

57TH ANNUAL MEETING

Sunday January 24, 2021

The Episcopal Church of the Ascension

10:00 AM



Episcopal Church
OF THE Ascension

www.ascensionmd.org

205 South Summit Avenue

The Episcopal Church of the Ascension Gaithersburg, Maryland

Agenda for the Fifty-Seventh Annual Parish Meeting 10:00 a.m., January 24, 2021 *The Reverend Javier Garcia Ocampo, Rector*

- * Opening Prayer: Javier
- * Adoption of Agenda
- * Minutes of Fifty-Sixth Annual Meeting (January 19, 2020)
- * Financial Presentation
- * Casting of Ballots for:
 - Three (3) three-year Vestry members
- * Voting results

OATH OF OFFICE:

“We, having been duly elected to the office Warden/Vestry Member of Ascension Parish in the city of Gaithersburg, Maryland, do declare our belief in the Christian religion, our assent to the Constitution and Canons of the General Convention of The Episcopal Church and of the Diocese of Washington and do affirm our adherence to the doctrine, discipline and worship of the said Church in the United States of America and promise to discharge faithfully the duties of a Church Warden/Vestry Member.”

- * Blessing
- * Next annual meeting January 23, 2022
- * Adjournment

MINUTES OF THE 55th ANNUAL MEETING January 19, 2020

Call to Order: At 11:54, the meeting began with an opening prayer by Padre Javier.

Kristen Keating moved to adopt the minutes and Gary McLaughlin seconded.

Financial Presentation: Avin Lalmansingh gave an overview of 2019. It was the first year without financial support from the Diocese. Last year we received about what we budgeted for. Spent less than expected and came out \$60k + (above?) planned. As Treasurer, he is optimistic moving into 2020. Financials are in the Ascendent and posted monthly on the website. The summary of the treasury report and 4-5 years budgets are on the last page of the booklet. Avin thanked the Vestry, Kevin Holland, Stewardship Committee for supporting him as Treasurer for the past two years.

Gary McLaughlin asked that we thank Avin for his efforts, after which, as incoming Treasurer, Gary went on to explain that the 2016-2019 data are actual numbers while the 2020 numbers are from the budget Gary developed. Note that we reduced our expenses over the years. We are in a good position to not worry about the coming year. Facilities still need to be addressed (the roof and fire panel) and aren't budgeted for yet. These need to be considered. Expect "rental" income to increase; \$500k is expected to come in. Expenses are mostly salaries then facilities. An Auditor is coming after three years of not having an audit. Gary expected it would change the budget and a new one can be presented at that time. The audit will help set up policies and programs as well.

The floor was open to questions. David Mitchell asked a question regarding the utilities followed by one regarding the \$2k spent on accounting. Utility bills have decreased over the past two years and Gary suspects that might be a result of how utilities are defined in the accounting realm, but that should be addressed by the audit. We are only spending \$2k on accounting because we are no longer using the accountant who managed it weekly. Lin is now responsible for it. Regarding the question of why other income isn't consistent and if it has to do with rental of the kitchen, again, it is likely due to definitions. Gary went on to address the different contracts and Avin shared his knowledge on that front as

well. This is another category that will likely be redefined during the audit. All Other money is what comes from pledges and plate donations. As for why salaries are decreasing from 2019-2020 and if the new online system will help correct the way we are accounting for our cash receipts and other categories, further investigation is needed.

Nominating Committee: Zadinga Ogada explained that the committee began its work in October, soliciting names from the congregation. The committee received ten names and met with each person to discuss what Vestry entails and asked them to pray on the idea of running. She thanked all who considered the opportunity and extended her gratitude to those who are running. There were four names, which were read aloud and presented (Adoma was not present as she had to work) and one who agreed to stand for Delegate. Since there was only one Delegate, that person would be elected by acclamation as stated in the revised bylaws. For Vestry candidates, Zadinga explained the process. Luis, Gordon, and Meredith are leaving as they completed their three-year term. Three new members will take their three-year term and the fourth person was needed due to internal movement. Betsy completed her time as Senior Warden; Zadinga stepped up from Junior Warden to Senior Warden at Padre Javier's request. Kristen Keating was nominated by the Vestry to be the new Junior Warden. Therefore, one candidate for Vestry will complete Kristen's remaining two years.

