seafood Restaurant and Oyster Bar in Richmond will be followed by an evening drive-through bus tour of Christmas lights in Fort Bend County with a docent on our bus leading the tour. Trip details will be sent out early November or contact Barbara Wiese at barb@blkbox.com or 281-496-4740 for more information.

PNO ANNOUNCEMENTS

Our monthly Parents' Night Out for November will be on November 8th. Registration opens on October 28th and runs through November 6th on the church website. Please remember this is a first come first serve basis. Invite your friends and neighbors. PNO is not an Ascension exclusive.

PNO is a vital ministry to the parents of the church, school and surrounding community. We have been fortunate to have a loyal group of volunteers who help out regularly, but as families move or their children graduate from AES, our numbers have decreased. We need you to join us. The wonderful activities director takes care of all of the planning and activities – all we need is you to come spend an evening with some fantastic children. You'll find yourself having as much fun as the kids! Please consider becoming a PNO volunteer so we may continue to offer this event. If interested or for more information, contact Robi Lasiter at robilasiter@gmail.com





Dear Parishioners,

We will celebrate Thanksgiving at Ascension by giving to others. On Thursday, November 13th our Student Council will sell carnations to families. These carnations will be part of “a random act of kindness”. Our families will present these carnations to a friend, neighbor or co-worker to extend “kindness” from our campus into the community.

We will have a clothing drive for Mission of Yahweh, collecting gently used winter clothes that our students have outgrown. We will also collect adult clothing for the Mission. This drive begins on Nov. 1 and ends Nov.25th.

Our community service day is Tuesday, November 25th. We collect water and granola bars for Lord of the Streets. Toiletry items are bagged for Lord of the Streets. We wrap the shoeboxes to be given to the Seafarers. We fold newspaper for cage liners at CAPS. We ask for donations of bottled water, granola bars, small toiletry items, wrapping paper, and scotch tape. These items are due by Monday, November 24th.

Faithfully,

Nancy Clausey



Your 2014 Stewardship Team

John Searle

Thomas Fenner

Jeff Parker

Tom Sutton

Stewardship Speakers

Oct 19— Joy of Giving

Cristina Mattern

Oct 26—Why I give

John Searl

Nov 2—Giving for the Future

Clement Falayi

Nov 9 — Money is Mission

Jeff Parker

Nov 16—Ingathering

Sayle Fox



Quarterly Giving Statements

Thank you for every penny of donation to Ascension Episcopal Church and its ministries. Your contributions have enabled us to make a difference in our community. Let us continue to reflect the salvation the Lord has given us by sharing all things he has given us; our gifts of the spirit, our wealth, and our time. Your contribution statement will arrive in the mail during the first half of October. Review your pledge activity through September 2014. Consider it as you learn about the ministries of our church. If you have questions call Leslie at 713-181-1330 or email at membership@ascensionepiscopalchurch.org

Vestry Nominations

Do you know a person who has demonstrated a passion for Ascension and shown themselves to be a leader? We would like the congregation to submit the names of people they think would be good vestry members, no later than December 7th by dropping the nominees' information into the offering plate with the title "vestry nomination". Each nomination should include the nominee's name, contact information and what you think qualifies them for this leadership position. If you do not have their contact info, don't worry we can find it. The Nominating Committee asks that you **DO NOT** speak to the person you are nominating before submitting his or her name. The vestry will confirm each person's willingness to serve before their name goes on the ballot.

Thank you for your help in this process which is vital to the ongoing life of Ascension.

Remember Ascension Episcopal Church and School in your will.



Contact: Leslie Nirider at
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

Hurricane Season Is Here

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

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...

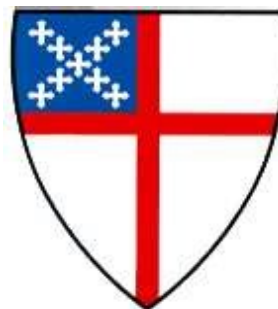
We receive nonperishable food items for distribution to those in need in our community every Sunday. These donated items are moved to the West Houston Assistance Ministry facility for distribution by volunteers. Look for the wooden box in the Narthex! Contact: office@ascensionepiscopalchurch.org

Staff

The Rev. Todd Bryant, Rector; Nancy Ginsburg, Choir Director; Leslie Nirider, Membership; Samantha King, Secretary; Reginald Johnson, Sexton; Ann Sietz, Bookkeeper; Paul Belk, Newcomer Minister; Robi Lasiter, Dir. of Religious Education

The Vestry

John Searle (Sr. Warden), Jim Anderson (Jr. Warden), Jeri Platt (Clerk), Thom Fenner, John Edel, Patrick Schwabrow, Laurie Taylor, James Berrie, Matt Murphy, Carol Goulet, Michael Fox, Mike Black, and The Rector.



The School Board

The Rector, Amy Criswell (President), Terry Kahn (Vice President), Ann Seitz (Secretary), Gemma Williams (Treasurer), Dana Murphy, Cindy Cadle, Todd Breton, Shay James, Marike Owen, Beatrice Menendez, Patrick Gallagher, and Ex-officio members: The Sr. Warden, The Jr. Warden, and The Head of School

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 Education, while ministering joyfully to all **God's** people.