



# Ascension Extension

FEBRUARY 2026

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

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### **Rev. Pierre-Henry Buisson**

Day Off: Monday  
[rector@ascension-westminster.com](mailto:rector@ascension-westminster.com)

### **Church Office Hours**

Monday, Wednesday, Friday  
9:00 am -3:00 pm  
[office@ascension-westminster.com](mailto:office@ascension-westminster.com)

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

## Rector's Message

Dear Friends in Christ:

When we greet one another, we often ask, "How are you?" It's usually a habit, and we expect the answer to be "Fine." People are sometimes surprised when we say we are not fine—and even more surprised when we pause long enough to really listen.

So let me ask it again, slowly: **How are you doing?**

So much is happening right now—in our own lives, in our parish, in our community, and in the wider world. Many of us are grieving the death of Jenny Beeker. Many are carrying concern for loved ones facing illness, financial strain, loneliness, or uncertainty. Some of us feel tired, overwhelmed, or anxious without quite knowing why.

We live in a time when harsh words, fear, and division often seem louder than compassion or understanding. The constant stream of news can leave us feeling unsettled, discouraged, or even unsafe. It is not easy to remain grounded when the world feels fragile.

As Christians, we do not pretend that fear or pain are not real. But we follow Jesus, who meets us in our fear and calls us into love—love of neighbor, love of stranger, love that does not deny reality but refuses to let fear have the final word.

*(Continued on p. 2)*

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

## February Worship

### February 1

#### **Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany**

#### **Youth Sunday**

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

9:00 am Sunday School (Gr. 6-12), Adult

Bible Study

10:15 am H.E. Rite II, Holy Cross Hall

11:30 am Fellowship Hour

### February 8

#### **Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany**

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

9:00 am Sunday School (Gr. 6-12), Adult

Bible Study

10:15 am H.E. Rite II, Holy Cross Hall

Sunday School(Gr. K-5)

11:30 am Fellowship Hour

### February 14

#### **Memorial Service for Jenny Beeker**

11:00 am Holy Cross Hall

### February 15

#### **Last Sunday after the Epiphany**

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

9:00 am Sunday School (Gr. 6-12), Adult

Bible Study

10:15 am H.E. Rite II, Holy Cross Hall

11:30 am Fellowship Hour

### February 18

#### **Ash Wednesday**

12:00 pm H.E. Rite II, Stone Church

7:00 pm Worship Service at Westminster

United Methodist Church

### February 22

#### **First Sunday in Lent**

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

9:00 am Sunday School (Gr. 6-12), Adult

Bible Study

10:15 am H.E. Rite II, Holy Cross Hall

Sunday School(Gr. K-5)

11:30 am Fellowship Hour

### *Rector's Message continued...*

I want to say this honestly: there are moments when I, too, feel afraid. And that is why the life we share in Christ—in prayer, worship, service, and community—matters so deeply. Here, we are not alone. Here, we listen to one another. Here, we practice love, even when the world around us feels unsteady.

That is why it matters so much to gather together Sunday after Sunday, to worship the Lord as a community. Jesus promises us that when two or three are gathered in his name, he is there among us. Knowing that the Lord is present when we come together is a deep comfort to me.

We come as we are—with our pains and sufferings, our doubts and our hopes. We bring our lives, and the lives of those we love, before the Lord of all. In his presence, we are reminded that we are known, forgiven, and loved.

Christ is present among us in many ways: in the community gathered in his name, in the Word proclaimed through the readings and the sermon, and in the sacramental bread and wine—his Body and Blood given for us. And when we leave worship, we are sent back into the world renewed, pardoned, strengthened, and sustained by God's grace, to live with hope, courage, and love.

Sometimes I hear people say, "I'm glad I'm an Episcopalian, because I don't have to go to church every Sunday." And in one sense, that is true: we are not bound by obligation or fear. No one is forced.

But the deeper truth is this: **we are invited.**

We gather not because we have to, but because we want to—out of love for the Lord who calls us, Sunday after Sunday, to come together as his people. Worship is not a requirement to be checked off, but a relationship to be nurtured.

The very word church helps us understand this. The Latin *ecclesia* comes from the Greek *ekklēsia*, reflecting a biblical understanding of God's people as those who are called together. Church is not first a building or an institution; it is a people who have been called—by God—to gather, to listen, to pray, and to be sent.

Each Sunday, Christ calls us again. Not with coercion, but with love. And when we respond to that call, we discover once more who we are—and whose we are.

In three weeks, we will enter the season of Lent with the celebration of Ash Wednesday on February 18. Lent is a time to deepen our relationship with the Lord and with one another. *(Continued on p. 3)*

*Rector's Message continued...*

Together, we will follow Christ from the desert to his passion, death, and resurrection on Easter morning, April 5. I hope this Lent will offer each of us an opportunity to pray more intentionally, serve more faithfully, and love one another more fully.

