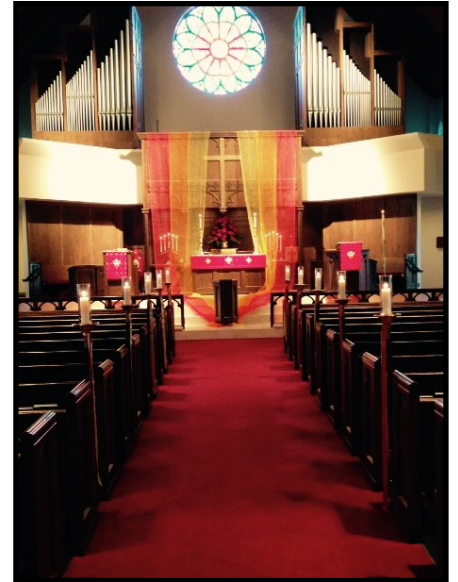


ASCENSION TIDINGS

SUMMER

I would rather complain about the heat, than the cold. That might change by July, but I am so glad summer is here. On June 7th, we will be on the road to Dulac Louisiana for our summer mission trip. Thank you Ascensionites for all your generosity in buying mission stock; getting your cars washed; and prayerfully supporting our missionaries. Your generosity has allowed about 20 people to get on the road for Jesus.

I am so happy to be taking my kids on this mission trip. As a parent, I want them to see beyond the well-appointed bubble that they live in. Further, I hope this experience will be a catalyst for all of us going to be transformed as servants of Christ and the world. When my kids were very little, I did not look forward to summer because my feral children were masters of making messes and they perfected the art in the summer.



Now that Kimberly and I have diaper-free kids who can dress themselves, feed themselves, and play without parental overlordship: summer feels like it should. We are swim teaming, mission tripping, vacationing, and I am planning a great Fall for Ascension. I have hinted in the past that Sunday morning adult education will be a little different. This Fall's adult education will be focused on The Daring Way™. The Spring will be a launch point for home/small groups where we will have neighborhood home groups that meet during the week.

Join us after the 10:30 service on June 28th for a special patriotic musical, *Freedom*, prepared and presented by the Parish Choir. We will have a fun picnic style lunch, provided by the church, and watermelon for afterward.

I am also very pleased to announce that the Rev. Mary Reddick will be joining Ascension as our deacon (she will be "Rev'd" by the Bishop on June 20th). The exact date of her arrival at Ascension is to-be-determined. Put simply, a deacon is mission and outreach cheerleader. Deacons are clergy who can marry, bury, and baptize people. Deacons have a significant role in worship except that they cannot celebrate the Eucharist. Deacons are almost always non-stipendiary.

The diocese of Kansas puts it well:

"As servant ministers, deacons should exemplify in their lives a spirit of service to others, including a dedication to helping others enter into the ministry of Christian service...Deacons are not ordained to do outreach ministry on behalf of the Church, but to be an icon of prophetic servant ministry and to lead all members of the Church into servant ministry in the world. Deacons also help interpret the needs and concerns of the world to the Church. Deacons will be ministers who have a visible ministry to the dispossessed, are willing to undertake prophetic ministry, and will strengthen the servant ministry of the Church in the Diocese. "

LETTER FROM THE RECTOR...(CONT.)

In other words, Mary is called to provoke us into a deeper service of others in the name of Christ. I am looking forward to her ministry with us. Among other things, she and I are working on bringing “Loving Houston” to Ascension. Loving Houston is a literacy ministry for at-risk kids and we hope to engage Walnut Bend Elementary with this ministry.

When summer starts coming to a close, look for a lot more details about fall education, worship, and outreach.

