



Ascension Extension

NOVEMBER 2026

www.ascension-westminster.com

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Church of the Ascension
23 N. Court St.
Westminster, MD

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Church of the *Ascension* 
Connect. Grow. Serve.

Senior Warden's Message

The Vestry will initiate the next steps in the Discernment Process for our new priest shortly.

Key Steps in our Pastoral Transition include:

- Farewell to Fr. Pierre-Henry & Sophie – complete
- Search for our Interim Clergy – complete
- Develop Transition Prayer Team – complete

The Discernment Process for our New Priest will include:

- Create Search Committee
- Self-Study & Data Gathering
- Create Vocation Hub Profile
- Discern with Candidates
- Calling of Ascension's New Priest

As we begin to approach next steps, there will be many opportunities for Ascension parishioners to share their gifts and serve in meaningful ways!

Due to prior commitments, Fr. Chip will not be available for three Sundays in November. As a result, the coverage will be:

- **Sunday, November 1** (All Saints' Day) – Fr. Bill Pugliese
- **Sunday, November 8** (Sunday before Mistletoe Mart) – Deacon Barbara Sears
- **Sunday, November 15** (Sunday after Mistletoe Mart) – Deacon Barbara Sears. Both worship services will be held in the Stone Church.

Church Office Hours

Monday, Wednesday, Friday
9:00 am -3:00 pm

office@ascension-westminster.com

**The Church Office will be closed
November 26 and 27.**

*Ascension is called to be a family of
faith so reflecting the life of Christ,
that we draw all people to him.*



November Worship

November 1

All Saints' Day

8:00 am H.E. Rite I, Stone Church
 9:00 am Adult Bible Study
 9:00 am Sunday School: Gr. 6-12
 10:15 am H.E. Rite II, Holy Cross Hall
 10:15 am Chapel for all ages
 11:30 am Fellowship Hour

November 8

Twenty Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

8:00 am H.E. Rite I, Stone Church
 9:00 am Adult Bible Study
 9:00 am Sunday School: Gr. 6-12
 10:15 am H.E. Rite II, Holy Cross Hall
 10:15 am Sunday School: Gr. K-5
 11:30 am Fellowship Hour

November 15

Twenty Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

8:00 am H.E. Rite I, Stone Church
10:15 am H.E. Rite II, Stone Church

November 22

Last Sunday after Pentecost: Christ the King

8:00 am H.E. Rite I, Stone Church
 9:00 am Adult Bible Study
 9:00 am Sunday School: Gr. 6-12
 10:15 am H.E. Rite II, Holy Cross Hall
 10:15 am Sunday School: Gr. K-5
 11:30 am Fellowship Hour

November 25

Thanksgiving Eve

7:00 pm H.E. Rite II, Stone Church

November 29

First Sunday of Advent

8:00 am H.E. Rite I, Stone Church
 9:00 am Adult Bible Study
 9:00 am Sunday School: Gr. 6-12
 10:15 am H.E. Rite II, Holy Cross Hall
 11:30 am Fellowship Hour

We are excited to welcome the Right Rev. Carrie Schofield-Broadbent, Bishop of Maryland, to Ascension on Sunday, December 6!

- **There will be 1 worship service, with Confirmation and Reception, at 10:15 am in the Holy Cross Hall.**
- A reception will follow with the bishop leading a congregational Q&A session.

We invite everyone to attend this joyful service.



The 2027 Annual Parish Meeting will be held Sunday, January 17, 2027. (Inclement Weather date: January 24, 2027)



May God, who loves us through all states of stability and change, guide our hearts and calm our minds as we navigate this transition.

