



A Message from the Rector

Dear Friends:

I know that my resignation caught you by surprise and brought sadness, disappointment, and many questions about what comes next. Those feelings are natural. I am not leaving because something was wrong, but because I believe the Lord is calling me to a new ministry. Leaving is not easy for me either—I have loved being your rector.

When transitions happen, it is normal to feel anxious, to have fears, and to wonder what will happen next. The Church has always lived through seasons of transition, and every transition is also an invitation to trust that God is already preparing what comes next. Whoever the Lord calls, in God's time, to be your next rector will love you and work alongside you to help you fulfill your baptismal vocation: to love and serve the Lord, and to love and serve your neighbor.

Please, never forget: the ministers of the Church are first lay people, then ordained ministers.

Under Christ, the future of Ascension is you, dear people of Ascension. You and the people you will invite and welcome.

Together, follow the One who called you to be part of this congregation. Don't be discouraged. You received the gift of the Holy Spirit in your baptism and reaffirmed your faith in Confirmation. You have all the spiritual gifts you need not only to keep this place alive, but thriving.

A French song came to mind as I was writing this: even the darkest cloud has its golden lining. Picture the sun hidden behind a heavy, dark cloud. You cannot see the sun itself, but its light still traces the edges of the cloud with gold. That is what I believe about this moment. The light of Christ—the true Light—is already shining amid our uncertainty, our grief, and our questions, even when we cannot yet see it clearly.

So keep your eyes on him. Follow him. He is our hope.

Faithfully,
Pierre-Henry+

Church Staff

Rev. Pierre-Henry Buisson
Ann Fariss
Lynn Lyon-Vaiden
Mary Butler
Travis Collins
Suzanne Walter

Rector
Parish Administrator
Communications Associate/Handbell Choir Director
Organist/Choir Director
Digital Ministry Associate
Nursery Attendant

Vestry Meeting Highlights: July 2026

Highlights from the July 21, 2026 Executive Session Meeting

Present: The Rev. Pierre-Henry Buisson, David Anderson, Lorraine Fulton, Kim Tompkins, Melissa Leahy, Deborah Rio, Susan Considine, Dave Gosnell, Bryan Lance. *Absent:* Mark Howe

Fr. Pierre-Henry presented his resignation as Rector of the Church of the Ascension to the vestry. He has accepted the call to serve as the next Rector of St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Geneva, New York, in the Diocese of Rochester. **His last Sunday at Ascension will be September 13, 2026.**

Highlights from the July 28, 2026 Vestry Meeting

Present: The Rev. Pierre-Henry Buisson, David Anderson, Kim Tompkins, Mark Howe, Melissa Leahy, Deborah Rio, Susan Considine, Dave Gosnell, Bryan Lance. *Absent:* Lorraine Fulton

Lorraine Fulton has resigned from the vestry as she is moving out of town. We are grateful for all of her contributions to Ascension and the vestry and we will miss her. As a result, **Kevin McIntyre will fill her remaining term.** He will begin to attend vestry meetings in August and will complete her term through February, 2027. The **vestry registrar position is also now open** and will need to be quickly filled (see p. 6). Any interested persons should contact Kim Tompkins.

Susan Considine reviewed the **Financial Reports** for June, 2026 (see chart).

The diocese has now awarded a \$40,000 one-time grant to Ascension for 2026! We are grateful for the diocese's consideration and support. Susan Considine is working with the diocese to coordinate the details.

We are striving to send a 2-3 person team from Ascension to attend the College for Congregational Development (CCD) at the Diocesan Center in Baltimore. This is a comprehensive program scheduled for 6, full-day Saturday sessions from October through April. This program builds connections and a community of love within and between congregations to strengthen shared learning, encouragement, community, and inspiration as well as to enhance our ability to discern our future. Any interested persons should contact Kim Tompkins.

We are beginning to organize a training & licensing program for specific lay leadership roles at Ascension in order to support the Episcopal Church canons and recent diocese guidelines. More information will follow.

The vestry will continue to focus on **Ascension's current financial situation** and develop future strategies for 2027 and beyond. A **Marketing Committee will be launched shortly** to develop and implement approaches to increase rental opportunities at Ascension across our campus. There will also be a **Marketing Initiative to bring in new parishioners.** The Outreach Committee is preparing to host an **Adult Financial Education Speaker Series** beginning in September, covering a variety of topics for both parishioners and the community.