10 Guideposts for Wholehearted Living From Daring Greatly, Sept 13- Nov 22.

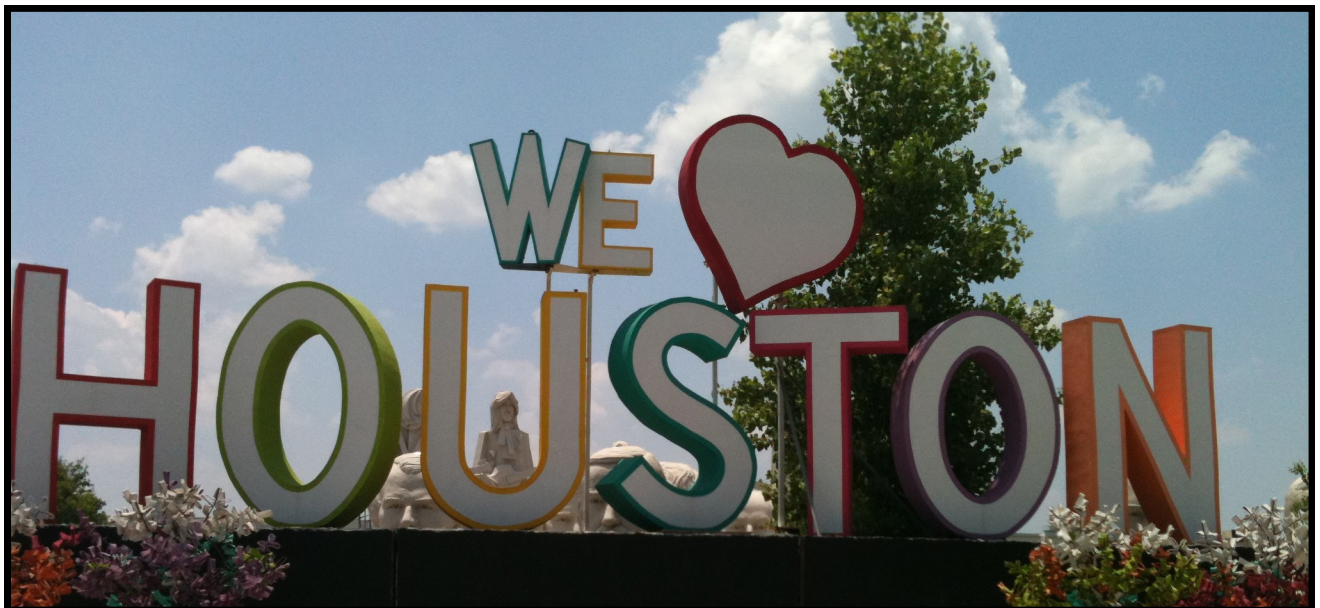
How the Courage to Be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent, and Lead
by Brene Brown

1. Cultivating Authenticity: Letting Go of What People Think
2. Cultivating Self-Compassion: Letting Go of Perfectionism
3. Cultivating a Resilient Spirit: Letting Go of Numbing and Powerlessness
4. Cultivating Gratitude and Joy: Letting Go of Scarcity and Fear of the Dark
5. Cultivating Intuition and Trusting Faith: Letting Go of the Need for Certainty
6. Cultivating Creativity: Letting Go of Comparison
7. Cultivating Play and Rest: Letting Go of Exhaustion as a Status Symbol and Productivity as Self-Worth
8. Cultivating Calm and Stillness: Letting Go of Anxiety as a Lifestyle
9. Cultivating Meaningful Work: Letting Go of Self-Doubt and “Supposed To”
10. Cultivating Laughter, Song, and Dance: Letting Go of Being Cool and “Always in Control”

Peace,



Pastor Todd





Houston's churches loving Houston's schools

Step 1

Loving Houston Training Sessions are for church and school leaders who have caught the vision of city transformation and want to start a church-school partnership. Leaders will learn about basic tips for starting a partnership, common challenges and solutions for those challenges, and other insights about working within their specific school districts and communities.

Step 2

Loving Houston Learning Communities are for church and school leaders who are already in a partnership. These Learning Communities give leaders an opportunity to network, share ideas, and brainstorm together. Loving Houston then gathers and shares these learnings to accelerate the good work being done and to build momentum around church-school partnerships throughout Greater Houston.

Q: Why is Loving Houston just focusing on schools?

A: Schools are the centerpieces of our communities, and so many individual and community needs can be addressed within our local schools. Houston is the most diverse city in the country, with thousands of immigrants and refugees arriving each year. By volunteering in your local school, you can help these families transition to life in the States. For example, you could partner with your school to offer ESL classes for families, tutor students in English, mentor students as they're going through the transition, or help families translate and navigate the difficult first steps of moving to a new country.

Q: So what does this have to do with Ascension?

