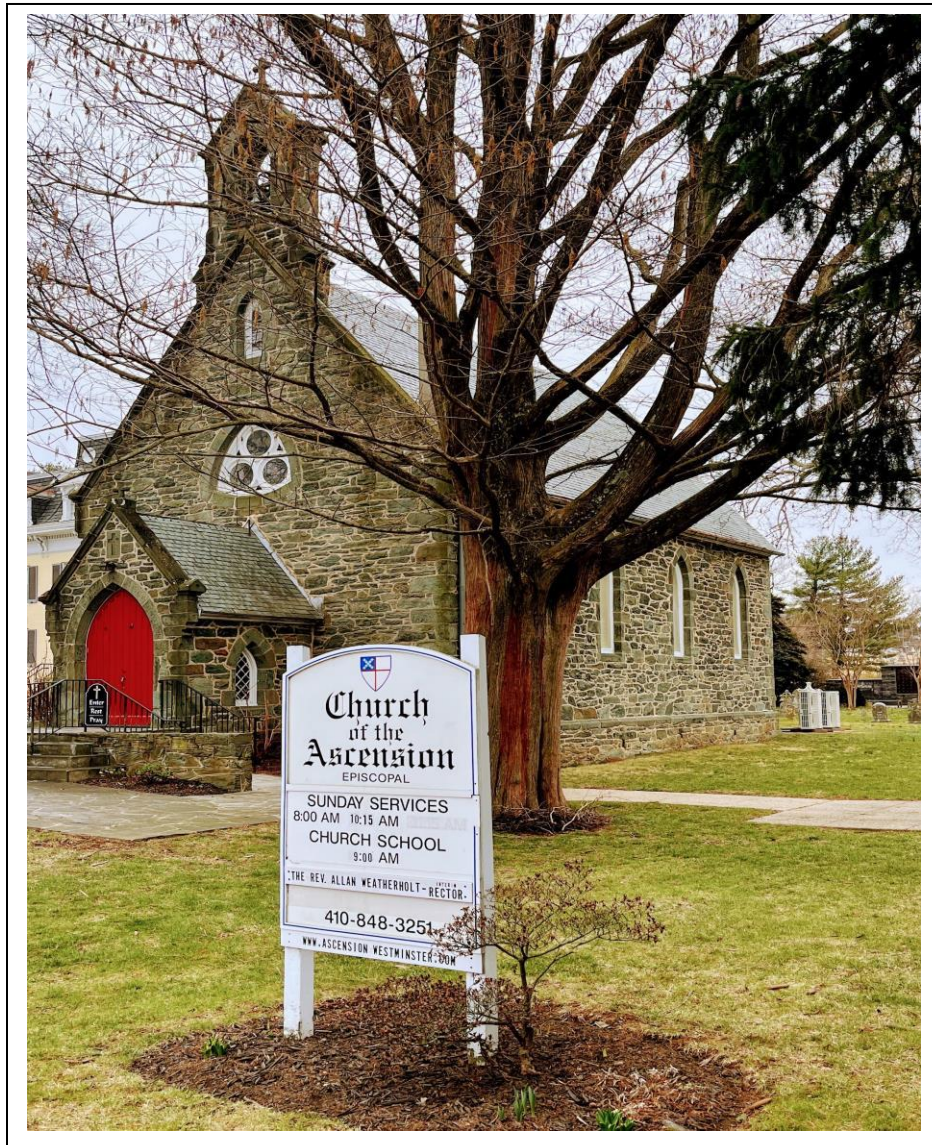


OUR PARISH PROFILE



Church of the Ascension

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OUR MISSION STATEMENT

To restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ through prayer, worship, and proclaiming the gospel and in doing so, strive to love our neighbors as ourselves and respect the dignity of every person.



Historic (1844) Stone Church at Thanksgiving



Christmas in the Holy Cross Hall

WELCOME

We at the Episcopal **Church of the Ascension** in **Westminster, Maryland** welcome you to our church, to our community and to sharing our faith-filled relationship with God. Thank you for reading more about this congregation, our community, and our hopes for the future.

