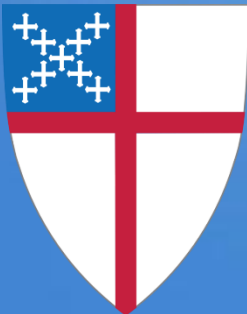
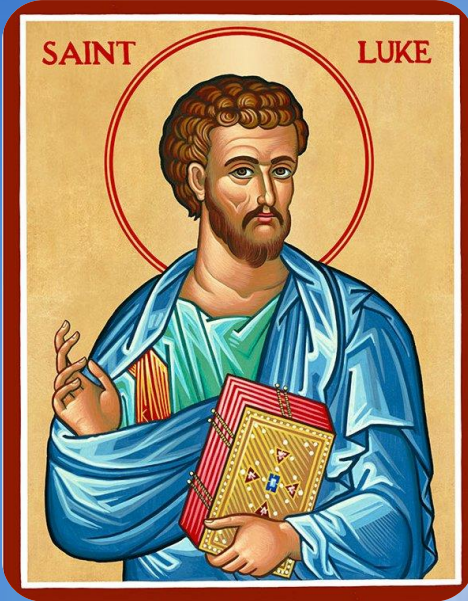


Summer 2020

IKON

The Ascension Messenger



Church
of the
Ascension
Munich

Points to Note

Worship

We worship every Sunday at midday in the Emmauskirche, Laurinplatz, 81545 München, Germany. For up-to-date news and details of services, check our website at: www.ascension-munich.org

Do also take a look at our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/ascensionmunich and our YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/channel/UC4802rHFcPLNCJxnSGeZ3FA

Clergy

The Rt. Rev. Mark D. W. Edington, Bishop in Charge
mark.edington@tec-europe.org

The Rev. Allan Sandlin, *Priest in Charge (until 19th July 2020)*
revallansandlin@ascension-munich.com

The Rev. Dr. Ali Gray, Priest Associate
revaligray@ascension-munich.com

The Rev. Clair Ullmann, Priest Associate
revclairullmann@ascension-munich.com

Pastoral Care

In a pastoral emergency, first point of contact should be **Joan Case** for the fastest response: mobile: 01728256425 home: 0802449945.
You can also contact the wardens:

Janet Day-Strehlow: mobile: 01707926767

George Battrick: mobile: 015208293438 home: 0896881151

Financial Support

Our church receives no funds from any government body; we are entirely supported by the contributions of our members.

Donations and pledges can be made by bank transfer to:
The Church of the Ascension, Deutsche Bank
IBAN: DE49 7007 0024 0459 8702 00

2 Corinthians 9:7 “*Let each one do just as he has resolved in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver*”

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Editorial

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

Phew. Another **Ikona** is out! In these troubled times you can probably guess why St Luke was chosen to grace the cover of this edition. I hope he has been guarding you, your neighbours, friends and all your loved ones. So here is the patron Saint of artists, physicians, bachelors, surgeons, students and butchers, but why is there a butterfly?

Roger chose this as the symbol of renewal. It is a very apt symbol to include on the cover of the last edition before Allan leaves us to go back to the US to be with his family after his difficult period of isolation. When he arrived, this parish was a bit like a pupa, brown, lifeless and brittle. (My great nephew, whose grandfather was a renowned entomologist, may tell me a pupa is not brittle, but it certainly looks that way.) Now we are like a newly emerged butterfly. We may not be able to fly yet, but we are beginning to spread our wings and have recognised that there is colour and beauty around us as we begin to see that beauty in each other.

It is inevitable that this edition is very influenced by the times we are living through. We have Ali Gray's uplifting sermon on the virus; we have a compilation of Alleluia Moments; we have Jeff's response to a moving Easter sermon. Great ingenuity has been shown over this period of isolation and that too is reflected in articles in this edition. You can read how

the flexible Outreach Committee just managed to deliver Easter bags to the soup kitchen before lockdown; you can marvel at virtual quiz night, online yoga and Zoom services that have been more successful than anyone could have imagined a few months ago. At this point it is worth recording our eternal gratitude to Steve Knowles, the Zoom wizard, (read more about him on page 25) for making all this possible.

Thanks too to the Regathering Task Force who, together with the Worship Committee, have helped us move forward towards a new normal. Their work is described by Jeanne Glenz. The youth group has also contributed to these pages and an interview with Laura and Andreas completes the offerings that we hope will have something for everyone.

Allan has guided us well and we are grateful. I am grateful to Roger and Mitchell and Ali for help with editing and to all contributors who have responded very quickly to requests from me. We are all grateful for the resilience of this parish and for the part that Allan has played in our emergence from that pupa.

Looking to the future, we are grateful that we have a supportive bishop and wardens, who will help the butterfly launch with confidence into the unknown.

Peace and a virus-free summer to everyone.

Sue





Letter from our Priest in Charge

Dear Beloved of Ascension,

Some of you have caught on by now that I've been saying goodbye to you in my sermons these past weeks. Some of you realize I've said goodbye to other churches over these 28 years of ordained life and you won't be surprised that it's always hard saying goodbye to people I've come to care for, indeed, to love.

The Church of the Ascension is different. It was on top of the Olympiaberg in December, 1985 that I whispered into Gretchen's ear (15 months, as it happens, before we would get married and 6 years before

I would be ordained to the priesthood)

"You know, there is an Episcopal Church in Munich. Who knows, if I do get ordained, one day they might call me to be their priest..."

And so you did and so we had this time together. Moving forward, my greatest hope is that you will keep telling your stories to each other. Maybe you will gather in circles again. Don't give up on each other. This is essential if the wounds some of you still have are to heal completely.

Know that I'll be keeping an eye on you, from a distance for a while. It's important that we have a little separation from each other, I think. But it won't be forever. Gretchen and I plan to return to Germany and to Munich once it becomes easier to travel again, once your next priest has a chance to settle in.

