

ASCENSION TIDINGS

SUMMER



By the time some of you are reading this, I will be on sabbatical. Your vestry and lay leadership is fully prepared to lead Ascension in my absence. Upon my return, I will write a reflection about my time away. My biggest goal for Ascension as well as myself is to hit a “reset button”. My prayer is for Ascension to create new opportunities for leadership during the summer and for me to reflect my role as a spiritual leader. I have become pretty good at the logistics of church life, but pray for me during this sabbatical to clarify how I can continue to develop as a spiritual leader.

Ask any clergy, congregational gravity pulls them toward managing in favor of spiritual leadership. I want to be the best possible leader of Ascension. I want to call you all into deeper levels of service to the community; continually remind you of your identity in Christ; help you worship with your heart, mind, and soul; and continually carve out new ways for you to serve God in Jesus’ name, all while making sure the trains run on time.

This sabbatical is a tool to find clarity, and I will miss you all deeply in the next few months. Pray that my identity in Christ grows more fully. Pray for me to find a new level of devotion. Pray for me to sharpen my sense of servanthood.

I am so grateful to all of you who have made this sabbatical possible:

I thank Bishop Fisher for generously giving me a diocesan sabbatical grant.

I am beyond grateful for the many hours our Sr. Warden and I have spent thinking through the logistics of sabbatical.

I breathe a sigh of relief that the intrepid Miranda Griesbaum is at the helm of Jr. Warden.

I appreciate Matt Murphy, your treasurer, for his thoughtful leadership and visionary thinking.

I am thankful for the three clergy who have agreed to serve in my absence: Fr. Bob Flick, Fr. Jim Morgan, and Fr. Will Hood.

I am thankful for all the generous gifts from parishioners to my sabbatical.

Thank you to the Vestry, new and old, who are serving during this sabbatical summer.

Thank you to Sam, Ann, Leslie, Suzanne, Robi, Nancy, and Miguel for holding down the fort in my absence. They are a great team.

LETTER FROM THE RECTOR...(CONT.)

Many thanks to Deacon Mary who has so graciously stepped up as the glue to hold worship and pastoral care together in my absence.

With regard to pastoral care, you can always talk to the Vestry, chat with Deacon Mary, stop by the church office, or simply call the office phone 713.781.1330. We have a new tool help us stay connected to you, pastoral@ascensionepiscopalchurch.org is an email you can use to ask for prayers, request an LEV visit, ask to be put on the prayer list, update us with death notifications, or request a visit from Deacon Mary. Your prayers can be big or small.

Cant wait to see you when I get back. Much love and summer blessings.


Pastor Todd

Adult Sunday School

Join us for the Mike and Mary Show!

May 22 - June 19. Discussion of John Ortberg book, If You Want to Walk of Water You Have to Get out of the Boat. Led by Mike Black

June 26 and July 10. Discovering and using Our Spiritual Gifts (No Sunday School on July 3)

July 17 - Aug 7 Discussion class led by Deacon Mary and various Ascension leaders based on our part in Bishop Doyles new book A Generous Community

Aug 14, 21 Franciscan Spirituality led by Rev Bob Flick

Copies of Ortberg best selling book will be available at church but you may also enjoy the class just through the discussion.



The Sabbatical Line-Up

As Pastor Todd will be on sabbatical till the end of August, we ask that everyone welcome the supply priests who are filling in.

Fr. Will Hood is filling in from May 22nd to June 5th, we welcome Father Morgan from June 12th to July 3rd, and Father Bob Flick will be pulling the last leg. He will be preaching from July 10 through August 21st. We will welcome Pastor Todd back on August 28th.


Thank you to Deacon Mary and the vestry for moving Sundays along smoothly.

REACH OUT

My, what a long short time. In two months, I will have been with you for a year...and that barely seems possible. I have a wee bit more time of learning the ropes while I see a season for the first time...and then I quickly become an old hand. Thank you for helping me-and please keep right on doing it.