This shared life of worship and love also shapes how we make decisions together as a parish, including at our Annual Meeting on February 8, when we will gather to give thanks for the past year, elect new members of the Vestry, and honor all who offer their gifts in service to this parish.

May Christ meet you in your fear and your hope.

May you know yourself held in God's love.

And may the Holy Spirit guide us, as we listen, discern, and walk together in faith.

Blessings,

Pierre-Henry +

## Ash Wednesday – February 18

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the season of Lent—a forty-day journey of prayer, repentance, and renewal that prepares us for the joy of Easter. It is one of the most solemn and meaningful days of the Christian year, inviting us to pause, to reflect, and to turn our hearts again toward God.

On Ash Wednesday, we hear words that are both humbling and honest: "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return." These words are not meant to frighten us, but to tell the truth about our humanity. We are finite. We are fragile. And we are deeply loved by God. The ashes we receive on our foreheads—made from the palms of last year's Palm Sunday—are a visible sign of repentance, mortality, and hope. They remind us that even what seems spent or finished can be transformed by God's grace.

Lent is not about self-punishment or guilt. It is about creating space—space to pray more intentionally, to listen more deeply, to let go of what distracts us from God, and to practice acts of mercy and generosity. It is a season that invites us to be honest about our lives, trusting that God meets us not with judgment, but with compassion and forgiveness.

## A Holy Beginning

As is our tradition, we will offer two Ash Wednesday services.

- **At 12:00 p.m.**, we will gather in the Stone Church for a spoken liturgy with the imposition of ashes.
- **At 7:00 p.m.**, we will join with our brothers and sisters of **Westminster United Methodist Church** for a **shared ecumenical service**, hosted at the UMC. I will have the privilege of preaching at the evening service, continuing a meaningful partnership between our congregations that reflects our shared faith in Christ.

Whether you come at midday or in the evening, whether you come with clarity or with questions, Ash Wednesday offers a quiet and grace-filled beginning. God meets us where we are and invites us, once again, to walk the way of love that leads through the cross and into resurrection life.

I hope you will join us as we begin this holy season together.





## Lent Devotional

**Living Well Through Lent 2026** invites you on a transformative Lenten journey exploring the theme of Healing and Wholeness—for yourself, and for the world. This 88-page devotional offers daily reflections and “making-it-personal” questions that encourage deeper exploration of this year’s theme. The devotional includes a rich collection of Scripture, prayers, quotes, and contemplative practices to support our journey through Lent and to help prepare us for the true meaning of Easter.

Available starting on



## Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper: February 17

St. Martha's Guild invites everyone to celebrate Shrove Tuesday with a Pancake Supper on Tuesday, February 17, from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall.

Guests will enjoy a delicious variety of pancakes, including buttermilk, blueberry, chocolate chip, and gluten-free options, served with sausage and applesauce. This family-friendly event is open to everyone and offers an affordable evening of good food and fellowship.

Come hungry and bring family, friends, and neighbors for a warm and welcoming Shrove Tuesday tradition.

**Please RSVP** indicating how many adults, children, extended family, friends and co-workers will attend with you.

**Volunteers are needed!** Pancake flippers, Cafe Host/Hostess, Buffet Servers, and Clean Up

[Click here to RSVP and Volunteer!](#)



**5 PM - 7 PM**

## Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper

**BUTTERMILK, BLUEBERRY, CHOCOLATE CHIP, & GLUTEN-FREE PANCAKES WITH SAUSAGE AND APPLESAUCE**

**ADULTS: \$8 CHILDREN (Age 4-11): \$3  
FAMILY (5 or more): \$25 UNDER AGE 4: FREE**



**CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION  
FELLOWSHIP HALL  
23 N. COURT STREET  
WESTMINSTER, MD**

[ASCENSION-WESTMINSTER.COM/EVENTS](http://ASCENSION-WESTMINSTER.COM/EVENTS)

