

A Timeline of Events at Church of the Ascension

March 1, 2014 - Father Cobb begins his rectorship at Chicago's Church of the Ascension -- a renowned destination church, dedicated for 150 years to preserving traditional Anglo-Catholic theology and worship.

April 12, 2014 - A longtime parishioner writes to the new rector, complaining about numerous liturgy changes. No changes are reversed, and liturgical innovation continues.

Oct. 25, 2014 - At a Vestry retreat, Fr. Cobb takes notes while discussing with the Vestry their vision for the next ten years. His notes, later shared with the Vestry, list among the 10-year goals "Same Liturgy and Music."

Jan. 15, 2015 - Fr. Cobb summarily discharges the parish Organist; the Choirmaster; and the Director of Finance & Administration. These are exceedingly dedicated and competent men who, collectively, have served the parish for 90 years. The Director of Finance is ordered to abandon his work and leave the office immediately.

Jan. 25, 2015 - Parishioners and Vestrymen, who were not consulted about the firings, express shock and dismay at Ascension's Annual Meeting. Nine parishioners denounce Fr. Cobb's actions before the allotted half-hour expires; two speak in his defense. Cobb remains silent throughout the proceeding, addressing none of the questions directed at him but instead delegating his Senior Warden to reply.

In place of the usual Annual Report on 2014, the parish is presented with a few hastily-xeroxed pages containing virtually none of the information they are accustomed to receiving. The deficiency of financial data is particularly glaring.

Feb. 15, 2015 - Organist Schrader, Choirmaster Wikman, and the Choir that Wikman recruited and trained perform together at Ascension for the last time. At the end of the service, they receive a very lengthy ovation from the floor.

March 11, 2015 - By now the parish has noticeably declined. Capping a chaotic eight-week flurry of correspondence among dozens of concerned individuals, *Save Ascension* sends its first Open Letter to Cobb with 46 signatures. Weekly follow-up letters ensue.

May 14, 2015 - Bishop Jeffrey Lee, during his annual parish visit, acknowledges the discord at Ascension and suggests mediation between the Rector and the parishioners. The Vestry subsequently recommends an outside consultant of high repute: the nearby Lombard Mennonite Peace Center.