



## **2023 ANNUAL REPORT**

ANNUAL MEETING  
January 28, 2024

## AGENDA OF THE ANNUAL MEETING

- I. Opening Prayer The Rev. Weezie Blanchard
- II. Call to Order
- III. Approval of Minutes of the 2023 Annual Meeting
- IV. Vestry Candidate and Warden Elections
  - Vestry candidates
    - Charlie Antrim, nominated for a three-year term
    - Stephanie Johnson, nominated for a three-year term
    - Court Wold, nominated for a three-year term
  - Warden candidates
    - Chris Miller, nominated for a one-year term as Senior Warden
    - Lea VanSchaack, nominated for a one-year term as Junior Warden
- V. Annual Giving Report Court Wold
- VI. 2024 Parish Budget Sam Herman
- VII. Senior Warden's Report Amy Leonard
- VIII. Rector's Report The Rev. Weezie Blanchard
- IX. Questions and Answers Chris Miller
- X. Closing Prayer and Adjournment The Rev. Garry Horle

## Biographies of Vestry Nominees



### **Charlie Antrim**

Charlie, his wife Lucy and their children Lee, Sydney, and Carter have attended Ascension since 2021. Charlie grew up in Richmond, VA and moved with his family to Denver after living in New York City and Darien, CT for 18 years. He is the founder and Chief Investment Officer for Denver based Walnut Level Capital. Charlie enjoys biking, skiing, and fishing with the family and is an unfortunate Washington Commanders fan.



### **Stephanie Johnson**

As the daughter of an exploration geologist, Stephanie Johnson grew up mostly in Texas. Relocating to Denver from Houston in 1981, she became a member of Church of the Ascension. Dave and Stephanie married at the church, and their daughter, Morgan, was baptized here. Naturally, the first ministry to which she committed her time was the children's program. Over the years, other ministry involvement has included the neighborhood newsletter, hospitality, acolyte training, eucharistic minister, LEMs, stewardship, prayer & study groups, rector search committees and vestry service. Stephanie retired from the State of Colorado's Board of Land Commissioners (lease accounting staff) two years ago and currently enjoys seasonal road trips with Dave to Flagstaff, Arizona where Morgan now lives.



### **Court Wold**

Court is the father of Jack, Freddie, and Marilyn and devoted to Cullen, his wife of 16 years. Court and Cullen are active in the Ascension community through serving the Giving Committee and Children's Ministries. Court serves on the boards of several civic organizations and manages an oil and gas business. Court and Cullen are blessed with strong mentors, friends, and family. They love to hunt, fish, work hard, and give back to those who have helped them along the way.

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## Rector's Report

Dear People of Ascension,

Once again, Church of the Ascension was blessed beyond measure in 2023. We continued to grow as a parish in numbers of people and in engagement in our common life as we lived into our calling as a place where faith and real life intersect.

### *Worship*

Beautiful and faithful worship is at the heart of the strong church that Ascension has become. Attendance at all services increased throughout 2023. We baptized 13 children, celebrated the marriage of Kirsten and Misha Calkins, and held funerals for five beloved souls. One of the distinguishing features of Ascension is that we welcome people of all ages to participate fully. In 2023, 20 children and youth served as acolytes. Children gathered at the altar and the baptismal font for a closeup view of the sacraments that ground our tradition as followers of Jesus Christ. Our winter tradition of Ski Season Sundays highlighted the importance of gathering together to give thanks to God in every season. Other worship highlights included joyful celebrations of Easter and Christmas, weekday Morning Prayer, and the Blessing of the Animals. Throughout the year, our livestream offering increased the accessibility of our service to those who were at home or traveling.

### *Staff*

The marvelous staff at Ascension is quite simply the best. Each of them feels called to serve the parish, and they do so enthusiastically and well. They work beautifully together as a team.

Our Associate for Children, Youth, and Families, Mary Margaret Murdock, continues to nurture a thriving program for our children and youth and has laid the groundwork for its success for years to come. This fall, she increased our Sunday school offerings from one class for children ages four through fifth grade to three classes, including one for youth, who also continue to gather regularly away from Ascension. In December, Mary Margaret and over 50 children presented another wonderful Christmas pageant. Active participation by parent volunteers is foundational to all aspects of our children's and youth ministries, and we were blessed to have the participation of so many of you. Mary Margaret also presides over Ski Season Sundays, our popular Sunday evening offering that creatively addresses the historic decline of family participation from January to mid-March, which is now in its third year. She meets regularly with the Children's and Youth Ministry Committees, whose involvement continue to be vital to the success of our children's and youth ministries. Mary Margaret also takes on a number of our communications needs, including newsletters for the parish and for families, as well as seasonal communications.

Our Director of Music, Dr. Cindy Lindeen-Martin, continues to lead our music program with energy, artfulness, and creativity. She is an invaluable partner in planning for regular worship and such important events as weddings and funerals. Under her leadership, the Parish Choir has nearly doubled in size, and we have a full new bell choir with the Ascension Ringers. Guest instrumentalists and vocalists enhance our worship, as well, and Cindy's knowledge of our instruments and the care that they need has enabled us to be better stewards of such important resources. Last spring, Cindy introduced SONshine Singers, a children's choir that practiced throughout Lent and sang at the 10 a.m. Easter Sunday service. The offering was so popular that the SONshine Singers now practice regularly to sing at Christmas, Easter, Ascension/Pentecost, and All Saints.

Our Parish Administrator, Sarah Dougherty, continues to put the breadth and depth of her experience with parish administration and other church roles to work to our great advantage. Sarah manages critical aspects of our common life and is constantly discerning new ways for the Parish Office to run efficiently. At her suggestion, Sarah is now present most Sunday mornings, which makes every aspect of those days flow smoothly. She often pinch-hits as a greeter, usher, or livestream assistant. Over the past year, Sarah also worked closely with Senior Warden Amy Leonard, Treasurer Sam Herman, and Annual Giving Chair Court Wold, as well as oversaw the conclusion of our Parish Hall renovation with Chris Nazar. She coordinates our parish volunteers and works closely with our Altar Guild. She also works tirelessly to update and consolidate our data management.

The Rev. Garry Horle is a beloved and invaluable colleague as our Priest Associate. In addition to helping with services, he assists with leading our popular in-person and Zoom Bible studies. We have also been blessed from time to time to have as preachers Roger Bullard, who has an M.Div. from Berkeley Divinity School at Yale University, and parishioner Brian Ward, whose journey to ordination was cruelly cut short by ALS. All of their insights have broadened our knowledge and helped deepen our faith.

Last spring, the Vestry authorized the search for an Associate Rector to meet the ever-increasing demands of our growing parish. We were blessed to receive a gift of \$125,000 for each of 2024 and 2025 to fund this much-needed position. I remain confident that we will fill the position with a highly qualified priest who will serve Ascension well as we navigate the coming future.

### *Vestry and Officers*

Lay leadership continues to be the backbone of Ascension. Our Vestry has guided us steadily throughout an incredibly active year.