Javier called for Tellers. Janet King, Arturo Rodriguez, and Michelle Wood volunteered. A question was raised to ask if the vestry candidate who was not available for the Candidate Forum nor Annual Meeting should be allowed to be on the Vestry. Another person commented that work responsibilities keep people from being where their heart wants them to be. One person said the first person's comments should be stricken from the record because the candidate in question was not present to defend herself. Betsy stepped in to explain there is a rule that Vestry members must attend a certain frequency of Vestry activities to remain on Vestry. If obligations aren't met, there is a conference with that person to see if they may continue to serve. Another person spoke up to share his experience with not joining the choir and that we should take into consideration when voting. At this point, voting began.

General discussion while the vote was being tallied: A former Vestry member wanted to ask what the plans are for Ascension House. She was a member of Vestry when it was first bought. She discussed the programs and history of the house and its place in the life of the church. Betsy explained that in 2017 when we attempted to turn around finances, the top was renovated for Javier to live there. It was in great disrepair. When the parking lot was put in, a request was made to tear down the house at the same time. A historical preservation group wanted it to stay. There is mold, the foundation is “shaky”, critters live there and are in the living space. A lot of money is required to clean it up. A question of it being zoned for residential use was raised because that would prevent it from being used for anything else. It isn't zoned as residential. Attempts to rent it have been made with no luck. Gary, the treasurer, was asked by Javier prior to the meeting if there was anything we can do. Gary is open to all ideas.

Further comments and questions from the parish:

- Can we appeal to the City of Gaithersburg that we don't have the funds and that it's a detriment to the community? This happened with the Chapel; the congregation got the money together to fix it and we need to do that for the Ascension House.
- What happened to the G sharp program? The school cancelled it. The county won't pay anymore because a space is provided for them in the school. All of these will be reviewed by the Ascension House Committee.
- Javier's Call: Kristen Keating explained the process of getting Javier's paperwork to officially call Javier. Expect to have the Bishop's signature by Friday for him to officially be our Rector.

Junior Warden Kristen Keating addressed committees at Ascension and started by saying that everyone says we like being with one another and are a healthy church. Two new Committees are available. Personnel will help Javier to handle salaries and evaluations for staff. If anyone is interested in joining, please tell Javier. Communications- Jesse is doing it solo. There's routine stuff (Ascendant, weekly bulletins), emergent things (emails, etc.), outreach (how we want the community to see us). We appeal to the youth to join. The Facilities Committee is small in number and requires more help. Members don't have to be handy; they need people who can research issues and be at the church to ensure work is done when appointments are scheduled. Thanks to the Worship, Finance,

Parish Life, Acolytes, and all Committee participants. She encouraged everyone to find a way to be involved.

Senior Warden Zadinga Ogada presented the priorities going forward. With respect to our facility, security cameras, our HVAC system, elevators, and plumbing all need to be fixed. Two large sections of the roof will need to be repaired as well as the fire panel and Chapel HVAC. These are all expensive repairs so sequencing is going to be key. The Vestry has discussed having another system to manage and track the required repairs. With respect to contracts we are looking at sharing space with Sandy Ridge Academy, Saint Barnabas, several 12 Step programs, and an organization called Infians for Christ. We need to find ways to schedule and organize so we have use of our spaces when we need it. Berenice Rodriguez has standardized contracts to protect us.

Voting Results: The vote for Ruth Anna Skowronski as Delegate was called by acclamation. Those in favor were requested first and given loudly together. No one raised their voice in disagreement. Ruth Anna was elected to the position.

The tellers returned with the results of the Vestry vote. Danielle Allen, David Mitchell, and Wendy Quijada were selected for three-year terms, and Adoma Baffoe was selected for the two-year term.

Javier thanked the outgoing Vestry members, Gordon, Luis, Meredith, and Betsy asking them to come forward for acknowledgement along with Avin, the outgoing Treasurer.

Adjournment: At 1249, Gary McLaughlin moved to adjourn the meeting. David Mitchell seconded and by acclamation the meeting closed.