Ascension is going to explore the schools in the area school district. We are first connecting with the principle at Walnut Bend Elementary to see how we can get involved in the literacy and mentoring program. When we have more information we will pass it along. In the meantime you can go to lovinghouston.net to find out even more information on the Loving Houston program.

NEWCOMER CORNER

New Membership and Baptisms at Ascension

During our most recent Bishop's visit in late April, we were thrilled to welcome our newest members into the church. Since it had been over a year since we last welcomed Bishop Doyle, we had one of the largest groups to date that were confirmed by visiting Bishop Bill Frey, coming to us as a retired bishop from the Diocese of West Texas.

We welcomed:

Carolyn Axelrod
Adam Brown
Travis & Brittany Beck and daughter Amelia
Sandra Colley
Carrie Durham and children Isaac and Amelia
Clement & Funmi Falayi and children Nifemi, Damisi, and Enoch
Annie Gooding
Geraldine Liborio
Jeff & Christina Parker
Carroll Prasad
Louise Sutton



We were also thrilled to baptize the following children on Pentecost Sunday:

Wesley Gilheart
Juliette and Jaxon Jenkins
Connor and Matthew Cooke

On May 31st, in private baptism:

Aaron and Cort Loftin

And in January we welcomed through baptism:

Amelia Rosily Beck
Wendy Yuwen

When you see them around, please introduce yourself and help them feel welcome!

But how do I Join the Church?

The most common question I receive from newcomers is, "How does someone join the church?" That question has a simple answer, but the process is also one that requires some commitment. Many new members come to us from another Episcopal church. Whether it is a job transfer, retirement to the area, or someone simply looking for a new church home, Episcopalians may simply request a Letter of Transfer from one parish to another. Once that request is made to either Paul, the Newcomer Minister, or to

Leslie, our Membership Secretary, we take care of the rest and make all the arrangements. Once we confirm receiving the letter, the process is complete. You are now a member of Ascension.

The second way to become a member is slightly more involved. A person may become a member through confirmation from a bishop. In order for this to occur, we ask newcomers to attend a "Get-to-Know Ascension Weekend," which consists of a Friday evening and Saturday morning gathering for all those who are interested in learning more about the church and/or becoming members. After the weekend, we await a Sunday visit by one of our bishops. Often, this occurs a week or two after the Get-to-Know weekend, but sometimes it may take a few months. Those who have undergone the GTKAW are invited to be either "Confirmed," "Received," or "Reaffirmed."

The confirmation categories break down like this:

Confirmed: You come from either no church background or from a "non-apostolic succession tradition" (i.e. Baptist, Methodist, Evangelical, Non-denominational, etc.).

Received: You come from an "apostolic succession tradition" (Catholic, Lutheran, and Orthodox are recognized by the Episcopal Church).

Reaffirmed: You were previously confirmed in the Episcopal Church or other Anglican Communion tradition and you are renewing your commitment to the Episcopal Church.

During the Sunday service, each candidate for membership will kneel at the altar and allow the bishop to speak a prayer of blessing and welcome over her or him. After participating in the liturgy, you are now a new member!

Occasionally, we hold a "Liturgy of Belonging," which does not require a bishop's visit. This liturgy signifies that a person has attended a Get-to-Know Ascension Weekend and has committed to the ministry of this local parish. After a Liturgy of Belonging, a person is a member of Ascension, but has not been confirmed as a member of the larger Episcopal Church.

The real work begins after you become a member. Claiming church membership goes beyond just being able to mark that off your life's checklist. It involves being an integral part of a community of faith and service. It means allowing others into your life to bless you and sharing your blessings with others. It means becoming involved beyond just coming to church. If you are interested in becoming a member or just knowing more about the church, come talk to us! We'd love to sit down over a cup of coffee and get to know you!



ASCENSION SCHOOL

Dear Parishioners,

We had an amazing year and look forward to increased enrollment in the 2015-16 school year. Our school is growing, volunteers are amazing, and we can't wait to see what the future brings.

Check out the pictures for a snippet of our year-end wrap up.

Faithfully,

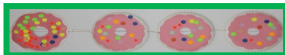
Nancy Clausey



Volunteer Breakfast

We "Do-nut" know what we would do without you!

Thank you!!



