

Church of the Ascension

256 Azalea Drive

New Milford, NJ 07646

Office of the Pastor



WELCOME TO ASCENSION PARISH WEBSITE!

The Church is called the People of God. It is more than just a building, but rather, a gathering of baptized men, women and children who have chosen Jesus Christ and a way of life that reflects the Good News of His teaching.

This Website has been designed to make you aware of the varied ministries and organizations of many wonderful people in the Ascension Parish Family who believe Jesus is first in their lives. These good people make faith and love real in the life of the parish.

I invite and encourage you to read and reflect on the good works reflected in the various sections. God is calling you to make a commitment to Jesus by becoming an active participant in the ministry and organization of your choice. Our parish family needs **YOU!**

Know that I pray for you every day. Please, pray for me.

Again, welcome to our Website, and may God bless you.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Rev. David W. Milliken".

Very Rev. David W. Milliken, V.F.

Pastor



OUR PARISH AT A GLANCE

CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION

256 Azalea Drive New Milford, New Jersey 07646

Rectory:

256 Azalea Drive
New Milford, NJ 07646

Telephone: (201) 836-8961
FAX: (201) 836-5896

Rectory Hours:

Weekdays: 9:00 A.M. to 12 Noon; 1:00 P.M. to 4:00 P.M.
Rectory business conducted during listed weekday hours.
All other times are by appointment only.

Convent:

256 Azalea Drive
New Milford, NJ 07646

Telephone: (201) 836-4398

Transfiguration Academy (Grades 5 - 8):

1092 Carnation Drive
New Milford, NJ 07646

Telephone: (201) 836-7074
FAX: (201) 836-4475

Transfiguration Academy (Pre-K - Grade 4):

10 Bradley Avenue
Bergenfield, NJ 07646

Telephone: (201) 384-3627
FAX: (201) 384-0293

Transfiguration Academy Office Hours:

Monday through Friday: 8:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.

Religious Education Office:

1092 Carnation Drive
New Milford, NJ 07646

Telephone: (201) 836-3085
FAX: (201) 836-3130

Religious Education Office Hours:

Sunday: 10:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M.
Monday through Friday: 8:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.

MASS SCHEDULE:

Sundays:

5:30 P.M. (Vigil)
7:30 A.M.
9:00 A.M.
10:30 A.M.
12:00 Noon

Daily:

Monday through Friday
7:00 A.M., 8:30 A.M.
Saturday 8:30 A.M.

Holy Days:

7:00 A.M., 8:30 A.M.
7:30 P.M.
(or as otherwise announced)

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION (Penance):

Saturdays 11:00 - 11:30 P.M.
Other times by appointment

Reconciliation Room

PARISH DEVOTIONS:

NOVENA:

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Novena each Wednesday 7:30 P.M.

ROSARY:

The rosary is prayed Monday through Saturday at 7:45 A.M.

Parish Membership

We invite all who live in our area to join our parish community. New parishioners are asked to register by calling the Rectory and requesting a Parishioner Registration Form. The form should be filled out and returned to the Rectory.

Should you leave the parish or change your address, please notify us. Also, let us know of important changes in your family, e.g., a birth, a new resident, children moving, marriages or deaths.

Being registered is our only way of knowing who is a member of the Parish. It is a prerequisite for celebrating baptism, confirmation or marriage in our church. It is also necessary for the issuance of sponsor certificates, letters of recommendation and character references.

BAPTISM:

Baptism is usually celebrated on the third Sunday of each month at 1:30 p.m.. Parents must be registered parishioners. It is mandatory before scheduling the date for a baptism to attend a baptism preparation class usually given on the first Sunday of every month at 1:15 p.m. in our parish Gathering Room. Godparents must be practicing Catholics in good standing. Pre-registration at the Rectory is necessary prior to the Baptism preparation class.

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION (Penance):

Saturdays 11:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.. Other times by appointment.
Communal Penance Services are celebrated seasonally.

MINISTRY TO THE SICK:

Please notify the Rectory of any elderly, shut-ins, or sick at home who wish to receive the Eucharist or Anointing of the Sick. Priests of the parish will be happy to visit parishioners in the hospitals in the area. Please notify the Rectory if someone from your family is in the hospital and wishes a priest to visit.

WEDDINGS:

Please make arrangements at the rectory with one of the priests of the parish one year in advance.

MINISTRY TO THE SICK:

Please notify the Rectory of any elderly, shut-ins, or sick who wish to receive the Eucharist or Anointing of the Sick.



TIME, TALENT, TREASURE. PUTTING GOD FIRST?

Ascension Parish believes in "stewardship,"
which is the acknowledgement that all we are and all we have
are gifts that God has given us
for our temporary use and for helping our neighbor.
Stewardship starts with the personal need within each of us
to return to God a thankful portion of our gifts of
time, talent and treasure
that has been entrusted to us.



PARISH STAFF

Pastor

Very Rev. David W. Milliken, V.F.

Parochial Vicar

Rev. Arcadio Munoz

Deacons

Harold Bates

Paul Kliauga

Transfiguration Academy

New Milford Campus (5-8)

Sal Tralongo, Principal

Mary Louise Canlas, Administrative Aide

Mary Cox, Secretary

Bergenfield Campus (Pre-K-4)

Sr. Madeline Hanson, S.S.N.D., Director

Lynn Ciccia, Secretary

Religious Education Center

Theresa Carbone, Coordinator of Religious Education

Lorraine Montecuollo, Coordinator for Grades 7 & 8

Dena Sedlak, Coordinator of First Reconciliation and

First Holy Communion

Rita Ernst, Secretary

Director of Music

Glenn Gordon

Pastoral Council President

Sal Puleo

Parish Trustees

Mary Hickey

Brendan Suter

Parish Secretary

Sharon Martin

PARISH HISTORY

In 1952, St. Joseph, Oradell, was given permission to purchase land for a new parish and begin its construction. Ascension was officially made a parish the following year.