We are a congregation diverse in its representation of life, family, vocation, economics, politics, and opinions. However, we are one community in our commitment to our Lord Christ and excited to follow God's plan in welcoming our new Rector. We are looking forward to new ideas, growing our church family by attracting new families, and finding ways to share God's love with our surrounding community to include young adults.

Ascension has a strong foundation made up of talented, valuable staff, and strong, dedicated lay people. Our location in downtown Westminster provides the opportunity to reach out to the community and people in need, while our many activities, from summer camps to the Mistletoe Mart (more on that below), to the 1844 Shoppe, draw people in.

OUR HISTORY

Founded in 1844, Church of the Ascension began worshipping in the beautiful stone church in May 1846, when it was consecrated. The **Stone Church** is still the cornerstone of our campus which also includes a separate building containing the **Holy Cross Hall** (a larger worship space), the **Children's Chapel**, the **Fellowship Hall**, classrooms & meeting spaces, offices for the Rector, Finance, and Church Office. The **Rectory** is attached but a separate building. [More about our rich history and pictures can be found here.](#)

OUR PARISH

Our official membership count is approximately 120 active households. Average Sunday attendance for both services, including those attending via YouTube and Facebook, has been **81** for **2022**. Despite the challenges posed by Covid, we have experienced some growth in the past year with the addition of **15** members including children. As with many congregations, our demographic tends toward the more mature (age 65 and above) with fewer young families. As you will read below, one of our goals is to work diligently to attract new members which include young adults and families.

OUR CAMPUS

Ascension Church is located in the middle of downtown Westminster on approximately 1 ¼ acres and consists of the historic 1844 **Stone Church**, another building complex which contains the **Holy Cross Hall**, (our larger but equally important worship space), the **Children's Chapel**, the **Fellowship Hall** (with a commercial kitchen), classrooms, offices, and other meeting spaces, and the **Rectory**.



Historic Stone Church from Court Street



Holy Cross Hall, Children's Chapel, Offices & Classrooms/Meeting Spaces



Coffee Hour in the Fellowship Hall

Indoor Space:

The **Fellowship Hall** is a large space that can be sectioned off into smaller, more intimate spaces, depending on the need. Everything from the weekly **Coffee Hour** following the 10:15 a.m. service to the **Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper**, **Summer Drama Camp** rehearsals and special receptions are held in this space. Connected to the Fellowship Hall are: the **Children's Chapel**, additional meeting rooms and the Church and Rector's offices on the first floor and classrooms for **Sunday School** on the second floor.



Fellowship Hall reception following an Evensong Service



Fellowship Hall dinner with summer drama campers & families

A **Soup Kitchen** is provided in the Fellowship Hall every Wednesday at noon by the St. Vincent DePaul Society of St. John Catholic Church, located in Westminster. We provide use of the kitchen and secure pantry storage.

In the past, other outside groups (i.e., AA, NA, and a quilting guild) regularly used the classrooms for meetings. These in-person meetings stopped with Covid. However, other events have occurred, including a meeting and reception held by and for **New Life for Girls**, wedding and funeral receptions, and a variety of church-related celebrations. Requests for use of our facilities and fees are evaluated on a case-by-case basis by the Rector and the Vestry.

Outdoor Space:

While our indoor spaces provide wonderful opportunities for worship and fellowship, the generous outdoor space deserves equal attention. The yard is in the center of the campus surrounded by the Stone Church, the brick building complex, and Rectory on three sides. **Summer Programs for Children**, the annual **Blessing of the Animals**, **Sunday School Open House**, the **Blessing of Backpacks**, and receptions have all been celebrated outside, weather permitting. Also, "Lemonade on the Lawn" is held here in good weather in lieu of Coffee Hour in the Fellowship Hall.



Blessing of the Animals on St. Francis Day



Love our pets...



Reception for Fr. Allan & Rev. Anne



Blessing of the Backpacks

In the Fall, the Children & Youth Ministry hosted a family scarecrow-making and arts & craft event on the lawn.