Finally, **discussions are underway to begin to prepare for the Rector Transition Plan.** Kim Tompkins has already been in touch with the Rev. Kristin Krantz, Canon for Transitions at the diocese. Canon Kristin will meet with the vestry in August and we will work closely with her throughout this entire process. Canon Kristin will preach at Ascension on Sunday, September 27, and will meet with the congregation afterwards.

Vestry: Church of the Ascension

- Rev. Pierre-Henry Buisson, Rector
- Kim Tompkins, Senior Warden (2027)
- Bryan Lance, Junior Warden (2029)
- Susan Considine, Treasurer (2029)
- Nancy Starner, Assistant Treasurer
- David Anderson (2027)
- Kevin McIntyre (2027)
- Deborah Rio (2028)
- Mark Howe (2028)
- Melissa Leahy (2028)
- Dave Gosnell (2029)

A Financial Snapshot — June, 2026

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

June, 2026

	Budgeted	Actual	Compared with budget
Income	\$29,765	\$25,555	\$4,210 below budget
Expenses	\$35,062	\$26,841	\$8,221 below budget
Income vs. Expenses	(\$5,297)	(\$1,286)	

Year to Date, January–June, 2026

	Budgeted	Actual	Compared with budget
Income	\$178,590	\$215,717	\$37,127 above budget
Expenses	\$210,372	\$189,021	\$21,351 below budget
Income vs. Expenses	(\$31,782)	\$26,696 surplus	

A note on reading these figures. Amounts in parentheses are deficits — periods in which we spent more than we received. Our expenses are running below budget in part because the diocesan assessment has been held temporarily waiting for the diocesan grant; it has not been removed and will still need to be paid.

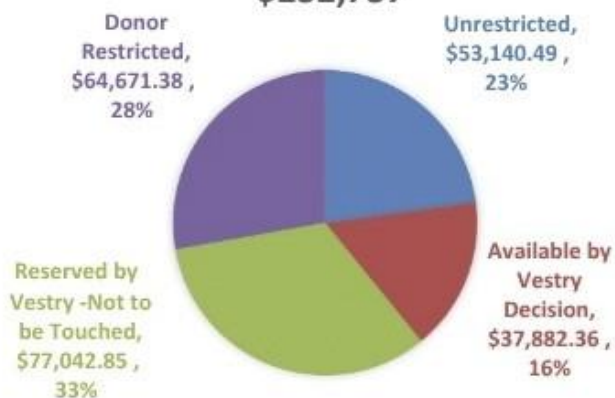
The year-to-date surplus also reflects the timing of gifts: several ministries redirected funds to the General Fund early in the year, and a number of pledges were paid in full up front. For these reasons, the early-year surplus should not be read as the outlook for the full year and has been declining each month.

What's in the Bank (Checking Account & Money Market Account)

Of the \$232,737 in our bank accounts, only \$53,140 is fully unrestricted (23%) and available to pay our operating expenses. Our monthly Operating Budgeted expenses average \$35,062 per month.

TOTAL BANK FUNDS AS OF 6/30/2026

\$232,737



From the Senior Warden

While the departure of Fr. Pierre-Henry and Sophie marks the end of a meaningful chapter in the life at Ascension, it also begins a new season of discernment, hope, and opportunity for us. We give thanks for the many blessings we have shared together and now look forward to the future.

As we enter this time of transition, I encourage each of us to remember that we are a church family. Like every family, we will experience a variety of emotions along this journey. Let us continue to support each another with compassion, love, patience, and respect as we move forward together, trusting that God is leading us every step of the way.

We will navigate this process together, step by step. **The Vestry is committed to open communication throughout this transition.** Our goal is to be transparent, providing regular updates so that everyone understands where we are in the process and what comes next. Clear communication is essential to maintaining the trust and unity that make our parish so special.

We are also blessed to be working closely with Canon Kristin Krantz, Canon for Transitions, who will guide and support us through each stage of the transition process.

Her experience and leadership will be invaluable as we prepare for the next chapter in the life of our church.

One of the greatest strengths of our congregation is **the incredible depth of talent, generosity, and dedication found among our members.** Our church family is truly amazing! As we move through this transition, there will be many opportunities for members to share their gifts and serve in meaningful ways.

Most importantly, **let us remain steadfast in prayer**—for Fr. Pierre-Henry and Sophie, for the Vestry, for Canon Kristin, and for one another. May we continue to seek God's wisdom, embrace each another with grace, and place our trust in the Holy Spirit as we progress through this journey.