In Christ's love,
Kim Tompkins
 Senior Warden

Worship Assistants: November 2026

Altar Guild: Team 2 - Janice Hobart, Jill Horn, Emelia Howe, Deb Vana

	Usher(s)	Lector	Acolyte	Chalicians	Worship Slides
November 1 8:00 am	Cheryl Vecera	Angela Chmar	Jennie Grabill		
November 1 10:15 am	1. David Anderson 2. Ellen Anderson		Kat Dittrich	1. John Holbert 2. Sandy White 3. Helen Lang 4. Betsy Reinders	Jill Horn
November 8 8:00 am	Bill Sears	Roberta Wilhelm			
November 8 10:15 am	1. 2.	Betsy Reinders	Raymond Lui	1. Helen Lang 2. Sandy White 3. Susan Considine 4. Betsy Reinders	John Holbert
November 15 8:00 am	Roberta Wilhelm	Mary Lou Berg			
November 15 10:15 am Stone Church		John Holbert	Ellen Anderson		
November 22 8:00 am	Cheryl Vecera	Jim Fariss			
November 22 10:15 am	1. 2.	Buck Lyon-Vaiden		1. John Holbert 2. Helen Lang 3. 4.	
November 25 7:00 pm Thanksgiving Eve Stone Church	Roberta Wilhelm	John Holbert	Ellen Anderson		
November 29 8:00 am		Mary Lou Berg			
November 29 10:15 am			Kat Dittrich	1. John Holbert 2. 3. 4.	
December 6 10:15 am Bishop Visit One service Holy Cross Hall	1. 2.		Kat Dittrich	1. Helen Lang 2. Kim Tompkins 3. 4.	

Vestry Meeting Highlights: October 27, 2026

Present: Rev. Dr. Chip Lee (via Zoom), Kim Tompkins (Sr. Warden), Bryan Lance (Jr. Warden), Susan Considine (Treasurer), David Anderson, Mark Howe, Melissa Leahy, Deborah Rio, Dave Gosnell, Jill Horn (Registrar).
Absent: Kevin McIntyre

The Right Rev. Carrie-Schofield-Broadbent, Bishop of Maryland, will attend Ascension on Sunday, December 6. **There will be one worship service, at 10:15 am, in the Holy Cross Hall, which will include Confirmation and Reception.**

We are in the process of finalizing additional details regarding her visit and will communicate as soon as they are available.



The 2027 Annual Parish Meeting will be held Sunday, January 17, 2027 (inclement weather date: January 24, 2027).

The Vestry is discussing next steps in the discernment process for our new priest.

A project is being implemented to improve wireless coverage, reliability and overall network performance throughout the facilities.

The Annual Stewardship Campaign is underway! This is a critical topic for the 2027 budget process. As we understand the total pledges received by the end of November for the 2027 General Fund/Operating Budget, we will be able to better understand what expenses Ascension can and cannot support for next year. This includes determining what monies will be available to hire new clergy.

Susan Considine reviewed the Financial Reports for September, 2026 (see the Financial Snapshot on p.5). The Vestry is beginning to work on the 2027 budget, with the goal to complete and approve by late December.



The Vestry		
Vestry/Officers	Term Ends	Ministry Liaison
Rev. Dr. Chip Lee		Interim Rector
Kim Tompkins, Sr. Warden	2027	
Bryan Lance, Jr. Warden	2029	Buildings and Grounds
Susan Considine, Treasurer	2029	
Nancy Starner, Assistant Treasurer		
Jill Horn, Registrar		
Kevin McIntyre	2027	Christian Education (Adults)
David Anderson	2027	Worship Assistants
Deborah Rio	2028	Fellowship
Mark Howe	2028	Stewardship
Melissa Leahy	2028	Outreach, Pastoral Care
Dave Gosnell	2029	Christian Education (Children & Youth)

A Financial Snapshot — September, 2026

Below is a brief look at how the parish is doing financially — first for the month of September, then for the year so far — alongside what we had budgeted, so we can see how we stand against our plan.

September, 2026 Operating Budget (General Fund)

	Budgeted	Actual	Compared with budget
Income	\$29,765	\$25,101	Received \$4,664 less than budgeted
Income – Diocese Grant	0	0	
Expenses	\$35,062	\$36,974	Spent \$1,912 more than budgeted
Income vs. Expenses	(\$5,297)	(\$11,873)	

Year to Date, January–September, 2026 Operating Budget (General Fund)

	Budgeted	Actual	Compared with budget
Income	\$267,885	\$300,245	Received \$32,360 more than budgeted
Income – Diocese Grant	0	\$40,000	\$40,000 (was not budgeted)
Expenses	\$315,558	\$305,090	Spent \$10,468 less than budgeted
Income vs. Expenses	(\$47,673)	\$35,155	

Note: Amounts in parentheses are deficits — periods in which we spent more than we received.

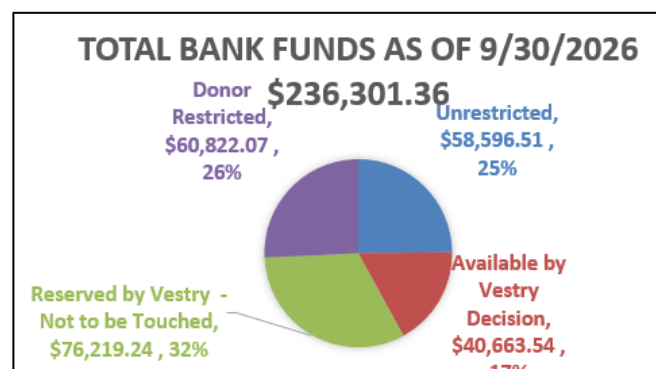
For the approved 2026 Operating Budget (General Fund), the total Expenses are \$420,745, the total Income is \$357,182, resulting in a projected \$63,563 total deficit for the year.

