



THE ASCENSION

HERALD

Volume 4

Fall 2018

From the Rector:

One of the great joys I have had since moving here is the opportunity to reconnect with my advisor from college. As many of you know, I majored in religion at Davidson and had some hopes of becoming a theologian before admitting to myself that I was not cut out for the academic life. Sandy McKelway was an important part of my studies. He is a Presbyterian minister who studied with Karl Barth – one of the great theologians of the 20th century. He is now retired and living on the Northern Neck. We touched base, and Bill and I went to visit. On our first visit, as we were catching up on things, he said “We always knew that you were destined for great things, but none of us imagined that it would be in the Church.” I remain tickled by this. Of course none of my professors imagined that. How could they? The Book of Common Prayer described the church in a collect buried in the Easter Vigil as “a wonderful and sacred mystery.” That, I believe, is an understatement.

The Church, the Body of Christ, takes people of different gifts, different needs, different persuasions – all of whom have their quirks and their faults and their shining moments. We have different tastes in music, different body clocks and family routines. Each of us is in a different place in our spiritual journey--and yet we are called to travel together and to work together as Christ, to build each other up and to serve God and God's people. We are who we are as Church, not individually. To embody Christ together, to move as one despite our differences is an epic feat. It requires the grace of the Holy Spirit. In some ways Church as an endeavor is unimaginable. I can imagine plenty of “good people,” tons of “spiritual people.” But it is a mystery how TOGETHER we are Christ for the world. This mystery, this community is the primary difference between someone who is “spiritual but not religious” and someone who is just plain religious as I am. It is a conviction that rests deep in my bones that we are all in this together, and that without everybody we are nobody.

As a young person, I had a lot of me to get over, and I probably still do. But because the Church holds me, I am learning how to be forgiven, I am learning how to forgive and I have begun the grace-filled work of dying to myself and rising to the life of Christ. What we do together matters. It is not always pretty. Sometimes we don't hear each other. Sometimes we get stuck. Sometimes we cause each other pain with our sharp edges and our desires to do what is best – as if we can know what that is with precision. And yet I have never known such grace and joy, such meaning and purpose: a holy mystery indeed.

We as Ascension are trying to move together in a world that is changing and uncertain. What does it mean to be Church now? What are we called to do, and how are we called to do it? I pray on this constantly. I hope you do, too.

(Continued from previous page)

And because my prayer is guided by Scripture I am holding on to this exhortation from the third chapter of Colossians. I commend it to your prayers as well.

¹² As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. ¹³ Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord* has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.¹⁴ Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

Church of the Ascension Staff

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Church of the Ascension Vestry & Commission Liaisons

Sr. Warden: Susan Motley

Jr. Warden: Chuck Beers Finance; Building & Grounds (with Tim Westfall)

At the Vestry retreat held August 11, the discussion of our concerns led to an exploration of the value of a strong fellowship program and of the value of reinstating commissions. We believe strengthening fellowship will knit people together and that we will engage more people in the life of the church through the commission system. We looked to find a balance between tradition and moving forward, and the following structure resulted from the discussion. Vestry members are merely liaisons between the commissions and the members of the parish. The commissions consist of Ascensionites who are called to the ministries the commissions represent.

Lana Butler Outreach (Food Pantry coordinator)

Sherlyn Horton Stewardship

Donna Killmon Pastoral Care

Ann McMellin Liturgy (includes ushers and greeters)

Suzi Montagna at large

Tim Westfall Building & Grounds; Communications

Courtney Wheeler Outreach (projects)

Patti Glowatsky 423-6715 pglowatsky@ascension-norfolk.org; Christian Formation

Roni Porfert Fellowship

Vestry minutes are on the website. Go to <http://ascension-norfolk.org/vestry-minutes-2/>

Music that makes Community

From your music minister, Ginny Chilton

While doing some research for a project this summer, I came across a group called "Music that Makes Community." It's a nonprofit that works on a number of things related to communal singing, and I highly suggest you check them out online, but everything they do is based on the belief that singing together is particularly effective at building community. This is an idea that may feel foreign to us in 21st century America, but it was in the not-so-distant past that you needed other people in order to have any music in your life at all. Before recorded music, everyone played an instrument or at least sang. Nearly everyone could keep a steady beat and hold a pitch (you have to be able to do those things if you want to create music together!). Think of how much certain songs or bands shaped who you were at different times in your life. Now, imagine you lived before recording technology, and you and your friends and family had to make all that music yourself. We would all be much better musicians, sure, but I'm more struck by how much more time we would have spent face-to-face with one another. I can't help but wonder what a difference that would make in terms of belonging and community building.