Can it possibly be true that my favorite (no, really, this time it really is my favorite) poem has gone unspoken these 15 months? I think it might be so. I tried and tried to think of another poem to leave with you. But there is something about this one that captures an important piece of who you are. You enjoy theological conversations that can run deep, asking questions about God, asking questions of God.

But finally, words don't matter as much as presence. (I could easily add that words don't matter as much as music, but that's for another day.)

It's called "Sunday School, c. 1950" and the luminous Alice Walker wrote it:

*"Who made you" was always
The question,
The answer was always
"God."*

*Well, there we stood
Three feet high
Heads bowed
Leaning into
Bosoms.*

*Now
I no longer recall
The Catechism
Or brood on the Genesis
Of life*

*No.
I ponder the exchange
Itself
And salvage mostly
the leaning.*

I am grateful.



Faithfully, Alice



Alleluia Moments

“This weekend I finally managed to "capture" a lark singing. The song seems so full of life and forces you to look skywards. I don't think anyone can be "downcast" when they are lucky enough to hear a lark singing nearby.”

Jo Westcombe



“This morning's Alleluia comes from Uta Söhlke-Habib, a simple butterfly on her balcony.”

“Here is a picture of a section of my daily walk. When I first walked along the river a week ago, I noticed that someone had made a couple of model boats and anchored them in the shallows of the river. When I walked past today, the river is now packed full with little boats, all delightful and made with such detailed loving care, beautiful creative reminders of the joy of community sharing. It just made me smile.”

Kaye O'Connell



“Just to share my Alleluia with you. My eldest granddaughter (15) is a bit of a wild child, not interested in school etc. - however she sent me a video of her playing the piano, a piece including 2 octaves and I thought 'Alleluia she has found!'”

Liz Wink

“In a Youth Group WhatsApp text (which I am privileged to ‘overhear’), one of the leaders shared a note from an older parishioner to a younger parishioner from whom she had received a letter.

The young person had asked the older person “Is there anything you do to distract yourself these days?” The older person wrote back saying she was putting together a book of family stories and then included one of her favourite poems.

In sharing that note with the entire Youth Group (and their priest), another Youth Group leader observed “This is an Alleluia moment you’ve shared with us! Thanks.”
Allan Sandlin



Alleluia! Thank God for companion animals.

Alec, my son who lives permanently in our family home in England, had long wanted a cat but never found the right one. When we found proof that the mice were now entering the kitchen the decision was made, but then came lockdown.

As soon as it looked like there would be an easing of the situation, we started to scan the adverts and found Rex. He is

17 months old, an Abyssinian x Cornish Rex cross who needed a new home due to bullying by one of the human children. A week ago the cat moved in with us; he promptly went and hid behind the cooker and then, in a locked room mystery, got behind an apparently sealed bookcase. He was very anxious, not eating and not drinking. Inspired by his disappearing act we renamed him Hannay after Richard Hannay from ‘The 39 Steps’.

Over the week we have been gentle and consistent, sitting in the room with Hannay, talking and reading to him, approaching very very gradually. He began to eat again. Two days ago I was allowed to stroke his head. Yesterday our patience was rewarded when he accepted stroking and came and sat on Alec’s lap.

I am grateful to God that we were able to offer Hannay a safe new home, and that he is settling in. Hannay will stay with Alec when I return to Germany in late September, and I look forward to many years of companionship with him whenever I’m in the UK.

Ali Gray



The Easter Sermon

Our Music Director, Jeff Leipsic, commended Fr. Allan on a very special Easter sermon during Corona Time.

The idea of nothingness or emptiness being not only an end but, perhaps more importantly, a beginning conveyed a message to me in a very telling way. Maybe one could better list it as one of life's more vitally important lessons. Take, for example, the colour white which on the one hand is technically a lack of all colour but which, on the other hand, remains a symbol of inspiration and hope. At the moment, many if not all of us are facing blocks of time which might be considered empty.

What I have learned from the shut-down is that emptiness is anything but empty and, conversely, being continually occupied does not at all connote fulfilment. When we were children, we could occupy ourselves for hours on end with a small piece of wood or a bucket of sand. Somewhat later in life we could lock ourselves away and read for hours on end. Why is it that as adults we always have to be "doing" something in order to avoid the guilt feelings sometimes simply and negatively called laziness?

This may be a remnant of America's basically puritan heritage where pure enjoyment of the wonders of life is tinged with the concept of sin and lack

of activity is denoted as sloth. But emptiness is a cup waiting to be filled with life's wonders and, by the same logic, with life's trials and sorrows. It is a beginning with which every hour and every day starts.

During the lockdown, hours are not important - except, of course, for the exact time that each week's Liturgy begins. And even in that case, due to the wonders of technology, one can worship together after the fact. It doesn't really matter what day it is or what time it is.

This gives one the peace of mind to view every tree, every flower, every book, every meal, every conversation as a new and miraculous phenomenon.

Would that we might be able to retain at least a bit of this sense of timelessness and this sense of awe when we return to the daily grind. It might make us less selfish, less egotistical, more tolerant, more human.

If this has inspired you to listen to the sermon again, the Easter service can be accessed at:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=1AP4dYHgJRE

Jeff Leipsic

Virtual Quiz Night

On Saturday, May 9, thirty of us gathered on Zoom with the Quizmaster, Malcolm Phillips, and our Producer, tech-wiz Steve Knowles, for the first ever Church of the Ascension Virtual Quiz Night.

For the first attempt at this, it was decided the participants would not choose their own teams. This produced an excitement of its own - a bit like the random breakout groups after our Sunday Service. We didn't know who would be on our team, but getting to know others better while negotiating answers was great fun.



The technological aspect made the evening so long that Malcolm had to trim two subject areas off the normal menu. So out of the normal list: Pictures, History, Entertainment, Science & Nature, Geography, Bible, General Knowledge, German-Speaking World and Literature, the last two were dropped.

