



We believe in sharing love and grace with God and one another.



Ascension

Highlights What's Happening This Week

- Being Jewish - Wednesday, May 27 @ 5:30 PM - Temple Beth Or
- Men's Prayer Breakfast - Thursday, May 28 @ 7:00 AM
- Cursillo - Thursday May 28 - Sunday May 31
- Vestry Meeting - Sunday, May 31 @ 12:00 PM

From the Rector...

I grew up a middle-class white kid in Selma, Alabama. I never lacked food, clothing, or most of the toys I wanted. I had a comfortable bed, a safe neighborhood, a bicycle to ride, plenty of books to read, and opportunities to explore every interest that caught my attention. I played sports, had two loving parents, a dog, and attended one of the best public schools in town. My parents could afford field trips, cheerleading uniforms, and summer vacations. I got a car when I turned sixteen and went off to college without financial hardship. In short, I grew up surrounded by opportunity—and I took almost all of it for granted.



As naïve as it sounds now, I was not very aware of race when I was young. My best friend from fifth through eighth grade was a boy named Timothy Stewart. We were opposites in almost every visible way: I was white, he was black; I was tall and lanky, he was short and sturdy; I had plenty, he did not. Yet somehow we became friends in the school library. A shared love of books and an absence of judgment formed the foundation of our friendship.

I never went to Timothy's house, and he never came to mine. I did not know his parents, and he did not know mine. At the time, none of that seemed unusual. At school we were

inseparable, and during the summers we simply accepted that we would not see one another until classes resumed in the fall.

It was not until junior high that I began to notice the divisions around us. My elementary school had been tucked into a predominantly white middle-class neighborhood. Most of the minority students there were bused in from other parts of town. Middle school was different. It sat in a lower-income area surrounded largely by black neighborhoods. I never felt unsafe there, but I became increasingly aware that people lived different experiences depending on their race, neighborhood, and family circumstances.

Timothy and I remained friends for a while, but our friendship occasionally became the subject of ridicule. Slowly, we drifted apart. By high school, the separation between black and white students had become so normalized that few people even questioned it.

Most of our classrooms had open seating, yet students almost always divided themselves by race. One side of the room filled with white students, the other with black students. We talked with one another and joked around, but we remained socially separated. Looking back, I could offer many explanations for why that happened, but underneath them all lies a painful truth: racism often persists not only through hatred, but through distance, silence, assumptions, and the quiet acceptance of division.

None of us would have called ourselves racist. Yet we rarely crossed the invisible lines that separated us. We did not make much effort to know one another deeply, to understand one another's struggles, or to appreciate one another's experiences. What felt "natural" to us was actually something learned and reinforced by the culture around us.

I sometimes wonder how much those quiet divisions continue to shape our society today. We seem less trusting of one another than we once were. Fear is amplified by politics, media, and systems that often deepen suspicion rather than encourage understanding. Instead of confronting violence, poverty, and inequality as shared social wounds requiring healing, we retreat into camps of blame and self-protection. We neglect public education while seeking private solutions. We blame the poor for their circumstances while ignoring the systems that keep many people trapped in cycles of hardship. Most dangerously, we begin to convince ourselves that the suffering of others is not our responsibility.

But the Gospel will not allow us that escape. When Jesus said, "You always have the poor with you," he was not giving permission for indifference. He was reminding his followers that caring for the vulnerable would always be part of the Church's calling. The presence of poverty is a summons to compassion, justice, mercy, and action. The Body of Christ cannot remain divided by fear, class, race, or comfort but must live as the reconciled people we claim to be within the Church.

It is easy to lament the divisions of our nation. It is harder to examine the divisions within our own hearts, neighborhoods, friendships, and assumptions. Yet that is where Christian

discipleship begins—not merely in identifying the sins of society, but in allowing Christ to transform us personally. The Kingdom of God is built whenever we choose relationship over suspicion, mercy over judgment, generosity over self-interest, and love over fear. Those choices may seem small, but they are holy work. And perhaps healing in our communities begins when followers of Jesus decide that the lines dividing us no longer deserve the final word.

