

# The Episcopal Church of the Ascension

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The Rt. Rev. Charles G. vonRosenberg, Bishop of East Tennessee  
The Rev. Dr. Howard J. Hess, Rector  
The Rev. Robert P. Travis, Associate Rector  
The Rev. Brett P. Backus, Assistant to the Rector  
The Rev. Mary Lee Bergeron, Priest Associate  
The Rev. Amy H. Morehous, Deacon

## July 2009

### Peanut Butter Sunday

July 26, 2009



Pages 10 and 11 are the month's calendar which is in a separate attachment.

**P**eanut Butter Sunday is our annual food and funds drive to support Ascension's Hunger Ministry. Ascension-led FISH Hospitality Pantries (four Knoxville locations) provide food packages each month to over 12,000 families who are low on food and low on funds to buy food. There are 30,000 people in these families; 26% are children. Please bring jars of peanut butter or make a donation and FISH volunteers will do the shopping for you. Thanks to special purchases and donated food items, \$5 will feed a family of four for three days.

Your annual donation of \$600 (\$50 per month) would mean that every day of the year one family would be eating, thanks to your generosity (\$5 = 3 days, \$600 = 365 days)



Make checks payable FISH Hospitality Pantries or to Ascension, marked for FISH.

More than 70 Ascension parishioners serve the hungry in our community.

Explore the possibility that FISH may be a meaningful volunteer opportunity for you.

Please call today 588-9200.

**Deadline for August Parish Paper: July 15**

# Service Schedule for July

## Sunday, July 5 - Pentecost V, Proper 9

8:00 AM Holy Eucharist I

10:30 AM Holy Eucharist II

*Appointed Readings: Ezekiel 2:1-5; Psalm 123; 2 Corinthians 12:2-10; Mark 6:1-13*

## Sunday, July 12 - Pentecost VI, Proper 10

8:00 AM Holy Eucharist I

10:30 AM Holy Eucharist II

*Appointed Readings: Amos 7:7-15; Psalm 85:8-13; Ephesians 1:3-14; Mark 6:14-29*

## Sunday, July 19 - Pentecost VII, Proper 11

8:00 AM Holy Eucharist I

10:30 AM Holy Eucharist II

*Appointed Readings: Jeremiah 23:1-6; Psalm 23; Ephesians 2:11-22; Mark 6:30-34, 53-56*

## Sunday, July 26 - Pentecost VIII, Proper 12 — "Peanut Butter Sunday"

8:00 AM Holy Eucharist I

10:30 AM Holy Eucharist II

5:00 PM Taizé Service

*Appointed Readings: 2 Kings 4:42-44; Psalm 145:10-19; Ephesians 3:14-21; John 6:1-21*

## a letter from Father Howard —

June 22, 2009

Dear Brothers and Sisters In Christ,

I'm writing to you with a deep and joyful sense of how God is presently working at the Church of the Ascension. Representative of God's blessing is the wonderful success of our vacation Bible School this year under the able leadership of Lynn Wise and her team. We had 139 children and supported our effort by surpassing our fundraising drive goal to support VBS. Many of the children were not from Ascension, but we hope that they and their families will return and try us out as their church home. I want to again express my appreciation to every one who worked so hard in this effort. Right now we have a full set of families staying here as a part of the Family Promise Program and volunteers galore to make their stays comfortable and enjoyable. Thank you, Ann O'Connor and your team.

I hope that you can pick up on the enthusiasm around our parish. Our coffee hours are packed with parishioners and visitors enjoying one another after our 10:30 service, often staying long after the refreshments have been consumed. This is proving an excellent opportunity for us to meet new folks and tell them about our active parish. Thank you Nan and Darrel Sheley and Mike and Mitzi Terry-Cochran for helping us organize this ministry. Each week I am meeting people who are new to Ascension and taking the chance to tell them about who we are and what we have to offer to them as newcomers.

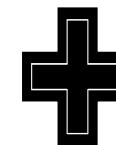
There is much for us to thank God for here at Ascension. Our average daily attendance and our giving are both increased over last year, and I am heartened that many parishioners are responding to the request to give more systematically over time to help the parish pay its bills without borrowing. I would strongly encourage all parishioners to maintain their giving in the summer months even if they are away on vacation.



What all of this amounts to is that I believe Ascension is seeking God's will about our call to ministry and responding to that call with enthusiasm and vigor. Our faithfulness to our mission is and should continue to be the foundation for our life here. God has provided us with every resource and then some to be able to grow and thrive in our life in Christ. We who are called to Ascension as your clergy, staff, and vestry are committed to facilitating your success as ministers. Initiatives in Christian Formation, Great Commission Programs, Youth Programs, Music and Worship, Pastoral Care, Outreach and other mission-related activities are planned for the fall. We invite you during the slower pace of the summer months to come and talk with one of us about what our current person-power needs are and how you might plug into the ongoing ministries here.

But absolutely most important of all is maintaining the active commitment we have to proclaiming and living out both The Great Commission and The Great Commandment here at the Church of the Ascension. To whom much is given much is expected. I urge us all to keep our focus on the way Christ is blessing us and the way that Christ is calling us to be an avenue for him to bless others. Let's keep our attention clearly upon what is important in God's Kingdom and live together into the future that God has given us in this wonderful parish.