September 1953, the auditorium-church was dedicated, the First Mass was celebrated and Ascension School opened its doors under the direction of the Dominican Sisters of Caldwell.

In March, 1957, after a successful fundraising drive, groundbreaking took place for a church/rectory/convent complex to meet the expanding needs of the parish. The cornerstone laying and blessing of Ascension took place in September 1958.

During the past 50 years, Ascension has grown from the original 80 families to more than 1,700 and is being led into the 21st Century by its sixth and current pastor, Fr. David W. Milliken.

Ascension Parish owes its development to those families in New Milford who supported the first efforts to build a Catholic Faith Community here. Their initial efforts have been supported and expanded by newer residents who bring a diversity of background and culture to our parish.

Through the years, Ascension has been blessed with devoted priests and active parishioners. A debt of gratitude is owed both to the original families who were instrumental in building the church and to all those who actively participate in and support the wide range of parish activities that are the hallmark of Ascension.



PARISH MISSION STATEMENT

**Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit,
we, the Catholic Community of the
Church of the Ascension, New Milford,
commit ourselves to celebrate the Gospel of Jesus
in Sacrament and Prayer. We dedicate ourselves
to foster a warm and loving parish of concern and service for the
individual, family and total community.**



INTRODUCTION

This Handbook is divided into five sections which remind us that “God made us to **know Him (LEARNING)**, **love Him (WORSHIPPING)**, and **serve Him (HELPING)** in this world and **be happy with Him** in the next” ... a happiness which starts here (**PLAYING**).

For over fifty-five years the people of Ascension parish have been led on the journey of faith by many active players (**ORGANIZING**). Our Handbook begins from the perspective of those who help to lead us as a faith community that we might better achieve what we proclaim to be in our Parish Mission Statement.



"Lord, prosper the work of our hands."

PART I

ORGANIZING

A. Pastoral Staff

Consisting of the pastor, priests, deacons, principal of Transfiguration Academy, Director of Religious Education and the Director of Music Ministries, our Pastoral Staff meets monthly to discuss parish issues and programs in order to see that the needs of parishioners are being met.

B. Pastoral Council

The Pastoral Council is a community of parish leaders and representatives formed to serve as the primary advisory body in pastoral matters to the pastor, priests and staff. Its purpose is to provide direction for the parish as a whole in light of our Mission Statement. Its functions are to examine parish needs, engage in long-range planning and formulate recommendations for the future of the parish.

The membership of the Pastoral Council consists of twelve members, two representatives from each major parish ministry selected by its respective group to serve a term of at least two years. The Council members are committed to participate in five bi-monthly meetings from September through May each year.

The Chairperson is chosen by the members at the September meeting using a process of discernment.

C. Finance Council

The Finance Council is a group of parish leaders with professional skills helpful to the Pastor regarding the operation of the parish with respect to temporal matters. In an advisory role, its purpose is to make recommendations regarding the finances of the parish, review budgets and financial statements, provide guidance in legal matters, make suggestions with respect to the maintenance of facilities and give advice on the feasibility of new projects.

Members are appointed by the Pastor on the basis of nominations offered by the Council. The Parish Trustees are ex officio members of the Council. The Council meets at least four times a year after the preparation of each quarterly report. The meetings are conducted by the chairperson, who is selected by the pastor.

D. Buildings and Grounds Committee

God has abundantly blessed Ascension Parish with beautiful buildings and grounds. A good pastor must be a good steward. He must take care of the resources of the parish. He cannot do this alone.

A dedicated group of parishioners with good knowledge and skill in property management, care, and maintenance assist the pastor in this vital task. Meetings are held monthly.

E. Communications Committee

The goal of the Communications Committee is to keep parishioners aware of important news about their parish. This is accomplished by publicizing programs of concern and interest to the parish, assisting parish organizations in promoting their programs and recommending new or additional ways or programs through which information may be provided to parishioners.

The **Parish Bulletin**, distributed after every weekend Mass, contains general information about the sacraments and other religious services, the schedule of weekly Masses, the weekly parish calendar, and notices about events of the parish family. The bulletin is prepared by the parish secretary, who must receive material for publication no later than the Monday afternoon preceding the publication of the bulletin. All material submitted for publication in the bulletin must have the approval of the pastor.

Any parishioners interested in helping the parish in the area of communications should contact the Rectory.

F. Collection Counting Teams

The Collection Counting Teams volunteer their services to process the collections taken at the Sunday and Holy Day Masses.

Monies are counted, properly arranged for deposit at the bank, and a report of the receipts is prepared.

Each team serves about one weekend per month.

B. PASTORAL COUNCIL MINISTRIES

The ministries of the Pastoral Council are the means by which the parish goals and objectives are implemented. The main ministries of the Pastoral Council are as follows:

1. Ministry of WORD

This ministry provides opportunities for all members of the parish to grow in their knowledge and understanding of basic beliefs of the Catholic Faith.

2. Ministry of WORSHIP

The Ministry of Worship plans different programs and religious experiences that help to nurture the spiritual life and faith of parishioners.

3. Ministry of SERVICE

The Service Ministry assists the needs of parishioners, and helps to promote justice, and to correct social injustice.

4. Ministry of COMMUNITY BUILDING

The primary mission of the Ministry of Community Building is to identify and provide for the social, community and recreational needs of the members of the parish. This ministry works to promote unity in the family, in the parish, in the neighborhoods and in the town.