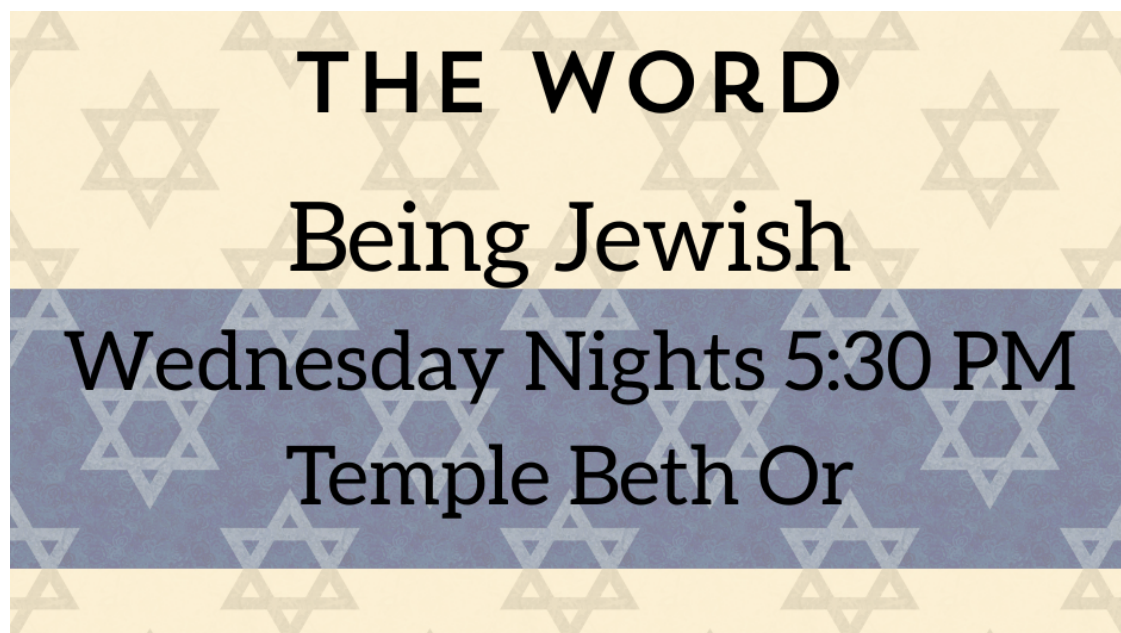
Light and Life,

Candice+

candice@coascension.org

GROW

The Word will join a class hosted by Temple Beth Or examining the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict and being Jewish after Gaza beginning April 29.



**BEING JEWISH
AFTER THE DESTRUCTION OF GAZA
WEEKLY MEETINGS WILL BEGIN
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 29
5:30 PM
TEMPLE BETH OR LIBRARY**

Stories have dominated communal Jewish life for centuries. There are stories of persecution and victim hood and, ultimately, of survival and even victory. We, Jews, know who we are by our stories, our religious beliefs and traditions, and Rabbinic teachings.

Today, we have 24-7 news reports, audio and video documentation of current events happening worldwide. The torture, kidnapping, and slaughter of innocent Jews by Hamas on October 7th will forever be in our memories and our stories. Governments and

people still tell their stories, but what happens when the videos we see contradict the stories told? What do we tell ourselves today, after October 7th? Perhaps a more important question for Jews to address is what has occurred after October 7th.

For this class, we will initially read [“Being Jewish After the Destruction of Gaza: A Reckoning,”](#) by Peter Beinart (2025). The history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will be covered, in the context of the history of the Middle East, as well as current documented events. We encourage the active participation of all attending and look forward to lively discussion. Some of us will disagree; some will agree; some will not be sure of what to think. We feel that this is an important discussion to have because now, in light of the stories we hear and see about events in Gaza and the Middle East in general, we now ask and must answer: “What does it mean to be a Jew?”

NEW!