One of the first projects I started work on was the partnership with Walnut Bend Elementary. Our first year with them is now over and what a packed joy filled experience that has been. Every volunteer can share with you how open the children are to forming a relationship. It does not take long to realize that they all come from very busy homes where they do not have anyone who can sit down and listen to them. The greatest gifts we give them are time, thoughtfulness and acceptance. There are a variety of opportunities available throughout the year. We hope to expand our work with them this next year and also to repeat the uniform drive this summer to help those who cannot afford to purchase them.



Last month we offered our first A  DIOS days to serve the community. On Saturday, we went to WHAM to work in the Food Pantry repackaging food for distribution in the Pantry itself. This job saves the staff a lot of time and is easy and fun to do as a team. We are exploring doing this for WHAM on a regular basis...it is a fun way to work as a team. On Sunday we worked on some projects at the church. Huge shout out to Liz Goodman as she designed and led big team effort to make goodie bags for testing days at Walnut Bend. The adults and children were really proficient as they sacked up hundreds of bags....it was awesome to watch. We cooked and froze food to take to the shut-ins; cleaned the fountain; landscaped; collected a truck full of items for the Second Blessing shop and had some great visiting time. Notice I said this was our first one....look forward to the next one!

We have an Outreach Committee now to assist with visioning and implementing outreach for the church. As our work in outreach ministry continues to grow...expect changes and exciting new opportunities. We will share new projects as they come on board, but please check in on the Outreach tab at the Ascension homepage. This summer promises to be a time of research and growth...stay tuned!

Our next outing is to the Tremont Retirement Center on July 1st to take a party to the residents. It will be an Ice Cream Social. Doug Meyer has planned a grand event. We need a few volunteers to go along to chat and socialize with the attendees. When you live in a facility....company does not come often enough.

This summer the Adult Sunday School Class will feature "The Mike and Mary Show", which is shorthand for a collaborative effort of our Senior Warden, Mike Black and myself. The subtitle is "Growing Up and Out in Community". The classes are designed for discussion. The first 5 sessions will be based on the best selling book If You Want to Walk on Water You Have to Get Out of the Boat by John Ortberg. You do not have to read the book to participate-but I will share it is a fast read and I have yet to meet anyone who was not a big fan. It is

based on Peter walking on water in Matthew. As that is completed, we will have one session on discovering what our individual spiritual gifts are. Next are several weeks where will do a combination in class of exploring new concepts of community and discussion with parish members about their community ministry efforts.

We have many things planned for you this summer and I hope to see your smiling face at some of them when you are in town.

Blessings!

Deacon Mary

Thoughts on Walnut Bend

Some of our volunteers at Walnut Bend share their thoughts on their experience this year about working with the students.

Lunch Bunch-

I have 4 boys in the 4th grade, Seth, Isiah, Matthew and Kymani that are so delightful, fun and full of energy! We meet every Thursday for 30 minutes which really isn't long enough to cover the material but in the other hand it's plenty of time to go crazy and establish a relationship. That's what it is really all about, getting to know the kids, establish trust, friendship and to listen. I've done that and it feels good! - Carol Goulet

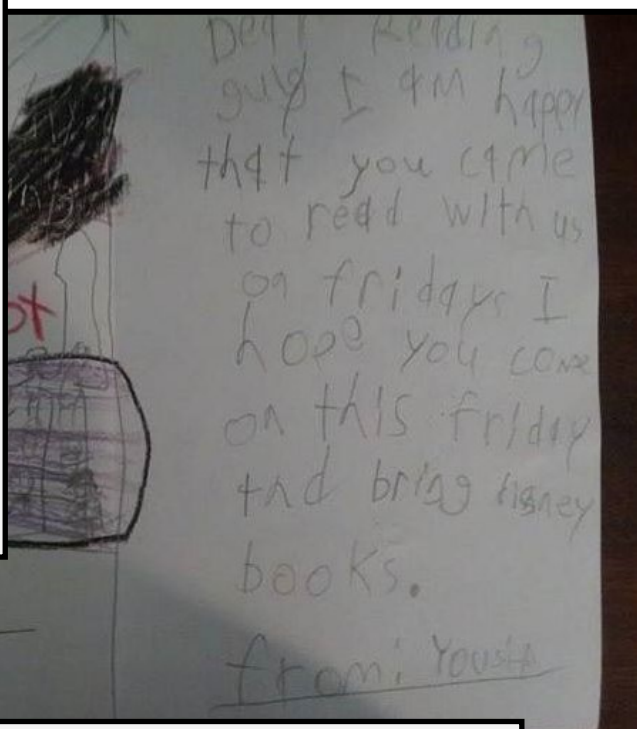
The kids at Walnut Bend are great, spending time with my four Lunch Bunch boys is always the highlight of my day. - Miranda Griesbaum

Adam Brown performed and read at Family Night in the fall. There were great comments about his assistance from the staff....and he loved it!

