

# 59<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MEETING

---

Sunday January 22, 2023

The Episcopal Church of the Ascension

10:00 AM



**Episcopal Church**  
**OF THE Ascension**

[www.ascensionmd.org](http://www.ascensionmd.org)

205 South Summit Avenue

# Agenda for the Fifty-Ninth Annual Parish Meeting

## 10:00 a.m., January 22, 2023

*The Reverend Javier García Ocampo, Rector*

- \* Opening Prayer: Padre Javier
- \* Adoption of Agenda
- \* Minutes of Fifty-Eighth Annual Meeting (January 23, 2022)
- \* Presentation of Vestry Candidates
  - Marcia Noble
  - Betsy Hasegawa
  - Henry Musikar
  - Curt Lindsay
  - Fredis Diaz
- \*Presentation of Convention Delegate Candidates:
  - Arturo Rodriguez
  - Angie Hight-Walker
- \* Casting of Ballots
  - Three (3) three-year Vestry members
  - One (1) delegate for Convention
- \* Financial Presentation
- \* New Treasurer
- \* Open mic
  - Ascension House
- \* Voting results

### **OATH OF OFFICE:**

“We, having been duly elected to the office of Treasurer/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 Treasurer/Vestry Member.”

- \* Next annual meeting January 21, 2024
- \* Adjournment
- \* Blessing

**EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION**  
**Minutes - 58th Annual Meeting**  
**January 23, 2022**

Call to order was made at 11:22am. The meeting opened with a prayer by Padre Javier.

A motion was made that we begin the 58th annual meeting and accept the agenda with the correction of the minutes from the previous year listed as the 56th Annual meeting instead of the 57th. The motion was seconded and it passed unanimously.

The treasurer explained the 2021 budget and how we arrived at our income for the year. The difference between the two left us with about \$32,000 and that was a positive year. He also explained the expenses; salaries and benefits were 57% of the expenses; facilities was 20%; utilities was 8% and diocesan pledge was 7%. All other expenses were 8%. He itemized it further. Example, for electricity, we have about \$25,000 to cover our fire systems and the alarms; the contracts for the extinguishers add up to about \$1,100. We had elevator expenses this year of \$3,200 to keep the machine going until we found out that the machine died. We had to spend another \$3,000 just to keep it going in a normal way. Outside, we had grounds and landscaping costs at \$11,500. All the repairs cost us about \$20,000. Thanks to the facilities co-chair we have the breakdown and details for the repairs. It has been a roller coaster and there is no way we can predict some of these things. The last column is the budget for this year. These numbers are best guesses. Salaries and benefits are slightly up and the Treasurer prays the net revenue will be \$16,000. A member asked who is included in the salaries and the Treasurer said there are three employees. When the administrator position is replaced, there will be four.

The Treasurer thanked the congregation for their generosity. With the disaster today, we will need to think about the facilities. A fundraiser, to be more forward. A member asked why salaries jumped from the 2020 budget compared to this year's budget. The Treasurer explained that it is Padre's housing allowance that caused the increase. He also asked if Lin's absence resulted in savings and the Treasurer said yes. Another member said that the date in the Treasurer's report should read 2021 and not 2017 so it will be corrected. The Treasurer wants to put together a Finance committee to help make financial decisions. A motion was made to accept the Treasurer's report with the change in the date from 2017 to 2021. It was seconded and it passed unanimously.

A member asked the Treasurer if he would give an update on the elevator. He said that in order to pay for the \$100,000 it will cost for the refurbishing, we decided to borrow the money with a low interest rate. Most banks and other places will not grant a loan. The Episcopal Church Building Fund will give us the loan if we fold in our mortgage for a total of \$200,000 for 25 years. It does a couple of things with our current rate of 6%. It will change to 3%. The current payment is \$5,100 and the new mortgage will be \$1,100. If we pay the current amount of \$5,100, we will pay it off in three years. The problem with the loan is that the company is in Chicago and they are having problems with the counties in Maryland. The document has different names for our church and it is confusing. Finally, the mortgage that was started to get the elevator fixed has not materialized and there has been no action on fixing the elevator. We will get through this and it will be taken care of.

Voting began after Padre explained how to vote online when there are multiple persons voting from the same household. We are voting for three people for three-year terms and one for a one-year term. The other two will be delegates to the diocesan convention.

Padre thanked everyone who has helped the church with their gifts. Volunteers and those who do stuff behind the scenes. He was very happy that people are confident to approach him with advice. This year, we formed new committees and he is happy there are many people who have joined them and now we are known at the diocese for these efforts. The History committee is new and he is thankful for the willingness of the congregation to be involved. His wish this year is to do something with Ascension House. We also need to be in the community so we will be seen. We need to know our neighbors. The Vestry retreat will be on February 12, 2022 and a staff member from the diocese will lead it.

Finally, Padre thanked the outgoing vestry members for their service to the church. He said the Senior Warden Zadinga was awesome and a person who gave him a sense of reason. Wadai for all her wisdom and Adoma who is very organized especially during the re-opening. Arturo was always present and his input was always appreciated.

Our new Senior Warden is Kristen Keating and Danielle Allen is the Junior Warden. Kristen thanked Padre for appointing her as the Senior Warden and she is honored. Zadinga expressed her gratitude. She said she has never had a more collegiate group of people to work with. She has benefited even though when you serve, you think it is service only. Zadinga said she has enjoyed the past five years and it has been wonderful. Stephanie thanked everyone for the time she was Vestry Secretary and it is very comforting to be part of an elite group which is the vestry and we cannot take it for granted.

Danielle announced the results of the votes; for the three-year terms Randall, Shirley and Roger were elected. For the one-year term, Lisa was elected. The two diocesan delegates will be Marcia and Elizabeth. Padre reminded the vestry members that the retreat will be held online on February 12, 2022. Kristen told the new vestry members that any expense over \$1,000 has to be approved by the vestry. Padre will invite the new members to join the vestry email group because there will be an emergency meeting in the next couple of weeks. The new vestry was sworn in. Padre reminded everyone that if they want to present their issues or concerns at the annual meeting, they need to submit it one month before the meeting.

Padre closed the meeting with a prayer. The next annual meeting will be on January 22, 2023

A member moved to adjourn the annual meeting and it was seconded. It passed unanimously. The meeting ended at 12:25pm.

---

## **RECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT**

My dear friends,

The year of our Lord 2022 has been truly exceptional in almost any way that we commonly measure a year's passage. Today, January 22, I am pleased to say that things seem to have reached a sort of equilibrium—a temporary, brief resting place to assess all that has happened in our lives, and in the community that is the Church of the Ascension.