Rector Annual Report

Dear Ascension Family,

As I sit down to write my first Annual Report as your Rector, I am filled with one overwhelming emotion—gratitude.

I thank God for his mercy and loving kindness, and I am grateful for the protection he has showered over us all in these difficult days.

I thank the vestry, wardens, and the staff of Ascension for all the careful recalibration of our plans and activities, and I am grateful for the work you have done to make them come to fruition.

I am thankful for this most excellent congregation, and grateful for your loving and enthusiastic participation in everything we have accomplished this year.

Just think: last January, we were innocents, planning for a predictable sort of year ahead. We actually had enough of everything but didn't seem to know it; we talked of fostering change in many areas, but it was really more of the same. God had another plan. We wouldn't have chosen it, just as we wouldn't have chosen the suffering and loneliness that accompanies this alternate reality. But we have all learned some powerful truths after accepting this reality, and we are better for it.

If you are like me, you found out how important faces are; the faces of people you love so much that it hurts to see them only on Zoom; the faces of everyone in the congregation, assembled at once, almost as if they are arranged in pews; even faces of strangers, walking their dogs or meditating as they run. Faces are beautiful, and we will see them again, fully and with joy.

We have discovered a deeper well of compassion for those who are sick, needy or depressed, and we have reached out to them.

We have found that whatever our computer skills may have been, they were not quite adequate, and we have made the effort to learn more.

We realized very early in the pandemic that we could trust each other, work with each other, and get all manner of things done that needed to be done.

We perceived, finally, just how vulnerable we are to an invisible micro-organism that cares nothing about us. Though frightening, we embraced the techniques that keep it at bay.

We came to a deeper appreciation of God's love and faithfulness.

Here is a tiny sample of things we have been able to do together:

-We have kept our vibrant congregation worshipping together with NO attrition for a year through the wonder of Zoom and other on-line platforms. This took planning, trial and error, and generous gifts to fund new equipment.

-We have a renewed interest in spirituality and ritual. The Education for Ministry Bible Study Group has the largest class in years; nightly Compline (a brief evening prayer service) rejoices in music and prayer together.

-We have been extremely fortunate to keep our Spanish Bible Study going. We meet week after week to study and learn from God's Word.

-We have held two on-line organ concerts designed and performed by our Minister of Music, Andrew Kullberg. These performances allowed the congregation-and the public- to delight in the music and to produce significant contributions to two worthy causes.

-We have held multiple drive-through opportunities for parishioners to receive God's blessing as well as the gladdening effect of seeing the faces of each other personally, privately and safely.

-The vestry has called everyone in the congregation on multiple occasions to ascertain well-being, and to solicit suggestions for regathering.

-Committees met regularly on line, doing the work of the church, socializing for a moment, and for some, learning just a little bit about 21st Century communication.

Each in our own way has learned why the Church of the Ascension is important in our life. Perhaps this is what we were meant to discover and to value, and to remember in the days ahead. One of the things I have learned is that elaborate plans announced for the year to come make considerably less sense than careful attention to the essentials of worship, service to the congregation, and willingness to preach the good news to those eager for the message. Of course, there are things that we must do to keep our congregation engaged and our facilities sound. I will ask for your help, and you have proved beyond any doubt that you will serve as you have done through this very difficult time. I am intensely grateful for your skills and talents, your generosity and loyalty. I thank you, humbly and sincerely.

I think that President John F. Kennedy put this very well. He said, "As we express gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them."

Thank you and May God pour more blessings upon you and all your love ones.

From The Senior Warden

At last year's Annual Meeting, I outlined what I thought would be our priorities for the year-- upgrading our facility and managing relations with the many groups that use our church. Of course, this was before we found ourselves in the midst of a global pandemic and had to pivot... And pivot we did.

We made it through 2020 by being flexible, resourceful and resilient. We developed new ways to mark important rites of passage, both happy and sad. We also found new ways to support one another from afar, whether with an email or call, a bag of groceries left on a front porch or a quick visit from behind a screen door. And here at church, we learned about online worship.

Before last March, I am sure that very few of us had imagined the possibility of "church by Zoom." And while it's not a perfect solution, it's a good one under the circumstances. Each week more than 100 participants link to our Sunday services. When you include those watching on other platforms and those attending Compline, we have done an impressive job of staying connected during 2020.

