



The Dome

ASCENSION CHURCH OF OAK PARK

A Stewardship Parish, Sharing Our God-Given Gifts in Service

December 25, 2011 The Nativity of the Lord—Christmas

*A Savior
has been born
for you*



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Merry Christmas, God's Blessing on You and the Whole World!

ASCENSION CHURCH

Parish Center: 808 S. East Ave.
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www.ascensionchurch.com
www.ascension-school.com
www.archdiocese-chgo.org

Pastor

Rev. Larry McNally 848-2703

Pastoral Associate

Victoria M. Tufano 434-1533

Director of Institutional Advancement

Lynn Fredrick 434-1558

Director of Music

David Anderson 434-1535

Director of Religious Education

Christine Ondrla 848-3099

Director of Youth Ministry

Daniel Lawler 434-1555

School Principal

Mary Jo Burns 386-7282

Parish Office Support Staff

Financial Secretary:

Mary Pat Landa (M-F) x221

Administrative Secretary:

Rosemarie Nowicki (M-W) x231

Sacramental Secretaries:

Joanna Cundari (PM: M,Th) x230

Deedee Ralston (PM: T,W) x230

Pastor Emeritus

Rev. Robert A. Cross

Weekend Assistants

Rev. John Cunningham, S.J.

Rev. Ray Guiao, S.J.

Rev. Richard Woods

Deacon Couples

Lendell & Tina Richardson

Roger & Betty Vandervest

Joe & Kathie Walsh

Infant & Toddler Care is available
during the 9 & 11 a.m. Masses in the
Cry Room of the Church.

From the Pastor

DEAR FAMILY OF ASCENSION,

MERRY CHRISTMAS! "GIVE THE CHILD GLORY." ANGELS
PRAISING GOD SAYING: "GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST."
MERRY CHRISTMAS!

I thank our many parishioners for your generous and compassionate participation in the Thanksgiving Day St. Vincent de Paul collection (\$3,718). Because of your thoughtfulness and kindness, our St. Vincent de Paul Society was able to help a number of parish families who have fallen upon hard times to have a merrier Christmas. I also want to take this time to thank the members of our St. Vincent de Paul Society for your good and kind work as you go so quietly about taking such good care of the needs of our parishioners. I thank you all for your compassion and thoughtfulness.

One more time, I would like to thank our many parishioners who participated in our Christmas Angel program (109 bags). Also because of your thoughtfulness and kindness not only were the Mission of Our Lady of the Angels parishioners helped, but also our very own parishioners; all of them had a better Christmas because of you. I thank you so very much for your compassion and generosity. Thanks to thank Sheila Martinotti, Marybeth Granholm and Colleen Bracco for your leadership in this compassionate program.

I would like to thank Jack Nowicki for decorating the outside of our parish center, especially with the damp and cold outside.

Thanks to Charlie and Lynne Williams, owners and operators of the Drechsler, Brown and Williams Funeral Home, for our 2012 Parish Calendars. Thanks, Charlie and Lynne, for your generosity. (I hope every family took one home.)

Because this year Christmas is a Sunday, some of traditional Christmas Feasts such as the Feast of the Holy Family and the Baptism of the Lord will be celebrated on a week day. The Feast of the Holy Family, when we praise and thank God and ask for blessings not only for our own family but for the community of believers, the Family of God at Ascension, will be celebrated on Friday, December 30, at our 8:15 a.m. Mass. And then we celebrate the Baptism of the Lord on Monday, January 9, at 8:15 a.m. when we praise and thank God for our own baptism and entrance into a Community of Faith (like here at Ascension), and celebrate the Lord's Baptism in the River Jordan by John the Baptist.

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We celebrate the Solemnity of Mary on Sunday, January 1, at our usual Mass times (without 5 p.m. Saturday night): 7:30, 9:00 and 11 a.m. and 5 p.m.

Then we celebrate the Feast of Epiphany on Saturday and Sunday, January 7th and 8th at our usual Mass times. The Feast of the Epiphany (growing up we would call this feast Little Christmas) is the day we celebrate that Jesus came to save ALL not just the many.

