

THE ASCENSIONITE

BIMONTHLY NEWS FROM THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION IN HICKORY, NC
March/April 2011



CAST 2011 BOAR'S HEAD FEAST

Repairing the Breach

A service of repentance, healing, reconciliation

Saturday, April 9, 11 a.m.

TRINITY CHURCH, ASHEVILLE

THE MOST REV. KATHARINE JEFFERTS SCHORI

PRESIDER AND PREACHER

- A celebration of God's power to heal and redeem the wound of history
- The culmination of Phase I of our "Repairing the Breach" process
- The beginning of a whole new chapter in the life of the Diocese
- Powerful music. Moving prayers. Diverse voices. Renewed hope.

- ◆ A group will gather at Ascension at 8:30 a.m. on Saturday, April 9, to carpool to Asheville for the service.
- ◆ If you would like to go up with the group please call the office and sign up.
- ◆ Let us know if you can drive.

Lenten activities, opportunities

BY KARLA WOGGON

Rector

Lenten small groups:

Spiritual gifts

All members and friends of Ascension are invited and encouraged to join a small group during the season of Lent.

We have scheduled group meetings during a wide variety of days and times with the hope that you will find one that fits your schedule.

For Five weeks, from March 13 to April 17, the groups will meet once a week for about an hour and a half to study the Bible. Listen for what God wants from us as individuals and as a community and discern what spiritual gifts we have.

The groups will also help us to deepen our connection with one another and with Christ.

A small group host will call and invite you to join one of the small groups. Look over the list below and decide which small group time works best for you.

Sign up at church on Sunday, call the office or let the host know which group you want to join when they call.

Small group meetings:

- Sunday at 4
 - Monday at 10 a.m. and 7 p.m.
 - Tuesdays at 7 p.m.
 - Thursdays at 7 p.m.
- Child care will be provided for the Sunday afternoon group for children ages 0-12.

Lenten Meditations

Episcopal Relief & Development Lenten Meditations is co-authored by a group of leaders from across the Episcopal Church.

The devotional offers insights on the daily lectionary readings and how we might apply them to our lives as we face a world in need. This book of Lenten Meditations is available for you in the back of the church and in the office. Come by and pick one up today.

Lenten Outreach Opportunities

Episcopal Relief & Development

March 13, the First Sunday of Lent, is Episcopal Relief & Development Sunday.

A special collection will be taken that Sunday to support ERD and the work they do around the world to assist people in poverty.

■ Your contribution will:

- Alleviate hunger and improve food supply for those who struggle to feed their families each day
- Promote health and fight disease through medical care, training in preventing illness and providing clean water and sanitation
- Help us respond to disasters and rebuild communities in the wake of natural and human-made emergencies.
- Support our partnership with the worldwide Church to help people lift themselves out of poverty.

- To learn more, please visit www.er-d.org.

Rice Bowl offering

Consider making an offering to the Rice Bowl during Lent. This special offering will support Greater Hickory CCM and the School and Living Community in the Diocese of Durgapur, India.

Fifty percent of the offering will help feed people in Hickory, and 50 percent will feed children in India.

Give up something during Lent, and give the money you would normally spend on that item to the Rice Bowl offering.

For example – if you give up Starbucks coffee and normally spend \$15 a week on coffee, then put the \$15 in the Rice Bowl each week during Lent.

Stop Hunger Now

Ascension Church is joining the Rotary Clubs of Hickory to ship 250,000 meals to Haiti.

YOU CAN HELP. Make a donation. Make your check out to the Episcopal Church of the Ascension and mark “Stop Hunger Now” in the memo section.

- Donate 25 cents for one meal, \$1 for 4 meals, \$25 for 100 meals, \$50 for 200 meals, \$75 for 300 meals, \$100 for 400 meals. Help us reach our church goal of \$2000 for 8000 meals.

- Volunteer to help package the meals on Saturday, March 5.

- **Three shifts are available**
- **8:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.**
- **11:00 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.**
- **2:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.**
- **Our goal is to staff 4 tables, which means we need 72 volunteers.**
- **Children, youth, and adults of all ages can volunteer.**

Stop Hunger Now is an international hunger relief organization that coordinates the distribution of food and other life-saving aid around the world. The organization is driven by a vision to end world hunger in our lifetime and a mission to provide food and life-saving aid to the world's most destitute and hungry in the most sustainable, efficient and effective manner.

Stop Hunger Now's meal packaging program provides volunteers the opportunity to package dehydrated, high protein, and highly nutritious meals that are used in crisis situations and in school feeding programs for schools and orphanages in developing countries around the world.

In its efforts to respond to emergency needs around the world Stop Hunger Now receives and distributes significant donations of in-kind aid. These donations are large quantities of food, medicines, medical supplies and other such items as may be of use in fighting hunger and providing relief in a crisis.

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Sunday morning class

- March 6 to April 17, 9:30-10:15 a.m.
 - I. Lectionary Bible Study.
 - II. Jesus and Non Violence:
 - A Third Way
 - Professor E. Gitlin retired religion professor from Lenoir-Rhyne University will lead a 7-week exploration of Walter Wink's book, "Jesus and Non Violence."
 - "More than ever, Walter Wink believes the Christian tradition of non violence is needed as an alternative to the dominant and deal-dealing powers of our consumerist culture and fractured world. In this small book Wink offers a précis of his whole thinking about this issue, including the relation of Jesus and his message to politics and nonviolence, the history of nonviolent efforts, and how nonviolence can win the day when others don't hesitate to resort to violence or terror to achieve their aims."

Special Lenten worship services

- Lenten "Taize" service
6:45-7:15
March 16, 23, 30
April 6, 13, 20

During the season of Lent we will have a Meditative "Taize" service like we did in Advent.

The sanctuary will be filled with candles and icons. The service will last from 6:45 to 7:15 and include scripture reading, prayers, and the singing of simple yet beautiful melodies that will draw us all into a period of silence.

The quiet meditative prayer provides us with the opportunity to lay down at the cross of Christ our own burdens and those of others.

Come out and give the service a try and enter into Holy Lenten Silence.

