

# Ascension Dimension

December 2011

*From the Interim Rector*

## “The Joy and Care of Children”

I remember a Christmastime when I was 13 or 14 years old, and remarking to my mother that the celebration and the presents, etc., wasn't as exciting as it was when I was little. Her response was that she thought this was natural – and that Christmas would become that much fun for me again ... when I had children of my own. How right she was, though I waited more than 15 years to find out!

In the “Prayers and Thanksgiving” section of the Book of Common Prayer, we find this on page 829: “*For the Care of Children...* Almighty God, heavenly Father, you have blessed us with the *joy and care of children*: Give us calm strength and patient wisdom as we bring them up, that we may teach them to love whatever is just and true and good, following the example of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.” What wonderful wisdom the beautiful words of that prayer convey. How true it is that we need calm strength and patient wisdom to raise children! A lot of parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles and child caregivers would quickly add that we need a sense of humor, and lightness of heart, too! Those who think deeply might also add that a sense of humor and a light heart *are a necessary part of* calm strength and patient wisdom. Just about everybody who has spent time with children would know what these words mean.

Not just parents, but the whole body of the Church of the Ascension has been blessed with the *joy and care of children*. Those we baptize and bring into Christ are the same ones who watch us at worship and at Coffee Hour, learn our names, and generally take in what we say and how we act. Children are truly learning all the time, whether we think they are or not, whether we intend for them to be learning, or not. We may not all teach Church School or serve in the Nursery, but we are *all* responsible for creating an environment that is safe, positive, respectful – of them and of the mystery of faith, humane, consistently attentive, and steadfastly wholesome.

In addition to this, a few of us are called to give ourselves, and many hours to the work and ministry of teaching children the Christian faith: that is in Church School, Youth Group and preparing for Confirmation. I am so pleased and excited to see a lot of new energy emerging for this at Ascension, and I want to again thank the five members who took a whole Saturday to be trained in the *Godly Play* curriculum. The *Godly Play* room is being spruced up and rearranged, and our church school classes of *Godly Play* resume this Sunday (November 20) beginning at 9:45am. Starting up with an every-other week schedule until after Christmas, we look forward to having the classes every Sunday in the new year.

As we enter the Advent-Christmas cycle, I am reminded that there is no better time to think about our ministry to and with children, and youth. Let's give thanks for this new energy, and the movement of the Holy Spirit, to renew and to start something fresh among us that will help us to take seriously our Godly call for “the joy and care of children”.

EEG+



*The Church of the Ascension  
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## December Birthdays

- 1<sup>st</sup> Steve Stephenson  
 2<sup>nd</sup> Phil Crosland  
 6<sup>th</sup> Debbie Widenor  
 7<sup>th</sup> Kelly Axsom  
 8<sup>th</sup> Eddie Kates  
 9<sup>th</sup> Rees Gwynn  
 11<sup>th</sup> Sue Pearson  
 13<sup>th</sup> Don Crawford  
 15<sup>th</sup> Frank Groff  
 Stephen Tryon  
 16<sup>th</sup> Sandy Godfrey  
 Kathy Gorman  
 18<sup>th</sup> Audrey Appleton  
 19<sup>th</sup> Karen Tryon  
 24<sup>th</sup> Skip Kates  
 28<sup>th</sup> Joanna Morgan  
 29<sup>th</sup> Ashley Martin  
 Charlie McKinley  
 Colin Todd  
 31<sup>st</sup> Ken Reynolds

**Happy Birthday!!**

*If you or family members are not listed in the birthdays or anniversaries, please call the office and let us know the date. YOU are an important part of our parish family.*

On November 6<sup>th</sup> we welcomed Milton and Jace Melville, the twin sons of Chrissie & Milt Melville into the family of Christ here at Ascension. Due to technical difficulties, we cannot print a photo this month but hope to do so in the next newsletter. Grandparents are Paul & Lisa McFarland; Great-grandmother is Stella Williams.



*Happy Anniversary!*



**Sunday School**  
 MAKES A DIFFERENCE

## December Anniversaries

- 11<sup>th</sup> Paula & Bob Widenor 40 years  
 12<sup>th</sup> Lyndie & Leo Mozzoni 13 years

## Godly Play is back!

On November 20<sup>th</sup>, Godly Play returned to the Church of the Ascension. Through the end of the year, our younger members will meet at 9:45 for Godly Play and then join their parents in church after the sermon. Starting in January, we will have Godly Play every week. Questions?? Talk to Jodie Lockwood.