Despite our distance, we have come together in wonderful ways this year. Members of Ascension made generous donations toward St. James School, COVID-19 research, racial equality, food insecurity, and Ascension, itself. We also received many gifts to the Rector's Discretionary Fund to help those in our own community experiencing hard times. Members also blessed us with their time and talents on existing committees as well as new ones, such as the Reopening Committee and the Race, Equality and Social Justice Committee. Even amidst the pandemic, we are living our mission of being ambassadors for Christ.

Looking ahead, in addition to building repairs that always need our attention, we will continue to upgrade our audio-visual system because a hybrid church model with some worshipping in person and others worshipping at home is the way of the future. Our priority is making sure that everyone who uses our building does so safely, so as our community begins to reopen, we will revisit our contracts with the groups that use the church. Lastly, we will continue to think about how we can support our nearest neighbors, for example, with programs to improve literacy in its many forms.

I feel strongly that the year 2020 calls for a special thank you: Many, many thanks for your ongoing patience, understanding and support as we have worked to provide a safe and healthy worship environment for our community. This is what being one Ascension is truly about.

From The Junior Warden

This year saw many changes, however; there was one constant. Our facilities continued to age.

It is traditionally the responsibility of the Junior Warden to deal with facilities issues. I have learned a lot this year about building maintenance and repair. Fortunately, our parish administrator and Facilities Committee Chair Ted Bedell do a great job of dealing with facilities issues as they arise. Some of the things that we have had to deal with this year include repairing the vinyl soffit and reattaching the shutters on the chapel, repairing a roof leak over the office, and replacing the water heater.

Although we have not been gathering for worship, our facilities continued to be used by Sandy Ridge Academy who returned in August to continue using the classrooms downstairs and the undercroft. The Washington Grove Seventh Day Adventist Church returned to using the chapel in September. Because these organizations are our tenants it is our responsibility to make sure that they, as well as our own staff and church members, are safe while in our facility. To that end, I took responsibility for learning what the cleaning requirements were and the best methods for meeting those requirements. We hired Stratus Building Solutions because they use the electrostatic cleaning method which is thought to be the best way to prevent the spread of COVID. We have also placed MERV 13 filters in air vents in the office and classrooms downstairs and MERV 10 filters in all other air vents. Our HVAC system is too old to support MERV 13 filters in all of the air vents. The HVAC company that provides service for our units is investigating ways to make it possible to put MERV13 filters in all of the vents using our current system

As chair of the Personnel Committee I worked with the committee to update the contracts of all of the staff members and instituted an annual review process.

This year Padre asked that Zadinga and I participate in weekly staff meetings. I have really enjoyed these meetings. It is great to see how well our staff work together under Padre's leadership. We are truly blessed to have a staff of such hardworking, dedicated, creative people working to help us fulfill our mission at Ascension.

I have learned a great deal this past year. It has been an honor and privilege to serve as Ascension's Junior Warden. I look forward to the challenges of the coming year. Church of the Ascension, Gaithersburg is an amazing strong community. I am confident that we will emerge from COVID stronger than ever and ready to do even more to represent Christ wherever we may be.

Minister Of Music

Serving as Minister of Music at Church of the Ascension has been one of the most significant experiences of my lifelong career as a church musician. While I am thankful to have served here for almost two and a half years, my position and the church's music program have changed significantly in the past 10 months due to the COVID-19 pandemic. All of us have had to change how we think about church music, but the Ascension community and staff have supported my ongoing task of providing music for our virtual congregation.

Before the pandemic, Ascension's choir presented a choral evensong in celebration of the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. In this service, we performed new choral music and welcomed a guest speaker who worked personally with Dr. King in Georgia in the 1960s and transcribed his letters from the Birmingham jail.

After a very successful start to the Lenten season in March, we went into a nationwide lockdown and closed Ascension to parishioners as coronavirus cases rose. From that point forward, our services went virtual and have been taking place online ever since. Javier, Jesse, and I started out as the core group running Sunday services from the church while others participated from home. As time has passed, we have gained more in-person assistance with technology, preaching, and music, but our parishioners are still participating online.