Holy Week and Easter at Ascension, April 17-24

- Stations of the Cross

The stations are set up in the sanctuary. Worship books for praying the Stations of the Cross are also in the sanctuary. Come by whenever your schedule permits and pray the stations.

- Palm Sunday
April 17

8 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.

- Blessing of Palms
Passion Narrative
Holy Eucharist

The service will begin outside (if it is not raining) with a blessing of the palms and a procession into the church reminding us of Jesus' triumphant entrance into Jerusalem.

The service then switches tone as we read the Passion Narrative, enter Holy Week and begin the walk with Jesus toward crucifixion.

At the 10:30 a.m. service we will have brass and organ music.

- Monday in Holy Week
April 18, 5:30 p.m.
 - Holy Eucharist, Rite II, Chapel
- Tuesday in Holy Week
April 19, 5:30 p.m.
 - Holy Eucharist, Rite II, Chapel
- Wednesday in Holy Week
April 20
5:30 p.m.
 - Holy Eucharist and Healing
- 6 p.m.
 - Dinner
- 6:45 p.m.
 - Taize Service
- Maundy Thursday
April 21, 7 p.m.
 - Holy Eucharist, Foot washing
Stripping of the altar

The name Maundy Thursday is derived from the Latin *mandatum* and refers to the new commandment (*novum mandatum*) in John 13:34 (I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.)

Appointed in the prayer book to be sung as an antiphon during the foot washing, which came to be called the Maundy in Medieval England.

The liturgy on Maundy Thursday celebrates the events of the Last Supper, Jesus washing his disciples' feet as an act of service and finally Jesus' betrayal.

You may participate in the foot washing by washing one another's feet.

If you would like to have your feet washed be sure to wear shoes and socks that are easily removed. Following the foot washing and Holy Eucharist the altar is stripped bare.

- Watch and Pray 24 Hour Prayer Vigil

Jesus asked his disciples in the garden of Gethsemane to stay awake and pray with him.

- We will have a 24-hour prayer vigil from the end of the Maundy Thursday service to the end of the Good Friday evening service
- 8 p.m. on Thursday April 21 to 8 p.m. on Friday April 22
- During the day the chapel and sanctuary will be open for prayer.
- Suggestions for keeping the prayer vigil will be available Palm Sunday and Maundy Thursday.
- Please sign up for a half hour or hour time slot.
- Signup sheet is in the parish hall.
- Good Friday
April 22
11:30 a.m.
 - Stations of the crossNoon
 - Good Friday Prayer Book service6:30 p.m.
 - Stations of the Cross7 p.m.
 - Good Friday Prayer Book service.
- Easter Sunday
April 24
7:30 a.m.
 - Easter Vigil and Holy Eucharist

This ancient service leads us from death to life with Christ through fire, light, word, water, bread and wine.

A new fire is kindled, a great candle is lighted. By its light the Bible is read, prayer and praise are offered, and we celebrate the Easter sacraments of baptism and Eucharist.

We begin the Easter Vigil right before sunrise gathered around a small fire. From the fire we will light the paschal candle and process into the church where we will hear the stories of salvation from the Old Testament.

The stories will be sung and told by some of Ascension's best story tellers. After the stories we renew our baptismal vows and are anointed with Holy Water. Then all the lights will come on, the candles will be lighted, the bells rung, and the FIRST ALLELUIA of Easter is proclaimed. Be sure to bring a bell to ring. The Easter Vigil is one of the most ancient and beautiful services in our prayer book. If you haven't experienced the service before, I hope you will join us this year.

9 a.m.

- Festive Easter Breakfast
- 9:45 a.m.
- Easter egg hunt
- 10:30 a.m.
- Festive Easter Eucharist

Swaddled in love and acceptance

BY KARLA WOGGON

Rector

Sermon, Christmas Eve 2010

This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.

Reading this passage for the umpteenth time, I began to wonder why God would choose such an odd sign. On any given night wouldn't there have been countless babies wrapped in bands of cloth? I suppose they all wouldn't have been lying in a manger, but still, wouldn't the star the kings followed have been a better sign to look for?

Perhaps, but the star and wise men are signs and symbols found only in Matthew's gospel. Tonight we have Luke's versions of events and according to Luke if the shepherds want to find the long awaited messiah, then they are to look for a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.

If you had been one of those shepherds what kind of sign would you have wanted the angels to give? How about today? What sign would reassure that Jesus is the messiah? That God became flesh and dwelt among us and is with us still?

I'd like a big and bold sign. A super bright star. Or the angels saying follow me, I'll take you right to him. Or better yet, God showing up and saying I'm real, I'm here, and I love you and all of creation now and always. Come and follow me.

Those, of course, are not the signs we get. We get a whisper rather than a shout – a child wrapped in swaddling clothes lying in a manger.

While shopping for Christmas presents I wandered into a store that had lots of beautiful, rather expensive, things for babies: tiny little shoes and softer than soft fleece coats for itty bitty babies to snuggle into.

We had to wait awhile to check out, so I had more time than I really wanted to look around the store. At the checkout counter they had lots of those last-minute buy-on-impulse products. One such item was called the world's best swaddling blanket. It was designed by a mid-wife nurse and claimed to be better than any other swaddling blanket on the market.

I don't know much about swaddling

blankets and if one is truly better than another, but I did wonder. Are some swaddling blankets inferior, and others superior? Will a rich baby really be happier and healthier wrapped up in the world's best swaddling blanket than a poor baby wrapped up in an ordinary blanket?

Later on I wondered about the kind of material Mary wrapped Jesus in. Were the bands of cloth new, designed by the hippest midwife in Bethlehem, or handed down to Mary from her mother or from her cousin Elizabeth? Were they soft or scratchy?

Of course, scripture doesn't tell us, but we know Mary and Joseph were poor so we can assume they did not swaddle their new born king in the best swaddling clothes the Roman Empire offered.

For most of history mothers, rich and poor alike, have wrapped their new born babies in swaddling clothes of some kind.

In the ancient world evidence indicates that mothers used the bands to help their babies bones grow straight.