- In March, we applied for a one-time grant from the diocese to help address this large budget deficit. We were awarded \$40,000 and received those funds in August.
- Our 2026 YTD actual expenses were running below budget through July in part because we held paying the monthly diocesan assessment, pending the grant decision. Now that the \$40,000 grant has been received, we have paid the diocesan assessment through August (\$25,027).
- The higher YTD actual income reflects the timing of gifts. Several ministries redirected some of their restricted funds to the General Fund early in the year. In addition, a number of pledges have already been paid in full, some earlier in the year and some during August.

What's in the Bank?

(Checking Account & Money Market Account)

Of the \$236,301 total in our two bank accounts, only **\$58,596 is fully unrestricted (25%)** and available to pay our monthly operating expenses. Our Operating Budgeted expenses average \$35,062 per month.



Annual Stewardship Campaign: Journeying Together in Mission

Our 2026 Annual Stewardship Campaign will conclude on Sunday, November 8, when we will gather and bless our pledge cards during worship.

Stewardship means recognizing that everything we have is a gift from God, including our time, our talents, and our resources. It is our joyful response to these gifts, using them to honor God. While you will soon receive a letter about our 2026 Annual Stewardship Campaign, please remember this is an opportunity to reflect on how we are participating in the mission of Ascension. It is important that we pause to give thanks. So much of the ministry at Ascension is possible because of your generosity—not only financial giving, but also the countless hours given to worship, prayer, pastoral care,

Outreach, music ministry, fellowship, children and youth, Buildings and Grounds, Bible studies, fundraising, altar guild, and quiet behind the scenes support. Each act of service, each pledge, each offering of time and talent is a visible sign of faith and love.

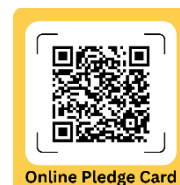
This year's campaign is especially critical for the 2027 budget process. As we understand the pledges received for the 2027 General Fund / Operating Budget, we will be able to better understand what monies will be available to hire new clergy.

Our goal this year is 100% participation. We hope that every member of our parish family will return a pledge card. No gift is too small. What matters is your participation. Every pledge is a statement of faith, belonging, and gratitude.



2027 Pledge Card

Due by November 8.



Online Pledge Card



Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” — Matthew 6:21

My/Our Financial Commitment: In gratitude for God's blessings and in support of the worship, service, care, welcome, and mission of the Church of the Ascension, I/we prayerfully make the following commitment:

2027 Financial Pledge: \$ _____

☐ Weekly

☐ Quarterly

☐ Monthly

☐ Annually

I/We plan to give by:

☐ Offering envelope

☐ Online/Recurring Giving

☐ Other: _____

Signature (optional): _____ **Date:** _____

Thank you for your faithful stewardship.

Together, through our time, talents, and treasure, we continue the mission God has entrusted to us.

Church Office Notes

Early Publication of Bulletins and Enews in November

During two weeks in November, the Sunday bulletins and Enews will be published on Wednesday:

- Wednesday, **November 11**
(Mistletoe Mart week- November 15 bulletin/announcements)
Thank you for submitting announcements to be included by **Tuesday, November 10.**
- Wednesday, **November 25** (Thanksgiving week – November 29 bulletins/announcements)
Thank you for submitting announcements to be included by **Tuesday, November 24.**



Church Staff	
Rev. Dr. Chip Lee	Interim Rector
Ann Fariss	Parish Administrator
Lynn Lyon-Vaiden	Communications Associate/Handbell Choir Director
Mary Butler	Organist/Choir Director
Travis Collins	Digital Ministry Associate
Suzanne Walter	Nursery Attendant

Mistletoe Mart

**There are 1 ½ weeks remaining until Ascension's 52nd Mistletoe Mart.
Thursday, November 12 - Saturday, November 14**

mistletoemart.com

The Mistletoe Mart has become one of the premier arts and crafts shows in the tristate area. The talent of each of the 40 artisans participating this year is truly amazing! Over 2,300 patrons attended the 2025 Mart. Each year the Mart donates 20-30% of their proceeds to Community Outreach, with the balance providing support to Ascension. Proceeds from Mistletoe Mart 2025 provided \$7,500 to Community Outreach (15 different organizations) and \$27,500 to Ascension.