## Worship Assistants: February 2026

### Altar Guild: Team 3

Ellen Anderson, Dorothy Carpenter, Jennie Grabill, Lisa Jamison, Melissa Leahy

	Usher(s)	Lector	Acolyte	Chalicians	Worship Slides
<b>February 1</b> 8:00 am		Mary Lou Berg	Jennie Grabill		
<b>February 1</b> 10:15 am	1. David Anderson 2. Ellen Anderson	Jim Fariss	Kat Dittrich	1. John Holbert 2. Jim Fariss 3. 4.	Lynn Lyon-Vaiden
<b>February 8</b> 8:00 am		Roberta Wilhelm	Beverly Baker		
<b>February 8</b> 10:15 am	1. 2.	Buck Lyon-Vaiden	Ellen Anderson	1. Kat Dittrich 2. 3. 4.	John Holbert
<b>February 14</b> 11:00 am Jenny Beeker Memorial Service	1. 2.		Jennie Grabill	1. John Holbert 2. Susan Considine 3. Kim Tompkins 4. Betsy Reinders	Jeanne Cox
<b>February 15</b> 8:00 am	Bill Sears	Barbara Sears	Beverly Baker		
<b>February 15</b> 10:15 am	1. David Horn 2. Beatrice Howe	Jill Horn	Kat Dittrich	1. John Holbert 2. Jill Horn 3. 4.	Jeanne Cox
<b>February 18</b> 12:00 pm Ash Wednesday			Beverly Baker		
<b>February 22</b> 8:00 am		Mary Lou Berg	Beverly Baker		
<b>February 22</b> 10:15 am	1. 2.	John Holbert		1. John Holbert 2. 3. 4.	

## Sunday, February 1 will be Youth Sunday during the 10:15 am service!

DATE	Sunday School (Gr. 6-12)	Sunday School (Gr. K-5)	Children's Chapel (all ages)
<b>February 1</b> Youth Sunday	9:00 am		Children's Sermon & Chapel 10:15 am
<b>February 8</b>	9:00 am	10:15 am	
<b>February 15</b>	9:00 am		Children's Chapel
<b>February 22</b>	9:00 am	10:15 am	

Walking Faithfully into 2026: A Pastoral Word on Our Parish Finances

Over the past several weeks, many of you have heard me speak about our Vestry’s work on the 2026 parish budget. I am grateful for the thoughtful attention, prayers, and generosity that have accompanied this process, and I would like to offer a brief clarification as we move forward together.

At its meeting last Tuesday, January 27, the Vestry adopted a 2026 budget that reflects both our financial realities and our deep commitment to the mission and ministry of the Church of the Ascension. The budget currently includes a projected deficit of \$16,563.35. This budget also incorporates a \$40,000 diocesan grant and \$7,000 drawn from unrestricted reserve funds, both of which help stabilize our financial picture for the year ahead.

The Vestry’s hope—and mine—is that this remaining gap can be bridged over the course of the year through additional pledges, increased giving, or special gifts, as well as through careful stewardship of our resources. The Vestry will be closely monitoring utility usage, exploring new ways our buildings might be used to generate revenue, and continuing to manage expenses prudently. As part of this work, the Vestry also made the difficult decision to eliminate one musician position, a choice made solely for financial reasons and not without regret.

**One important decision the Vestry reached together was that it is in the best interest of this parish for me to remain full-time.** I am deeply thankful for their trust, support, and confidence, and I do not take that affirmation lightly. I see it as a shared commitment—to pastoral presence, continuity, and leadership during a season that requires care and stability.

While this budget is not yet fully balanced, it represents a faithful and realistic step forward. It allows us to continue worshiping, serving, and caring for one another, while also naming honestly the work that remains to be done. This is not a moment for alarm, but for shared responsibility, prayerful generosity, and trust that God will provide through the gifts of this community.

If you have not yet made a pledge, or if you feel able to increase your commitment or offer a special gift to the operating fund, I invite you to do so. Every contribution—large or small—makes a real difference and helps strengthen the foundation of our common life. Thank you for loving this parish, for walking with your Vestry, and for engaging this season with faith, generosity, and hope. Please continue to hold our leaders and our shared life at Ascension in your prayers as we move forward together.

With gratitude and hope,  
Pierre-Henry+

With Gratitude

From September through January, we were blessed by the ministry of Martin Villanueva, who served with dedication and care alongside our Praise Ensemble. During his time with us, Martin offered his musical gifts generously, helping lead our congregation in worship with energy, prayerfulness, and joy.

Music plays a vital role in shaping our common prayer, and Martin’s presence enriched that shared life.

We are grateful for the ways he supported the Praise Ensemble, collaborated with fellow musicians, and helped create worship that invited participation and praise.

As Martin concludes his time with us on January 31, we offer him our sincere thanks and our prayers. We wish him every blessing as he continues his musical journey and ministry beyond Ascension, and we give thanks to God for the gifts he shared with us during these past months.

Church Staff	
Rev. Pierre-Henry Buisson	Rector
Ann Fariss	Parish Administrator
Lynn Lyon-Vaiden	Communications Associate/Handbell Choir Director
Mary Butler	Organist/Adult Ensemble Director
Travis Collins	Digital Ministry Associate
Suzanne Walter	Nursery Attendant



***Thank You, Mary Butler***  
**December 2025 marked ten years of faithful service from our organist and Adult Ensemble director, Mary Butler.** Mary, over the past decade your music has carried this congregation through seasons of joy and sorrow. You have helped lift our prayers, deepen our worship, and open our hearts to God's presence. We are deeply grateful for the gift of your ministry among us during these ten years. Thank you for the beauty, dedication, and care you have offered to Ascension.





