



Office for
Transition
Ministry

Ministry Portfolio

Full Portfolio (last updated Sep 28, 2022)

Church of the Ascension, Staten Island, New York

1 Kingsley Avenue, Staten Island, NY 10314, United States

Contact:

Rector / Vicar / Priest-in-Charge | Receiving Names until 11/30/22.

ascensionsisearch@yahoo.com

Weekly Average Sunday Attendance (ASA)	Number of Weekend Worship Services	Number of Weekday Worship Services	Number of Other per Month Worship Services
43	3	1	
Current Annual Compensation	Cash Stipend	Housing / Rectory Detail	Utilities
SECA reimbursement	Compensation Available for New Position	Housing Available for	Pension Plan
		6	We're in compliance with CPF requirements.
Healthcare Options Clergy+1	Dental	Housing Equity Allowance in budget	Annual Equity Amount
	Yes	No	
Vacation Weeks	Vacation Weeks Details	Continuing Education Weeks	Continuing Education Weeks Details
One month, including 5 Sundays (standard)		2 (standard)	
Continuing Education Funding in budget	Sabbatical Provision	Travel/Auto Account	Other Professional Account
\$501-\$1000/year	Yes	Yes	No

We are calling a Priest-in-Charge, compensation & benefits according to diocesan guidelines

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Describe a moment in your worshipping community's recent ministry which you recognize as one of success and fulfillment.

Church of Ascension was one of the first parishes to utilize Facebook Live when COVID forced us to discontinue in-person worship. Sunday Mass and daily Morning Prayer were broadcast from the church, led by our priest and a Lay Assistant. When in-person worship returned we continued to broadcast our services, and have expanded our broadcasts to include weekday Morning Prayer and Compline, which are led each day from the homes of parishioners who have volunteered to take on this daily Ministry. In addition to reaching out to our homebound parishioners we have also developed an additional following of at least 30 or more viewers each day who are located in other boroughs of NYC, in addition to a few in other states.

How are you preparing yourselves for the Church of the future?

Members of our Vestry have been attending IPC workshops focusing on the "Open Doors, New Futures" program recommended by the Diocese, and are in the process of developing plans to welcome new worshippers with the goal of increasing our membership. In addition, we are working to revitalize our Godly Play ministry, as we had five baptisms in 2021 and two so far in 2022. Parents have indicated that they would like to bring their children to Sunday School. We are also attending to some physical needs in our buildings - updating the electrical systems in both the church and the rectory and updating the rectory bathrooms in preparation for a new Priest.

Please provide words describing the gifts and skills essential to the future leaders of your worshipping community.

Relevant Sermons. Compassionate. Approachable. Motivator.

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Describe your liturgical style and practice for all types of worship services provided by your community.

Ascension uses the Book of Common Prayer (Rite II) for all services. We celebrate the Eucharist on Sunday morning with a spoken service at 8 a.m. and a Sung Eucharist at 10 a.m. We have a small volunteer choir that sings for special services and our organist has been with us for 51 years. In the summer months we try to celebrate "Mass on the Grass" at least once or twice during the season, followed by refreshments. We also host a Healing Service once a month which takes place on Saturday at 12 noon and is led by our Deacon and one of our long-time parishioners. The service includes hymns taken from "Songs of Praise" (a supplemental hymn book), accompanied by a guitarist. We also have an ongoing Sunday ministry at Lakeside Manor, a Senior Care facility in the neighborhood, where a team of Eucharistic Ministers lead an afternoon service with hymns and pre-sanctified bread. This important ministry was started nearly 30 years ago by one of our parishioners, who later went on to become an ordained Deacon in the Episcopal Church.

How do you practice incorporating others in ministry?

Ascension offers many opportunities to share in the ministry. At each service greeters welcome all attendees at the door. Newcomers are welcomed and at the end of the service a greeter will informally connect with them to answer questions, provide information, and invite them to any after service events. Announcements are made during the service to inform all attendees about ministries that are taking place. Additionally, there are articles or announcements in our weekly newsletter. Members of the parish typically participate in our service as ushers/greeters, lay readers, Eucharistic Ministers, altar guild, counters, and acolytes. Sunday School activities have been on hiatus for the past year and a half since parents were keeping their children home for safety reasons. Thanks to vaccinations and boosters we hope to welcome back more families. We will be introducing the Godly Play program in the fall and are excited to have several members signed up for training. We are currently sponsoring a candidate for the diaconate who is an active participant in our services. We also have an ongoing Sunday ministry at Lakeside Manor, as well as our monthly Saturday Healing Service.