Mother's Day Chapel



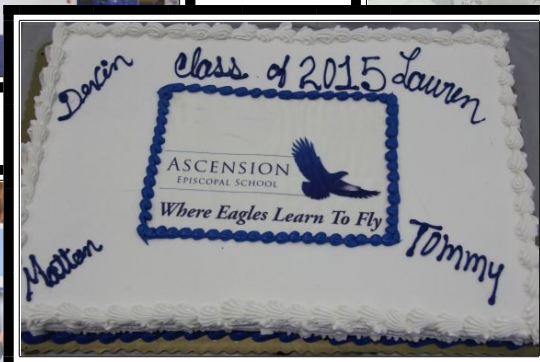
Awards Chapel



Spring Program



Graduating Class of 2015



MEMBERSHIP

Pledges and Statements

Thank you to everyone who has pledged to the ministries of Ascension Episcopal Church. Second Quarter Statements will go out after the July 4th holiday. 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. You may also put the information on a Newcomer's Card and drop it in the plate any Sunday.

Baptisms

We were pleased to baptize five children on Pentecost Sunday, May 24, 2015. If you would like to learn more about baptism, or have questions, they may be answered in our baptismal customary found at <http://www.ascensionepiscopalchurch.org/baptisms.html>. Pastor Todd is eager to answer any questions you may have 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 , or simply drop it in the plate on Sunday morning. We wish to welcome you to a life of grace through Christ our Lord.



Ascension's Remembrance Book

Help us create a living memorial by rebuilding the Ascension Book of Remembrance. Ascension celebrated its 50th Anniversary in 2011. Our church and school are here because of the inspired gifts and dedication of people who envisioned a tabernacle to the Lord. Perhaps you remember a particular gift given to the church for practical use or beautiful embellishment. If you know a story about how the church was constructed or the planting of a particular tree, Ascension wants to preserve our history. Please contact Leslie at membership@ascensionepiscopalchurch.org. Our goal is to form a committee to oversee the physical book we plan to display as well as keep a computer record of the contributions made to the establishment and care of Ascension Episcopal Church. Tell us your story or let us know who we should

Safeguarding

All adults over the age of 18 who work with our youth in any capacity are required to attend Safeguarding God's Children training every five years. If you are in need of training or recertification, summer is the perfect time to do it. We will be glad to work with your schedule to help you complete the process. Please contact Leslie Nirider at membership@ascensionepiscopalchurch.org or Robi Lasiter at robilasiter@gmail.com for more information.

DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

We've come to the end of another successful year of Sunday school. During this past year, our kids have learned about the animals & critters of the Bible. They joined Moses in his flight from Egypt, they crossed the Jordan River and they fought at the Battle of Jericho. They learned about disobedience from Jonah and about faith and courage from David. They had their own Palm Sunday parade as they welcomed Jesus into Jerusalem, they mourned His crucifixion and they learned the real and joyous reason we celebrate Easter.

The Bible came alive for our children this year thanks to some very special people who committed themselves to being there week after week to teach Sunday school. Thank you to our teachers: Pam Greene, Joy Dyer, Dave Maschek, Marilyn Hanovich, Katie Kruszka, Sayle Fox, Terri Kelleher, and Funmi Falayi. Thank you also to our assistants: Geraldine Liborio, Lilian Care, Amy Criswell, Sharon Black, Christine Searle, Busayo Ogunmesa, Ngozi Adimora, Carrie Durham, Shelly Ryan and Sheri Harvin. You each are a true blessing to the children and families of Ascension!

If your children weren't able to join us for Sunday school this year, it's not too late! Children's Sunday school continues throughout the summer. Send them upstairs in the parish hall to join us each Sunday at 9:30, and let the stories of the Bible come alive for them, too!



Summer Sunday School Teachers and Assistants Needed!

As our wonderful Sunday school teachers take a break, we are in need of volunteers to serve as teachers and assistants throughout the summer months. Volunteers can sign up to serve as few as one week, or for the entire summer! All lessons and materials are provided – all you will need to do is read over the lesson the week before your scheduled Sunday, and then be there on Sunday morning at 9:30 to teach. Summer classes are typically smaller, so if you've ever wanted to try your hand at Sunday school, this is the perfect time to do it. Please contact Robi Lasiter through email (robilasiter@gmail.com) or after either service to for more information or to volunteer.



Wash & Worship a Success!

