

E A S T E R 2 0 1 8

Church of the Ascension

Light in the City

From the Rector.....Happy Easter!

Did you know that Easter is named after the ancient Anglo-Saxon Goddess of the Dawn, Eostre, goddess of Spring and renewal? It is no surprise then that Christians adopted this day to celebrate the new dawn of warmth and light that Jesus' resurrection brings into our lives.

The Easter story tells us that although the women who went to the tomb were burdened with grief, they remained faithful and carried on loving, despite the way things seemed. In so doing, they discovered a profound truth, that Jesus, in whom they had placed their hope and their faith was not contained in any grave. He was in fact alive. But what if they hadn't gone and carried on? What if they had lost hope and not taken that fateful trip to the tomb? Would the risen Jesus have been known to them? There wouldn't have been a need to call the disciples or much to talk about among strangers on the road to Emmaus.

Carrying on, in spite of the circumstances we find ourselves in, is a critical act of faith and a way that we carry Easter's new dawn in our hearts. It is the way that we "practice resurrection" and live our faith, even when we are overcome with sadness or are mourning. So, as we joyously celebrate the season of Easter, let us also carry on hoping and loving and offering compassion to those around us with a renewed assurance, as recipients of God's grace.

As Christians, this is what we do; we carry on loving and serving, practicing the resurrection, and by doing so, we, too, will discover that hope is alive and real, and that transformation is not only possible but ultimately inevitable.

So carry on, be strong in hope and firm in your faith, and may Easter live in your hearts and your lives. Because practicing resurrection reveals it's all true. Happy Easter! I hope your faith is always, and especially now, full of Easter! God bless you.

Nick +

Save the Date!

Screening in Faith
Sunday, May 6th – 12 pm
Help to keep our Church safe for those most vulnerable in our care. All are encouraged to attend.

Mother's Day Tea
Sunday, May 13th – 12 pm. Now a tradition at our Church, honour your mother with this celebratory Tea, tickets \$10

Summer Fair
Sunday, June 24th
11:30 am – 2:30 pm
Plan to be part of this annual event as we open our doors to the community!



Celebration of Life Service Wednesday June 6th 11:00 am followed by Café 65 Lunch & Entertainment

All are invited to this special service specifically intended and designed for those members of our parish and community who are homebound and unable to get out to church on a regular basis. This is an ecumenical service open to all denominations.

Following the service, Café 65 will be hosting a special lunch and entertainment. If there are dietary needs, we will need to know well in advance so that we can plan. Volunteers will need to help bring people, but also to act as hosts to welcome folk. If you know of someone who would be interested in attending this service, or if you can help in any way, please contact the Church.

Ministry of Service & Care

Warner and Jeanette Hart have been members of the Ascension for 21 years. Following their arrival at the Ascension in September 1997, Warner immediately involved himself in various areas of ministry. Through the help, instruction and mentoring from many members of the clergy and congregation, Warner has served and assisted at services both at the Ascension and in other caring and retirement centers in the community. He received his license to function as a Lay Server and Lay Anointer from Bishop David Bedford Jones and Bishop Patrick Yu. For four years Warner volunteered weekly at Providence Health Care Facility, Scarborough, in the Pastoral Care Unit. He used his pastoral skills alongside other volunteers from other Anglican Churches by visiting residence, reading the scriptures

to them, taking them on an outing in good weather and also with many hours of just

listening and being a loving presence in their lives. Once a month, he would help staff assemble

up to 90 residents, the majority in wheelchairs for Holy Eucharist, assisting Fr. Philip as Anglican Chaplain, and then continuing to assist visiting priests after Fr. Philip retired. In addition to the Ascension Sabbath Holy Eucharist Services and Bible Study, Warner established weekly Morning Prayer Services at Greenview Lodge and Delmanor and weekly Bible Study at Revera Retirement Residence. He also assisted our Celebrant Priest(s) with monthly Holy Eucharist Services at Greenview Lodge, Revera, and Delmanor. Recently Warner initiated Open Art classes (Van Go) in Water Mixable Oils, Acrylics, and Watercolours in the Ascension's Great Hall. He is currently leading his third Van Go class with eight students. Warner would like to thank Canon Logan Vary, Canon Murray Henderson, Fr. Philip Townshend-Carter, Fr. Nicholas Morkel, Fr. Vernon LaFleur, Deacon Harry Leach (Providence Health Care Centre), Church Wardens, Deputy Wardens and Altar Guild volunteers for the time and assistance they gave in schooling him.