Looking back to this time last year, we were preparing for a virtual Annual Meeting, and struggling with how best to handle the voting for vestry members over Zoom. I don't think anyone felt safe then in group situations. Even the Diocesan Convention was a virtual event. I am proud to say that the entire congregation followed recommended health guidelines for months without complaint. Very gradually, parishioners began to come back into church; very tentatively you began to take off your masks so I could see your beautiful smiles! By Fall, you had organized a very successful yard sale and cleanup activity.

After such a long time working from home, worshipping on Zoom, and worrying about absent relatives, you began to get together in ways that felt safe; the book club resumed in person, the Green Team and Equity and Social Justice groups began serious outreach efforts. The choir, under Andrew Kullberg, began to have pick-up sessions with the intent of healing the spirit, and perhaps enlarging the group a bit. We were fortunate to have a visit from Bishop Sally Sue Hernandez from the Diocese of Mexico in May. She radiated hope and energy for many of the efforts we have in common.

Of course, there were dark days as well. For a while, it was hard to believe that another vital part of the church's infrastructure had failed. First it was the elevator, a hundred-thousand-dollar expense, followed by separate serious roof leaks and associated interior damage. The cranky HVAC system for the sanctuary failed completely, the lighting for the parking lot had to be replaced. As the costs for these restorations mounted, I was momentarily

tempted to put off taking down an ancient oak that was largely dead. But the risk to life and the structure of the chapel should it fall was too severe to ignore, and it had to go. Fortunately, we have been blessed by the presence of Randall Adams, whose expertise in all aspects of building construction and maintenance has been generous and timely. Although no one can know when an element of the campus may fail, Randall has developed an exhaustive list of elements scheduled for examination, repair, or replacement, with the expectation that the cost of regular maintenance will be far less than abrupt emergencies.

Ascension experienced the death of several members of the community—Dorothy Thiele, Fran Spina, Roy Bevington, Ed Neal, Doris Froelich, Ruthie Swain and Mark Barnet. The congregation participated in the celebrations of their lives, in person and on Zoom. I want you to know that that this simple act of quiet presence spreads wide ripples of love and support for all who attend. I am not sure that we have fully addressed the depth of loneliness and stress that afflicts the physically well but socially isolated members of the community. Covid gave all of us feelings of isolation to some degree, and many still feel a bit lonely.

Mother Teresa has said, “The most terrible poverty is loneliness, and the feeling of being unloved.” We cannot allow such destructive emotional waves to take hold at Ascension. As we move into 2023, I want to foster active engagement in all that we undertake. Zoom has been a life saver during the worst of the pandemic, allowing us to have something of our mission. Today, it is certainly useful for anyone who is housebound, out of town, or infectious. But I am concerned that Zoom, as a regular diet is not sustaining. When I come to the monitor to greet you, the image is flat and I miss your sparkle, and all that makes you unique. When you view the service on your screen you hear the word of God—a very good thing—but you miss the essence of the service, the reality of being a member of the body of Christ. There is no one I am prepared to give up on, or let drift away. Are you? If there is someone whom you miss, reach out and ask him/her to come back. If there is a friend, relative, neighbor who is searching-- take the first step in love and friendship to strengthen the whole community. This is simply evangelism, nothing scary or objectionable.

I am delighted to have capable staff and loyal vestry and volunteers. There is so much we can accomplish together in the next year. With your help and enthusiasm, I believe that the Church of the Ascension in 2023 will be stronger, more dedicated and more vibrant than it has been in many years. May God give us the strength and vision to bring this about.

The Rev. Javier G. Ocampo  
Rector

---

### FROM THE SENIOR WARDEN

I think of 2022 as the year that Church of the Ascension, Gaithersburg returned to what I believe will be our new normal. My favorite parts of this year were the things that we did as a community. These things included prayer vigils; participating in meetings to learn about opportunities to promote social justice; stuffing back packs; gathering clothing for the immigrants being bused to the DMV from the southern border; visiting St Thomas to help with their program serving the immigrants; our trip to the cathedral for Rosa’s ordination; our first indoor yard sale; and the Giving Tree. I enjoy these opportunities to meet new people and get to know people better. I look forward to many opportunities for us to come together in the coming year to serve both our Ascension community and the community at large. I often refer to the people at Ascension as my church family. Growing up, one of the ways that I contributed to my family was by doing chores, keeping my room clean, setting the table for dinner, unloading the dishwasher etc. I am sure I am not alone in this experience. I think that we need to think of volunteering for activities sponsored by the church as our contribution to our church family. I am excited about the opportunity to work alongside old friends and make new friends in the coming year.

Although challenging, this time of transition to our new normal was made easier by three things. First, we have an amazing staff and I was very happy to welcome Julie Brewer and Rosa Briones to our Ascension family. I was

also very pleased to learn that Tracey had agreed to extend her time with us. Second, Ascension is also blessed with many devoted hard-working volunteers. I really appreciate all of Gary's efforts at the beginning of the year to keep the office going while we looked for a new church administrator and his work as treasurer over the past three years. I would also like to give special thanks to Randall for all his hard work on the facilities, either doing the work himself or being onsite to oversee the work and managing the contracts. Many thanks to Angie and Trevor for their fantastic work with the youth group. Thank you to all of the members of Parish Council (committee chairs and vestry) for all of your hard work during the past year. Third, thank you to everyone who volunteers their time to serve on a committee, bring food, serve on the Altar Guild or Welcome team. I am very grateful for all of these things because they make Ascension an awesome community. We have come this far by faith and with all of these gifts I am excited to see how far we can go in the coming year.

Kristen Keating

---

### FROM THE JUNIOR WARDEN

Goodbye 2022. Hello 2023. Concluding my first year as Ascension's Junior Warden, I will start by thanking you all for the trust you put in me to join the Vestry three years ago and for the Vestry's faith in selecting me as Junior Warden. The focus of this position is on the buildings and other elements of our facilities. I continue in my mission to encourage increased stewardship (sharing your time and talents) toward Ascension to maintain our beloved church.

This past year has been another full of change and growth. The year began with our Annual Meeting online due to continued pandemic restrictions and the failure of the Narthex's heating system. The exterior and parking lot lighting was restored in the Winter and Fall to prepare for increased in person activity as we returned to the building. The elevator was rehabilitated in the Spring while a large, diseased, and dead tree that posed a falling hazard was removed in October. I am grateful to Randall Adams for his knowledge and oversight of these facilities projects. Various sections of the roof have been replaced as we experienced several leaks. In the places we couldn't immediately repair, Randall ensured the areas were shored up to give us more time to sustainably finance them.