## The Vestry

Vestry/Officers	Term Ends	Ministry Liaison
Rev. Pierre-Henry Buisson		Rector
Kim Tompkins, Sr. Warden	2027	Altar Guild, Worship Assistants, Mistletoe Mart
Gary Lang, Jr. Warden		Buildings & Grounds
Nancy Starner, Treasurer		
Deborah Rio	2028	Welcome Ministry
Beverly Baker	2026	Fundraising
Liz Lowe	2026	1844 Shoppe, Pins & Needles, Book Club, Church Homes Foundation, Bible Studies
Roberta Wilhelm	2026	Buildings & Grounds
David Anderson	2027	Worship Assistants
Mark Howe	2028	Stewardship, Altar Guild, Worship Assistants
Melissa Leahy	2028	St. Martha's Guild, St. James' Commission, LEV, St. Luke's Guild, Outreach, DreamBuilders MD

### Invitation to Serve: Vestry Registrar

The Vestry is currently seeking a new **Registrar**—also known in many parishes as the **Clerk or Secretary of the Vestry**—to support the governance and record-keeping ministry of our parish.

According to **Article III, Sections 3 and 6 of our bylaws, the Registrar is elected annually by the Vestry** at its first meeting after the Annual Parish Meeting and serves a one-year term. In the event of a vacancy, **the Vestry appoints a Registrar to complete the unexpired portion of the current term.**

Any **Voting Member of the Church of the Ascension** is eligible to serve as Registrar. A *Voting Member* is a **confirmed communicant in good standing**—someone age 16 or older who regularly worships at Ascension and is faithful in prayer and giving.



#### The Registrar:

- Records the minutes and resolutions of all Vestry meetings and meetings of the voting members
- Maintains the official Vestry minute book and keeps the by-laws up to date and available for inspection
- Holds the corporate seal of the church
- Performs other duties as the Vestry may assign
- Assists the **Executive Committee**, which meets monthly to prepare the Vestry agenda and distribute documents for **the monthly Vestry meeting**

If you have gifts for organization, attention to detail, and a desire to serve the church in a meaningful way, please prayerfully consider this opportunity.

To learn more or express interest, please speak with **Fr. Pierre-Henry+ or Senior Warden, Kim Tompkins, or contact the parish office.**

Thank you!

### Highlights from the January 11, 2026 Vestry Meeting

Present: The Rev. Pierre-Henry Buisson, Kim Tompkins (Sr. Warden), Gary Lang (Jr. Warden), David Anderson, Beverly Baker, Mark Howe, Melissa Leahy, Deborah Rio, Roberta Wilhelm.

Excused: Liz Lowe.

This was a special Vestry meeting to develop the budget for 2026.



## Highlights from the January 27, 2026 Vestry Meeting

Highlights from the January 27, 2026 Vestry Meeting

Present: The Rev. Pierre-Henry Buisson, Kim Tompkins (Sr. Warden), Gary Lang (Jr. Warden), David Anderson, Beverly Baker, Mark Howe, Melissa Leahy, Deborah Rio, Roberta Wilhelm.

Excused: Liz Lowe

This was a special Vestry meeting to finalize the budget for 2026

## Vestry Election At Our Annual Meeting

February 8, 2026

One of the central responsibilities of our Annual Meeting on Sunday, February 8, is the election of new Vestry members. The Vestry serves as the parish's lay leadership, working with the Rector to guide our mission and oversee the temporal affairs of the Church of the Ascension.

### Open Vestry Positions

In February 2026, the congregation will elect **four (4)** Vestry members:

- **Three (3) members to full, 3-year terms**, replacing Beverly Baker, Liz Lowe, and Roberta Wilhelm, whose terms are concluding.
- **One (1) member to a 1-year term**, completing the remainder of Diana Baker's unexpired term.

### Nominated Candidates

The Nominating Committee has prayerfully identified the following candidates, who have agreed to stand for election (listed alphabetically by last name):

- Susan Considine
- Lorraine Fulton
- David Gosnell
- Bryan Lance
- Dennis Margroum
- Kevin McIntyre

### How the Election Will Be Conducted

- Voting will take place by **secret ballot** at the Annual Meeting on Sunday, February 8, 2026.
- **No proxy voting** is permitted.
- A candidate must receive **a majority of the votes cast** to be elected.
- The first three candidates elected will serve **3-year terms**; the fourth elected will serve the **1-year term**.
- Newly elected Vestry members take office **immediately upon election**.