It was Sunday, December 31, 2017, on a bone cold morning when just as **Ian & Pat Paul** were leaving for Church they received a phone call from a very good friend named Jean, asking us if we would be interested in hosting a refugee family of 4 from Nigeria, the Osunremis, a young couple in their thirties with 2 boys, 6 and 3years old, who had walked 15 km to cross the Canadian border into Montreal from the United States. They had been travelling for 4 days. Because Ian and Pat we were hurrying not to be late for Church, they suggested to Jean that she should have the family call them when they returned at about 1:30 p.m. that afternoon to see how they might help. Little did Ian and Pat realize that Jean not only gave the family their phone number and address so that by the time they were about to go through the door they had a call from the family saying that they were in the lobby of their apartment building and that they knew that we were going to church but they would wait there until the Paul's returned. "Good Lord!" thought Ian and Pat, "What are we going to do"? Pat invited them up and we immediately saw this shivering family with despair, fear and sadness in their eyes and the kids not having been dressed with proper winter gear were crying because their fingers and toes were frozen. Our hearts just sank to the ground and we quickly prepared some hot chocolate tea and sandwiches for them and cancelled our plan for going to Church". Once getting over their initial shock, the Paul's found the Osunremi family quite polite and very hungry. Fortunately they all spoke English very well, "but it was challenging for a few days until we got the logistics of sharing our space worked out", Ian said. "Some thought that we were crazy to give shelter to unknown strangers in our home for an indefinite period of time while others saw it as God working through us as a lesson of compassion...we really did not fathom the fear and difficulties some people have to endure just to stay alive". After 4 days of staying with the Pauls the Osunremis were able to get into a shelter on a temporary basis, through Social Services but have since been provided an apartment. The two boys are in school and enjoying Canada. Mr. Osunremi has been enrolled in a job-training project while Mrs. Osunremi stays at home to chaperon the kids to and from school. This eye opening experience changed Pat and Ian's opinion of refugees: "We always tried to be considerate of those less fortunate, but now have a better understanding of their struggles. It certainly has increased our prayers for those less fortunate than us in a world of plenty. We continue to pray for the Osunremi family". Would they do it again? "Without a doubt."





Raise the Roof Campaign Phase One

From its origins, the Church of Ascension has weathered many storms. But inevitably roofs, and doors and drain pipes fail, and repairs need to be done. As part of our Growing Healthy Stewards Program, we are on an ambitious course to address some of these structural issues. Now is such a time.

In particular, we have to begin funding to replace the Church and Parish Hall roofs. The roof project is an investment in our future and will prevent water damage to our building if the work is done. We hope to have the necessary funds in hand by the early summer of 2019 so that, God willing, work can begin in the fall of 2019. We estimate the cost of replacing the tile on the roof to be approximately \$150,000. A vestry motion will have to be made before we begin the work, but in the meantime, we are hoping that we can raise at least \$60,000 of that amount in 2018. That is an enormous amount for this congregation to raise after we have already raised the money to replace two boilers.

The Corporation understands the burden this places on many in the congregation, and all we ask is that you do your best when and wherever you can to help to support this project so that we can reach our goal.

There will be some fundraising efforts that you will hear about throughout the year, such as our Summer Fair, the ACW No Bake Sale, and Rector's Appeal. But one method that hopefully will interest the congregation is FundScrip.

FundScrip is Canada's leading gift card fundraising program used by schools, sports teams and clubs, churches, community organizations and more.



FundScrip encourages supporters of a campaign, and in our case, supporting the Ascension, to pay for their everyday expenses & gifts with gift cards bought from FundScrip. Each purchase someone makes automatically includes a donation to the Church of between 3% -5%, depending on the retailer. The donor isn't out of pocket, all they do is buy the gift card and shop where they would normally shop whether it is buying their groceries, gas for their car or eating out. In the coming weeks Barbara Rochard will be making a formal presentation to the congregation as to how they can purchase gift cards from FundScrip and its benefits to the Ascension.

