

The Episcopal Church of the Ascension



54th Annual Meeting

*10:15 a.m. Sunday,
4 March A.D. 2018*



**THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION
Gaithersburg, Maryland**

**Agenda for the Fifty-Third Annual Parish Meeting
10:15 a.m., March 4, 2018**

The Reverend Randall Lord-Wilkinson, Rector - Presiding

Opening Prayer: Randy

Adoption of Agenda

Minutes of Fifty-Third Annual Meeting (*March 12 , 2017*)

Nominating Committee Report

Appointment of Tellers

Casting of Ballots for:

Three (3) three year Vestry members

Two (2) Diocesan delegates

for one two year term, one unexpired one year term, and an alternate

Open Discussion and Dialog with Rector and Wardens

Swearing in of new Vestry Members

OATH OF OFFICE:

I, _____, do solemnly affirm, that I will faithfully execute the office of a Vestry Member of Ascension Parish, in Montgomery County, Maryland, without prejudice, favor, or affection, according to the best of my skill and knowledge; further, I affirm my belief in Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior and commit myself thereto, God being my helper.

Blessing

Adjournment

**MINUTES OF THE 53RD ANNUAL MEETING
MARCH 12, 2017**

The meeting was called to order by the Rev. Randy Lord-Wilkinson at 10:35 with prayer. Motion was passed by unanimous consent to proceed.

A motion was made and seconded to accept the minutes of the 52nd Annual Meeting without changes or additions. The motion passed.

Nominating Committee Report: Randy, on behalf of the Nominating Committee, introduced the vestry and delegates candidates for election.

Vestry:	Gordon Donnelly, Meredith Horan and Luis Pedron
Junior Warden:	Janet King
Diocesan Delegates:	Carleton MacDonald, Sue Snay and Mardia Dennis

There were no nominations from the floor. A motion to close the nominations was made, seconded and passed.

Appointment of Tellers: Tellers appointed were Gary McLaughlin and Paul Whitmore. A quorum being present, ballots were cast and collected. After the collection of ballots, the tellers retired for the counting.

Open Discussion and Dialogue with Rector and Wardens, including Budget and Finance. Items discussed included:

- ◆ Treasurer Howard Holland introduced himself. He extensively went over our financial status. After some years of financial decline, the parish must make some hard decisions. He outlined key info:
 - ◆ Income: we get most of our income from Sunday collections, both pledged and unpledged; Other income sources include rental of space to Sandy Ridge Academy and others, and from our two small trusts
 - ◆ Expenses: our largest expenses are (1) salaries and benefits, and (2) maintenance
 - ◆ For the last five years, Sunday collections and other pledged income have been declining. The treasurer and vestry have been cutting expenses and staff, kept other expenses as low as possible, but we have had to turn to our endowment to meet day-to-day expenses.
 - ◆ If things continue at the current rate, with a bare bones budget, we will have a substantial deficit this coming year, which will have to be made up from the endowment
 - ◆ Continuing as is will drain the endowment, and it will be gone in 18-20 months., thus requiring Ascension to close down
- ◆ Junior Warden Janet King then asked the gathered congregants for suggestions and thoughts for ways to address this crisis. Several ideas were put forth by attendees.
- ◆ Randy announced that he was looking into becoming a bi-vocational priest, thereby reducing his Ascension salary as he would pick up salary elsewhere.

Election Results: The tellers returned and announced the election results. Janet King was returned as Junior Warden, Gordon Donnelly, Meredith Horan and Luis Pedron were elected to three-year vestry terms. Carleton MacDonald and Sue Snay were elected as diocesan delegates with Mardia Dennis as alternate delegate. Electees were then sworn in.

Closing: Randy gave a closing prayer. He then asked for and received a motion to adjourn; the motion was seconded and the meeting was closed as of 12:04.