Your reaction to these few large projects is hopefully one of joy that we are taking great care to ensure the church has a long health lifespan and that we are focused on your safety. Additionally, you may feel unsettled by how we found ourselves in this reactionary position and for how much strain this puts on us financially. These are valid feelings to have, and I'm pleased that you all are engaged in the future of Ascension to keep these concerns in mind. Believe that the picture is not so bleak. We have attended to these maintenance issues within our means. We have plans to continue catching up while remaining within our means so we can follow a maintenance schedule into the future that puts less strain on us financially.

This is also my call to action to all of you. We will need your support to maintain the grounds. Please see this as additional opportunities to serve at Ascension. I understand that stewardship is more than financial. I pray you all will show your support through greater participation in our on-site activities. I have high hopes for how we will meet the challenges of this coming year. We are in this together, and together, with God, all things are possible.

Danielle Allen

## FROM THE MINISTER OF MUSIC

The greatest challenge presented to Ascension's music ministry this past year was to adapt to the ever-changing landscape of the covid-19 pandemic. In early January, we experienced a surge in cases and found ourselves worshipping virtually once again. Despite this challenge, members of the choir and I worked diligently to record our music ahead of time and play the recordings during Sunday Zoom services. This way, the sound of our pipe organ and choir could still be heard in worship even when all of us had to participate from home.

In the late winter and early spring, the Ascension choir prepared and performed a variety of new music for their first Lenten and Easter seasons in-person since 2019. We also welcomed guest instrumentalists to take part in our Palm Sunday and Easter services once more. Their presence greatly enhanced our worship experience.

The greatest accomplishment of Ascension's music ministry this past year was the increase in the number of musical opportunities made available for the choir, congregation, and community. Ascension's music programming expanded by reincorporating Choral Evensongs. Through these musically driven services of evening prayer, our community can now experience worship through new liturgy and an emphasis on lesser-known saints and celebrations in the Episcopal tradition. In September 2022, we presented an Evensong to celebrate the feast of St. Michael and All Angels, and it was positively received by all who attended. In just a few weeks, we will have another Evensong to celebrate the feast of the Rev. Absalom Jones in conjunction with Black History Month.

I am pleased to report that the Ascension choir has experienced a significant increase in participation since our last annual meeting. In April, we had our first Pick-Up Choir in which visitors were invited to join the Ascension choir in a more informal setting and learn an easy anthem to sing during the worship service. Since then, we have had five Pick-Up Choir Sundays, and all have included visitors of various ages and levels of musical ability. Our regular choir members have been blessed by the addition of these individuals and their voices.

There will be two more Pick-Up Choir opportunities during the Lenten and Easter seasons of this year. It is also worth noting that we gained two new regular choir members since our first rehearsal in September 2022, and we are working to continue increasing our membership.

For the first time in at least two years, we hosted a Sunday afternoon recital featuring students from my friend and colleague's low brass studio and his professional quintet, the Chesapeake Brass Authority. I am happy to announce that the Chesapeake Brass Authority will join us for our 10am service on Easter Sunday and take part in another low brass studio recital that we will host in early June.

In closing, I want to express my gratitude to the members and friends of Ascension for your support of our music ministries. It is my goal to always provide this community of faith with meaningful music that will complement our liturgy, enhance our worship, and inspire us to represent Christ wherever we may be. As we move further into 2023, I pray that you all will continue to support and invest in the growth and longevity of Ascension's music.

Andrew Kullberg

---

## CHILDREN'S FORMATION

Children are welcome here!

Ascension believes in its children - their innocence, energy, joy, spirit of wonder and the honesty of their questions. We believe that children have a place equal to the youth and adults of this parish at the table in God's house.

Children's formation is held at both 10:00 and 12:00. We use Godly Play, a Montessori-based Sunday School curriculum, presenting the stories of the Bible using figures and objects within a sacred space. Children

experience these stories, wonder about them and explore the stories using the story objects or art materials. The children and teachers join the congregation for the Eucharist and closing hymn.

Children may attend either in person, or via Zoom. We currently have 3-6 children who regularly attend at 10:00 (including one who attends over Zoom) and 2 who attend at 12:00. We have 4 trained Godly Play teachers, who take turns doing the lesson at 10:00: Kristin FitzPatrick, Michelle Wood, Denise Lionetti and Megan Didavi. Mary Rouse and Kay Kolle take turns assisting at 10:00. Megan Didavi is the only trained Godly Play teacher who does the lesson at 12:00 and Gordon Donnelly is the only helper. We are eager to train more teachers and recruit more helpers.

**Pancake supper children's activities:**

During the Mardi Gras Pancake supper, we offer children's activities such as making a Mardi Gras mask or decorating a Halleluiah banner which we will keep hidden until Easter when we may say Halleluiah again!

**Easter Egg Hunt:**

The congregation donates plastic eggs stuffed with candy or small toys and we invite children to search for them on the church grounds. We often invite youth group members to help hide the eggs.

**Children's Sunday:**

In the spring, the children and their teachers plan a One Ascension service. We work with our Director of Music, Andrew Kohlberg and the Spanish service Music Director, Jesse Velasquez, Sr. to choose the music. Children help with welcome team duties and do the readings for the day.

**Family Activities:** We plan to organize family fun activities in the spring, summer and fall. In the past, we have held a bike rodeo and met at Butler's Orchard.

**Epiphany Pageant:** January 8, 2023 we performed "Wow! A Nativity Play for Kids" by Gwynne Watkins. Nine children from all three services attended several rehearsals to prepare for the performance. Our actors are: Chelsea Osorio, Joshua Moffat, Rosemary Janiak, Jesse Velasquez, Jr., Alex Dias, Francis Janiak, Fimi Popoola, Oyin Popoola and Claire Rouse. Five adults (Gordon Donnelly, Kay Kolle, Kristin Fitzpatrick, Ruth Anna Skowronski and Megan Didavi), led by high school senior Melvyn Velasquez, designed the set over several work sessions. Andrew Kohlberg accompanied the Christmas Carols on the piano.

For more information, or the Zoom link, contact Megan Didavi at 703-626-7199 or megandidavi02@gmail.com

## YOUTH GROUP

For grades 6 and up (including alumni both from local colleges or those visiting home), we gather for Ascension Youth Group on the second and fourth Sundays of each month from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. Since Fall, we have had around 10 active students, one of our smallest groups in a while. This is because we have graduated 13 students in the past three years. Our leadership team is composed of three lay leaders. As we no longer have a Sunday morning educational component for Youth in this age group, we added formation to the evening program, when most of our students are more awake and engaged. Each Youth Group meeting consists of the three "Fs", Food, Formation and Fun!