- After six years on the Vestry, including the past two as Senior Warden, Amy Leonard will take a well-deserved break. As Senior Warden, she literally did it all in this past year with seemingly boundless energy and good humor. She has a broad and deep knowledge of the ministries of Ascension, along with deep faith and love of Ascension. She has made my job so much easier and often a great deal of fun. I am blessed that she will remain my friend.

- Lea VanSchaack, continues to be a calm and eminently capable Junior Warden. Her deep knowledge of Ascension and Denver is invaluable to our ministry of hospitality, to the intricacies of maintaining and improving our building, and especially to the transition that we now face.
- Sam Herman remains a blessing as Treasurer. He and the Finance Committee (Jack Blumenthal, Davis Butler, who recently stepped down, Tom Fitzgerald, Rob Hearne, who recently stepped up, and Tim Shannon) bring an unparalleled level of expertise to our finances and the financial challenges that Ascension faces as we meet the demands of a growing congregation and an aging building.
- Christi Canada's vestry term will end at the annual meeting. During her two consecutive terms, including the last two years as Clerk, she has served Ascension with love and good cheer. Christi is the epitome of hospitality. She was always willing to help with sometimes thankless projects, and her deep faith helped all of us remember why we are here and whom we serve.

I am thrilled that Chris Miller has agreed to serve as Senior Warden and that Lea VanSchaack will again serve as Junior Warden. I'm delighted that Charlie Antrim and Stephanie Johnson will join the Vestry and that Court Wold will serve a second term. I'm grateful for the continuing presence of Ellie Caulkins, Kim Conci, Chad Nichols, and Tim Shannon as we face the exciting challenges of the coming year.

### *Financial Stewardship*

2023 was again a banner year for Ascension in meeting our financial challenges and obligations. Under the inspiring leadership of Court Wold, we had a record-breaking annual giving campaign, as you will hear today and can read elsewhere in this report. Thank you to all of you for your generosity in supporting Ascension in the only way that we can do all that we are called to do as a place where faith and real life intersect. Thank you, too, to the participants in The Ascension Legacy, which is crucial to our long-term financial health. The ongoing advice and guidance from our Finance and Endowment Committees is invaluable.

You can read more about the hard work of our Altar Guild, Annual Giving, Building Enhancement, Endowment, and Outreach Committees elsewhere in this report. I am extremely grateful for the spiritual perspective with which each of these groups approach their ministries on behalf of all of us. We are a much stronger parish because of them and all of you who devote so much time and energy to our common life under whatever circumstances we find ourselves.

As we continue into 2024, I give thanks for each of you and your faithfulness throughout our journey together. I am grateful beyond measure for the privilege of serving as your rector, and you have my heart. We have good, hard work to do together in the coming weeks. I am confident that the best days for this remarkable church lie ahead.

In Christ's love,

*Weezie<sup>+</sup>*

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## **Senior Warden's Report**

Our parish had another tremendous year of growth in 2023. We grew throughout the year with many new people joining our congregation. Many of our members also stepped into new roles by joining committees and serving the parish from finance to outreach to vestry to altar guild and service participants. Together with the leadership of our exceptional rector, Weezie Blanchard, we are truly making Ascension a place where faith and real life intersect.

### **Vestry:**

Much of our Vestry's activities for 2023 were about planning for our future together and for the next generations. Much of our vestry serves on this board and on other committees for the church. I am

grateful to each of them for their time, vision, and commitment to making Ascension a strong and healthy community of faith.

In late March, we had a retreat led by Susan Weeks, a spiritual and leadership consultant. From this meeting we developed areas of focus for the year.

- **Recruiting and Giving**
- **Building Systems and Directory**
- **Fully Staffed Church**

Each vestry member took on one of these focus areas and together we worked to bring support, vision, and direction to each of these areas.

### **Recruiting and Giving:**

In this area, we are working on a holistic vision for growth and education about why giving matters to the parish. We have continued to transition to a year-round understanding of stewardship including time, talent, and treasure. I am very grateful for the hard work of Court Wold and our Annual Giving campaign committee. This year's campaign continued to focus on how our pledges directly support Ascension. Through Annual Giving, our pledges fund 90% of our annual operating budget. Together we have committed to over \$558,000, which is one of the largest campaigns in our history. Your support is vital to the health of the parish and allows our ministries to thrive and fully serve the needs of the parish. Thank you to our parishioners for making a pledge. If you have not pledged for 2024, it's never too late.

### **Building Systems and Directory:**

Throughout the past year, we have worked directly with Sarah, our parish administrator, on ways to improve our systems throughout the church. We had a file clean out over the summer and organized how we approach our filing, daily systems, finances/accounting, calendars, and much more. We continue to make updates and address our needs in all of these areas.

For our building, parish administration plays an integral role in supporting the daily operations of our building. From maintenance to cleaning to grounds, there is a constant need for oversight and support. In 2024, we will need to form a fully functioning Building Use committee to support our space and continue to address the needs of the physical structures. This committee will also need to work to develop an annual maintenance calendar. We are so grateful to Stephanie Johnson for keeping our plants alive. And to Walt Smith and Terry Conci for their tireless efforts as handymen throughout the year.

In the fall, we embarked on our Parish Directory project. We hired Bettinger Photography to photograph the parish and produce a new directory. We will receive the printed directories in the spring which will help us all to communicate with each other throughout the year. Thank you to Christi Canada for your ongoing work on this project.

### **Fully Staffed Church:**

Due to our growth, we committed to seek an Associate Rector for our parish. This person will support the parish and the rector as an officiant and pastoral care leader and in faith formation and communication. After a nationwide search, we continue to seek to fill this position and are faithful in God's vision.

### **Report on our other Core Ministries**

#### **Children, Youth, and Family Ministries:**

We have continued to see unprecedented growth as we welcome more active and faithful families to Ascension in 2023. We have made ministry for children, youth, and families more of a priority in our budget and activities. Thanks to the innovation and energy of Mary Margaret Murdock, our Associate for Children, Youth and Families, and her committees, we continue to grow our programming for children and youth. The Christmas pageant was a particular highlight with over 50 children participating in the pageant.

In 2024, Mary Margaret with the help of our parents will continue to provide enriching faith formation for all of our children and youth.

**Music Ministry:** We continue to be blessed by a strong music program at Ascension. Under the direction of Cindy Lindeen-Martin, our Director of Music, our choir and bell choir continue to grow and thrive. The expansion of the music budget allows for additional choir members and musicians during the Christmas and Easter seasons. And our newly formed children's choir delights us throughout the year. The choir enhances our services each week and I think is one of our greatest gifts. I am looking forward to continued beautiful music in 2024.

**Outreach:** In 2023, we continued to look at ways to make our outreach programs more tangible and relevant to our parish and our community. We continued the grant process for funding distribution to support many of our core organizations. The lunch-making for Women's Homelessness Initiative involves many of our parishioners and their families each month. We were also able to support St. Elizabeth's school with Thanksgiving Meal Kits, our troops with care kits, African and other immigrants and Locally Haiti with the giving tree, and our Denver community with a blood drive. With the continued leadership of Chris Nazar, I know that 2024 will bring new ways for us to support those in need outside of our doors.