## December 3<sup>rd</sup> –

### Claymont Parade – Reception – Craft Show

Come watch the parade, witness the blessing of the weed, greet our neighbors, and shop for that gift, stocking stuffer, or bake item that you have been looking for.

Once again we will be serving our neighbors cookies and hot chocolate. *If you can provide a package of cookies it would be greatly appreciated. Just drop them off by 10AM on the 3<sup>rd</sup> so that we know we have enough for those who come in following the parade.*

The ladies of Ascension Guild, with help from our friends have been working hard on craft items that will be on sale that day. As you know we also have great cooks at Ascension and there will be a bake sale table available as well.

### Are you shopping on-line this Christmas?

Sign up with **Good Shop** to benefit Church of the Ascension and enter your favorite sites through the Good Shop web site and you will still get all of the discounts and coupons the site offers while a percentage of your purchases will go to Ascension. If you make **Good Search** your default search engine, Ascension will make a penny for each search.

As you do your **grocery shopping** at Acme, Giant, SuperFresh and/or ShopRite, don't forget to get gift cards from the Golgolabs the 1<sup>st</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month. It costs you nothing and Ascension will earn 5% of your purchase amount. Join those of us who use gift cards for all of our grocery purchases



Inside this newsletter is an envelope that you can use to help decorate the church for Christmas while remembering your loved ones.



On Saturday, October 29th, a dedicated group of volunteers served dinner at the **Sunday Breakfast Mission**. The hungry men, women, and

children were fed hamburgers, corn, potato puffs, and greens. We extend a hearty thanks to Beth and Joe Fitzpatrick, Roald Sonju, and Vicki Dixon for giving of their time that evening. This was the first visit to the Mission for all of them! They reported that the people receiving their meals were very grateful and many kind words of thanks were expressed.

We thank you very much for your contributions to the **Christmas at Sea** program. Many of the toiletries collected were travel/hotel size, perfect for the seafarers. The estimated value of all contributions was \$390.00. This program benefits seafarers who arrive at the Port of Wilmington during the month of December. Joan Lyons, Executive Director of the Seamen's Center of Wilmington, was our guest speaker at both services on Sunday, October 23rd. She asked us to close our eyes and imagine what life would be like if we were sailors. These men give up family, share close quarters, and endure many lonely times to provide the fresh fruits that are supplied to our markets every week.

The collected Christmas at Sea items are placed into shoe boxes and become known as "ditty bags". These ditty bags are wrapped and given to the seafarers who come to the Port of Wilmington during the month of December. In addition to the toiletries, winter hats, scarves, socks, and gloves are also included in the bags. The men greatly appreciate this kindness, and it is one way for us to thank them for the sacrifices they make each day. A cheery group of volunteers headed to the Port of Wilmington on Saturday, November 12th to wrap 150 ditty bags! Many thanks to Mary Ann Rodriguez, Barbara and Lauren Berheide, Debbie Hamilton, Ann Archer, Father Godden, Judy DuRoss, and Chris Tomasetti for giving of their time that day. A special extra thanks to Judy DuRoss for organizing all of our supplies and to Mike DuRoss for the VIP tour that he took us on after we finished wrapping!

**Claymont Community Center** gratefully acknowledges our food contributions for their Thanksgiving Food Drive. Many cans and boxes were delivered to the Center. These items will be put into baskets and given out so that others less fortunate than us may enjoy a delicious Thanksgiving meal.

Our next Outreach meeting will be on **Sunday, February 12, 2012 after the 10:00 service**. Come and join us as we explore ways to serve others.

## *Holiday Food Baskets*

We will be collecting the following food items for the Claymont Community Center's Holiday Food Baskets on **December 4, 11 and 18**: **Canned Sweet Potatoes, Corn, Green Beans, Canned Fruit, Cranberry Sauce; Cereal, Pancake Mix, Syrup; Boxed Stuffing, Mashed Potatoes, Mac N Cheese** Please place the canned and boxed items in the baskets in the sanctuary before or after services.

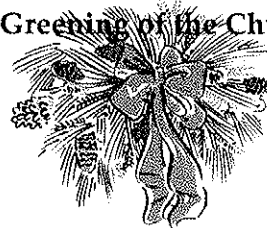
## *Gifts for the Christ Child*

As is our tradition, "Gifts for the Christ Child" will be collected at both Christmas Eve services.



