

February 6, 2020

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



## Ascension This Week

**Moving Forward Together  
— from Fr Bill Baker**

On Sunday, February 9

- 8 am Said Eucharist
- 10 am Sung Eucharist
- 11:15 Coffee Hour
- 2:30 pm Service at Lakeside Manor

Inside this issue:

- “Moving Forward Together” an article from Fr Bill Baker
- #Somethingtoconsider
- Flyer for the Chinese New Year dinner.
- Black History Educational Month Series at Christ Church
- Save the Date events and meetings, and a few announcements

I met with Bishop this week. He helped me a lot and reminded me that change is slow. He told me that he loves the people of Ascension and holds a vision of this parish having a full-time rector within 5 years and being a beacon here on Staten Island. He would love for me to help with that as much as I am able, but if we aren’t a match, he told me I am free to go. It’s funny, after he said I could go, I felt more resolve to stay. The Bishop and I talked about a plan for Ascension. I would like to share both some of what we talked about and what I envision for this place.

First, I want to share with all you, that through prayer, I realize that this has little or nothing to do with me. I took some of the resistance to change here personally, but this is not about me. This is about all of you. You are good people, loving people. Consider this; maybe God sent me here to help you realize something new. Are you willing to grow and change? Please consider this in prayer.

A lot of my conversation with the Bishop centered around “the Other”. “One of the hardest part of Christianity,” I told the Bishop, “is to get people to see those who look vastly different from them, as part of the same family in Christ.” We talked about the need to meet the foreigner and stranger, and how to welcome those who are poor and even those who seem strange, is vital aspect of our Christian Faith.

I came away from the meeting with the idea that we need more education and more chances to meet people who are different from us. We will participate in the Lenten series that the IPC suggested for the churches on Staten Island. I would like to hold at least one of those session per week on Thursday evening in the rectory again, but I would also like to start a Bible study and discussion group on some of these topics. We might consider doing this one Wednesday a month after coffee hour or we might wait until we finish the Lenten Series and choose to continue to meet one evening a week. Would you like to know what the Bible says about the foreigner, your neighbor, your enemy or who we might welcome?

Experiences also help to shift hearts and change minds. We have a really good opportunity to meet some of our neighbors when we host a Friendship Dinner at Church of the Ascension. I invite all of you to attend, but more so, I truly hope that every person in the church will attend, as a way of meeting our neighbors, when we host the dinner on February 16th from 5:30-7:30pm.

When the Bishop heard that I asked the question about Sanctuary, he said he feared having Sanctuary in any church might put a target on the backs of people we need to help. Instead he told me of two interesting programs. One is in Kingston, NY, where the church is designated Sanctuary, but no one uses it because there are 10 secret homes throughout the community where individual families agree to keep families safe. Some of those homes have housed families with great success.

The Bishop also talked about another program we might want to start ourselves. In some places, it is unsafe, in the current climate for undocumented parents to pick up their children from school. In those communities, people from the church walk the children of undocumented parents home after school. They also might go grocery shopping to help out a parent who is trying to stay under the radar. Bishop Dietsche said this program works well in churches with lots of retired people. We certainly have that!

I told the Bishop that I contacted the Chair of the Anti-Racism Committee about the plaque honoring the slave lives who helped build our church and he thought that was a good idea. We should wait and see what they say about how to proceed. Maybe this will mean having more listening session and invite Black people to come and share with us about the resolution. Or maybe it will mean letting the issue die for a period of time. The Bishop and I agree though, this should not be a controversial issue. We might feel defensive or fearful about what the acknowledgement means or maybe we just don't understand why and what the Diocese asked us to do. I hope to share more about this with you all soon.

Finally, I want to say if you have ideas about how we might proceed, please talk to me. I welcome feedback, new ideas, concerns and even criticism. I cannot and do not want to do this all alone. This process needs all of us. Growing can be exciting, but it can also be painful. I continue to pray for all of us and invite you to do the same. Together, we will find a way forward!

Blessings, Fr Bill+

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**#Somethingtoconsider** focuses on thoughts that Fr Bill is pondering in his heart. We can all join with him in this.

"I have been thinking about something lately. I keep hearing that the economy is strong. The Stock Market is growing. God does not really care about how our economy is doing. God cares how the poor are doing. God cares about our faith growing!"

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***BLACK HISTORY MONTH EDUCATIONAL SERIES***

During the month of February, Christ Church will host an educational series dealing with the issues of slavery, racism, and religion in Staten Island. The format for the series will be fellowship, presentations and conversations with learned professionals who have studied this material and are able to help us with these issues.