**Hospitality:** Molly Freeman and the Hospitality Committee are taking steps to make newcomers and long-term parishioners feel more welcome and connected. Weekly it takes 2 greeters, 4 ushers, a live-stream assistant, and a coffee hour host to support both the 8 and 10 a.m. services. That is 8 people in addition to our lectors and eucharistic ministers. Hospitality takes all of us, so please consider signing up for one of these important service jobs. More information on how to help is available in our weekly announcements or through our office. I look forward to finding ways to support and grow our hospitality team in 2024.

**Thanks to so Many:**

Thank you to our staff and ministry team. And thank you to Weezie for being an incredible leader. Her gifts of ministry, organization, vision, and leadership have been a blessing and gift to us all. Her leadership over the past 6 years has helped us to truly ascend and lean into the vibrant vision of a strong community.

Sarah has been a great addition to our staff and brings a wealth of knowledge to our operations. Cindy continues to enhance our music programs in new and creative ways, and Mary Margaret has brought a new energy and meaning to our Children's programs. Garry Horle continues to lead meaningful Bible studies that many of us enjoy weekly and plays an integral role in our services. Thank you all.

Thank you to our outgoing Vestry member, Christi Canada, for your diligent service as clerk and all your hard work over the last 3 years. Finally, it has been my great pleasure to serve on the vestry for the last 6 years and to serve as your Senior Warden for the last 2 years. I leave you in the capable hands of Chris Miller and the rest of our incredible vestry. Thank you all for your ongoing support.

I will, of course, continue to serve the parish on the various committees upon which I serve and I look forward to our continued growth in the years to come. Our strength comes in our collective vision, our community, and our belief in God's vision for Ascension.

Faithfully,



Amy Leonard, Senior Warden

"Almighty and everliving God, ruler of all things in heaven and earth, hear our prayers for this parish family. Grant us all things necessary for our common life, and bring us all to be of one heart and mind within your holy Church; through Jesus Christ our Lord." *Amen.* (BCP)

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## Treasurer's Report

To: Church of the Ascension  
From: Sam Herman, Treasurer

### Overview

Church of the Ascension had a strong year in 2023. We had some misses on our expense budget, and we have adjusted for those in our 2024 budget. But, our successes have outweighed these issues, and the Church's cash and financial position is as strong as it has been for many years.

The following report provides a brief summary of the Church's 2023 financial results and 2024 Budget:

### 2023 Financial Results

#### *Balance Sheet*

- We ended the year with more than \$200,000 in cash, including roughly \$41,000 in general checking, \$38K in reserves for building expenses and \$118,000 in a special reserve account to support the hiring of an Associate Rector.
- These reserve funds were made available to us via extraordinary gifts and included two gifts of \$125,000 (\$250,000 total). One gift of \$125,000 has been received and the next will be provided next year. Together, these gifts support the majority of the compensation of our Associate Rector in 2024 and 2025, which we estimate to be ~\$155K per year
- The church now benefits from a sizeable endowment, totaling approximately \$1.1M.
- The endowment recovered many of the losses we had last year, gaining \$129K in 2023
- Long-term it is very difficult for any Church to fully support itself through recurring revenues such as pledges and plate offerings, so we hope to continue growing the endowment, particularly through Legacy Giving.

#### *P&L Statement*

- The 2023 budget, which was approved by Vestry in early 2023 projected a balanced budget, with \$647K in projected revenues and expenses. In order to show a balanced budget last year, we were utilizing \$43,000 in reserve cash.
- In terms of our actual results, the final P&L shows nearly \$863,000 in revenues, beating budget by more \$216,000 due largely to the special gifts we received.
- However, our expenses were also high at \$685,000 or ~6% over budget.
- Our Adjusted Net Income for the year was \$52,138, again compared to a break-even budget. To calculate this, I take our total revenues, deduct the \$129K in gains on the endowment (which is not cash immediately available to us) and also deduct \$39K in 2023 expenses that carried into early 2024, including the repayment of our line of credit in January. So overall, pretty good.
- To go into more detail, for Regular pledges, as of year-end we had received ~\$501K of the total \$510K budgeted including \$117K in 2023 pledges received in late 2022, which are not included in the P&L but are footnoted
- Similarly, we had already received nearly \$100K in 2024 pledges in late 2023
- As mentioned, expenses were 6% (\$38K) over budget. Most of the major variances have been footnoted in the financials, but to highlight a few:
  - o We had a total of ~\$20K in expenses that carried over from last year (2022), including payments for Rector and Staff pension and audit expenses; those are all footnoted.
  - o Utilities expense was 24% higher than budgeted at \$37K, which is what we have assumed for the 2024 budget
  - o Insurance expense was ~\$6,400 more than budgeted due to previous insurance claims and an increase in premiums, but expected to reduce in 2024 as old claims come off of our policy
  - o Supplies, Copier and Office Expenses were a combined \$3,500 over budget
  - o Overall, the staff has done a good job of controlling expenses and taking ownership of the budget, but we are still dealing with the increased costs of operating the growing church and our old church building.

- *Open for Q&A*

### 2024 Budget Overview

- There are a number of moving pieces associated with this year's budget, including Weezie's retirement and plans to hire a new Rector and Associate Rector, so we are making a number of assumptions
- For 2024, we have approved a \$38K deficit budget to give us significant flexibility for all the things we need to do this year, including the use of \$152K in reserve funds for the Associate Rector and Building.
- Even so, we are conservatively projecting to spend \$38K more than we bring in
- Our hope is that the \$38K budget deficit can be reduced, possibly to zero. Already we have exceeded our budgeted pledges. In addition, we made an application for \$56K in ERC (employee retention credit) that we hope to receive in 2024 that is not assumed in the budget
- If we are unable to overcome the deficit, then we will first utilize our line of credit, but may need to discuss with Vestry the possibility of drawing on the endowment as a last resort
- Keep in mind that working under a deficit while the church is growing is not new territory, in 2021 we approved a budget deficit and ended up with a positive year
- Also, given the strong cash position of the Church, we are comfortable with this year's budget, but over the next two years, we need to check in on how we are doing and adjust the budget accordingly.

### Detailed Discussion of 2024 Budget

#### *Revenues*

- The 2024 budget assumes \$550K in pledges, and I am happy to report that we have already surpassed that goal, receiving more than \$558K in 2023 pledges from 118 households (\$4,711 per pledge)
- We assume \$50K in non-pledge gifts and have already received a special gift of \$5,000 this year and \$16K in plate offerings, which is what we received in 2023

#### *Expenses*

- Compensation is our biggest expense item, accounting for ~2/3 of the budget
- Over the past several years, one of the key initiatives of Ascension's Vestry and Finance Committee has been to increase clergy and staff compensation to a fair standard – in line with the Diocesan Guidelines
- Due to the financial pressures of the growing church, we have phased these increases over a period of four years.
- For 2024, Vestry has approved an 8% increase in staff compensation.
- Including this year's recommendation for 2024, we will have increased in-place staff compensation (salary and pension) by ~45% (from \$254K in 2021 to \$367K in 2024).
- To put the 45% increase in compensation in context, since 2021, we have grown pledges by 64% from \$339K to \$516K
- For the first time in many years, we are now compensating the full staff in line with the Diocesan guidelines, which is a very positive achievement and will allow us to attract a great team to Ascension