With God's Peace and God's Love,  
Father Howard



## Report from the Vestry ~ June 9, 2009

The Church of the Ascension vestry met for its regular meeting on June 9, 2009. After approving the minutes of the May meeting, which were described as excellent, the vestry heard the Treasurer's report. Treasurer Vaiden Taylor described May as a good month for Ascension financially. Total operating revenues exceeded the estimated revenue budgeted for May by \$9,733, with operating expenses being approximately \$3,658 more than budgeted. Per the operating budget, the parish is approximately \$10,000 better than anticipated at this point. The current deficit to this point in the year is \$45,000, rather than the expected amount of \$55,000.

As part of the Rector's report, Father Howard requested comment and feedback from members of the vestry on Corky Carlisle's presentation on stewardship at the May meeting. He also requested any input vestry members wish to make on the proposed approach for the upcoming stewardship campaign. Vestry member Robin Kell noted that the creation of a stewardship statement for the parish, as proposed by Carlisle, would be a difficult task, especially in the time frame remaining before the campaign commenced. A discussion followed in which Father Howard was complimented on his comments addressed to stewardship during recent sermons. The vestry, by general consensus, voiced its concurrence with the plan for the stewardship campaign.

Father Howard next noted that the parish maintained a memorials account which contained a positive balance but which had no policy providing guidelines for its use. Bob Wadley explained that such funds contributed to Ascension go into a restricted fund that is not considered operating revenue. Father Howard stated that a committee had been formed to develop a policy for memorials and endowments.

Finally, Father Howard noted that the General Convention of the Episcopal church would be meeting during July, a month in which there is no regular vestry meeting. He wanted members of the vestry to be aware that among many issues to be considered at the General Convention will be a discussion on whether to adopt, or allow the adoption of, liturgies blessing same-sex relationships. He also reported that the

Bishop of the Diocese of East Tennessee was in the process of forming a task force to be positioned to consider issues on the subject.

As part of the Senior Warden's report, Tom Hale thanked Father Brett Backus for his leadership and the entire parish for its great support for the Bolivian Mission Trip. Hale commented on the very positive impact of the trip on Andrew, his son. The Senior Warden also reported on a recent meeting of the ushers at which a number of procedural steps were discussed for implementation on Sunday mornings that were intended to increase the ushers' general awareness of persons entering the premises who might appear suspicious. Members of the Emergency Response Group who have been studying this issue were present. It was also reported that Dr. Paul Banick had agreed to lead a small medical subcommittee to review the adequacy of the parish's emergency medical supplies and medical equipment, as well as to organize those with medical backgrounds in the parish to be better positioned to respond to emergency situations.

Junior Warden Julie Hembree reported that those who had not visited the chapel at Grace Point should do so as it provides a serene and tranquil environment for functions sponsored by the diocesan parishes. She noted that Ascension was well represented at the recent dedication ceremony of the chapel. Hembree also commented on the excellent performance provided by The African Children's Choir, and how well it was received by the parish. Finally, Hembree pointed out that the Vacation Bible School currently underway had 139 children who appeared to be enjoying the experience very much.

Father Backus gave a report concerning the Bolivian Mission Trip. As there will be many opportunities to hear directly from the 21 parishioners who made the trip to three Bolivian cities, we will not attempt to detail in this report the many good works and interesting events experienced by the mission team. Father Brett generally expressed his heartfelt gratitude for the support of the trip provided by Ascension parishioners. He stated that the group was very cohesive, and the general attitude made the trip an outstanding experience. Vestry member Courtney Zirkle, who was a member

of the team, echoed his comments and complimented him on the great leadership he provided to the group.

The vestry next heard a report from the Worship and Music Commission given by Robin Kell. The detailed report will be copied and placed on the communication center for anyone wishing to review the details. Kell reported that a number of lessons were learned during Holy Week and Easter services. The Commission felt that the parish benefits from having rehearsals for these once-a-year services. Suggestions were also made to improve the services by making changes to the sound system, starting the Palm Sunday procession at a different point outside of the parish, and relocating within the procession where the donkey would be placed for better visibility. Kell also reported on the recent meeting of the ushers at which their general responsibilities were addressed. He noted that a document summarizing things ushers should keep in mind is being prepared. Some of the issues addressed involved attempting to decrease the amount of talking and noisemaking in the nave and narthex prior to the service, and discouraging parishioners from bringing food and drink into the nave. Kell also noted the upcoming presence of a gift from the Icon Guild of Stations of the Cross which will be displayed seasonally throughout the nave.

Bert Ackermann reported from the Inreach Commission. He noted that through the end of May 2009 average Sunday attendance for 2009 had been 413. For the same period dur-

ing 2008, the average attendance had been 342. He also displayed examples of an Ascension Ministry Notebook which was created by the Commission to provide a compilation of one-page descriptions of active ministries underway at Ascension. The notebooks are available in the library, the Visitor/New Member Room and on Cathy Wadley's desk. These notebooks should be helpful in assisting visitors or new members to become more involved in the parish. Ackermann noted that Steve Catron is compiling the notebooks and keeping them as current as possible.

Ackermann also reported on the Communications Commission's recent request for proposals extended to six potential website designers in the Knoxville area. The purpose of the request for proposals had been previously discussed and are intended to provide the parish with an updated and more user friendly website so that visitors to the website will be able to find relevant information about the parish in a way more consistent with modern website design. The new website is expected to have both audio and podcast components and should be ready by late fall or early winter 2009. The budget for this project is \$5,000 and is being provided through the Rector's discretionary fund.