There were also no "Spot Questions". (I personally didn't miss those. I may be bored in lockdown, but not enough to count how many times 'goat' is mentioned in the Bible!)

Of course, a lot of the banter that takes place at a table during a normal quiz night was missing.

It is hard to tease the Quizmaster when we are all muted, LOL.

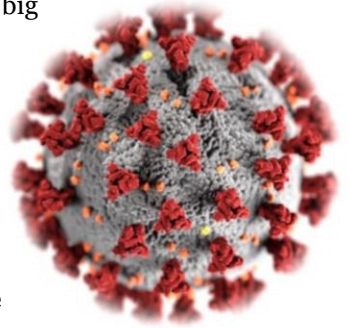
And there was no pouring of drinks or passing the plate of snacks for each other. That is probably a good thing for those of us on baking overdrive right now.

Still, it is all for a good cause. Everyone who participates is asked to make a donation to the church. I am looking forward to the next Quiz Night - virtual or real!

Lois Stuckenbruck

Ali Gray's Coronavirus Sermon

I want to address the elephant in the room: not the big grey wrinkled thing, but the small spiky highly infectious thing called the coronavirus. I can easily speak as a doctor, but instead I want to focus on the theology, with the help of a bit of history and loads of science.



Why would God create something, or allow something to evolve, which causes such distress and suffering? Because viruses have a positive role in nature, and their ability to harm humans is a side effect of this role.

Viruses are non-living entities which depend on their ability to hijack other cells to replicate. On their own, they can't do the things that living beings do - grow, change, reproduce. There are billions of types of virus out there; most of them are bacteriophages which infect bacteria. So why did God make viruses?

Bacteria and viruses are essential for life on earth; there are billions of types of bacteria, many of which can take inorganic compounds and turn them into a form which living things can use. But the compounds are trapped inside the bacterial cell. The bacteriophage viruses attack the bacteria, splitting them open and releasing these nutrients. Bacteriophage viruses are also important in controlling the bacteria population. Bacteria divide into two every 20 minutes. Unchecked, the earth would just be filled with bacteria, so the 'phages' are part of God's balanced ecosystem.

Now, we can look at DNA in detail, and we can see that many types of plant and animal have viruses in them. Often, the viruses, far from causing illness, are actually helping the plant or animal. For example, viral infected mice are more resistant to some bacteria. We all have viruses living in us, along with many types of bacteria.

Viruses can be used by scientists in a redemptive way. Our understanding of genetics, of how cells work, and how we can alter DNA and cells' machinery are only possible because of viruses. Viruses are a natural part of God's good creation, important in cycles of death and decay. Only a tiny percentage can cause human disease.

So how should we respond to the coronavirus epidemic? Looking back in history we can see there are five types of response to any epidemic, which are:

panic and flee, pretend it's not happening, get drunk and party, turn to God in penitence, and participate in community by helping others.

Panic has taken hold in some places. A doctor friend in Prague tells me that there is a black market charging ridiculous amounts for face masks and alcohol-based cleaning products. Those who pretend it's not happening, simply carry on as normal, don't change their behaviour one little bit, apart from avoiding anyone who is visibly ill. Another group simply go wild, and party. The feeling here is that if we are all going to die soon anyway, we may as well enjoy our last few days: so "eat drink and be merry, for tomorrow, we die". Others turn to God in penitence and cry out for forgiveness. During the Black Death in Germany in 1348, groups marched around barefoot singing hymns whilst whipping and beating themselves to try to appease God.

There is nothing wrong with penitence at all; it is good that we have a time to examine ourselves and our behaviour, and turn back to God. The problem comes when the focus is on what we can achieve through our penitence and spiritual purity. Don't think we can twist God's arm and ensure our own and our loved one's safety through the intensity of our spiritual disciplines; you will probably be sadly let down. God doesn't promise to take away the difficult things in life, but to be right by our side as we go through tough times.

We repent and turn back to God because it is the right thing to do, not because of any benefit and blessings which may then come. Otherwise, we slide into a teaching that with enough faith, enough repentance, and enough self-denial, any prayer will be answered as we wish. With that teaching comes blame for all those who are still struggling, all those with chronic illness.

And then, there are those who participate; who look around and see the need and help others. The early church grew very rapidly, and historians suggest that one reason for this is that the Christians cared for the sick during the regular epidemics which swept the Roman world, and those who recovered, naturally joined the church. Jesus Christ, our role model, showed compassion, healing society's outcasts, touching lepers, not fearing contamination.

Ultimately Christians don't need to fear death. We know that our lives are in God's hands, and we trust God's plan.

This work continues to this day. Much of the work with those currently suffering from the Ebola virus in the Democratic Republic of Congo is undertaken by medical missionaries who daily put their lives in God's hands. Ebola virus is very different to Coronavirus. It is highly infectious and kills half of those who contract it, so to choose to work in that field requires moral courage, trust in God's call and God's care.

Ikon

Here's a report from Leonardo Blair at The Christian Post January 31st:

“Medical missionary Dr. Rick Sacra was honored with the Rabbi Erica and Mark Gerson L’Chaim (“To Life”) Prize for Outstanding Christian Medical Mission Service along with a half-million dollar grant.

When Sacra got sick he had only been back in Monrovia for about four weeks after stepping in to volunteer shortly after... (others) became ill.

And he remembers it well.

“It was a Friday night when I developed the fever. ... I didn’t know of an exposure, but we had had several patients who died under somewhat mysterious circumstances. At that time we didn’t have good access to testing,” he explained. “But for some reason, I really felt from the moment I had the fever, I just thought, this is it. And I don’t know why but I just felt that this is Ebola.”

Even though he was sure he was doing what God wanted him to do, Sacra was tortured over what his possible death could mean for his family and the ELWA hospital.

He cried as he trusted God to keep him.

