

Church of the
Ascension
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CHURCH OF THE
ASCENSION

We believe in
sharing the
experience of
love and grace by
seeking
relationship with
God and one
another.

Save the Date for VBS

June 3-6, 2019

8:30am—Noon

St. John's Episcopal
Church

This year St. John's will host VBS.

We will look at the story of Joseph and God's Faithfulness to Joseph despite many difficult times in his life. We will also "grow our faith" while exploring farms and gardens around the River Region. Remember that even though we are not the hosts, we still need the support of Ascensions AWESOME volunteers.

You'll receive more information later in the Spring, but keep these dates open for our children to have a great experience!



Church of the Ascension

May 2019

The Tower

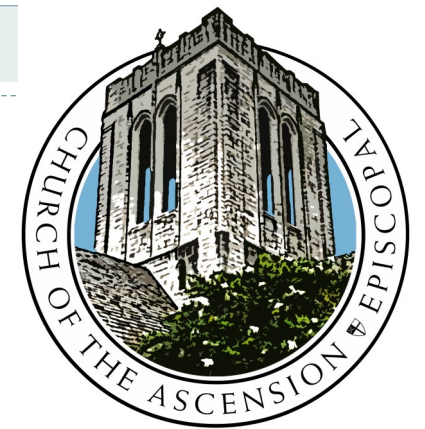
FOUR GARDENS: A SALVATION STORY

Gardens have a significant place in Scripture. The prophets and even the four evangelists—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—often allude to them as places of hope and promise. The prophet Isaiah reassures the exiled Israelites that their return to their land will not be a return to desolation and waste but one filled with hope as portrayed by the lushness of a garden, “The LORD will surely comfort Zion and will look with compassion on all her ruins; he will make her deserts like Eden, her wastelands like the garden of the LORD. Joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the sound of singing.” (Isaiah 51:3) In the parable of the mustard seed, we are told that it is planted in a garden and from it springs a plant that outgrows itself in size to offer respite and security to all who would gather there, “It is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his garden. It grew and became a tree, and the birds perched in its branches.” (Luke 9:13) More than just the image of peace and hope, the Bible also tells us of four gardens in which significant things take place—Eden, Gethsemane, the Tomb in the Garden, and Paradise.

The Garden of Eden is the place of creation and fall. It is where God locates man and woman after the world has been established and it is good. Eden means, “delight” and God seemed to take delight in his creation and in humans. In the Garden of Eden, God would stroll with Adam and Eve and simply delight in them and they in him. Yet, even though this new world is beautiful and has all that they need, it also contains the opportunity for free will to enter into the world—the trees of knowledge and life are in the midst of the garden, a fruit is picked and eaten, the man and the woman know their nakedness and instead of finding an easy comfort with God, are now humbled by God’s presence and are separated from God; sin has entered into the world.

The Garden of Gethsemane is the place where Jesus will spend the last hours of his life; the place where his disciples will not even be able to stay awake one hour to “watch and pray”; the place where he will be arrested and even at the end preach compassion not violence. It is through the Garden of Gethsemane that our Lord and Savior leads us to redemption. The choice made in the Garden of Eden is swallowed up in the victory of the choice made in the Garden of Geth-

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CLERGY & STAFF

The Rev. Candice Frazer
Rector

The Rev. Mark Waldo
Rector Emeritus

Rebecca Taylor
Organist/Choirmaster

Tiffany Nishibun
Children's Ministries

Laura Walter
Youth Coordinator

Tracy Hinton-Adams
Parish Administrator

Jessica James
Communications

Will McQueen
Facilities Manager

Octavio Gomez-Jimenez
Housekeeping

Ryan Hall
Housekeeping

semane. God wins after all.

Jesus’s body is laid to rest in a new tomb in a garden. But rest is not in God’s plan. Instead Mary and the women discover the tomb is empty—God is not dead, Jesus has risen from the grave, death is not the victor instead, there is everlasting life that awaits us all. The empty tomb is the sign of resurrection, of transformation and newness of life, of hope. And in the first sighting of the resurrected Jesus, he is mistaken for a gardener.

In resurrection we are promised newness of life—a life that will find its eternal fulfillment in the paradise of God. Paradise was how the original garden, the Garden of Eden was described. And in the restored life in God, the book of the Revelation to John, paradise is the word that describes heaven. Thus Eden is restored to her perfect and pure created state and we are restored to the delight of God—no longer separated from God.