In the 17th century the swaddling clothes fell out of favor because of concerns that infants were being bound too tightly or being swaddled by nurse maids and then ignored.

Swaddling blankets came back into fashion when modern medical science proved they helped calm babies as well as helped them fall and stay asleep.

When my nephew was born my niece was 2 and a half years old. She came to the hospital to see her new born brother and was curious about the blanket tucked so tightly around him.

"Don't you remember being swaddled?" her daddy asked. "No" she said. He then took her beloved blanket, the one that she had carried everywhere with her since she was a new born baby, and wrapped her up in it until she was swaddled up just like her little brother – almost. Fortunately the blanket was pretty big and she was still fairly small so it almost worked.

She laughed and laughed with glee and delight. After swimming or a bath or on a cold winter night, at the ripe old age of 8, she still likes to be swaddled up in blankets and towels.

Don't we all? I know during this cold

December I've enjoyed snuggling down into the covers a night.

Deep inside each of us is a desire to be swaddled, not necessarily in blankets or swaddling clothes, but in love and acceptance. We long for the deep assurance of protection, love and care that the swaddling blanket symbolizes.

In a way it's what Christmas is all about. It's what the incarnation is all about. God being swaddled in human flesh so that we could in turn be swaddled in God. Not held so tightly that we suffocate, but tightly enough that we are reassured in the depth of our bodies that we will never be abandoned or forgotten, reassured that someone will honor our dignity, love us without conditions, and cherish us not for what we do but for who we are.

During the service tonight, when immersed in the beauty of the music, when passing the peace, while kneeling at the altar to receive Holy Communion, while surrounded by the gentle light of the candles during the singing of Silent Night, or maybe right now, somewhere during the service tonight let yourself imagine being wrapped up gently and lovingly in God's arms, swaddled in God's love, light, and holy presence.

Allow yourself to rest in that love for as long as you can. Breathe in deeply the love and acceptance that God offers us this night. Then go – go to your homes, to your parents, to your grandparents, to your in-laws, to the hospital, to the nursing home – go wherever you are going and share the love you receive this night.

Swaddle another in love, honor their dignity, care about their hopes and dreams, accept them for who they are, not for what they do. Find something they do well and shower them with praise, include them in your activities, strive to understand their point of view, give them the benefit of the doubt, help keep them safe, pray for them, forgive them and forgive yourself when they or you fall short of your expectations.

Go forth and be a sign for your family and for the world that Christ is born. A sign that the entire world is swaddled in Christ's redeeming love, a sign that the light has come into the darkness and the darkness has not, cannot overcome it.

Feast of Baptism of Jesus: Chosen, Blessed, Broken, Given

BY KARLA WOGGON

Rector

Sermon, Epiphany I, Jan. 9

Chosen

Pick me, pick me, pick me. I don't know if they still do, but when I was a camper and counselor at Camp Henry when playing trash can lid (for those of you unfamiliar with the game...it is a version of musical chairs that involves a trash can lid...when the lid drops everyone who has been picked runs for an empty chair) as a camper and counselor I sat in my chair circled up with my fellow counselors and campers, held out my hand and screamed as loud as I could, "Pick me, pick me, pick me."

We were obnoxiously verbalizing the desire that dwells within most of us, the desire to be chosen.

I'm sure all of you can recount countless stories as children, teenagers and adults when you were picked or not picked, chosen or not chosen.

Do you remember at what point you got picked for the kickball team as kid – first, last, or somewhere in the great middle. Do you remember which group in middle school or high school or college picked you, which company picked you, which husband or wife, which circle of friends.

Sadly too often, to be chosen means that someone else is not chosen. In fact in many ways the more exclusive the group feels often the more honored we feel to be chosen to be a part of it.

God chooses very differently from the world. God chooses me and you and your son and daughter and the neighbor beside you in the pew and your neighbor across the world. God is constantly calling and calling and calling out to us. I choose you, I pick you. You are my beloved. Chosen, cherished, and treasured.

In the story of Jesus' baptism that we hear on the 1st Sunday of the Epiphany season, each year we are given the iconic story of Jesus coming into a deeper awareness of his identity, of the reality that he is chosen and beloved of God.

Just as God chooses Jesus, so God chooses us, all of us. Let yourself absorb that reality. God chooses you. Chooses you as the old song goes just as you are. Right here, right now God is once again choosing you.

Blessed

In addition to being chosen we are also

blessed. This is my son the beloved...with him I am well pleased.

The blessing given to Jesus is also the blessing given to each of us. Just as it feels good to be chosen so does it feel good to be blessed.

To be blessed literally means to know that you are good. Think back over your life. Can you remember a time when someone gave you their blessing – a parent, grandparent, friend, teacher, mentor.

How about a time when you blessed someone. Father Nowen, a Roman Catholic priest and writer who died in 1996, tells a wonderful story about the power of blessing in his book "The life of the Beloved." Nowen spent the last years of his life working and living in a community for people with various mental and physical disabilities.

He wrote, "There is one of my friends there who is quite handicapped but a wonderful, wonderful lady. She said to me, 'Henri, can you bless me?' I remember walking up to her and giving her a little cross on her forehead. She said, 'Henri, it doesn't work. No, that is not what I mean.' I was embarrassed and said, 'I gave you a blessing.' She said, No, I want to be blessed.' I kept thinking, 'What does she mean?'"

"We had a little service and all these people were sitting there. After the service I said, 'Janet wants a blessing.' I had an alb on and a long robe with long sleeves. Janet walked up to me and said, 'I want to be blessed.' She put her head against my chest and I spontaneously put my arms around her, held her, and looked right into her eyes and said, 'Blessed are you, Janet. You know how much we love you. You know how important you are. You know what a good woman you are'"

"She looked at me and said, 'Yes, yes, yes, I know.' I suddenly saw all sorts of energy coming back to her. She seemed to be relieved from the feeling of depression because suddenly she realized again that she was blessed. She went back to her place and immediately other people said, 'I want that kind of blessing, too.'"

