



# ATTENTION ASCENSION

## News You Can Use

Church of the Ascension

Volume III, Issue I

Fall 2017

### *A Letter From Your Pastor*

#### *Discernment: The Path Forward for a Bright Future*

Over this past summer, our parish has undertaken a number of important projects, all designed to continue Ascension's status as the premier parish in Southeast Louisville.

After years of delay, an enthusiastic endorsement was given to resurfacing the floor in the Caster Gym, a project embraced by many volunteers including the leadership of our athletic ministry. Our commitment to providing quality educational opportunities for preschool children was demonstrated by the acquisition of new playground equipment for our young ones. The space available for arts education was expanded to the delight of those who recognize the value of and contributions made by the young artists of our community. And, the safety of our school children was enhanced through the installation of new windows and video equipment near school entry ways.

These and other projects resulted directly from your stewardship: the giving of your time, talent and treasure to the building up of your faith community: the Church of the Ascension.

As we look ahead, an opportunity is unfolding for the community to pray, listen, celebrate, decide and develop priorities and projects for the next 50 years of Ascension's service to southeast Louisville. These five movements of the Spirit will inspire us to vision Ascension in 2030.

We will be part of the "first wave" of parishes engaged in a discernment process which has been inspired by the Archbishop's pastoral letter, *Your Parish: The Body of Christ Alive in Our Midst*. This letter, released by Archbishop Kurtz on the Feast of the Holy Family (December 30, 2016), outlines an exciting and joy-filled process for parishes in assessing their current and meeting future needs. The full text of the pastoral letter is available online at [www.archlou.org](http://www.archlou.org).

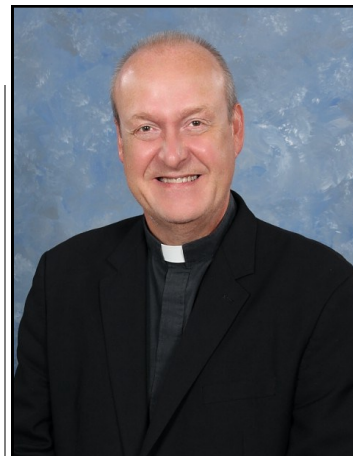
We have already identified some important needs for our growing parish. Formulated as a result of a special parish task force (the Facilities Assessment Team), this list of needs has been previewed in several editions of recent parish bulletins. Whether in creating a new structure to facilitate expanded ministry opportunities or in meeting long overdue repair needs in our existing buildings, this list is an excellent basis upon which to initiate a discernment process.

The list of opportunities already developed fits well with the parish strategic planning goals developed and approved by the Pastoral Council, the primary advisory board to me as your Pastor, in the spring of 2016. We look forward to taking the next steps in the unfolding upcoming discernment process to occur during the fall. It is likely that our discernment will likely lead to a capital development campaign, subject to the review and approval of the Archbishop, in 2018.

We do, indeed, live in exciting times! In the words of the Archbishop: *"As we embark on this exciting journey, let us seek the intercession of our Blessed Mother Mary, whose wholehearted 'yes' is the inspiration for all of our efforts..."*

And the People of God in southeast Louisville say, "Amen!"

Peace,  
Reverend Steven D. Henriksen



Reverend Steven Henriksen  
Pastor  
Church of the Ascension

### **Can't make it to church this weekend?**

You can watch weekend Mass online. The link is located on the parish website [ascension-parish.com](http://ascension-parish.com) below Father Steven's picture.

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## Under Construction

By: Jason Lewis, Facilities Manager



The summer of 2017 has been and continues to be a very busy and exciting time around Ascension's campus. Numerous changes and updates have taken place and are scheduled to take place before the start of school in the middle of August. Changes and updates to the interior and exterior of various spaces will be noticed as students return for the 2017-2018 school year. The gymnasium, the playground, the classrooms, and the cafeteria are examples of areas where significant changes will have occurred during the summer.

Ascension's gymnasium will have a new floor installed that will improve the safety, appearance, and maintenance requirements of our multi-purpose space. Cosmetic and functional issues with the gymnasium walls, bathrooms, and concession stand have also been, or will be, addressed. The accompanying pictures showcase the progress and look of the new gymnasium floor.

The playground on Ascension's campus is slated to undergo an expansion during the late summer season before school is back in session. The longstanding playground structure has served and is only approved for use by children aged five years and up. The new playground structure will serve the growing population of younger children aged two to five and provide separate spaces for younger and older children to expand their imaginative recreation time.