The job description of our newly opened position of Director of Institutional Development is now being posted on our parish website, the Archdiocesan website, and many other locations. We are asking those who are interested in this position to send their resumes to the parish by January 31st. We are now in the process of setting up a Search Team to begin the interviews starting in early February.

I have heard the Christmas song, "I'm dreaming of a White Christmas" many times on the radio, and snow is a good possibility for Christmas as well as for the next few months, especially on the weekend. So to be ready for this, we will need a list of parish volunteers to help Kenny with snow removal and putting down salt all around the campus. If you could be of help for this annual weekend chore, please email me at: lmcnally@ascensionchurch.com or give me a call, 848-2703. I thank you.

I was reading the other day that our Lieutenant Governor Simon's favorite hobby is to knit and sew. She has made many outfits for herself and her daughters. Only a "stitch in time" will tell us if she is governor material.

We are working with the Ward Construction Co. concerning the stone falling from the front of the church. We will get that repaired as safely and as quickly as possible, weather permitting. There is never a good time for any of this to happen, but with this being the Christmas Season, it is not a very good time at all. The safeguard barriers will remain in place until the completion of the work. The estimate of the work to be done is over \$6,000.

With the good help of Bob Kane and Mike Gnolfo,

we were able to get an update on our new Church doors for the south side of the Church. Master Craftsmen is putting on the last coat of finish. There was some problem agreeing on the hardware for the doors, but the agreement has been reached. But now, it is too cold, snowy, damp, etc. for the doors to be installed. So now it will be Spring when we finally see them in place. I am sorry this has taken so long, especially the courtyard handicap door which needs replacing the most. This has been a *Murphy's Law* experience since I first signed the contract back in early June.

As far as I am concerned, we are off to a very good start in adapting to the new Roman Missal. I thank you so very much for your patience before Mass as David explained the changes and then practicing them. Thank you for coming to the formation sessions run by Vicky. Thank you for our own personal study of the new translation. Thank you for your openness towards it. I am really enjoying all the smiles coming my way especially at the time of the Sign of Peace as you respond: "And with your Spirit."

I thank you for our new *Gather* hymnals and for your generous response resulting in all of them being gifts and/or a thank you. They are helpful with the Creed and the other changes and they are easy to find in the front of the hymnal. The prayer cards have also been a big help. My priest friends are also finding that the prayer cards have been an enormous help in their parishes. The way this is going, I am confident that we will get use to the new translation a lot sooner than expected.

Our Parish Center is closed tomorrow, Monday, December 26, but I will periodically check our voice mail for any pastoral needs that may arise. We will be open on Tuesday, December 27, at our normal hours, 8 a.m. until 8 p.m.

Due to the Christmas holiday, we had to go to press early. I will catch up with the financial Offertory collection summary when we get back to our usual press times. In the meantime, I thank you for ALL that you do for our Family of Ascension.

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The Ascension Community Welcomes You!

Christmas Mass proclaims God's gift to the world: His son Jesus. We are glad you are celebrating with us! A delicious meal, the exchange of meaningful gifts, good conversation: these are the secular gifts of the Christmas season. We are blessed at Ascension to witness and participate in the spiritual gifts of the season - the gift of celebrating Mass in a beautifully decorated Church with priests that are holy, and liturgical ministers and musicians that seek to honor Christ's birth.

The community of Ascension invites you to continue the celebration into 2012 by joining us in the many ministries that make up this vibrant parish.

"Called to be stewards of our Christian faith..." so begins Ascension's Stewardship Mission Statement, begging the question what is it to be a **Christian** in today's world? The most famous of modern day Trappist monks, Thomas Merton, answered: "**All Christian life is meant to be at the same time profoundly contemplative and rich in active works.**" And so the age long debate between private prayer and good works ends in a tie with the understanding that both are necessary for living out our Christian faith.

Perhaps you have a job or a talent that could benefit our parish community. Email the Stewardship team: stewardshipteam@ascensionchurch.com. We will help connect you to one of the 25+ parish organizations that need you.