The **Forgotten Books**

Scripture Between the Testaments



Every Thursday - 7 AM
Breakfast & Bible Study
Ascension Hall
Men's Prayer Breakfast

In Trouble and In Wonder

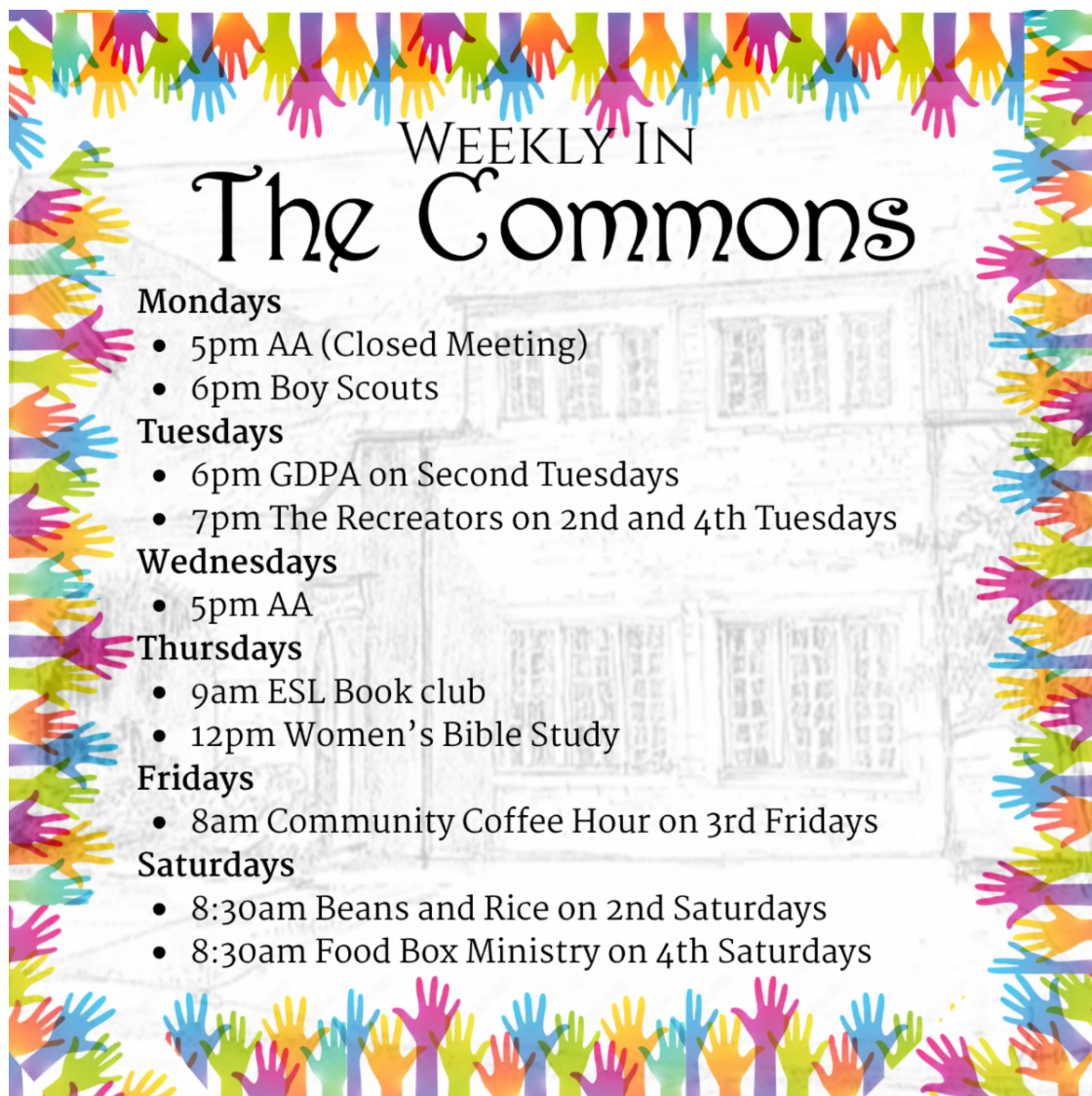
The Gospel of St. Thomas

Thursdays - 12pm

Joshua Commons

Women's Bible Study

SERVE



WEEKLY IN

The Commons

Mondays

- 5pm AA (Closed Meeting)
- 6pm Boy Scouts

Tuesdays

- 6pm GDPA on Second Tuesdays
- 7pm The Recreators on 2nd and 4th Tuesdays

Wednesdays

- 5pm AA

Thursdays

- 9am ESL Book club
- 12pm Women's Bible Study

Fridays

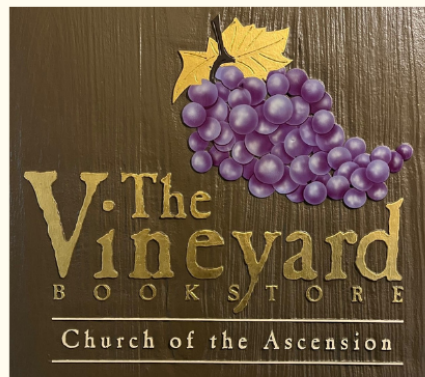
- 8am Community Coffee Hour on 3rd Fridays

