CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION

CATHOLIC PARISH

WE JOYFULLY PROCLAIM, CELEBRATE, WITNESS AND SERVE JESUS CHRIST

The History of our Parish

9510 W 127th Street
Overland Park, KS 66213
PARISH OFFICE: 913-681-3348
SCHOOL: 913-851-2531
YOUTH FAITH FORMATION: 913-681-7683
www.kcascension.org

OUR PARISH HISTORY

1988
- Archbishop Ignatius Strecker purchases 35 acres of land.

1991
- Fr. Larry Albertson named Pastor for new parish.
- Officially named Church of the Ascension.
- Parish membership of 500 families.

1992-1996
- Preliminary plans to build a $4.9 million church facility.
- Archbishop Keleher officiates groundbreaking of new facility.
- Parish membership exceeds 1,450 families.
- SOR membership exceeds 1,100 students.
- Fr. Joseph Lopez appointed first Parochial Vicar.

1997-2001
- Church of the Ascension holds dedication ceremony.
- Ascension Catholic School opens K-5 program and then adds one grade per year until it reaches 8th grade.
- Parish mourns unexpected death of Fr. Joseph Lopez.
- First 8th grade class graduates.
- Fr. Al Herber appointed Parochial Vicar.

2002-2006
- Fr. Thomas Tank named new Pastor.
- Welcome Mass for Coadjutor Archbishop Joseph Naumann.
- Christ Renews His Parish Retreat Program begins.
- Fr. Thomas Tank appointed Reverend Monsignor.
- Retirement Mass for Archbishop Emeritus Keleher.
- Celebrate 15th year anniversary.
- Parish membership of 2,481 families.
- First CD produced by Ascension Choir, "Together, We Sing!"
- Fr. Gary Pennings, Fr. Gabriel Landis and Fr. Bruce Ansems appointed Parochial Vicars.

2007-2010
- Fr. Tom celebrates 40th Anniversary of Ordination.
- Ordination Mass for three Archdiocesan Seminarians.
- New Parish Office, Youth & Adult Faith Centers completed.
- Parish Pastoral Plan completed.
- Addiction Support and Legion of Mary ministries formed.
- Parish membership exceeds 2,800 families.
- Fr. Rich Warsnak and Fr. Matthew Schiffelbein appointed Parochial Vicars.

2011-2015
- New parish website rolled out.
- Family Formation Program formed.
- Weekly Family Rosary begins.
- Women of Ascension Ministry and Evangelization Initiative formed.
- Sanctuary renovation completed.
- Fr. Lazar Carasala, Fr. Nathan Haverland and Fr. Alessandro Borraccia appointed Parochial Vicars.
- New crucifix placed in the sanctuary.

2016-2019
- Celebrate 25th year anniversary.
- Parish boundaries expand.
- Parish membership exceeds 3100 families.
- Fr. Tom celebrates 50th Anniversary of Ordination.
- Ascension Catholic School opens Preschool Program.
- Ascension Ambassadors and Vocations Ministries established.
- Deacon John Stanley assigned as permanent deacon.
- Ordination Mass for six Archdiocesan Seminarians. Largest class since 1981.
- Fr. Regie Saldanha, Fr. Michael Guastello and Fr. Viet Nguyen appointed Parochial Vicars.

CHURCH FACTS

The **Stained Glass Windows** behind the altar have been restored from the Church of the Risen Christ in Kansas City, MO. They were originally crafted in Austria in 1924, each piece having been individually painted and baked. The center panel depicts **The Ascension**; the right illustrates the **Keys to God's Kingdom entrusted to St. Peter**, and the left portrays **The Resurrection**. They were installed in March, 1924 within the Church of the Annunciation, coincident with renovation of that church which had built on the corner of Linwood and Benton Blvd. in 1902. These windows have framed the prayer of many thousands of Kansas Citians and have inspired them to engage in countless efforts to build God's kingdom in this region. In 1975 three inner-city parishes of St. Vincent, Holy Name and Annunciation merged, forming the Parish of the Risen Christ and using the former Annunciation Church property for their worship. Inspiring windows that inspired tremendous expressions of deep faith inspire us again today.