Please bring baby essentials (**infant** clothing, diapers, blankets, etc.) on Christmas Eve and place them in and around the manger in front of the pulpit. This is a very special way to help mothers in need. The Outreach Committee will donate these items to Friendship House Clothing Bank of Delaware. In a thank you letter dated February 1, 2011, Linda Harrison, Director of Friendship House, said, "New **infant clothes** are a special treat to distribute and receive!"

## *Greening of the Church*



The Altar Guild will be **greening the church on December 18th following the 12 PM service**. This is definitely a case where many hands make light

work, so help us if you can. We will be hanging evergreens on pillars, bows on windows, putting up the pew candles for the candlelight service, and putting greens and bows on the Advent wreath. This can all be done in about an hour with enough help. So enjoy the Nativity Show for a while after the 10 AM service and then help with the greening.

## **Damaged Items Returned**

The beautiful three-branch candelabra have been returned after being repaired. They have had their sockets restored and have been professionally polished and buffed. The large gold cross and the single candlesticks are being repaired. When they were returned from the police, they needed repair and have been sent off. This is all being covered by our wonderful insurance. Gradually, everything will be back in place.

Bridgewater's in New Castle has had the responsibility for these repairs, and they send them to a company in Maryland. They do wonderful work!

## The Thanksgiving Altar

Thank you all so much for the fresh fruit and vegetables presented for our Thanksgiving altar! The food was taken to the Claymont Community Center's Food Closet the first thing on Monday morning for distribution Thanksgiving week. Our generosity is much appreciated by the folks at the Food Closet and of course by the families who will enjoy the food.

Nov. 13, 2011

Dear Friends:

This is an update on my pilgrimage with Christ. You know I have been a vowed Brother for six years, my run at the deaconate but now I am entering a new phase. I have started a seminary program with the North American Old Catholic Church. The seminary is St. Wolbodo a program without walls. What does this mean for my life at Ascension? It means that for the foreseeable future I shall be continuing as I have been, on vestry, communion assistant, Eucharistic visitor and brother in Christ. The seminary is leading me to ordination as a priest. At that time we shall see, I hope to maintain what I call dual citizenship with both churches. This can be possible due to a developing communion with the Episcopal Church and the N.A. Old Catholic Church. I continue to believe that I am called to serve in the Church; I foresee being a chaplain in service to others in hospital or other like institution.

Feel free to ask if you have any questions.

Peace of the Lord to you all,

Br. C. Gregory



Cold weather soon will be here. this means soup time, please save Campbell's Soup labels (gravy labels too). **GF Box Tops for Education** are to be found on Progresso soup labels, cereals, Green Giant produce & other products. Please leave the labels in the box located in the Narthex. Labels are given to Claymont Elementary School & the accumulated points provide extra equipment for the school.

*Thanks to Ann Archer for coordinating this for us.*



*This year we received information about our Adopt-A-Family too late to be included in last month's newsletter and the deadline for financial donations is November 27<sup>th</sup>* Our family this year is from the Claymont area. They are living in a Women's Shelter due to domestic

violence. The mother is currently unemployed, but is a full-time student. There are 4 children: a 10-year-old daughter, 3-year-old twin boys, and a 2-year-old girl. The family has access to Acme, Food Lion, or Superfresh, plus Target, K-Mart, or WalMart. Gift certificates are great, or you can give cash (in a labelled envelope, please), or a check. Our drop-off date is Dec. 5<sup>th</sup>, so I would need donations of cash or checks by Sunday, Nov. 27<sup>th</sup> to give me time to purchase gift certificates. Gift certificate donations can be made up to Sunday, Dec. 4<sup>th</sup>. Remember to get grocery gift cards from the Golgolabs and benefit the COTA roof fund as well.

Thank you so much! I know we are all feeling the pinch of less income/more outgo this time of year, but I know our Ascension family has always come through to make the Christmas holiday brighter for a family in extreme need.

Blessings!

Sharman Stephenson



*Christmas Eve*  
SERVICE

JOIN US THIS  
CHRISTMAS EVE  
AND/OR  
CHRISTMAS DAY  
as we celebrate the  
birth of our Savior.