FROM THE RECTOR

Rector's Retrospective

I want to say: “thank you.” In this past decade of travelling with you I have lived more than in any previous period of my life. It has truly been the best of times for me, with my share of losses, of course, both personally and professionally. I have been deeply and profoundly blessed and transformed by my priestly vocation, especially by my time with you.

2017 was the culmination of serious discernment on the part of the leadership on how to “reshape” Ascension to align more closely with its financial resources. We were still living, for the most part, in a previous era. We discontinued some staff positions (nursery, three part time musicians, Sunday morning sexton), and changed others, such as the parish administrator position.

I had been prayerfully considering how I might help Ascension achieve a place of balance, too, since the Fall of 2016, when we began to accept the reality that a priest and a half was more than the parish can carry. I attempted to become a bi-vocational priest, and learned that this was really unattainable as Ascension, though smaller than it was 10 years ago, is still large by Episcopal standards (average Sunday attendance over 200 with the national average being 60), and complex. We are gloriously diverse. We revel in it. But it requires care and attention. Ascension needs a full time rector.

So I decided to “retire.” I am extremely fortunate to be able to do so, and to have enough good health and passion in me to want to continue working. In particular, I want to teach full time, possibly in Montgomery County public schools. As of this writing that is Plan A, although I am having a grand time teaching a class in the astronomy department of the University of Maryland, College Park.

I need to name some names here, I think. I want to express my gratitude for the service to Ascension rendered by staff who are no longer with us: Gisele Lachance and Brenda Alvarez (in the nursery; Gisele for over 20 years); Betty Lavern (Sunday sexton, also in excess of 20 years); musicians Howard Hanson (who played guitars at 10:15 and 11:15), Samuel Munguia (accompanist at the 11:00 a.m. Spanish service), and Eric O’Laughlin (5:00 o’clock accompanist). These latter three served Ascension for well over 10 years. Kathy Van Arnum served as Office Coordinator for a good five years before we discontinued her position.

In the “Shined Brightly and Briefly” category we place Minister of Music Jerrold Tidwell, who led us to new musical heights for just shy of two years, before he decided it was time to follow his spouse to a new venue vocationally.

As we begin to discern who his successor will be, we are blessed by the musical support of Karina Gomez McCarty (11:15) and Clarice Snyder (9:00).

And as always, I give thanks to God for our Vestry and Wardens, and existing staff: Lin Keene as the new Parish Administrator (and a hit already!), and for Eleni Hailu, Media Specialist (a.k.a. Geek Extraordinaire). They are not only good partners in the work of supporting Ascension, but I can call them friends.

Finally, there is Javier Garcia Ocampo, my brother and fellow priest in the vineyard. I think it is obvious to everyone how much he and I love and respect each other.

You are in good hands. You are in *God’s* hands. Beginnings and endings. It can be crazy making, but Jesus never said this would be easy!

Know that you and our story are indelibly inscribed upon my heart. Soon, I will no longer be your priest and rector, but I will always be your friend.

Godspeed People of Ascension!

Love, Randy

FROM THE ASSISTANT TO THE RECTOR

To Ascension Family,

Nearly four years have passed since my arrival at Ascension. I came here as the “Spanish Language Missionary”. In July 2016, my title and responsibilities at Ascension changed and now I am the Assistant to the Rector. I am still working with the Ascension Latino Community and I celebrate every other Sunday at the 10:15 a.m. service and as needed by the Rector at the 5:00 p.m. service.

We had many activities last year. We had two “Yard Sale and Car Wash”, two cookouts in the park; we celebrated Three Kings Day (día de los Reyes Magos), Día de la Candelaria; La Fiesta de las Americas; Mother’s Day, Father’s Day, Children’s Day, and we sponsored Let’s do Dinner and Dancing to raise money for Ascension, we also celebrated the Day of the Death (Día de los Muertos), Lady of Guadalupe, Thanksgiving Celebration at Ascension House and the Christmas Party. I also visited almost all of the parishioners for pastoral care as per their request.