Church is one of the few places that people still gather to make music together *en masse*. Recorded music has become so ubiquitous that we rarely even listen to music with others, never mind sing it together; we each have our own self-curated list of songs on our smartphones, which we listen to with earbuds on. I think it's pretty awesome that we church folk are so proudly countercultural that we will still sing together each Sunday morning (and during the week, too!). I feel confident that when we sing together, we are closer to each other. And when we're closer to each other-- when we cultivate a place where people are known and feel like they belong--we are doing the work Jesus called us to do. When we are close to someone, we are seeing Christ in them and we are being Christ to them. This is exactly what we are called to do! It is quite lovely to me that music is so effective and helping us do that. Sing on.

Sunday mornings: Friends, for some time now, there has been a concern about our service times being too late for some. Because of that, I tasked the Vestry with talking to people about the shape of Sunday mornings. What things work for you, and what things do not? As we come to the end of that process, I want to make sure that everyone knows that we are discerning what--if any--change we should make. Should the service be earlier? How much? Later? If you have thoughts on this subject, please talk with a Vestry member at your earliest opportunity. Thank you.

Stewart

Book Group: The Talbot Park Baptist, Royster Presbyterian, and Ascension Book Group will meet Wednesdays from 10-11 beginning September 12. We will be reading [Where Your Treasure Is: Psalms that Summon You from Self to Community](#) by Eugene Peterson. Peterson is concerned with the "unselfing" of our self-preoccupied, self-bound society through the action of praying together with other believers.

He offers insightful, thought-provoking reflections on eleven select psalm-prayers that can help us overcome such things as self-centeredness, self-assertiveness, self-righteousness, self-sufficiency, self-pity, self-service, and self-love. He does this by centering his reflections around eleven psalms that shaped the politics of Israel.

"And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down and when you rise. And you shall bind them as a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. And you shall write them on your doorposts of your house and on your gates."

--Deuteronomy 6:6-9 (RSV)

Family Formation and What it Looks Like on Sunday

The goals for children and youth at Ascension are to promote an understanding of God's love, grace, compassion, and mercy in age-appropriate ways. We hope to accomplish this by cultivating knowledge of the Bible as it relates to our everyday lives, providing sacred spaces for spiritual growth, seeking an understanding of Episcopal traditions, and applying Jesus's message to our lives in the community and the world. In order to better equip children and families with the tools to accomplish these goals, we are going to TRY SOME NEW THINGS this fall! I would like to be very clear that this is a trial run. Nothing is set in stone, and I welcome feedback both constructive and complimentary.

Starting September 16, children's Sunday school ages 3-10 will meet in the Ward Chapel for Godly Play led by Cindy Jones and Courtney Wheeler. Older children will be encouraged to take leadership roles and mentor their younger classmates. The middle and high school youth will meet in the EYC room led by Susan Meredith and Phil Todd. They will be using a bulletin published by the Episcopal Church that is a companion to the lectionary and is based on Bishop Curry's series [The Way Of Love: Practices for a Jesus Centered Life](#).

We will no longer be offering Wiggly Ones this fall. Instead, we will have a structured and intentional space at the front of the sanctuary designed for children ages 3-8 to quietly engage in age-appropriate activities while experiencing worship along with their families. This space is called a "Pray Ground". Feel free to Google it.

On second Sundays we will offer a separate service in the small chapel for children and their parents to worship together in a child friendly format. They will join the congregation in the sanctuary for the Peace and remain there for the duration of the main service.