Ministry meetings are held bi-monthly from October through June. Any interested parishioners who would like to serve in any of these ministries should contact the Rectory for additional information.

PART II

LEARNING

Ministry of the WORD

**Through the Ministries of the Word,
our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is proclaimed
and our knowledge of the faith is enhanced and passed on.**

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OF THE YOUNG

A. TRANSFIGURATION ACADEMY

Transfiguration Academy represents a new model for Catholic school education which we believe will lead the way in academic excellence in the 21st Century. Co-sponsored by the parishes of Ascension, New Milford, St. Mary's, Dumont, and St. John's, Bergenfield, the Academy not only offers the best from the heritage schools, but offers an enhanced curriculum, extra-curricular activities and a new organizational structure. Through these enhancements, we will attract more students at all grade levels, Pre-K 3 through the 8th Grade. In order to achieve this objective we have enhanced the curriculum in the lower school, Pre-K3 to 4, at our Bergenfield campus and established a superior Middle School, at our New Milford location, for grades 5 through 8.

The name Transfiguration Academy, which is representative of Our Lord's transformation, was chosen to symbolize that we are, in fact, taking the lead in transforming the face of Catholic School education and fulfilling our mission to teach as Christ taught.

We invite all those interested in enrolling in Transfiguration Academy to contact either Sr. Madeline at the Bergenfield Campus for grades Pre-K 3 through Grade 4, (201)384-3627 or Mr. Tralongo at the New Milford Campus, Grades 5 to 8, (201)836-7074, to arrange a meeting and tour of the facilities.



B. RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM

Parents are the "first and best teachers of their children." Our parish Religious Education Program exists to help parents as they assume their responsibility of bringing up their children as Roman Catholics; but this program demands parental involvement and support.

Religious education classes for grades K-6 are held on Sunday mornings and classes for Grades 7-8 are held on Mondays from September through May. All classes are taught by volunteer catechists. Children are re-registered for religious education classes each year in May.

The goal of the program is to help the children grow in their knowledge and love of the Father as He is revealed to us through His Son Jesus in the Holy Spirit. The students are also exposed to the rich heritage and traditions of the Roman Catholic Church.

C. SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION PROGRAM

Children of the parish are prepared for the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist in the second grade. The Archdiocese of Newark requires that a child attend religious education classes for at least two years prior to the reception of any sacrament. Special preparation for the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist is done by the parents/guardians of the children under the supervision and guidance of the Religious Education staff. Special preparation is also provided for children above the second grade level who have not received these sacraments.

First Reconciliation is celebrated in December and First Holy Communion is celebrated at selected Sunday Masses in the Easter Season.

The Sacrament of Confirmation is administered to ninth graders in the Easter Season. The preparation program includes seventh and eighth grade religious education classes, special evening preparation classes which begin in February of eighth grade, service projects and a retreat.

Those who wish to register their children in our religious education programs and those who would like to volunteer as catechists may contact the Religious Education Office.

D. RELIGIOUS EDUCATION EXTENSIONS

1. LITURGY OF THE WORD FOR CHILDREN

From September through June, a Liturgy of the Word for children is celebrated during the 9:00 A.M. Sunday Mass. Children in kindergarten through grade 4 are escorted to a gathering area for the Readings, Gospel and Homily, especially adapted for their age level. The children return to join their families at the Offertory of the Mass.

2. PROTECTING GOD'S CHILDREN

In keeping with the Archdiocese of Newark mandate, all Ascension staff, catechists, aides and volunteers who have contact with children participate in the Protecting God's Children program. This awareness program along with the screening of all volunteers and staff who have access to children helps to create an environment that is as safe as possible for the children in our program.

E. SOME PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE...

1. VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Vacation Bible School is a fun-filled experience of Bible stories, songs, arts and crafts, and games for children four years old through second grade age. It is held for one week during the summer, Monday through Friday.

2. ELEMENTARY YOUTH GROUP (EYG)

We have a need for an Elementary Youth Group to allow a time and place for parish youth, grades 3 to 5, to come together to enjoy wholesome recreation and opportunities for service to others under parish guidance and leadership. EYG is not a substitute for the Religious Education Program. Rather, it is a support arm of the program that will foster and develop a sense of our religion and religious traditions and values in the lives of our youth. Parent volunteers will be needed to get and keep this program going.

3. JUNIOR HIGH YOUTH GROUP (JYG)

A Junior High Youth Group would offer parish youth, grades 6, 7 and 8, meaningful Christian growth experiences stemming from the same principles that guide the Elementary Youth Group.

Regularly scheduled meetings would incorporate social activities, service activities and prayer.

Parent volunteers will be needed to get and keep this program going.

4. HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH GROUP

Under the supervision of a priest youth moderator and a parish youth minister, high school students, grades 9 through 12, would meet weekly for both spiritual and social fellowship. Activities would seek to foster the teenagers' awareness of their leadership roles in church activities, both religious and social. The goal of these activities is to call the Catholic teenagers to a greater awareness of Jesus' active presence, interest and participation in their lives.

For further information about any of the above activities, please contact the Religious Education Office.

ADULT EDUCATION

Ascension offers various programs and opportunities throughout the year to foster the spiritual growth of our adult parishioners. Some of these include:

1. BAPTISM INSTRUCTION

Baptism is but the first step leading to full membership in the Church. The Church views this sacrament as much more than a once-given rite to take away original sin. Baptism is only the beginning of a life of faith. This faith is a **“seed”** needing to be nurtured by the parents. In the ceremony itself the parents are asked if they are ready to show Catholic example and raise the child in faith. The celebrant reminds the parents that they are **“the first and best teachers in the ways of faith.”** Since parents are seen as the **“first and best”** teachers, the Baptismal Instruction program seeks to offer the parents both the support of the parish family and an opportunity for reassessing their own faith and responsibilities to educate their child(ren).

