



*Spires* September 2020

# Church of the Ascension

13216 Detroit Avenue • Lakewood, OH 44107 • [www.ascension-lakewood.org](http://www.ascension-lakewood.org)

## FROM REV. VINCENT BLACK



### From Your Priest September 2020

*Whether we live or die, it must be for God, rather than for ourselves. Whether we live or die, it must be for the Lord. Alive or dead, we still belong to the Lord. (Romans 14:7-8.)*

We will read the scripture above on the second Sunday of September. It reminds us that we are and always will be God's own beloved, whether we are alive or dead we belong to God forever.

I begin my eighth year as your priest on September first. The first Sunday I was here I met Marilyn and Clarence Watters. It was Labor Day weekend. That was the last time I was to be able to worship in church with Marilyn for she was hospitalized within days of our meeting and died on September 28th, 2013. Seven years later to the day, we had the celebration of renewed ministry in which we marked the call for me to be the fulltime rector at Church of the Ascension. That was a year ago this month.

And now as we begin September, we will partake of the Blessed Sacrament together for the first time since March 8th. When we last had the opportunity to partake together it was the season of Lent, a time in the church calendar marked by fasting and intentional remembrance that we are all made of dust and that we will all return to dust. Well that season of fasting has been greatly extended by COVID-19. We were not able to worship in-person at Ascension until July 19th and have not been able to all receive the consecrated bread together until Sunday September 16th, and the priest alone will be receiving the consecrated wine for the foreseeable future. Yet, no matter what happens, we belong to God and God has us and loves us endlessly.

We are blessed to have a seminarian placed with us as an intern. Her name is Leah and she has written a letter of introduction. It follows the Senior Warden's Report. Please read it and welcome her warmly to our parish as I am sure you will. Leah will join us for our parish picnic with her husband and stepson on September 12th and join us for the first time for worship on September 13th. She will preach on September 20th at both services. We thank God, Bishop Mark, and The Rev. Percy Grant for giving us this opportunity to grow with Leah in our vocations and identity in Christ. Leah will contribute monthly to the Spires, always following the Senior Warden's report.

As summer draws to a close and we turn toward fall, we are reminded that seasons come and go. This season of fasting will come to an end and we will again be able to feast in a post pandemic world. We will not go back to how things were, but we will move forward into the future God has waiting for us. We do so with the saints who have gone before us like Marilyn and Clarence, with the living saints we have sent out in ordained ministry including Noah who also has a letter in this month's Spires, with our new seminarian, and with all our new Facebook viewers, and we do so with Jesus as our Lord and leader and giver of the promised Spirit who inspires and sustains us all.



## PARISH PICNIC

We will have a parish picnic on Saturday September 12th  
from 12pm - 2pm in the north garden.

# FROM CORKY THACKER, SENIOR WARDEN



## Senior Warden's Report

In August, I talked about the importance of planning ahead for the time when we leave this life for the next, eternal one. The old saying is true: You can't take it with you. So, end of life planning means making decisions about what to do with our worldly goods, and how to make sure they are distributed according to our wishes.

The process required me to do some soul-searching to identify what I value, and how I wanted to make a meaningful, long-term difference. Helping insure the financial sustainability of Church of the Ascension so others may share in what I've found here is at the top of my list. Hopefully, it will be somewhere on your list, too, along with other people and institutions you value.

There are several options for planned giving at our church:

**Endowments** – We have established two separate endowment funds within our account in the Diocese of Ohio's Joint Investment Fund (JIF). This is a diversified, professionally managed fund that historically has produced earnings of 4% or more. The endowments are designed to supplement our two largest budget areas beyond what parishioners' annual pledge revenues may be able to support.

**Church of the Ascension Endowment for Clergy Support** was established to supplement the cost of the compensation package for our priest and/or additional clergy. It will enable Ascension to retain and attract strong spiritual leadership to continue our vibrant growth and ministries.

**Church of the Ascension Endowment for Facilities Upkeep and Maintenance Support** was established to supplement our budget for large capital projects needed to protect and maintain our beautiful church and related buildings. The church is 100+ years old, and typically requires major repairs of \$40,000–\$50,000 each year.

Each of the above endowments has a Phase One goal of \$500,000 and a Phase Two goal of \$1 million. When fully funded, their annual earnings at a 4% rate will produce \$20,000 each at the Phase One goal level and \$40,000 at Phase Two. To insure these income streams in perpetuity, only the earnings may be channeled to restricted budget accounts for use. The capital may not be invaded.

