

Church of the
Ascension
315 Clanton Avenue
Montgomery, AL 36104

www.coascension.org

Phone: 334-263-5529

BULK MAIL

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



**CHURCH OF THE
ASCENSION**

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



**2nd Sunday Eucharist
Reserved Sacrament**

You must reserve your
sacrament by Thursday,
July 9 at noon by calling
the church office or email-
ing jessica@coascension.org. Drive thru pick-up
stations will be available in the back parking lot
(enter through the Hull Street entrance and exit
through Clanton Ave) from 10:30AM until 11:30AM
on the morning of Sunday, July 12.

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The Tower

Newcomers

The Apostle Paul starts every letter he writes to a church in the New Testament in the spiritual language of greeting and welcome, "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." Paul then goes on to riff off of this welcome typically with offering thanks to God for whomever he has just greeted. I like that, welcome first and immediately follow that greeting with why you are thankful for the other. Its kind of fun, especially when you aren't sure why you might be thankful—so you start with the basics, "Welcome! I'm so grateful you are here so we can get to know one another...or catch up...or because I was feeling a bit lonely and now, I am not...or simply because life is always better when you have someone to share it with." And whatever the reason you are thankful for that other person, it is grounded in God. We aren't all Paul and we certainly won't all think or talk or believe as Paul does, but sometimes I wonder how different the world might look if we simply greeted one another like Paul greets us in his letters—Grace and peace to you and thanks be to God for you!

For me, that is a big part of what it means to be a member of our Newcomers Ministry Team—simply being a person of faith who is willing to greet another person regardless of their faith or even lack thereof and still be

thankful for them. Many people come to the Episcopal Church because they haven't felt a welcome that accepted them for who they are or maybe they never felt they could live up to a standard that they perceived other religions expected. That is one of the powerful and beautiful things about the Episcopal Church—our acceptance and inclusivity. The challenge we face as a church is not in being open or inclusive, it is in being inviting and absorbing others into our life as a church and congregation.

Episcopal churches tend to come in two types, the church of friends or the friendly church. Both styles of being church are good. They value love, pastoral care, outreach, and worship as a community. Both have their challenges. The church of friends encourages those in their groups, strives for spiritual growth and depth, finds common purpose and supports that purpose. The challenge with a church of friends is that they have a difficult time absorbing someone new and often the newbie never feels truly connected or included. The friendly church is also encouraging and supportive though they have a more challenging path to finding common purpose as they are often a diverse group. This style of church often finds they can absorb newcomers much easier and newcomers will feel connected much more quickly. The challenge for the friendly church is to ensure that they have good leadership

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CLERGY & STAFF

- The Rev. Candice Frazer
Rector
- The Rev. Drew Brislin
Associate Rector
- Rebecca Taylor
Organist/Choirmaster
- Tiffany Nishibun
Children's Ministries
- Elizabeth McGowin
Youth Minister
- Tracy Hinton-Adams
Parish Administrator
- Jessica James
Communications
- Laura Walter
Special Events
- Will McQueen
Facilities Manager
- Octavio Gomez-Jimenez
Housekeeping
- Ryan Hall
Housekeeping



Light and Life,
Candice+
candice@coascension.org

P. S. The great thing about COVID-19 and our bishop requiring face masks, even outside, is that sometimes you don't recognize someone with a mask on—so what better time to find out that person's name you always wondered about with the excuse that you didn't realize who it was because their face was covered!

that keeps them moving forward on a common path in a forward direction instead of falling prey to distraction and whim in the form of good works that can fracture a community.

Ascension is a friendly church. It is inviting, accepting, and engaging. It is a loving community that wants to include the other and finds a way to absorb the newcomer and offer them purposeful and meaningful relationships with God and one another. That is the church's mission, to partner with God and one another to do God's work of restoration and unity.

When it comes to newcomers, The Episcopal Church has a reputation of seeing visitors walk in the front door and continue right out the back door never to be seen again. The surprising thing is that there is significant data to suggest that many of those one-time visitors don't return not because they didn't like the church or the people, in fact most of them are immediately enamored with the liturgy. They didn't come back because no one asked them too. Taking a few minutes to greet a visitor is wonderful. Taking a few extra minutes to find out something about them, invite them to a meal, show some interest in them and then ask that they might come back to church or even to something the church is doing is even better.