This year, I organized two Organ Marathons that served as fundraising events for different causes. For the first marathon in April, I played the entire 1982 Hymnal to raise money for the CDC Foundation and assist with COVID-19 relief. Members and friends of Ascension came together to watch the marathon on YouTube and donated over \$7,000.

In late spring, our nation went through its most significant racial reckoning in decades. As organizations all across the county stood up to racism, police brutality, and white supremacy, our church staff and vestry decided that we had an obligation to demonstrate our dedication to equity and racial justice. In June, I performed a second Organ Marathon to raise money for the Black Lives Matter Global Campaign. Members and friends of Ascension tuned in as I played the

Lift Every Voice and Sing Hymnal from cover to cover. During breaks in the music, various members of Ascension spoke about current issues and what we can do to move our church and our nation forward. This event lasted about 6 hours and raised over \$6,000.

At the end of the summer, our choir attempted its first virtual music project. Using an accompaniment track that I recorded, singers recorded and submitted videos of themselves singing their own voice part of “Ave Verum Corpus” by W.A. Mozart. Afterwards, I used a video editing program to put everyone’s tracks together into a virtual choir. The project was challenging, but it was a good way to bring out choir’s voices together even though we could not be together in person. In the fall, we enlisted the help of a professional videographer and presented three virtual choir videos for the Christmas Eve service. Our choir sang the “O Come, all ye Faithful,” “Hark the Herald Angels Sing,” and “What is this Fragrance?”

In the next year, I hope to continue providing Ascension’s Sunday services with music that is both relevant and meaningful. Until it is safe for us to start making music together in person, we will continue to find ways to make music together virtually.

Andrew Kullberg, Minister of Music

Children’s Formation

January through March 8, 2020

10:00 am Infant/Toddler class

This class began in Summer 2018, as a way to serve families who attended the 10:15 “Families with Young Children” service which was discontinued that spring. The class also welcomes all ages on days when there is no regular Sunday school, like holidays and One Ascension Sundays.

Parents bring children to the “Place of Peace” (room 3) at the beginning of the service. After some playtime, we sing “This is the Day that the Lord has Made”. Next, we read a bible story, often using toys to illustrate it with the intention that

the children may later try to retell stories with the toys. We follow that by singing the creed and some other songs like “Marching (Jumping, Dancing, Singing) in the Light of God”. We talk about what we are thankful for and what we would like to pray for. Lastly, we play with toys, modeling positive social relations, until it is time for the children to rejoin their families for Communion.

10:00 am Godly Play (Preschool-5th grade)

For Godly Play, the children and teachers start off in the church service with their families. After the processional hymn and the Collect for Purity, we are called up to the front of the church for a prayer before going downstairs to Room 6 for Sunday School. Godly Play is a Montessori-based curriculum which presents the stories of the Bible using figures and objects within a sacred space. Children experience these stories, wonder about them with the story teller and explore the stories using the story objects or art materials. After the lesson and exploration, they rejoin their families for Communion.

About 3-4 children of a total of 10 typically attended on any given Sunday. The 10:00 Sunday school classes are taught and assisted by teachers, rotating from a strong team consisting of Geogette Dennis, Kristin Fitzpatrick, Denise Lionetti, Lovetta Willie, Michelle Wood and Kay Kolle. Megan Didavi also teaches and coordinates the Children’s formation program.

12:00 A Joyful Path

Beginning in September 2018 Gordon Donnelly began offering the curriculum called “A Joyful Path” during the 12:00 service in Room 2. The class used the Year One curriculum of Joyful Path which explores being a Christian in our modern world. The age range is from 3-16 and attendance varied from 2 to 12 children. Gordon adapts the curriculum to the ages present each Sunday with stories, arts and crafts.

2020 Virtual Sunday school

March 8, 2020 was our last day of in-person classes for the 10:00 am Infant/Toddler, Godly Play, and the 12:00 Joyful Path classes. From April through mid-June we met via Zoom at 9:30, typically with 2-3 children and their

families. We would sing together, tell a story, and pray together. We took a break during the summer months to plan for a full year of virtual Sunday school classes and resumed Sunday School via Zoom on September 20.