Pressed for time? Somewhat cliché has become the mantra of time, treasure and talent; yet, these are the gifts of the steward. Not everyone has the luxury of time; maybe your best gift of stewardship is to give generously to specific organizations, or to brainstorm the giving strategies of others. "You fool this very night your life will be taken from you," so Jesus warns the greedy landowner against accumulation of wealth for its own sake. Stewardship forces us to look critically at how we spend our money. Need and want can become interchangeable if we aren't scrupulous. In writing the check, donating food and/or goods, do we take the time to pray, "Should this be more?" "Can this be more?" "Show me how I can do more."

Ascension is a Stewardship Parish. We as a parish strive to be pleasing to God. The Stewardship Team at Ascension invites you to share your gifts. E-mail us and we will personally respond. Our promise: renewed energy that comes with new friendships and the joy that accompanies serving others.

The Stewardship Team at Ascension
708-848-2703 or
stewardshipteam@ascensionchurch.com

Marriage Mentors / PADS/ St. Vincent de Paul Society / SPRED / Respect Life / AWC /
Religious Education / Peace & Justice / Music Ministry / Finance / Lectors / Maintenance / Youth Ministry /
New Horizon / Ministers of Care, Companionship, Praise / Sacristans / Bible Study / Extending the Word /
Bereavement Support / Eucharistic Ministries / UPAJ / Liturgy Committee / Taizé /
Christian Initiation of Adults / Men & Women's Spirituality Groups / Environment and Art /
Baptism Prep / Home & School / New Hope / Parish Council / Greeters / and MORE!

Ascension School Centennial

In September Ascension will open its doors for the one hundredth time! Students, alumni, faculty and staff are all beginning the preparations for this huge anniversary. If you are not currently receiving mailings from the Ascension Advancement Office and would like to be informed about the celebrations in store, please contact us at 708-434-1541 or email alumni@ascension-school.com. Would you like to join us to help plan the Centennial Year? Use that same contact information and we'll fill you in on what's happening.

We will begin the celebration with special activities this coming June, and wrap up with special activities in June 2013. The plans include a strong focus on the history of our community, with many opportunities to reconnect with old friends. Some events will be primarily geared toward alumni participation, some for current students and their families and some for anyone with an attachment to Ascension.

Centennial Weekend: June 22 – 24, 2012

Friday, June 22: Alumni & Friends Golf Outing, Big Run Golf Club, Lockport, Illinois

Saturday, June 23: 5K Run/Walk through South Oak Park

Centennial Kick-off Mass: 5:00 p.m. followed by an All-Class Reunion

Sunday, June 24: Memorial Brick Blessing, Open House, Block Party

(Coming in Centennial Weekend 2013: Roller skating in the gym, beer garden, dinner dance!)

Calling All Recipes

In honor of the Centennial Celebration, we will put together a collection of recipes near and dear to those who have called Ascension School home. Generations have passed through our halls, each student nourished by varied culinary heritages. What we eat binds us together. Food is about more than eating -- it is about shared experiences, passing on traditions and feeding our future.

From the spaghetti and meatballs that you ate before the big game to Sunday pot roast, from bake sale goodies to favorite after-school snacks -- we'd love to have you share your recipes and memories with us.

Send your recipes, or questions, to triciadoherty@me.com

Ascension House Project

You're invited to be part of another cool project, too: An Ascension community walking tour. Walking to school at Ascension figures large in the memories of many of our alumni – and it will probably stand out for many current students, as well. We are looking for homes that have been home to more than one generation of Ascension families and then doing research on those homes.

In particular, we're looking at the 500 to 800 blocks of Elmwood, Gunderson, Scoville, East and Clarence. (If we get more people involved, we could go west a little farther.) Do you live in that area? Do you know who lived in your house before you? Contact Geralyn Magrady if you'd like to be involved in the house project: gmagrady97@aol.com.

Treasures From Our Traditions

An old joke asks, “What time is Midnight Mass?” The answer is not really obvious, since Christmas is unique in having several distinct celebrations. The readings and prayers vary greatly from hour to hour. The Vigil Mass hinges on the family heritage of Jesus and his origins. The concept of “midnight” predates clock time, and really has to do with a celebration in the hours of darkness. Years ago, it was not possible to receive Communion without fasting for a full day, so the late hour of this Mass made it possible for the people to receive. The first Mass after sunrise, the Mass at Dawn, was once known as “The Shepherds’ Mass,” and later Masses set aside stories of Jesus’ birth to focus on the key to the day’s celebration: John the Evangelist’s majestic theology of Christ’s identity as the Word made flesh, dwelling among us. One feast, four separate Masses. Only monasteries manage the whole round. Parishioners typically take just one entry point into the mystery. Yet there is much to savor and celebrate in the coming of Christ into the world. Christmas is not a day, but a season. You still have two weeks to send those Christmas cards before you’re officially late!