Please be patient as families adjust to these changes. We will give it some time and evaluate in November.

Online Bible Study: The online Bible Study will return on Mondays from 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. beginning September 10. We use a Lectionary-based curriculum, [Feasting on the Word](#) and use Zoom, a platform designed for online meetings. Study and reflect on Scripture from the comfort of your home. The link for the class will be posted on Facebook and will be sent by email. Join us!

Fall Events at the Day School: On Saturday, October 27, we will hold the 10th Annual Children's Fair. Please invite your friends, relations, and neighbors to this fun event.

On Tuesday, October 30, we will have our annual Fall Costume Parade through Talbot Park starting at 4:00 pm. Parishioners and neighbors of all ages are invited to parade with us or cheer us on.

Risser Memorial Library News: What a lovely space we have in the Risser Library. My favorite time is when the morning sun comes through the windows, and I can sit and read in the quiet sweetness of the space.

The Risser Memorial Library was inspired by the extraordinary private collection of books of our former rector, the Rev. Richard Risser. The books were given by his wife Peggy as a legacy after his death. The collection was extensive, and some books were purchased by a rare book seller, others were given to a seminary, and then we began to form the library we have now.

In the last few weeks, the former library committee of Peggy Risser, Mary Louise O'Brien, Faye Pahl, and Sally Miller have begun to go through the books and clean out the outdated and worn books. There are some rather classic books that we felt people in the parish might like to have as their own. These will be put in the Narthex on September 9th for the next few weeks.

Please take time to go to the library and look at what is there. Books are easy to get on computers, kindles etc., but there is nothing like holding a book, feeling the pages, and lingering over words that hold truth for you. We hope you will find a quiet place for reading and prayer there. You may take books home to read; however, we ask you bring them back for others to read. If you have books you would like to give to the library, please place them on a shelf to the left as you enter marked "Donated Books." Please know that we may not keep them all, and what is not placed in the library will be donated to the Salvation Army.

In my lifetime, many authors became my spiritual guides as I have moved through my seeking and walk with God. May you find your guides as well in the books that are there for you.

Sally Miller

Ascension Book Club

Jane Hedgecock

The Ascension Book Club began on August 19, 2004 when a group of bibliophiles got together to discuss their favorite books. Fourteen years later, we're still going strong!

We meet on the second Monday of the month, year round, from 6:30 to 8:30 PM. We take turns hosting the meeting at our homes, providing drinks and light refreshments for the participants. In December we choose the books we'll be reading for the coming year. It's not necessary to finish the book, or even read it, before the meeting. Members come for the lively and insightful discussion and fellowship.

Our next meeting dates, books, and locations are as follows:

Sept. 10	The Book of Secrets by Deepak Chopra	Anita Mitchell's house
Oct. 8	Born a Crime by Trevor Noah	Kris Huddle's house
Nov. 12	The Templars by Dan Jones	Jane Hedgecock's house
Dec. 10	The Last Painting of Sarah DeVos by Dominic Smith	George Mahaifer's house

For additional information, please contact our "Fearless Leader", Jane Hedgecock.

Finances as of 30 July

Chuck Beers

Expenses year-to-date are below budget with Repairs and Maintenance and Salaries the major contributors. July was a very good month: income exceeded the budget, and expenses were below budget.

If you are new to Ascension, you may not know how Pastoral Care can assist you or your family members with your joys, sorrows, or just everyday life. Our job is to try to meet the needs of all those in our parish. It might be as simple as a card or phone call to let you know we care. Perhaps you or a loved one are hospitalized. We can visit, provide a meal when needed, or wrap you in the comfort of a beautiful homemade prayer shawl. Sometimes, you may feel the need for prayer. Let the church office know, and your name will be sent out on our prayer chain to those folks who love praying for others. Twice a month at both services, we offer prayer and healing in a small room to the right of the altar. We also offer transportation to services, if needed, and communion to those homebound or in the hospital.

We will even send you an e-card on your birthday. We love our homebound folks and try several times during the year to visit and provide them with a remembrance to let them know they are still very much a part of this church.