### Christmas Eve

5 PM with Children's Sermon

7:30 PM Choral Christmas Music

8:00 PM Christ Mass

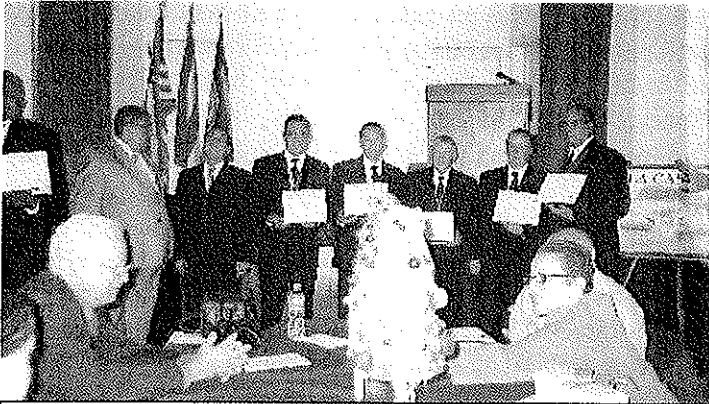
Christmas Day

8:00 AM Holy Eucharist (only English service)

12 Noon Spanish Misa

*Merry Christmas!! Feliz Navidad!!*

## Hogar Crea Graduation



On November 6<sup>th</sup>, Ascension's Parish Hall was the joyful setting of Hogar Crea of Delaware's 10<sup>th</sup> annual graduation of six residents from the program. After 18 months of therapeutic treatment carried out in a disciplined family environment, these residents have become drug free. They are "re-educated"; they have worked hard to become "new persons", ready to be reintegrated into the community to face life's challenges and become productive, responsible citizens. The six graduates who received their First Letter are Michael Erickson, Francisco Lopez, Edwin Navarro, Israel Nazario, Eduardo Rodríguez and Luis Santiago. Everyone successfully completing the first 18 months will have a follow-up each year for the first five years. Those who received their Second Letter this year are Marc A. Berry, Emmanuel Dummont and Andres Velasquez. Jose D. Lopez and Alberto Morales received their Third Letter.

The first Hogar Crea was established in St. Just, Puerto Rico, in 1968 by the late Juan Jose Garcia Rios (better known as "Chejuan"). Imprisoned for drug abuse, Chejuan had a vision of how he could help those immersed in drug addiction to become a new person, free of substance abuse. Out of prison and with the help of the Episcopal Church in Puerto Rico, he began his first center, calling it "Hogar Crea". ("Hogar" is the Spanish word for "home". "Crea is an abbreviation for "Centro de la Re-Educacion de Adictos"). Chejuan's philosophy was that over several months (at first the length was 2 ½ years; now it is 18 months), a drug addict in a disciplined residential home environment and through therapeutic treatment could become drug free, modify his behavior and learn to become a positive, responsible person.

Each Hogar is completely maintained by the residents themselves: they cook, clean, do laundry, care for the yard and carry out any other chores one encounters in successfully running a home. For many residents, this is the first time they have been confronted with this type of responsibility, which helps them develop a sense of family. A special activity of the residents is the sale to the community of flans (Custards), cheese cakes, cookies, and jelly rolls – all made by them. They are proud that they not only run their own home, but they also generate income to help maintain it.

Therapeutic treatment is administered by a staff who have gone through the program and been re-educated, and have received training to carry out the different therapies. They believe that a person who has actually been in the throes of substance abuse and has pulled himself out of the horror of drug addiction will make a more effective drug counselor. Both Spanish and English are used in the Hogar.

Forty-three years after the first Hogar was established, there are now 85 Hogares Crea in Puerto Rico; there are centers in Costa Rica, Panama, Columbia, El Salvador, the Dominican Republic, Venezuela and the United States. In this country, Hogares have been established in Delaware, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Connecticut and Florida. Among the centers are those for men and for women, for addicts with HIV and for abused children. The centers are monitored by the Department of Drug and Alcohol in the state in which they operate.

Church of the Ascension is happy to welcome the Hogar Crea residents each Sunday to our Spanish Misa. We congratulate those who at the graduation received their First Letter and those who received their Second and Third Letters. We all know that life is not easy. We all know that conquering drug addiction is not easy. But with a positive attitude, with hope and perseverance and a desire to rise out of the devastation of drug addiction, and with Christ by your side, you will gain the victory and realize that life can be beautiful. Life is what you yourself make of it! Your friends at Church of the Ascension are cheering you on!