“I did cry about it. I was upset about it, mainly for the sake of my wife and my kids. And even for the hospital. What would this do to the hospital to have another one of our health care providers come down with Ebola? That was pretty difficult to think about,” he said. “But you know, I have to say that for myself, I just had a real sense of peace that God was saying, ‘I’m here.’ I felt like I was doing what I was supposed to be doing. I said to God, ‘God, but what about my family and what about the hospital?’






And God kinda said, ‘Rick, I got it. I can handle that.’”

We can be like Rick Sacra, like thousands of doctors and nurses today, like the early Christians, and care for those around us, friends and strangers, by giving practical help, in prayer, and by following hygiene guidelines. We don’t need to fear the coronavirus which is, I repeat, many, many times less serious than Ebola. We need to take sensible precautions and put ourselves into God’s hands, listen to God’s guidance, trust in God and God’s plan for our lives.

Rev. Dr Alison J Gray, Priest Associate, Church of the Ascension, Munich. Coronavirus sermon, delivered 27th February 2020.

Volunteers sought

Enjoy fun, fellowship and service by volunteering for one or more of the following ministries (even though they are somewhat curtailed at the moment!):

Coffee hour		<i>Contact:</i> Joan Case 0172 825 6425 MJCase@gmx.net
Altar Guild		<i>Contact:</i> Carol Forrester 0172 257 6446 carol.forrester@web.de
Lectors and Intercessors		<i>Contact:</i> Sue Morris 08122 8928560 sue.morris@web.de
Choir (tenors particularly welcome!)		<i>Contact:</i> Jeff Leipsic 0176 5012 3388 jeffantje@aol.com
Acolytes and Eucharistic Ministers		<i>Contact:</i> Martin Schaeffer 0171 2232 190 or 08041 4389692 dycon@online.de

Let your dreams be bigger than your fears,
 your actions louder than your words
 and your faith stronger than your feelings.

Anon

Worship in Augsburg

We worship each Sunday, normally at 4:30 PM (16:30h CET) at our host church:

**Evangelisch-Lutherische Auferstehungskirche,
Garmischer Str. 2a,
86163 Augsburg (Hochzoll).**

(Please check for eventual time shifts on www.stboniface.de or on Facebook.)

After services, we enjoy a time of fellowship with coffee/tea, cake and/or home-made goodies. Please feel free to join us as we worship together.

Worship in Nuremberg

St. James the Less meets every 2nd and 4th Sunday for worship at 16:00 in the main church of the Jakobskirche in downtown Nuremberg:

**Jakobskirche - Church of St. James the Less
Jakobsplatz 1
90402 Nürnberg**

Please come and join us! We would be honored to have you worship with us. No matter who you are, or where you are on your spiritual journey, you are welcome at St. James the Less.

www.st-james-the-less.de

No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite.

Nelson Mandela

Thank you Father Allan...

Dear Allan, we will miss you.

THANK YOU FOR...

...being all-embracing.

...making me feel welcome again in our church.

...reminding us to be grateful.

..your grace, openness and love of God.

...for welcoming and shepherding us.

...sharing your love of poetry with us.

...sending notes, always so loving, that made me feel special.

...being our rock and stronghold in these difficult times and for your love of and gift for music!

...valuing prayer.

...being a really good shepherd.

...really listening and hearing.

...introducing me to unconventional prayers and priests.

... showing us that loving-kindness and patience are able to bring us into communion with one another.

...helping us heal and move forward.

...your interest in people.

...listening and being there when needed.

..your calm, consistent, loving, and reassuring presence.

...all your support.

... being so warm and welcoming - making efforts to get to know new people and introduce them to the congregation.

...motivating many people to reform groups and church activities.

... being a team player, and for sermons where you speak your mind and give us direction from the pulpit.

...bringing us stability and helping to re-energize the parish.

...your calm, consistent, loving and reassuring presence.

...helping us heal and move forward.

...your interest in people.

...being there when needed.

...all your support.

...caring.

...making efforts to get to know new people and introduce them to the congregation.

...for your gentle singing after the sermon.

...being our kickstarter.

... being a sport.

...being the most favourite pastor to our kids.

...helping us on our way to come back together as a community.

...taking a personal interest in our development.

...waiting at the church entrance after worship and for asking 'How are you?' It made me feel like I am at my home church.

Sunday School and Youth Group

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sunday School offers Christian education and fellowship in the English language to children from age 3 – 11 on Sunday mornings. Lessons are held on Sundays from 11:45 – 12:45 (during the normally scheduled service).

NOTE: At present, Sunday School has been suspended because of COVID-19. Please watch announcements in the bulletin for dates when we hope to resume services once a month.

YOUTH GROUP

The Youth Group meets regularly for fellowship and fun activities on a Christian platform, currently once a month on Sundays from 11:30 – 12:30 joining the main service for the Peace. Please inform any Vestry member or the Church Office if you are interested. We have members aged from 10 to 15 and it is the hope that we will be able to divide into a Junior- and a Senior section in the near future.

The Pentecost Project

As normal activities were limited by the by anti-corona constraints, the Convocation youth leaders organised an international project to produce a film for Pentecost featuring the youth from all over Europe speaking in their different languages.



The youth of Ascension took part, and you can see the results of their efforts by following this link:

<http://youtu.be/S41WOYGWEBA>



Positive Thoughts in Coronatime

We asked our youth for any positive aspects of life under corona lockdown; thankfulness summarised in a word or two. Here are the results:

Good school system that is very supportive

Family

Understanding teachers

A trampoline

The lake to swim in

The weather

Food

space at home to have your peace and quiet

Caring friends

Seeing my dad lots

Imagination!

Staying in a pyjama all day!

Music

My birthday cake!

Free time to do things I never had time for

The Youth Group!



Time with family

Ways of communicating with the loved ones I miss

Humorous things

Playing guitar and teaching myself the ukulele ;)

Rhubarb pie!

