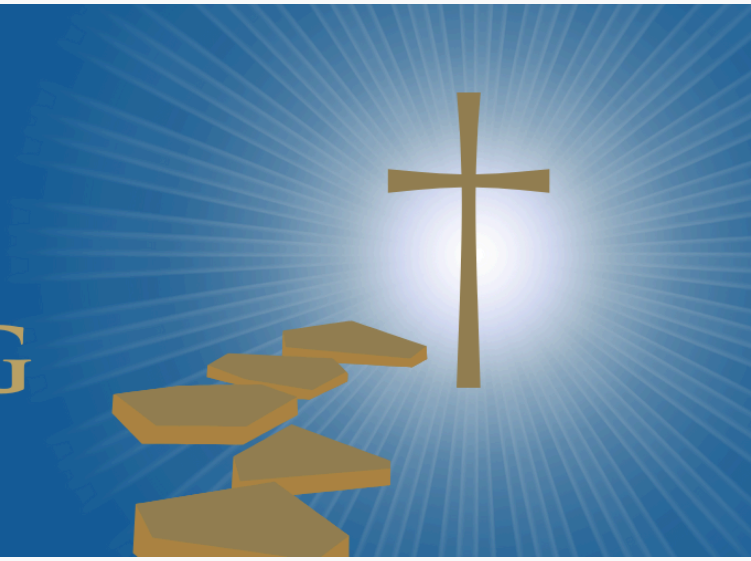
DISCERNING *God's Call* RENEWING *Our Mission*



September 4, 2025

DISCERNING GOD'S CALL - RENEWING OUR MISSION

by Suzan Fenner

This year is a time of transition for me. I launched the Radical Hospitality Committee many years ago and served as its Chair until last year, when Harry Breda and Kathleen Rylander became Co-Chairs. This summer, I retired from the committee. One of the reasons that I stepped down was that, as I have entered my later seventies, I realize that I don't have the stamina that I used to have. So now I will focus on less strenuous activities.

I participate in the Adult Formation class, where I lead some of the Sunday sessions. I also enjoy leading or co-leading other Bible studies, such as the Disciple Fast Track series that Joan Romanosky, Laurel Johnson, and I led last year. I anticipate that other opportunities for leading studies will arise in the future. Another activity I hope to continue is organizing a small group of Ascension parishioners to cook and serve lunch for seniors at the Network of Community Ministries once or twice a year.

My husband, Peter, and I have been financial contributors to Ascension since we joined. We believe that it is important to tithe at least 10% to support Ascension's general operating budget. We also financially support many of Ascension's ministries, such as the Food Pantry, the Sandbranch Water Drive, backpacks for Kids U, book drives, and supplying lasagnas for the Austin Street Center, as well as resources for refugees.

Question for Reflection

How do I understand God to be calling me to serve and share with Ascension this year?

My call from God, however, is not limited to the time and financial resources that we share at Ascension. God's plan is a lot bigger than that, and both of us have found many ways to answer God's call in the world. I've served on the Board of High Adventure Treks for Dads and Daughters/Sons for many years. Last year, at Katie Dickinson's request, I joined the Board of The Senior Source, a wonderful organization that improves the lives of seniors in Dallas and surrounding counties in many tangible ways. We also financially support several other organizations that provide support for the community and beyond, including the North Texas Food Bank, The Stew Pot, Austin Street Center, Episcopal Relief and Development, Our Friends Place, Communities in Schools, Educational First Steps, the Grant Halliburton Foundation, and OK2BX. So that future leaders of the Episcopal Church receive outstanding training, we financially support the Seminary of the Southwest, where I served on the Board of Trustees for eight years. Three former Ascension members recently graduated there. Two, Annelies Moeser and Laura Warner Gilmer, are now priests, and one, Randy Nelson, is a Deacon. Kai Ryan and Ernie McAfee did their seminary training there years ago, and Bishop Kai is now Chair of the Board.

I recently finished reading "When the Heart Waits" by Sue Monk Kidd, which explores the process of finding one's identity and calling as we transition from one phase of life to another. I am reflecting on how I can apply the wisdom from this book to the transition I am currently experiencing so that I will be sure to continue to hear God's call to me in the future. I invite you to join me in discerning how you, too, can best follow God's call, both at Ascension and beyond.

Suzan Fenner and her husband, Peter, joined Ascension 38 years ago with their two children, Laura, aged 6, and Adam, aged 2. Now Laura is married to an Australian, Andrew Page, and lives in Sydney, Australia, with their two children, and Adam, who married his high school sweetheart, Lindsay, lives in Murphy with their three children. All five of the grandkids were baptized at Ascension as infants. Suzan is a retired lawyer, having practiced with a large Dallas firm, heading up its Employee Benefits and Executive Compensation practice group. Throughout her life, Suzan has been active in church and nonprofit organizations. She has served on the Ascension Vestry three times and was Senior Warden with both Kai Ryan and Paul Klitzke. She and Pete love to travel and visit their daughter and family in Sydney as often as possible.