All classrooms throughout Ascension have undergone extensive cleanings and numerous updates. The cosmetic and functionality aspects of each classroom will be visually different and improved as the students return for the 2017-2018 school year. Additionally, the classrooms will be reorganized to facilitate the instruction of various subjects as Ascension makes the transition to a departmentalization method of teaching.

The cafeteria at Ascension will showcase a new ice maker and new milk-dispensing appliance. Accommodations will be made to enable the younger student population to view the healthy choices offered on Ascension's lunch salad bar. The menu of lunch food items served by the cafeteria will also be healthier to better feed the growing bodies and minds of our students.

Numerous safety improvements will have been completed before the start of the new school year. Many of the safety improvements will be visually noticeable, while other behind-the-scenes improvements will raise the already safe, learning environment to a new standard. An immeasurable amount of appreciation is due to all of our parish and school committees, work groups, faculty, and staff for their time, efforts, and patience during this exciting time to be an Ascension Longhorn!







## The Five Strategic Planning Objectives

**Adopted by the Pastoral Council on April 16, 2016.**

1. To continue to build an inclusive, participatory, evangelizing and welcoming faith community.
2. To offer worship and sacramental opportunities which are spiritually nourishing, celebratory in nature, and reflective of the Church's rich liturgical tradition.
3. To sponsor activities fostering a continuous lifelong commitment to spiritual formation and education.
4. To serve the needs of the poor and vulnerable, consistent with the Church's social teaching, through advocacy and corporal works of mercy.
5. To nurture and deepen the partnership between the parish and the school.

### Little Bits....

**By: Valerie Shell, Director of Kid's Time**

"It is paradoxical that many educators and parents still differentiate between a time for learning and a time for play without seeing the vital connection between them." -Leo F. Buscaglia

Summer is the time we think about children and play. A large amount of time in the summer is spent on playgrounds. Who doesn't have a childhood memory that doesn't involve their school playground? One of the big changes occurring at Ascension this summer is the addition of a playground for the preschoolers. Our current structure will remain in place; we will be adding a small structure on the left side that will accommodate our preschoolers. The structure is set to be in place in early August. Like the quote above by Mr. Buscaglia, our faculty values the connections between learning and play. Playground equipment has a multitude of benefits to children besides the development of motor skills and exercise:

Group interaction and social development occur while learning to take turns, wait in line and help others as they master new skills.

Self Confidence is gained from mastering new skills: Climbing, balancing, hanging and swinging are skills still being conquered at the preschool level.

Playground equipment can help foster imaginative play: tunnels can become a rocket that will blast off into outer space, bridges can become the plank on the pirate ship, the underneath becomes a schoolhouse for future teachers.

As Albert Einstein said; "Play is the highest form of research."  
Our preschool is excited to begin it's own research!





## 2017-18 “State” of Ascension School

### Our Mission

As a vital ministry of the Church of the Ascension, our school’s mission is to recognize the uniqueness of all students in a caring, disciplined environment that exemplifies Christ’s command to serve one another. Ascension School fosters excellence in academics and promotes spiritual, intellectual, emotional, and physical growth of the whole child.

The faculty, supported by the parish staff, School Board, and Parent Teacher Organization (PTO), recognizes that students must be prepared to meet challenges of an ever changing world and to live cooperatively as critical thinkers and problem solvers in a global society. Love of GOD, human dignity, justice, ecumenism, service to others, stewardship, and excellence are among the values lived.

As we close another year at Ascension school, I wanted to share with all of you some accomplishments from 2016-‘17 school year as well as some changes for the 2017-‘18 year.

The company who handles Terra Nova scores sold their division to another company. This change has delayed the distribution of scores to all schools who take the test. Below are the scores from this year; individual student scores will not be available until the end of July/beginning of August – we will get those to each of you as soon as we have them.

Overall, we did well this year with slight drops in our 3<sup>rd</sup> grade math and 5<sup>th</sup> grade reading. The most impressive growth was in middle school with 10 and 18 pt. growth in Reading and Math! The “cut-off,” numbers represent Blue Ribbon scores needed to qualify.

### The scores below are National Percentiles

Grade	Reading-School	Reading –Cut-off	Mathematics-School	Mathematics-Cut-off
Grade 3	68	65	65	69
Grade 5	61	67	70	69
Grade 7	79	69	88	70

Here is what we can determine from this year’s scores: our middle school had the benefit of an added LA teacher (volunteer Dotty Lewis). Mr. Stephens taught reading, vocabulary and spelling while Mrs. Lewis taught writing and grammar as well as reading of classics. Overall, middle school students were exposed to a greater amount of material by teachers who are teaching in their area of expertise. The same holds true for middle school math: tutoring and assistance from John Amback (volunteer) as well as Leah Lancaster and Rebecca Burch. Ms. Soeder does a phenomenal job teaching math.