The gardens of scripture not only offer us hope, they help us to understand what we believe about our faith: there is creation and then fall, redemption and resurrection, that brings us to new life in Christ, a new creation. The theological cycle of creation, fall, redemption, resurrection, and new creation is the basis of our belief in the salvation story. Through the garden we can see that story acted out naturally because it is the story of nature not just humans. A seed is planted (creation); it must die to itself (fall) in order to become something new (redemption). With nourishment, light, and water it grows into a plant (resurrection). And as the plant dies and goes back into the earth it prepares itself to become a new creation either because it is dormant for a time or because it has born more seed. That is the natural cycle of the world, but it is also the cycle of salvation.

Gardens remind us of that promise, of the hope of our eternal salvation. We, like seeds, are planted and in order to grow must be transformed—dying to self and rising to life in Christ. We will bloom as plants in the garden of this world and when our season is over we will become seeds again planted in the garden of Paradise. It is no wonder that

gardens have and will continue to be important to us—as provision for food, for beauty, for peace.

We plant all kinds of gardens—vegetable gardens, herb gardens, flower gardens, even butterfly gardens—and the thing that all those gardens have in common is the hope that creation always brings with it. Gardens are not easy to care for; they require tending—weed pulling, digging in the dirt, transplanting plants, harvesting—constant care.

We have a few gardens here at Ascension and those too, require constant care. They are also visual reminders of our hope and faith—witnesses to the salvific light we are promised in this world and the next. The Sundial Garden is not only a place of beauty, but a reminder of time and seasons; a reminder that we keep moving forward and that movement is not static. Plants change depending on the season, but time keeps moving us forward. The Waldo Garden is as much a water garden as anything else and it is the place in which we gather in fellowship and reflection—it is the place of new creation in relationship with God and one another. The Memorial Garden is a resting place. Though the ashes of those who have died may reside there, we know that they are born into the resurrected life and that brings us comfort and peace and reminds us of the promise of our own salvation. Our newest garden is the Transfiguration Garden, a powerful and visual witness to our neighborhood and community. It is the place of Eden and its purpose is to remind us that even in our brokenness, God makes all things new and wants of us a partnership—a willingness to work with the Lord—in bringing reconciliation to all creation.

Gardens take a lot of care and attention, as does humanity. And like humanity, they can be mistreated, neglected, and abused. But they can also be places of peace and respite, comfort and nourishment. I expect that will be the case with all of our gardens because they are not ours to possess, but to give to the world as stewards of God’s creation that we may delight in him and he in us.

Light and Life,
Candice+



Symbolism Found in the Transfiguration Garden

The new garden is a traditional potager garden or kitchen garden planted with fruits, vegetables, herbs and flowers. The plan of the garden has a stone fountain at its center with four pathways radiating from it separating the center of the garden into four beds. This traditional garden design comes from the description of the Garden of Eden from Genesis (2:8-10) which ends with “A river flows out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it divides and becomes

four branches.” This became the standard for garden design for thousands of years. Examples of which can be found across Europe and the Middle East in Judeo-Christian and Muslim gardens, Roman and Greek gardens, Medieval, monastic, Tudor and Renaissance gardens, and in today’s gardens. The fountain represents Christ in the center of the lives of the faithful, “Out of the believer’s heart shall flow rivers of living waters” (John 7:38); and four beds surround it -- representing the four Gospels. There are twelve beds total -- representing the twelve apostles. The pair of pomegranate trees in large pots represent Martha and Mary who cared for the apostles. Just outside the boxwood edging, with ample room to grow, will be an apple tree, giving a nod to the first garden at Eden. The two wood benches nestled under iron trellises covered with climbing roses represent Moses and Elijah on the Mountain of the Transfiguration as they appeared speaking with Christ, who is represented by the cross. The stone cross is our former Tower cross reassembled after it was struck by lightning, saving the Church. All of these broken pieces, much like we are broken, are held together by a strong iron frame. Carved into it’s base is 2 Corinthians 5:17 “So if anyone is in Christ there is a new creation. Everything old has passed away. See everything has become new!”



—Richard Norris



Lay Weeders are looking to GROW!

The weeds are ripe for pulling, and the weeders are few. Pitch in to keep the gardens and grounds beautiful! No experience required. Bring gloves, a trowel and a willing spirit to the Sundial Garden every 2nd Saturday at 8:30am. Questions? Call Janet at (334) 462.5166 or Camille at (334) 462-0390.