FACETIME AND HOUSEPARTY

Interview with:

Andreas Bartesch and Laura Baird

Andreas Bartesch and Laura Baird have not been at Ascension that long, but they have already become very much involved in the life of the church. Laura sings in the choir and helped sing the psalm for us via Zoom on Pentecost Sunday – she keeps her voice oiled by singing to daughter Claire; they are members of the young adults' group and Claire was baptised when the bishop was here on January 12th. Andreas has been very active in the Regathering Task Force. But what else do you know about them?



I began the interview by asking how a young man from Germany and a young woman from Australia met and got an unexpected answer.

Laura: We met in Helsinki in 2015. I had been visiting Russian friends in St Petersburg and had the opportunity to go on to Helsinki. I wasn't all that well at the time, but didn't want to miss this opportunity.

Andreas: I was also travelling - from Estonia and then on to St Petersburg and Helsinki. Before my trip I'd had a bicycle accident and broke my elbow, so almost didn't take my flight. Lucky I did! We met in the hostel we were both staying at in Helsinki – I thought at first that Laura was Canadian! We spent time together the next day sightseeing and then we went our separate ways, but kept in touch. Three months later I flew to Australia, to see Laura again and to meet her family.

Tell me a little bit about your families.

Laura: My mother and sister live in Newcastle, New South Wales, my brother in Canberra and my father in Muswellbrook, a town near Newcastle.

Andreas: My family is originally from Romania but we moved to Germany when I was a child. My parents are in Würzburg, which I still consider my home town, and I have one brother who also lives in Munich with his family.

We have all been suffering in lockdown but I asked whether this had been a particularly difficult time for them with a small child – Claire is now 9 months old.

Laura: Maybe it would be more difficult with an older child, but Claire hasn't really noticed it. When lockdown eased and we were allowed to meet another family, I have been spending time with friends I made during birth preparation classes and mothers' groups. Claire is a sociable baby and enjoyed the company. It is a shame that any plans to celebrate her first birthday have had to be put on hold at the moment.

Andreas: I have taken parental leave for two months, so in this period of lockdown we have been able to spend time together and enjoy seeing Claire grow. Although we speak English together, we speak to Claire in our own mother tongue so that she can grow up bilingual. As nice as this time together has been, it wasn't what we had planned originally. The plan was to fly to Australia, so that all the family could meet Claire, and also we wanted to celebrate our church wedding. The civil ceremony took place last year. My family came, and Laura's brother and his fiancé were able to be there.

Laura: We had a quite a few visitors last year. My Dad visited twice, once during summer. He even got to use his ticket to Wimbledon while he was in Europe! And then he was here for Christmas and Claire's baptism. My mum came for Claire's birth and arrived just hours before she was born. Even my grandmother, who is in her mid 80s, flew over with my aunty to see her first great grandchild. We are particularly grateful that they were able to make it over, now that we had to cancel our plans.

This interview was conducted via Skype and so questions about online communication were inevitable.

Laura: I feel that "meetings" with a defined structure, such as Morning Prayer with a given liturgy or Bible Study, have worked very well and allowed me to participate, when it might not have been possible otherwise, given the demands of a young child. The young adults' group has met three times in lockdown thanks to the efforts of Rohit and Shema. We even managed to play Pictionary online as well as enjoy the more serious part of the meetings. The group had not been formed long, and friendships had not yet had time to flourish when COVID-19 hit. Zoom isn't quite the same as meeting in person, but it's a lot better than nothing.

Andreas: I know my way around technology, but have been learning all the time because of my involvement with the Regathering Task Force.

And what of the future beyond COVID-19?

Andreas: The answer is a little complicated. My contract with Vodafone, after working for them for 8 years, came to an end in June as my position has been relocated to Düsseldorf and both Laura and I agreed we wanted to stay in Munich. So now, rather than jumping to a new job, I want to enjoy time with my family. The postponed visit to Australia will hopefully happen over Christmas 2020. Then, the plan is to stay there for six months and look for a new job when we return to Germany.

(Good news for us at Ascension that they intend to return!)

Laura: This will fit in with my plans when my maternity leave ends next year. I was lucky that when I first moved to Munich I had the time and the resources to devote to learning German, so I now have my B2 certificate. (A thumbs up here from Andreas!) This is one step towards my goal to work in my profession as a social worker here in Germany.

Thank you for sharing all this. It was good to have a Skype interview rather than have you simply answer written questions. All the very best for those future plans.



Laura with her father and baby Claire

Interview by Sue Morris

Talking Heads

Apparently, I attended my first Zoom meeting – a webinar for teachers – on Monday 23rd March this year. Sifting back through my emails, I see that the CoA went online for the first time the day before, so our lives in Zoomland have similar starting points. Although I haven't been “at church” every Sunday, I have attended more regularly than in “real” life. Here are some notes from a happy Zoomer.

My first time

By the time I joined you all at church for the first time a week or so later, I had been a Zoom host a few times (I teach English at university, and this is an online semester). But I found it very moving when I was admitted to church for the first time and rows and rows of you good people appeared on my screen. There you all were, leaning out of your boxes and smiling and waving and greeting each other and adjusting your sets. It was and is a real thrill to see you and be able to be part of that community, extending from Munich to Mainburg, Mühlbach and Maine, Sendling to Bad Bayersoien and Soddy Daisy, Tennessee.

Church close up

Zoom can be an intimate affair. We've had the clergy and readers sitting among us – a Zoom “conspiracy”, Allan? Despite my prejudices around projectors and screens in church, I've enjoyed the photo essays – especially the one accompanying Ali's “herstory” – but I always feel better when the speakers are back in their box. I spent several weeks watching Allan delivering his sermons from his home to ours, wondering how on earth we'd got so lucky to have him with us and, latterly, being so grateful that he has been. (I also kept an eye on the objects on his walls and shelves...). Now that bricks and mortar church is open again, we Zoomers have been granted both front row and balcony seats, with excellent audio quality.