Despite overcast skies and the promise of rain, the Wash & Worship fundraiser on May 17th was a huge success! The youth of Ascension (along with some very special adult helpers) washed countless cars and raised \$512.20 for our mission trip. They also sold \$350 worth of mission trip stock, bringing the total raised for the day to \$862.20!! (As you can see, they also had some "sudsy" fun!) Thank you to everyone who participated.



We are headed out!!

Our mission trip to Dulac, Louisiana is fast approaching! We will be in Dulac from Sunday, June 7 through Friday, June 12. Speaking for those participating, we cannot thank our Ascension family enough for the tremendous support you have shown us as we prepare to embark on our first mission trip in many years. We set a fundraising goal of \$3000, and easily made that goal in just three short weeks. Thanks to you, we were able to subsidize a large portion of the cost for each participant, making the trip a reality. Check the Ascension Facebook page while we are gone next week for updates! We look forward to sharing our experiences with the church upon our return. We appreciate you keeping us in your prayers for safe travel as well as for God to work through each of us to be a blessing to the people of Dulac.

Please come to the 10:30 service on Sunday, June 7th where we will be blessing the outgoing mission team.



NOTES FROM THE CHOIR LOFT



-Dr. Nancy Taylor Ginsburg

'Tis the season of Pentecost! What a wonderful celebration of the presence of the Holy Spirit we shared on May 24th! The hymns of the day are very special.

Ascension Children's Choir: The children's choir had a **great** year...and our spring musical, *Praise Rocks!*, rocked!

Choir parents and assistants are key to the success of a children's choir. Thanks again to each and every person who assisted with this choir in any way this past year (and that includes each parent who made it possible for their child(ren) to be part of this wonderful worship group).

Enjoy the summer break, everyone. Plans are in progress for our fall start-up!

Ascension Parish Choir: From now to the end of June, the Parish Choir will rehearse on Wednesday evenings from 7-9 p.m. and on Sunday mornings, beginning at 9:30 a.m.

CHILDCARE IS AVAILABLE ON WEDNESDAY EVENINGS! Please bring your child/children with you to Ascension and join the choir! We need *your* voice!

In addition to music for worship services, the Parish Choir is preparing a special patriotic musical, *Freedom*. This fun, God-centered, musical will be shared on Sunday, June 28th during an all-church mid-day celebration of our nation's independence. So, for the next month or so, join us. This is going to be fun!!

EVERYONE! MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW: SUNDAY, June 28th at 11:30!
All-church picnic-food luncheon with the special Parish Choir presentation of *Freedom*.

SUMMER CHOIR: Through July and much of August, music in worship will be led by our summer choir – an open, extended version of the Parish Choir with no Wednesday evening rehearsal.

Come any Sunday at 9:30 a.m. and prepare for worship with us! (Of course, childcare is available; we will make sure the music is ready for you!)

SO WHAT DOES THE CHOIRMASTER DO IN THE SUMMERTIME?: In addition to "making friends" with the music library at Ascension, a task long-delayed, I will attend several music conferences. Conference days include music reading sessions (I'll be looking for music for both choirs), worship seminars, and concerts. I will also continue building the music worship plan for Ascension through January 2016.

Today, the second day of Pentecost, I give thanks for the Holy Spirit and the work the Lord is doing in and through each of us! To God be the glory!!

Blessings & Joy! ... Nancy

ACTIVITIES AND ONGOINGS

Senior Bus Trip

For those 50+ years young, join our Senior Bus trip touring Houston outdoor art on Friday, June 19. Cost is \$6.00, due by Thursday June 4. Please write checks to Ascension Episcopal Church with "Senior Bus Trip" noted on both the check and your envelope. Bus leaves at 9am on 6/19 with a docent to take us through the Heights, Moody Park, downtown, Discovery Green, Allen Parkway, Montrose, Hermann Park, and a stop at the Chase Tower for a scenic panoramic view of our city from the 60th floor observation deck. Lunch at Treebeards will cost ~\$12.00 plus tax, tip, drinks, dessert at your own additional expense. For special needs such as a wheelchair or walkers, contact Barbara Wiese by June 2, 281-496-4740 or bwanchor@gmail.com to verify appropriate bus and sufficient space. If you miss the 6/4 payment deadline, please contact Barbara to see if there is still room on the bus. Looking forward to having you join us on this unique bus ride tour of our city outdoor art works!