"The people kept walking up to me and I suddenly found myself embracing people. I remember that after that, one of the people in our community who assists the handicapped, a strong guy, a football player, said, 'Henri, can I have a blessing, too?' I remember our standing there in front of each other

and I said, 'John,' and I put my hand on his shoulder, 'you are blessed. You are a good person. God loves you. We love you. You are important.' Can you claim that and live as the blessed one?"

Nowen concludes, "I think it is very important that when we are in touch with our blessedness that we can then bless other people. People need our blessing; people need to know that their father, mother, brothers and sisters bless them."

Broken

Jesus is chosen and blessed and broken and so are we. Jesus offers his life to be broken on the cross to free us from our own brokenness and to stand in solidarity with us in the midst of our brokenness.

All of us in one way or another are broken. Much of our brokenness is the inevitable result of being in relationship with another. Someone dies, or betrays, or hurts, or shames us, or leaves us and we feel broken.

For most of us our initial reaction is to turn away and deny our brokenness. "I'm good," we say symbolically if not literally.

When I lived in DC, I lived in a very large apartment complex with a large parking lot. One winter night I came home late from work and for some reason was carrying a large box of books from my car to my apartment.

The parking lot was covered with ice and snow and it was bitterly cold and dark. I couldn't see well over the box and stepped off the sidewalk onto the road between the parking lot and the complex. My right foot sank into a pot hole, and I twisted my ankle. I fell to the ground spewing books and keys all over the road.

A few moments later a car came driving slowly by. The driver stopped and asked if I was alright and if I needed help. "No, I'm good," I said. "Thanks, I've got it."

He drove away and I thought, am I crazy, it's late, it's dark, it's cold, I'm lying in the middle of the road with books and snow and ice scattered around me and I'm not sure if I can stand up. I'm definitely not alright.

Fortunately for me the driver ignored my statements, parked his car and came and helped scoop up me and my books.

So often when life breaks us, our initial reaction is to tough it out. I'm good. I don't need any help. I'm not really hurt.

See We are chosen, p. 6

Cursillo Weekend #71 to be held May 5-8 at Christmount Conference Center in Black Mountain

BY SUZANNE ELLER
Cursillista

The next Cursillo Weekend #71 begins May 5 and lasts until May 8. Cursillo #71 will be at Christmount Conference Center in Black Mountain, and team members throughout the diocese are busy planning for this fun and life-changing event.

The Cursillo Movement is patterned after Christ's own life and example. Christ searched out and called small groups of potential Leaders (pre-Cursillo), trained them by example, teaching, and inspiration (the Three-Day Weekend), linked them together and sent them into the world (the Fourth Day). The word Cursillo means "little course in Christianity."

Lay people conduct the three-day Cursillo weekend with three members of clergy to function as spiritual advisers. As with most Episcopal gatherings, there is food, singing, prayer and fellowship. However, there is far more. The weekend helps Pilgrims fully experience the unconditional love of Christ in ways that most describe as life-changing, and one of the Movement's goals is to help the Pilgrim better define his or her personal ministry.

The weekend begins Thursday evening in the Chapel with meditations, Stations of the Cross, discussions, and Compline. Then blessed silence is kept until after the worship on Friday morning. After breakfast participants are assigned to table groups for the weekend. The three days are filled with talks and group discussions with emphasis on the doctrine of Grace, the Sacraments, and the great Cursillo tripod: Piety, Study, and Action. Plus there is time for privacy,



meditation, prayer, and walks. Eucharist is celebrated each day, and there is at least one Healing Service.

If you would like to attend the weekend, please go to <http://wncursillo.org> to download an application, or see Suzanne Eller who will get one to you. Likewise, if you are a Cursillista (somebody who has already made his/her Cursillo) and would like to serve as a team member on a future weekend, you can get an application from the link on the website.

The Western N.C. Episcopal Cursillo web page above also has additional information about the weekend, including Frequently Asked Questions. Furthermore, it has a link for signing up for the Prayer Vigil during the weekend. This is something we can all do to support the Pilgrims on their journeys, whether or not we have been to Cursillo ourselves.

If you have previously attended Cursillo,

you should be receiving a "The Fourth Day" with the names of the candidates and team. If you are not receiving this newsletter, you can sign up at the website.

COA sponsors a Reunion Group with members from Ascension, Epiphany, St. James-Lenoir and Grace-Morganton each Tuesday (except the second Tuesday) at 5:30 p.m. in the parlor. All Cursillistas are welcome. You may also join us if you'd like to learn more about the weekend.

If you or if your group would like to send Palanca (notes, cards, small gifts) to the candidates and team, you can give Palanca to Suzanne Eller by May 1. Groups can also make General Palanca, which is a single poster or a letter for the entire Cursillo. Palanca reminds the candidates and team that we have them in our hearts and prayers, and it reminds them of God's bountiful love and grace.

De Colores!

We are chosen and blessed

Cont. from p. 5

God invites us to do something differently. To acknowledge our hurt, to accept our brokenness, to take up our cross, to face into the pain and darkness, to reach out and ask for help and to find our neighbor and the risen Christ in the midst of that darkness and pain and brokenness.

Given

Chosen, Blessed, and Broken. Like the risen Christ we can be

given to the world. When we can fully embrace our humanity, take into the depth of our being that we are chosen and blessed by God. Then we can find that out of our brokenness and our blessedness we have something to give to the world.

Come Holy Spirit, come and anoint us as you anointed Jesus at his baptism that we might beyond a shadow of a doubt know that we are chosen and blessed so that we can accept our brokenness and with joy reach out to one another and the world.

From the Organ Bench...

“One Baptism – One Mission”

By CORY WESTBY

Organist and Choir Director

The Epiphany season lasts only a few weeks, but during this time Jesus ages some 30 years (quite a growth spurt!). Epiphany marks the beginning of Jesus’ ministry on Earth. Take a look at the beginning of St. Mark’s gospel; it does not begin with the Christmas Story. Though the story of the nativity is of great importance to all Christians, Mark’s gospel, believed to be the earliest of the four, begins with John’s baptism of Jesus in the Jordan. We recently celebrated this feast in the life of Christ on Jan. 9. Jesus sets the example here: baptism marks the beginning of one’s mission.