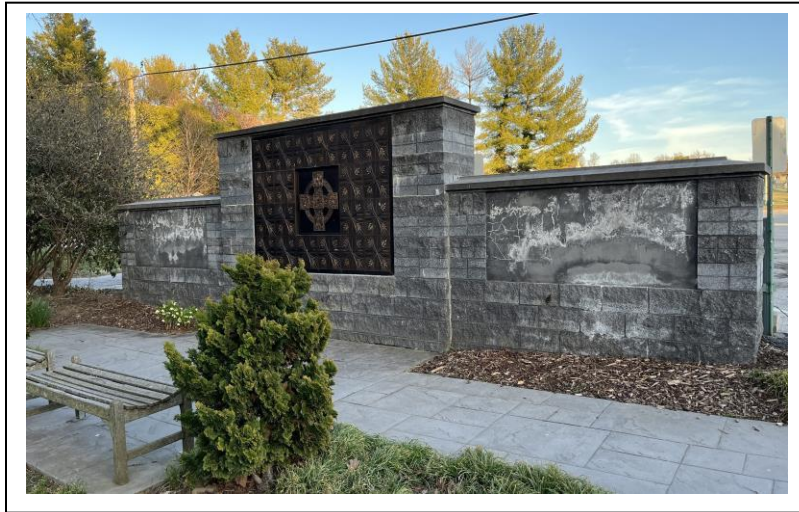


In addition to the Stone Church, the large, brick building complex, and the Rectory, Ascension also owns a **historic house** directly across the street at 30 N. Court Street. It was originally a school for African American children. This property is approximately 1729 square feet and is currently rented out to a small business for additional income.

The **Columbarium** is located at the back of the small cemetery behind the Stone Church.



Historic House



Columbarium

Stone Church with Cemetery & Historic brick Court House in Background



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF MARYLAND

“The Episcopal Church in Maryland is as old as the first English settlements on the shores of the Chesapeake Bay during the 1630s. The “Protestant Episcopal Church,” created in 1780 by Maryland-based Anglicans, is now a vibrant community of congregations and individuals in covenant with God and one another.”

Our Bishops:

Both **the Right Rev. Eugene Taylor Sutton, Bishop of Maryland** who is retiring in 2024, and the Right Rev. **Robert Ihloff, Assisting Bishop of Maryland** who has retired in 2023, have both made visits to Ascension.

On March 25, 2023, the Diocese elected the **Rev. Carrie Schofield-Broadbent** as **Bishop Coadjutor-Elect (XV Bishop of Maryland)**. She will be consecrated on September 16, 2023 at the Washington National Cathedral in the Fall. She will automatically become Bishop of Maryland upon the retirement of Bishop Sutton.



Bishop Eugene Sutton



Bishop Coadjutor-Elect Carrie Schofield-Broadbent

See the [Episcopal Diocese of Maryland](#) for more information about our Diocese and the people who make it so special.

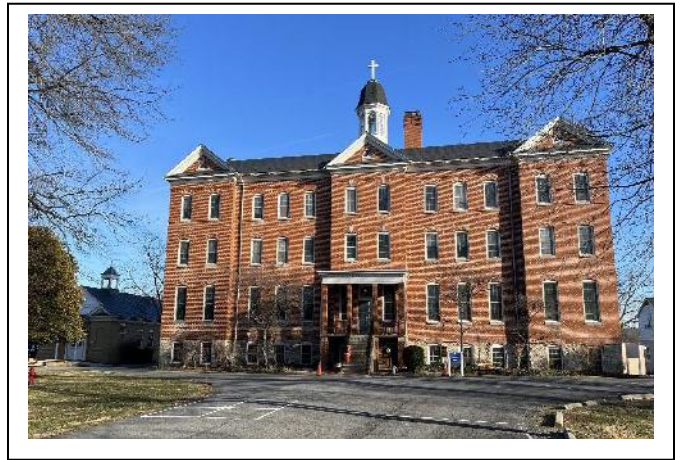
The Office of the Diocese of Maryland is in downtown Baltimore at 4 East University Parkway.