Breaking out

Certainly, for teaching purposes, breakout rooms that a teacher can drop in and out of are a pretty brilliant invention, so I was delighted when Steve suggested we try them out after church. I've had nice chats over coffee at the CoA, but real-world demands there mean that people are also moving around in search of a sandwich, the list they need to sign or the person they really have to speak to before heading home. When waiting to be assigned to a breakout room, there's a childlike anticipation as to who's on the other side of the wall, followed by the innocent surprise (unless you're good at probability

calculations) at finding you're with the same people you were with last week! In breakout rooms, everyone is looking at everyone else (as best you can on Zoom) and thus is automatically included. I'm sure we've all got to know new people, shared common ground, listened well, had a laugh and some serious interactions in those safe spaces.

Going organic

While I've swapped my place on the bleachers in the choir loft for my office chair, others have been hard at work making sure the music doesn't stop. Joan and David brought us hymns from home, Stephen Norton, Nick Ukiah and Gudrun Forstner have taken the road to Emmaus to play for us, while Stephen also played English Cathedral organs in his Munich flat. (Don't ask me, but he or George can explain.) I think many of us talking heads have found ourselves particularly fascinated by the organists' nimble fingers and feet. Perhaps it's also just nice to remember that humans have them?

Peter Dalen's brassy triptych *Fanfare for St Edmundsbury* was a highlight for me. Having been asked to contribute to Zoom music, I know how much work goes into just one very meagre recording contribution in terms of hardware, (in my case involving a ladder, piles of books and blu-tak), offline run-throughs, multiple takes and layperson fumbblings with audio and video settings. I have the greatest respect for and gratitude to Stephen, Steve Schmidt, Jonathan Hanks, Peter, Jeff, Nick, David and everybody else who has not only shared their musical gifts with us, but also spent hours editing and putting tracks together for these enriching offerings. It does rather give a heightened meaning to the term "Voluntary".

It has been a special time. How lucky we are to live in an age when technology can bring worship and fellowship to our homes, and how uplifting that so many of us have skilled up in such a short time to be able to share in such a remarkable collective venture. OK, Zoomers!

Jo Westcombe

You have read a lot about online worship in this edition and for some of you, this will be the way you wish to worship in the future. However, the work that the Regathering Task Force has done makes actual church worship possible now. Whatever the future holds for you in terms of worship, it has become clear over the last few months that The Church of the Ascension is not a building, but one community of faith, worshipping in two different places perhaps, but united in the love of God.

Janet Day-Strehlow (Senior Warden)

Our Life with Zoom

Sue Morris meets the man who makes it happen and brings us all together like a happy family.

Steve Knowles grew up near Barnsley, England, in the heart of the Yorkshire coal mining industry. After graduating from Salford University with a BSc. Hons. in French, German and Computational Linguistics he moved to Germany in 1979 where he worked for Siemens and then Nokia for over 30 years in various sales-oriented roles. He has been married to Sue for 39 years and they have one daughter, Maddie, who is 29 and lives and works in London. He has been an active member of the Church of the Ascension for almost 30 years. For a long time he was group leader of the Ushers and Greeters, a job he has now surrendered to Mary Wulf. He is a member of the vestry and also the webmaster of the Church of the Ascension website, which was given a major overhaul last year.



He is now enjoying early retirement when he can pursue his hobbies: computers, music, photography and video, cycling, mountain walking, running, skiing and ballroom dancing. Well this was the case until COVID-19 hit and the world had to communicate virtually. Steve answered the cry for help. When most of us are just enjoying the Zoom service, be it Morning Prayer or The Eucharist, spare a thought for the trials and tribulations of our technical wizard - to mute or not to mute and the joys of alphabetical order. Let him explain:

“When we first started doing the Zoom service, we quickly realised that it would be best if we muted all participants - a chatty lot! The problem with this process is that “mute all” really means mute all. It is then a mad dash, scrolling through 3 or 4 pages, to find people who are actively participating in the service and to unmute them when necessary. No problem surely. All muted participants are listed in alphabetical order, I thought. Big mistake! It’s easy if you know how the person whom you need registered - as “Jim”, “Beth and Jim” or even “Wilkinson Family”? Without this information it was well-nigh impossible. I aged that day. Fortunately, for the second service I had the brainwave of getting everyone making a contribution to rename themselves with a ‘1’ in front of their name. ‘1’ comes before every letter in the alphabet, so when muted, these participants appear at the very beginning of the list”.

“One hopes that the priest is also easy to find at a church service, even at a Zoom one, so Allan has ‘o’ in front of his name. Unfortunately, at the first hybrid service back in church his phone disconnected and upon re-joining the Zoom meeting had lost its ‘o’ prefix and was also muted. I searched under ‘A’ for Allan – nowhere to be found. Then I tried ‘S’ for Sandlin. Still no luck. Finally, I remembered something about iPhone, so I looked under ‘I’ and found ‘iPhone of Allan’. Phew. If I didn’t already have grey hair...”

We are eternally grateful to you Steve and hope the summer is a good one so that you can do a little of that walking in the mountains, maybe even on a Sunday if you have trained your apprentice by then.

What is Ascension doing for Outreach ?

Easter Outreach project

Despite not being able to meet in church for as long as we had anticipated, we still had a super response to the Easter egg appeal and we were able to make up a total of 160 pretty, delicious, chocolate Easter bags! We decided to take them to the Soup Kitchen on Friday March 20th, earlier than planned because we anticipated the lockdown. As I was on my way to deliver them on Friday afternoon my daughter-in-law telephoned me to say that the lockdown would come into force from midnight on Friday evening. We just made it in time!

The sisters were extremely pleased and asked me to pass on their thanks and to say how much they appreciated what the Church of the Ascension does for them. Many thanks from the Outreach Group to all who participated in this worthwhile project.