### Voting Members

**Voting Members are confirmed communicants in good standing, age 16 or older, who are faithful in worship and who have been faithful in giving, as defined by our Parish Bylaws.**

The Rector maintains the list of Voting Members in accordance with the Canons of the Episcopal Church.

*Questions about nominations or eligibility may be directed to the Senior Warden or the Rector.*

Please keep all of our candidates—and our whole parish—in your prayers as we discern together the leadership God is calling forth for this next season.



## Get To Know Our Vestry Nominees

**Name:** Susan Ann Considine



**Occupation:** Currently retired. 38 years analyst, Chief of Staff and Senior Executive for the National Security Agency.

**Family:** Parents, Paul and Thelma Lee, living in Sykesville MD. Sister in Mt. Airy, Brother in Howard County and Brother in Newark DE. Three children, Sean, PMP for Lockheed Martin; Jess, Nurse Liaison for Care First; Jordan, DPT for Nova Care. Four grandchildren: Lorelei, James, Maisie, Fiona. One dog, Bella.

**Number of years at Ascension:** Approximately 33 years

**Activities at Ascension:** Prior activities include; Sunday School teacher for ~10 years, one full term on Vestry, Registrar while serving on Vestry. Current activities include; Altar Guild Team Lead and Treasurer, 2023 Discernment Committee, 1844 Shoppe, Realm Directory, Mistletoe Mart Committee (lead/co-lead for 2 committees), chaliceist, recent member of Handbell Choir.

**Community activities:** Nothing outside of church activities

**In what ways do you see yourself using your time and talents to further the ministry and programs of the church?**

Continuing to serve in current ministries and programs. As a member of Vestry, I hope to actively listen and respond to parish concerns and ideas to influence decisions that impact the growth of the mission and vision of Ascension.



**Name:** Dr. R. Lorraine Fulton



**Occupation:** Currently, I am a retired Public and Private school educator.

**Family:** My husband passed away on February 1, 2025. I have two daughters, three grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren, with an additional great-one to arrive in a few months. So, sadly there are just myself and the infamous, Zippo the Wonder Cat at home, now. However, I am fortunate to have very many kind and loving friends and our beautiful and welcoming Church of the Ascension.

**Number of years at Ascension:** 20 years

**Activities at Ascension:** I belonged to the Roman Catholic Church, however my husband, Colin and I have attended and shared in the love and warmth of Ascension Church ever since we moved to Carroll County, 20 years ago. The examples below have been repeated most every year. They include but are not limited to the following.

- I served on committees such as the jury committee for Mistletoe-Mart.
- I worked in the Tea Room for Mistletoe-Mart for three years, then worked in the serving kitchen for two years and more recently serving and cleaning in the dining room.
- Attended and participated in most fundraisers.
- Played in the Handbell Choir for 18 years with practice every Wednesday night. You would think I would know what I'm doing by now...sadly not so much, but I keep trying.

- Participated in Thursday Night Bible Study for the last three years.
- Helped with the children's garden.
- Gave and purchased donations in the 1844 Shoppe to support this endeavor.
- Fully participated in the evening preparation classes for reception into the Episcopalian Church. I was received in April of last year. I enjoyed and benefited from these experiences.

I have to say, I learned a great deal during Thursday Night Bible Study, and my readings and discussions with Fr. Pierre-Henry.

These are 'some' of the activities that I can remember. It would be such a humbling and yet honorable service if I could contribute whatever skills and abilities I may have to the Church Vestry.

**Previous church experiences** (if a "newcomer"):

While I am not a newcomer, I would like to share my life-long strong personal relationship with God. Throughout my life in Canada, the UK, and the United States, it was always important to me to be a full participant and dedicated church member. As a small child, there was never a time when I missed Sunday mass and catechism class. In my home, we got on our knees in the living room and said the rosary together, every evening, when my homework was done. As a young teen, my two girlfriends and I would go to mass before school every day. At that time, we sang the mass in Latin with an old gentleman named Mr. Rudderham, who was at least as old as the dilapidated and dusty organ that he made huff and puff out the music in those early morning hours. I found great joy in being there up in the church loft. I felt closer to my God for many reasons. I share this picture only because it seemed to be in alignment with the many members of my family who chose a clerical life. My two uncles were Catholic priests, as was my older cousin, and my aunt was Mother Superior with the Sisters of St. Martha. I was surrounded by role models and reinforcers that enhanced my relationship with Christ on a daily basis. It was a difficult and agonizing decision to leave my church and find my home in the Episcopalian Church. We all have reasons for making these heavy decisions. I have never regretted this decision, and I truly love our church and all that being truly present entails.

**Community activities:** I have always been very involved in my community. This has been partly a result of my professional responsibilities over 50 years as an Educator and to a large part my desire to simply help others.