—James Field, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.



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Readings for the Week

Monday	Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59; Mt 10:17-22
Tuesday	1 Jn 1:1-4; Jn 20:1a, 2-8
Wednesday	1 Jn 1:5 — 2:2; Mt 2:13-18
Thursday	1 Jn 2:3-11; Lk 2:22-35
Friday	Sir 3:2-7, 12-14 or Gn 15:1-6; 21:1-3;
Saturday	1 Jn 2:18-21; Jn 1:1-18

Feast Days

Monday:	St. Stephen, first martyr
Tuesday:	St. John
Wednesday:	Holy Innocents, martyrs
Thursday:	St. Thomas Becket
Friday:	The Holy Family of Jesus
Saturday:	St. Sylvester I

The Gift of God’s Word

The readings today are different at each Mass, therefore, they are not listed here.

On this day of gifts and gift-giving, it seems appropriate that we take a moment to reflect on the great gift of God’s Word. Because it is creative, God’s Word always points to its author, always calls us to respond. Because it is powerful, God’s Word can link the sublime with the ridiculous, the transcendent with the immanent, the divine with the human. Because it is graceful, God’s Word establishes a relationship of deep intimacy between us and God.

At the heart of God’s Word lies a tantalizing tension between the mysterious and the mundane. In our liturgical celebration, this unresolved tension both reveals the meaning of life for us and calls us to respond, to act upon that meaning.

Once accepted and opened, the gift of God’s Word is a gift that keeps on giving and keeps on calling us to give in return. It dares us to be like the gift-giver and to become gifts for others, not only at Christmas, but at every moment of life.

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*To help prepare for Mary, the Mother of God:
Numbers 6:22-27; Psalm 67; Galatians 4:4-7;
Luke 2:16-21*

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I pray for you every day.

I see where Maker's Mark bourbon and Casa Cuervo Tequila of Mexico are in court over the use of the red wax seal which has been a trademark of Marker's Mark since its inception. I understand that to be hired as a lawyer for Maker's Mark and its famous red seal, one must be able to "wax eloquently" in the courtroom.

MERRY CHRISTMAS, EVERYONE!

MAY THE GOD OF INFINITE GOODNESS
FILL YOUR WONDERFUL HEARTS AND
MINDS WITH THE CHRISTMAS
GLADNESS OF PEACE AND FAVOR.

GOD BLESS,



Confirmation Meeting

Confirmation candidates and Mentors will meet for their next session on Thursday, January 12, at 7:00 p.m. in the Pine Room. Please complete all required work before the meeting.

Meetings and Events

Today	December 25	
	Merry Christmas!	
Monday	December 26	
	Parish Offices Closed	
Sunday	January 1	
	Happy New Year!	
Taizé	Church	7:30 pm

**Our Mass Schedule for Next
Weekend is:
No Mass on Saturday, 12/31**

Sunday, 1/1/12:

7:30, 9:00 & 11:00 a.m. & 5 p.m.

Taizé Prayer at 7:30 p.m.

Religious Education Classes

Religious Education classes will NOT be in session during the Christmas holidays.

Sunday classes resume on January 8th

Tuesday classes resume on January 17th

Wednesday classes resume on January 18th

Teacher Training takes place on January 10th.