*We thank Mary Anne Rodriguez for providing us with this information. Members of Ascension were invited to attend the ceremony and the Ascension Chancel Choir was privileged to participate by singing the National Anthem.*

### ***Fiesta of The Virgin Mary of Guadalupe***

***On Sunday, December 11, at the 12:00 Spanish service,*** we will honor the Virgin Mary of Guadalupe on the 480<sup>th</sup> anniversary of her appearances to Juan Diego, a simple indigenous peasant, near what is now Mexico City. She appeared four times as a mestiza (mixture of Indian and Spanish, with dark hair and dark skin). Using Juan Diego's native language of Nahuatl, she spoke to him in a loving and compassionate manner. From that time on, he became her devoted follower.

Precious to the appearances of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the missionaries sent from Spain to Mexico had had little success in converting the Indians to Christianity. However in the 10 years following her appearances in 1531, nine million Indians became Christians. That in itself was a miracle!

The Virgin of Guadalupe is greatly venerated by the Mexican people, but her influence has spread throughout many Latin American countries, as well as in the United States. Many churches and shrines bear her name.

We invite you to attend the noon Eucharist on December 11. We will present a short history of the appearances of the "Guadalupeana" to Juan Diego and the amazing results of these appearances. Sandy and the choir of Ascension will enhance the service with their music. We are expecting it to be a very special service – **Please plan to attend!!**



The 8<sup>th</sup> annual presentation of "Keep Christ in Christmas" will be held on Sunday, December 18<sup>th</sup> fro 9AM to 4 PM. "Keep Christ in Christmas" features approximately one hundred Nativities, from many countries and cultures, created from the materials available, and reflecting the traditions of Christian faiths around the world.

The first Nativity of Crèche scene is attributed to St. Francis of Assisi, but has been adopted by nearly every culture in the world. Ascension's unique display includes the Holy Family, made in Bangladesh from

mulberry paper and a Haitian nativity made from steel drums. Clay figures from Mexico, Bolivia and Peru are set up along with an extensive set of exquisitely carved and painted figures from Germany. There are Nativities from the United States, Thailand, Ireland, Argentina, Spain, Italy, Africa, Sri Lanka, the Ukraine and Indonesia, as well as three from Poland made entirely from cardboard, paper and colored foil. Carved Nativities of olive wood from the Holy Land are exhibited with ceramic and stained glass sets by local artists and crafters. Visitors with children will find an entire table dedicated to Nativities mad by and for children, as well as a free gift for each child. Plan to make time for this very special exhibit and enjoy light refreshments and beautiful Christmas music while you unwind from the stresses of the holidays.

### **Property Report DECEMBER 2011**

Well, we only have \$175 dollars left to get our front awning to help save our front door. There will be nothing on the front of the awning as the vestry didn't like anything presented.



The property committee and Christine Lockwood along with Bill Suiter, Janet Middleton, I & Mike Berheide, replaced

the rest of the Amis House ceiling tile. Lindsey helped too. Christine got a tour of the house too.

Kurt Gilgore had to stop working for us due to the cold weather but he kindly consented to help the Lockwood's wax the wood floor in the Parish House with the large machine. Thank you Kurt.

The vandalism stuff slowly is being repaired and back in service. Please have patience.

Ron Richardson is moving and has offered much stuff to the Church as he gets close to his move we will get the stuff. He gave use the large bush type clippers already. The fair is getting some stuff too.

Our insurance will cover the damaged Rantz tile floor. Hurrah!!

I'm still working on the choir book holders but I got the organ tuned and when you read this the computer program that runs it will be updated.

With Kurt's and my wife's help I have made a list of everything in the paint cabinet by shelf location. This will be posted on the doors. If you use anything up please delete the line. If I knew where it was used I also noted that on the list. Many cans were so marked.

Our neighbor in the back corner whose property line was in question has agreed to abide by any conclusion reached by a survey. So this is really a done deal. A good neighbor.

These are things that must be addressed as we move on; The church floor is still being looked at by the Sr. Warden.

The parking lot cracks need to be filled to prevent winter break up of the amosite. We are very short of money however. We have the prices. This will be looked into in the spring.

The walks that have sunk down will be raised with 2 picks and dry cement will be put under them so they will level out. We have the cement.

Another thought is to remove the AC units in the wall of the conference, Rectors office & Nursery rooms but it will mean shingling the outside and plaster board & insulation inside.

We got a lot done this year but we must keep it up or it gets very costly to fix as the problems don't go away. The Parish house outside is up for painting in the 2012 year to keep it in good shape.