The program offers parents a review of the history and theology of the sacrament of Baptism, reaffirms their own faith, and offers them the opportunity to share concerns and faith with other parents. A video supplements the discussion of the ceremonial aspects of Baptism. This program helps parents realize the Church's concern for them in their responsibility to raise their child(ren) as Roman Catholic Christian(s).

Baptismal Instruction is offered the First Sunday of each month in the Parish Gathering Room from 1:15 to 2:30 P.M.. Baptisms are celebrated the Third Sunday of each month at 1:30 P.M.. To register for the Baptism Instruction Program, parents must first be registered members of Ascension Parish. At least one godparent must be a practicing Catholic; a baptized Christian may serve as a witness in place of one of the sponsors.

For further information and to register for the Baptism Instruction Program, please call the Rectory.

2. LENTEN SMALL CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES

This program is one of our Lenten opportunities to grow in the Lord. Through small group sharing and prayer parishioners and their families are welcomed, catechized and invited to participate in Church life as the disciples of the Lord each of us is called to be.

3. PRE-CANA

Every engaged couple is required by the Archdiocese of Newark to attend either a Pre-Cana program or an Engaged Encounter Weekend as part of their preparation for the sacrament of Marriage.

Ascension offers a couple-to-couple Pre-Cana program for any couples being married in Ascension Church. The program, led by married couples, includes discussions on Communication, Sexuality and Family Life; times for reflection, and prayer. For further information contact the Rectory.

4. R.C.I.A.... RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS

This experience is a one-to-three year process of **inviting, welcoming** and **catechizing** prospective adult converts to the faith as they prepare for the Easter sacraments - **Baptism, Confirmation** and **Eucharist**. The progress of the candidates is celebrated by periodic public ritual celebrations at our Sunday liturgies. Each member of the parish family must be equally attentive to and involved in the whole conversion process, because the total parish is responsible for welcoming new members and showing them what it means to live the Roman Catholic Christian life.

Possible candidates for the **R.C.I.A.** process are:

- a. Unbaptized adults who wish to learn more about the Catholic faith with the possibility of becoming Catholic.
- b. Baptized Christians from other denominations who would like to learn more about and possibly enter the Catholic Church.
- c. Baptized Roman Catholics who would like to renew their understanding of their Catholic faith to prepare for First Eucharist and /or Confirmation.

For more information about the R.C.I.A., which begins in September each year, please contact the Rectory.

4. PARISH BOOK RACK

Our Parish Book Rack, located in the back of the Church, maintains a variety of pamphlets, books, and magazines, for personal and spiritual growth. This collection is maintained through monetary donations of parishioners.

COMING SOON TO ASCENSION...

1. RESPECT LIFE COMMITTEE

The purpose of the Respect Life Committee, together with the Archdiocese of Newark and the universal Church, is to raise consciousness, educate and motivate all persons to a reverence for all human life from the moment of conception to natural death and to witness against the "culture of death" that pervades our world.

2. PARISH BIBLE COURSE / SCRIPTURE STUDY

We need opportunities for Scripture Study for interested parishioners both during the day and in the evening. Programs may vary from a grounding in the fundamentals of Scripture Study to survey courses providing an over-view of the Old Testament and Gospels, as well as a comprehensive study of individual books of the Bible. For further information, please contact the Religious Education Office.

3. FAMILIES BEYOND BAPTISM

This program reaches out to young families in the parish to welcome them, catechize them and invite them to participate in Church life. After a child is baptized, parents periodically receive folders, each containing a scripture passage, a teaching which focuses on God's presence and action in the developing family and some faith-enhancing suggestions for the family to try.

4. "M.O.M.S." ... MINISTRY OF MOTHERS SHARING

This is a support program that the parish offers to mothers who are devoting their time to the spiritual and physical upbringing of their children and who need a place to receive personal and spiritual nurturing themselves. An initial seven-week session provides an opportunity for women to develop self-esteem, relationship skills and a more defined sense of their own spirituality at a time when they are facing the difficult challenges of raising a family. Follow-up is determined by the participants themselves. For further information about the M.O.M.S. please contact the Religious Education Office.

5. PARISH BOOK STUDY CLUB

This is a time for interested parishioners to share their insights and reflections on current books that are message-oriented and thought-provoking. For further information contact the Rectory.

PART III

WORSHIPPING

Ministry of WORSHIP

The Ministries of Worship facilitate celebrating fully the sacramental and prayer life of the Church.

A. CREATING THE ATMOSPHERE

To help create a worshipping atmosphere for our parishioners, our church is open during the day for private prayer and reflection.

B. CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENTS

BAPTISM is celebrated on the Third Sunday of each month at 1:30 P.M. in the church. Parents seeking baptism for their child are expected to be registered members of the Parish. To allow for sufficient time for pre-baptismal preparation, please contact the parish secretary at least two months in advance, preferably prior to the birth of your child. At least one godparent must be a practicing Catholic; a baptized Christian may serve as a witness in place of one of the sponsors.

PENANCE is celebrated privately from 11:00 to 11:30 A.M. every Saturday in the Reconciliation Rooms in the church and at other times by appointment.

EUCCHARIST is celebrated daily. Communion is distributed under both forms at all Masses and is brought to the sick and homebound upon request.

CONFIRMATION is celebrated by youth in the ninth grade who have fulfilled all the requirements of the parish program.