Saturdays

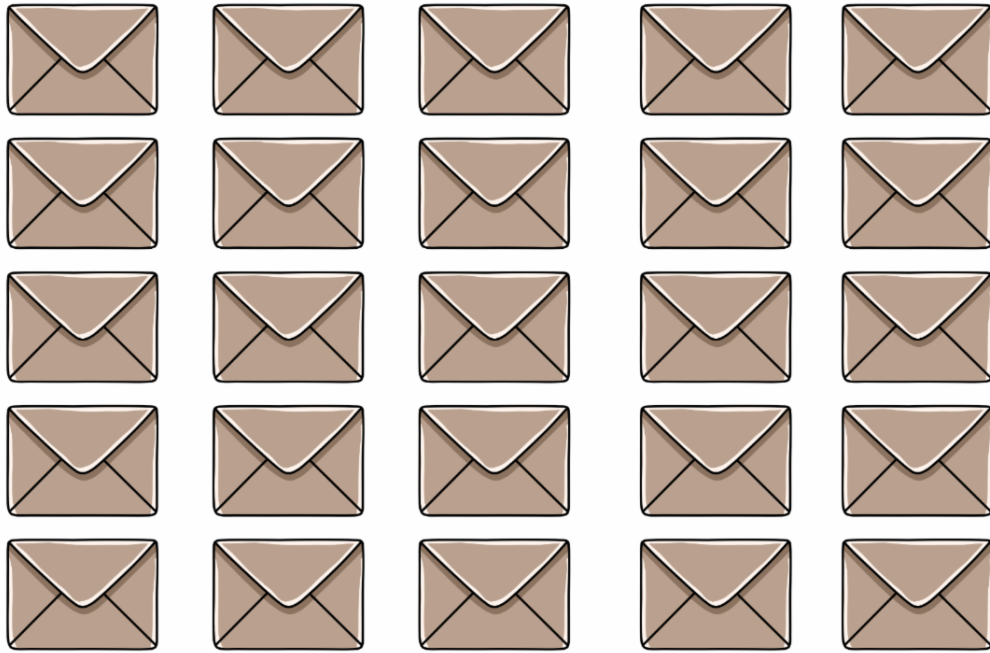
- 8:30am Beans and Rice on 2nd Saturdays
- 8:30am Food Box Ministry on 4th Saturdays

75% off Memorial Day Holiday Sale!

**Sale Excludes New Toys, Cheese
Straws and Peri Pottery Vases**



Youth Mission Envelope Fundraiser!



The Youth Envelope Fundraiser is back! Once again we are raising money for our summer mission trip to Hinton Rural Life Center in North Carolina. We will have 100 envelopes numbered 1-100 and ask members to select their favorite number (or group of numbers) and donate that amount of money to our trip! Each donor will receive a thank you note from our trip as well as updates along the way!

WORSHIP

MORNING PRAYER

8:00 AM MONDAY - FRIDAY

LIVE ON



Attention Venmo Users



As electronic payments become more widely used we ask that anyone who uses Venmo to **please add a short summary of what the payment is for in the description field.** We now accept Venmo for Wednesday night dinner, Sunday morning breakfast, purchases in The Vineyard Bookstore, as well as for giving. This description will help us allocate the resources appropriately. Thanks!

CONNECT



Church of the Ascension is excited to be jointly hosting the **2026 Bach's Lunch Summer Organ Festival**. **St. John's First United Methodist, Trinity Presbyterian, and Church of the Ascension** will be jointly hosting a Summer Organ Festival featuring great

organists of our city during the **months of June and July**. Our own Becky Taylor is featured as an artist. Concerts are at noon on Wednesdays rotating throughout the churches followed by a light lunch for \$10. **Please see agomontgomery.org for full information.** The festival is sponsored by the Montgomery Chapter of the American Guild of Organists.