Baptism sends Jesus into his ministry. During the weeks after Epiphany, we see Jesus revealing his mission on Earth – healing the sick, changing water into wine, and performing other divine acts – the beginning of his ministry.

Baptism sends us into our mission as well. This mission, given to every Christian, is made of several things. In Romans 12, Paul tells us this mission involves our bodies and our internal spirit. In 1 Peter, we are told that this mission should be lived out within a community. It is a shared mission. Christ sent his disciples into the world in pairs, signifying that we are united in purpose. Our task is to deny ourselves, take up our cross, spread the news of salvation, and share love and forgiveness so that others might come to know the joy we have in being children of God.

While our baptismal mission can be considered an “outer call” that all Christians share, each of us also has an “inner call” that is unique to each individual. Our mission is to be demonstrated daily through this inner call, or vocation. The word “vocation” comes from the Latin vocale meaning “to call.” God creates us with special gifts and talents, tools we are to use in living out this call. We may be called to be a priest, to be a vestry member, to volunteer with our youth, to join the choir, to help with outreach, or to find other roles in which we can live out our vocation. We each have a call to

discover and to live.

There are different ways to respond to this call. In Isaiah 6, the prophet has a vision of heaven and cries out, “Send me!” Jonah, however, responded to the call to prophesy to the city of Nineveh by running in the other direction, though he eventually heeded God’s command. Moses and Jeremiah responded to their calls with excuses until they submitted to God’s call. Are we responding like Isaiah? Or are we more like Jonah, Moses, and Jeremiah?

In the end, we say “yes” to a ministry, not to a job. We are God’s people, here to serve in any way we can, in any way we are asked. Hear your call, respond to it, and live out your vocation. With Isaiah, let us say, “Here am I. Send me!”

Library welcomes donated books

By JACKIE RING

Librarian/Archivist

Our thanks to some kind parishioners who thought of the church library when weeding out books at home. We’ve been fortunate to receive more than 30 books from the Turzillos and from Liz before she left for school. We also have some books from unknown sources.

These gifts include many different subjects and some fiction. For instance we received a new cookbook (2004) from the Heart and Diabetes Associations. The recipes look terrific. Of course, the library has the greatest number of books on and about religion, probably 1/2 to 2/3. But there is much room for other subjects.

To aid patrons the library has

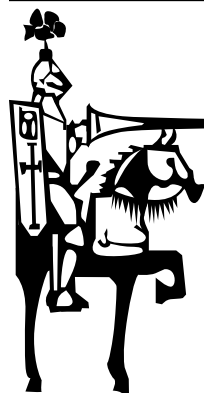
a full card catalog with listings of author, title and subjects. The files are to your left when entering. You have only to sign the card found on the inside back cover and leave it on the cart or desk.

The books have our church’s name on the inside front cover so you should have no trouble remembering where you found the book.

Archives

Just a note: if you are so kind as to give snapshots of various church groups and activities in the church, please put subjects’ names on the back of the photos together with the place and date, at least on one picture. Without identification photos will have no meaning in the future.

Thank you.



Boar’s Head special thanks:

- Denessa Yocum and friends,
- Russ Bennett, Lynn Carlton,
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- Autumn Earl, Martha Fogelman,
- Scott Hamlin, Fanny Lail, Robert Miller,
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- Neal Orgain, Mark Demankowski
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- Nancy Zagaroli, Cecily Zagaroli,
- fanjoy labrenz photography

Boars Head Silent Auction a success!

Thank you to all who donated and purchased items at the Boar’s Head Feast Silent Auction. The money raised will help the youth and music programs. It was only through your generosity that this auction was such a success.

Neal Orgain

Cast: A Ring of Truth: Boar’s Head Feast

- | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| TOWN CRIER..... Matt Hamlin | FORTUNE TELLER.....Mary Garrett |
| JESTER.....Peter Conrad | STEWARD (WILLIE).....Roger Speer |
| KING.....Tim Rapp | WILLIE’S WIFE.....Megan Monish |
| QUEEN.....Autumn Earl | QUEEN MOTHER.....Pat Turner |
| LORD DARNELL..... Vince Trollan | LADY-IN-WAITING....Anne Orgain |
| LADY DARNELL..... Kate Rawson | GUARD.....Jim Trollan |
| COURTIER.....Paul Custer | BLACK KNIGHT.....Karl Wolfe |

ACOLYTE TO BISHOP.....Shea Childres

BOAR'S HEAD FEAST



fanjoy labrenz photography



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FROM THE KITCHEN:
Back row: Alex Arditti, Roman Scudder-Cotherman, Allison Hamlin, Brenna Moran, Alexis Barker, Zoe Fisher, Brucean McIntyre, Will Arditti, Franny Lail, Dominique Wright
Front row: Chef Boyd Barker, Nancy Linker, Ellie Zagaroli, Erin Killian, Austin Arditti, Faya Scudder-Cotherman, Ashley Massey, Adrienne Childres.
This group prepared and served the food served at the Boar's Head Feast.

A RESOUNDING SUCCESS!



fanjoy labrenz photography



MISSION 2011

WHO? Youth entering grades 6-12 in fall 2011 and their families.

WHAT? A long weekend filled with spiritual exploration, challenge, and mission. We will set up camp at Lake Logan, and spend time exploring our internal faith through God's creation as we explore communal faith through life outdoors in tents.

We'll explore our outward faith as we help prepare Camp to serve the hundreds of youth who will come this summer.

WHEN? April 26-29, 2011

WHERE DO I SIGN UP? Send the bottom half of this flyer to Ascension office by April 17

HOW MUCH? \$20.00 per person, \$75.00 per family



Camp Henry 2011

- Send in your application soon for Camp Henry. Spots are filling up quickly.
- Ascension will cover 1/3 of the cost for all Ascension campers.
- Camp Henry has additional 1/3 scholarships as well.
- Call Karla, 828-638-0533, if you have questions.
- Check out new camp session this summer for parents and young ones grades K-3.
- Apply online or stop by the office for brochure if you still need one.