**Legacy Pledge Fund** – We recently established this as a means to replace your pledge for a specific period, suggested by other churches at 10 years, to fill the annual budget gap created by the loss of regular givers long enough to gain enough new members to cover our operating expenses. Many choose to make bequests to endowments for perpetual support and also a legacy pledge fund, where the capital provided will be used for the church's expenses for the given period. Due to the shorter timeframe and current market volatility, these donations are now held in a restricted cash account.

**Non-specified gift or bequest to Church of the Ascension** – Half would go to our Endowment for Clergy Support, and half into our General Fund for the Vestry to direct toward needs at the time.

There are several ways to give, as explained below from information posted on the website of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Cleveland Heights:

- Making an outright gift to the endowment fund.
- Naming the church in your will or codicil.
- Making the church the beneficiary of a life insurance policy or retirement plan.
- Establishing a charitable gift annuity or trust to benefit the church.

**Retirement Plan Assets/IRAs** – Often considered an attractive option for making a planned gift, retirement plan assets can be among the most tax burdened assets in an estate. To make a charitable gift of retirement assets, you simply need to complete a new beneficiary designation form naming the church as a percentage beneficiary.

**Life Insurance** – Life insurance is a convenient way to make a gift to the church. You can purchase a new policy and make the church the owner and beneficiary of the policy. Premium payments are tax deductible. You can make the church the owner and beneficiary, or percentage beneficiary, of an existing policy. There are tax benefits to each of these options. You can also make the church a contingent beneficiary of an existing policy if the designated beneficiaries pre-decease the insured.

**Life Income Gifts** – Life Income Gifts provide you or your designated beneficiary income for life in exchange for your gift. A significant tax benefit is created now. The three most common types of life income gifts are a Pooled Income Fund, a Charitable Gift Annuity, and a Charitable Remainder Trust. These types of gifts generally reduce or eliminate certain taxes while providing annual income. Consult your tax or financial advisor for benefits specific to your situation for more information about life income gifts.

## FROM CORKY THACKER, SENIOR WARDEN

In making a bequest in your will or codicil, naming the church as a beneficiary of retirement plan assets or life insurance policies, and in discussions with your attorney, tax or financial advisor, please remember to include the name of the church, address and tax I. D. number (Church of the Ascension, 13216 Detroit Avenue, Lakewood, Ohio 44107; Tax ID: 34-0714577).

I hope you'll find this helpful, and will consider how you might help Ascension continue to do God's work on this earthly plane after you've moved beyond it! Please contact Father Vincent for more information or to discuss your plans.

Sincerely,  
Corky Thacker, Senior Warden

## FROM LEAH ROMANELLI DEJESUS, SEMINARIAN



Dear Ascension friends (as I hope we soon shall be),

I am delighted to begin my ministry internship with you this September! Since I moved to Cleveland three years ago, people have told me repeatedly how welcoming you are, how meaningful your worship is, and what strong outreach you practice. I've seen firsthand the fruits of your nurturing community as my first friends here were all former ESC members: Lauren Dockery, Anna and Noah Sutterisch, and Steve Ashby. You have a beautiful legacy and I look forward to being formed with and by you in the years ahead.

This September I also start full-time studies at Bexley Seabury Seminary, where I've gone part-time for the last two years. I look forward to sharing what I'm learning with you and hearing your thoughts.

In my personal life, I have always earned my living through practicing youth ministry. My most current role was as Director of Youth Ministries at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Cleveland Heights, which ends this September. This past July, I married the best human I know: Alex DeJesus. I inherited a son from him, too, six-year-old Javier! We live in East Cleveland in the Forest Hills neighborhood. Together we enjoy splashing in all bodies of water from puddles to pools, planting gardens, reading aloud, playing board games, and caring for our pets: Karou the dog and Lumos the cat. Personally, I also love the lake, the Metroparks, British literature, pestering Farmer Kyle at Bellwether, feeding people, and home renovation projects (much to Alex's chagrin).

Originally, I hail from Chicagoland, my family are mostly farmers and teachers, and I did my undergrad at Grinnell College in the middle of Iowa...so I am very familiar with cornfields. My spirituality grew up alongside the plants in my mother's garden and I first learned to recognize God by hugging pine trees in the forest. While working in Chicago, though, I came to love the practice of cultivating a better communal life for everyone by integrating folks who lived at the margins through community meals, apprenticeship programs, and a well-loved school.