The Spanish Classes at Ascension House are still on. Everybody is welcome to join us to practice their Spanish.

Last year I was invited by a parishioner to take a course with The Montgomery County Police called: “The Hispanic Community Academy”. I was present for almost all of the 14 weeks of class every Wednesday from 7:00 to 9:30 p.m. This helped me to understand and experience how the Police work in our County. One of the reasons that they provide these classes is to inform the Hispanic/Latino community that we should not be afraid of the police, in these difficult times for immigrants.

I was also invited to be part of the Race and Social Justice Task Force from the Diocese. This group is committed to working against racism and toward racial reconciliation, and to celebrating the great cultural diversity of our communities. We have a meeting once a month.

I am very proud that the Ministerio Felicidad continue bringing food, love and prayer to Day Labor Workers and people who live on the streets whether it is their choice or not. This ministry has grown substantially being supported by the Latino Community of Ascension and for people from the 9:00 and 11:15 a.m. services, also. Ministerio Felicidad is supported and payed for by the ministry.

The 11:00 service unfortunately lost its musician last year but we were very blessed with another volunteer musician, Jesse Velázquez. He came to Ascension and brought many things including his love for technology. With his help we started the new “Ascension Radio”, you will hear more about it this year since we are working on the creation of a new App, for better access, as the creation of a new program schedule of music and shows.

Jesse and I started a weekly series of short videos called: “Cinco Minutos con Dios”, that are posted on Ascension Social Media. This year we are recording videos in English called: “Faith in the Word”. The 9:00 a.m. service in English and the 11:00 service in Spanish are transmitted Live on Facebook and on Ascension Radio.

During summer we have our Spiritual Retreat in Spanish. We spent a great weekend praying, singing and knowing each other. This weekend helped us to grow spiritually and as Ascension Family.

Ascension is always going to be faced with new challenges and we can rise to those challenges by working together as a Church. We have many activities planned for this year and I want to invite all of you to be a part of them. Even when activities are planned for the 11:00 a.m. Spanish service, we invite all to join in; we are after all promoting inclusion.

Let’s pray for Ascension and its mission.

The Rev. Javier Garcia

FROM THE SENIOR WARDEN

Dear Friends,

Well. 2017 was a year of joy, and voices, and change. Let us remember some of the joy.

- ◆ The lovely crocheted bedspread (“sobrecama”) offered up for raffle by Maria Estela Rodriguez;
- ◆ Celebration of our own Enid Cole as she pursues the diaconate—how beautifully she will serve beyond Ascension;
- ◆ the Sanctuary Movement-education and hope from Ascension onward;
- ◆ Dinner dances with music... and what dancers! Wonderful to see...And dream! haha
- ◆ The launch of the world-famous One Ascension Sunday service and fellowship;
- ◆ The also world-famous Ascension Youth Group, faithfully serving St James School in Philadelphia;
- ◆ Hosting Lucelia Justiniano, an immigration attorney doing pro bono work, serving our community and supporting our mission-quietly and with purpose.
- ◆ The Ascension cookbook-also world-famous and what a team that put it together. Thanks, Team!
- ◆ The Wednesday Morning Book Group (WAM!) which is treasure for the brain, the heart and the soul all in one room;
- ◆ The Ascension Adventurers covered many miles of smiles—what a fun ministry this is.
- ◆ Community carwashes and yard sales, great energetic work that raised money for Ascension.

Our faithful outreach groups and ministries resolutely continued their service to church and community: Gaithersburg Help; Welcome Team, Altar Guild, Men’s shelter lunches; the Lord’s Table; Mobile Med; the Rice Bowl; Acolytes of all ages; the Giving Tree (this year without an actual tree, but Ascension makes it work); Meals on Wheels, and many others. God is surely where the helpers are.

There were poignant moments as we prayed for loved ones who became ill or succumbed to illness; may we realize joy and gratitude in beloved memories; in new life-and how it blooms.