At the annual Expo (formerly the Ministries Fair) in September, we begin recruiting new students. Then our first meeting is a cookout in September where we brainstorm themes for the year ahead. We use mainly our own formation curriculum, keeping the material simple and biblically based, and most importantly, relevant. Often, we

pull from real-world activities to focus the discussion. We treat students as responsible young individuals who want to learn more about the Bible and its meaning in their lives.

Youth Sunday is a critically important activity for our Youth, and hopefully the entire Ascension community. The students plan and lead the service with our high school seniors presenting the homilies. Importantly, they select the music that has meaning for their lives. In the Spring of 2022, we had three seniors; young men who had all been in the Youth Group since sixth grade. It was an emotional and amazing experience. Look for Youth Sunday this Spring, 2023!

Service is a key component of the Ascension Youth program. In the summer of 2022, a week-long summer work camp experience supported the students from St. James School in Philadelphia, PA. This year was unique; our youth were camp counselors at North Bay, on the northern Eastern Shore of MD, for the St. James students. It's the summer camp for St. James with all the typical activities; swimming, basketball, campfires, and zip lines. Usually, we go to the campus in Philadelphia and work at the school itself, so this was truly a unique experience. We had ten youths participate, including two graduates! It was an amazing experience! Our Youth have enjoyed serving St. James students since before it was an official school, for over a decade.

Ascension's Youth Group is focused on forming lasting relationships through shared meals, fellowship, service, and fun. The strength of these relationships is born out of the closeness of the community. Fun games and outings include holiday parties and cookouts as annual events.

Contacts: Angela and Trevor Hight Walker, D-Win Allen

## WORSHIP COMMITTEE

Around the start of this year, the committee put together an online "Lent Madness" display following the example obtained from Living Compass. Biographic sketches for each of several saints were made available each day, and readers voted for their favorites. The choices advanced through a tournament bracket until an overall winner was determined. Several committee members and others helped condense the sketches to a maximum of 1000 characters to fit within the Facebook size limits. Ruth Anna Skowronski, Arturo Rodriguez, and Padre Javier provided Spanish language translations.

When the bishop authorized resumption of hand-to-hand delivery of Holy Communion, bread only, this past February, the committee assisted the rector in determining whether enough parishioners were comfortable with this to proceed with it, or whether to stay with the pre-consecrated kits. The outcome was that we would provide both methods and allow individuals to choose their preferred method at each service.

Instruction manuals for the acolytes and lay readers have been revised and put onto the parish web site. The Altar Guild is still undergoing reorganization and will update their instructions when they are ready to do it. We still need to update the instructions for the Welcomers (formerly known as the Welcome Teams).

A concern was expressed to the committee about the reading of the Gospel at the Pentecost 2021 Eucharist. The entire Gospel was read in each of the languages for which there were volunteers, making the reading overly lengthy. This year, a few verses of the Gospel were read in each language.

Our first liturgical observance of Juneteenth was held on the actual day, June 19. The committee offered support for the service, but in the end, the work of the Ascension Equity and Justice Committee and the music program covered almost all required preparations.

As noted in last year's report, members of the Worship Committee expressed the feeling that the committee should not be responsible for the overall coordination of the Ascension Expos. Curt Lindsay addressed the matter to the Parish Council with a suggestion that the council take on that responsibility.

The council agreed and filled that role this year. The Worship Committee put together a display for the event and had people standing by to answer questions from attendees. The effort was quite successful, yielding new or returning participants for the choir, the Altar Guild, the Worship Committee, the Lay Readers, and the Acolytes.

To address a request from the Finance Committee, the Worship Committee submitted a funding request for the upcoming year. We have requested \$10,000 as a preferred level and a minimum of \$8,000.

Like last year, some expressions of concern were addressed to the committee over the large banner hung above the altar. We learned that whoever placed it there did so without consulting the rector. We recommend that in future years, the banner be placed elsewhere, such as over the door to the columbarium or on the wall of the narthex over the stairwell. Also, we recommend that the rector's permission be obtained before placing anything in the nave.

Again this year, we have put together an online Advent meditations delivery using the pictures and quotes in "Living Well through Advent" from Living Compass. This year, we are using both the English and Spanish editions. In addition, Ruth Anna Skowronski translated the English texts into Spanish after noting that the Spanish texts from Living Compass were not translations of their English texts.

Contact: Curt Lindsay

---

## FACILITIES COMMITTEE

Calendar year 2022 has presented the Facilities Committee and the Vestry with multiple capital expense challenges. It is with a sense of accomplishment knowing that wise and educated decisions have been made to complete these projects. We have been very good stewards of the resources at our disposal.

The following is a listing of the capital projects that have been completed this year.

The Chapel fire panel was replaced at a cost of \$4,900.

The elevator was completely restored at a cost of \$115,000.

Parking lot and eave area lighting was restored at a cost of \$10,213.

The outside church signage lighting was restored at no cost to the Church by a generous contribution from two of our members.

The Sanctuary HVAC system was replaced and upgraded with a modern highly efficient system with humidity control, a cost of \$55,500.

The remaining flat roof sections over the Narthex and Sacristy / AV rooms were replaced at a cost of \$26,701.

And one diseased tree near the Columbarium was removed at a cost of \$8,000.

I was able to complete three of my goals for the year. First was to develop a facilities annual operating budget which allowed for the treasurer and finance committee to better see what is actually spent in operating the day-to-day business of the campus.

I also developed a spreadsheet that tracks our past and present capital expenditures and projected future capital expenditures out five years.

And thirdly a permanent, easy to access set of files was established in hard copy as well as electronic for all capital expense history with signed original contracts, owners' manuals and final invoices.

I am pleased to report that we were able to keep up with all our contractual obligations and daily operations of our campus. I am also looking at ways to reduce expenses and conserve on utility costs.

Looking forward to 2023, we will be faced with the probability of replacing the remaining Educational Wing shingled roof as well as the Sanctuary Roof. Finally, another concern I have is with the life remaining on the rooftop combination AC and air handlers, especially the lower level unit.

I would like to thank all of those who have supported me in these often difficult and challenging tasks. Thanks essentially to Padre Javier and the Vestry.

Contact: Randall Adams

### **COLUMBARIUM COMMITTEE**

The Columbarium was designed by Richard Froelich and dedicated to the memory of his wife Grey at the 1991 Easter service. The Vestry has overall responsibility for the management, maintenance, and upkeep of the Columbarium. The Columbarium Custodian (Kathryn Froelich) along with the Columbarium Committee (Susan McLaughlin, Chair) work with the Vestry Liaison on the day-to-day management of the facility, and report to the Vestry as requested.