SESSIONS

PARENT/1ST TIMERS

GRADES K-3

July 10-12

MINI-CAMP

GRADES 2-3

July 13-16

GRADES 3-5

July 3-9

GRADES 4-6

July 24-30

GRADES 6-8

June 26-July 2

GRADES 7-9

July 17-23

SENIOR HIGH

GRADES 9-12

June 19-28

CIT SESSIONS

June 26-July 9

July 17-30

Holy Smoke for Safe Harbor Rescue Mission

By PAT JONES

Deacon

Bishop Taylor has invited all parishes across our diocese to find ways to work together to engage, collaborate and transform our communities.

As a result of that invitation the three deacons in Catawba County – Diane Livingston from St. Albans, Pat Jones from Ascension and Anita Ware from Epiphany – decided to find a way for our three parishes to join together to serve those members of our community in need. We decided to form the Catawba Episcopal Outreach Committee to discern where the Holy Spirit was leading us in this community.

The Catawba Episcopal Outreach Committee gathered at St. Albans and at Epiphany to discern what we were being called to do together. We spent time getting to know one another, praying and meditating and identifying some ministry priorities as we continued to discern our common ministry together.

After hearing from Debbie Haynes, Safe Harbor Executive Director, about their rescue mission we decided that we were being called to partner with them. Their year-long intensive program provides an opportunity for women in need to rebuild their life in a Christ-centered environment.

In order to involve all three parishes we held a Holy Smoke Ministry Fair for Safe Harbor at Ascension on Saturday, Jan. 22. What a day we had! Men from all three parishes worked together to cook the meat and prepare the wonderful barbeque. Others added baked beans, cole slaw and desserts.

Folks came from 2 to 5 p.m., eating in or taking their meal out. Board members from Safe Harbor were available in 5 classrooms to discuss different areas of ministry involvement. A DVD continually showed so that those in attendance could see what the ministry was about. We had more than 95 people attend and more than 50 sign up to volunteer in a specific area!

So many have commented on the wonderful spirit that permeated the day! The Safe Harbor Board left so encouraged and excited about our Episcopal involvement!!

All members of the CEOC are to be commended for their hard work and dedication to our calling to ENGAGE, COLLABORATE, AND TRANSFORM!! The Catawba County Episcopal Parishes are united in their effort to make a difference at Safe Harbor and in our community.

HOLY SMOKE:

Members of Ascension, Epiphany and St. Albans and Safe Harbor staff gather to share barbecue and to discuss ministry opportunities at Safe Harbor Rescue Mission. More than 95 from the 3 parishes attended and more than 50 signed up.



Do Justice, Love Kindness, Walk Humbly with our God

RECTOR'S REPORT

BY KARLA WOGGON

Rector

What does the Lord require – feasts, fasts, perfection, purity? No, what the Lord requires is that we: Do Justice, Love Kindness, and Walk Humbly with our God.

I believe we, the people of Ascension, strive to fulfill the requirements God has set before us through the prophet Micha. We don't do them perfectly, but I believe that we desire to do them. As I've so often quoted, I believe that the desire to please God does in fact please God.

Do Justice, Love Kindness, Walk Humbly with God. Justice and outreach have been central to the mission of Ascension for a long time. This year we deepened and broadened our commitment.

Locally we continued to sponsor the summer learning program at Longview School. Each week, many of us helped students learn to read and solve math problems while others of us wrote letters and offered our prayers for the students, teachers and staff of Longview.

With our money and with our time, as individuals and as a community, we supported Greater Hickory Cooperative Christian Ministry, The Hickory Soup Kitchen, Exodus Homes, The Women's Resource Center and several other local agencies dedicated to doing justice and serving the poor in our community.

Internationally, we helped to send Liz to India for a month to work with the students in the Diocese of Durgapur. Eric Hart and Patti & Grimes Byerly each spent time working in the clinic run by the Diocese of Durgapur. As individuals, as ECW circles, and as an entire church community, we also helped to clothe, feed, house and educate many students from the slums of Durgapur in the diocesan school.

We also stepped out to participate in three new initiatives this year:

- **Stop Hunger Now:** We joined in a Rotary-sponsored county-wide project to package and send more than 200,000 meals to Haiti with the Stop Hunger Now program. Ascension contributed 8000 of those meals and 30 volunteers of all ages to help package them.
- **Repairing the Breach and Healing**

the Wounds caused by Slavery, Segregation and Racism: Along with St. Alban's, Epiphany, Exodus Ministries, and the Arts Council we sponsored two public viewings of the film *Traces of the Trade* at the SALT Block theater.

- ◆ Around 300 people from our local churches and the community came out for the film and discussion.
- ◆ We followed that with two luncheons at Exodus Ministries to explore ways we can continue to work on healing the wounds and divisions caused by slavery, segregation, and racism.
- In January of this year, about 75 youth and adults from Exodus Ministries, Viewmont Baptist, and Ascension gathered to view the film "**Blood Done Sign My Name.**"
 - ◆ We are currently working on forming small interracial groups for friendship and to discuss "Blood Done Sign My Name."
 - ◆ Our meeting to organize the small groups was Wed., Feb. 2. You can join one of the groups.
- On April 9, we hope to take a group of people from Ascension to Asheville for the diocesan service of repentance and repair that our presiding bishop will be leading.
- **Catawba Episcopal Outreach Committee (CEOC):** Pat Jones and the deacons from St. Alban's and Epiphany gathered representatives from the three churches to explore ways we could jointly do mission work in Catawba County. After careful discernment, the three churches decided to focus their efforts on supporting Safe Harbor Rescue Mission, a housing and rehabilitation program for women in need.
 - ◆ About 30 people from the three churches attended an informational dinner in December.
 - ◆ About 100 people came to Ascension for the Holy Smoke Safe Harbor Ministry Fair. We ate delicious BBQ prepared by the men's group, learned more

about Safe Harbor, and signed up as individuals and groups within the church to volunteer at Safe Harbor. This exciting work has just begun.

All of these new ministries have allowed us to strengthen our ties with the community and with the other Episcopal Churches in Catawba County, thereby making our witness to justice fuller and richer than it would have been otherwise.

To be able to reach out into the world, we need a place to be fed and to have our spiritual lives formed and enriched. With renewed commitment and from many different vantage points, we found ways to focus on the spiritual formation of children, youth, and adults in 2010.