As we figure out how to keep folks from walking out the back door at Ascension, we have put together a Newcomer's Ministry Team to focus on three aspects of newcomer engagement—invitation, welcome, and connection. You can see our initial members of the team and read about their reflections on why they love Ascension in this edition of The Tower. The ministry of welcome is not limited to our Newcomer's Team—these folks are simply tasked with being intentional in helping identify newcomers, reaching out to them, and getting them plugged in. Our job remains the same—welcoming the stranger and getting to know others as we grow in relationship with God and one another. Even in this time of COVID-19 we have had newcomers on-line and even at our outdoor worship. We might not be able to shake one another's hands, but we can still share a smile, ask someone's name, greet, welcome, and thank God for another.

Contributions to Clergy Discretionary Fund

The clergy Discretionary fund is partially funded through the Operating Account, as well as contributions from generous parishioners. This fund is used to offer assistance to those in need in our church and community.

Thank you to all who support the Clergy Discretionary Fund:

Lee and Nancy Ellis, and Jan and Paul Davis

Sustainers: Sustainers Hattie Boo and Frank Johnston

SHINING OUR LIGHT 2020 STEWARDSHIP UPDATE (As of 6/24/2020):

169 Pledges totaling \$940,148.00
2020 Pledges Collected To-date:
\$480,230.07

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.

YouTube June 2020 CoA YouTube Channel Stats

6 New Subscribers

647 Unique Views

8,371 Minutes Watched

During the "Great Pause," we haven't slowed down!

Children's Ministry

NEWCOMERS and Everyone!

Welcome to those of you who are new or "newish." I hope you have found a warm welcome from our Ascension community even though we are social distancing. The staff will be meeting soon to talk about and design our fall calendar considering how to proceed and keep our children as safe as possible.

But for now...Please mark off

August 9 as Kick Off Sunday! Activities TBA!

Memorial Donations Received in the Month of June

Memory of Jimmy Walter, Sr:

Libby and Henry Weatherly

Memory of Aimsley McDonald Kreuger:

Nan Bargainer

Memory of Paul Copeland:

Lang and Louis Cardinal

Memory of Sug Keene:

Nan Barganier

Memory of Oscar Reak:

Libby and Henry Weatherly

Memory of Bob Derickson:

Ann and Burgess Newell

Memory of Harold Nicrosi:

Pat and Billy Williamson

Memory of Phillip Rawlings Jr:

Tina and John Wilson

Karen and Marvin Campbell

Pat and Jim Franklin

Ann Blackmon

Hattie Boo and Frank Johnston

Kitty and Winston Sheehan

Libby and Henry Weatherly

Rod Frazer

Louise and Bill Hill

Martha and Thomas Tyson, Jr.

Bettie Miller

Lang and Louis Cardinal

Alicia and James Yoder

VESTRY

2020

Andrew Akin,

Senior Warden

Laura Brendle

Susan Copeland

Henry Weatherly

2021

Mr. Glenn Sylvest,

Junior Warden

Brittney Calhoun

Lacy Gibson

Nick Mielke

2022

Elizabeth Conner

Frank Johnston

Gil Steindorff

Peter Waldo

Robert Gould,
Treasurer

Matt Bledsoe,
Clerk of the Vestry



Lobster Fest will be Lobsters to Go this year!

WE NEED VOLUNTEERS

Even though it's take out, we will still need lots volunteers for the event to be successful. We will take precautions to ensure everyone is safe.

Please email or call Susan Copeland (susanc@fullercopeland.com or 657-6959) if you would like to volunteer. Let her know if you would be willing to be a chairman or vice chairman and what committees you are interested in. The committees are lobster cookers, lobster toters, decorations, sides preparation and bread preparation, take out, Sunday ticket sales, take out servers, apron care (ironing), publicity, set up, volunteer table, traffic, take up tickets, clean up.

Tickets are \$38 and includes lobster crackers!

Tickets sales will start soon and will be available online and for pickup

Proceeds are going to Ascension Day School and Respite Program

MUSIC NOTES

Sing to the Lord a new song

So, we can't sing...

As you can imagine, my greatest stress during this pandemic has been the prohibition against singing. If you have read any of my writings over these many years, you have heard that there are more than 400 references to music in Scripture, including many commands to "Sing." I have previously laid out the reasons that I believe God asks us to sing. Today, since we cannot sing as a congregation, and I suggest that we try humming!