ANOINTING OF THE SICK is celebrated at home for any individual who is seriously ill, chronically sick, disabled or advanced in age. In case of an emergency, a priest is available at any time.

Our priests regularly visit the sick of our parish in local hospitals. Please notify the parish when someone from your family is admitted to the hospital. We will put them on our prayer list for the sick and visit them, if possible. The administration of sacraments in a hospital, however, is under the pastoral care of the assigned Catholic chaplain.

Anointing of the sick is celebrated communally at Mass once a year in Easter time.

MATRIMONY is celebrated by couples, at least one of whom is a registered parishioner. To allow for proper premarital preparation, arrangements should be made one year in advance of the proposed marriage date. Please arrange an appointment with one of the priests before making wedding plans.

HOLY ORDERS is celebrated annually by our Archbishop in Sacred Heart Cathedral/Basilica, Newark. Please pray for vocations. Anyone interested in the priesthood or diaconate, please do not hesitate to speak with one of our priests.

C. SPECIAL SPIRITUAL OPPORTUNITIES

1. Spirituality Day for All in Ministry

Ministry is important, and even ministers need to be ministered to. We all need a spiritual lift. Each year we offer opportunities to celebrate our ministry.

2. Catechetical Sunday

This Sunday is celebrated annually on the third Sunday of September throughout the United States. All those involved in catechetical ministry in the parish will be commissioned at the 9:00 A.M. Mass on this Sunday.

3. Feastday of San Lorenzo Ruiz

On the Sunday nearest to September 26th, the feastday of the martyr, San Lorenzo Ruiz, our parish community celebrates this feast of the patron saint of our Filipino brothers and sisters. A 12:00 Noon celebration of the Eucharist is followed by a festive reception.

4. Blessing of Animals

On October 4, the feast of St. Francis of Assisi, we celebrate a special blessing of animals in the Blessed Mother's courtyard at 4:00 P.M.. This is an opportunity to share God's love with our pets.

5. Annual Prayer of Remembrance

On All Saints Day, November 1 at 7:30 P.M., as we anticipate All Souls Day, November 2, we celebrate a special Prayer of Remembrance for all our parishioners and members of their families who have died during the past year. What a great sign of our oneness in the Communion of Saints!

6. Thanksgiving Interfaith Service

On the Sunday before Thanksgiving Day, we join with members of other New Milford churches to offer our common thanks to God who has so abundantly blessed our nation, our communities, our families, and our churches. Each year the Interfaith rotates to another place of worship.

7. Thanksgiving Day Liturgy

On Thanksgiving Day at 8:30 A.M. we celebrate a Mass of Thanksgiving. We invite all parishioners to come and give thanks to our Lord for all His blessings.

8. Ministries Sunday

On this Sunday, scheduled in the fall of each year, the parish extends an open invitation to all its parishioners to become involved in one or several of our many ministries.

Representatives of the various ministries are available on this Sunday to explain what is involved in being a minister and to offer our parishioners an opportunity to indicate an interest.

Training for the individual ministries will follow, and our new ministers will be installed on the Feast of Christ the King, just before the beginning of Advent.

9. Family ADVENTure

In Advent we are called to prepare our hearts for the Lord's coming. On the Saturday of the First Sunday of Advent we celebrate Advent with an evening of Advent Wreath making. Our ADVENTure includes a pizza supper, visit by St. Nicholas himself and sharing desserts in his honor. The evening concludes with the blessing of the Advent Wreaths and photos with St. Nicholas.

10. Giving Tree

On the First Sunday of Advent, names of needy children and adults are placed on our parish "Giving Tree" in church.

Parishioners are invited to choose a name from the tree and buy a gift for that person, wrap it and bring it for giving on the designated Sunday. The gifts will then be delivered in time for Christmas.

11. First Penance

Children of the parish celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation with their families on a Saturday in Advent.

12. Parish Eucharistic Day

In Advent, as we prepare to celebrate Jesus' coming, we celebrate a Eucharistic Day with Mass at 8:30 A.M..

Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament continues all day and concludes at 7:00 P.M. with Solemn Vespers and Benediction.

13. Blessing of Throats

Throats are blessed on the Feast of St. Blase, February 3, at our daily Masses at 7 and 8:30am.

14. Marriage Anniversary Liturgy

Each year, on World Marriage Day, the Sunday nearest to Valentine's Day, a special anniversary Mass is celebrated to honor parish couples who are celebrating a wedding anniversary in multiples of five years (5, 10, 15, 20, 25, etc.) and every anniversary of 50 years or more. A reception follows the Mass.

15. Scouting Sunday

Special recognition is always given to our Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts at a Saturday 5:30 P.M. Mass in March. Please watch the parish bulletin for details.

16. Ash Wednesday

On Ash Wednesday, the beginning of the season of Lent, ashes are distributed during Mass at 7, 8:30am, 12 Noon and 7:30pm. as well as during a Liturgy of the Word service at 4:00pm..

During the Lenten season we add an additional Mass on Fridays at 7:30pm.

17. Stations of the Cross

On the Fridays of Lent, we gather to pray together the Stations of the Cross after the 7:30pm Mass.

18. Family Lenten Evening of Reflection

During the season of Lent we will celebrate a Family Evening of Reflection which will include a Soup Supper, Stations of the Cross, celebration of the Eucharist, exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, time for adoration and personal prayer, sacramental reconciliation and benediction.

19. Holy Week

Palm Sunday begins this holiest week of the year. Palms are distributed and blessed during the Sunday Masses. It is the custom within the Archdiocese of Newark to celebrate the Chrism Mass on Monday evening at the Cathedral/Basilica of the Sacred Heart in Newark.