If you are interested in this ministry, let one of the folks on this commission know. You are welcome to join. Come and share your time and talent.

Donna Killmon, Anita Mitchell, Bill Willey, Jane Hedgecock, Chuck Spence, Marilyn Meek, Suzi Montagna, Phillip Todd, Pearl Windle, Richard Drumwright, Lee Davenport, Kris Huddle, Sally Miller, and Marina Patricia White.

Using Credit Cards for pledge payments:

The Church has the capacity to receive donations in a variety of ways—cash, check, electronic bill payment, and credit card. A credit card payment requires the use of Pay Pal, which was set up primarily for the benefit of the Day School Casino Night. Like all non-profit entities, Ascension is watching its costs. Unfortunately, when a credit card payment is made, Ascension loses a 3.1% fee. For example, a \$100 pledge payment costs the Church \$3.10; the net pledge payment is \$96.90. If you wish the convenience of payment by credit card, please consider covering the 3.1% fee that is automatically deducted from your credit card donation. Obviously, whatever payment method, Ascension welcomes your contribution!

Chuck Beers, Finance & Jane Webster, Treasurer

Give it to God: A Great Tax-Saving Opportunity!

If you are at or near the age of 70 ½, you probably know that you must withdraw a “required minimum distribution” (RMD) from your IRA or other retirement accounts; e.g., 403(b) or 401(k), beginning in the year you turn 70 ½. Your age and the account value on December 31st of the preceding year are used to calculate this minimum amount you must withdraw each year. These withdrawals are taxable income in the year they are received.

The great tax-savings opportunity is that up to \$100,000 of your withdrawals can be donated to an eligible charity without your having to pay income tax on it, provided that the amount you donate is transferred directly from the custodian of your retirement account (e.g., Fidelity, TIAA, etc.) to the charity itself. For example, if you transfer \$20,000 in cash or other securities from your custodian to Church of the Ascension, you do not pay income taxes on that \$20,000. If you receive the money yourself and then give it to the church, it becomes taxable income.

The beauty of this tax rule is that you can make a larger gift than might be possible if you were making it with taxed income, since the amount donated through your RMD is not included in your taxable income. In the interest of full disclosure, be aware that money donated in this way cannot be claimed as a charitable deduction by those who itemize. The new tax law makes it likely that fewer taxpayers will itemize deductions, so for those not itemizing, using RMD's for charitable giving will result in tax savings they would not have had otherwise. This may sound complicated but it isn't! Some details, as simply as we can state them: Cash gifts should be sent directly from your retirement plan custodian to the Church of the Ascension's account, along with information stating that you are the donor and indicating the purpose(s) for which you wish the gift to be used. Securities should be transferred directly to Ascension's brokerage account, accompanied by similar information.

The Stewardship Commission urges you to talk to our Rector or Treasurer, as well as your Financial Advisor or CPA, and to consider this tax-saving opportunity when planning your gift to Ascension. It can be used for your annual pledge or for any special gifts you choose to make. Several of our parishioners have begun taking advantage of this tax rule to pay their annual pledge and/or to make other donations. As one so wonderfully put it: "I can give my money to Uncle Sam or I can give it to God. For me, that's a no-brainer!"

Faithfully, Church of the Ascension Stewardship Commission



A HALLOWEEN CELEBRATION FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY, SPONSORED BY CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION

WHEN: WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 31, 2018

TIME: 6-8 P.M. (SETUP STARTS AT 5 P.M.)

WHERE: CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION PARKING LOT

CHILDREN ARE INVITED TO WEAR COSTUMES AND TRICK OR TREAT WHILE VIEWING DECORATED CARS IN THE CHURCH PARKING LOT. FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO RESERVE A SPOT FOR YOUR DECORATED VEHICLE, CONTACT PATTI GLOWATSKY AT PGLOWATSKY@ASCENSION-NORFOLK OR 423-6715.

**THERE WILL BE A CONTEST FOR BEST COSTUME
AS WELL AS BEST TRUNK DECORATIONS!**