The Claggett Center:

The Diocese of Maryland also owns and operates the wonderful **Claggett Center** in Adamstown, Maryland (Frederick County). The Claggett Center began as a camp for youth in 1952. Situated on approximately 258 acres (the grounds of a former industrial school for boys and a working farm), the Center now provides conferences, retreats, camps as well as other programs and activities for youth and adults of all ages. Ascension members have enjoyed the Claggett Center over the years with retreats for women, men, and youth. In Fall of 2023, the renovation of a **historic (1898) barn** will be completed, creating more meeting spaces and an additional dining facility, primarily for the youth, yet retaining most of the original structure. Claggett is only an hour's drive from Ascension.



*Sugarloaf Mountain as seen from
The Claggett Center*



Chapel & Historic Powell Hall

See [The Claggett Center](#) for more information about the **Diocesan Conference, Retreat, and Camp Center** in Adamstown, Maryland.



*Silo Chapel, Monocacy meeting spaces,
Sugarloaf Dining Hall, Christiane Inn*



*Renovation of the historic 1898 Barn
for additional meeting spaces & dining*

OUR WORSHIP

Weekly Services:

At Ascension we are committed to providing worship services with both the Rite I and Rite II liturgies to accommodate those at both ends of the liturgical spectrum. Our “style” of worship would best be described as “middle of the road” – neither high Anglo-Catholic, nor low-church and less formal. Currently, the Eucharist service using Rite I is at 8:00 a.m. each Sunday in the beautiful historic Stone Church. This service is quiet and contemplative without music except on the 1st Sunday of the month when organ music is played.

We also have a Eucharist service using Rite II at 10:15 a.m. each Sunday in the Holy Cross Hall. This is a larger, more modern space affording the ability to seat more people and have a larger choir. In addition to an organ, there are instruments to accompany praise music. We refer to this as our family service with music provided by two non-vested choirs (Praise Ensemble and Adult Ensemble) on an alternating basis, and occasionally providing a collaborative music experience during worship. The Handbell Choir also participates once a month. [More information about the music offered at Ascension can be found here.](#)



Holy Cross Hall Easter Sunday



Sunday Service at 10:15 in the Holy Cross Hall

The 10:15 service is also the time when children in grades K through 5 participate in a children’s sermon in the adjacent **Children’s Chapel**. It is scaled to size for our youngest members while providing an age-appropriate worship experience. The children are escorted to the Children’s Chapel during the Gospel sequence hymn and return during the Peace.



The Children's Chapel



Sunday School Room

To provide access to both services (8:00 am & 10:15 am) to those who are unable to attend in person, the services can be viewed live via **You Tube and Facebook**. While getting the technology right in both the Stone Church and Holy Cross Hall has presented some challenges, it is a method of participation that neither existed nor was even contemplated pre-covid. To further our connection with those parishioners who cannot attend in person, we have a committed team of trained Lay Eucharistic Visitors.

Special Services:

We celebrate special services throughout the year including **Thanksgiving Eve, Advent, Lessons and Carols, Christmas Eve, Epiphany, Lenten Observances (Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday), Easter, Ascension Day, Confirmation**. These services are held in the Stone Church and/or Holy Cross Hall depending on the specific service and time. The annual **Blessing of the Animals** is held outside, weather permitting.

We have also enjoyed **Evensong, New Year's Eve, and Candlemas** services when offered.

Worship Participants:

At Ascension, we believe that the members make up the Church and that they gratefully serve in many ways. Our lay leadership is strong and diverse. Youth and adults serve as acolytes (and torch bearers), read the lessons & the prayers of the people, and serve in the music ensembles. Other adults serve as chalicists, ushers, Sunday School leaders, and nursery attendants. We also have someone manage the worship slides (in the Holy Cross Hall) and digital services (via You Tube and Facebook) which are now a regular part of our post-covid worship services. We are a community of people who are not afraid to step up and fill in when and where necessary. There is an open invitation to anyone who wishes to participate, and training is offered whenever needed.



Outside entrance to the Holy Cross Hall



Praise Ensemble & Choir in the Holy Cross Hall

Handbell Choir



OUR MINISTRIES

Ascension has a long history of providing support to our parishioners and our surrounding community. Our efforts are driven by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and knowing that being good Christians means being good neighbors. Covid challenged us to find ways to maintain our ministries both inside and outside of the church.