The December property meeting is cancelled due to its closeness to Christmas but in January we will replace the Amis tiles in the upstairs bedroom all 36 of them. Then that job will be done.

To note that I have printed oiling schedules for heating equipment and all fans with a sign up list in the boiler room. You put your initials in the square at the date you did it, This must be adhered to or the motors will fail. The list tells you where they are. I also have a light part number schedule placed in the sexton closet under the stairs for all the types of lamps. I bought a box of 30 fluorescent T12 lamps that will hold us for awhile but these 4' long by 1" in diameter tubes will no longer be sold after Jan. 1 1912. All these lamps must be replaced with T8 lamps 3/4' diameter which require a new ballast. The sockets are OK however but the ballasts cost \$14 each. T8's won't work with the T12 ballast.

The Lockwood's are trained for child care and if anyone wants to put there child in the Nursery just ask one of them and they will do that.

As a temporary fix what do you think of a carpet mat to cover the missing tiles? These mats are black and have a rubber bottom and lay flat. Let me know as we have the mats. *Greg Stilwell*

**SENIOR WARDEN'S MESSAGE**

Well here we are at the end of another year, Thanksgiving and Christmas are upon us. As I reflect on the year we have had a lot of joy and most certainly some sorrow but as we close out the year we are in a good place. We have been blessed with a very successful year in a number of ways and for that I give thanks every day!

Our search for the successor to our Interim Father Godden is on going, your Wardens and Vestry are working diligently. I will keep you all informed as this important work in the life of Ascension develops in the coming months. In addition we will be talking about it at our Annual Meeting on Sunday January 22nd, I encourage all of you to attend.

I greatly appreciate your support as I performed my duties this year as your Senior Warden, we have had some tough times but it has been an honor to serve. My family and I wish you a Joyous and healthy Holiday Season and New Year.

Hal Frantz  
Senior Warden



This year in our pledge journey, we were inspired by the Episcopal stewardship devotional series: "Feasting on Gratitude." Pledge cards were handed out Sunday, November 20 after six weekly messages were delivered to the congregation. Our new pledge card includes a table showing the real dollar amount of a pledge based on percentage of the giver's income. Instead of the traditional kick-off letter to every church member, a letter asking for a pledge or response was mailed the week of November 20 only to those who didn't make a pledge on the 20<sup>th</sup>. Kudos to Brother Carl Desmond, Mark Ferguson, Genia Thomas, and Fr .Godden for their invaluable ideas, assistance, and gifts of public speaking. Special blessings to all who pushed their spiritual and financial envelopes this season.

*-Sylvia Reid*

*As of November 24<sup>th</sup> 50 pledges have been received totaling \$83,750. Of those, 2 people had to decrease their giving while 16 were able to increase their giving and 22 maintained their commitment at 2011 levels.*

| Income and Expense through October 31, 2011 |               |                   |
|---|---------------|-------------------|
| <u>Actual</u>                               | <u>Budget</u> | <u>Difference</u> |
| Income                                      |               |                   |
| 106,640                                     | 101,749       | 4,891             |
| Expense                                     |               |                   |
| 109,630                                     | 105,902       | 3,728             |
| Net   |               |                   |
| -2,990                                      | -4,154        | 1,164             |
| Pledges exceed budget by \$3.357            |               |                   |

# The Church of the Ascension

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Sunday Worship  
8:00 AM & 10 AM

Domingo Misa 12 Noon



## Mission Statement

*The Episcopal Church  
of the Ascension  
seeks to be the body of Christ  
in our community through  
worship, teaching, service  
and celebrating life.*

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Website

[www.ascensionde.org](http://www.ascensionde.org)

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## December at Ascension

### December 3<sup>rd</sup>

**Reception with Hot Chocolate and Cookies** for the community following the Claymont Parade and Blessing of the Weed.

**CRAFT FAIR AND BAKE TABLE**

### December 11<sup>th</sup>

**Fiesta of the Virgin Mary of Guadalupe**  
**12 Noon Misa - all are invited**

### December 18<sup>th</sup>

**"Keep Christ in Christmas" 9AM to 4 PM**  
**Display of approx. 100 crèches from around the world**

### December 24<sup>th</sup>

**5:00 PM Holy Eucharist with Children's Sermon**  
**7:30 PM Christmas Music by the Chancel Choir**  
**8:00 PM Christ Mass**

### December 25<sup>th</sup>

**8:00 AM Holy Eucharist (only English service of the day)**  
**12:00 PM MISA**