As a worshipping community, how do you care for your spiritual, emotional and physical well-being?

Ascension continues to provide a variety of activities to feed the spiritual, emotional and physical needs of our parish family. We host/participate in Bible Studies and Book Clubs, in addition to our monthly Saturday Healing Service. We also maintain an ongoing prayer list which is included in our Sunday worship service, and we also continue to broadcast our weekday Morning Prayer and Compline services via Facebook Live. Our traditional fellowship events have included our Shrove Tuesday Pancake/Mardi Gras gathering, Chinese New Year Celebration, and our Oktoberfest Dinner. Please note some of these events have been on hiatus since 2020 due to the Pandemic. However, last year we were able to host two picnics in June and September, inviting our sisters and brothers from Lakeside Manor to join us.

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How do you engage in pastoral care for those beyond your worshipping community?

The people of Ascension consider each other as family, and although we are without an Interim at this time, we call and check in on one another and let our Wardens and Deacon know when there are pastoral needs in the community. Art Ullstrom, who chairs our Outreach at Lakeside Manor and is part of the Healing Ministry, also prays for and with people who are sick and in need of prayer. Our Facebook Live services make it possible for those who are unwell to join us online and add their prayer requests. In an emergency our Wardens can contact one of the other Episcopal priests on Staten Island for assistance.

Describe your worshipping community's involvement in either the wider Church or geographical region.

We are members of the Richmond Interparish Council (IPC) and work collaboratively with Episcopal Parishes on Staten Island collaborating on current programs and looking to establish new ministries. We also participate in workshops, seminars and Sunday Evensong services in our member churches. Ascension's St. Martha's Guild is a member of the Episcopal Church Women (ECW) of the Diocese of New York and has held fundraising events such as the Strawberry Festival and Kingsley Cafe to raise money for outreach programs, both locally and throughout the Diocese. We are currently assisting a group of caring people who make sleeping bags for the homeless of NYC out of used clean linens. It is called My Brother's Keeper Quilts, who then distributes them directly to the homeless who are living on the streets. The "bags" are assembled using blankets, sheets, towels and neckties which are used to hold the rolled bags together. Hats, gloves, coats, scarves and men's underwear are also collected, as well as thread, sewing needles and sample-sized toiletries. Ascension also opens its doors to AA Women Sharing which meets on Tuesday Evenings.

Tell about a ministry that your worshipping community has initiated in the past five years. Who can be contacted about this?

Following a short period of financial difficulty after our previous rector retired in 2016, Ascension entered into a shared ministry with St. John's Episcopal Church (Staten Island) through the auspices of Richmond Episcopal Ministries. In May 2018, we welcomed the Rev. William Baker. During that time, we had discussion groups on difficult topics and invited our sister parish to join us for Maundy Thursday services. We met for Lenten programs, Book Clubs and sponsored an Interfaith Friendship Dinner in February 2020. When the Pandemic began, some of the plans we had hoped to undertake took a backseat to COVID; however, we developed a strong online presence, purchasing a camera to broadcast our Sunday Eucharist and weekday Morning Prayer services; ZOOM meetings, Bible studies and a Book Club soon followed. Participants included people from neighboring churches and also some from far away. At this point in time, we feel that our most successful and growing ministry continues to be our Sunday afternoon Eucharist at Lakeside Manor. Arthur Ullstrom, one of Ascension's long-time members has been a part of this ministry since it was established 30 years ago.

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What is your practice of stewardship and how does it shape the life of your worshipping community?