- Carroll County Public Schools - Assistant Superintendent for Carroll County Public Schools.
- Gerstell Academy – I served as Head/Principal of Middle School I retired from Gerstell Academy, as President of the school, when my husband was diagnosed with Alzheimer's, so I could give more time and care to him.
- Kiwanis Club of Carroll County- I served on the many community activities associated with the club. I believe the club has since disbanded.
- Bonds Meadow Rotary Club – I served on numerous committees and fundraising activities according to the club's mission.
- Partnership for a Healthier Carroll County – I served as Vice Chair and Chair of this group of all major health service providers in Carroll County. Our mission was to monitor and coordinate health services in the county, and acquire state funding for enhancement of such services, especially for low income underserved families.
- Carroll County Public Library – I served as Director of Development for the library system.

- Carroll Community College – I served on the Carroll Community College Foundation Board for fifteen years.
- Springdale Preparatory School – I served as Deputy Head of School and chaired the process to secure school accreditation which was necessary to draw international students from China.
- Carroll Garden Club – I was invited to join the Carroll Garden Club three years ago.
- Chamber Music on the Hill (CMOTH) – I have served on the Board of Directors for Chamber Music on the Hill for about 16 years.
- Carroll County Board of Elections Judge – I provide assistance with document processing and directions for Carroll voters during election day/night.
- Inspirations Memory Care in Westminster – I volunteer one full day a week doing a huge variety of necessary tasks so staff can focus on other resident needs.
- Member of Powerful Accomplished Ladies Support (PALS) – Participate in this support group for wives with husbands who have been diagnosed and are suffering and dying from Alzheimer's/Dementia.
- I formed a support group for Alzheimer's/Dementia -spouses at Brightview Assisted Living in Towson, MD
- Brookshire Home Owners Association -member for 20 years and Chair for ten years, Currently, I serve on the Architectural Review Committee (ARC).

**In what ways do you see yourself using your time and talents to further the ministry and programs of the church?**

If I am asked to serve on our Church Vestry, I will have the opportunity to apply the knowledge and skills I have developed over the years. I will be a reliable team player and will help to tackle difficult issues, while respecting and learning from the input of each of my fellow Vestry members. Initially, I will probably need to spend some extra time listening and asking questions, as I process my contributions. I will definitely ponder the many good works and creative solutions that have already been explored and accomplished by the Vestry. I would humbly consider it an honor to help ensure the continued growth and community outreach of our Church of the Ascension. Together we can continue to connect, grow, and serve in fulfillment of God's plan.

**Name:** Dave Gosnell

**Occupation:** I am a Technical and Safety Trainer for forklifts at Raymond Corp.

**Family:** My wife Rhonda and I have 2 Sons and Daughters-in-Law that have given us 3 lovely grandchildren.



**Number of years at Ascension:** We have been attending Ascension for 1 year, have been confirmed in the Church and I was baptized last year.



**Activities at Ascension:** We have been extremely grateful with how welcoming the parish has been to us. This has played a large part in encouraging us to renew our relationship with God as we had been away from the Church for some years. I assisted with the Mistletoe Mart last year, which was a great opportunity to see how Ascension comes together as a congregation and truly does good work. This was also an opportunity for me to meet and interact with the 10:15 service people. (It's like 2 churches in one!)

**In what ways do you see yourself using your time and talents to further the ministry and programs of the church?** Continuing to serve in current ministries and programs. As a member of Vestry, I hope to actively listen and respond to parish concerns and ideas to influence decisions that impact the growth of the mission and vision of Ascension.

**Name:** Bryan Lance



**Occupation:** Account Manager for an Electrical Testing Company

**Family:** Wife-Karen, Daughter-Sarah and Son-Nathaniel

**Number of Years at Ascension:** 30 Years

**Activities at Ascension:** Playing drums in the Praise Ensemble, Usher, support Mistletoe Mart with set-up and tear-down/decorating. Making pancakes for Mother's Day Breakfast and Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper. Was on the Building & Grounds Committee for many years. Was on Vestry (3) other times, once as junior warden and once as senior warden.

**In what ways do you see yourself using your time and talents to further the ministry and programs of the church?** I would like to continue to support all the activities I'm currently involved with.

