

February 7, 2019

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

On Sunday, February 10

- 8 am Said Eucharist
- 10 am Sung Eucharist
- 11:15 am Coffee Hour

Fr Bill Baker will be our celebrant.

- 2:30 pm Service at Lakeside Manor
- 6 pm AA meeting

Inside this issue:

- “Mexico” Fr Bill’s experiences with the Spanish language workshop in Cuernavaca.
- Farewell message from Fr Roy Cole
- Meetings and Events for the next few weeks
- Chinese New Year announcement.



Ascension This Week

Mexico — from Fr. Bill Baker

I have so many things that I would like to convey in this newsletter article. Two weeks in Mexico creates many memories and many stories. I feel certain that I will tell you about the many experiences that I have had while I have been away. For this article, I want to tell you a little about the schedule and about one of the trips we took during an afternoon.

Every weekday we follow the same schedule. I wake at 6:00 and study for a little with a cup of coffee. Because the days are long and involve a lot of sitting, my classmate and I agreed to walk together for an hour each morning at 6:30. During our walks, we share our thoughts and reflections about the previous day and probably more importantly, we exercise our bodies to prepare for long days of physical inactivity.

After the walk, I shower and prepare for the rest of the day. At 8:00 am we pray Morning Prayer in Spanish, followed by breakfast at 8:30. Breakfasts are big, because we do not eat lunch until 2:00. At 9:00 we start class with Grammar and we keep at it until 11:00. My Grammar teacher is named Queta. The teachers in the church will appreciate, that Queta is a tough teacher. I get fined 2 pesos every time I speak in English or make the same mistake twice. If I am not careful, I will come home owing the Diocese of Cuernavaca a lot of money.

From 11:00-11:30 we take a break. The conference center provides light snacks. Discussion Class comes next. My Discussion teacher is named Marta. She teaches with a delightful spirit. The first day she said that we could discuss any subject, except politics--especially Donald Trump. Every day we talk about many, many subjects including politics. I love my Discussion Class.

After Discussion Class we have lunch at 2:00. The food is my favorite thing about Mexico. They feed us huge meals for lunch which usually start with soup followed by a full plate—enchiladas, tostadas, mole, chicken breasts stuffed with kale, fish in garlic sauce. All delicious, and made by the Chef, Danny, who has become our trusted friend.

Learning takes a lot out of me. After lunch, out of pure exhaustion, I take a nap for about 20 minutes. We usually have trips in the afternoon around the City of Cuernavaca. In the evenings, we have a light supper followed by Compline, which they call “Completas” and then we hang out or finish up homework for the next day. I make it to bed most night by 10:00, and out of complete exhaustion, fall to sleep immediately.

My favorite trip around Cuernavaca occurred on Monday. We went to an orphanage. Our hosts told us that adoption is not common in Mexico and birth families are given many chances to get their children back. Essentially, the orphanage acts as a group home. However, few parents return to get their children once they go into the home.

23 children live in the home. Two parents, called "Mama" and "Papa". Other staff help with the raising of the children. An observant person could tell that the children are happy and that they consider themselves family. The older children, a few of whom are 18 years old, help with the care of the younger ones. The love that the parents show the children was so obvious and genuine.

The week before, during one of our afternoon activities, we made stuffed dogs for each of the children. To break the ice when we arrived we introduced ourselves and then gave out the dogs. In Mexico, I am "Mamo", which is the equivalent of Bill. When I introduced myself as Mamo, one little boy ran up to me and said, "You're Nemo," in Spanish. Everyone laughed. After we gave out the dolls, we played and talked with the children.

I made the mistake of offering shoulder rides and playing Superman. For the next two hours, except when we ate cake, we ran around the yard with the kids. During the breaks from playing, and while we ate, I spoke to all the children. It pleased me to see the happiness in each child's face. I heard stories from children who like school, singing Christian music and soccer, and who want to learn English. A few told me that they want to come to New York.

I feel certain that we, as a church family, will get the chance to welcome and host some of our sisters and brothers from Mexico and from the Diocese of Cuernavaca, in the near future. My truest hope is that you all will learn, as I have, that the people of Mexico love, worship and serve God, just as we do, and that although they live thousands of miles away, they are both our neighbors and part of the body of Christ at work in the world.