VESTRY

2019

Scott Bamman,
Senior Warden

Paul Davis

Richard Norris

Chris Smith

2020

Andrew Akin,

Junior Warden

Laura Brendle

Susan Copeland

Henry Weatherly

2021

Brittney Calhoun

Lacy Gibson

Sissy Speirs

Mr. Glenn Sylvest

Robert Gould,
Treasurer

Matt Bledsoe,
Clerk of the Vestry

MAY HAPPENINGS

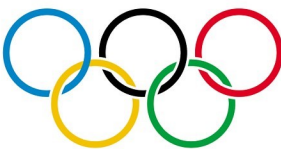


YOUTH SUNDAY MAY 5

Join us May 5 for Youth Sunday! Youth and children will participate in the 10:15am service. We will honor our graduating Seniors and recognize our first graders and Choiristers. A luncheon for youth will follow in Ascension Hall.

CHURCH OLYMPICS MAY 19 AT 9:15AM

Join us for the last day of Sunday School and “blue jean/casual Sunday” for a bit of fun and frivolity with “Church Olympics”! More details in E-News.



ANNUAL MEMORIAL DAY BOSTON BUTT SALE
PICK-UP, MAY 24 FROM 8:00 TO 10:00AM
\$40.00 payable to **CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION**
Call the church office to reserve your butt today at 334-263-5529
Orders must be in by Wednesday May 22nd

ASCENSION DAY MAY 30, 5:30PM

Our annual Ascension Day is just around the corner! Make plans to join us for a “Blueucharist” at 5:30pm, complete with a bluegrass band, BBQ dinner from Smokehouse and “jumpies” and other activities for the children. Contact the church office for ticket information.



Pew Pals

Totes filled with Godly and quiet activities for your child to enjoy during church services.

Available at the Vineyard Bookstore

TRANSFORMING GENEROSITY

2019 STEWARDSHIP UPDATE (As of 4/29/19):

171 Pledges totaling \$908,146.00
2019 Pledges Collected To-date: \$353,266.11

Pledges are important not only in properly budgeting for the church, but in our growth and transformation as we give to God to partner with God in doing his work in the world.

Also, have you considered Church of the Ascension in your estate planning? For more information, contact Tracy in the Parish Office.

MUSIC NOTES



Bluegrass and Cathedrals...

Every now and then, we need for our worlds to be shaken up a little. We need to have some serendipities in our lives, some surprises, some things that change our viewpoint and ruffle our complacencies.

The music for our Eucharist on Ascension Day will be from the Bluegrass repertoire, I mean, what could be more joyous to celebrate Jesus’ Ascension to heaven than our singing “I’ll fly away” outside? Ascension Day is one of the Major Feast Days of the Church, and we want our entire church family to join us. People are surprised to learn that in a former lifetime I played and sang with a Country and Bluegrass band. I love all kinds of styles and genres of music, and that period in my life was as much fun as any I’ve had. But I receive just as much joy singing the music of the high Anglican tradition.

Below is a picture taken from the organ loft of The Ascension Choir at Wells Cathedral. When I saw it today, my heart was heavy thinking of Notre Dame. The world is grieving for the damage to this iconic building, and I am thinking of beautiful spaces of worship, of Ascension, of Salisbury and Wells, places that we are bound to because of the profound worship that has

taken place there over the years and centuries.

Hymn 665, “All my hope on God is founded,” was composed by the great Anglican composer, Herbert Howells. He set Robert Seymour Bridges’ poetry in memory of Howells’ own son, who died accidentally in childhood. The words are powerful and I hope that you will read over them the next time you are with a hymnal. With the devastating fire at Notre Dame, the second verse comes to mind: “Mortal pride and earthly glory, sword and crown betray our trust; though with care and toil we build them, tower and temple fall to dust.” And so, as we have been reminded at the Offertory this season, we must “lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven.”

We are called to praise God in all circumstances, in all people, in all of creation. Our style of music, or architecture, or other earthly preferences are not the ultimately important choices we make, but our rejoicing in the beauty of holiness everywhere is our calling. The falling of buildings or the musical styles with which we worship are not our focus. French opulence or English simplicity is not the object of our praise, but rather God, who inspires the builders and architects, the congregations, the musicians, the beauty of His creation.

Join us for Ascension Day.

Becky

CONTRIBUTIONS

The Music Ministry Discretionary Fund has been established to provide special resources for the music program at Ascension. Gifts are welcome in honor, thanksgiving and memory of loved ones.