20. Living Stations of the Cross

Members of our parish will present the Living Stations of the Cross in the church on Good Friday. This is a special time for us to reflect through meditation, prayer, song and action on the events of Jesus' journey of love to Calvary.

21. Easter Triduum

These sacred "three days" are the culmination of the entire liturgical year. We solemnly celebrate Jesus' passion, death, burial and resurrection.

On **Holy Thursday**, our Lord instituted the Eucharist and washed the feet of His disciples. The Mass of the Lord's Supper is celebrated at 8:00 P.M. in our auditorium church. With no Mass on **Good Friday** or during the day on Holy Saturday, our attention is focused on the sacrifice of the cross. As we relive this agony and glory during the parish services, we strengthen our faith and renew the feeling of the presence of Christ in our lives.

The Easter Vigil Mass on **Holy Saturday** is the essential paschal celebration. The Vigil is arranged in four parts: the Service of Light, the Liturgy of the Word, the Liturgy of Baptism, and the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

22. First Eucharist

Children of the parish celebrate First Eucharist during the Easter season at designated parish Masses.

23. Parish Feastday Celebrations

In celebration of our Parish Feastday on Ascension Thursday, various activities, both spiritual and social, are planned each year.

24. Confirmation

Each year the sacrament of Confirmation is celebrated during the Easter season. A reception for the newly confirmed and their families follows in the Fr. Benedict Center.

25. May Crowning

The Rosary Society sponsors our parish May Crowning on the first Sunday in May at the 12 Noon Mass.

26. Mother's Day Liturgy

At each Mass on Mother's Day weekend, all mothers are honored. They are given special recognition and a blessing.

27. Communal Celebration of Anointing of the Sick

The Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick is celebrated to give spiritual aid to the sick. Those who can be anointed at a communal celebration of this sacrament, which takes place during Mass, include the elderly, those who chronically ill, those who have physical or mental illness, and those who will be undergoing surgery.

28. Graduation Liturgy / Baccalaureate Mass

On a Sunday in June during the 12:00 Noon Mass we honor members of our parish who are completing junior high school, high school, college or post-graduate studies. They receive special recognition and a special blessing. A reception for the graduates and their families follows the Mass.

29. Father's Day Liturgy

At each Mass on Father's Day weekend, all fathers are honored. They are given special recognition and a blessing.

30. Celebration of the Queenship of the Blessed Virgin Mary

On the Sunday nearest to August 15th, the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, our parish community celebrates this special feast with our Filipino brothers and sisters. A 12:00 Noon celebration of the Eucharist is followed by crowning of Our Lady, a procession and a festive reception.

D. LITURGICAL MINISTRIES WITHIN THE PARISH

1. Lectors

This group of men and women serve the parish by publicly proclaiming the readings from the Old and New Testament at weekend and daily Masses. Dedicated to proclaiming the Good News with a spirit of enthusiasm and celebration, the lectors are trained in the parish.

For information about becoming a lector, interested parishioners should contact the Rectory.

2. Eucharistic Ministers

This group of men and women assist the priests in the distribution of the Eucharist to parishioners at daily and Sunday Masses, to those confined in their homes, to Woodcrest Center, the nursing home in New Milford, and to area hospitals. Membership in this ministry is by the personal invitation of the pastor and mandate by the Archbishop. Eucharistic Ministers are trained in the parish. They should demonstrate a special devotion to the Eucharist and have a keen desire to foster fellowship to the extended members of our parish family.

3. Music Ministry

Liturgies at Ascension are enhanced by a variety of music. Our 5:30 P.M. Saturday Mass is led by an organist and leader of song. Our 9:00 A.M. Sunday Mass is led by either the Children's Choir or the Contemporary Choir. Our 10:30 A.M. Mass is led by a Traditional Choir, and the 12:00 Noon Mass is led by an organist and leader of song.

Periodically, throughout the year, our parish Filipino Choir sings at Mass.

Liturgical music ministers, (singers, musicians, leaders of song) are always needed and welcomed. To volunteer, please contact the Director of Music or the Rectory.

4. Ushers / Ministers of Hospitality

These ministers perform an essential role at Eucharistic celebrations on weekends, Holy Days and special occasions. They are responsible for greeting worshippers as they arrive for Mass; assisting parishioners in locating a seat; passing the collection baskets; together with the gift bearers, bringing the monetary offerings of the congregation to the altar as part of the offertory procession; distributing materials to the worshippers during Mass and afterward; providing guidance during the distribution of Communion; and generally being available to advise those who request information about church services.

Parishioners interested in serving the parish as an usher should contact the Rectory.

5. Altar Servers

These young men and young women of our parish are trained to assist the priests at Sunday Masses. They are assigned to serve on a rotating basis. A schedule of altar server assignments is issued on a monthly basis.

Boys and girls from the fifth grade through high school who are interested in becoming altar servers are asked to contact one of the priests.

6. Adult Altar Servers for Funerals

These men and women of our parish are trained to assist the priests at Funeral Masses. They are assigned to serve on a rotating basis. Any parishioner who is interested in becoming an altar server is asked to contact one of the priests.

7. Liturgical Masters of Ceremonies

Masters of Ceremonies assist in organizing special liturgies such as those of Christmas and Holy Week. They supervise and guide the altar servers.

Masters of Ceremonies must be high school age or older. Special training is provided in preparation for specific liturgies.

8. Liturgy Committee

The Liturgy Committee studies the Church's worship, its celebrations and rituals, in order to assist in preparing various aspects of the parish liturgies. Its purpose is to educate parishioners about worship and to seek to involve them in the worship life of the Church.