**PLEASE KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK ON YOUR PARTICIPATION IN PARISH ACTIVITIES AND YOUR PLEDGE DURING THE SUMMER MONTHS. THANK YOU.**

Tom Hale, Senior Warden

## Financial report through May 2009

	May Budget	May Actual	YTD Budget	YTD Actual
<i>Pledge, plate, &amp; unpledged contributions:</i>	\$86,352	88,875	430,644	436,137
<i>All other income:</i>	10,212	23,688	115,682	131,854
<i>Total income:</i>	96,564	112,563	546,326	567,991
<i>Total expenditures:</i>	107,009	116,640	602,000	613,677
<i>Net Surplus (loss):</i>	(10,445)	(4,077)	(55,674)	(45,686)

# The Bolivian Mission Trip: seeing the Body of Christ in action

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As most of you know by now, we have safely returned from our 2009 mission trip to Bolivia. It was a wonderful and very successful trip. Not only did your team work very hard and take very seriously the various projects



that they were engaged in throughout our two weeks there, but they also bring back with them many important learnings and experiences that have forever changed each individual member of our team. I want to take this opportunity to once again sincerely thank each of you for supporting us so generously with your donations, time, energy, and prayers. This trip would not have been possible without having this loving community behind it. Thank you. I know that each member of the group looks forward to having the opportunity to share their experiences with all of you, both through group presentations and individual conversations, and we look forward to working with you all towards continuing Ascension's presence and projects in Bolivia for the future. Below you will find just a small offering of some of the experiences that your team members have brought back with them from Bolivia. These statements were shared with the congregation as a part of the sermon during both Sunday services on June 14. Again, I thank you all.

God's Peace, Fr. Brett

## Deacon Amy Morehous

Since returning from Bolivia, I think we've all become storytellers. We've returned to tell the stories of people you might never meet, of a part of the world you may never have been, to lift up God's people all over the world. Their stories have now become part of our stories, in ways that are still unfolding. Together, we're all doing our best to live into the Gospel

Story, the story of a divine love so strong that it overcomes boundaries and divisions, a love stronger than even poverty and death. That love - God's love - supported us there when we were tired, lifted our spirits when we were depressed, comforted us when we felt alone. Now it sends us forth to continue telling our stories - to continue telling the story of the people of God.

## Courtney Zirkle

I felt God's presence many times on the mission trip. One thing that had a great impact on me was the warmth, hospitality and cheerful attitude of the Bolivian people I met and also how comfortable I was around them. God helped me realize how important it was to be able to put a face on Bolivia and how it wasn't about just sending a check. It is very true that we are all a part of one universal family and community despite differences in culture, customs and language. We are all the Body of Christ. I just wish I had been able to speak better Spanish.

## Andrew Hale

During our stay in Bolivia we met so many wonderful people, some of whom we could understand, and many we could not. But when we started interacting with the locals, it didn't matter what language was spoken. I felt a connection with everyone there because they are followers of Christ just like all of us. The relationships we made with the people, despite the language barrier, really showed me how God lives in each and every one of us in this world.



Fr. Brett and the Rev. Agustin "Pepe" Zubeita

## Molly Smelser

I was really touched when Pastor Belli spoke to our group about his parish. He told us that they had been praying about whether or not to keep their doors open, but they felt like our group's coming to their church was an answer to their prayers. It meant that God felt like they were important enough to stay open.

## Jane Maddox

I was fortunate to have several conversations with Pastor Belli and was trying to pinpoint him on some specific needs for his congregation. His face lit up as we discussed the possibility of sending the children of his parish some clothes. They tend to have only one or two outfits. He continued to tell me that they would need clothes only for children 6 -10 years old. I asked him why only this range? He explained to me that in Bolivia the children go to work once they are 11 or 12 years old and no longer attend school. They wash car windows on the streets, shine shoes, do construction or maybe clean houses with their mothers. That is their childhood...to 10 years old.

## Ed Green

For me, God was found in the slower pace of the Bolivian life. When one experiences Bolivian time, it gives us the opportunity to marvel at the works and presence of God in our lives and in this world.

## George Harb

The connections you make with the people from Bolivia are made because of shared strong beliefs. It is almost as if the language barrier doesn't even matter because there is a mutual understanding that transcends language. Although

the service that we attended in Santa Cruz was not in English, everyone who attended the service, Bolivian and American, realized there was a greater purpose and that we were there to do God's work.



new bracelets

## Bob Sowell

God moved through the congregation of Ascension and selected 21 people to experience the mission trip to Bolivia. We were all from very different backgrounds, ages and education. Some did not know all who were selected to go, but we were able to join together and become one big family which loved and respected each other. We were able to unite as one and accomplish many deeds for the different churches we visited and experienced. God led the way for this mission trip.

## Dan Hoskins

On this trip, I learned the hard way about the material things that I truly can live without. Seeing the people of Bolivia do so much with so little has given me cause to stop and think and hopefully even change.

## Kevin Robertson

During our time in Bolivia we had a couple of opportunities to be involved in other church services. Compared to what we are used to, monetarily they had barely anything, especially in Santa Cruz. But they make up for it with a congregation that truly knows how to live and act out of faith.