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**The light shines in the
darkness,
And the darkness has not
overcome it.**

John 1:5

Pray for the Sick

Miguel Arias, Marty Biau, Sarah Bowman, Andy Bottrell, Michael Brady, Kay Bracco, Josephina Carmona, Joe Cassidy, Mary Colombo, Anna Diaz, Danny Doyle, Jennifer Fischer, Simon Gutierrez, Meri Hale, William Hall, Bruce Hanessian, Patricia Hanley, Sam Harnisch, Ester Hitchner, Heather Kadlac, Will Kallal, Thomas P. Kragie, Scott Krusinski, Anne Marie Kuhny, Fay Kutz, Kathleen O'Bryan Kurrle, Annina Lementavich, Gerry & Mary Logan, Jan Lorenzen, Rosita Malmis, Mary Massura, Mary Ruth McGrath, Elina Manghi McGuire, Dellwyn & Nora Meewes, Ken Morten, Frank Murphy, Carol Ojala, Emilia Ortiz, Estelle Pargulski, Nina Petrosinos, Bob Prendergast, Philip Rice, Jeanne Riordon, Anne Sandow, Valerie Schoenneman, Cynthia Siarny, Tom Slott, Steven Sobie, Elizabeth Stohl, Mary Strenski, Mikayla Sweeney, Beatrice Talbot, Mary Thomas, Jesse & Sonia Vasquez.

May our prayers bring them healing and peace.



Please pray for the repose of the soul of all of our departed family and friends.

Welcome to Ascension Church

If you are new to our church or just visiting, please stop and introduce yourself. We are pleased to have you share in this celebration of the Eucharist. If you do not have a church home, or your church is not a home to you, we invite you to become part of our parish family. Our church is open to anyone looking for a spiritual home. Parish Registration forms are at all church entrances or you can also download a form at www.ascensionchurch.com (Administration/Forms/Join the Parish).

We are so glad you're here and hope you will come back again for Mass or to become a parishioner.

Masses for the Week

SUNDAY – December 25

The Nativity of The Lord—Christmas

Masses are at: 9:00 & 11:00 a.m.

MONDAY - December 26

St. Stephen

- 7:45 Rosary (Monday—Friday)
8:15 Tim & Ken Palmer/Catherine Cunningham

TUESDAY - December 27

St. John

- 8:15 Julianne Villari / Oscar Feliciano /
Carol Mulvihill

WEDNESDAY - December 28

The Holy Innocents

- 8:15 Jimmy Sullivan / Fred Brandstrader

THURSDAY - December 29

St. Thomas Becket

- 8:15 Mary Christiansen /
Remedios Sugay-Guevarra

FRIDAY - December 30

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph

- 8:15 Sherry Busby / Michael Bensen

SATURDAY - December 31

*Vigil: Blessed Virgin Mary,
The Mother of God*

NO MASS

SUNDAY - January 1

Blessed Virgin Mary, The Mother of God

- 7:30 Helen & Ed Freidham / Rich Spangler
9:00 Grace Kevil / Alfred Popoli /
Carol Mulvihill
11:00 Eileen Gull / John Jamnik, Jr.
5:00 John McCarthy

PARISH INFORMATION

Sacrament of Reconciliation: Saturday 4:00 - 4:30 PM.

Infant Baptism: Our parish celebration of infant Baptism takes place at 1 p.m., on the 2nd, 3rd and 4th Sundays of the month. A preparatory session for parents is held on the second Saturday of the month in the Parish Center at 9:30 a.m. First-time parents are required to attend. To register for a preparatory session, or to schedule a baptism, please call the parish office.

Adult Initiation: Adults interested in information about the Catholic faith or wanting to become Catholic, should contact Vicky Tufano, ext 233.

Weddings: Please make an appointment with Fr. Larry to pick up a wedding information packet at the Parish Office at least a year prior to selecting a date or reception hall.

Sick Calls: If there is anyone at home who cannot attend Mass or receive the sacraments because of illness or old age, please contact the Parish Office or one of the Ministers of Care Coordinators: Susie Cahill, 383-7238, Linda Dunne, 848-5574, or Cece Masella, 383-3785.

Registration: All newcomers are welcome to the Ascension family and are asked to pick up a census/registration envelope at the entrance of the Church or by downloading a form from the parish website. Parishioners who marry, have a baby, or move to a new address should also notify the Parish Office.

Audio Devices are available for the hearing impaired. Please see an usher or greeter before Mass.

Lost & Found Box is under the table in the church vestibule.

Parish Office: 708-848-2703

Bulletin deadline: Monday 5 p.m. Please deliver articles to Parish Office or email to ascensiondome@msn.com

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1 through 9, plus this page

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS

Do not staple. Thank you!

Merry Christmas, Enjoy your time off!
Rosemarie