I couldn't take a photo of the sisters receiving them, as I stayed socially distanced in the fresh air at the door!

Liz Wink



Father Allan's Time at Ascension



Ascension Yoga

Living through a global pandemic has prompted many of us to renew a focus on our health and wellbeing. Perhaps we've tried different things to keep ourselves active and healthy: going for daily walks, starting a new exercise regime, eating more vegetables, taking up new hobbies. For members of Ascension one of these ways has been through a new yoga class offered twice a week by our very own Nurtac Denton, who is a certified yoga teacher. **Ikona** decided to get in touch with a few participants to ask what motivated them to take part and what has stood out to them so far.

For some, this was their first experience of yoga. One participant said she'd always thought of yoga as being floor exercises, "My daughter keeps a yoga mat here and when she visits, throws herself on the floor to exercise. She also does headstands and the like. *Ohne mich!*" It was a relief to find that many yoga poses can be done sitting on a chair. The breathing exercises have been her favourite part. "It makes me all relaxed and Nurtac has such a pleasant, warm manner."

Our second participant was also pleasantly surprised that yoga isn't only "contorted lotus positions and superhuman balancing acts." The first class was easier than she'd expected. For her, meditation has been the highlight. "It gets me into a different dimension and relationship with my body. Nurtac's voice is so calming." While flexibility presents a challenge and some poses can be daunting, she says, "I certainly look forward to each session and feel more alive, tingly, present afterwards."

For others the stretching and mobility exercises have particularly stood out; one participant saying, "That's exactly what I've needed!" Another says, "I find I hold a lot of tension in my upper body, so the neck and shoulder movements have been great. The challenge for me has been staying focused during breathing exercises, my mind tends to wander. However, Nurtac reminds us to let our thoughts come and go without trying to change them, and I find that freeing, I leave the class feeling much calmer."

What is clear, is that Ascension Yoga is a ministry of inclusion; bringing together people of different ages, experience, of differing mobility levels, those working and retired, who draw strength from each other's presence and are able to take something into the rest of their day.

Laura Baird

Ascension Yoga takes place every Tuesday and Thursday 11.30-12.30 via Zoom

Ascension Regathering Task Force

Our Ascension Regathering Task Force (RTF) has now more or less finished its assignment of complying with the directives of the government, our bishop, and our host church and this has enabled our parishioners to come together once again for communal worship from Sunday, June 7.

The RTF, assembled by our Priest-in-Charge, worked in small groups to consider how to prepare for the return to regular Sunday services at the Church of the Ascension in close co-operation with our host church. The safety of our parish always remained the most important factor in our deliberations. In addition, we wanted to ensure that those who needed or preferred to join the service online would be able to do so. Thankfully, when the call went out for volunteers to aid us in implementing these plans, the response from our parish was quick and enthusiastic, although more volunteers to share the tasks are always welcome.

This time of wandering in the digital desert has brought us closer together as a church family. At first it seemed we might just forget about Sunday as a day devoted to worship. Instead the attendance at our Morning Prayer service increased with each Sunday. I have seen the faces of members from long ago and truly far away. Friends, who more often than not just departed after the normal service, stayed around for the online Coffee Hour.



The pandemic cloud that darkens our lives with restrictions and fear has given us the gifts of companionship and support in ways most of us had previously not imagined. The past weeks have shown how much we care for each other. Our journey continues as we take the next steps in regathering.

Now we have returned to worship in church, albeit not quite as we did before, because at the same time we will continue to worship online. Trinity Sunday was very special for us this year as, for the first time, those who were in church wore masks and stood at an appropriate distance from one another.

While the instructions for the general public seem devoid of empathy, they are actually a call to mindfulness. Wearing a mask and social distancing are just another means of caring about and for the others. The Great Commandment states it succinctly: Love one another!

Jeanne Glenz

Regathering Task Force Members

We owe a great debt of gratitude to the Regathering Task Force for working tirelessly to make the “hybrid” services, in church as well as online, possible. As well as Allan, the people involved were:

Andreas Bartesch
David Case
Yvonne Cockcroft
Janet Day-Strehlow
Lloyd Denton
Jeanne Glenz
The Rev. Ali Gray
Susan Knowles
Scott McLaughlin
Mavis Oteng-Mensah.

Worship Committee Members

The worship committee has also had a great deal of work to do in making the practical arrangements for the liturgy such as Altar Guild, music, ushers etc. Many thanks to them, and also the many other helpers and volunteers who make our services possible:

George Battrick
Carol Forrester
Steve Knowles
Jeff Leipsic
Sue Morris
Martin Schaeffer
The Rev. Clair Ullmann
Janet Day-Strehlow.



To bring about change, you must not be afraid to take the first step. We will fail when we fail to try.

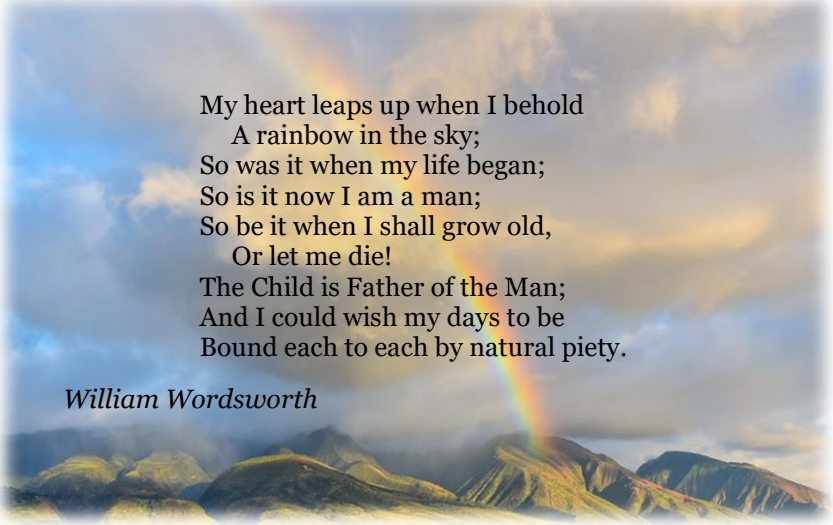
Rosa Parks

The “Men’s Room”

The Men’s Room is a meeting place for the men of the parish. We meet every couple of months or so on Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to noon - in normal times at someone’s flat but currently via Zoom online conferencing.