#### *Discussion of Other Expense Line Items*

#### *Open For Q&A*

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## **2024 Annual Giving Report**

The 2024 Giving Campaign began informally on June 26, 2023, with the submittal of a process memo from the Giving Committee to the Vestry. The campaign will be completed during the first week of February 2024. The process was coordinated as follows:

## **Giving Committee members**

- Sam Herman (Treasurer)
- Charlie Antrim (Parishioner)
- George Caulkins (Parishioner)
- Lea Van Schaack (Vestry)
- Kim Conci (Vestry)
- Ellie Caulkins (Vestry)
- Weezie Blanchard (Rector)
- Court Wold (Vestry)

## **Coordinated Process**

- Touch Base Phone Calls with Parishioners (July 2023)
- Giving Committee meets casually to kick off Giving Season and divide / conquer responsibilities (late July 2023)
- Weezie's Letter with Giving theme was emailed / mailed to every Parishioner (Sept 2023)
- Education Post card sent to each family (Sept 2023)
- Brochure and pledge card mailing; cover letter from Court and Sam Giving Pamphlet (Oct 2023)
- Friday emails to Parish, "Grace in Action - what does Ascension mean to you" - 6 emails delivered to entire parish (Oct - Nov 2023)
- Parishioner Personal Stories during services - Why we Give (Nov 2023) - 4 Speakers
- Weekly updates during Pledge process to Giving Committee summarizing the following:
  - # households
  - Total Pledge \$
  - Average, median statistics
  - Pledge by tenure, and activity level
  - For families who had not yet pledged, built strategy around engagement and outreach

There was strong coordination between the Giving committee, Weezie, and the Ascension staff. The Realm database was updated more frequently, and numerous analytical tools were utilized to provide more accurate and timely data analytics. Sarah Dougherty was particularly helpful. The process was highly structured, intentional, and collaborative.

## **Summary**

Like 2023, the 2024 campaign was intentionally direct, to continue our focus on educating new parishioners on the giving process. We emphasized why consistent financial gifts from each household are necessary for the church to maintain a cohesive and balanced community. We continue to prioritize transparency in budgeting so that our constituents understand how their sources of capital are being used. At the end of the campaign, and as of the date of this letter (1-22-24), we are in the final stages of encouraging 100% participation. We worked to make giving natural, comfortable, and enjoyable. In summary, we have assimilated the following financial commitments for the calendar year 2024:

- Total to date, as of 1-22-24 = \$535,536.
- 10 likely giving families remaining @ \$1,500 each = \$15,000
- Estimated Total by February 1, 2024 = \$555,536

Summary Metrics based on actuals as of 1-22-24:

- Total to date = \$535,536.
- 116 Households

- Average = \$4,617
- Median = \$3,000

We are open to additional pledges, but we are also intentional about a beginning and an end to our process. In early February, we will close the campaign and shift focus to collecting the commitments and executing on our budget.

Respectfully submitted,  
Court Wold, Annual Giving Committee Chair

## 2024 Annual Giving Participants

T and Kirk Adamson  
Claudia Alexander  
Lorie Amass  
Lindsay and Doug Andrews  
Lucy and Charlie Antrim  
Betty and David Arkell  
Liz and Guy Arnold  
Sarah and Michael Attridge  
Kristin and Jim Bender  
Fred Berhenke  
Weezie and Buck Blanchard  
Natalie and Jack Blumenthal  
Julia and Rob Brown  
Charlie Bullard  
Roger Bullard  
Grace and Thomas Burk  
Holly and Davis Butler  
Kirsten and Misha Calkins  
Christi and Jared Canada  
Whitner and Greg Carlin  
Joan Casey  
Christina and George  
Caulkins  
Ellie Caulkins  
Marilyn and David Chappell  
Allison and Mike Cirenza  
Joann and Charlie Cole  
Ann Collier and Tyler Ray  
Kim and Terry Conci  
Sara and Ed Cotter  
Jamie and Patrick Cowan  
Carolyn and Byron Craig  
Nikki and Bruno Darré  
Robin and Phil Darrow  
Jill and Larry DiPasquale  
Erin and Hank Dougan  
Sarah and Mike Dougherty  
Jan and John Douglas  
Michelle and Keegan Drake  
Nan and Spike Eklund  
John Eliot  
Beth VanZant Elliot and  
Andrew Elliott  
Kristin and Robert Ferguson  
Kayla and Garrett Fitzgerald  
Jamie and Tom Fitzgerald  
Molly and Mac Freeman

Nancy and Mike Gegen  
Sissy Gibson  
Annie and B Gottwald  
Sarah and Schuyler Grey  
Eric Hammerberg  
Sarah and Lynn Haney  
Melissa and Armand  
Hatzidakis  
Kira and Dusty Healey  
Elizabeth and Rob Hearne  
Mia and Sam Herman  
Sarah and Doug Herman  
Carol and Garry Horle  
Anne and Bill Howard  
Isabel and Doug Howard  
Diane and Hank Ipsen  
Stephanie and David  
Johnson  
Beth Keel  
Doris Kimbrough  
Becky and Grant Knowlton  
Terrill Legueri and  
Kane Turner  
Amy and Jim Leonard  
Cindy Lindeen-Martin  
and Ken Martin  
Priscilla Longfield  
Deana and Chuck  
Macdonald  
Jedeane Macdonald  
Julie and Tom Mahoney  
Paul Maricle  
Robin McDougal  
Sherry McGinnis  
Alexis and Chris Miller  
Carolyn and John Moorman  
Wendy Morrison  
Margaret and John Murdock  
Mary Margaret Murdock  
Heather and Sean Nagle  
Barbara and Bill Nash  
Chris Nazar  
Cora and Dave Neslin  
Kari and Chad Nichols  
Meg and Ed Nichols  
Emily and Blake  
O'Shaughnessy

Tim Palinski  
Leah and Bates Parsons  
Kerry and Robbie Pearson  
Libby and Jimmy Perkins  
Mary Jo Pollman  
Ellen and Peter Putze  
Kathleen Reilly  
Ellie and Kevin Rice  
Serena and Chase Robinson  
Mary Ruth and Buzz  
Schaumberg  
Cat Scheer and Peter  
Westwood  
Teva Scheer  
Jodi and Tyler Sewell  
Susanna and Tim Shannon  
Cynthia and Tom Shannon  
Kellie and Andy Shopneck  
Margo and Will Simpson  
Marilyn Smith and  
Richard Tubbs  
Tonya and Walt Smith  
Stephanie and Ben Stapleton  
Christine Stroup  
Henrietta and Bryan  
Thompson  
Ashley and Chris Tulp  
Lea VanSchaack and  
David Neff  
Betsy Wahlberg  
Brian Ward  
Barb and David Watson  
Katherine and Michael  
Whitcomb  
Wallis and Peter Whitcomb  
Suzy Whittemore  
Anne and Christopher  
Wiedenmayer  
Seth Wiggins  
Molly and Patrick Williams  
Susan Williams  
Ann and Roger Wilschke  
Cullen and Court Wold  
Hildy and Jack Wold  
John Wright  
Nancy and Joe Yeaman  
Dawn and Scott Zumbahlen

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## Children, Youth, and Family Ministries



It's been another big year for Children and Youth Ministries at Ascension! Our programs continue to thrive and grow. From families who have been here many years, to families who have just arrived, there is a genuine desire for community and formation at Ascension. It is a great pleasure to create opportunities for our children, youth, and families to connect to God and one another. In 2023, we were supported by 25 Sunday School volunteers and 25 acolytes, introduced Lenten Suppers and the SONshine Singers, and expanded our Sunday School program from 1 class to 3 classes. Children, youth, and their families are active in both programming and worship and help to make Ascension a vibrant place to be!