## Susan Pannell

The most memorable parts of the trip to Bolivia involved our interaction with the children. At the church in Santa Cruz, we met some of the teens served by the church and later at a church service we sang together and the teens sang for us. At a neighborhood school in Santa Cruz, we made bracelets with some children and then gave them gifts of



Pastor Belli and Jane Maddox

notebooks and crayons. The look on the children's faces as they received their gifts is one I will remember. In La Paz we visited a church that provided breakfast and activities for the neighborhood children on Saturdays. Although some of these children had stories of sick parents and lack of food, at the church they played and laughed like children everywhere. For me, the ministry that these churches provided for local children was a fulfillment of Christ's commandment that we love one another.

#### Carolyn Boswell

Thank you for giving us such a wonderful opportunity. I only wish you could have seen your mission team hard at work; I wish you could have seen the faces of the children receiving the gifts you sent.

#### Judy Thompson

The trip to Bolivia was really a spiritual renewal for me. I felt like each church that we visited was filled with God's love and presence and His devotion. The people greeted us as part of their family and indeed we were — we were God's family. In Pastor Belli's church, in Santa Cruz, you could feel God's presence. The people had nothing and yet they had everything. Pastor Belli worked to serve God and the community, and he especially worked for the children. I pray that if we have the chance to go back to Bolivia, I am able to return. It was such an inspiration for me to be there and to see how devoted to God these people are. It was just a very very moving experience for me.

#### Davis Richards

We tore down and rebuilt a rickety wooden fence at the church in Cochabamba. We had to move it about 10 feet back because the property line of the church extended past the fence. When we rebuilt it a few days later, we went to the church that was in charge of the construction. They said they were very thankful for what



Davis Richards

we did. They thought it would take another week to build it, but it took only three days. They were all smiling and reaching out their hands to us. It made me feel really happy to help them.



Carolyn Boswell with a mother and her daughter

#### Stuart Deaderick

One of the things that struck me the most during the trip was seeing how the Holy Spirit filled the children we encountered. Even though these children had very little even by Bolivian standards, just being with other children and interacting with our group gave them a positive outlook on life that drew other children and even adults to Christ.

#### David Smelser

After reflecting on the work our group did on the mission trip to Bolivia, I realized I had experienced what it means to be a member of the Body of Christ. Sometimes people get the impression from mission work that we are the blessed who are going somewhere to save the unfortunate. While helping the churches in Bolivia, I never got the feeling that we were there to give and they were there to take. We were just a group of Christians helping another group of Christians do God's work. In working in the schools, the neighborhoods, and on the construction site, we all, both Americans and Bolivians, worked side by side. This was so evident in Santa Cruz when, during their church service, the pastor called our group to the front and the entire congregation followed, and then prayed for us. They weren't praying for those Americans who had so much and had come to save them. They were praying for their fellow brothers and sisters in Christ, fellow members of "The Body of Christ".

### from our Associate Rector

In this issue of the *Parish Paper* there has been much to remember, a great deal of reminiscing. I have just returned from a training conference that has more to do with the future of our parish than its past. It's true, we have had Stephen Ministry in an active form here for a year now, but as a ministry of Ascension, it is in its infancy. The potential for it here is great.



Many of you still probably wonder what Stephen Ministry is? A person I visited with today said, "Is that what my son is doing? His name is Stephen!" No, unfortunately the ministry is not a program from a guy named Steve. It is a great enhancement of the pastoral care ministry at our church, indeed an enhancement of the pastoral care ministry of every kind of church. At the conference where I was trained in leadership of Stephen Ministry, there were Roman Catholics at tables with Baptists, Lutherans, and Methodists sharing experiences with Pentecostals. I believe every Christian denomination is represented in this ministry. That is a testimony to the central place throughout the entire Christian church that the caring work of Stephen Ministry holds.

Stephen Ministers come alongside brothers and sisters in Christ, and listen to their experiences, their hopes and dreams, their struggles and fears. They provide a ministry of presence through all kinds of challenges that people may go through. Our Stephen Ministers at the Church of the

Ascension (and we currently have over 20 of them) work one-on-one, in a completely confidential way, with people who are going through all kinds of difficulties. These problems can be as seemingly simple as adjusting to life in a new place, or with a home where the kids have all grown and gone, or as complex as going through a death, divorce or bankruptcy. Stephen Ministers are trained to be the best listeners you can imagine, to offer encouragement and support, to minister out of Christ's love for each one of us. This is so central to who we are as Christians, it is not surprising that Stephen Ministry takes place in all denominations.

I am honored to be serving in a parish that has Stephen Ministry because I know that people who need ongoing care will be provided with it. This far exceeds the level of consistency that clergy can provide. While we strive to care for people in crisis, as time goes on and their needs remain, we often have to move onto the next crisis. A Stephen Minister can provide that constant support, which helps the person move through their life transition knowing we love them as Christ loves them.

If this kind of thing sounds like a ministry that you or someone you know might appreciate, please inform Peg Hess, Laura or Bob Barnes, Jane Phillips, Fr. Howard or me (the Leaders of our Stephen Ministry), and we will connect that person with a Stephen Minister. This formal, confidential relationship can be as short-term as a couple of months or ongoing for a year or more, but the effects of this ministry last much longer than that. Paul writes "they will know you are Christians by your love." Stephen Ministry is a good witness of our love to the world around us.

Fr. Rob

### PLEASE NOTE:

There will be no Community Chest Collection Day in July. It will resume on August 1 — 10 to 11:30 AM in the parking lot.