Daughters of the King

The Daughters of the King will hold their regular monthly meeting at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, June 13th in the parish library. Ginny Zuppann will be speaking to us, and her topic is "Crowns of Glory". All ladies of the parish are cordially invited to attend. They will also continue to meet the second SAaturday of each month through the summer. Those dates are July 11th and August 8th, so mark your calendars



Reginald Johnson's Retirement Party

On June 1, 2015, Reginald Johnson retired after serving Ascension Episcopal Church for thirty-two years as our Sexton. In the very near future we will be honoring Reginald with a retirement party. When a suitable date is selected you will be notified.

We would, as is our tradition at Ascension, like to present him with a cash "purse" of donations from our members who have been touched by his service over the years. If you would like to do so, please mail or bring your check or cash to the Church Office or just place in the offering plate. Make the check out to Ascension Episcopal Church and be certain to earmark it for "Reginald Purse". The deadline for contributions is **Sunday, June 21, 2015**. This gift will be presented at the retirement party.

I know you join us in wishing the Reginald the very best and a hopeful future. It is the Christian way. It is the Ascension way.

Kathleen Hannah
281-496-0728
kathleen.hannah@att.net

Alan Burton
713-782-6572
ab607@comcast.net

Editorials

Parishioners are welcome to submit letters to the Tidings for publication. Would you like to recognize someone you think does an outstanding job in the community? Maybe you'd like to share some observations, or recap an event that was held here. If you have participated in an activity that was not reported on in the Tidings, please send us some pictures and an article or quick note telling us what you did or are doing. We would love for the congregation to know all the wonderful things that members of the congregation are doing.

FROM LAST TIDINGS...

Looking way, way ahead

Sabbatical.

In the Episcopal Church and many other denominations, it is an expected part of clergy development. I will be taking my sabbatical in the summer of 2016 (fourteen months away). The vestry is in fully supportive of this. I very much look forward to returning to share new energy, a renewed spirit and insight into the Kingdom of God.

Sabbatical - What is in it for Ascension?

Sabbatical breaks habitual patterns and empowers lay leaders and staff to lead ministry. My goal is to come back recharged and ready to help us grow in faith, prayer, numbers, and ministry.

And yes, it is good for me

My vision for this time is still forming. But I want to explore preaching in many different locations and cultures. My preaching will benefit from learning from, engaging, and interviewing fellow pastors from different parts of the world. What I want to come back as a better preacher and leader.

My ideal vision, dependent on foundation grants like Lily and the Louisville grants is:

- Travel east to Abuja, Nigeria and spending time with Anglican Nigerian clergy to experience and learn from them.
- Then east again to the Holy Land
- Then head west to Washington D.C.
- Head west again to Wyoming.

This will be the renewal component. I will finish my sabbatical in Wyoming with Kimberly's family. Here I will refresh and reflect on the journey. My hope is to upload all the audio of the clergy interviews and my reflections on a blog that I will build at that time.

In Advent of 2015, I would like to ask the church community to contribute to a sabbatical fund, but it will be a quiet ask. Letters will be sent home. This will be a supplement to the grants. Little, if any, time will be spent asking for money on Sunday morning. In February of 2016 we will hold a two week Sunday morning class to talk about the theory and practice of Sabbatical while fielding any questions you might have.