**Name:** George Dennis Margroum



**Occupation:** Owner and Operator of Landscaping and Grounds Maintenance Company 1976 – 1996,

- Maintained and repaired lawn equipment
- Chemical Operator - turf and insect applications
- Snow removal for businesses, apartment, townhouse communities and condominiums

Car Sales, new and used Toyota - 1996 – 2023

**Family:**

Karen Margroum – wife, Scott Margroum – son, Michele Margroum - daughter-in-law

**Number of years at Ascension:** Active member for 2 years

**Activities at Ascension:** Activity for fundraisers: Santa and Mrs. Claus, Lawn maintenance (member of Building and Grounds Committee)

**Previous church experiences** (if a "newcomer"):

- Member of St. Christopher's Episcopal Church (12 plus years)
- Vestry member for 2 years
- Maintained grounds for 12 plus years
- Fundraiser activities

**Name:** Kevin McIntyre



**Occupation:** College Professor

**Family:** wife Diane; daughter Adelaide; cats Chloe, Daisy, George, Kaiju, Panda Bear, Poppy, Thumper, Ventress

**Number of Years at Ascension:** 21

**Activities at Ascension:** Chalcist, lector, finance committee, very occasional Sunday school HS substitute teacher, vestry 2010-2013, former parish webmaster

**Previous church experiences (if a “newcomer”):** I was raised Lutheran, but have been a happy Episcopalian longer than I've been involved with any other church.

**Community Activities:** Humane Society of Baltimore County, neighborhood assistance, public speaking on economic issues, student mentoring

**In what ways do you see yourself using your time and talents to further the ministry and programs of the church?**

I'd like to continue to help with parish finances and contribute to outreach via the Internet, local media, and at McDaniel College. We are seeing more and more younger people investigating or reconnecting with Christ; Ascension needs to be in on thi



## Fellowship Hour



We love gathering after the 10:15 service for conversation and fellowship but **volunteers are needed to host**. We want to keep it VERY simple by providing coffee and a cookie or two.

There are snacks in the pantry which are there for this reason so there is no reason to worry about baking or shopping for treats. We have created easy to follow steps for making coffee which are posted by the coffee pots.

As it takes a while for the coffee pots to heat up, turning them on before the service is critical.

Basically, 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 new signup sheet on the kitchen door.**

Please consider hosting once in a while! Maybe your ministry could pick a week! Training is available! The key to this is keeping it simple so it isn't a big burden! Please contact Ellen Anderson if you have any questions.

## DreamBuilders MD

### Greetings from the DreamBuilders MD Leadership team!

Our 2026 event and mission trip planning is well under way. It is shaping up to be an exciting year!

We are very blessed by the many volunteers who support the DreamBuilders MD initiatives and the ever-growing community of volunteers.

### Upcoming Events:

- **Sunday, February 8, 2:00pm - 3:00pm**  
General Information Meeting at Temple Isaiah in Fulton, MD  
We will share our plans for the year.  
**Registration for the June mission trip to Hazard, KY will open that night.**  
February 8 is Super Bowl Sunday, but we promise to be done well before the game.
- **Saturday, March 14, 5:00pm-8:00pm**  
**Spaghetti Dinner and Silent Auction** at Temple Isaiah in Fulton, MD.  
This is our biggest fundraiser of the year. Consider donating an item for the silent auction, volunteer at the dinner or just come and eat!

### Planning is currently underway for the following mission trips and projects:

- **April 12-18, Hazard, KY**  
This trip, which is already fully booked, will be our first home-repair trip to Hazard, KY rather than new construction. Based on how well it goes, we may plan more such trips in the future.



- **June 21-27, Hazard, KY**  
Triple blitz build! The timing of this trip is one week later than 2025 to avoid any conflict with high school schedules. Registration for this trip will open on February 8. There will be maximum of 36 volunteers. This is our most popular mission trip. **(Registration opens on February 8.)**
- **October 18-24, San Juan, Puerto Rico**  
We are planning a week-long mission trip to Puerto Rico to continue the Hurricane Maria recovery efforts. In order to secure the necessary lodging, we will need a minimum of six volunteers.
- **Local projects:** We continue to seek opportunities to take on one or more local, weekend projects. We will share information if/when we identify suitable projects.
- **Future projects:** We are discussing a "scouting trip" to North Carolina in the spring to investigate potential opportunities there following the 2024 floods. This will be advance planning for 2027 mission trips.

**The DreamBuilders MD Leadership Team,** includes members from the following places of worship:

- Church of the Ascension, Westminster, MD
- Christ Episcopal Church, Columbia, MD
- St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Highland, MD
- Temple Isaiah, Fulton, MD
- Trinity Episcopal Church, Elkridge, MD

Questions?

Please contact Buck Lyon-Vaiden

## Book Club



**February 25:** *Great Expectations*  
by Charles Dickens

**March 25:** *The Sound and the Fury*  
by William Faulkner

All are welcome.

For more information, please contact  
Cheryl Vecera at 443.794.3691 or  
cherylvecera@gmail.com

## 1844 Shoppe



Following a successful 2025, The Shoppe is looking rather sparse as 2026 begins. The 1844 Shoppe needs new merchandise to fill the empty spaces. We're looking for anything antique or eclectic, small furniture such as end tables, coffee tables, bookcases, etc., jewelry and other women's accessories, spring and summer decor, and we always accept Christmas items. Please drop off donations on Fridays and Saturdays, 10:00 am - 1:00 pm, or place them in the vestibule closet on other days. We greatly appreciate your support.