### Children

We began the year again with Ski Season Sundays to accommodate our families that ski on the weekends but still want to come to church on Sundays. This casual service of Compline includes music, prayers, and a lesson. Our program focus was on the parables and our average attendance was 32. Ski Season Sunday will return January 21, 2024!

Regular Sunday School began in March and continued into May. Throughout the spring, 48 children in PreK through grade 5 participated in Sunday School with an average attendance of 18 (this is up from 27 children participating last spring with an average attendance of 12). In addition, we had a well-attended pancake supper to celebrate Mardi Gras and introduced Lenten Suppers. Families enjoyed attending these together, and children rehearsed as the SONshine Singers with Dr. Cindy Lindeen-Martin and performed on Easter! Also on Easter, over 70 kids hunted 630 eggs at our annual Easter Egg Hunt in Little Cheesman Park. We celebrated the end of a successful school year in late April at Observatory Park with pizza and popsicles. In late May, we honored all of acolytes, Sunday School volunteers, rising 5th graders, and graduation seniors on Children and Youth Sunday. It was a wonderful celebration of the many hands involved in our ministry.

Summer was quiet, though families regularly attended church when in town and were especially enthusiastic to attend our services in Little Cheesman Park. In August, we blessed backpacks, trained acolytes, and kicked off the program year with the Sweet Cow truck, face painting, and hair tinsel at the church. Sunday School started back in September with 2 classes for children in elementary school which was a well-received change by both parents and children. Having 2 classes split by age group (grades K-2 and grades 3-5) allows for children to receive content that is more directed toward their developmental characteristics and reduces chaos of large class sizes. 40 children in kindergarten through grade 5 were active in Children's Sunday School this fall, with an average attendance of 16.

Advent is always an exciting time, and this year was our biggest yet! Many families enjoyed making Advent wreaths on the first Sunday of Advent, and 21 families hosted Mary and Joseph which is the most ever! Families and children also enjoyed caroling at the Ronald McDonald house for the first time this year, a tradition we hope to continue. We ended the year with our Christmas Pageant in which 50 kids ages 3 to 11 participated. A large crowd attended in person and we were also able to livestream the pageant so that grandparents and other family members, as well as our own parishioners, were able to watch online. All of our children enjoyed being able to dress up and tell the story of Jesus' birth, and I am appreciative of all our volunteers who made it all come together.

### Youth

This has been a year of growth for youth ministries with 20 youth active in the program! In the spring, we continued to have events once a month for youth which included games at the church, ice skating, hiding Easter eggs, and Topgolf in May. At our last event, we welcomed a healthy stock of 5th graders into Ascension Youth, which has helped us continue to build our foundation. This fall we began our youth Sunday School class for youth in grades 6 and up. It has been very successful! The Youth and volunteers have both enjoyed it, and I expect it will only grow. In addition to Sunday School, this fall we went to Boondocks in October and packed the thanksgiving boxes for St. Elizabeth's School in

November. Some youth even helped out with our Christmas Pageant in December! We couldn't have done it without them!

I remain grateful to our Children's Ministry Committee (Lucy Antrim, Julia Brown, Kristin Ferguson, Kari Nichols, Kerry Pearson, and Susanna Shannon) and Youth Ministry Committee (Holly Butler, Bill Howard, Alexis Miller, Ashley Tulp, and Cullen Wold), our parents, our children and youth, and to the entire parish for the support I receive from all of you at Church of the Ascension. May 2024 be even better!



Mary Margaret Murdock, Associate for Children, Youth, and Families

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## Music Ministry

What a year of blessings! We have maintained and we have grown in number of participants, in number of choirs, and most certainly in our faith. *God is here, in this place!*

### *Parish Choir*

We continue to lead worship in liturgy and song, singing a variety of styles of music. We also enjoy fellowship with each other both at our beginning and end of season celebration parties and on a weekly basis as we gather at rehearsals, enjoy coffee after worship, and support each other through prayers of concern, healing, and thanksgiving. Once again this year we embraced a couple of new members and welcomed back a couple of seasoned members. Sadly, we have missed a few members due to illness. We continue to keep them and their families in our prayers and hope for the return of some. In particular, we lost our beloved John Stevens who, at the age of 93, was our oldest member in the choir. Having sung in choirs all his life, it was certainly a delight to relish in his colorful stories and charming idiosyncrasies. It was humbling for the choir to be asked to sing at John's memorial service and we certainly do miss him. Over the past year the choir continued to get better and better and I am truly grateful for their dedication to this important ministry in the life of Ascension.

*God is here, in this place!*

### **Ascension Ringers**

We underwent a bit of a transformation in the fall due to some members who love to ring but simply can't, due to illness. Regardless, the ringers practice diligently each Sunday and played about four times during the year to enhance our worship services. Rehearsals are light-hearted and we support each other through our laughter, always leading the way to our musical successes.

*God is here, in this place!*

### **SONshine Singers**

Ascension's newest and youngest choir began in March 2023, as rehearsals in preparation for Easter paired with our Lenten suppers. Thirty children sang on Easter Sunday. Our first pursuit of a children's choir was a success and so, on a whim, we opened up another opportunity to sing on Ascension Sunday in May. Although it did not include as many children (about 12 kids), it was another success and a joy to hear the children sing. After a break for the summer, a new model of choir was founded where children may participate in a choir session leading up to singing as many as four times in a season - All Saints Sunday (November), Christmas Eve (December), Easter Sunday (March) and Ascension Sunday (May). For All Saints and Christmas Eve, the choir again attracted 10-12 singers. This model is a good one for this parish of busy families and is proving to be a win. For me personally, this added choir adds a new dimension to my ministry here at Ascension, as I love getting to know the children and their families.

*God is here, in this place!*

### **Second Sunday Summer Singers**

Another newly founded ensemble this past year was a summer pick-up choir on the second Sunday of June, July, and August. Anyone could come to rehearse a simple anthem prior to the summer worship service and

sing during the offering. It was an enjoyable time had by many who sing regularly in the choir and for those who wanted the experience singing in a choir short-term without a long-term commitment.

*God is here, in this place!*

### **Instrumental Music**

Ascension is blessed with a beautiful pipe organ heard weekly in worship and it continues to be maintained by regular service and tunings. The occasional hiring of instrumentalists to play with the organ and/or with the choir is a wonderful addition to our services and appreciated by many. The ultimate example was a glorious Easter with the sound of brass, organ, handbells, and choir.