And then there is the budget. During 2017 we moved determinedly toward a balanced budget, making intentional and painful decisions in order to cut our costs. We eliminated positions for two of our paid musicians, our sexton, and nursery coordinator. We hired a new parish administrator to consolidate bookkeeping and financial reporting in one position. We move closer to becoming independent of our accounting service; they have been very valuable to us in training Lin and helping us over the transition. We expect to realize the full value of these savings in 2018. And yet, despite the struggle, our parish exceeded last year’s pledged financial giving. That brings a tear of joy to me.

And finally, we will soon say good bye to Randy, our rector. I am thankful for his acceptance and collaboration in this effort, for his willingness to act on behalf of Ascension even as he has stepped into the big unknown of looking for a job, a change from what he’s been doing the last 30 years. As I listen to him talk about his adventures I feel certain that he has made the right decision for us and for him, and he leaves us in an excellent position to welcome a new rector this year. Thank you, Randy.

Finally, I must express my gratitude for the group of people I work with on Vestry; it is truly a privilege, and a blessing.

Betsy Hasegawa

FROM THE JUNIOR WARDEN

THE PARISH LIFE COMMITTEE REPORT: Janet King Vestry Liason: We assembled for the first time at the Vestry meeting on January 22nd. All were interested in helping to keep the commitment to Parish Life ongoing and active. The Committee includes: Anika Lalmansingh, Dorett Sutherland, Megan Didavi, Lovetta Wille, and Berenice Rodriguez and Luis Pedron. We meet again on Feb 12th to start organizing for the Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner.

CHRISTIAN FORMATION FOR CHILDREN

Children are Welcome Here - Ascension believes in its children - their innocence, their energy, the joy they bring, their spirit of wonder and the honesty of their questions. We believe that along with the youth and adults of this parish, children have an equal place at the Table in God's house.

Children's Formation - Classes for children three years old through 5th grade are held at 9:00 and 11:15 a.m. during the school year.

We use **Godly Play** and **A Joyful Path** curricula.

Godly Play—This is a Montessori-based method, presenting the stories of the Bible within a sacred space. Children experience these stories, wonder about them and then are allowed open-ended opportunities, usually with art supplies, to explore the stories. **Godly Play** classes meet downstairs in Room 6. It follows the format of liturgy:

- ◆ Entrance
 - ◆ Gathering - greeting at the door and preparing to enter the sacred space, and singing together
 - ◆ Getting ready - entering the sacred circle, community, greeting, silence
- ◆ Word and Response
 - ◆ Hearing - presenting the story, wondering
 - ◆ Responding - individual work, getting ready for prayers and Feast
- ◆ Joining the Congregation for Eucharist
- ◆ Thanksgiving
 - ◆ Preparing - preparing tables, prayers
 - ◆ Sharing - enjoying Feast, putting away
- ◆ Sending Forth
 - ◆ Dismissal - getting ready to bless and be blessed, individual blessings
 - ◆ Going forth - leaving the sacred circle, goodbyes at the door

A Joyful Path - This curriculum is for 3rd through 5th graders developed jointly by ProgressiveChristianity.org and the Center for Progressive Christianity. A spiritual curriculum for young hearts and minds, it is inclusive, compassionate, and "inter-spiritual" in the sense that it exposes children to the concept that many of the values taught by Jesus are found in other cultures' faith traditions. It teaches children how to access the wisdom already implanted by God in their hearts, about the sacred character and unity of the cosmos, and how to expand their awareness of our Creator. The class will end with the teachers and children joining the congregation for the Eucharist. **A Joyful Path** met downstairs in Room 11. The class has recently moved upstairs to Room 2 the former Nursery Room.

Worship for Families with Young Children - Children too young for Sunday School and their families worship together during a modified Eucharist with story-style sermon, prayers and simple songs geared for children. Join us on Sundays at 10:15 a.m. in the Chapel.