Mistletoe Mart:

If we were to identify one ministry that stands out as unique to Church of Ascension, it would be the annual [Mistletoe Mart](#). Planning for this event begins in March when the craft people/vendors are selected via a jury system and comes to fruition the second week of November when, for three days (Thursday through Saturday), the entire brick building complex is transformed into a Christmas shopping wonderland of handcrafted items including jewelry, art, décor and countless other treasures as well as a café offering food and a bake shop. This year will mark the 49th annual Mistletoe Mart at Ascension. In keeping with our commitment to our Christian outreach, we commit 25% of our retained earnings from the prior year's show to those organizations helping others in Carroll County. The Mart is attended by people from all over – many who come year after year.



Mistletoe Mart Vendors

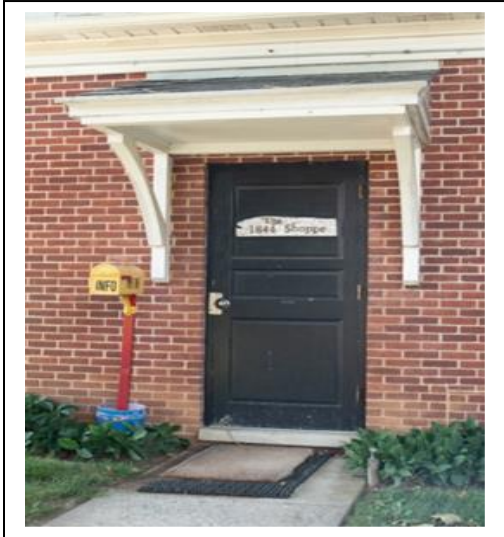


Café

What is truly special about the Mart is the number of parishioners and friends who come together before, during and after to make it the consistent success that it is. It begins in March when the committee vets applications from artisans and crafts folk wishing to participate, to make sure there is both a variety of offerings as well as something new each year for repeat visitors who come to shop.

Absolutely every room and office in the brick building complex (including the Holy Cross Hall and its altar) is emptied, walls stripped of all hangings etc., and dedicated to artisan space. Volunteers welcome visitors at two entrances, sell tickets, work in the kitchen making and serving food, clean up, and when it is all over, restore every room to its pre-Mistletoe Mart state. To describe the effort as herculean is not an exaggeration!

Our own [1844 Shoppe](#) (named after the parish's founding year) is also open during the Mart, as well as Friday and Saturday each week. The 1844 Shoppe is Ascension's vintage thrift shop that offers ever-changing merchandise from collectibles, jewelry, furniture, decorative items and so much more, donated by parishioners and others. The 1844 Shoppe is managed by a dedicated group of church volunteers which is in fact running a small business together that contributed approximately \$15,000 to Ascension in 2021.



Exterior entrance to 1844 Shoppe



Interior of 1844 Shoppe

Outreach:

We are proud of our outreach ministries that provide support to, and partner with our community organizations. Locally, these include **Shepherd's Staff**, **New Life for Girls**, and **Carroll County Food Sunday**, and beyond Carroll County through **DreamBuilders**. The commitment of our parishioners to respond to the needs of each of these organizations makes Ascension an important member of the larger community. Outreach is less effective if not coordinated and organized. Noteworthy is the dedicated work of Ascension volunteers who communicate, plan, organize, deliver, and serve where needed to help our outreach ministries have the most impact. [More information on each of these important ministries can be found here.](#)

Below is a brief description of some of our ministries.

Healing Ministry:

Our **Healing Ministry** includes prayer lists, laying on of hands (led by a dedicated team of parishioners), home visits and occasionally, healing seminars.

St. James Ministry:

St. James Guild was formed in 1989 to provide care and support to a parish family at the time of their loss of a loved one by providing a reception following the funeral or memorial service at Ascension.

Pins and Needles:

Pins and Needles, which also includes what was formerly Heart and Hand Ministry meets every Wednesday to knit, sew, craft, quilt and more. The items are sold, and the money raised supports various other church ministries.