## FISH Hospitality Pantries offer new community initiatives

At Ascension-led FISH Hospitality Pantries we continue to focus on three aims and purposes: (1) to help ensure that everyone in our community gets enough to eat; (2) to respect human dignity and privacy (we believe the way people are treated is as nourishing as the food they receive at our pantries); (3) to be a place in the community where people from different backgrounds and heritages work together to overcome the stereotypes and differences that tend to keep us from enjoying the best about one another. In this vision and effort, we are creating true community. All of our different programs are expressions of these three central values and our vision of true community.

Peanut Butter Sunday comes at a time, as you are aware, of increased economic difficulty for families throughout the nation as well as in our own Knoxville community. Rising food costs, job losses, low wages and the high cost of

medicine and fuel play a role in increasing numbers of hungry families and children. In Knox County 58,000 people live below the poverty line; 26% of them are children. Many thousands more live very near the poverty line and must struggle for the basic necessities of life.

At our pantries we are scrambling to identify new food sources and looking for ways to make every food dollar count to fill the growing need. The cost of food items we must purchase to make a more nutritionally balanced food package has risen dramatically over the last year. We continue to receive offers of donated food from throughout the Eastern United States, but we must pay the cost to transport it to Knoxville. Last year we received and distributed to families in need donated food valued at \$1,400,000.

**Mosaic, our new multi-cultural leaders' initiative, focuses on relational empowerment, building an understanding among our Latino, African-American, and Anglo leaders that together we can address problems like hunger.**

It is conservative to say that for every dollar in freight we pay for donated food offered to us (from as far away as Arkansas, Florida, Minnesota) we receive at least 25 times that in the value of food received. So, every additional \$1,000 we have available to pay for freight cost results in at least \$25,000 worth of additional free donated food to distribute to local families in need.

Funding supports our new BOOST program, which provides individual nutritional packages for children to promote strong bones, bodies, and brains, our Women's Community School, and our newest program, the Mosaic Initiative.

As part of our community building efforts, our Northwest pantry is becoming a place for the community to gather and talk about hunger and poverty. Many of our guests have told us how welcome they feel here - how it is more than a place for them to get food. And in that spirit we are offering programs like the Women's Community School and the Mosaic Initiative.

Community building does not end with getting people together. Some people who visit and serve at our Northwest Pantry harbor underlying stereotypes and racist perceptions of others. Our projects provide ways to correct misperceptions of the other, to move away from the competitiveness which exists between people from differing races and ethnicities. In weekly and day-to-day trainings, perspectives are exchanged, misconceptions about the other are corrected, barriers are broken, trust grows, relationships are forged, ideas are exchanged, collaboration begins and community is created.

Mosaic, our new multi-cultural leaders' initiative which will take place at the Northwest Pantry, focuses on relational

empowerment, building an understanding among our Latino, African-American, and Anglo leaders (many of whom are low-income) that together we can address problems like hunger. Participants (a dozen men and women) in this training institute will receive day-to-day training in the pantry, increasing their own skills and capacity for working together. They will also participate in monthly meetings which will include reflection on their common humanity and communication around aspects of their own cultures. They will work with other pantry leadership to design a seminar on undoing racism and developing diversity appreciation for use with FISH participating congregations and in trainings for new pantry volunteers. They will participate in the implementation of the diversity training as well.

The Episcopal Diocese of East Tennessee Opportunity Fund recently awarded a \$4000 grant in support of the Mosaic program.

We launched the Community School program in early 2008 with a dozen women from a variety of backgrounds and circumstances, including African-American, Latina, and Anglo women. There are representatives of the Episcopal, United Methodist, Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, AME Zion, Baptist, and Lutheran faiths who weave a rich fabric through their diverse perspectives. Several of the participants have been recent seminary graduates or ordained ministers. Others are mothers who work in a variety of jobs.

Participants expressed their desire to emerge from this process with stronger voices and increased capacity to be leaders in their congregations and neighborhoods. Each month in a seminar setting they explore concepts and themes geared to help them understand in a deeper way the whys and underlying causes and history of hunger and poverty, how change occurs, and the communal and biblical values that underpin a world where there is dignity for all. They learn how to tap into their own abilities and capacities to equip them to act together across lines to transform their congregations, neighborhoods, and communities.

Ultimately, the Community School's goal is threefold: it discovers and calls forth talents and abilities among these diverse women; provides training for them in how to act together to improve situations in their neighborhoods and community; and creates community across denominational, class, ethnic and relational lines by building relationship around their common values and interests.

Another part of the community school involves a hands-on experience in which participants work side-by-side at our new FISH Northwest Pantry / Food Warehouse to gain skills and abilities learned from the responsibilities of running the pantry and responding to the poor in their midst.

**When people are treated with respect, they are strengthened in spirit. When people discover their potential to work and speak on their own behalf, they are empowered to work for change.**

Meanwhile in the second year of our Women's Community School, to put some of the concepts we've been exploring around working in the community into practice, we've developed a field work piece with the historic Lyon's View

Community located beside the Church of the Ascension. This offers training for participants and provides low-income residents a place in which to learn while working to revitalize their own community.