Epiphany Pageant "The King's Birthday" - On Sunday, January 7th, 2018, at 5pm the church presented "The King's Birthday." This year's emphasis was to recruit a larger and cross-generational cast. We had 15 cast members from pre-school to adult. With a great cast the costumes came out to add to the pageant feel. Karina Gomez Mc Carty provided the piano accompaniment to the signing of traditional carols and hymns. Fr. Randy again joined us for the summation of the story. Gordon Donnelly (Director) would like to thank all the cast members and parents who made this year's pageant such an enjoyable event.

Artwork for Worship Leaflets - Children are invited to submit artwork for the covers of the Easter and Christmas service bulletins.

Easter Egg Hunt - Following the Easter Family Service at 12:30 p.m. there is an Easter Egg Hunt for preschool-age children and school-age (1st through 5th grade) children on the front and back lawns of Ascension.

Parish Picnic - Typically on the first Sunday in June at Bohrer Park following an 11:00 a.m. bilingual Eucharist.

For more information please contact Megan Didavi at mdidavi@gmail.com.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS MINISTRY

Health & Wellness Ministry at Ascension is an intentional ministry focusing on both healing and health, combining the ancient traditions of the Christian community and the knowledge and tools of modern health care.

Blood Pressure Check-ups - Blood pressure check-ups are offered quarterly.

Living with Serious Illness Support Group - Meets the second Monday of each month for a brown bag lunch at 11:30 a.m. for discussion, fellowship and prayer among those living with serious illness and those who love them.

Labyrinth & Other Spiritual Practices

At various times throughout the year, Ascension's labyrinth is made available for prayerful walking. In addition, other spiritual practices including retreats, a Benedictine cell and contemplative prayer sessions are offered.

Yoga

One yoga class is offered each week: Thursdays at 10:00 a.m. in the Chapel.

For more information contact Laura Shay at shayhealth@gmail.com

OPERATIONS AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

Operations and Finance Committee

Budget Development and Implementation

The Operations and Finance Committee regularly reviewed monthly and year-to-date income and expense figures during 2017, as well as prepared reports for the Vestry's meetings and for the Ascendant.

In consultation with the Rector, Wardens, and Vestry, the Committee took steps to address budget issues throughout the year, especially to help bring Ascension's expenses more closely in line with income. Doing so involved a number of difficult decisions, including ones impacting personnel. It also involved looking critically at all of the parish's key operational areas.

A brief summary of Ascension's 2017 income and expenses is below. In addition, the annual meeting packet includes a year-end Treasurer's Report showing cash holdings, reserves, and other fund balances. The packet also includes an unaudited summary of Ascension's budget in 2016 and 2017, as well as a preliminary budget for 2018.

In working with the Rector, Wardens, and Vestry on the 2018 budget, we have carefully reviewed our fixed costs, such as our mortgage, as well as critical areas such as salaries and benefits. In particular, we have attempted to project what our personnel costs will be once our Rector has retired, and what those costs may be in 2019 and beyond.

Many of these issues for 2018 remain ongoing and a final budget for 2018 has not yet been adopted. The Vestry anticipates adopting a budget at its meeting on March 18, 2018, and the Committee will continue to provide the Vestry with the assistance and input needed to do so.

Highlights of 2017 Income and Expenses

Ascension's income and expenses varied from month to month during 2017 as is usually the case. Typically, we incur higher expenses earlier in the year and receive more income later in the year. That pattern held once again for 2017.

During 2017, we received income of \$555,372 for the year. We received \$44,682 in plate receipts and \$368,671 in pledge income. Plate receipts were approximately 8% lower than we projected, with pledge income slightly higher than anticipated.

However, we had much more miscellaneous unrestricted income than we expected. That was due to higher-than-planned receipts from two trusts, greater use of Ascension's facilities for funerals and other events, and an unrestricted gift of \$50,000 from the Kathryn Brooke estate.