Since September 20, we have been meeting for virtual Sunday school every Sunday at 2:00 pm Eastern time. On most Sundays, 5-7 children join the class. Children of all ages and their families are welcome to attend. During the summer we planned a schedule of lessons and crafts. Megan prepared a kit for each child and mailed or delivered them before the first class. The kits include a project for each week and the clothes pins, fabric scraps, markers, stickers, glitter, pipe cleaners, and other supplies to make them. For example, during Advent the children made shepherd's crooks, a donkey, and a picture of the road to Bethlehem.

We begin each class with our song "This is the Day the Lord Has Made", and follow that with some yoga to help us prepare for the story. Megan then tells a story using the Godly Play materials and curriculum. After most stories we discuss the wondering questions. We ask "I wonder what part of the story you liked best?" "I wonder what part of the story you think is the most important." "I wonder what part of the story you think we could leave out and still have all that we need?" and perhaps most importantly, "I wonder what part of the story is about you?" These wondering questions are the heart of the Godly Play approach. The Godly Play approach allows each child to hear the stories of the people of God and to reflect on how the stories are manifest in their own lives. After the wondering questions we work together on a craft project using the supplies in each child's kit. We finish our class with prayers of thanksgiving and petitions. Each of us is invited to share something we are thankful for and then we pray together. Although we miss meeting in person, virtual Sunday school has revealed some rich and unexpected blessings for which we are deeply grateful. One of the most wonderful results is that we are joined each week by children near us in Gaithersburg and Germantown, as well as Virginia, and even as far as Chicago, Illinois. Our Sunday afternoons together give us time to grow in our love for one another and in the knowledge that God is with us in all times and in all places. All are welcome to join us at 2:00 pm Eastern time on Sundays for a most joy-filled time.

Megan Didavi and Michelle Wood

Worship Committee

The Worship Committee's activities were understandably less numerous or involved than those of the previous year, due to the extended closure of the church. The committee held three meetings at the church from January into March, and two Zoom meetings after that, one in April and one in August. In addition, we held an e-mail exchange to consider contributing to an online devotional resource for Advent. It was decided that this last possibility would have needed to be identified earlier than it was in order for the committee to have time to contribute content for it. We have begun to consider preparing something like this for Lent and Easter Week 2021.

The following is a summary of the committee's activities this year, along with things to note after the parish is able to resume regular operations.

- There is a need for more worship support providers--readers, Welcome Team members, acolytes--at 8:00 a.m. Sunday services. Some of those who have provided almost all of this support in the past will probably not be able to continue to contribute as extensively in coming months. This is likely to become a problem again when the church is able to resume its regular worship schedule.
- Offers of support were made for the Evensong office in memory of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., on January 19. The Minister of Music had made most of the necessary arrangements. Committee members provided some support by identifying individuals to serve as an acolyte and some additional ushers. In addition, one member contacted two of the other churches in Gaithersburg to let them know about the office and invite their members to attend.
- Long-term needs for worship support, Epiphany through Easter 2020, were identified and preliminary plans were made for addressing them. Most of these were overtaken by the closure of the church following the Second Sunday in Lent.
- Plans were started for the New Ministry Celebration at which Padre Javier would be formally installed as rector. The diocese provided a date, which ended

up falling after the diocese ordered all churches closed. So far, no further mention has been made (to the committee's knowledge) of a new date.

- The rector requested that the committee fund some small gifts he wishes to give to parishioners over the course of the year, particularly during Lent and on Mother's Day and Father's Day. A budget request for this was submitted to the parish treasurer and was granted.

- Some issues noted with services were identified and discussed:

-- There have been problems with volunteers for worship support activities at services other than on Sundays signing up and then not showing up.

-- Some readers and others speaking from the pulpit are not positioning the microphone in a way that enables them to be heard from the back, especially by people who have hearing impediments.

- Ascension House needs extensive cleaning and repair. Its condition was such that Padre Javier could not continue living there. When we are able to reopen our facilities, some means of funding the repairs and cleaning needs to be identified. We also need to come up with ideas as to how to use the facility.

- Planning support was provided for Holy Week Services. Of particular note was that Ruth Anna Skowronski researched and ultimately obtained the antelabrum used for the Tenebrae office. Also noteworthy is that Ascension was the only parish in the northern Montgomery County portion of the diocese that held an Easter Vigil. Bishop Chilton Knudson preached via Zoom at the online service.