**Contacts:**

Kathryn Froelich, Columbarium Custodian	Email: Kathryn_froelich@yahoo.com
Susan McLaughlin, Columbarium Committee Chair	Email: quilter@his.com

### **ASCENSION EQUITY AND JUSTICE COMMITTEE (AEJC)**

The Ascension Equity and Justice Committee (AEJC) at the Episcopal Church of the Ascension, Gaithersburg was formed in June 2020 in response to the social unrest and ongoing systemic inequities in our country. For the past 2 ½ years, we have dedicated ourselves to promoting justice and dismantling inequity and injustice in our church, community, and country. Our work falls into three categories: spiritual growth, education, and advocacy. In 2022 we stepped more fully into the advocacy role.

Our committee is open to anyone feeling a call to action around issues of equity and justice. Several people are members of other Episcopal churches, and two of them (Deborah Beebe and Hollis King) are very active in our committee's work. Ten or so members attend nearly all meetings and are very active in organizing and participating in committee activities. Others attend meetings when they can and participate in activities of particular interest to them. Others attend few or no meetings but keep up with issues of interest by reading the committee's communications. Others simply pray for the committee and our mission. Since the beginning, we have welcomed any level of participation.

Our membership grew to 28 people in 2022. Current members are Laurie Yelle (Chair), the Reverend Javier Ocampo (Rector), Danielle Allen, Ed Armstrong, Deborah Beebe, Alice Benson, James Black III, the Reverend Rosa Briones, David Burton, Richard Chasdi, Wadai Dennis, Megan Didavi, Tracey Forfa, Nancy Hadad, Sara Harris, Sharon Hayden, Hollis Ann King, Janet King, Kay Kolle, Diane Leach, Marcia Noble, Nancy Reding, Mary Rouse, Ruth Anna Skowronski, Gail Unterberger, Bob Waters, Michelle Wood, and the Reverend Amy Yount.

We generally meet on the first and third Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m., currently via Zoom. For further information and the Zoom link to our meetings, contact [AscensionAEJC@gmail.com](mailto:AscensionAEJC@gmail.com).

**Accomplishments in 2022:** Since its inception, our committee has celebrated the diversity of our parish and our community by:

- Acknowledging and respecting the inherent dignity of every human being and celebrating our differences.
- Bonding with one another in prayer and fellowship.
- Rooting our mission in Scripture by presenting and discussing scripture, prose, or prayer at our meetings.
- Listening carefully to each other's thoughtful presentations about our experiences with equity and justice and offering support.
- Examining inequalities and injustices and considering how we can live into our interconnectedness using our God-given talents to lift up every member of our human family.
- Educating ourselves by reading news clips, books, and articles; watching films and programs; attending presentations; participating in training sessions; walking in marches; discussing issues of equity and justice with one another; following events and information from the national Episcopal Church and the Episcopal Diocese of Washington (EDOW); and interacting with religious and community leaders. Ed Armstrong prepared comprehensive news briefs of relevant local, state, national, and international issues, events, and legislation for every single AEJC meeting through September 2022, when James Black took over the task. We have shared much of this information with the congregation.
- Conducting advocacy for causes that promote equity and justice.
- Partnering with like-minded organizations such as the Pine Ridge Reconciliation Center, Pine Ridge SC.
- Exploring topics relating to societal and religious diversity as well as equity and justice.

### AEJC ACTIVITIES IN 2022

#### Events held

"A Conversation about Criminal & Social Justice in Montgomery County" with Montgomery County At-Large Councilmember Will Jawando, moderated by Ed Armstrong, on January 13. Thirty-eight people attended. Listen to it here: <https://youtu.be/JYN85llbueo>.

Watch Party (February 3) and Discussion (February 10) of the documentary film *13<sup>th</sup>*. Both Zoom events were attended by 12–15 people. The film examines the U.S. prison system and looks at how the country's history of racial inequality drives the high rate of incarceration in America: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=krfcq5pF8u8&t=61s>

"Sharing Personal Experiences of Equity & Justice" on February 24. The 12 participants met in breakout rooms to deal with equity & justice (or inequity & injustice) in our families, our neighborhoods, our workplaces, and at Ascension. "Sharing Personal Experiences of Equity & Justice: Session II," on March 24, had 5 participants who discussed equity & justice (and inequity & injustice) in the world and in our nation, particularly among Indigenous Peoples, and at Ascension.

"Becoming an Advocate for Social Justice in Voice and Spirit," a return Zoom event with Hazel Monae, EDOW Missioner for Equity and Justice, moderated by Ed Armstrong, on March 10. Twenty-four people attended. Listen to it here: <https://youtu.be/7l8lNKoyfHY>.

"Interactive Briefing on Federal Programs and Legislation Advancing Equity & Justice," a town-hall-style Zoom meeting with Congressman David Trone (D MD-6) moderated by Ed Armstrong, on April 7. Twenty people attended. Watch it here: [https://youtu.be/V5j9Wg\\_hgPo](https://youtu.be/V5j9Wg_hgPo).

"Fostering Trust, Respect, and Understanding at the Pine Ridge Reconciliation Center (PRRC), Pine Ridge, South Dakota" via Zoom on May 5, including presentations by Tracey Forfa, Diane Leach, and Pastor Dan Johnson, Director of the PRRC. About 20 people attended.

Watch Party at the church and on Zoom (June 6) and a Discussion on Zoom (June 8) of the film *Crip Camp: A Disability Revolution*. About 14 people attended each night. Participants were moved by the film and had a deep discussion.

The June 23 AEJC meeting consisted of an honest discussion about how to best cope with discouraging events taking place throughout the nation and world, and to keep ourselves mentally and physically equipped for the road ahead. Michelle Wood moderated the session, and Hollis Ann King and Mary Rouse prepared materials to augment the spiritual and mental health aspects of this discussion.

Technology genius Danielle Allen produced every event flawlessly.

#### Excursions Held

Rockville African American Heritage Walking Tour on February 12. The 18 participants visited 7 sites and learned a lot about local African American history. Several participants had lunch together afterward.

National Museum of the American Indian on April 9. Twelve people attended. The excursion was a prelude to the Zoom event "Fostering Mutual Trust, Respect, and Understanding at the Pine Ridge Reconciliation Center, Pine Ridge SD," held May 5. Many had lunch together afterward.

The Woodend Nature Sanctuary of the Audubon Naturalist Society, Chevy Chase, with Ascension's Green Team, on June 11. Twelve participants examined the pollinator and other plants, under the guidance of Master Gardener Linda Waters, with an eye to planting a pollinator garden on Ascension's grounds. Several participants had lunch together afterward.