THIS SUNDAY AT ST JOHN'S

Aaron Shows, Organist

Organ Concert: Songs of Home
May 31, 2026, at 4 p.m.
The program and biography can found at

<https://stjohnsmontgomery.org/pages/chamber-music-organ-concerts>

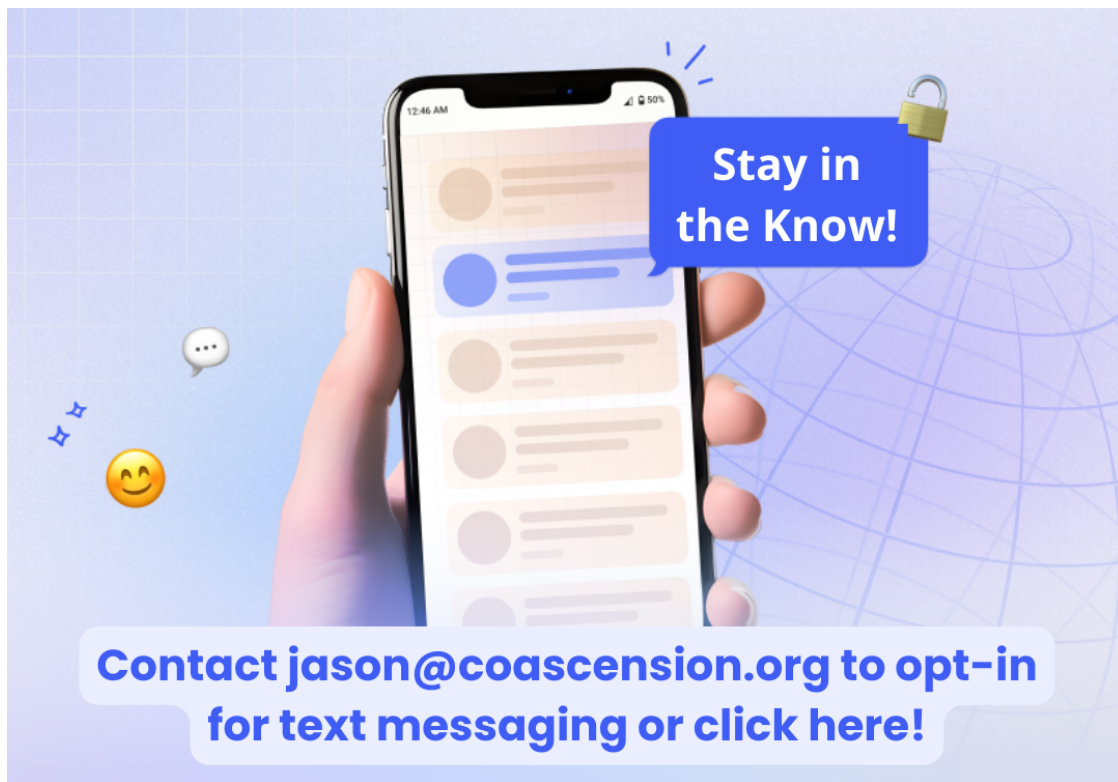


Ascension Children!

Let's beat the heat together and explore what it means to be co-creators with God as we engage in various creative projects and mindful exercises! COC Camp will meet in Joshua Commons. More information will be sent to you closer to camp time.
To register your child, use the QR code or follow this link:

[REGISTER for Camp!](#)

Get Signed Up Today!



Staff Directory

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Fay Worrilow, Administrative Assistant fay@coascension.org

PRAYER FOR THE ASCENSION

Almighty and everlasting Father, we stand in your presence, awed and silenced by your goodness and wisdom. We rejoice in the outpouring of your Spirit on the Ascension and our ministries. Help each of us to remember that we are walking in your sight, and that you are present with us at every moment. Through your Holy Spirit, guide us in our prayers and enable us to focus our thoughts on you, so that we may be filled with the knowledge of your will. Grant us the wisdom to ask what you would have us do; the strength and courage to carry out your work; and the grace to show our gratitude through good stewardship of your gracious gifts. We ask all things in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

[Visit Our Website](#)

Church of the Ascension | 315 Clanton Avenue | Montgomery, AL 36104 US

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