Six Brass Candlesticks are used in our sanctuary. Crafted around 1920, the shafts are a twisted rope designed with deep-set bobeche tops. They were originally made as funeral casket sticks and have stood beside the bodies of our forebears in faith who have taken to their eternal rewards. These candlesticks have been acquired for us from a monastery of French Dominicans.

Fourteen Stations of the Cross line outside walls of the worship space. These images of the way of the cross were carved around 1890 and have been identified of Italian origin by virtue of their soft wood. They had been acquired by Dr. William Earl Evans Jr. to be placed in a chapel envisioned to be built adjacent to Johnson County Community College. The project never materialized, and after twenty years of being stored in the doctor's attic, they have been restored for our use.

In the gathering space stands a seven-foot replica of **The Cross of St. Francis**. This crucifix called the San Domiano Cross, was commissioned specifically for our church and is made of tiles hand painted in Assisi, the birthplace of St. Francis in Italy. It is incased in the same oak wood used in other portions of the church. As a youth, Francis often went to the small chapel of San Domiano to reflect and pray where, above the altar, was a large Byzantine crucifix. Tradition tells us that from that crucifix, Francis heard a voice in his heart saying, "Now go hence and build up my house, for it is nearly falling down." Taking the words literally, Francis went and sold many of his possessions to rebuild the church of San Domiano. Later he realized that the message meant more- that he was to work for the rebuilding of all the Church. As we reflect and pray before this crucifix, we, too hear our hearts the command to work for the building of God's kingdom on earth.

The relics of Pope St. Clement and St. Ursula and her companions have been placed beneath the altar. It is profoundly significant that these two heroic saints who sacrificed their lives and gloriously shed their blood for Christ should rest at the foot of the altar upon which is celebrated the sacrifice of Christ.

Twelve small crosses are marked on the inside walls of our church. On the anniversary day of dedication each year a lighted candle will be burned before each of the crosses.

Six **statues** have been placed in and around the Sanctuary, Sacristy and Gathering area- those **of Saints Joseph, Patrick, Jude, Paul, Francis of Assisi, and the Cure of Ars**, all chosen by virtue of their common popularity and as worthy examples for our emulation.

CHURCH FACTS

The Statue of Mary, Mother of God and Mother of us all, occupies a prominent spot to the right of the altar. It is depicted of Mary as Our Lady of the Walsingham, in a remote village of Norfolk, England. Mary encouraged the widow to build a replica of the house of Nazareth, which she showed in the apparition. In the shrine, a statue of the virgin was constructed as Richeldis had seen her. It became a place of popular pilgrimage but was completely destroyed during the iconoclasm of the Reformation. The statue and shrine were recreated in 1921. Walsingham has since become a sacred place for Orthodox, Anglican and Roman Catholics alike. The statue and tradition capture for us the overwhelming mystery of one simple woman transformed into Queen of Heaven and Earth and Seat of all Wisdom.

The Tabernacle reserves the Blessed Sacrament. Designed to resemble the Arc of the Covenant, that sacred place where the commandments were kept, it symbolizes and enshrines God's very dwelling among us.

A **Statue of the Sacred Heart** extends its welcoming hands and open heart over all those who enter and gather in the narthex. Set upon a pedestal by the grand staircase, it encourages us to accept God's incredible invitation to enter into deep and intense intimacy with the divine.

The Baptistry has been placed at the entrance into the worship space, symbolizing each of our entrances into the kingdom of God. By dipping our hands into the flowing waters of life and by retracing the Sign of the Cross upon ourselves, we affirm the promises we made at our baptisms and reinvigorate our commitments.

The Crucifix was placed in the Sanctuary on November 18, 2014. It is a custom hand-carved linden wood corpus that is 6 feet 6 inches in height and spans 71.5 inches from fingertip to fingertip. The face of Jesus with the open eyes convey compassion and sympathy. This depiction of Christ invites us to a deeper appreciation of Christ's mercy and love.