For the 2017-18 school year, Mr. Amback (volunteering) and Leah Lancaster will be helping the elementary grades on a more regular basis in math. We have also been working, as an entire faculty, since October on Departmentalizing our grades 2-5.

Departmentalizing means every teacher teaching their areas of expertise. Our students in grades 2-5 will have Mrs. Herriott for Religion and Handwriting; Mrs. Dixon for Writing and Grammar; Mrs. Jessica Wimsatt (Berry) for Reading, Vocabulary and Spelling; Ms. Shell for Math; Mrs. Disselkamp for Social Studies and Mrs. Jackel for Science. Specials remain the same.

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## Cont from page 4

Because Science with Mrs. Jackel was a huge success with students, it became evident we needed to offer our students the same passion in every subject. With the added data from middle school, it seems even more logical. As a faculty, we spent every week together in meetings (October –May) discussing research topics associated with departmentalizing:

<http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2014/02/19/21department.h33.html>

<http://macrothink.org/journal/index.php/jse/article/viewFile/4802/3981>

<http://www.aabri.com/manuscripts/131774.pdf> as well as our own pros and cons and, in May, had finalized a schedule and the various implications of taking this step for greater student success. Students will spend from 7:40 until 9:15 with their homeroom teachers, which alleviates some research findings concerning younger student's need for a, "home base." They will also spend the last ½ hour of each day in home room. Because of the increased movement from class to class, PE pockets is no longer needed giving us the 30 min. saved for transition time from class to class. Our teachers will have more time to collaborate with their colleagues and by the end of the year have a much better understanding of each student for the upcoming year.

**Cafeteria:** As some of you know, the archdiocese no longer participates in the National School Lunch Program, which provides federal subsidies that help offset the price of school lunch.

Costs associated with lunch (food, labor, cleaning supplies etc.) require us to charge a minimum of \$3.50 for school lunch. After surveying parents and students, and working with a group of parents and other partners, we've added 50 cents to that cost (\$4.00 per lunch) in order to improve what we serve students. These improvements include:

Scratch-cooked meals

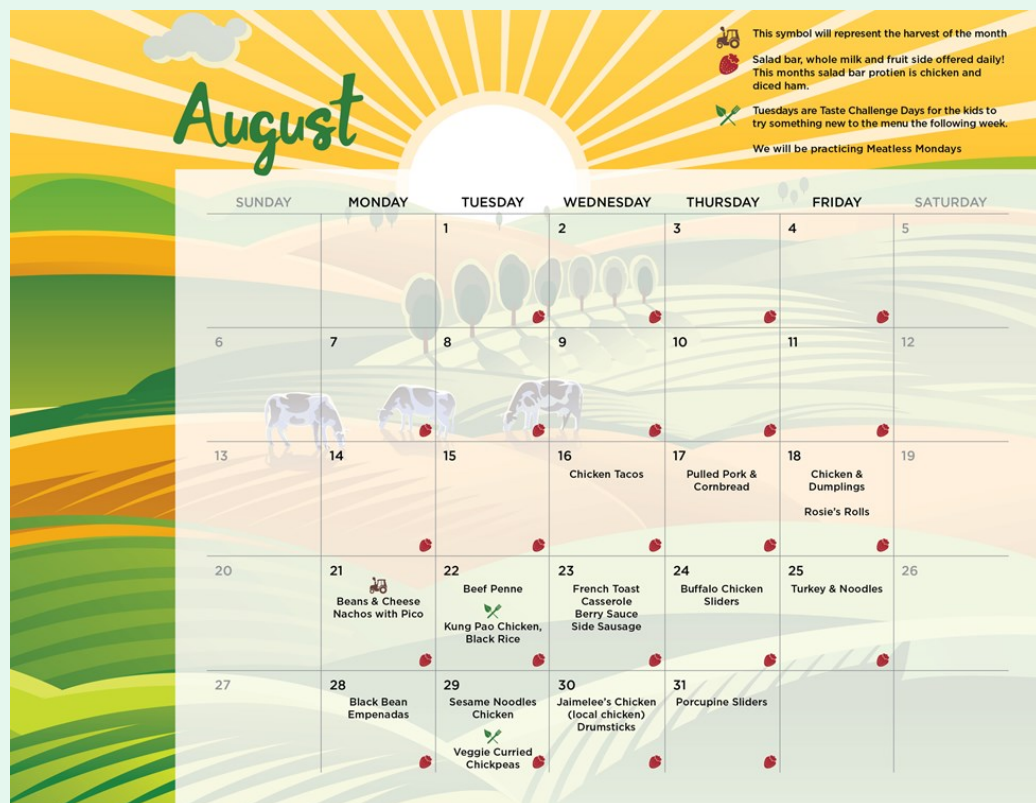
Milk from a refrigerated dispenser, which cuts waste and improves milk quality