After careful consideration, the decision was made to increase the admission price from \$5.00 to \$7.00. Children under age 12 remain free. This should result in an additional \$4,000 - \$4,500 admission income. As a reminder, the admission ticket is good for all three days of the Mart.

[YOUR HELP IS NEEDED!](#)



Volunteer signup boards will remain posted outside of the Fellowship Hall until Saturday, November 7.

[Click here to sign up online!!](#)

► **Decorating** (Please contact Donna Bair for details.) The "Fluffing of the Greens" is complete! Wreaths, greenery and decorations are now ready to hang as we transform our space into a beautiful Christmas setting throughout the Holy Cross Hall, Fellowship Hall and hallways. Help is always needed to then undecorate after the Mart.

► **Publicity** (Please contact Susan Considine & Lynn Lyon-Vaiden for details.)



Mistletoe Mart Postcards: Please continue to take postcards to places that you visit, including dry cleaners, hair and nail salons, restaurants, Starbucks, Dunkin Donuts, Panera Bread, schools, doctor's offices, daycare facilities, and senior centers. Postcards are available at the back of both sanctuaries.

Yard Signs: All of the yard signs have been claimed. Thank you for returning them after the Mistletoe Mart!



Advertising: Social media posts are now on Facebook and Instagram. **Please Like and Share!**

Banner: A large Mistletoe Mart banner is hung on the fence by the Westminster airport.

Billboard: The digital billboard at Rte. 140 and Green Mill Road, heading towards Westminster, is also advertising the Mart!

► **Shop Assistants**

(Please contact Ellen Anderson for details.)

Visit vendors throughout each day, taking and delivering their café food and drink orders. Vendors compliment the Mart on this service that is provided to them— and with a smile!

Continued on next page.

Mistletoe Mart (continued)

► **Tear Down / Set Up**

(Please contact David Horn for details.)

Take down the Holy Cross Hall altar and pew chairs as well as furniture from the Fellowship Hall, classrooms and offices before the Mart and then set up after the Mart. Also move packed Mistletoe Mart boxes and items used during the Mart out of storage and return them afterwards. This is physical work and while we have movers from Glamour Moving to help on specific days, Ascension volunteers are needed to make the take down and set up tasks effective and manageable.

► **Kitchen** *(Please contact Melissa Leahy for details.)*

Food prep takes place Monday (11/9) – Wednesday (11/11) before the Mart. Help is then needed throughout each day on Thursday, Friday and Saturday to prepare food, serve food and clean up. There is a wonderful fellowship while working in the kitchen, and the more volunteers that sign up result in more manageable shifts, especially during lunch and dinner.

► **Admission Table** *(Please contact Susan Considine for details.)* Sit at one of our two Admission Tables (by the back parking lot and by the church office). Welcome patrons and sell admission tickets.

► **Country Store** (Baked Goods Table-Please contact Merri Hollinger for details.) Calling all bakers - the bake table needs your talents! This is the time to get out those great recipes for cookies, cakes, bread, pies, muffins, cupcakes, candy, fudge, muffins and more. Please remember, **the bake table needs to be stocked for ALL THREE DAYS.**

► **Church Store** (Ascension Greeting and Information Corner outside the Holy Cross Hall) Sell specific Ascension items. This is a perfect spot to greet and visit with our patrons!

► **Café Host/Hostess**

(Please contact Beverly Baker for details.)

Clear and clean the café tables.

► **Golden Bough Tea Area** *(Please contact Jeanne Cox for details.)* Mistletoe Mart Tea Setup in the Fellowship Hall
Ensure there is Mistletoe Mart Tea and supplies available.

► **Santa's Workshop** *(Please contact Lynn Kirby.)* Children will be able to visit with Santa & Mrs. Claus! Crafts will also be available.

► **Sound System** *(Please contact Travis Collins for details.)*

Assist with playing Christmas music through the sound system and display presentations on the monitors. Make announcements during the Mart.

► **When you volunteer during the Mart, please wear your Ascension magnetic nametag!** If you need to order one, please contact our Parish Administrator, Ann Fariss, in the Church Office.

This is such an exciting time of the year! We all have special memories we have shared with each other as well as our family, friends, vendors and the community! However, **everyone's help is truly needed** to manage the wide range of jobs. Thank you for all of your time and support to make the Mart a success!