All men of the parish are welcome to join with us for conversation, discussion, prayer, and reflection on our lives as Christian men.

Contact: George Battrick, gwb@muc.de



My heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky;
So was it when my life began;
So is it now I am a man;
So be it when I shall grow old,
Or let me die!
The Child is Father of the Man;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.

William Wordsworth

Coming Events

We hope to resume many activities soon, but at the time of publication we cannot be certain of the future.

Please, therefore, always check on our website for the latest news.

<i>July 19th</i>	<i>Service begins at 1 pm this week, (Fr. Allan's last Sunday with us)</i>
<i>September 13th</i>	<i>Zoom AGM at 4pm</i>
<i>September 20th</i>	<i>Celebration Sunday</i>
<i>November 14th</i>	<i>Quiz Night 7pm</i>

Please take a look at our calendar on the website; this will be updated on a regular basis. The link is:

<https://www.ascension-munich.org/calendar>

If you click on the Google Calendar icon at the bottom of the calendar, it will link your Google Calendar to the Church of the Ascension calendar.



If we open a quarrel between past and present, we shall find that we have lost the future.

It is always wise to look ahead, but difficult to look further than you can see.

Winston Churchill

The 2019-2020 Vestry

The Vestry, together with the Priest in Charge, are responsible for the running of the church. Don't hesitate to contact any member if you have a question. The current vestry members will remain in post until the next AGM, currently scheduled for September 13th.

If you are interested in standing as a candidate in the Vestry election, please contact the Senior Warden. We have 5 places to fill.

- Janet Day-Strehlow, *Senior Warden*
- George Battrick, *Junior Warden*
- Michael Beer
- Carmen Bleicher
- Roger Houghton, *Clerk of the Vestry*
- Steve Knowles
- Sue Morris
- Graham Pearce
- Joy Schindel
- Angela Schneider
- Lois Stuckenbruck
- Mitchell Woodard



Each vestry member (excepting the Senior and Junior Wardens) has the responsibility of being in touch and close communication with the leaders of these ministries, to support them and serve as a liaison to the Vestry. They keep the Vestry informed of the needs of the parish in terms of these ministries.

<i>Administration</i>	Lois Stuckenbruck
<i>Communication</i>	Steve Knowles
<i>Children, including the crèche, through age 9</i>	Mitchell Woodard
<i>Youth (ages 10-18)</i>	Roger Houghton
<i>Hospitality</i>	Joy Schindel
<i>Music</i>	Michael Beer
<i>Outreach/Mission/Ecumenical</i>	Angela Schneider
<i>Parish life, including the Men's Group, Golden Girls, retreats, young adults</i>	Carmen Bleicher
<i>Stewardship/Finance</i>	Graham Pearce
<i>Worship</i>	Sue Morris

50 Years with Emmaus

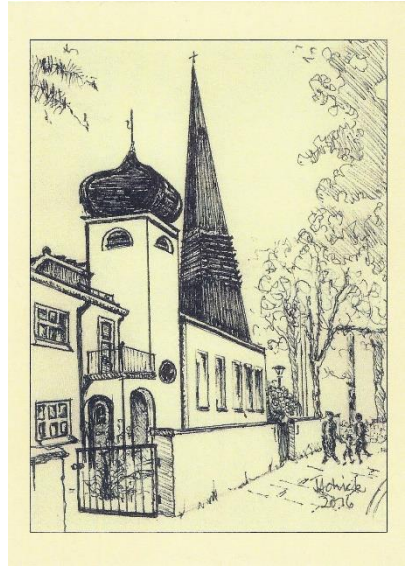
The Church of the Ascension moved to our present location in 1970 as guests of the Lutheran **Emmauskirche** in Harlaching.

The first service was held here in November 1970 – just 50 years ago this year. We had therefore been planning a weekend of celebrations together with Emmauskirche.

Because of the pandemic, the vestry has decided to postpone the main celebrations until 2021.

Watch this space for further news.

Thank you Emmaus !



Drawing by Juliet Schick

Closing words

The editorial team and the vestry wish everyone a happy summer as lockdown eases and seeing friends and family begins to look possible.

As Allan returns to the US to be with his family, we allow him the last word in this edition. He has chosen the editor's personal favourite:

Life is short and we do not have much time to gladden the hearts of those who travel the way with us.

So... be swift to love and make haste to be kind.

And the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be among you this day and remain with you always.

(Attributed to Henri-Frédéric Amiel)

Imprint / Impressum

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Assistant Editors: Dee Pattee, Mitchell Woodard

Layout: Roger Houghton and Paul Houghton

Please help us to fill the magazine with the life of the church and send any ideas or contributions for the next issue of **lkon** to the editor for consideration: sue.morris@web.de

Please note ...
if you want to have anything announced during the church service or in the bulletin, you will need to first run it past the Senior Warden, Janet Day-Strehlow.

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The Church of the Ascension is an Anglican/Episcopal Church in the Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe, a member of the worldwide Anglican Communion.

We extend a warm welcome to all!

Our Purpose and Mission

We offer worship in English, serving Greater Munich and the surrounding area. We welcome people of all nationalities to join our community and share in our journey towards a deeper knowledge of God as revealed in Jesus Christ.

We seek to

- Proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ by word and deed
- Celebrate God through beautiful and meaningful worship
- Minister to one another through worship, fellowship, Christian education and pastoral care
- Care for people in the wider community through outreach projects, both alone and together with others