Children and Youth:

- First with Elizabeth and now with Roger Speer we have been blessed with dynamic, passionate, God-loving, incredibly talented Youth Ministers.
 - ◆ Over spring break, Liz and I took 15 kids on a mission trip to Valle Crucis to help clean up after the massive winter ice storms.
 - ◆ Over the summer, we sent more than 30 young people to Camp Henry for a week of spiritual formation and fun.
- After being with us for two years, Liz left in May to go to seminary.
- Roger arrived in June. Over the summer with help from the youth, he transformed one of the classrooms into a living Bible story.
 - ◆ With stories, drama, and creative play, 10 to 20 children 5th grade and younger gather each Sunday with Roger to explore stories from the Old Testament.
 - ◆ Middle School and High School youth gather each Sunday evening for dinner and the opportunity to explore their faith and deepen friendships.
 - ◆ About 40 young people attended an Advent Retreat that included workshops on various ways of praying, Christmas caroling, and an all-night lock in.
 - ◆ We had a grand medieval feast Feb. 25 and 26 of 2011.



A DAY TO REMEMBER: Nancy Meek, Sharon Goodwin and Gail Ramsdale, members of the Catawba Episcopal Outreach Committee, pose with Bob Meek at the Holy Smoke Ministry Fair for Safe Harbor, held at Ascension Jan. 22. Parishioners from St. Albans, Epiphany and Ascension enjoyed barbecue prepared by members of all 3 churches and volunteered time and talent to help Safe Harbor in its ministry.

Ascension: an active parish
Cont. from p. 12

Through worship, prayer, music, Bible study, faith exploration, book discussion, theological discussions, outreach, and conversation around the table during Sunday breakfast and Wednesday dinner, we are formed as Christians.

In addition to Sunday Morning Worship and the Outreach initiatives, we also offered a variety of formation opportunities on Sunday mornings, Wednesday evenings, Thursday mornings, and Thursday evenings.

Last year (for the first time in many years) we also had Lenten Small Groups. Eleven small groups met in parishioners' homes once a week for the six weeks of Lent. More than 100 people participated in some way. We shared our faith journeys, studied the Bible, and deepened out relationships with one another and God.

This year, our worship has been greatly enriched by the talents, energy, and faith of our new organist and choirmaster, Cory Westby. The choir is growing in numbers, in talent, and in spiritual ways, and we are all blessed by it. I don't know about you, but I find myself smiling more and more during church on Sunday mornings as the music lifts my heart to God.

To do justice, to love kindness, to walk humbly, we need to be open, to be emptied of our agendas, ego, and pride, to be bendable and flexible. We need to remember that it's not all about us. It's about God and God's Holy Spirit transforming us as individuals and as a church into missionary partners with Him.

In closing, I want you to know that I am honored to serve as the Rector and leader of this parish. I am truly humbled to have the opportunity to minister with you and the staff we have assembled here.

Most days, I'm in awe of the work and ministry that Stephanie, Diane, Roger, Cory, Boyd and Pat do.

I also want you to know that I love you. I love Ascension. I love working with you. I love finding ways to serve God with you. I love the way you love and care for one another and the way you reach out to the world. I love the way you pray and the way you play. Thank you for allowing me to join you in Doing Justice, Loving Kindness, and Walking Humbly with our God.

Ascension fund Report

By DONNA SCUDDER

Ascension Fund Chairperson

Since there was no Ascension Fund report in the last issue of the Ascensionite, this report will cover the last six months from July 28 through Jan. 31.

During this time frame, we received requests from social workers through the DSS and CVMC, ALFA, WRC, Exodus Homes, and two referrals from COA members. 50 percent of these requests came from the Department of Social Services.

The community had great need this year for assistance from churches and various organizations. The Ascension Fund was able to provide more assistance this past year.

During the previous 10 years, disbursements from the Ascension Fund ranged from \$6000 to \$12,000. The total distributions for the calendar year 2010 were \$15,982.18 (which includes a \$28 bank fee). You can see the full report and disbursements in the COA Annual Report.

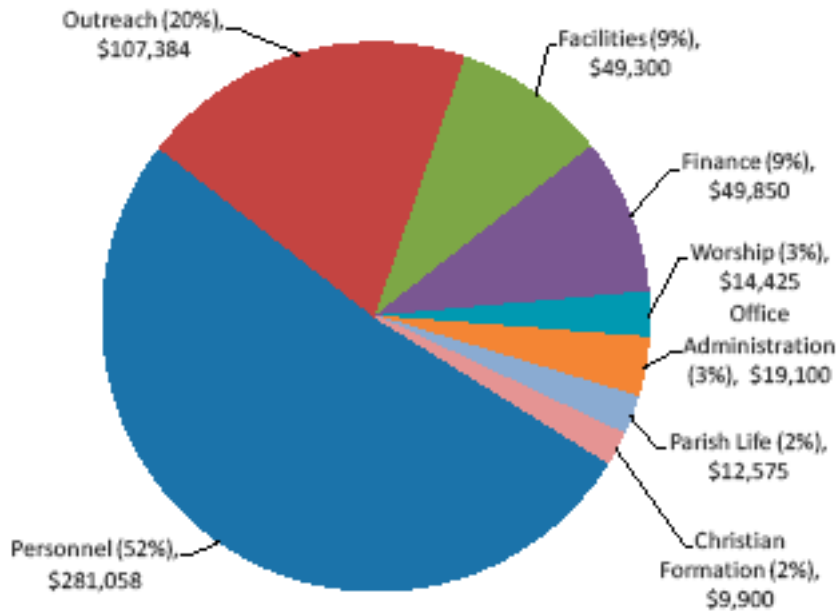
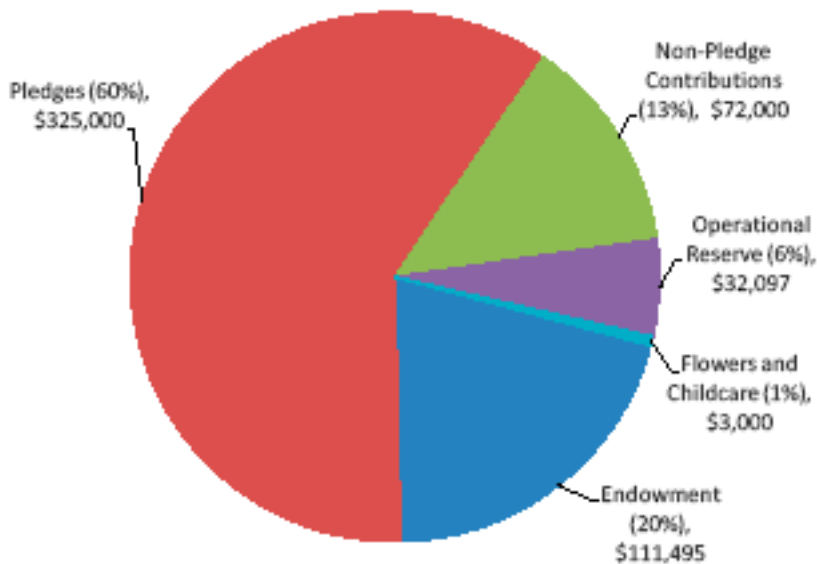
It has been a pleasure and a privilege being part of the Ascension Fund with the other members these last 3 years. I will rotate off and June Perkins will join the committee. Jean Bolton will be the new chairperson and Joyce DeSimone will continue as a member.