A Candlelight Election Eve Prayer Vigil outside the church from 7:00 to 8:00 pm Monday, November 7. Twelve participants read prayers for our community, our leaders, and our nation.

The Washington National Cathedral on November 12 for the ordination of Deacon Rosa Luisa Briones. About 20 Ascension members attended. Nine people had lunch together afterward.

Ascension's Latino Community Day on November 19 at St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Dupont Circle, DC. The committee arranged transportation to St. Thomas and helped with feeding, clothing, and caring for immigrants and their children bussed to DC from Texas and Florida.

#### Exhibits, Newsletters, Resources, and Social Media in 2022

For Black History Month (February), James Black prepared a parish newsletter on the November 2021 excursion to the National Museum of African American History and Culture.

The AEJC wrote an article about Juneteenth for the June 12 bulletin that included links for Juneteenth events in the community. Barbara Harbison wrote an article with Laurie Yelle for the June 19 bulletin about the history of Juneteenth and Barbara's experiences of celebrating the holiday with her family.

In June the AEJC sent the Youth Group a congratulatory message about their excellent work on Youth Sunday with special congratulations to the graduating seniors.

In a bulletin article the AEJC encouraged congregants to read a book about equity & justice issues for National Book Lovers Day (Aug. 9) and provided a list of books suggested by our members.

In September Ed Armstrong prepared the AEJC's contribution to the Digital Expo, and he and Laurie Yelle put together the AEJC's Ministry Fair trifold and materials. With other AEJC members we provided handouts in English and Spanish about the AEJC, our upcoming event with Reverend Ann, and our collaboration with the Pine Ridge Reconciliation Center in SD. The handouts in Spanish were particularly appreciated.

In September Ed Armstrong compiled selections from our community's Scripture, Prose, and Prayer exercise, and we offered this digital collection to the congregation.

In November James sent the congregation an informative newsletter about Indigenous people's history.

Danielle Allen posted on Ascension's social media sites information related to the committee's work all year long. She updated the committee's website information, created sophisticated registration systems for our events, and skillfully produced all AEJC events. We could not do our work without her.

### Outreach

AEJC members helped organize and participated in Ascension's outreach activities, including Mobile Med and the Lord's Table (coordinated by Michelle Wood); the men's shelter lunch project; and the yard sale. They helped with the Giving Tree project by creating bilingual requests for gifts for charity, service, and prayers; making the cards, envelopes, and ornaments; and preparing the tree.

### Community Relations

The AEJC sent Hazel Monae, EDOW Missioner for Equity & Justice, a copy of Montgomery County Councilman Will Jawando's book *My Seven Black Fathers* as a going away gift.

Janet King and Laurie spoke with Rudy Logan, (then) EDOW Interim Missioner for Equity & Justice, about our AEJC activities and goals, and he shared his vision for EDOW's equity & justice mission. The committee sent him a letter of congratulations on his appointment as EDOW's permanent Missioner for Equity & Justice.

The AEJC sent Councilman Will Jawando a letter of support denouncing the harassment and hate speech he received at an online meeting.

We welcomed to the AEJC Deborah Beede, Vestry member at Good Shepherd Episcopal Church Silver Spring, who is helping us collaborate with Good Shepherd, and, through Deborah, with Transfiguration and Ascension, Silver Spring.

## **PLANS FOR 2023**

### Upcoming events

Reverend Ann Moczydlowski will speak on "Hope for American Criminal Justice Reform: Ending Torture, Dismantling Racism, and Developing Restorative Alternatives" on Monday, January 23, 2023, at 7:00 pm via Zoom. She will describe her volunteer work with the [Interfaith Action Center for Human Rights](#) (IAHR). Hollis King and James Black III will moderate.

Ascension's own Diane Leach will speak by Zoom on "European Colonization's Impact on American Indians Along the Mid-Atlantic Seaboard: A Story of Population Loss, Cultural Degradation, and Forced Removal" in February (date to be determined). Christy Gonzales, a friend of Danielle's, will join Diane to describe the collectively shared history of our country's Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations, drawing examples from history, the communal nature of her tribe, and her role in the Native American Commission in Fargo, ND. We hope to coordinate the event with an announcement of the Green Team's inauguration of a Piscataway Pollinator Garden on Ascension's grounds and a robust campaign to raise funds for the Pine Ridge Reconciliation Center (PRRC) in South Dakota.

Our line item in the Ascension budget for a partnership with Pastor Dan Johnson and the PRRC has been granted. In the short term, we will help PRRC and residents of Pine Ridge meet their financial needs through items donated to the Giving Tree project. We will then start a more robust donation campaign in conjunction with our event with Diane Leach on Native American history.

We are planning an excursion to the National Museum of American History to visit "Presente! A Latino History of the United States" and other exhibits. Date to be determined. Optional lunch together will follow. See: <https://americanhistory.si.edu/exhibitions/presente-latino-history-united-states>.

AEJC members plan to meet with the Youth Group, the Young Adult Group, and the Spanish-speaking congregation to gather their input on equity and justice issues and the committee's work. We'll also express our interest in mentoring our youths.

Other plans are:

- Holding congregation-wide events for viewing and discussing films on equity and justice issues every two months
- Taking excursions every two months
- Holding speaker events every two months
- Holding prayer vigils
- Assisting in other Ascension activities (outreach activities, work with immigrants, yard sale, Giving Tree, choral services related to equity & justice)
- Preparing a resource list of books, articles, films and programs, organizations, and websites relating to equity and justice for the congregation
- Preparing comprehensive news briefs of relevant local, state, national, and international issues, events, and legislation for AEJC meetings and offering them to the congregation
- Helping to ensure that Ascension is fully accommodating to persons with disabilities
- Interacting with community leaders and organizations
- Advocating for policies and laws to achieve equality and justice
- Partnering with other Episcopal churches and other faith communities

Suggestions are welcome!

#### OUR MISSION STATEMENT

My commandment is this: Love each other as I have loved you.