When people have more food, they are stronger. When parents don't have to worry about how they will feed their children, they have more energy to devote to their families and to deal better with other issues in their lives. When people are treated with respect, they are strengthened in spirit. When people discover their potential to work and speak on their own behalf, they are empowered to work for change. In supporting FISH Hospitality Pantries, you contribute to creating a healthier and stronger Knoxville.

Jim Wright, Director  
Ascension Hunger Ministries

## from our Director of Christian Education



The weeks leading up to Vacation Bible School were full of planning, ordering, copying, cutting, creating, counting, building, decorating, more planning, more cutting, more copying, more planning, more planning, more planning, oh, and more planning. And then the actual first day of VBS arrives and the reality of life, its full unpredictability, especially the reality of the lives of families with young children, erupts at the doorstep in full force.

This year there were 139 children, from babies to middle-schoolers, enrolled in VBS; half of them were not members of Ascension. A total of 70 volunteers — moms, dads, grandmothers, grandfathers, high schoolers, college kids — shepherded, taught, fed and played with the children every day. There were unforeseen challenges: the snack department almost ran out of chow mein noodles for the cookie spider's legs; the bounce house showed up too late to use; extra manpower was needed to change 22 wet four-year olds into dry clothes after a turn on the water slide.

And then there were the "God moments." That's what I heard some of the moms call them. You know what I mean—those moments when some small interaction lifts you out of yourself and you feel God's purpose at work. The moment may not last long, but it's holy and hard to forget. They happen right under our noses, often reaching us in the middle of the noise and distraction. This VBS was full of those moments. Every day I experienced "God moments,"

sometimes in my own interactions with the children, sometimes watching other groups of children and leaders.

I think, in a sacramental, intellectual tradition like ours, we tend to leave the Holy Spirit business to the clergy. The ordained handle the sacraments and the mystery. But I can tell you that when seventy Christians of all generations, just plain people, gather together to teach and love and pray with a wiggling mob of young children, the Spirit ordains us all. It's fitting that VBS happens during the season of Pentecost. The Spirit holds us together, across the generations, reaches families beyond the walls of our own church, and pushes us as one body, forward into the Kingdom of God. There's nothing deeply theological about water slides, spider snacks and crafts. We find ourselves teaching the love of God by showing up, and by loving the children God sends.



SonRock Kids' Camp!

Christ himself was God's message to the world, his message of love and redemption. Now we are that message, too. We are its hands and feet and heart. God has always sought out regular people like you and me to carry his words to others. We do not need special training or vestments or a detailed understanding of the liturgy. The Holy Spirit doesn't worry about anyone's resumé. Each loving heart,

softened by prayer, is a welcome landing place for its power and grace. We don't need to wait around for a priest; we are filled with God's power and purpose as we are. We are called to be Christ's presence wherever we find ourselves—even on the water slide, even in the snack corner, even in the craft room.

I ask God's blessings on all seventy VBS volunteers. May the Holy Spirit continue to fill us all with God's purpose and love, everywhere we go.

Jacqueline Soltys

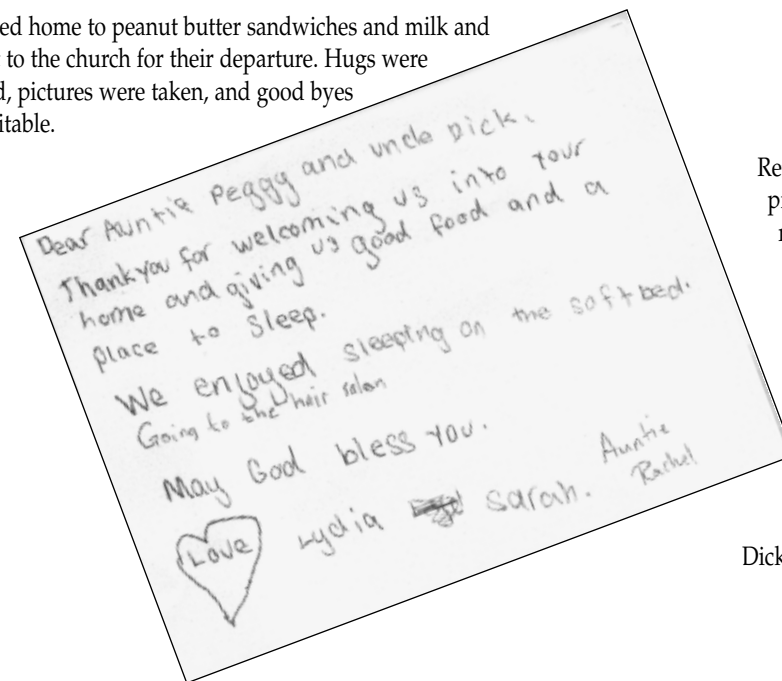
## HOSTING THE AFRICAN CHILDREN'S CHOIR

After experiencing the wonderful performance of the African Children's Choir, we headed downstairs for an orientation. We were instructed on how to host our guests and how they in turn would relate to us. After much anticipation, we left with Rachel, the chaperone/bus driver, Lydia who was 11 years old, and Sarah who was 9.

On Saturday morning the girls woke up to a breakfast of scrambled eggs, toast and fruit. After the meal, both girls thanked us by giving us a hug and calling us Auntie Peggy and Uncle Dick. After breakfast Lydia, Sarah, and Rachel each went for a spin in the Honda convertible, smiling from ear to ear. We then proceeded to Salon Visage where they, with much trepidation, learned how to use a revolving door. Each was treated to a shampoo by our granddaughter, Audrey.