The Liturgy Committee works cooperatively with the priests and the director of music in planning parish liturgies that will enable the entire parish to grow into a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ. Meetings are held bi-monthly.

9. Church Decorating and Environment Team

The Church Decorating and Environment Committee prepares proper church decorations, such as banners, altar cloths and flowers, for the Church. They help to enhance the community's liturgical celebrations throughout the seasons of the Church year by providing an inspiring and appropriate environment for worship.

Committee members are given the opportunity to learn about liturgical seasons and feast days. Occasional meetings are held as needed.

10. Sacristans

There are also a few dedicated parishioners who on a weekly basis launder the altar linens and clean the vessels used for distribution of communion.

11. Liturgy of the Word with Children Leaders

This team of volunteers plans and organizes the Children's Liturgies of the Word, preparing the worship space, arranging for a presider, either a priest, deacon or a layperson, composing the petitions for the General Intercessions and preparing a take-home pamphlet.

PART IV

HELPING

Ministry of SERVICE

The Service Ministries encourage us to serve Jesus in the persons of all those with needs of any kind.

PART III - HELPING

The Service Ministry is an integral part of who and what we are as a Catholic Community here in Ascension Parish. It is an important way for us to express what we witness to and do in Word, Worship, and Community Building.

Service Ministry is the fruits by which we are known and by which the Lord Jesus is known. It is not an optional ministry, an add-on, or a luxury for us. It is an expression of what we truly believe in as Catholic Christians.

A. Pastoral Care Ministry

The Pastoral Care Ministry of Ascension Parish provides assistance to sick, homebound and bereaved members of our parish family.

1. Visiting the Sick

a. At Home

On weekdays, upon request, Eucharistic ministers of the parish will bring the Eucharist to any parishioner who is confined at home. Monthly, priests and Eucharistic ministers will visit the parish sick and homebound.

b. In the Hospital

Although it is the primary responsibility of the hospital chaplains, upon request, priests of the parish visit parishioners in local hospitals. Several of our Eucharistic ministers are also commissioned as Eucharistic ministers at area hospitals. Upon admission to the hospital, please notify the Rectory.

c. Nursing Homes

A priest celebrates Mass monthly and a deacon celebrates a weekly Communion Service at the local nursing home, Woodcrest Center. Upon request, priests or Eucharistic ministers from the parish bring the Eucharist to the patients during the week.

Other parishioners make friendly visits to our parish sick and shut-ins, sometimes helping with shopping or other chores. Volunteers are always needed. Please contact the Rectory.

B. Service Ministry Activities

1. Food Pantry

Once each month volunteers collect and distribute food to needy families in our area.

2. Hackensack Walk-in Meals for the Homeless

Bi-monthly, volunteers serve meals to the Homeless at the Hackensack Feeding Center.

3. Harrison House

Once a month volunteers prepare meals for patients with HIV/AIDS in Bergen Regional Hospital in Paramus.

4. Ministry to the Homeless

Once each year, in collaboration with four other denominational churches of New Milford, members of our parish volunteer their help at St. Cecilia Emergency Family Shelter in Englewood, NJ. Volunteers make and serve meals, visit and dialogue with the guests, spend the night, and clean up.

5. Annual Thanksgiving Turkey Drive

Food baskets are distributed to needy parishioners and others in need in New Milford and the surrounding areas.

6. Giving Tree

On the First Sunday of Advent, parishioners of Ascension donate gifts to bring Christmas joy to less fortunate children and adults.

7. Parish Blood Drive

The parish, in affiliation with Community Blood Services, sponsors a blood drive every year in August. Any adult parishioner below the age of 65 may donate blood unless excluded for health reasons.

For further information about these activities, please contact the Rectory.

"What you can do, I cannot. What I can do, you cannot.

But together, we can do something beautiful for God."

(Mother Teresa of Calcutta)



PART V

PLAYING

Ministry of COMMUNITY BUILDING

**The Community Building Ministries
foster Christian fellowship
through social and spiritual events.**

Woven into our learning, worshipping and helping
are laughter, play and celebration.
The following are some highlights for this year.

1. Pancake Breakfast at AHOP

Periodically, from September through June, the Pancake Ministry at AHOP (**A**scension **H**ouse **O**f **P**ancakes) provides a delicious breakfast from 8am to 12 Noon in the Fr. Benedict Center. Only \$6.00 for all you can eat.
What a treat...and it can't be beat!

2. Halloween Spooktacular

Children of our Parish are invited to come to a howling good time at our parish Halloween Party, sponsored by the Home-School Association of Transfiguration Academy.

3. Winterfest 1 - Pasta...Pasta...Pasta...A Taste of Italy

Everyone is invited to enjoy authentic and delicious Italian homecooking at our annual Pasta Dinner prepared and served by members of our Winterfest Committee in our multi-purpose room on a Sunday in January.

4. Winterfest 2 - Mardi Gras Beef Steak / Karaoke Night

Get ready to Eat, Drink, and Sing the night away! We gather together to celebrate Mardi Gras on the Saturday before our Lenten fasting begins. What a fun-filled evening!

5. Winterfest 3 - St. Patrick's Day Dinner Dance

Put on your green, because everyone is Irish on St. Patrick's Day. Plan to join us as parishioners of Ascension, St. Mary's and St. John's gather to eat, drink and dance the night away.

6. Fish and Chips Dinner

On a Lenten Friday evening parishioners are invited to share a fish and chips dinner in the Fr. Benedict Center.

7. Breakfast with the Easter Bunny

Children of the parish are invited to have breakfast with no one less than the Easter Bunny himself. After breakfast the children hunt for Easter eggs. Prizes are awarded and children can have their picture taken with the Easter Bunny.