*God is here, in this place!*

### **Miscellaneous and the future**

The music room is a wonderful rehearsal space for the children's choir, my office (upstairs) has been recarpeted and painted, and the handbells will move to a new rehearsal space downstairs (hoping for a face-lift!). Conversation is underway in the new year for our Parish Choir to join in singing a concert with the Colorado Hebrew Chorale, adding a deeper understanding of our faith and adding dimension to our musical repertoire.

In all, we are always growing and stretching.

*God is here, in this place!*

Soli Deo gloria!



Dr. Cindy Lindeen-Martin

*Here in this place, new light is streaming,  
now is the darkness vanished away.  
See, in this space, our fears and our dreamings,  
brought here to you in the light of this day.  
Gather us in - the lost and forsaken,  
gather us in - the blind and the lame.  
Call to us now, and we shall awaken,  
we shall arise at the sound of our name.  
We are the young, our lives are a mystery.  
We are the old who yearn for your face.  
We have been sung throughout all of history,  
Called to be light to the whole human race.  
Gather us in, the rich and the haughty,  
Gather us in, the proud and the strong.  
Give us a heart so meek and so lowly,  
Give us the courage to enter the song.*

*-Marty Haugen*

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### **Altar Guild**

Within the scope of the liturgical calendar, the Altar Guild is responsible for preparing the altar each week for the Eucharistic services and for special services such as baptisms, weddings, funerals, and memorial services. As stewards of our paraments, sacred linens, vestments, chalices and altar settings, we maintain and manage the replacement of items essential to congregational worship. We work under the direction of our rector, Weezie.

In 2023, we continued to work with several family-owned businesses in the community: Bonnie Brea Florist, Joy Wine & Spirits, and Gerken' Religious Supplies. All of these businesses provide excellent service to the church.

Currently, we have eleven regular members organized in four teams so that each individual member is committed to serving only one regular weekend a month with occasional requests for volunteer availability during festal liturgical seasons. This year we welcomed Marilyn Smith. It has been a pleasure to add her to our roster!

We invite anyone with an interest in this vital ministry to explore Altar Guild membership. Specifically, we need several new members to fully staff the teams this coming year. All members of our community are warmly welcomed to join the Altar Guild, including teens, young adults, and men as well as women. It's a wonderful way to learn more about our liturgy as we prepare the Altar for all to come together at the table. We're a diverse group with a strong sense of fellowship. Join us!

Respectfully submitted by the managing members,  
Kathleen Reilly, Stephanie Johnson, and Julie Mahoney

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## **Adult Formation**

### Bible Studies

Gospel Bible Study on Sundays at 9 a.m. in the Chapel and Tuesday Bible Study on Tuesdays at noon by Zoom encourage reading, enjoyment, and understanding of Scripture; increase our faith; bring scripture to bear on our current lives and world; and encourage an atmosphere of trust, sharing and fellowship. Both Bible studies nurture a close and measured reading of the text by setting the text into its sociopolitical historical setting, paying attention to the literary and structural features of the text, asking tough questions about the text, learning to hold the tension of some unanswerable questions and to enter into the mystery inherent in the text, sharing our personal view of the text and our experience, and honoring other persons positions. The Gospel Bible Study addresses the Gospel as prescribed by the lectionary. The Tuesday Bible study looks at various books of Hebrew Scripture, commonly known as the Old Testament; in 2023 we studied all or parts of the Books of Daniel, Esther, Isaiah, Joshua, and Ruth.

### Book Studies

Since 2020, the Ascension Book Study has read books that help us prayerfully and thoughtfully engage various topics that widen our world. Our Episcopal tradition of praying the same prayers even though we may interpret or understand their words differently is a strength in tackling sometimes difficult issues together and gives us a framework for talking about uncomfortable topics, while at the same time inviting different points of view. The book study, which meets on Tuesdays at 5 p.m. by Zoom, is blessed by the participation of Ascension parishioners and others. In 2023, we read *The Sweetness of Water* by Nathan Harris, *Night* by Elie Wiesel, *Demon Copperhead* by Barbara Kingsolver, *Killers of the Flower Moon* by David Grann, *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller, and poetry by Maya Angelou.

Separately, Weezie Blanchard and Mary Margaret Murdock led a lunch discussion of one of their favorite books, *Wholehearted Faith* by Rachel Held Evans.

### Lenten Suppers and Rector's Forums

During Lenten Suppers, Weezie Blanchard and Garry Horle led Episcopal 101, a discussion of how we observe Lent and what is distinctive the Episcopal Church.

In the fall of 2023, monthly Rector's Forums explored the topic of grace, which was also the focus of our annual giving campaign.

### Lent and Advent at the Museum

Again this year, Weezie Blanchard led seasonal tours of various works in the collections at Denver Art Museum that illuminate the themes of Lent and Advent.

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## Building Improvement Report

The Building Improvement team worked more informally in 2023 but still accomplished several key items.

- Active building improvement team members included Terry Conci, Walt Smith, Amy Leonard, Sarah Dougherty, and others. They coordinated or made many small repairs related to electric/lighting issues, heating and cooling, and plumbing. Thank you to all for your assistance.
- We discovered issues with the heating and cooling unit installed for the Parish Hall, which resulted in significant remedies from the contractor at no additional cost to us. While the oversights from the heating and cooling subcontractor were disappointing, this came during our warranty period. All these repairs and remedies have now been made and the warranty period was restarted/extended. Thank you to Sarah for her dedicated coordination during these fixes.
- We also worked through the final punch list of items for other minor repairs/issues with the Parish Hall renovation to close out the one-year warranty period. We are excited with its increased use for receptions and events.
- We investigated and obtained bids for Chapel, 6th Street and kitchen/music room window repairs. We developed a grant application for Historic Colorado to pay for most of these repairs. Unfortunately, that grant was not approved in the December grant period. We will seek guidance on how to improve our chances and resubmit next year. In the meantime, we will continue to investigate funding needed to make smaller improvements.
- We painted and installed carpet in parts of the upper level. Thank you to Amy Leonard, Wendy Morrison, and Lea VanSchaack for organizing this.
- We partnered with the Outreach Committee and held a fall parish workday to clean-up and make minor improvements. Thank you to the 20 or so Parishioners who helped.
- We have begun discussion of installation of a columbarium in the renovated light well. More details to come.
- We continue to report and work on our energy efficiency and meeting new City of Denver requirements. The Parish Hall heating and cooling unit should assist with this as would the window grant. More activities in this area will be a focus in 2024.

Respectfully submitted,  
Chris Nazar

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## Centering Prayer

Centering Prayer gathers on Thursdays from 8 to 8:30 a.m., live in the Chapel and on zoom.

Based on Contemplative Outreach's model of 'resting in God', we begin with a scripture reading, focus on a sacred word and sit for 20 minutes in silence. Thomas Keating, Richard Rohr, Martin Laird and a host of current day theologians have led the way in this growing practice.