On the expense side, we had total expenses for 2017 of \$573,871. We worked diligently throughout the year to cut expenses in many areas, including salaries and benefits. To do so, many difficult decisions had to be made, including the decision at midyear to no longer provide paid musicians for the 11:15 a.m., Spanish language, and 5:00 p.m. services. Most other expenses were kept at or slightly below expectations.

As a result of the income and expense figures just described, Ascension had negative net operating income of \$18,499 for the year.

Finally, as of December 31, the balance in the Endowment Fund stood at \$308,599. Our Unrestricted Cash Reserves were \$56,685. In addition, with the continued donations that we have received, we had \$43,401 in the Facilities Reserve Fund.

Avin Lalmansingh
Howard Holland

COMMITTEE FOR MISSION

Ascension's Mission: "To be ambassadors who represent Christ."

Mobile Med: Ascension hosts the Mobile Med van on Tuesday at Ascension House (where the van parks) and the Chapel (where the patients wait). We have volunteers that man the waiting room from 7a-3p (1pm in the summer). In 2017, we had 11 volunteers who donated approximately 360 hours of time.

LORD'S TABLE/SOUP KITCHEN

The services performed by fellow members of Ascension and community friends at the Lord's Table/Soup Kitchen held the first Saturday and third Monday of each month have proved to be a vital yet essential mission of our outreach. As a volunteer and now appointed leader of the first Saturday shift, being the meal preparation and dining room set-up, I have found it to be both rewarding and a fun way to get to know others.

Many times we get caught up in our own lives and busy schedules without really realizing and understanding the need for a warm hearty meal for those in need. Our volunteers take to heart to fulfill this very goal in order to give of ourselves, our time, our talent, and most of all, our desire to serve God's way.

Contribution supplies such as paper goods, ground coffee, etc. are suggested on a regular basis since there are times we wish to serve these regular menu items and we're usually running out to the grocery store to purchase out-of-pocket. This mission relies solely on donations.

I'm hoping that our participation grows to reflect our community here at Ascension, which continues to need prayer and support.

In 2017 Ascension supplied volunteers and supplies nine times. We had 11 volunteers and were supported by the youth from another local church.

"What's Happening Now:"

- ◆ Men's Shelter Lunches
- ◆ Linkages to Learning Fall backpack drive
- ◆ Lenten Rice Bowl
- ◆ Advent/Christmas Giving Tree: Special offering for Henry Sanchez
- ◆ Twice monthly Lord's Table service
- ◆ Mobile Med
- ◆ New: "Felicidad" lunches for day laborers
- ◆ Youth Group annual mission trip to Philadelphia

Respectfully submitted, Gary MacLaughlin, Vestry Liaison, for the Committee

Church of the Ascension

Treasurer's Report Cash and Reserve Funds December 2017 (unaudited)

Cash Account Balance Per Balance Sheet	
BOA Checking	66,887
BOA Savings	2,523
BOA Columbarium Account	16,486
M&T Endowment Account	308,599
Total Cash	394,496
Cash Totals by Cash Classification	
Unrestricted Reserves	56,685
Restricted Reserves	337,811
Total Cash	394,496
Cash Balances By Fund Category	
1) Unrestricted Reserves	56,685
2) Endowment Fund	308,599
Held in an account with M&T Bank, managed through the Diocese of Washginton.	
3) Capital Improvements & Building Repairs	-43,416
4) Facilities Reserve Fund	43,401
5) Memorial/Worship Fund	3,048
6) Columbarium Fund	16,486
7) Other Restricted Funds (Special Offerings)	12,467
Reconcile Change in Cash to Total Net Income	
Total Net Income (Annual Basis)	20,857
Change in Cash	14,309

2017 FACILITIES REPORT

The church of Ascension is an aging facility and will require continued tender loving care. This year we have been spared of major repairs/equipment replacement as in years past. But, don't let that fool you, there will continue to be needed repairs and/or replacements. Currently we are dealing with the following issues:

- ◆ We have been battling leaks on and off in our roof, especially the flat roof over the office wing.
- ◆ Ice/water damage causing deterioration of gutters, façade, and brick work around and over the rear lower level entrance.
- ◆ Installing an electronic smart door monitoring/lock system to allow unlocking of the rear office wing door remotely.