Humming is a regular practice in many religions and important as a spiritual practice. It is said that humming stimulates a parasympathetic nervous system response. I'll leave you to read about that, but basically it relaxes us. Our breath rate slows down and the vibrations from humming activate the energy centers in our bodies, possibly generating healing.

But primarily for us in our corporate worship, it focuses our intention. In the moment of humming together, our hearts are more open, our ears more alive and our minds quieter.

My friend Ana Hernández ([Ana Hernandez.org](http://AnaHernandez.org)), who has visited and sung with us at The Ascension, tells about an author who speaks of the story of Jesus calming the sea. These words seem so especially appropriate for today's world. This is a quote from Ana's blog, "Support Your Local Musician."

"In his book *The Dharma of Jesus*, George Soares-Prabhu reminds us that "The great calm is not simply a return to a pre-storm quiet, but the attainment of a new depth of stillness, immeasurably greater than that obtaining during the anxious bustle that preceded the storm... We are suddenly made aware of the fact that the stilling of the storm... is a rescue operation in which the men are saved from the forces of destruction that continually threaten the world we live in. We experience vividly the precariousness of human existence lived out in a world teetering on the edge of chaos. The fragile boat of man's existence can at any moment be overwhelmed by the sea.'"

We are approaching a great calm, whenever that may be. Humming, centering ourselves in the present moment can help guide us to the calm, and I hope that we can give it a try. Stay tuned! In addition to its enhancing our worship in the time of pandemic, it's going to be fun.

—Becky Taylor

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
Patty & Carlton King
Diane Williams
Melanie & Dan Morris
The Family of June Scott
Anonymous
Anonymous
Nancy & Lee Ellis
Sally & Young Boozer

In Memory of Nancy Dunlin

Karen & Marvin Campbell

In Memory of Bob Derickson

Ann & Burgess Newell



The Ascension Choir * The Ascension Choristers (grades 1-6) * Rejoice! (ages 3 through K)

We welcome and need new choir members!

If you would like more information about this wonderful ministry,

Please contact Becky Taylor at beckytaylor@coascension.org

This break in our schedule is a great time to consider joining us.

We'll be practically starting over when we return, so it will be a good time to begin.

Newcomer's Ministry Team

Ascension is breathing new life into our Newcomer's Ministry, and is excited to have The Rev. Drew Brislin take the lead in this important part of our church community. Below are members of the Newcomer's Ministry, and a few words as to why they love our beloved Church of the Ascension family!



**The Rev. Drew Brislin,
Ministry Leader**

As someone new to this community, I can attest to the welcoming spirit of the people of the Church of the Ascension. I have been overwhelmed by the outpouring of love and support that I have received and I am so thankful that I get to serve such a loving community.



Jessica James, Staff Liaison

After moving to Montgomery almost 2 years ago (time flies!), I quickly found my church home at Ascension. Feeling welcomed immediately, there is no other place I would choose to worship! The loving sense of community I found here is what I hope to share with all who hope to share with us in the love of Christ.



Jan and Paul Davis

We love the challenge of the choir and the warmth of the fellowship.

There's nowhere more beautiful than the grounds and the nave.



Glenn Cain and Bruce Freitas

We immediately felt at home in the congregation at The Church of the Ascension.

We've made many new friends and enjoyed the activities.



**Nan
Barganier**

Ascension, my church home for 39 years, offers me a special place to worship and fellowship with

my church family, participate in a variety of ministries, and volunteer in areas of interest. I feel God's love and manifestation throughout the halls of Ascension.

**Cristina
Cadden**

After moving to Montgomery 7 months ago, finding and attending The Church of the Ascension has been an absolute Godsend.

The messages of love, acceptance, compassion, and guidance have brought a true feeling of peace to my husband and me during our transition here.



**Patty
McDonald**

I have been a member of Ascension since moving to Montgomery 35 years ago, and love it for many reasons! Not only for the excep-

tional beauty of the church and its liturgy, but for the wonderful relationships formed with fellow parish members as we have worked side-by-side and reached out together to serve the community around us. Getting involved makes all the difference!



Peter Waldo, Vestry Liaison

The Ascension is filled, and fueled, with love—unmistakable and boundless love. Love for one another, for the stranger, for the homeless, and for our Savior.