

September 13, 2018

**“Our mission is to celebrate God’s transforming Love in Jesus, by following where Jesus’ Love is calling us to serve the community”**

There will be one service  
On Sunday, September  
16

—10 am Holy Eucharist.

—11:30 Church Picnic in  
honor of Bill Baker’s ordi-  
nation to the priesthood

— Fr Bill Baker will be  
our Celebrant

Inside this issue:

— Fr Bill’s path to  
the priesthood

— Congregational De-  
velopment workshop  
held at Ascension flyer

— Meetings, Events and  
Church Service sched-  
ules for the next few  
weeks

— Richmond Episco-  
pal Clergy Rota for  
September

**God loves you.  
No exceptions.**



The Episcopal Church Welcomes You. [www.dohio.org](http://www.dohio.org)

## Ascension This Week

### My Vocation, Part II Fr. Bill Baker



Last week, I shared a very early memory of feeling called to the priesthood. The memory I want to share in today’s newsletter happened about 8 1/2 years ago. Most of you know that my mother died and many of you know that she died from cancer. The last year of her life she suffered a lot and I knew that my mother was really sick. At Christmas time in 2009, I really wanted to take Meagan and Justin out to California to visit “Mimi”. I assumed it would be one of the last times they would see her, if not the last.

A few days before Christmas that year, a blizzard hit New York City. Flights were cancelled and airports were backed up for days. The kids and I were scheduled to fly out on Christmas Eve morning and the airline told us not to even show up because of the backlog. For a couple of days, we tried to get waitlisted on flights and find a flight to the west coast. We were desperate to get on a flight!

Finally, on the day after Christmas, the airline found us a flight and we flew to California. We actually had to fly into San Francisco, rent a car and drive 8 hours to get to Southern California, but that is a story for another newsletter. When I walked into my parent’s home, I immediately saw my mother. She looked sick. She was small and frail. My heart sank.

Since New York is 3 hours ahead, the next morning I woke up very early to find my mother sprawled out on the kitchen floor. She tried to open the refrigerator to get a drink and in her weakened state she had fallen. She said that she only been on the floor for a short while, but I always wondered if that was the truth.

After the fall, that day I watched my mother carefully. I worried and I watched. I knew something was wrong, but I did not know what. Sometime in the mid-morning, I went in the room my mother was sleeping in and she seemed confused. She was trying to take her blood pressure, but she seemed confused and couldn’t do it. Finally, I offered to help her and when I was putting the cuff on her arm, my mother’s eyes rolled back in her head and she went limp. I thought my mother had died in my arms and I called my dad. He saw my mom and screamed for me to dial 911.

By the time the ambulance arrived my mother had been revived and she did not want to go to the hospital, but my father and I insisted. I worried while I waited for my dad to call me about my mother’s condition. I did not want my children to be scared so I told them that Mimi was sick, but okay. Then I called my sister who lives near my parents and we agreed to take the kids someplace fun for lunch.

*(continued next page)*

As we were leaving to go out to lunch, my father returned from the hospital and I could tell he had been crying. He said that if my mother made it out of the hospital, they decided that she would go into hospice care. I felt deflated. I knew that my mother was sick, but I did not realize how sick. After lunch that afternoon, I returned to my parents' house and called everyone in the family to tell them about their decision.

The rest of the week revolved around visiting my mother in the hospital. On the last day, I arranged for my dad and my sister to take the kids out to lunch and I went to visit my mother alone. It was New Year's Eve 2009. My mother and I talked for an hour and we shared everything—I held nothing back, including my tears.

Ironically, my mother never cried. I have always wondered if she wanted to save me pain or protect me in some way. I will never know why she did not cry. But, I told my mother that I loved her and that she was one of the most important Christian examples that I knew. My mother worked for and with adults with profound disabilities and she loved her clients like they were her children. She gave her whole heart to them. I told my mom that I had tried to follow in her footsteps and love others in the same way that she had shown me.

When I was a teenager, my mother and I argued a lot. That day, I told her that I thought we had argued so much because we were so much alike. My mother admitted that of all her children, we were the most alike. It caused friction from time-to-time, but we also understood and loved each other a lot.

Then my mother told me that she knew that my father would remarry. "People who were happily married remarry," she said. I felt a little surprised, but I just listened. And then she looked at me in the eyes and asked me very gently, "Are you going to get ordained to the priesthood?" She went on to tell me that she thought I should be ordained, even if it wasn't in the Roman Catholic Church. Again she surprised me, but I knew in my heart she was right.