St. Martha's Guild:

St. Martha's Guild hosts receptions for special occasions and visitors and sponsors the annual **Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper**.



Pins and Needles



Outreach Committee Gift Organization



Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper sponsored by St. Martha's Guild



DreamBuilders:

Founded in 2002, **DreamBuilders** is an inter-faith organization consisting of four Episcopal churches and one Jewish congregation. It organizes week-long mission trips for teens and adults to either repair homes that have been damaged by natural disasters or has participated in so-called "blitz builds." The

latter starts with a concrete slab or foundation, and by the end of the week, the house is fully framed, and the roof and siding are finished! Projects have been in 10 states and in Puerto Rico.



OUR COMMUNITY

[Westminster](#) is located in Carroll County about 45 minutes from downtown Baltimore, 1 ½ hours from Washington, D.C., and one hour from Gettysburg, PA. Carroll County is considered by many to be a rural area with a population of approximately 173,000 people. If plenty of open space, farms, Main Streets, and small neighborhoods are your definition of rural, then yes, Carroll County is in fact rural. However, its public school system consists of eight high schools, eight middle schools, and 22 elementary schools, as well as several secular and non-secular private schools. Recreational sports leagues of all kinds are available for participation by kids of all ages.

The [Carroll Arts Center](#), located on Main Street, offers a wide range of art exhibits, music, movies, and children’s programs. **Farmers’ Markets** on Saturday in the spring and summer are found downtown just off of Main Street and at the [Agricultural Center](#) where the **County Fair** is held, among many other events. The [Farm Museum](#) is a wonderful way to learn about Carroll County’s agricultural past. The main farmhouse displays period furniture and artifacts, and the collection of historic farm buildings exhibits old machinery and other implements. Westminster sponsors numerous festivals and parades. And if hiking, fishing, biking, dog walking, and other outdoor activities are your wheelhouse, there is **Piney Run Park and Nature Center**, **Hashawa Environmental Center** and **Bear Branch Nature Center**, **Morgan Run Environmental Area**, and more. For more information see the following: [Carroll County Dept of Parks & Recreation](#) and [Maryland State Department of Tourism](#).

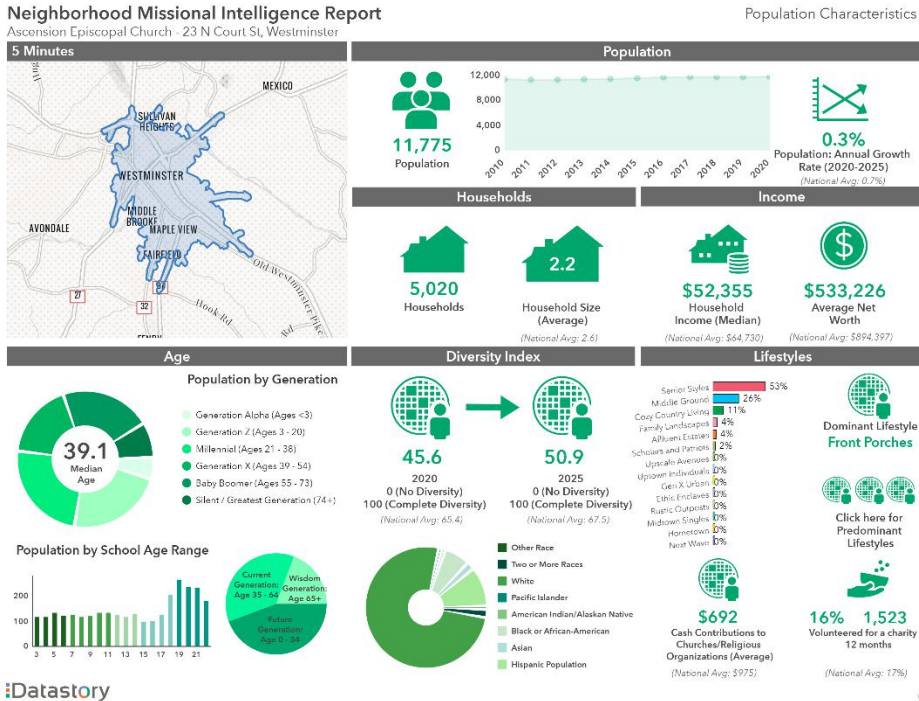
See [Carroll County Office of Tourism for more information](#)