Oh, what fun they had! Once Lydia and Sarah were finished with their massage/shampoo, they asked for hair combs and went to the styling station where they proceeded to comb, gel, mousse, and spray hairspray until we were all choking! Rachel was treated to a blow dry and style by Audrey and loved her new look. The girls walked out, this time, with anticipation of going through the revolving door.

We returned home to peanut butter sandwiches and milk and then went to the church for their departure. Hugs were exchanged, pictures were taken, and good byes were inevitable.



Returning home, we were surprised to find, on their carefully made up bed, a beautiful thank-you note from the young girls.

It was our pleasure to host them. We hope they can return to grace us with their joyful music once again. We were truly blessed.

Dick and Peggy Borreson

## Brotherhood of St. Andrew Retreat: again a success

For the sixth consecutive year, Ascension's men of The Brotherhood of St. Andrew went to Lake Logan Episcopal Center, near Canton, North Carolina, for a weekend of renewal and relaxation. Here, in their own words, are reflections on the weekend from some of the men who attended.



Fr. Rob Travis, Allen Douglass, Bert Ackermann

I realized that BSA is as spiritual as we are service oriented.

Allen Douglass

As this was my first time on a Lake Logan retreat, it was everything I suspected and more. The fellowship was, of course, great. I thought that we had a very balanced agenda and the study-discussion time was also very enriching. Father Rob was an excellent discussion leader. I enjoyed getting to know him better during the retreat. My only complaint was the food....I'm trying to lose weight and a buffet which offers good food made that an impossible challenge.

Rick Deaderick

I don't know how anyone could feel closer to God. Between the physical beauty of Lake Logan and the experience of being with a group of men sharing their innermost thoughts and beliefs it is a very moving experience.

Danny Maddox

My thoughts are all pleasant! The high point was when Fr. Rob asked every person to talk for two minutes about what God meant to us. The room was completely quiet. This showed how emotion-

al God is in our thoughts and our prayers. Fr. Rob's open style encouraged each Brother to express himself. This openness unified the group.

Carl Asp

I had a delightful and enriching weekend. Through the leadership of Fr. Rob and especially his guidance, insight, and reflection, he truly focused us as individual members of Ascension and as an organization on how we may better carry out Christ's charge in the Great Commission. I also reveled in the fellowship with the other men and the beautiful surroundings of the Lake Logan Retreat.

Bert Ackermann

Brief thoughts:

1. Wonderful venue
2. Great fellowship
3. Wonderful topic
4. Good thing to have read the book prior to the retreat (John R's idea)
5. Good interaction
6. Excellent leadership-easily engaged the group

Les Hargrove



Mike Terry-Cochran, Ed Lester, Bob Wadley



Les McLaurin, Jim Phillips

In my opinion this year's Lake Logan retreat was the best one I've ever attended. The biggest reason I say this is because those of us in the Brotherhood had a wonderful opportunity to really get to know our Fr. Rob. I am thoroughly impressed with his knowledge, personality, and compassion for his fellow man. Already looking forward to next year's retreat!!!

Jim Spitzer

Each year the retreat gets more and more refined and honed. It is remarkable how the rookies in the group are welcomed and encouraged to share. The conversations were both scintillating and thought provoking. It was especially highlighted in that the weather was warm and dry. Fr. Rob was convincing in his leadership. The food was stellar. It was a great study in the true meaning of the word "retreat."

Charlie Gehres

## Do you or anyone you know use a Stairlift?

Phyllis Leonard Turner is interested in learning if there is someone in the parish who uses a stairlift (chair that goes up and down stairs). She would like to speak to anyone familiar with the stairlift to determine if it would be feasible for her. She would like to purchase a second-hand unit. If you can help, please call the office, 588-0589, and we will get you in touch with her.

## Parking Request

It has become convenient for many of us to park in the circle at the front entrance. However, for safety and emergency

reasons, the circle must be kept clear to allow fire trucks and ambulances access and ample space to maneuver. If you need to park there temporarily, for health or other reasons or to unload items, please move your car as soon as possible or ask a staff person to park it for you. Your cooperation will be appreciated.

## MUSINGS from The CHURCH MOUSE

Hello again. I'm your little church mouse, and I must say, it is really hard to find a quiet moment at the Church of the Ascension. It seems the "Martha Window" blessing was just over when 22 of the most energetic children I've ever seen came bursting on the scene. They called themselves The African Children's Choir. But, oh my! With their drums



vibrating and their singing and dancing, they were amazing. It was a glorious night, and one I will never forget. Then two days later, a different 22 men, women, and young people loaded a trailer with suitcases containing gifts to take to a couple of small churches in Bolivia, South America, and left on a mission trip for twelve days. And a few days after that, 17 men went off for the weekend on something they called the Brotherhood of St. Andrew Annual Retreat. The climax was Pentecost Sunday. It happens every year, but I'm always surprised and delighted to see all the many colored balloons floating above the pews. What a sight! I overheard someone say it was the church's birthday party.

Well, as I began, there is so much going on, it's hard to find a moment to rest. I guess the Holy Spirit has just inspired all these folks so much they can't sit still. At least there is one good thing: they've begun having delicious morsels with their coffee following church services each week and that always means some goodies for me to nibble on after everyone has gone. Of course, I have to be very careful. If Byron or George sees me, I'll be in big trouble.