A pandemic is an odd time to take on a new position. I know getting to know each other will look different than it might have just last year. But I look forward to getting to know you all over the next several months and I hope you'll consider having ice cream with me—if you'd like, we can meet in the garden at church, or I'm happy to travel to your home and sit outside or on a balcony or porch. Either way, I'll bring the Mitchell's!

With thanksgiving,  
Leah Romanelli DeJesus  
(seminarian)



# FROM DEACON NOAH

August 2020

Dear Church of the Ascension,

I write to you full of joy as I have been called to serve as deacon-in-charge at All Saints Church in Parma.

As I reflect on the major milestones I have recently come to - graduation from seminary and ordination to the diaconate, I am filled with gratitude for your support without which it is clear to me I would not be an ordained person. At the same time I am filled with sadness over the inability to have visited you in person this past Winter and Spring due to the threat of COVID-19 and keeping the church's value for the wellbeing of all people. I long to see you all and celebrate my ordination with you face to face.

As you may or may not know the stole I was ordained in is Father Vincent's the same stole he wore in his ordination to the diaconate. As I wore that stole over my heart it not only reminded me of who has supported me but its physical touch was impossible to ignore and felt like one big Ascension hug. In no small way was I mindful of the caring touch of that stole which acted as a stand-in to what would have been without a pandemic a season where handshakes and hugs would have abounded. And you may have heard or saw Lauren Dockery support my ordination on behalf of the people. I am proud that she as a member also represents Ascension. Because you were not able to be there in person, know that if you feel you have in some way contributed to my formation be assured you have and that I am grateful for it.

Our privilege as disciples of Jesus is to imitate Jesus in the midst of the world not apart from it. The chances and changes of this life find us by virtue of our baptism being called to imitate Jesus in the midst of a pandemic and in the midst of people of color crying out for justice, peace, and dignity. I have discerned that I can serve in this time as a listener - being open and curious about how to keep the health and protect the dignity of others in new ways. To proactively learn about and respect another's way to stay safe during this pandemic. To proactively ask myself if the label I use for a person really means I know them. Does not the Trinity teach us that God is more than the three names we so often use. God is more than the box we often put God into so that we might try to understand the divine. God manifests in ways we do not expect because God is eternal, eternally knowable and yet eternally loves us and nourishes us to love anew.

Thank you for all of the phone calls, emails, and cards to help celebrate the recent milestones in my life and remind me who has supported me to reach them. I am encouraged from knowing you that God indeed is always doing new things. You have shared life, church, and faith through your own eyes teaching me from different perspectives of age, race, gender, and experience - lessons I could not learn because I have not been you! I am so grateful you are my sponsoring church, have shared and cared for me, and continue to be a part of my church community. I look forward to following Jesus with you all and could not ask for better partners. And, God willing, I look forward to staying in touch during this pandemic and seeing each other in person.

Peace,  
-Deacon Noah

**God loves you. No exceptions.®**

## THE WEEKLY PRAYER LIST

The weekly prayer list is used for those who need extra prayers due to illness or a particular challenge or hardship.

It is important to remove people from the prayer list, not just add to it. We all need prayers and so we pray for the gathered congregation each week when we meet but not each member of the congregation is prayed for by name.

All names will be removed from the prayer list at the end of November as we end the liturgical year. We will start with a new prayer list the first Sunday of Advent. For those wanting to add or remove people from the prayer list please call the office.



# September 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 5 pm - Trials for Hope Meal (Take out only)	2	3	4	5
6 8 am- Service (Make reservations) 10:30 am- Service (Make reservations)	7	8	9	10 6 pm - Community Meal (Take out only)	11	12 12-2 pm - Parish Picnic (north garden)
13 8 am- Service (Make reservations) 10:30 am- Service (Make reservations)	14	15 12:12 pm- Noon day prayer via conference call (See Page 6)	16	17	18	19
20 8 am- Service (Make reservations) 10:30 am- Service (Make reservations)	21	22 12:12 pm- Noon day prayer via conference call (See Page 6)	23	24	25	26
27 8 am- Service (Make reservations) 10:30 am- Service (Make reservations)	28 5 pm - Trials for Hope Meal (Take out only)	29 12:12 pm- Noon day prayer via conference call (See Page 6)	30			

## In-person worship resumed on Sunday July 19.

Please call the office at 216-521-8727 to let us know if you are coming and how many in the party. Imagine it is like making reservations at a restaurant for now. This will help us better plan and be prepared. Of course we will also accommodate visitors and others who may not have been able to call ahead. We will also continue to offer a virtual worship opportunity as well.