Demographics:

According to the latest census data (2020), nearly 91% of Carroll County’s population identified as white alone, the median value of owner-occupied housing was \$343,400, 93% of residents are high school graduates, and 37% had bachelor’s degrees or higher. For complete 2020 Census Data

see [Census Data for Carroll County, Maryland](#)

Below is a snapshot of from the Map Dash™ application reflecting information with respect to the neighborhoods and population within five miles of Ascension Church.



County History:

Carroll County was named for Charles Carroll of Carrollton, a Revolutionary War Statesman, and a Maryland signer of the Declaration of Independence. The City of Westminster was incorporated in 1818, and in 1867 Western Maryland College (now known as **McDaniel College**) became the first coeducational institution south of the Mason-Dixon Line, and among the first in the nation. The **County Historic Society** offers a robust calendar of events for all ages. (See [Historic Society of Carroll County](#)). And if an area rich in history and historical significance is of interest, our proximity to the [Gettysburg National Military Park Museum and Visitor Center](#) cannot be overlooked.

Shopping:

Carroll County offers plenty of shopping opportunities at nationally recognized stores and shops, although it does not lay claim to any traditional shopping malls. The movie theater in Westminster is state-of-the-art, and in addition to our own shopping options, wonderful outlet shopping is accessible

just over the State line in Gettysburg, PA., and with a slightly further drive, in Lancaster, Pa. Traditional malls, both indoor and outdoor are found in nearby neighboring counties.

Hospitals:

Westminster is also home to [Carroll County Hospital](#) which is now part of the LifeBridge Health System, provides a wide range of inpatient and outpatient health care services. The internationally acclaimed **Johns Hopkins Hospital** is in downtown Baltimore as is the nationally recognized **University of Maryland Shock Trauma Center and Hospital**. Additionally, there are several other large hospitals located in the surrounding areas (e.g., Greater Baltimore Medical Center (GBMC), Sinai Hospital, St. Joseph’s Medical Center, and Mercy Hospital).

Primary & Secondary Education:

The schools that are in the district in which Ascension Church is located, are:

[Cranberry Station Elementary](#)

[East Middle School](#)

[Winters Mill High School](#)

Higher Education:

Carroll County is home to the private liberal arts college [McDaniel College](#) (formerly Western Maryland College), located among rolling hills and open spaces in Westminster. [Carroll County Community College](#) offers a wide variety of classes for either Associate of Arts seekers, those wanting to delay the cost of obtaining a four-year degree, or for anyone who is just interested in a subject but not college credit. In close proximity to Carroll County, in neighboring Baltimore County and Baltimore City, are institutions of higher education both public and private that offer a variety of undergraduate and graduate degree programs, including **Stevenson University**, **Goucher College**, **Towson University**, **University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC)**, **University of Maryland Baltimore (UMB)** and **University of Baltimore (UB)** (Towson, UMBC, UMB, and UB are each constituent institutions of the University System of Maryland), **Johns Hopkins University**, **Loyola College**, **Morgan State University**, and **Coppin State University**, to name a few.

Community Services:

A number of charities provide services, support, and opportunities including, but certainly not limited to, Carroll County Food Sunday, Inc., Shepherd’s Staff, Habitat for Humanity, the Carroll Arts Council, the Carroll County Literary Council, the Community Foundation of Carroll County, and many others.

Houses of Worship:

There are three Episcopal Churches in Carroll County, including Ascension. They are not in close proximity to one another. There are a variety of other faith-based houses of worship – Catholic, Methodist, Lutheran, non-denominational, and others. Through a tutorial offered by a member of the Maryland Diocese on Map Dash™, we do know that many in the community identify as conservative or very conservative. Politically, the State of Maryland is deemed a blue state, however Carroll County consistently proves itself the outlier by consistently voting for Republican candidates.