Improved salad bar, with increased variety

Improved protein offerings: whole muscle meat rather than "parts"

Increased use of Kentucky-grown foods, including produce, grass-fed beef and chicken

Sarah Fritschner, former food editor of the Courier-Journal and now coordinator of Louisville Farm to Table, a Louisville Metro program, is working with the current kitchen staff to plan meals based on federal guidelines. Ascension depends on its parent community to provide a great environment for the kids. We appreciate your patience as we make and learn from our mistakes throughout this process. Thank you to Sarah Fritschner, Jaimelee Steurer, Jamie Strothman, Katie Murphy, Jaclyn Mullin and Theresa Garrett for their time and effort in making all of this possible! To the right is a tentative menu for August.



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16 Chicken Tacos	17 Pulled Pork & Cornbread	18 Chicken & Dumplings Rosie's Rolls	19
20	21 Beans & Cheese Nachos with Pico	22 Beef Penne Kung Pao Chicken, Black Rice	23 French Toast Casserole Berry Sauce Side Sausage	24 Buffalo Chicken Sliders	25 Turkey & Noodles	26
27	28 Black Bean Empenadas	29 Sesame Noodles Chicken Veggie Curried Chickpeas	30 Jaimelee's Chicken (local chicken) Drumsticks	31 Porcupine Sliders		

This symbol will represent the harvest of the month  
Salad bar, whole milk and fruit side offered daily!  
This month's salad bar protein is chicken and diced ham.

Tuesdays are Taste Challenge Days for the kids to try something new to the menu the following week.  
We will be practicing Meatless Mondays

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*Cont from page 5*

Our **art program, under leadership of Ann Smith, has raised over \$26,000** from sales of student artwork at Dee's Crafts and school fundraisers. \$10,150 of this money has come back to Ascension and the rest to help fund Art programs at other schools. Ascension's Art program will be growing this year as Mrs. Smith's room has expanded to include the closet space once adjoining her room. This extra space will allow us to expand our offerings and give students more room to explore their creativity.

**Holly Smith**, our music teacher, continues to lead a stellar music program offering band and choir as well as musical productions and Christmas programs. Ms. Smith will be expanding her music space to include the music room above the gym.

**In sports**, we won two CSAA City Championships: 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade boys basketball #2 team and 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade girls basketball #1 team. The new gym floor is complete and a grand re-opening was held on Monday, July 17<sup>th</sup> at 6pm. Archery was a huge success last year and we are looking for bigger and better this coming school year. There is a new athletic website, which houses all registration, fees, stats and more. You can find the site under the athletics tab on the Ascension website.

We are very excited to be offering a new course at Ascension to our middle school students called **Trivium**, which will be taught by Dr. Michael Shell (husband of Valerie and father of Trinity). While this is new to Ascension, it has deep roots in the earliest traditions of the great Catholic universities of Europe. The Trivium has three parts: Grammar, Logic, and Rhetoric. These three ideas form the foundation for education and armed with these skills students can be life-long learners in any subject. Some put it this way: Language is INPUT, Logic is PROCESS, and Rhetoric is OUTPUT. This class (think language) will focus on mastering the Latin and Greek roots, prefixes, and suffixes that make up the majority of English words. The average middle schooler will encounter 10,000 new words every year and 80% of them have Latin or Greek roots. In the words of Sister Miriam Joseph (The Trivium: The Liberal Arts of Logic, Grammar, and Rhetoric, 2002) "logic is the art of thinking; and rhetoric is the art of communicating thought from one mind to another." As a professor of philosophy and logic, Dr. Shell has worked with these ideas for many years and also taught middle school for over a decade. This course will be taught once a week in a fun interactive way with the goal that our students will come out thinking more clearly, able to express themselves with confidence and be able to confront new information with tools to help them absorb concepts and not just read words. Middle school students will be taking Trivium in lieu of Spanish.

The 8<sup>th</sup> graders explored Zion NP, Bryce Canyon NP, Grand Canyon NP, Hoover Dam, Glen Canyon, Antelope Canyon and the Colorado Plateau for their **8<sup>th</sup> grade trip**. Our students had the opportunity to learn about the impacts of Westward expansion, the geology, geography and overall history of a region with stunning landscapes and far reaching implications.

We began gathering data for our 5yr Accreditation, which culminates with an external review team this November.