Read Aloud Program

What an honor to be asked to participate in the "Read to the Final Four Literacy Program" at Walnut Bend. The students absolutely loved the interaction I had with them and frequently reminded me that some of the Disney characters were not pronounced correctly. This certainly demonstrates the student's drive to understand what was being read to them. I was equally honored to read in the same classroom and sit in the same chair at the former First Lady Barbara Bush used. One of my favorite moments is when a student gave me a thank you card. This speaks volumes to me. The best part of this moment was when I was identified as the "Reading Guy".

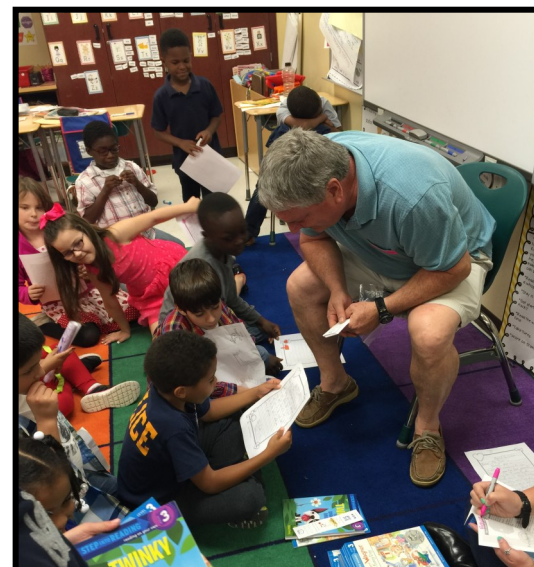
Todd Breton



The letter reads:

Dear Reading guy I am happy that you came to read with us on Fridays I hope you come on this Friday and bring disney books. from: Yousif

I thoroughly enjoyed reading to the children. It was not easy to find something they had not already heard, but they were always happy even then, and asked for more. I did find a couple of things they hadn't heard and they were very attentive. It is an interactive experience, and I had forgotten how children love to know about you. They were quite concerned because I have essential tremors and wanted to know why my hands were shaking. I explained that it was just a part of me, and that I was not ill in any way. The next time when one of the children mentioned it, some of the others answered her with what I had told them before, and assured her that I was okay. - Wanda June



It was wonderful! I was apprehensive at first to agree to do this. The first day was a little odd. There was a substitute teacher in the room and he was not sure what to do. I said I will read to the kids and we will see what happens. I thought he did not have very good control over them but then I was not a first grade teacher. The kids seemed to like it. It was a little off putting due to their having to stay behind their desks. The next time I walked into the classroom I was greeted with hugs and Yeah, it's Mr. Tom. I was taken back, I didn't know the impact I had on them the first time. From then on I was hugged and fawned over when I showed up and also when I left. It was wonderful! They want me to keep coming. The teacher said that would be okay, she said they really responded to me. I will try to make it back once a week. - Tom Sutton

Thank you to all of the volunteers who went over to work with the children this year at Walnut Bend. They started with assisting by entertaining children during enrollment before school all the way through April. And of course a huge shout out to John Edel who was featured in the Houston Chronicle on a section first page while he was reading to his first grade students. I love all of my Lunch Bunch girls and already miss them. Hope you join us in one of the activities at Walnut Bend next year...it is joyous!



Summer is coming! Have you wanted to sing in the parish choir, but just couldn't get to a Wednesday night rehearsal? Or are you warm-natured and can't imagine wearing a robe in July? Well, here's your chance.