Mistletoe Mart Chair
Kim Tompkins

RAFFLE TICKETS ARE AVAILABLE FOR THE BEAUTIFUL
STARS AND STRIPES QUILT (48" x 72")
\$1 EACH OR 6 FOR \$5



WINNING TICKET WILL BE DRAWN ON NOVEMBER 14!

Mistletoe Mart Parking

Unfortunately, parking has always been a challenge at the Mistletoe Mart. **Whenever possible, we would like to reserve the Ralph Street parking lot behind the church for Mistletoe Mart customers.**

We are pleased to share that we have secured additional parking spaces for our artisans and Mart volunteers.

If you require handicap-accessible parking, please let Debbie Bargar know in advance so we can make the appropriate arrangements.

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation. We look forward to seeing you at the Mistletoe Mart!

A Mistletoe Mart postcard must be displayed on your dashboard.

- Street Parking – both sides of **N. Court St.** - NOTE: 'No Parking' signs are on Court Street, but mart volunteers may park there if a Mistletoe Mart postcard is displayed on dashboard.
- **Westminster First Church of God** – 27 N. Center St. (right side/back of lot)
- **Parking lot at Court Place and Court Lane**
- **Circuit Courthouse Annex** – parking lot adjacent to the Westminster Cemetery at corner of Ralph St and Greenwood Ave.
- **221 E. Main St. – parking lot off Winter's St.** – across from Ralph St. parking lot – available parking spaces will be marked for Mart (left side of lot)

DO NOT Park at York Heating.

Mistletoe Mart is almost here, and the festive excitement is building.

The signs are everywhere... the countdown has begun!





Calling all Christmas music lovers! We are putting together a playlist for the Mistletoe Mart, and **your requests are needed!**

Last year, one person chose all the songs our shoppers heard as they browsed the Mart. What's the fun in that? Just as the Mart is a team effort, the "official" Mistletoe Mart playlist deserves to represent our entire Ascension family!

So, if you want your favorite carols to be played during the Mart, [CLICK HERE](#) to share your requests (preferably both title and artist).

Questions? Please contact Chris Nusbaum

After Mistletoe Mart: SCRUB AND BUFF!

On **Saturday, November 14 at 9:00 pm**, after Mistletoe Mart has ended, J. D. Dixon Company will scrub and buff our floors. They will finish up by 9:00 am Sunday. At 12:00 pm on Sunday, November 15, our furniture will be returned and set up.

Take Note: The 10:15 am service on November 15 will be in the Stone Church.

Church of the *Ascension*
Connect. Grow. Serve.

On **Sunday, November 15**,
worship services
will be held
in the Stone Church
at 8:00 am
and
10:15 am.

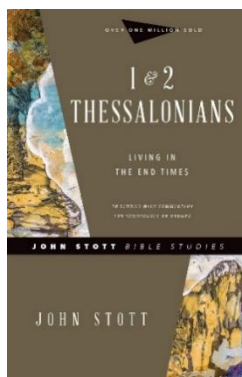
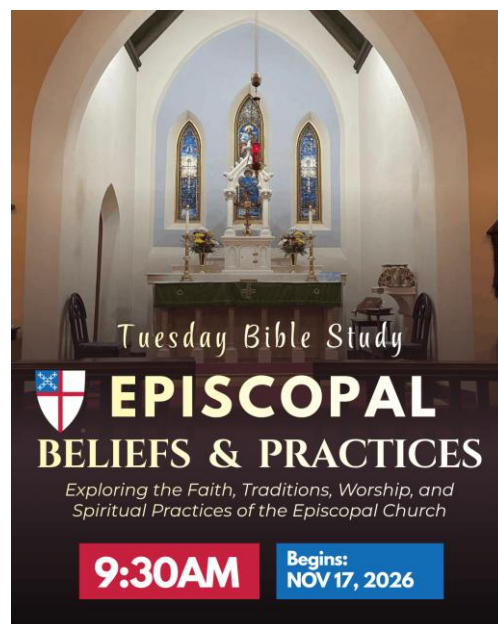
A photograph of the entrance to the Stone Church. It features a large, arched red door set within a stone wall. To the right of the door is a small black sign with a white cross and the words 'Enter Rest Here'. A black metal railing is visible on the left side of the entrance.