Fr. Steven continues to provide leadership and vision. His presence in school reading to students, on the morning announcements and greeting parents and students at morning carpool is a testament to his passion and dedication to the school ministry.

Welcome to our new 5<sup>th</sup> grade Social Studies teacher, Mrs. Casie Disselkamp, and Kindergarten Assistant, Mrs. Megan Wesley.

Again, I thank all of you for everything you do to make this school so amazing! I urge each of you to please come see me with any questions or concerns: I would much rather hear from you BEFORE issues arise or compound. We can solve so much together!

May God bless you,  
Terrence Mullaney







## The Practice Behind the Passion: How We Teach

Part two of a three-part series

By: Terry Mullaney, Ascension School Principal

Our explosive growth over the last 4 ½ years has led to continued probing into “how do you all do it?” Here is a look at some of the methods being employed in our classrooms to challenge and prepare our students.

### \*Explicit Instruction

Equally focused on student centered learning, explicit instruction is a direct approach to teaching new skills to novice learners. Explicit instruction is characterized by a series of supports to guide students through a learning process, with clear rationale for the purpose of the new skill, modeling of the instructional goal, and scaffolded practice until independent mastery is achieved. (Anita Archer)

### \*Formative Assessment

Our faculty assess students in every class using a variety of methods with the sole intent of informing instruction. Information gathered from formative assessments have the potential to transform instruction almost immediately. Using assessment platforms such as, KAHOOT, Socrative or IXL, our teachers gain quick insight into the effectiveness of their teaching as well as student understanding: they have the opportunity to re-teach or work with students in small groups or individually to increase understanding and overall success. (Michael Scriven and Benjamin Bloom).

### \*Critical Exploration

During critical exploration, the child explores the subject matter and the teacher explores the child’s thinking. There are endless numbers of adequate pathways to make sense of the new experiences. Teachers engage learners in subject matter and show interest in students’ thoughts over their own to encourage students toward greater intellectual involvement. This teaching practice is rooted in a development tradition: the natural development of the learner is the basis for determining what should be taught and how it should be taught. (Jean Piaget and Eleanor Duckworth)



### \*Project Based Learning

Project based learning uses hands-on learning activities that engage student interest and motivation to bring depth to the content areas. Activities are designed to answer real life questions and solve authentic problems. A well-designed project invites students to tackle the central concepts and principles of a discipline. Teachers plan projects to enrich student’s learning experiences by integrating content with instructional strategies, technology, collaboration, and communication. (James Bellanca)



### \*Inquiry Based Instruction

A teacher using inquiry based instruction guides class discussion with focused interpretive questions that serve as a problem to be explored by the group. Students are expected to offer different answers to these questions and with an underlying concept of multiple valid responses. Students are encouraged to be active participants, learning the process of listening, speaking, reading, and writing under expert guidance. (Jerome Bruner)

\*The next newsletter will feature the final part of this series focusing on methods that will be implemented in the fall of 2017

“The **more** that you **READ**,  
the **more** things you will **KNOW**.  
The **more** that you **LEARN**,  
the **more** places you’ll **GO**.”

~Dr. Seuss



## Church of the Ascension

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through worship, outreach, education  
and fellowship guided by the teachings  
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## BACK-TO-SCHOOL for ANCHOR



It will soon be "back-to-school" for our religious education program on Sunday mornings; beginning September 10<sup>th</sup>. This year, we have close to 34 students, including many who are returning; along with some new families. ANCHOR (the name of this religious education program) is in its third year here at Ascension and has been quite successful since we began in 2015. This program serves the formation needs of children and their families by providing weekly instruction in the faith by a staff of volunteer catechists. Sacramental preparation is included for 2<sup>nd</sup> graders receiving First Communion and 8<sup>th</sup> graders receiving Confirmation. Family formation opportunities are available at special times of the school year; where children and their parents participate together. ANCHOR classes meet on Sunday mornings between masses from September through the end of April. We are looking forward to another wonderful year and welcome all of our families back; including those who joined this year.



## Drive-Thru Faith Bites

Our Formation ministry is pleased to announce the start of a special outreach to parents of our parish schoolchildren who arrive early to pick up their children from school. This exciting new endeavor called "Drive-Thru Faith Bites" is an opportunity for parents waiting for school dismissal in carpool lines to come inside for literal "bites" of goodies (refreshments/snacks) AND "bytes" of engaging information about our Catholic faith. It is a new concept to engage our school parents in small bits of catechesis that is easy to digest in a short period of time on a monthly basis.

**Date: September 6**

**October 4**

**November 8**

**December 6**

**Time: 2:00pm**