8. Spring Gala / Tricky Tray Auction

The annual Spring Gala sponsored by the Parish Life Committee features dinner, dancing, and raffles. Proceeds benefit the parish.

9. Spring Dance

Parishioners are invited to come to a howling good time at the parish Spring Dance, sponsored by our Parish Filipino Community.

10. Parish Pilgrimages

Periodically throughout the year, our Parish Pilgrimage Committee sponsors pilgrimages for parishioners. Some past pilgrimages include Blue Army Shrine, St. Padre Pio Shrine in Barto, PA, Keep your eyes and ears open for news of the next pilgrimage.

11. Parish Festival

There is food, fun, amusements, and games for everyone at our annual Parish Festival on our parish grounds. The date, time and more details will be announced as the time approaches.

12. Ascension in Atlantic City

Periodically throughout the year, our parish sponsors trips to Atlantic City for a winning day at the casinos or on the boardwalk.

13. Parish Trips

Periodically throughout the year, our Parish Events Committee sponsors trips for adventurous parishioners. Some past trips include Cape Cod, the Thousand Islands, Delaware Park and the Three Little Bakers Dinner Theater. Keep your eyes and ears open for news of the next adventure.

14. Parish Coffees

Our Parish Events Committee holds coffees after Sunday Masses periodically throughout the year.

15. Ascension Card Club

The Card Club meets once a month in our multi-purpose room, eight times a year beginning in October. The year will begin with a dinner at Ascension in September. For further information about this group, contact the Rectory.

16. Golf Tournament

Our parish "duffers" gather at an area country club for a day of golf and fun which is followed by a dinner with awards and prizes.

A VARIETY OF GIFTS AND GIVERS

1. Rosary Society

The Rosary Society, one of the oldest confraternities of the Church, was established at Ascension in October of 1953 and has as its primary purpose to praise and honor the Blessed Virgin Mary and to serve her patronage by recitation of the rosary for the mutual spiritual benefit of its members, for peace in the world, and for the souls of the unborn. The Rosarians also sponsor parish events such as their May Crowning and Living Rosary. Meetings are held the Monday after the first Sunday of the month at 7:30 P.M..

2. Filipino Community Ministry

Our parish is graced by the spiritual, social, and fundraising activities sponsored by our Filipino Ministry. Some include our parish Christmas Concert with the Orchestra of St. Peter by the Sea, Santo Nino, San Lorenzo Ruiz and the Queenship of Mary, Calendar Raffle, Three Parishes and a Concert, a Spring dance, and Atlantic City trips.

3. Ascension Golden Ministry (AGM)

Our parish seniors gather twice a month for some socializing which includes prayer time, a guest speaker, and refreshments.

4. C.F.M.

Christian Foundations for Ministry is a three year program sponsored by the Archdiocese of Newark. It is an adult formation process to help Christian adults recognize their baptismal call and exercise their talents in service to the Church and the world. Certificates are awarded upon completion of each of the three yearly courses. For further information contact the Rectory.

5. Knights of Columbus

The Knights of Columbus is an international organization of men devoted to the needs of the Church at large. The Knights have dedicated themselves to the spirit of Columbianism - CHARITY, UNITY, FRATERNITY, PATRIOTISM.

The St. Joseph Council, No. 3814, which was established in 1905, includes the towns of Oradell, New Milford and Bergenfield. Meetings are held at the Knights of Columbus Hall on River Road in New Milford.

STEWARDSHIP OF TIME AND TALENT

Here at the end of this Parish Handbook, we give **YOU** a chance to become a part of the many activities offered in this parish. There is something anyone can do to enrich another, our parish and our surrounding community. So, we are asking for your time and talent. **What can you do? What can you share?** Here are some suggested areas. Check off your areas of interest, detach the page and return it to the Rectory. We will direct it to the proper person who will contact you and explain more fully your areas of choice.

WORD

- Catechetical Ministry (K-6) Sunday
- Catechetical Ministry(K-6) Tuesday
- Catechetical Aide (K-6) Sunday
- Catechetical Aide (K-6) Tuesday
- Catechetical Ministry(7th-9th)
- Arts and Crafts Aide
- Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)
- Arts and Crafts Aide
- Christian Foundations for Ministry (CFM)
- Adult Education
- Adult Spirituality Committee
- Baptism Preparation Team
- Marriage Preparation Team (Pre-Cana)
- Vocations Committee
- Youth Ministry
- Young Adult Group

WORSHIP

- Lector
- Eucharistic Minister
- Altar Server (Youth)
- Adult Altar Servers (Weekday Mass)
- Adult Altar Servers for Funerals
- Ministers of Hospitality (Ushers)
- Liturgy of the Word for Children Team
- Children's Choir
- Contemporary Choir (9:00 A.M.)
- Traditional Choir (10:30 A.M.)
- Liturgy Planning Committee
- Church Decorating
- Sacristans
- Church/Altar/Sanctuary Care

SERVICE

- Food Pantry
- Food Basket Distribution
- Thanksgiving Turkey Drive
- Advent Giving Tree
- Social Justice Issues
- Ministry to the Homeless
- Pastoral Care Ministry
- Pro-Life Ministry
- AIDS Ministry
- Parish Life Committee (Fundraising)
- Stewardship Committee

COMMUNITY BUILDING

- Parish Events Committee
- Pilgrimage Committee
- Rosary Society
- Small Christian Communities
- Ascension Golden Ministry (Seniors)
- Welcoming/Hospitality Ministry
- Transfiguration Academy HSA
- Filipino Community
- CYO Sports Program