For two years (2018 and 2019) we used the Consecration Sunday program which consisted of two or three parishioners giving short talks about their personal experience with Stewardship and encouraging proportional giving. It culminated on "Consecration Sunday," with a guest speaker and luncheon after everyone presented their pledges. In 2020 and 2021 we tried to follow a modified version of that program, also asking some parishioners to share their personal experiences. We try to develop a Stewardship "theme" each year. This year, as in the past, we had three members of the parish give a short talk during our Sunday service about their concept of Stewardship - some talks focused on the speaker's experiences as visitors or members of the parish, while others focused on the nature and importance of giving and tithing. We also try to have literature available that focuses on Stewardship and we do stress the importance of "personal" Stewardship in terms of time and talent, in addition to "treasures." We emphasize that Stewardship is reflected in our efforts to volunteer (i.e., being readers, ushers, altar guild, servers, Eucharistic Ministers, etc.) as well as outreach to the community.

What is your worshipping community's experience of conflict? And how have you addressed it?

Over the course of the past few years the country has seen an unfortunate increase in racism and violence. Much of this was triggered by the unrest that seemed to be widespread during the previous administration and it was felt across the nation - and in the borough of Staten Island as well. Black Lives Matter was one of the prevalent themes in light of the George Floyd shooting, and our church did host a book study of Dr. Ibram X. Kendi's "How to Be an Antiracist." that enabled participants to share their feelings and increase their understanding and appreciation for the lives of others. In addition, our Priest used role play in planned scenarios to better understand and find effective ways to deal with conflict. In addition, during Lent 2021, he led a workshop entitled "How to Have Difficult Conversations" in which we role played various scenarios on how we would handle real life situations. It was well attended. Some of our parishioners also participated in the programs offered by the IPC and the Antiracism Committee of the Diocese of New York.

What is your experience leading/addressing change in the church? When has it gone well? When has it gone poorly? And what did you learn?

In 2019, our church reflected on and acknowledged that nine of our founding members and the founding Rector of Ascension, owned a total of 36 slaves as listed in the New York Census of 1800. We continue to seek justice for all people and affirm that Black lives are and have always been worthy of respect, dignity and honor. Our priest at that time enabled us to tackle the painful history of slave ownership. In terms of negative experiences dealing with change, the most recent and pressing issue that we are experiencing is the effect of the COVID virus on our worship. We have discovered how difficult it is to maintain continuity in our worship and in our church attendance when we have a different priest every three or four weeks. What we've learned is that continuity makes all the difference in keeping a parish together in times of change. Despite that challenge, we celebrated our 220th Anniversary this year on the Feast of the Ascension with a Visitation by the Rt. Rev Mary D. Glasspool who received a new parishioner into the Episcopal Church."

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Prior Incumbents

Name	Position Title	Date Begun	Date Ended
The Rev. William Baker	Rector / Vicar / Priest-in-Charge	2018-09	2021-10

Name	Position Title	Date Begun	Date Ended
The Rev. Roy Cole / The Rev. Mark Brown	Team Ministry Member	2016-10	2018-04

Name	Position Title	Date Begun	Date Ended
The Rev. Richard Marchand	Rector / Vicar / Priest-in-Charge	2010-05	2016-06

Our church school suffered a loss of attendance due to the Pandemic. Prior to 2020, we had about 8 children enrolled in our Sunday School, with plans to enrich their worship through the Godly Play program. We will be re-introducing Godly Play in the fall. One of our newer parishioners who is a Chaplain at Wagner College here on Staten Island has recently led a Book Club study and has indicated her desire to be more involved with Adult Education in the fall.

Church School YES	Number of Teachers/Leaders for Children School	Number of Students for Children School
	2	8

Number of Teachers/Leaders for Teen/Young Adults School	Number of Students for Teen/Young Adults School	Number of Teachers/Leaders for Adults School	Number of Students for Adults School
1	2	1	16

Day School	Number of Students for Day School	Number of Teachers for Day School	Number of Total Staff for Day School
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Contact:
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Worshipping Community Web site: www.ascensionsi.org

Media Links:

Online References:

@ascensionchurchsi (Facebook)

Languages Significantly Represented:

English

Provide Worship or Classes in:

English

References

Bishop:

Diocesan Transition Minister

Current Warden/Board Chair

Previous Warden/Board Chair

Search Chair

Parish/Institution

Local Community Leader