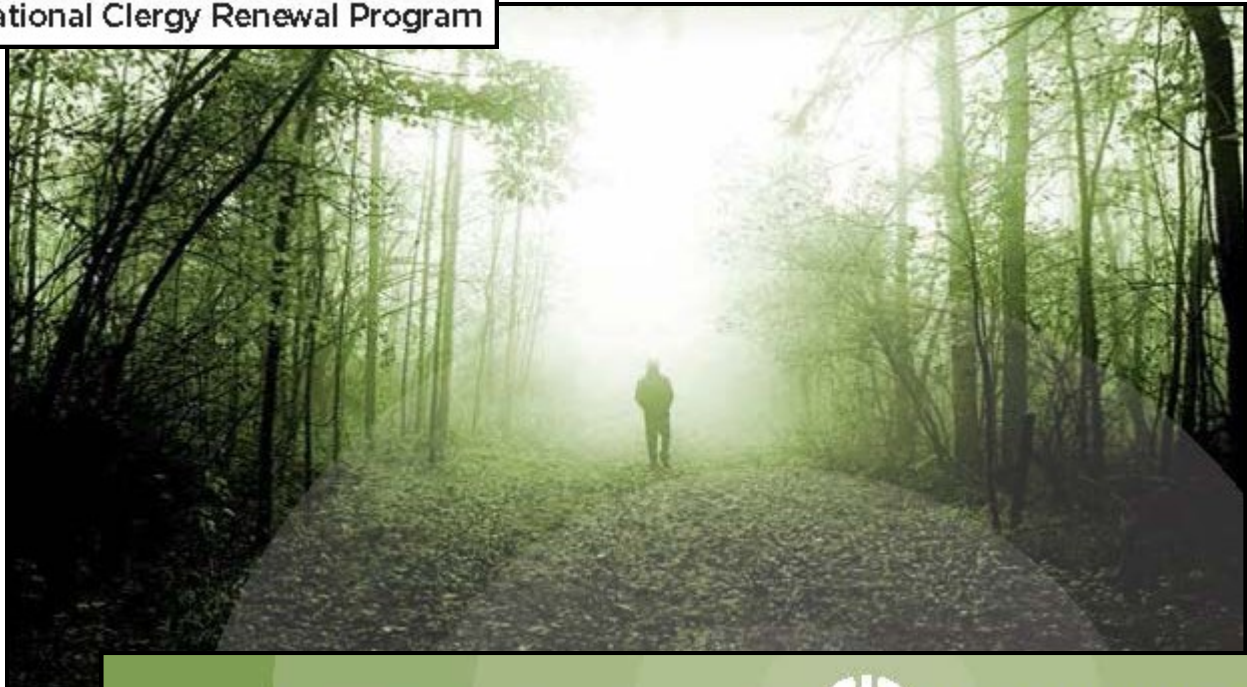
How will we cope without you?

Here is an example of how sabbatical can be managed while I am gone (much of this is already in place): Pastoral Responsibilities will be divided between the DOK, Tuesday Women's Bible study group, LEV's (people who take communion to the home bound), and the Vestry. Each week we have two Vestry people on duty. They will stay informed of pastoral ministries that are working well or not. The different pastoral ministries will maintain a list of those who are in the nursing homes, homebound and in the hospital. They will make routine pastoral visits.

Five local clergy to take one week of emergency pastoral calls. Three weeks a piece on a rotating basis. This does not include routine hospital visits. These are only non-routine pastoral emergencies that arise during the week, for example, there is a death or injury. Our Junior Warden (volunteer facilities manager), will have a limited spending authority for individual problems that arise with the facility. For issues that are over \$1000, the Vestry will make a decision in my absence on appropriate expenditures. They have full authority to authorize major repairs. The office staff will continue with regular bulletin production and the one summer newsletter that will go out in my absence. Most administrative duties are already performed with minimal input from me. Requests for financial assistance from the homeless and working poor will be referred to our ministry partner – WHAM – West Houston Assistance Ministries. and our we will preferably have Sunday supply clergy – preferably one clergy versus many.

Peace,
Pastor Todd

2015 Lilly Endowment
National Clergy Renewal Program



What Will Make Your Heart Sing?



CHRISTIAN THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY

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:

<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 now 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:

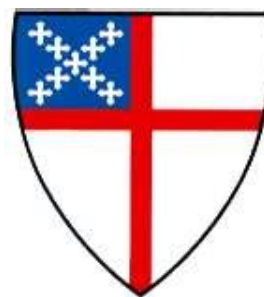
office@ascensionepiscopalchurch.org

Staff

The Rev. Todd Bryant, Rector;
Dr. Nancy Ginsburg, Choir Director;
Leslie Nirider, Membership;
Suzanne Anderson, Organist;
Samantha King, Secretary;
Ann Seitz, Bookkeeper;
Paul Belk, Newcomer Minister;
Robi Lasiter, Director of Religious Education

The Vestry

Mike Black (Sr. Warden), John Searle (Jr. Warden), Jeri Platt (Clerk), Thom Fenner, John Edel, James Berrie, Matt Murphy, Carol Goulet, Michael Fox, Clement Falayi, Cindy Breton, Cheryl Coppock, 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.