The choir's last Wednesday night rehearsal will be June 29th and we will resume Wednesday night rehearsals on August 17th. During this time, choir will rehearse on Sunday mornings at 9:30 AM. In a nod to Houston's summer weather, the choir will not robe during this time.

In addition to the music and fellowship, we also learn a bit about the hymns in that day's service. There is no audition or entrance exam. If you are not sure what part you sing, we can guide you. Try us; you'll like us.

- Suzanne

ASCENSION SCHOOL

Dear Parishioners,

We have had a tremendous year at Ascension Episcopal School. Our enrollment is the largest it has been since I arrived seven years ago. We have 129 in the School and 72 in Early Learners, so 201 on our campus. We are excited for the next school year when we expect a similar enrollment.

On Tuesday, May 17th, we had our Awards Chapel. The Donnie Hollowell Scholarship was awarded by Mrs. Cathy Hollowell to George Gallagher. George is a current 4th grader who wrote about himself and his accomplishments within the school and community. The Award Committee and Mrs. Hollowell were greatly impressed by his service.

On Sunday, May 22, we had our 5th Grade Graduation Ceremony in the church. We had 9 graduating 5th graders. This class was accepted collectively into more than 30 area schools and the majority was accepted into their first choice. The graduating 5th graders and their middle schools are:



Pictured above: George Gallagher, recipient of the Donnie Hollowell Scholarship, with his parents & Cathy Hollowell

Reiner Arlt - Westbury Christian
Preston Boyd – Western Academy
Nathan Dube – Davey Crockett Middle School
Sophie Kheder – Her family is moving to Manhattan
Paige Pierce - St. Cecilia
Matthew Seitz – St. Thomas Episcopal School
Megan Seitz- St. Thomas Episcopal School
Aiya Tawakkol - Grace Presbyterian School
Chance Thalmann - Epiphany Lutheran School

Faithfully,

Nancy Clausey
Head of School

DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

If you haven't already noticed..... we've really "shaken up" things in children's Sunday school! Our new start time is 10:20, and we return the children to the sanctuary at 11:05, just in time to join their families for communion. If you run late one Sunday, don't worry! After the 10:30 service begins, our Jr. Acolytes (with the help of an adult usher) will escort to class any children who arrive a little late but who still want to join us. Thanks to our amazing crew of volunteers, we had a great 6 week trial run and are ready to tackle the summer. As attendance is usually a little lower in the summer, we will have just one class, and it will meet upstairs in the parish hall. We will be learning stories from the beautiful Jesus Storybook Bible, and enjoying lots of crafts and games, as well.

If you attend adult Sunday school at 9:15 and are wondering what to do with your children during that time, we've got you covered there, as well! During the school year, children 5 and up will have the option of going to "Drama Club", where they will rehearse for special performance that will be presented throughout the year, or "Service Club" where each week they will work on special service projects such as Get Well cards, bundling papers for the SPCA, and more. For the summer, children will meet in the upstairs Youth Room for a special fun time with videos and games.

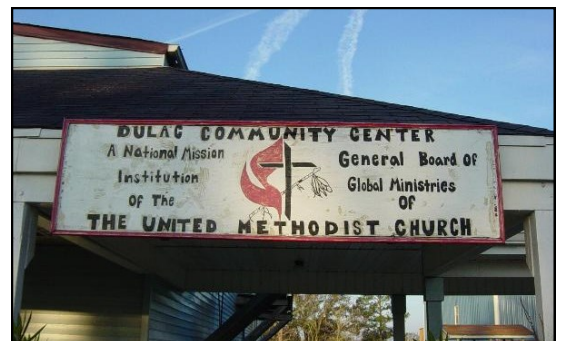
If you have questions about our children's program, or would like to join our fantastic team of teachers, come talk to me any Sunday after the service!

Looking For a Fun Ministry??