Currently there is no real active Facilities "Committee". I have been communicating with Lin and helping out where I can. Recently John Pruessner has been providing support as well. As of January 31, 2018, the balance of the facilities reserve fund is \$41,265. Following are our current service providers supporting facilities:

American Lawns	Snow/ice (and lawn care/landscaping support as needed)
Smart Cleaning Solutions	Janitorial
Thyssen Krupp	Elevator inspection/service/monitoring
Waste Management	Trash
Alliance Pest	Rodents/Bugs/Pests
Hatfield Equipment	Grease interceptor cleaning
Ark Systems	Fire Alarm monitoring
Maryland Fire Equip.	Semi-annual inspection kitchen hood and in general
MCPS/Gaithersburg HS	Lawn mowing
Ted Bedell	

2018 Diocesan Convention

Mardia Dennis, Kristen Keating, Janet King, Javier Ocampo and Sue Snay attended the One Hundred Twenty-Third Annual Convention of the Diocese of Washington. The convention agenda included an address from the bishop. During her address, the bishop talked about all of the work that the churches in the diocese are doing in their communities. Much of the work is supported by diocesan grants to the congregations. These grants are made possible by the congregational pledges to the diocese. In addition, the bishop mentioned that she will be taking a three-month sabbatical beginning in spring.

The business portion of the convention consisted of several activities including the election of members to the diocesan Standing Committee and Alternate Deputies to General Convention this summer in Austin Texas. In addition, we voted to accept several changes to the constitutional canons including an amendment to carry out a new policy that would bring the Regional Assembly structure and process in line with the actual practice by removing the regional steering committees, discontinuing the position of elected regional conveners, and streamlining the procedures for conducting Regional Assemblies. We also voted to authorize a pilot program for alternatives to Regional Assembly meetings. Alternatives may include electronic meetings and electronic voting. The last amendment would allow for the election of the Alternate Deputies to General Convention in the same year as the election of Deputies to the General Convention instead of in the following year as is the current practice. This will allow those going to General Convention to have more time to work together.

The final activity during the business meeting is the passing of the resolutions. This year we passed three resolutions. The first states that the diocese will become a sanctuary diocese which means that we will honor the immigrant and oppose policies that target undocumented immigrants for deportation while also placing undue restrictions on refugees seeking safe haven in the U.S., provide places of welcome and healing, and other forms of material and pastoral support regardless of a person's immigration status, to work with our neighbors to ensure the dignity and human rights of all people. We will also engage in education, organizing advocacy, legal direct action and other appropriate methods to ensure the safety and security of all immigrants and refugees. We will also work toward meaningful reform of U.S. immigration laws.

The second resolution encourages all parishes to remove all obstacles to full participation in congregational life by all transgender people and anyone whose gender identity and expression differs from that assigned at birth by making all gender-specific facilities and activities fully accessible.