## Bible Study

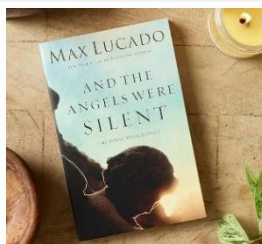


### Tuesday Morning Bible Study

We will meet on February 3 and February 24, 9:30 am, in Room #202. For information, please contact Bill Sears.



## Thursday Night Bible Study



Thursday Night Bible Study will read and discuss  
*And the Angels Were Silent: The Final Week of Jesus*, by Max Lucado  
**Begins February 5 at 6:30 pm**  
In the Guild Room and on Zoom  
For additional information, please contact  
Lynn Lyon-Vaiden





# Mistletoe Mart

[mistletoemart.com](http://mistletoemart.com)

**Mistletoe Mart 2025 was a wonderful event!** It is truly amazing how Ascension works together to not only host a successful Mart, but to also reach out to our community as well as develop true friendships with the artisans – and each other!

We look forward to contributing to Community Outreach organizations early this year using proceeds from Mistletoe Mart 2025. As a result, during February (after all our bills have been paid!) we will meet to determine the Outreach donations. **If you have a Community Outreach proposal you would like the Mistletoe Mart Committee to consider, please forward it to Kim Tompkins (ktompkins2@verizon.net) by Wednesday, February 11.**

Thank you, again! We are truly grateful for all of the time and talents each of you have shared to support the Mistletoe Mart.

Kim Tompkins  
Mistletoe Mart Chair

During 2025, using proceeds from Mistletoe Mart 2024, we donated \$9,850 to Community Outreach. These donations ranged from supporting multiple local organizations to global initiatives, including:

- Access Carroll
- The Arc of Carroll County
- Bridging Life – Holiday Hope
- Carroll County Food Sunday – Holiday Hope
- Caring Carroll
- Carroll County Youth Service Bureau (CCYSB)
- Carroll County 4H & FFA Fair – Cake Sale
- Church Homes Foundation (Timber Ridge)
- DreamBuilders MD, Joyce's Crew
- Ghanaian Mothers' Hope
- Human Services Program of Carroll County
- Meals on Wheels
- North East Social Action Program (NESAP)
- The Shepherd's Staff – Festival of Trees
- Target Community & Educational Services, Inc.
- Westminster Rescue Mission
- YMCA Turkey Trot

## Thank You Notes

I would like to thank everyone for all the thoughts, prayers, and cards during my illness. I know it's what helped me to get better. I'm still cautious about being in public venues right now as I just finished taking Prednisone for a month. Hopefully, I will be back to church and other activities by the end of January.

Blessings,  
Cheryl Vecera

The Vana's would like to thank our church family for the outpouring of prayers, communications, and thoughtful acts of care during Deb's illness and now recovery. We are grateful and feel so very blessed.

Deb and Steve Vana

## In Loving Memory

It is with sadness that I share the news that **Jenny Beeker died on Monday, January 19.**

We hold in prayer her husband Jeff, her daughter Lauren, her mother Ann, and the whole Beeker family as they grieve this loss.

### Visitation and Service Details

#### **Visitation:**

The family will receive friends on Friday, **February 13, 2026, from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.** at Pritts Funeral Home & Chapel located at 412 Washington Road, Westminster.

#### **Celebration of Life:**

A memorial service will be held on Saturday, **February 14, 2026, at 11:00 a.m.** in Holy Cross Hall. **Two Ushers are needed.**

**A reception** will follow the service. St. James' Commission will notify everyone if volunteers are needed.

#### **Memorial Contributions:**

In lieu of flowers, and in thanksgiving for Jenny's life and dedicated service, the family invites memorial donations to the Church of the Ascension Outreach Ministry.



## 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration: February 1



*In the name of the Father and of the Son  
and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

Your prayers and presence are warmly invited for a  
Celebration of the Holy Eucharist  
In Thanksgiving to God for

The Reverend F. Allan Weatherholt, Jr.  
On the 50th Anniversary of his Ordination  
To the Sacred Priesthood

5:00 PM

Sunday, February 1, 2026

Ascension Episcopal Church  
23 North Court Street  
Westminster, MD 21157

Service in the Holy Cross Hall  
Reception in the Parish Hall  
Clergy: White Stoles

No gifts, please  
Your presence is your gift.

The Rev. Allan and Anne Weatherholt  
712 David Avenue  
Westminster, MD 21157





## Church of the Ascension

23 North Court Street  
Westminster, MD 21157