### **Please do not come to church if you are not feeling well.**

All will be required to wear a mask and keep a social distance of 6 feet. Please bring your own mask. Masks will be available if you forget to bring one.

Hand sanitizer will be provided, and you are asked to use it. It is recommended that you have your own hand sanitizer as well.

There will be no coffee hour following the services at this time. People may socialize at a safe distance outside on the lawn or in the garden.

8am service will be held in the West Garden weather permitting. Otherwise it will be in Ascension Hall. Those attending 8am service are asked to enter the building through the West Entrance unless the assistance of the elevator is required. When calling ahead please specify whether you will bring your own chair or need one to be provided for outdoor worship.

10:30am service will be in the church. Those attending 10:30 service are asked to enter and exit through the front doors in the Nartex. As a rule we will enter via the center isle, and exit via the side isles maintaining social distance. Those requiring the assistance of the elevator are welcome to enter and exit through the East Entrance.

All these things may seem to be a burden and to diminish our experience of worship. The devil, the power of evil, wants us to be discouraged and to give up hope. We need to be mindful that we worship God as our Creator and Redeemer and that all our hope on God is founded! We will not give up gathering as the Body of Christ simply because it is less than ideal. Remember we follow a Lord who was terribly inconvenienced by the crucifixion but in the end rose from the dead and freed us from death and despair. So in this season we gladly bear the burden of keeping each other and ourselves safe while simultaneously worshipping God and bearing witness to the world of God's unwavering love.

## Starting Sept. 15th - Noon day prayer Tuesdays At 12:12pm via conference call

On Tuesdays there will be a conference call enabling you to call in and join Father Vincent and other members of our Ascension community for:

- Noonday Prayer (10 minutes),
- A reflection from Forward Day by Day (5 minutes),
- Time for us to check-in with each other (20 minutes),
- Time to ask questions and exchange information (10 minutes),
- Prayer for the Church of the Ascension.

This will give everyone access to our priest and allow us to continue together in prayer and fellowship.

**We will start noonday prayer promptly at 12:12 and end just before 1pm.**

**Please do not call in before 12:05pm.**

You can call in for all or part of the time.

We will use the Book of Common Prayer pp. 103-107.

Dial-in number: (425) 436-6300

Access code: 593523#

Use \*6 to mute and un-mute yourself when trying to talk.

## REMINDER TO THE PARISH AND COMMUNITY

- Community Meals will continue as scheduled. **Meals will be prepared for take-out**
- Vestry Meetings will be virtual until further notice.
- Please click on the link for a list of phone and internet AA meetings [Online Intergroup Alcoholics Anonymous](#)

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## SEPTEMBER CELEBRATIONS



### BIRTHDAYS

**September 06:** Alisha Conway  
**September 08:** Steve Ashby  
**September 09:** Eleanor Jones  
**September 09:** Jennifer Spada  
**September 11:** Richard Ballard  
**September 12:** Marjorie Hildebrandt  
**September 13:** Jeffrey W. Knapp  
**September 13:** Gilbert Newlands  
**September 13:** Gregory Sent  
**September 14:** Hugo Hildebrandt  
**September 15:** Christina Ferraro

### BIRTHDAYS

**September 17:** John Mohlar  
**September 22:** Nancy Murphy  
**September 23:** Kent Johnson  
**September 24:** Cole Spada  
**September 27:** Codi Hildebrandt  
**September 27:** Ava-Joyce Lewallen

### ANNIVERSARIES

**September 03:** Christina Ferraro & Joseph Kidwell  
**September 26:** Richard & Rosemary Ballard

## PLEDGES AND OFFERINGS TO THE CHURCH

Please mail in your pledges/financial offerings so we can continue with the ministries of the church as well as meet our financial obligations.

**OR**

## YOU CAN USE PLASTIC TO DONATE TO THE CHURCH!

At [theascensionshop.com](http://theascensionshop.com) you can use plastic to donate to the church. Credit and debit cards are accepted. One time, Weekly, Bi-Weekly, and Monthly contributions can be entered. All contributions will show on your annual statement. Just take a look! With thanks to theascensionshop creator Michael Crowdes; send questions to [crowdes@gmail.com](mailto:crowdes@gmail.com).