**All presentations will be held at Christ Church New Brighton, 76 Franklin Avenue, SI, NY 10301. Call 718.727.6100 for more details.**

*Refreshments will be served. The schedule is as follows:*

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**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 02, 2020**

**4:00 pm - 6:00 pm**

**Slavery, Religion, and Resistance on Staten Island, 1640 -1800.**

**Presenter: The Rev. Dr. George McClain**

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**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 09, 2020**

**4:00 pm - 6:00 pm**

**Sundown Towns on Staten Island? A look at past and present housing discrimination.**

**Presenter: The Rev. Dr. George McClain**

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**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2020**

**4:00 pm - 6:00 pm**

**Slavery in Staten Island and its lasting legacy on race relations.**

**Debbie-Ann Paige, Staten Island Museum**

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**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2020**

**4:00 pm - 6:00 pm**

**Frederick Douglas Memorial Park**

**Presenter: Duane Felton, Esq.**

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*Refreshments will be served.*

**All are invited to share in this education series, to be informed, and to learn how we can be anti-racist in a culture of division.**



**Year of the Rat 4718**  
**Celebrate**  
**Chinese New Year**  
**At the Church of the Ascension !**

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

**Where: 1 Kingsley Ave Staten Island, NY 10314 (718) 442-4187**

**When: 5 pm, Saturday, February 8th, 2020**

**Cost: \$30/person - \$10/children 8-16yrs; Children under 8 FREE**

**All you can eat! Soda, Coffee and Oolong Tea are included. BYOB!**

**Tickets may be purchased by contacting Roy Williamson  
at 718-448-9508. Doors open at 4 pm.**

**Menu prepared by our own Ed and Mercedes Chow !**

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|---|---------------|------------------|
| Egg Drop Soup                                 | Fried Rice    | Buddhist Delight |
| Chicken Lo Mein                               | Pepper Steak  | Fortune Cookies  |
| Chicken Dim Sums                              | Egg Foo Young | Pineapples       |
| Daicon  | Roast Pork    | Chips            |
| Chinese Sausage with Rice Vermicelli          |               |                  |
| Kid's Menu: Chicken Nuggets and Mac n' Cheese |               |                  |



## Save the Date: Upcoming Services, Meetings and Events for Richmond Episcopal Ministry:

**Saturday, February 8:** The Annual Chinese New Year dinner and auction at Ascension. 2020 is the year of the Rat. See flyer in this newsletter.

**Sunday, February 9:** St Martha's Installation Brunch at the Hilton. Contact Barbara Krause if you wish to attend.

**Sunday, February 9:** Second in the Black history Month Educational series at Christ Church, 4:00—6:00 pm. See flyer in this newsletter.

Please join us at **5:00 pm on Saturday, February 15**, and every third Saturday of the month for a **healing service at Ascension**. As many of you know, Arthur Ullstrom has a spiritual gift of healing prayer. On February 15 he will be joined by Dcn. Geri and Fr Bill for the laying on of hands and prayer for healing.



**Sunday, February 16:** Don't forget the next monthly Friendship Dinner is Sunday, February 16, 5:30 to 7:30 at Ascension Church. This is a wonderful opportunity to socially meet those of other faiths bringing us together through the One common to us all: God. It is Pot Luck and you are asked to bring a vegetarian dish; vegetarian so that all may eat. Of course we will need volunteers to set up, clean up and meet and greet. Let us be welcoming not just with our Hall, but with a host of Ascensionites known for our warmth and friendliness! —Cindy

**Lenten Service at St. Alban's Church:** The IPC Lenten Committee is planning an Evening Prayer Service with hymns to be held at **St. Alban's Church on Sunday, March 15th at 4:00 pm**. The theme of the service will follow the SSJE 2020 Lenten study "Signs of Life - Why Church Matters - Light / Water / Food / Shelter / Community."

## Why Church Matters

"When we hear the water being poured into the font, or witness the new fire at the Easter Vigil, or experience solidarity and shelter among the assembly, or taste the bread of life, we are reoriented toward God's eternity. Time stands still, God moves, and we are changed." Dr. Lisa Kimball calls on the Church to share the signs of life with those trapped in the signs of our times.

### Light • Water • Food • Shelter • Community

Worship engages our deepest human needs and has the power to transform our lives. Join the Brothers of SSJE in exploring the signs and symbols at the heart of Christian worship. This free 5-week offering encourages individuals and groups to explore the riches of our worship traditions, liturgy and sacraments, and the art and architecture of our worship spaces, revealing the full meaning of these signs, deepening our experience of Christian vocation and guiding us toward ongoing conversion. In addition to weekly videos the program includes a daily practices calendar with readings and activities to incorporate into your Lenten discipline.