Thank you to all who support music ministry at the Ascension, by your prayers, presence and gifts.

Sustainers:

Pat & Jim Franklin
The Hobbs Foundation
Karen & Marvin Campbell
Emily Caruso
Susan & Lavone Dubose
Patricia T. Guest and her family
Diane Williams
Melanie & Dan Morris

In Thanksgiving

Tim Vaught

In Memory of Mae Vaught

Karen and Marvin Campbell

In Memory of Caroline Barmettler

Karen and Marvin Campbell

In Memory of Jackson McLendon

Karen and Marvin Campbell



Episcopal Youth Community

DEVELOPMENT AND EXPANSION OF THE CHURCH'S MINISTRY WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

Join us for our next adventure! All youth in grades 7 to 12 are welcome to come anytime!

Youth Sunday

May 5, 2019

10:15 SERVICE LED BY YOUTH

LUNCH TO HONOR SENIORS

11:30 AM

Ascension Small Dining Room

Youth families welcome!

RSVP to laurawalter7@gmail.com

334-300-2310

Wonderful, Wonderful Camp McDowell!

Summer camp registration is now open

PRIMARY I (1st-3rd grade w/ adult) MAY 24-26

ELEMENTARY II (4th-5th grade) MAY 29-JUN 2

MIDDLER CAMP (5th-6th grade) JUN 5-JUN 10

SOPHOMORE CAMP (8th-9th grade) JUN 14-22

JUNIOR HIGH I (6th-7th grade) JUN 25-JUL 1

SENIOR CAMP (10th-12th grade) JUL 6-15

JUNIOR HIGH II (7th-8th grade) JUL 19-26

ELEMENTARY I (3rd-4th grade) JUL 28-JUL 31

YOUTH FOLK CAMP (5th-12th grade) JUL 28-31

PRIMARY II (1st-3rd grade w/ adult) AUG 2-4

BETHANY'S KIDS:

CAMPER BUDDY (10th grade-high school grads) JUN 5-9

CAMPERS (4th-8th grade w/ AND w/out disabilities) JUN 6-9

Grade based on entering Fall 2019



Register at:

<https://campmcdowell.com>

Children's Ministry

Godly Play Teachers (PreK and K) 9:15 Sundays, Third Floor

May 5: Christine Harrison, Allison Jones
Faces of Easter (Last Lesson)

May 12: Christine Harrison, Allison Jones
Pentecost

May 19: OLYMPICS!!!

May 26: No Sunday School

ELEMENTary Teachers (1st-6th) 9:15 Sundays, Third Floor

May 5: Nan Bargainer, Lauren Greene
Ascension

May 12: Laura Brendle
Pentecost

May 19: OLYMPICS!!!!

May 26: No Sunday School

Children's Church Helpers, 10:15 Sundays

May 5: The Wiggins Family

May 12: The Coker Family

May 19: TBA

May 26: The Harrison Family

Children's choirs meet Wednesdays at 6:00, our last Wednesday is on May 15

Family Dinner starts at 5:15 with a max cost of \$15 per family.

Dates to remember....

May 5th 10:15, First Graders will be presented with Bibles during church. No need to do anything special! Just show up like a regular Sunday

May 12th 10:15, Both the children's choirs will sing in this service! Mrs. Becky and Mrs. Tiffany will be in touch for more instruction. We *will* have children's church as usual.

May 19th 9:15, OLYMPICS during the Sunday School hour. MANY church groups will be competing for the trophy, but I'm sure the kid's will WIN it!

June 3-6 8:30-Noon, Vacation Bible School You can sign up online at StJohnsMontgomery.org, from the Children's Ministry FB page or get a paper reg. form from Tiffany.



Vacation Bible School June 3-6, 8:30am - Noon @ St. John's

This year St. John's will host VBS. We will look at the story of Joseph and God's Faithfulness to Joseph despite many difficult times in his life! We will also "grow our faith" while exploring farms and gardens around the River Region. Remember that even though we are not the hosts, we still need the support of Ascensions AWESOME volunteers! You'll receive more information in the spring, but keep these dates open for our kids to have a great experience!



We have started providing some materials to help you children engage in each service. You will find some activity kits for them in the narthex. These materials are not meant as distractions, to keep the kids quiet, rather these materials are to help kids sustain their attention and keep them involved in church. If you are interested in reading more about how to involve children in the fullness of worship. Candice has recommended this book, *Parenting in the Pew*, to offer us some pointers about how kids can be a part of worship.