Thank you for your faithfulness, your support, and your love for this parish! I am confident that, united as a church family, God will continue to bless and guide us in the days ahead. As Ellen Anderson said in the July 24 Enews, we are Ascension Strong!

In Christ's Love,

Kim Tompkins

Senior Warden

seniorwarden@ascension-westminster.com



Mistletoe Mart

Website: mistletoemart.com

There are 3 months until Mistletoe Mart!

The committee is busy planning for Mistletoe Mart #52 which will take place November 12-14, 2026!

We have 42 talented artisans for this year's Mart. The beautiful postcards have been received and have been mailed to specific vendors so they can advertise the Mart at their summer shows. The Mistletoe Mart website is being updated. Menus are being reviewed.

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

Wearing our Ascension magnetic nametags during the Mart is a great way to identify ourselves. If you don't have one this is a perfect time to order one! Please contact Ann Fariss in the Church Office.

The volunteer signup boards will be posted in early September. Please be sure to mark your calendars and begin to think about how you would like to be part of this year's Mart!

Please note: This will be Melissa Leahy's last year serving as the lead of the Mistletoe Mart Kitchen. Therefore, we need someone to shadow and assist Melissa this year and assume the role by Mistletoe Mart 2027. Please contact Melissa to further discuss.

We are grateful for all of your support!

Kim Tompkins
Mistletoe Mart Chair

1844 Shoppe

Yard SALE

Saturday, August 29
9am - 2pm

RAIN OR SHINE

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

THIRD ANNUAL
OUTREACH COMMITTEE

BABY SHOWER

AUGUST 30, 2026
during Fellowship Hour
Additional info in Enews

To Support
The Pregnancy Support Center of Carroll County

Church of the Ascension
Connect. Grow. Serve.

HOME COMING SUNDAY

Sunday School classes resume
Worship Services at 8:00 am & 10:15 am

Blessing of Backpacks

welcome home

SEPTEMBER 13

ascension-westminster.com/events

BIBLE BASICS
with Carrie Goff

10:15 am
June 7
July 19
August 9

Summer

CHILDREN'S SERMON

Fr. Pierre Henry

10:15 am
June 14 July 12
August 2

Church of the Ascension
Connect. Grow. Serve.

See you at Church

8:00 am Stone Church
10:15 am Holy Cross Hall

CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION
23 N. COURT STREET
WESTMINSTER, MD 21157

Bible Study

Sunday morning at 9:00 am
Tuesday morning at 9:30 am
August 4 & August 18

3rd Annual Outreach Committee Baby Shower

to support the
Pregnancy Support Center of Carroll County
Sunday, August 30 during Fellowship Hour

The Pregnancy Support Center of Carroll County, Inc. is a faith-based, pro-life, tax-exempt, nonprofit organization dedicated to providing free, compassionate, and confidential support to women facing an unplanned pregnancy.

Key Commitments:

- Providing a safe, judgment-free environment for one-on-one consultations and medical services
- Offering medical-grade pregnancy testing, limited obstetrical ultrasounds, and parenting instruction to help women prepare for their new role
- Delivering material support (e.g., diapers, wipes, baby clothes) and community referrals to meet practical needs
- Supporting women through emotional, physical, and spiritual challenges, including compassionate follow-up after abortion if desired

Immediate needs for the center's boutique:

(Please bring to the shower on August 30.)

- Baby Wash and Shampoo
- Diaper Rash Cream
- Baby Wipes
- Bibs for boys and girls, Socks
- Size 0-3 months clothes for boys and girls
- Size 3T-4T girl clothes
- Bottles, Pacifiers (newborn to 6 months)
- Burp cloths, Swaddlers, Baby washcloths and towels
- Baby Toys and Toddler Books
- Size 4T-5T Pull-ups

Monetary donations are always welcome for program costs and to achieve its mission.

Website: friendsofpscwestminster.org

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.

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

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.

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 Senior Warden, Kim Tompkins, or contact the parish office.

Drama Camp Update

After much thought and prayer, it has been decided that **Drama Camp will not be held this summer.**

A number of circumstances have come together this year that have left us without the time and preparation needed to give the program the attention it deserves. Rather than put together something rushed, we believe it's best to step back for this season and return when we can offer the kind of experience our campers and volunteers deserve.

We appreciate your understanding and continued support, and we look forward to bringing Drama Camp back in the future. Thank you for your prayers, encouragement, and enthusiasm—we're grateful for each of you.

Church of the Ascension

23 North Court Street
Westminster, MD 21157