More opportunities for practice, classes and retreats are available:

1) The Contemplative Prayer Center Denver 3650 Yates St  
Denver, CO  
303-698-7729  
[www.Centeringprayer.net](http://www.Centeringprayer.net)

2) The Center for Action and Contemplation 1705 Five Points Rd SW  
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87105 505-247-1636  
[www.cac.org](http://www.cac.org)

3) Sacred Heart Jesuit Retreat Center 4801 N. State Hwy 67  
Sedalia, CO. 80135  
303-688-4198 [www.sacredheartretreat.org](http://www.sacredheartretreat.org)

Please email me to be placed on the email list:  
[barbarawatson825@comcast.net](mailto:barbarawatson825@comcast.net)

Also, let me know if you would be interested in an Introductory Workshop on Centering Prayer, Lectio Divina, Welcoming Prayer or Active Prayer here at Ascension. These are all considered 'contemplative forms for prayer'.

Peace+

Barb Watson  
[barbarawatson825@comcast.net](mailto:barbarawatson825@comcast.net)

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## Endowment Committee Report

The Endowment Committee continues to oversee our endowment to maintain the viability of the ministries and programs of our Parish as well as the capital needs of our physical assets such as our building. The Endowment Fund has three funds: the Church of the Ascension Endowment Fund, the Denver Ascension Grant Memorial Fund, and the Denver Ascension McCarty Memorial Fund. The Vestry has elected to spend 4% of the market value of the Endowment Fund on an annual basis. In consultation with the Endowment Committee, the Vestry may also elect to make expenditures for approved purposes. As of 12/31/23, the Endowment Fund's market value was \$906,949; the assets ended the year with 77% in equities and 23% in fixed income (the target asset allocation policy for the Fund is 75% equities and 25% fixed income).

In addition, in June 2022, the Endowment Fund made a 5-year \$130K loan to the Church to help complete the Parish Hall renovation. As of 12/31/23, the balance on the loan is \$97,500, and repayment remains on schedule.

Ascension's access to both the Grant Memorial Fund and the McCarty Memorial Fund is limited to interest payments, which are in turn limited to use for church flowers. As of 12/31/23, the market value of the Grant Memorial Fund was \$75,708, 100% of which is in equities, and the market value of the McCarty Memorial Fund was \$6,780, 100% of which is in equities.

The Ascension Legacy is the church's ministry for planned giving. We are grateful for the families/parishioners that have given current and/or planned gifts to the Endowment Fund, thereby becoming members of The Ascension Legacy. This will require a renewed focus in 2024. Please see the list of current participants in The Ascension Legacy below.

Faithfully,

The Endowment Committee (Chase Robinson, Rob Brown, Chad Nichols, Christina Caulkins, Roger Bullard, and Christina Adamson)

### The Ascension Legacy

Betty Arkell  
Weezie and Buck Blanchard  
Natalie and Jack Blumenthal  
Shannon and Chris Catalano  
Christina and George Caulkins  
Ellie Caulkins  
Rosalind Farnam\*  
Anne and Bill Howard  
Stephanie and Dave Johnson  
John Kayser\*

Doris Kimbrough  
Jedeane Macdonald  
Robin McDougal  
Chris Nazar  
Kari and Chad Nichols  
Tonya and Walt Smith  
Hazel Stevens-Price and Doug Price  
Brian Ward  
Nancy Yeaman

\*deceased

## Hospitality Committee

The Hospitality Committee has had a good fall season at Ascension. Our goal is to invite, welcome and connect new and existing parishioners and to help make them feel at home.

Our top priority is growing our ministry in order to accomplish our goal. With that being said, we were happy to host the Welcome Back dinner in the fall. It was a beautiful and meaningful event for all. Coffee hour has been quite a success due to the new process of signing up for a Sunday to bring cookies and clean up. You can find the sign-up link in the Thursday newsletter that is emailed to you each week. A big thank you to all who have contributed this season. It is a smooth operation that we would like to keep going. The Parish Hall has been a fruitful space for the church and others. We look forward to hosting and helping others in the upcoming season. If you are interested in any role of our committee, please reach out to Molly Freeman, [freemacdaddy@aol.com](mailto:freemacdaddy@aol.com).

Respectfully,

Molly Freeman

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## Morning Prayer

Morning Prayer is offered on Fridays in the Chapel from 8 to 8:30 a.m. A Zoom link is provided for those who may be unable to attend in person. Morning Prayer is also available Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays via Zoom (only) starting at 8 a.m. The officiants are: Kathleen Reilly and Brian Ward. The Morning Prayer service has its origins in the Liturgy of the Hours, a centuries-old spiritual practice. Ritual prayer at designated hours of the day is still vibrantly practiced in convents and monasteries. Our short lay-led service includes reading from the Psalms and scripture, reciting the appointed daily collects, and offering community prayer intentions (see the Book of Common Prayer, starting on p. 80). We always set aside some time for fellowship after prayer, too, sometimes enjoying a coffee at Novo together.

In 2023, we continued the hybrid schedule: Zoom Morning prayer is available every weekday (except Thursdays) and on Fridays, we gather in person in the Chapel. We create service leaflets for each in-person service and email them to those who want it. Participants will access the document from their mobile device - both convenient and good for Creation Care! I happily report that our "regular crowd" has grown again this past year. To keep the ritual fresh, we have added some variations this year: occasionally incorporating prayers from Enhancing Our Worship or using Rite I for the entire service on the last Friday of the month. I find that starting the morning with Morning Prayer sets me on the proper footing for the day and reminds me of the many blessings in my life. It strengthens me to face whatever challenges I may encounter.

In 2024, we would like to make the service leaflet accessible via a QR code, so anyone who attends and who has a mobile device can access the document. We welcome new-comers and will gladly help you navigate the rubrics. Contact Brian Ward at [beemerward@me.com](mailto:beemerward@me.com) to get the Zoom link and to be included on the email distribution list.

Respectfully,

Brian Ward

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## Outreach Committee

The Ascension Outreach Committee had an active year in 2023, welcoming new members, building on existing partnerships, and exploring new opportunities to serve our neighbors. Early this year we conducted a visioning process to help revisit the types of organizations that we could have meaningful outreach partnerships with. This included considerations for both existing and new partners. The committee then moved to a monthly outreach activity format while continuing long-standing regular efforts with key partners and our outreach grant program. Highlights included:

- Ongoing monthly lunch making to support homeless youth served by **Urban Peak** (through Women's Homelessness Initiative). Thank you to all who contributed food and supplies and to those who took time to make and deliver lunches. We have opportunities to expand our partnership with Urban Peak, who presented to the committee in September. We will be looking at additional involvement in 2024.
- Supporting **Metro Caring** through our annual Loaves and Fishes Food Drive and attending events to learn more about their ministries. This year's food drive in July yielded more than 400 pounds and over 50 bags of food.
- Providing beverages, snacks, and bike blessings at our station for Bike to Workday in June.
- Holding a successful drive for backpacks, water bottles, and insulated lunch boxes for **St. Elizabeth's School** in August. We also partnered with Weezie to provide a scholarship to St. Elizabeth's School for a student in need.
- Sponsoring a Parish Workday in September to improve conditions at the Parish, along with an option to assist a Parishioner with work needing completion at their home.
- Holding a successful drive for care packages and cards that were delivered to a **deployed Army Unit in Iraq** and Navy personnel on the **USS Kearny** before Veterans Day.
- Gathering needed clothing for the **St. Francis Center** and hosting an Ascension table at the St. Francis Gala in October.
- Holding another successful Thanksgiving Meal Drive and preparing Thanksgiving Baskets for approximately 25 needy families for Thanksgiving.
- Participating in the Annual Evening for Haiti in the Spring and then hosting the Haitian Christmas Market in December, which had more than 100 attendees during the day and raised over \$5,000 for our partner **Locally Haiti**. Parishioner John Douglas will be serving as chair of the Locally Haiti Board in 2024.
- Learning more about **The Delores Project**, a homeless shelter and support agency for unaccompanied women and transgender individuals experiencing homelessness. They visited with the committee in October, and we were able to support them by providing requested holiday craft supplies.
- Providing gifts for individual refugees and families through our Annual Giving Tree in December and in partnership with the **African Community Center**.
- Holding a successful **Team Foster** blood drive with **Vitalant** in December, with 29 donors and several more individuals looking at future donation opportunities.
- Caroling at Ronald McDonald House, with gifts, in December.