Bible Study



On November 5, at 6:30 pm, Thursday Night Bible Study will begin a 10-week study:

1 & 2 Thessalonians: Living In the End Times by John Stott who was one of the world's leading and most-loved Bible teachers and preachers. In this study, you can explore Scripture under his guidance, enhancing your own in-depth study with insights gained from his years of immersion in God's Word. For more information, contact Lynn Lyon-Vaiden.



Tuesday Morning Bible Study

This study will begin on

November 17

at 9:30 am in Room #202.

For information, please contact Bill Sears.

Fellowship



Volunteers are needed to host. We want to keep it VERY simple by providing coffee, and using snacks that are available in the church pantry. Coffee making instructions are provided. All you need to do is make coffee, set out a few platters or baskets of snacks, monitor the coffee and make more if necessary and clean up. There is a signup sheet on the kitchen door. Training is available! Questions? Please contact Kat Dittrich.



Church of the *Ascension*

Children and Youth Ministries



November 2026

November 1: All Saints' Day

6th – 12th grade: Sunday School at 9:00 am
Children's Chapel for all ages at 10:15 am

November 8

6th – 12th grade: Sunday School at 9:00 am
K-5th grade: Sunday School at 10:15 am

November 15

No Sunday School class following the Mistletoe Mart

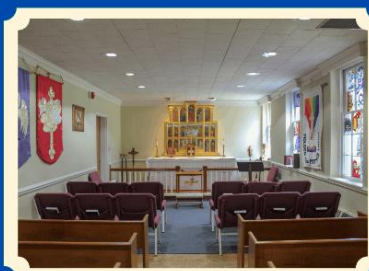
ascension-westminster.com/sundayschool

November 22

6th – 12th grade: Sunday School at 9:00 am
K-5th grade: Sunday School at 10:15 am

November 29: First Sunday of Advent

6th – 12th grade: Sunday School at 9:00 am



Children's Chapel

- November 1
- December 20

during the 10:15 service



Got Jewelry?

The 1844 Shoppe is collecting costume jewelry, as well as any broken gold chains or single gold earrings that you or your friends may have.

I'm taking some of my own items to Smyth's to sell and will donate the proceeds to the 1844 Shoppe. Every little bit helps! If you have anything you'd like to contribute, please consider participating. Your generosity and support are greatly appreciated!

Sandy White

Outreach Committee:

Financial Awareness Series: Protect Today, Plan for Tomorrow

The Outreach Committee is pleased to share the success of the first session in our Financial Awareness Series: Protect Today, Plan for Tomorrow, held on October 18.

We welcomed Martina Lane from PNC Bank, who presented an informative and timely program on "Financial Scams and How to Avoid Them." Thirty people attended this engaging session, which featured lively discussion, questions, and a valuable exchange of information and ideas. Participants had the opportunity to learn practical ways to recognize financial scams and protect themselves from fraud.

We are grateful to Martina Lane for sharing her knowledge and expertise, and to everyone who attended and contributed to making this session such a success!

We look forward to offering more opportunities to learn, share, and plan together. Thank you to everyone who helped make our first session a success. We hope you will join us for future programs as we continue to Protect Today, Plan for Tomorrow!



Future Topics:

- **How Financially Literate Are You?** Do you know the facts about important financial topics such as RMDs (Required Minimum Distributions), financial planning, planned giving, and more?
- **Planning for Your Memorial Service and Funeral** - Have you thought about what you would like your memorial service and funeral arrangements to look like? This discussion will offer an opportunity to consider these decisions in advance and share your wishes with your loved ones.
- **Including the Church of the Ascension in Your Estate Planning** - A representative from the Diocese of Maryland will discuss ways you can include the Church of the Ascension in your estate planning and explore the different options available for making a lasting gift to the church.

PROTECT TODAY, PLAN FOR TOMORROW: A FINANCIAL AWARENESS SERIES

A Quarterly Series Sponsored by the Outreach Committee

Church of the *Ascension*
Connect. Grow. Serve.

Future Sessions:

- Financial Literacy
- Memorial Service & Funeral planning
- Estate Planning

ascension-westminster.com/events

A promotional poster for a Thanksgiving Worship Service. The poster has an orange background with a white central text box. To the right of the text box is a photograph of a church altar decorated with autumn-themed items like pumpkins and flowers. The text in the white box provides the date, time, title, location, and a website link.

NOVEMBER 25 7:00PM

*Thanksgiving
Worship Service*

Church of the Ascension
23 North Court Street
Westminster, MD 21157

*In the historic
Stone Church*

ascension-westminster.com/events

Church of the Ascension

23 North Court Street
Westminster, MD 21157