Please remember if you know of a person/family in need, in our church or in the community, you can fill out a referral form or contact the Ascension Fund chairperson.

The Ascension Fund also accepts donations towards the fund.

Disbursements since July 28, 2010	
13 requests for rent	\$3475.00
2 requests for mortgage/taxes	688.20
2 requests for auto	603.29
8 requests for utilities	2128.89
1 request for lawyers fees	400.00
4 request for medication	486.94
Total	\$7782.32

2011 BUDGETED EXPENSES, \$543,592

TOTAL INCOME EXPECTED FOR 2011
\$543,592

2010 Year-end financial report

Financial Health and Transparency:

The Vestry, Finance, and Stewardship Committees have worked on this diligently for the past few years.

- In 2009, we completed a financial review with an outside accounting firm.
- We will have another outside review in 2011.

With hard work by our bookkeeper Diane Vezmar, treasurer Tommy Shores and financial warden Bryan Graham, we now have very clear financial records.

We once again overcame a potential shortfall at the end of 2010 and passed a balanced budget for 2011.

You, the people of Ascension, made this happen. THANK YOU.

A membership update

We are still working to update our database so that we have accurate membership records. We are looking for a volunteer who could help update our membership database.

- It's a bit of a puzzle, so if you have a mind that can puzzle out records and have some time to give to the church please let me know.
- We believe we have around 400 members. The most accurate record of membership we have is our average Sunday attendance. In 2009, our average Sunday attendance was 157. In 2010, it was 141.
- In 2010, we baptized five beautiful babies and buried 5 beloved members of the parish. Five members transferred out (because they moved out of the area), and three people transferred in. Two couples were married.

Recognition of outgoing wardens and vestry members

- Thank you to **Claudia Earle**, Worship; **Marty Mason**, Evangelism; **Chris White**, Communications; **Mark Valcourt, Jr.** Warden for three faithful years of service on the vestry.
- Returning Vestry Members:
 - ♦ Term ends 2012: **Lynn Carlton, Sr.** Warden; **Bryan Graham**, Finance Warden; **Rama Donepudi**, Finance; **Tom Perkins**, Building and Grounds
 - ♦ Term ends 2013: **Carie Kahn**, Children and Youth; **Sharon Goodwin**, Outreach; **Scott Hamlin**, Newcomers; **David Jones, Jr.** Warden
 - ♦ Newly Elected Vestry Members, Term ends 2014 **Nancy Meek**, **Alex Reeves**, **Paul Richardson**, **Rob Wessels**,

2011 Vestry



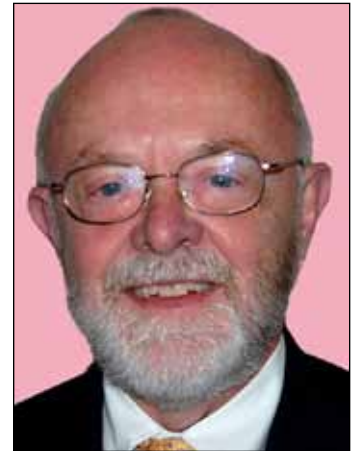
Lynn Carlton
Senior Warden



Rama Donepudi
Finance



Bryan Graham
Financial Warden



Tom Perkins
Building & Grounds



Sharon Goodwin
Outreach



Scott Hamlin
Newcomers



David Jones
Junior Warden



Carie Kahn
Children & Youth



Nancy Meek
Worship & Music



Alex Reeves
Evangelism



Paul Richardson
Finance



Rob Wessels
Communications



Church of The Ascension

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Clergy

The Rt. Rev. G. Porter Taylor, *Bishop*
The Rev. Karla Woggon, *Rector*
The Rev. Pat Jones, *Deacon*

Staff

Roger Speer, *Director of Children and Youth*
Cory Westby, *Director of Music, Office Manager*
Boyd Barker, *Sexton*
Diane Vezmar, *Bookkeeper*

Sunday Schedule

8 a.m. Holy Eucharist Rite I
10:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist Rite II

Wednesday Schedule

5:30 p.m. (in Chapel) Holy Eucharist with Healing

Office Hours

Mon - Fri: 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Contact Information

726 First Avenue NW, Hickory, NC 28601-6062, phone: 828-328-5393 emergency phone: 828-638-0533
ascensionhickory@gmail.com | www.ascensionhickory.org

The Mission of The Episcopal Church of the Ascension is to follow boldly the path as God directs and challenges us.

Our path is
to love with the heart of Christ,
to think with the mind of Christ,
and to act as the body of Christ
in the communities to which we are called:
our families, our Church family, our Diocese, our community and beyond.

Show me your ways, O Lord, teach me your paths.
Psalm 25:4