*John 15:12*

***Mission:*** *As our Lord commands and to which we commit in our Baptismal covenant, our mission is to take active and deliberate measures to assure that the inherent dignity of all peoples is acknowledged, respected, and protected. By all peoples, we mean every adult and child of every race, ethnicity, nationality, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, physical ability, religious background, and socioeconomic status under God's creation. We do not overlook but rather respect and celebrate our differences as God intended. We remember and live into our interconnectedness, knowing that we are only as strong, healthy, happy, and satisfied as the least of our human family. We use our God-given talents to lift up every member of our human family.*

*We will achieve this through active and deliberate measures such as:*

- *Creating a safe space to discuss inequities within our church and in our community*
- *Becoming a Beloved Community by moving from an inclusive congregation to a connected congregation where all feel they belong*
- *Encouraging members to work toward actively eliminating injustice*
- *Participating with activities/organizations that are already working to bring equity (e.g., Habitat for Humanity; Identity, Inc., Gaithersburg; and 3GDC).*
- *Providing educational opportunities for the congregation and community on issues of social justice, race, and inequity that empower them to speak up and speak out against instances of injustice*

*How:*

- *Celebrate culturally important days/activities that are present in our community.*
- *Make use of national and diocesan programs such as the Episcopal Diocese of Washington's Sacred Ground dialogue series and the national Episcopal Church's initiative "Becoming a Beloved Community," which includes the "From Many, One" project.*
- *Host seminars, town hall-style meetings, vigils, film viewings, lectures, discussions, and service projects for our congregation and the community, including other faith groups.*

- *Encourage the sharing of stories and experiences.*
- *Recommend media (films, books, articles, lectures, workshops, seminars) that provide diverse perspectives.*
- *Conduct a racial audit: research and write up Ascension's history with regard to race and other aspects of its diverse history.*

Contact: Laurie Yelle, AEJC Chair

### ASCENSION HISTORY COMMITTEE

#### Ascension History Committee Members:

Michelle Wood (chair)  
Megan Didavi  
Janet King

Marcia Noble  
Ruth Anna Skowronski  
Laurie Yelle  
Rev. Amy Yount

In 2022 the Ascension History Committee conducted research about the history of the Church of the Ascension regarding race and racism. We focused on the history from Ascension's founding in 1880 as a mission of Christ Church, Rockville to the present time. We conducted this work as part of a Diocese-wide initiative called the Congregational History component of the Reparations Task Force. The purpose of the Reparations Task Force is to investigate the financial legacy of chattel slavery in the Diocese. The congregational history project is exploring the history of congregations and their connections to slavery. In September 2022 the Ascension History committee completed the report and submitted it to the EDOW Congregational History group. The EDOW Reparations Task Force held an in-person meeting and webinar on October 1, 2022 to discuss the legacy of the Diocese's involvement with slavery, approaches to reparations, and to highlight the key findings from the congregations that are investigating their histories.

The Ascension History committee is planning several activities for 2023 to build on the work done to develop the history report. The committee will work to preserve and protect the historical documents we located in our work. We also plan to connect with other ongoing congregational activities such as Tending our Soil, to talk with parishioners about our history. We also plan to collaborate with the Green Team efforts to build a garden on the Ascension grounds, which would offer opportunities to honor the Piscataway people, who first inhabited the land where our church is located.

### ASCENSION'S CHRONIC ILLNESS SUPPORT GROUP

For people dealing with a chronic illness, Ascension offers a way to receive support and spiritual sustenance from a caring community. Those individuals and their family members and/or caregivers are invited to join Ascension's Chronic Illness Support Group. We have traditionally met monthly to pray together, offer one another upliftment and camaraderie, and share ways to continue living our lives to the fullest. We also pray for those on Ascension's extended prayer list.

Some people come to the meetings only during the course of their treatment, and others remain in the group even after they have regained their health. Many enjoy continuing to bond and offering support to others. All that is shared in the group is kept strictly confidential.

Traditionally we have met on the second Monday of each month in Ascension's Room 1 from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Participants have brought a bag lunch.

In spring of 2020, we suspended our meetings because of the pandemic. Laurie Yelle polled former participants in fall of 2022 and did not find anyone willing to come back to in-person meetings or participate via Zoom. She is willing to plan and run the meetings, either in person or virtually, if there is interest.

Contact: Laurie Yelle at lyelle@aol.com or call Father Javier at the church office (301-948-0122).

## OUTREACH COMMITTEE

The Outreach Committee serves as a bridge between the Church of the Ascension and its surrounding geographical and spiritual communities.

As representatives of Christ, we seek to understand the needs of our neighbors, and to coordinate outreach activities of the parish.

We actively seek out and create opportunities for our church members to interact with the greater community, sharing what our church has to offer.

In 2022:

We have continued with several of our ongoing activities-

For the Men's Shelter (coordinated by Edith Sekasi) we have been making approximately 100 bag lunches on the third Sunday of every month. Volunteers meet in the undercroft and assemble sandwiches, snacks and drinks between the 8:00 and 10:00 a.m. services, so that they can be delivered before noon.

Contact Edith Sekasi.

During the fall, winter and spring, we have continued to support Lord's Table, which had been on hiatus due to covid, but has been ongoing this year, and we have been active in our support. Our stalwart volunteers prepare and serve dinners on the third Monday of each month. No dinners in the summer.

Contact: Michelle Wood.

In the past we have supported Mobile Med by providing them a place to park and use the bathroom, as well as providing volunteers to help patients with forms. This has not been as active this year; first, because the patient load is far lighter than pre-covid, and second, because they have recently been having trouble with their van. We hope to be able to support them again as soon as they are able to use our parking lot!

Contact: Michelle Wood.

We provided 73 backpacks this year for "Linkages to Learning"; members of the congregation donated backpack contents as per the Summit Hall Elementary School's back to school Supply Lists. Volunteers assembled backpacks for each grade, and we delivered them to the school in late August.

Contact: Kristen Keating

Our fall yard sale was a big success; we held a community "pay what you will" yard sale, netting \$1,199.66 in total. The remainder of the clothing and shoes after the yard sale have been held for St. Thomas, Dupont.

Contact: Kristen Keating.

Caroling at Asbury Methodist: Some of the outreach committee joined the residents of the Trott building for their annual Christmas Party, to lead them in carols. Barbara Harbison, a member of Ascension, is one of the residents at Trott, and is who invited us to join them for their party. We would like to do this again next year!

We did two joint projects in conjunction with the Social Justice and Equity committee in 2022:

one was delivering clothing to St. Thomas Dupont Circle in support of their intake program for refugees from Central/South America. We also helped sponsor the Giving Tree project, in which parishioners selected and provided a gift needed in the community. Gift offerings ranged from providing needed items for Comfort Cases (supporting Foster Kids as they travel between houses), St. Thomas, Dupont Circle, offerings of tasks to be done around the Church grounds, and prayer requests.

Contacts: Kristen Keating and Laurie Yelle.