- Ruth Anna did extensive work to design and arrange for the production of vehicle window stickers bearing the parish's current logo and giving its address, phone number, and web address.

- In response to a request from the Reopening Committee, the Worship Committee provided recommendations for distributing Holy Communion in a way that it could be received by parishioners at home during online services. At the same (virtual) meeting where this was discussed, suggestions for the conduct of outdoor services were made.

- Sari Stoddard has been doing indispensable service scheduling readers for online services, including Compline on weekday evenings.

Curt Lindsay

Facilities Committee

Despite the fact that we have not been worshipping in our facility since March, there were several facilities issues that needed to be address this year. Thanks to the efforts of our Parish Administrator and Ted Bedell, the chair of the facilities committee, we were able to continue to address these issues in a timely manner. Here are some of the issues that were addressed this year:

- Replaced the covering on one of the flat sections of the roof of the church
- Replaced the gasket on the freezer in the kitchen
- Fixed the grate over the air vent in the undercroft
- Fixed the sink in Room 6
- Eradicated termites from Room 6.
- Repaired the holes in the walls and the open wiring in the halls outside of the classroom's downstairs.
- Installed a new water heater because the old one could fail at any time
- Fixed a leak in the roof over the church office
- Fixed the vinyl vents around the soffits and reattach the shutters on the chapel
- Put MERV13 filters in the air vents in the office and the classrooms and MERV10 filters in all on the other air vents. This helps to prevent the spread of COVID.
- On the advice of the HVAC company, we adjusted the thermostat in the chapel to address an issue of extreme over heating

The committee plans to address the following issues in the coming year

- Clean the gutters on the church and Ascension House cleaned The gutters on the chapel were cleaned in 2020.
- Replace the bulb in one of the lights in the Ascension House parking lot
- Replace the bulbs in the lights along the walkway.
- Investigate adding a heating element to the one HVAC unit for the church that does not currently have one.

In addition to the activities of the Facilities Committee, the vestry also hired a new lawn care and snow removal company and a new janitorial service.

The cost of these facilities needs is substantial. We do not have sufficient funds in the Facilities Reserve Fund to cover these costs.

Respectfully submitted,

The Facilities Committee

Ascension House Committee

In early 2020, the Ascension House Committee investigated the possibility of obtaining a grant from the Maryland Historical Trust. After extensive communication with the trust and the Gaithersburg Historical Society, it was decided that although the house was eligible to receive trust funds, it was not in the church's best interest to pursue a grant. There were several reasons for this decision including the small likelihood of receiving enough money to complete all of the necessary renovations given that the house is not historically significant on a statewide level; the fact that the church would need to hire someone to manage the renovation and ensure that we received the funds from the trust in a timely manner; and those who receive funds must agree to use the building in a way that meets the requirements outlined by the trust. The main reason we chose not to apply for a grant was that after receiving funds, the church would be obligated to maintain the building in the future regardless of their budget. The committee was not comfortable placing this burden on future generations of the parish.

The committee had the house inspected and it was determined that despite some significant cracks in the walls on the first floor, the house is structurally sound. The roof is in good condition. It was also determined that there was not a significant mold problem. The moldy odor is most likely coming from the old carpet. We have also learned that in order to allow renters to use the second story we will need to replace the stairs off of the back of the house.

The committee met a few times to discuss potential uses for the house. We made an appeal to the parish for ideas and received one suggestion. It was decided that we would clean the house out and determine what we would need to do to rent it as either a residence or a commercial space. On November 10, people from the ReStore came to pick up a lot of the furniture. Unfortunately, they were not able to take the recliners and sofas. We will need to find another way to dispose of those. We also took the furniture that could not be reused and all of the broken appliances to the dump.

In an effort to determine what we are going to do with the house, Julia Thom called the county to learn whether there were any use restrictions placed on the property. She also inquired about any costs we might incur to prepare the building for rental. Here is what she learned, 202 S. Summit Ave. is zoned CD (Corridor Development). Per S-814(R), the approved site plan for the property, it is approved for office use. So, an office would be an approved use. Any interior or exterior changes would require a Commercial Renovation Permit. Any exterior alterations would also require an Historic Area Work Permit. Finally, a potential business would require a Use and Occupancy Permit and a Sign Permit.