FaithWorks with Café 65

Thank you to all who took part in our recent FaithWorks Lenten Toonie fundraiser. To date, we have raised approximately \$500 toward our goal of \$1000. FaithWorks is the annual appeal of the Anglican Diocese of Toronto. Since 1996 FaithWorks has provided more than \$24 million to Anglican affiliated ministries offering help and hope to people in need throughout south-central Ontario and around the world. FaithWorks allows us to share our blessings with others who are less fortunate right here in our community and around the world. FaithWorks supports the work of 18 Anglican affiliated ministries. Compassionate staff and volunteers who know and understand the needs of the people they serve run each of these agencies. Services are provided without discrimination and at no cost to clients.

Your donation will help:

- At-risk women, youth, and children
- Outreach to the homeless and prisoners
- Refugees and immigrants
- Spiritual Care for the terminally ill
- International Aid and Relief efforts



Did you know?

Did you know that when you donate to FaithWorks, you are also helping programs such as Café 65? The Ascension first received an initial \$5000 Reach Grant to get Café 65 launched and then an extra \$10,000 Stretch Grant additional support as Café 65 grew more successful, all made possible by FaithWorks. Because of your support Café 65 provides seniors in our community to gather in a safe place where they can enjoy a simple meal, make friends and build relationships.

Encountering the Risen Christ



The Gospel throughout the Easter season challenges us to encounter the risen Christ as Jesus meets different people in the readings for each Sunday. An encounter with Christ is not only just a simple meeting to talk about daily living, but can be an occasion where

Jesus directly challenges us either through a person or a situation. We are encountered by Christ when we take time to consider the depth of his words and the placement of the event in the story of Jesus. Paul, for instance, presents an actual example when he accounts his encounter with Christ on the road to Damascus; Saul became Paul when he dramatically transformed from a violent opponent of God and one who persecuted the early Church to a great Christian missionary.

Few of us will have such a life-changing Damascus experience, but someone we meet may provide us with a challenge by a simple remark or by the life that they have led. For many of us, it may be difficult to identify an experience that transformed our lives because the event was so simple; this is especially true for a person who was brought up in a home where a Christian lifestyle was the norm. We all need to find opportunities for encounters to grow as Christians beyond the reaction to Sunday's sermon. In his book "Future Shock", Alvin Toffler suggests that "the illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read, but will be those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn". Christian living is a lifelong learning experience.

Encountering Christ involves taking advantage of positive experiences which enable us to grow our Christian understandings through circumstances or moments that invite a challenge to our current 'mindset'; opportunities that may arise in discussions

with our family or friends about current issues in the church, the world or about our daily life. We should not attempt to create such situations, but we must always be prepared to grasp appropriate moments when they arise. In the Daily Office Lectionary in the Book of Alternative Services, provides an appropriate and excellent resource for Bible study. Bible study groups that encourage and invite views or questions from its participants can help particularly on more difficult Bible passages when we engage in discussion, supported in an atmosphere where all perspectives and understandings are shared and heard. Many of us who are unable to be part of a discussion group may find occasions for personal interaction such as a brief time for reading the Bible, preferably with one or more good Bible commentaries. This requires only a short time daily or otherwise regularly, which provides us with a positive beginning or ending to the day.

Recently, I encountered this statement that all Christians, need to consider seriously; "In many churches, attendance on Easter morning is greater than attendance at all Lenten and Holy Week services combined. Joy is fine, but we have little patience for suffering. So suffering is unmentioned, unacknowledged, and kept apart from our relationship with God or one another" ('Jeremiah 30-52 and Lamentations', by John M. Bracke). At Easter when we rejoice in the joyous victory present in the resurrection of Jesus, we should consider this within the context of the suffering of Jesus through Holy Week and Good Friday. Knowing that Jesus was a man well acquainted with our grief and sorrow, might also help us to remember to respect the rights and needs of our friends and other people whom we know to be suffering daily.

David Dunnill

David Dunnill & his wife Pat have been members of the Ascension for the past 9 years. They attend the 8 am service. After retiring from teaching, they served as Volunteers In Mission in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania where they shared the position as teacher of English to clergy wives & secretary to the bishop. Dave is a long time student of the Bible he studied at Wycliffe College and has written several essays & articles.



Church of the Ascension

33 Overland Dr., Don Mills, Ontario, M3C 2C3

Phone: 416-444-8881 Email: ascension@ca.inter.net Web: ascension@toronto.ca
 Audrey Leadbitter & Boa Burns, Editors; Carol Hamilton, Parish Administrative Assistant
 The Rev. Nicholas Morkel, Rector, The Rev. Vernon La Fluer Honorary Assistant