My mother knew that I felt called to the priesthood. All of our paths are long. I had both prayed about being a priest and struggled with the idea over the years. That conversation, 8 plus years ago, in part, is what motivated me to start the ordination process. A month later on January 29, 2010, my mother died. I am so grateful for all the love and support she gave me over the years. I am also grateful that she started me on this process which led me to Church of the Ascension. Now the next chapter begins....

Blessings,  
Fr Bill

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**"Brother, Give Us A Word."** Every day, on the SSJE website, one of the brothers gives a word that we might use as a focus in our prayer and meditation. **"Revelation"**. *"Take heart. If you find yourself praying for God's guidance, God is guiding you already. The desire itself is the seed of revelation. God has caught your attention. God is already there in the question or your sense of need."* — Br. Curtis Almquist, [SSJE](#) You can see his full page of comments on this word on [SSJE.org](#).

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**If you plan to take the bus to the Cathedral on Saturday, September 15, please be at Ascension Church at 8:30AM.**

~ Save the date and register now! ~

## I Want My Church to Grow: What is Congregational Development?

Saturday, October 20, 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

(Check-in & breakfast opens at 8:00 a.m.)

Church of the Ascension

1 Kingsley Avenue, Staten Island, NY 10314

This special training event is for:

- ✓ Laypeople and clergy who want to grow a vital church
- ✓ Those who want to join God in doing a new thing
- ✓ Leadership teams working on evangelism, church growth, spiritual development

### Workshops

- ❖ Evangelism 101: Using Community Organizing Tools for Church Growth
- ❖ We Need More Money: Best Practices for Your Stewardship Campaign

Plenary: "What is Congregational Development?" — The Rev. Canon Altagracia Pérez-Bullard, PhD,  
Canon for Congregational Vitality

Cost: 1-2 people: \$10 each

Group rate: 3 or more \$25 We encourage congregations to bring teams of 3 or more people!

Continental breakfast and snacks provided

To register, mail in your name, payment, and number of people attending to: The Church of the Ascension, 1 Kingsley Ave., Staten Island, NY 10314, Attn: Beth Brown. Checks payable to Church of the Ascension.

### Questions?

The Rev. Canon Altagracia Pérez-Bullard, PhD, Canon for Congregational Vitality

212-316-7433 or [aperez-bullard@dioceseny.org](mailto:aperez-bullard@dioceseny.org)

Or contact Beth Brown: 908-672-0765

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### What is Congregational Vitality in the Diocese of New York?

- Latinx Ministry
- Consulting with Congregations
- Renewal Works (2018)
- Congregational Development Commission
  - Developing/Identifying/Providing Resources [Resourcing]
  - Diocesan Training Events [Equipping Leaders]
  - Planting and redeveloping churches [(re)Development]
  - Grant Programs



The  
Episcopal Diocese  
of New York

**Save the Date: Church Services, instruction, meetings, events for the next few weeks --**

Deacon Bill will be ordained a priest on **Saturday, September 15, 2018.**

A Church Picnic will be held on **Sunday, September 16th**, in honor of Deacon Bill's installation after a 10:00 mass. Please bring a dish or a dessert.

**Saturday, September 22:** Fund-raising dinner at St Paul's, 6:30 to 8PM. Tickets are \$25 if paid in advance or \$30 at the door.

**Sunday, September 23:** Ascension resumes the schedule of 8AM and 10AM services. Sunday School also resumes this day.

**Saturday, September 29: 4PM to 9PM:** 175th Anniversary at St John's.

**Sunday, September 30:** Blessing of the Animals for St Francis Day at Ascension, 9AM.

**Sunday, October 7:** Annual Oktoberfest at Ascension beginning 5PM (Doors open at 4:30 to allow viewing of auction items. Tickets \$30—contact Roy Williamson. You may reserve tickets and pay at the door on the day of.

**Saturday, October 20:** Congregational Development Workshop, held at Ascension. 9AM—1PM. See flyer.

September Ascension	September St. John's
2 Mother DeLellis (9AM)	2 Fr. Cole and Deacon Bill Baker
9 Fr. Cole and Deacon Bill Baker	9 Fr. Mark Brown
10 16 Fr. Bill Baker and Fr. Cole (one service at 10AM)	16 Fr. Mark Brown
23 Fr. Bill Baker (8AM) and Mother DeLellis (10AM)	23 Fr. Cole (8AM) and Fr Bill Baker (10AM)
(Saturday – no service)	29 <sup>th</sup> 175 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Bishop Glasspool Celebrant and Preacher
30 Fr. Bill Baker (8AM & 10AM)	30 Fr. Cole and Deacon Geri Swanson (175 Anniversary Weekend)