---

## GREEN TEAM COMMITTEE

Welcome to the newly formed committee, "The Green Team". We came together as a team in February 2022 and had our first meeting on March 15, 2022. Our mission is to protect our environment not only for the natural environment (plants and animals) but for ourselves and our future generations. This includes protecting the Chesapeake Bay watershed, our shared living space. The Green Team has worked along with the Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake (IPC) to reach our environmental goals. You can find more information about IPC on their website: <https://www.interfaithchesapeake.org/>

Our team meets the first Monday of every month at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom. In the future it is our hope we will meet in person outdoors. The current members are Kay Kolle (chair), Gail Unterberger (co-chair), Randall Adams, Megan Didavi, Diane Leach, Padre Javier Ocampo, and (future) Linda Waters. I thank the members of our team for their contributions. I would like to thank Randall Adams for his expertise, advice and service for the team. We welcome all who would like to join us to make a mark in protecting our natural environment. We welcome everyone who shares concerns about our environmental future with the increase of global warming and pollution. We welcome anyone who would like to learn about preserving actions we can take and about the environmental degradation that is currently taking place. United together we can make our mark in the preservation of our natural world. We can follow God's call to care for the earth person by person, church by church, and community by community. For more information and the Zoom link to our meetings contact us at [ascensionmdgreen@gmail.com](mailto:ascensionmdgreen@gmail.com)

### What Have We Done This Year?

March and April: Members of the team attended a rain barrel workshop and were able to purchase a rain barrel for our church. The rain barrel was installed in the back of the church. The water collected from the barrel was used to water the annuals planted near the Columbarium. We also attended native and pollinator workshops at Brookside Gardens. In coordination with The Chesapeake Bay Foundation, our team agreed to reopen the mini grant application that was started in 2018 before covid hit our area. The mini grant, if awarded, would be designated to install a pollinator rain garden in front of the church.

May: An annual flower garden was planted near the Columbarium. The Green Team held a church grounds tour with members of our church after the 10:00 service. We toured the grounds to look at the site for our possible pollinator rain garden and for the rain barrel. We also observed areas of need on the church grounds. Our team met Susy Altman (landscape architect), Sarah Redden (IPC), and Anna Awimbo (IPC). During our meeting Susy showed us the architecture plans and descriptions for the pollinator rain garden. She also showed us where the garden would be placed and how the water diverted from the downspout would water the garden.

June: During our June Green Team meeting, we discussed various models for a succession plan. We decided that Kay Kolle would be chair and Gail Unterberger would be vice chair. The leadership would be for three years. It was also decided that we would present our Green Pledge at the Ministries Fair on September 18th. In coordination with the AEJC team, we planned an excursion to the Audubon Society in Chevy Chase, MD. On Saturday, June 11th Ascension's Green Team, along with the Ascension Equity and Justice Committee (AEJC) team, took a trip to the Audubon Naturalist Society Woodend Sanctuary to explore the native pollinator gardens. We also walked through and studied the various growing habitats. Afterwards we enjoyed a lunch at Parkwood Deli and shared green conversations together.

August: Megan Didavi agreed to create a banner that would include our Green Pledge. There would be room for church members to sign. Thank you, Megan and Jesse, for your help!

September: September brought us The Expo (Ministries Fair) where Kay Kolle shared the plans for the pollinator rain garden with parishioners. Team members also presented the Green Pledge and had many church members

sign their names to protect our watershed and our earth. During our meeting Randall Adams presented the first contractor's estimate for the pollinator rain garden, which came to \$8,340.40.

October: The team decided to show a movie to the congregation about the problem of plastic. It was decided that we would show "The Plastic Problem", a PBS documentary. The Green Team presented "The Plastic Problem" on October 24th at 7:30 p.m. with 13 church members present. We showed the movie in person at church and on Zoom. We had a lively discussion afterwards about what we could do here at Ascension to reduce our use of single use plastics. This type of plastic cannot be recycled; it is just thrown out in the garbage.

November/December: Kay shared during the meeting her reflections of the webinar "Maintaining Storm Water Projects". We need to organize a maintenance schedule. Members also discussed ways to help our church to become more "green". We decided that we could use paper tablecloths instead of plastic. We could also use compostable utensils instead of the single use plastic utensils. Laurie Yelle presented the Giving Tree project where we could have green items such as paper table clothes as an item on the tree. To reduce the amount of cup waste, we would use donated ceramic mugs for coffee hour. Through the generous donations from church members to support our annual yard sale, we collected over 30 mugs. These mugs could be used for our coffee hour. Team members will take turns cleaning the mugs and putting them away. We have already started using the ceramic mugs during our coffee hours.

#### Future Green Team Plans

- To apply for a solar grant, so that our church would be powered by solar panels and reduce our impact on the environment. This would be done after the roof is replaced.
- Or we would obtain solar by "Power Purchase Agreements" (PPA's). This is a third party who owns the panels and sells the congregation the power at a discount.
- Working with the IPC we would apply for a Maryland tree grant so we could plant trees next to the retaining wall near Gaithersburg High School.
- Have church members work in a local community garden to help support food needs in the community.

Contact: Kay Kolle

### **ASCENSION INVENTORY COMMITTEE**

#### **Ascension Inventory Committee Members:**

Berenice Rodriguez (chair)  
Cathy Oliveri  
Ruth Anna Skowronski

In 2022, the Ascension Inventory Committee resumed the process of taking inventory of all personal property items in the Church of Ascension and the Ascension House. The purpose of the Inventory Committee is to list and value the belongings of the church for insurance purposes. In addition, our hope is to resume the lending library that was closed during covid. Cathy has been instrumental in introducing us to TinyCat (a library management system) and Library Thing (for storing and sharing book catalogs and various types of book metadata) to identify and catalog nearly every book in our library. Our next step will be to inform Ascension members of the library materials that are available and invite them to borrow. In 2023, we will continue the inventory of all the resources that contribute to life at Ascension in case we ever need to file an insurance claim.

Contact: Ruth Anna Skowronski

### **TECH REPORT**

Audio Equipment that was in the Sacristy was moved into the room where we manage the live stream. With some effort, Jesse was able to diagnose the problem with Zoom not synching the audio and video based on our passthrough system (OBS) that is used to manage the livestream. Unfortunately, we are forced to trade off one audio issue for another. In order to synch the video's audio, there is now a feedback echo for people speaking

on Zoom. This isn't something that can be heard in the church or online, just for the person speaking. Our workaround for this is to mute Ascension's Zoom audio while people on Zoom are speaking.

Your generous donations were used to purchase new lavalier microphones for the services. Funds have been reserved as replacements will be required and for future upgrades to our systems.

We are still looking for volunteers to manage the livestreams and other online Ascension events.

Tech Team