Throughout the year we have been amazed by the energy and generosity of our parish towards the activities and organizational partnerships discussed above. Thank you all for your support.

The committee also made its annual recommendation on Outreach Grants to five ongoing partners. This recommendation, which was approved by the Vestry in November included:

- Locally Haiti - \$4,000
- Metro Caring - \$2,500
- Urban Peak - \$2,500
- St. Francis Center - \$1,500

- Women's Homelessness Initiative - \$500
- Total of \$11,000

Our active, engaged, and dedicated formal committee members include Jan Douglas, Barb Watson, Betty Arkell, Alexis Miller, Lucy Antrim, and Chris Nazar. We are aided and advised by the wise counsel of Kathleen Reilly, Joan Casey, Ellen Putze, Weezie Blanchard and Kim Conci (our Vestry Liaison). We also have potential new members discerning their involvement in the future and welcome anyone who would like to attend our monthly meetings and support activities.

In faith,

Chris Nazar, Chair

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### **Prayer Chain**

Ascension is blessed to have an amazing group of powerful prayer warriors. Whenever prayers are needed for family, friends, illness, accidents, travel or special circumstances, this wonderful group of over twenty parishioners prays mightily. All prayer requests are confidential. Anyone who feels called to participate in this important ministry is very welcome. Please contact Joan Casey, [jccasey01@gmail.com](mailto:jccasey01@gmail.com) to be included or if you have a prayer request.

Respectfully,

Joan Casey

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### **Senior Fellowship Luncheon**

The second Wednesday of every month, the seniors of the parish meet for a potluck lunch in the parish hall. All are welcome to join in the fun, fellowship and good food. We have some great cooks! Often, we have a speaker or sometimes just chat and catch up with everyone. This past year we have heard from John and Jan Douglas about their wonderful trip to New Zealand, John Wright about his beautiful family reunion in Greece, Paul Maricle on avoiding those pesky scams, Seth Wiggins on the relaxation techniques of Xi Gong, a speaker on Assistive Technology to make life easier for seniors, Roger Wilschke on his fascinating collection of scrimshaw, and Robin Macdougall on her interesting early days in Denver (she used to ride her horse down Broadway). We're a great group and would love for you to join us. Please contact Joan Casey, [jccasey01@gmail.com](mailto:jccasey01@gmail.com) for more information or to be added to the emails.

Respectfully,

Joan Casey

## Parish Register 2023

### Baptisms

January 8, 2023	Blair Wynne Beecherl
January 8, 2023	Grace Hubbard Gottwald
April 9, 2023	Audrey Elizabeth Herman
April 9, 2023	Jack Harrison Reichhold
May 21, 2023	Wallis Catherine Brown
May 21, 2023	Henry Kermit Howard
May 21, 2023	Stephen Frost McAllister
June 11, 2023	Helen Grace Andrews
June 11, 2023	Adeline Ruth Andrews-Lee
June 11, 2023	James Edward Andrews-Lee
June 11, 2023	Owen David McGuire
June 11, 2023	Rory Alden McGuire
November 5, 2023	Annie Rodes Burk

### Marriages

July 21, 2023	Kirsten Kellstrom and Mikhael Calkins
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### Burials

October 21, 2023	John Howard Kundts
October 27, 2023	John Allen Leonard
November 4, 2023	Diane Dehnert Hammerberg
December 4, 2023	James Arnold Stroup
December 12, 2023	John William Derrick Stevens

**2023 Memorial Gifts**

In Memory of Austin Miller, Sr.  
Lauren Dowlen

In Memory of James Arnold Stroup

Eve and Steve Balboni	Maxine and Donald Lucarelli
Kevin R. Bellis	Lenore Perrott
Thomas Brophy	J. Vincent Roche
Elizabeth and James Duncan	The Shore Club
Jennifer and Joshua Farnell	Lamar and Douglas Webb
Bonnie and Kevin Heenan	

In Memory of John William Derrick Stevens

Jane and John Baker	John Wasserman
Jill Hicks	

In Memory of Glenda Sue Winker

Natalie and Jack Blumenthal	Judith Lundquist
Bennett W. Cervin	Mr. and Mrs. Tom Moore
Jon Coates	Mr. and Mrs. Nash
Dr. and Mrs. Richard Cundy	Dee Norton
Ann and Jeff Dykes	Becky and Bill Rasor
Van and John Farnsworth	SA Services LLC
Virginia and Robert Fuller	Lure Beth Rasor Smith
Clarice Hill	Denise St. Vain Perkins
Sue and Roger Kinney	Camilla and Ronald Svoboda
Dennis Linden	Connie and Jerry Wrench
Sara and John Loss	

**THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN COLORADO**  
The Right Reverend Kimberly D. Lucas, *Bishop*

**CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION**

600 Gilpin Street  
Denver, CO 80218  
[www.ascensiondenver.org](http://www.ascensiondenver.org)  
303.388.5978

**CLERGY AND STAFF**

The Reverend Louise Browner Blanchard, *Rector*

[weezie@ascensiondenver.org](mailto:weezie@ascensiondenver.org)

Sarah L. Dougherty, *Parish Administrator*

[sarah@ascensiondenver.org](mailto:sarah@ascensiondenver.org)

The Reverend Garrison Horle, *Priest Associate*

Dr. Cindy Lindeen-Martin, *Director of Music*

[cindy@ascensiondenver.org](mailto:cindy@ascensiondenver.org)

Mary Margaret Murdock, *Associate for Children, Youth, and Families*

[marymargaret@ascensiondenver.org](mailto:marymargaret@ascensiondenver.org)

**OFFICERS AND VESTRY**

Amy Leonard, *Senior Warden*

Lea VanSchaack, *Junior Warden*

Sam Herman, *Treasurer*

Christi Canada, *Clerk*

Ellie Caulkins

Kim Conci

Chris Miller

Chad Nichols

Tim Shannon

Court Wold



*Church of the Ascension is a place where faith and real life intersect  
and where we are called to share God's love in the Church and in the world.  
We do this through generous hospitality, serving one another, community involvement,  
and providing a welcoming place for exploring a relationship with God.*

600 Gilpin Street | Denver, CO 80218 | 303.388.5978 | [www.ascensiondenver.org](http://www.ascensiondenver.org)