Residential use is currently not approved for the property. A residential use would require the approval of a concept site plan (\$840 application fee) and a final site plan (\$550 application fee) to change the approved use to residential. You may be required to bring the interior up to building code for residential use. A multifamily rental housing license costs \$110 per unit.

In the coming year the committee hopes to be able to have the cracks in the walls repaired and the carpet replaced so that we can rent the property. This may be a challenge given our limited budget and the large number of vacant commercial spaces created by COVID. I am confident that we will find a way to fix up Ascension House and rent it.

Grey Harman Froelich Memorial Columbarium

The year of 2020 has been for all a challenging year. Concerns relating to the overall condition of the landscaping and physical condition were brought forth by several parishioners. New plants and 2 separate clean-ups and weeding's took place. Much thanks to Kathryn Froelich, Kristen Keating, Gary and Susan McLaughlin, Dorrett Sutherland and Linda Waters.

At Gary's suggestion a Columbarium Committee has been formed to revitalize and be better stewards of this wonderful resource. Members are: Gordon Donnelly (Elected Chair), Kathryn Froelich, Gary McLaughlin, John Pruessner, Dorrett Sutherland and Linda Waters. The committee has met several times in the past several weeks to discuss and act on some proposals. Hilgartner Stone from Baltimore has been hired to clean the brick facing both the niche side and the side that faces 355. In addition, to recommend a system that will improve the overall niche appearance. Gary is working on refinishing the bench. Linda will work on updating the landscaping in the spring. Funding for these improvements and maintenance comes from subscription fees to the columbarium.

If you are interested in any other information, please contact the Rector or Gordon Donnelly.

Respectfully,
Gordon L Donnelly
Columbarium Steward

Church of the Ascension

Treasurer's Report Cash and Reserve Funds December 2019 *(unaudited)*

Cash Account Balance Per Balance Sheet	
BOA Checking	\$211,418.61
BOA Savings	\$52,531.511
BOA Columbarium Account	\$ 16,382.34
M&T Endowment Account	<u>\$406,207.12</u>
Total Cash	\$686,539.58
Cash Totals by Cash Classification	
Unrestricted Reserves	\$216,732.50
Restricted Reserves	<u>\$469,807.08</u>
Total Cash	\$686,539.58
Cash Balance by Fund Category	
1) Unrestricted Reserves	\$216,732.50
2) Endowment Fund	\$406,207.12
<i>Held in an account with M&T Bank, managed through the Diocese of Washington</i>	
3) Facilities Reserve Fund	\$50,159.05
4) Memorial/Worship Fund	\$ 9,500.47
5) Columbarium Fund	\$16,382.34
6) Other Restricted Funds (Special Offerings)	\$ 3,940.44
Reconcile Change in Cash to Total Income	
Total Net Income (Accrual Basis)	\$0
Change in Cash	<u><u>\$0</u></u>

					BUDGET
INCOME	2,017	2,018	2,019	2,020	2,021
Plate and Pledge	413,353	452,348	397,750	375,200	375,200
Rental Income	34,448	48,965	56,444	46,508	48,023
All Other Income	49,790	23,032	11,054	11,713	8,000
Trusts/Endowments/Gifts	57,782	86,644	13,191	4,362	5,000
TOTAL REVENUE	555,373	610,989	478,439	437,783	436,223
EXPENDITURES					
Salaries and Benefits	342,446	206,120	211,812	203,499	260,000
Mortgage Interest	18,993	16,449	13,738	10,868	12,373
Diocesan Pledge	26,572	26,572	29,366	32,214	33,000
Utilities	32,652	37,861	33,903	30,370	29,000
Accounting	24,861	10,485	2,658	2,205	4,800
Ministry, Outreach, Educatio	12,533	11,301	14,414	13,180	11,700
Office Expenses	19,509	19,148	21,483	11,165	14,400
Facilities	59,264	65,376	92,192	65,862	60,000
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	536,830	393,312	419,566	369,363	425,273
NET REVENUE	18,543	217,677	58,873	68,420	10,950