If you're looking for a fun and meaningful ministry....then you might just be the perfect fit for our children's Sunday school team!! We are in need of a few more teachers and assistants for all three of our classes (Preschool 3 – 5 yr. olds, Early Elem. K– 2nd grade, and Upper Elem. 3rd to 5th grades). Teachers are provided an easy to follow curriculum and all materials. Assistants are also needed to be present in the classroom on Sunday mornings to help the lead teacher with monitoring children, crafts, games, etc. Most of our teachers teach on a rotating basis, so you would be assigned class only once or twice a month. We have the BEST group of children here at Ascension – and they certainly love their teachers! Working with our kids is a fantastic opportunity to not only be a blessing to them with the gift of your time, but I guarantee that you will be blessed many times, over, yourself. This is definitely a win-win type of opportunity! If you would like to join our team, or have any questions, please see Robi Lasiter or email her at robilasiter@gmail.com

Return to Dulac – Mission Trip 2016

A small but hearty group of Ascensionites will travel back to the town of Dulac, Louisiana after services on June 5, and return to Houston on Friday, June 10. The mission team that went last year was so blessed by the people of Dulac and by the opportunity to serve them in the name of Christ, and I know that this year will be another wonderful experience. We still have room for more, so if you are interested in joining us, please call the office and let us know ASAP. Cost per person is \$250. We are continuing to take donations to help offset the costs of the trip. Youth will be in front of the Sanctuary after services for the next two Sundays, or you can write "Mission Trip" in the memo portion of your check and place it in the offering plate. All donors will be invited to a special dinner in August to hear about our adventure. Thank you for supporting us!



ACTIVITIES AND ONGOINGS



Altar Flowers

Please sign the flower chart which is posted in the narthex to dedicate the altar flowers. The cost of our flowers is \$100 (which includes delivery). Remember to sign the flower chart, enter your dedication in honor of, in memory of, or in thanksgiving of someone, and place your donation in the alms basin or send it to the office, marked flower fund. All questions can be answered by Ann Burton [\(713\) 782-6572](tel:7137826572).

Daughters of the King

The Daughters of the King will hold their regular monthly meeting on Saturday, June 11, Saturday July 9, and Saturday, August 13th in the parish library, with fellowship at 9:30 AM and the meeting at 10:00. All ladies of the parish are invited to join us for fellowship and prayer and their friends are cordially invited to attend.



Acolyte Training

Becoming an acolyte is a wonderful way for our youth to participate in our worship service. Acolytes carry the cross and lead the processions, light and extinguish the altar candles, and assist the pastor during Communion. Training for new acolytes may be conducted on Sundays from 9:30-10:15 AM. To schedule a training, please email the office or Paul Searle.

Photos and information for the Directory -

Keep an eye out for the latest edition of the directory, to be posted soon. Double check your information for accuracy and be sure that we have a picture of you. We want to know you!! If we don't have your picture, or you would like to submit a more up to date version, please email it to Leslie at membership@ascensionepiscopalchurch.org.



Graduate Recognition Sunday

Share your good news!

On June 5, 2016 Ascension Episcopal Church will be honoring high school, specialty programs, technical school, and college/grad school graduates. This is a very special occasion in your family member's faith journey, so mark your calendars and plan to attend the 10:30am service.

We need to hear from you by May 30th at the absolute latest, with the student's name and any information (such as a short bio or future plans) you want included in the bulletin in order for us to recognize these graduates' accomplishments. Please contact Sam in the office at office@ascensionepiscopalchurch.org, with the names of any family members or friends of Ascension who are Spring 2016/December 2015 grads. It will be helpful to know your graduate's school, as well as future plans following graduation. Thank you for your assistance as we prepare for this special recognition Sunday.

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

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...

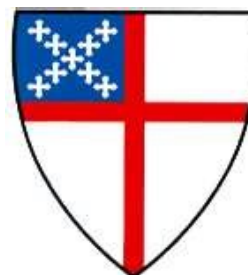
We have a drive **once** a month on the First Sunday and on the 3rd Saturday of the month we go over to WHAM to work to prep food for distribution in the Food Pantry. So bring your non-perishable goods on the First Sunday and please Sign up in the Volunteer Sign Up Log in the Narthex to help on-site.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

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 Rector, Todd Breton (President), Amy Criswell (Treasurer), Ann Seitz (Secretary), Patrick Gallagher, Shay James, Tom Konitzer, Beatrice Menendez, Marike Owen, Thom Fenner, Diego Parra, Amanda Candler 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 Education, while ministering joyfully to all **God's** people.