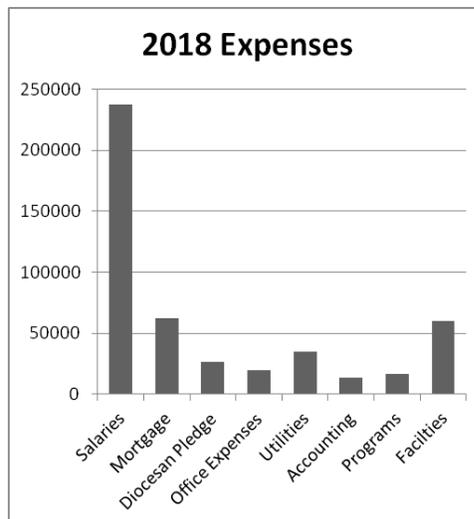
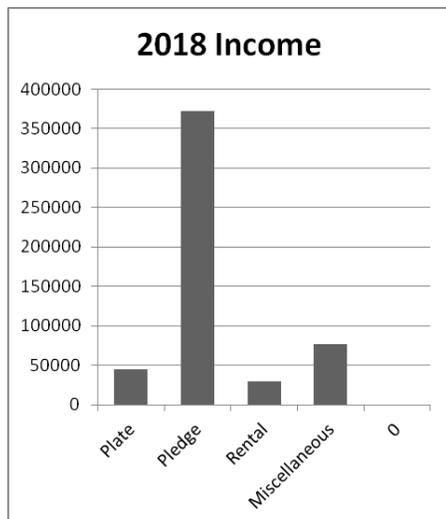
The final resolution states, "the Standing Committee on Liturgy and Music if [revising] the Book of Common Prayer, to eliminate, when possible all gendered references to God and to replace them with gender neutral language and if necessary to alternate gendered titles when referring to God.

As always, the convention was a joyous, hopeful experience. I recommend that everyone attend at least once.

Kristen Keating

Appendix A: Financials
Ascension Budget: 2016-2018

	End of 2016 Budget	Unaudited End of 2017 Budget	Preliminary 2018 Budget
INCOME			
Plate	\$54,780	\$44,682	\$45,000
Pledge	\$356,226	\$368,671	\$377,912
Rental Income	\$27,902	\$34,448	\$30,000
Misc.Unrestricted Income	\$85,257	\$107,571	\$76,329
Total Income	\$524,165	\$555,372	\$529,241
EXPENSES			
Education and Training	\$1,780	\$1,222	\$2,200
Salaries and Benefits	\$340,419	\$343,030	\$261,008
Mortgage - Principal & Interest	\$62,173	\$62,072	\$62,200
Diocesan Pledge	\$21,473	\$22,143	\$26,572
General Office Expense	\$21,256	\$19,090	\$20,000
Utilities	\$39,316	\$32,590	\$35,000
Accounting	\$29,750	\$24,861	\$13,250
Miscellaneous Expenses	\$768	\$419	\$1,000
Programs: Outreach	\$1,500	\$1,530	\$1,800
Programs: Ministry	\$14,791	\$9,632	\$14,400
Reserves	\$0	\$0	\$0
<i>Unrestricted Cash Reserves</i>	<i>\$0</i>	<i>\$0</i>	<i>\$0</i>
Facilities	\$66,452	\$57,282	\$60,000
Total Operating Expenses	\$599,678	\$573,871	\$497,430
NET OPERATING INCOME	-\$75,513	-\$18,499	\$31,811



Appendix B: From the Parish Office

Membership

2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
1,084	1,099	1,056	1,017	863

Average Sunday Attendance

2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
284	259	245	254	231

Dollars Pledged per Pledging Unit

2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
\$2,360	\$2,292	\$1,981	\$1,997	\$2,210

Number of Pledging Units

2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
192	188	179	169	171

Number of Baptisms

2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
25	6	5	7	6

Number of Weddings

2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
5	5	0	1	1

Number of Funerals/Deaths

2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
7	6	8	3	2

Baptisms: Nathan Xavier Lettrich
 Cristal Andrea Reyes
 Nelson Misael Reyes
 Isaac Ulises Reyes-Maya
 Christen Cahira Ruggeri
 Aaron Gabriel Sims

Funerals/Deaths: Thomas Fredrick Thiele
 Thomas Chea Teah

**SLATE OF NOMINEES FOR THE
ELECTION OF OFFICERS AT THE
ANNUAL MEETING OF CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION**

March 4, 2018

VESTRY—Vote for three

Susan MacLaughlin
Berenice Rodriguez
Bob Waters

DELEGATE TO DIOCESAN CONVENTION — Vote for two

Mardia Dennis
Gary MacLaughlin
Fredy Martinez

You must sign in to be eligible to VOTE!