Well, I guess that's it until next month.

# Passages

## Birth

**Seaton William Moffett**, son of **Ean and Rebecca Moffett**, grandson of **Beth and Monty Harris**, on May 21, 2009

**Shepard Carothers Williamson Brown**, son of **Caroline Vogel and Chris Brown**, on May 30, 2009

**Rose Stewart Walker**, daughter of **Mallary and Jonathan Walker**, granddaughter of **Posey and Joe Congleton**, on June 3, 2009.

## Baptism

**William Curtis Casciano** on May 24, 2009

**Charles Brady Johnson** on May 24, 2009

**Alexander Varnell Parkinson** on May 24, 2009

**Grace Ann Parkinson** on May 24, 2009

**Henley Teffia Prochaska** on May 24, 2009

**Bennett Westlund Cruze** on June 14, 2009

*Confirmed by the Rt. Rev. Charles G. vonRosenberg on June 7, 2009*

**Chuck Cox**

**Roslyn Darr**

**Will Deaderick**

**John Dickinson**

**Bobbie Frank**

**Pamala Harris**

**Barry Hoskinson**

**Kelly Martin**

**Evelyn Matthews**

**Alexander Parkinson**

**Jessica Robertson**

**Angela Smithey**

**Brandon Smithey**

**Dalton Townsend**

*Received by the Rt. Rev. Charles G. vonRosenberg on June 7, 2009*

**Amy Avery**

**Freddi Birdwell**

*Reaffirmed by the Rt. Rev. Charles G. vonRosenberg on June 7, 2009*

**Celeste Dickinson**

## Marriage

**Amanda Jessica Novak and Andrew Wilson Greenwood** on June 6, 2009

**Casey Lorraine Spitzer and Phillip Lee Carrigan** on June 13, 2009

**Patricia Earle Brake and Alan Glenn Rutenberg** on June 21, 2009

## Congratulations

**Bryson Bosson** received the B. S. degree in Public Affairs from the School of Public and Environmental Affairs at Indiana University.

## Transferred to Ascension

**Joel Bain** from St. James, Knoxville, TN

**Ronald Wells** from St. Luke's, Boston, MA

**Linda McCullough** from St. Bede's Anglican, London, UK

## Transferred from Ascension

**Lee H. Spitzer** to Church of the Good Shepherd, Dallas, TX

**Virginia Torcigliani** to Church of the Good Samaritan, Knoxville, TN

## Reactivated

**Sandra M. Sleeman**

**John Phillip Torrey**

## Added to rolls through recording of baptismal date

**Robert C. Sleeman**

**Karyn McCullough**

**Barbara Wells**

## Death

**Magdalene Perry**, cousin of **Paul Bergeron**, on May 21, 2009

**Patsy Harris** on June 8, 2009

**Robert W. Gibson** on June 9, 2009

**Eleanora "Lovey" D. Overbey** on June 11, 2009

**On June 7, 2009, Bishop Charles vonRosenberg confirmed, received, and reaffirmed a class of seventeen.**



Front row: Bobbie Frank, Kelly Martin, Freddi Birdwell, Roslyn Darr, Celeste Dickinson, Angela Smithey, Brandon Smithey, Dalton Townsend, Lydia Smithey (not confirmed but welcomed to the group!); Second row: Fr. Rob, Alex Parkinson, Chuck Cox, Barry Hoskinson, John Dickinson, Will Deaderick, and Fr. Brett.

Not pictured: Amy Avery, Pamala Harris, Evelyn Matthews, and Jessica Robertson

**The Episcopal Church of the Ascension**  
**800 Northshore Drive**  
**Knoxville, Tennessee 37919**

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## Staff

George Boling — Sexton  
 John Brock — Associate in the Music Department  
 Jeff Conley — Night Sexton  
 Bettie Corey — Registrar/Publications Editor  
 James Garvey — Director of Music Ministries  
 Charis Hoskins — Financial Assistant/Coordinator of Office Services  
 Sabra Martin — Program Secretary  
 Byron Proaps — Facilities Plant Manager  
 Jacqueline Soltys — Director of Christian Education  
 Bob Wadley — Parish Administrator  
 Cathy Wadley — Executive Assistant to the Rector and Director of  
 New Member Ministries  
 Lynn Wise — Nursery Coordinator  
 Jim Wright — Director of Hunger Ministries

*Office hours: Mon - Thurs, 9:00 AM — 4:30 PM; Friday, 9:00 AM — 4:00 PM*

*Building hours: Sunday: 7:00 AM — 3:00 PM*

*Monday - Friday: 8:00 AM — 5:00 PM*

*Saturday: 8:00 AM — 4:00 PM*

## Vestry

Tom Hale - Senior Warden  
 Julie Hembree - Junior Warden and Pastoral Care  
 Bert Ackermann - Communication, Inreach  
 Paul Banick - Youth  
 Louise Conrad - Christian Formation  
 Ben Davidson - Great Commission  
 Robin Kell - Worship and Music  
 Randy Nichols - Youth  
 Ann O'Connor - Outreach  
 John Pannell - Finance, Chair  
 Jim Phillips - Building and Grounds  
 Scott Poland - Great Commission  
 Vaiden Taylor - Finance, Treasurer  
 Rick Turner - Building and Grounds  
 Courtney Zirkle - Outreach  
 Larry Jones — Clerk