I very much look forward to seeing you all on Saturday at the Chinese New Year or Sunday at church!

Blessings, Fr Bill+



This is on top of the pyramid of Teotihuacan, near Mexico City. We hiked up there last Sunday. In the picture--Canon John Perris, Fr. Bill (minus the beard) The Rev. Charles Cowen (back row) The Rt. Rev. Mary Glaspool, The Rev. Eva Suarez (front row).



On Sunday, January 27, the Sunday School children spoke to the congregation and asked for food donations.

Something new: On the last Sunday of every month we will have a birthday cake at coffee hour in honor of all the birthdays during the month. Come and sing the birthday song with us! Sign up sheet for cake donation will be available in the undercroft.

Save the Date: Upcoming Events for Richmond Episcopal Ministry:

Saturday, February 9: Ascension's Annual Chinese New Year dinner. See details next page.

Sunday, February 10: The Ascension Annual Meeting. One Eucharist Service at 9AM, followed by the meeting and a special brunch.

Wednesday, February 13: Healing service at Ascension, 9:30am. St Martha's meets after the Holy Communion and breakfast hour.

Sunday, February 17: On this date, Fr Cole's last day on Staten Island, St John's will hold a wine and cheese farewell reception for him from 12 noon to 3PM.

Saturday, February 23: Voyces presents Madri Gala 2019. Christ Church, 7PM. Tickets \$50. Includes wine and seltzer bar, cheese. Pay at the door or make a reservation at info@voycesSI.org or 718-873-6458. Check the Voyces website for more information.

On January 28, Fr Roy Cole posted this message on his Facebook page:

"It is as official as it can get. All the paperwork has been signed. After 10 years and 2 months as Rector of St. John's Staten Island and 3 years as Canon Missioner of the Richmond Episcopal Ministry (Staten Island) I am leaving to move 18 miles north to the Church of the Epiphany at East 74th and York Avenue. I will serve there as their Interim Priest in Charge for three years.

There are so many memories that flood my mind as I think back over the experiences I have had and the people I know - both here and those who have proceeded me into that Greater Light of God's unending presence. It may sound hyperbolic to most of my clergy friends, and probably more than a few church people, but in 10 years the "honeymoon" never ended. I have been blessed to shepherd and be shepherded by a remarkable parish. I have also learned more than I can express from having served alongside the clergy (deacons and priests) of the Staten Island Clericus. Their lives, and the lives of my parishioners, are forever woven into my life.

My last Sunday at St. John's will be February 17th. I start at Epiphany the next day and will Celebrate my first service on March 3.

Thank each of you for your prayers for St. John's, and for Epiphany and me as we take this journey together. May God forever be a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path."

St John's is holding a farewell reception for Fr Cole on Sunday, February 17, 12 noon to 3PM.

Ascension's Annual Chinese New Year Dinner will be held on Saturday, February 9, Doors open at 4PM, dinner beginning at 5PM.

Where: 1 Kingsley Ave Staten Island, NY 10314 (718)442-4187. Contact Roy Williamson for Tickets (718) 448-9508.

**Craft Table for Kids! Fifty-fifty Drawing!
Basket Raffles!**



A sumptuous Chinese banquet will be prepared by our own Ed and Mercedes Chow! The menu will include Chicken Lo Mein, Egg Foo Young, Dim Sums, Buddhist Delight, Daicon, Chinese Sausage with Vermicelli Fried Rice, Pepper Steak, Egg Drop Soup, Fried Wonton Chips, Fortune Cookies, Almond Cookies, and Pineapple served buffet style. **Kids menu items of Chicken Nuggets and Mac'N Cheese will be on the buffet table and craft projects will be available for kids as well.** Soda, Coffee, and Oolong Tea are included, and if you want something stronger, BYOB.

Ticket prices are: adults = \$30; children 8 to 16 = \$5; children under 8 = free. Tickets may be purchased by contacting Roy Williamson at 718-448-9508. Seating is limited so early ticket purchase is strongly encouraged.

1 Kingsley Ave, Staten Island, NY 718.442.4187

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