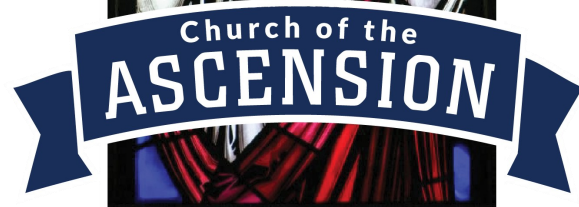


# THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION

LAFAYETTE, LOUISIANA

PARISH MEETING

JANUARY 25, 2026



## Senior Warden's Report 2025

Greetings to you and yours from your Vestry, where we hope that all of you have had a wonderful Christmas season! As always, it was such a treat to share Christmas with all of you in our beautiful church. In addition, we had the added blessing of welcoming our new Rector and his family to Ascension, at this most special time of year. I cannot think of a more magical time to be a part of our community, than to celebrate Christmas with Matt, Kasey, Windsor, and Pippa...such a wonderful and beautiful addition to our Ascension family!

If you were able to attend his installation back at the beginning of December, you witnessed a special and emotional event in the life and ministry of Father Matt Ainsley. It was something that he will not soon forget! If you haven't had the opportunity to visit with Father Matt, please introduce yourself (his memory is being tested with all the new names!) the next time you see him and/or stop by the office for a cup of coffee on his back patio. It is a great place to hang out, and he absolutely loves it!

Many thanks again to the search committee and Vestry for the love and passion that they have shown for Ascension. I cannot emphasize enough how awesome it has been to work alongside so many quality and dedicated people, who selflessly give their time and talents to the parish. You have kept us going strong and steady over the past few years. Thank you from the bottom of my heart!

As my time to serve comes to a close at the annual meeting, know that our church and school are in good and capable hands. With the new Head of School (Interim tag recently removed!) Sarah Davenport, working alongside Father Matt and their staffs and Vestry ...we have a formidable team to launch us into 2026. I trust that you will keep them in your prayers and be willing to step up if you feel called to do so.

It has been an honor to once again serve the Parish that I love and I look forward to seeing you around church in the coming weeks.

Blessings,

**Kelly Cox**

Senior Warden

## Agenda

I. Call to Order and Opening Prayer

II. Election of Candidates for Vestry (p 5)

III. Senior Warden Report

IV. Junior Warden Report

V. Treasurer's Report

VI. 2025-2026 Budget Reports

VII. Ascension Episcopal School

VIII. Chaplain's Report

IX. Deacon's Report

X. Rector's Report

XI. Closing Prayer

## Junior Warden's Report 2025

My fellow Parishioners

For the last 3 years I have had the distinct honor of being the one involved directly ( I don't want to say in charge, because I am not , this Church is in charge of itself) with the well being and upkeep of the Church and grounds. While being a job that is sometimes demanding, causes lack of sleep and loss of hair, it is very rewarding knowing that it is taken care of and will be here for many years in the future.

Over the last year we have done mostly minor maintenance and were fairly lucky in that aspect.

With the exception of the Air Conditions that were replaced this year outside of the Church, and the unit inside the kitchen ceiling in Coughlin Hall, everything else for the most part has been maintained. We are lucky that the AC units survived the time they did, as they were well past life expectancy when we changed them.

We have a great working relationship with the school and their staff that helps keep the costs down for labor when it comes to things like grounds and minor repairs.

Couple of things that will need to be addressed in the coming months/years:

Icemaker- It is working and we just happened to be able to fix it but also, is well past its life expectancy but it keeps on trucking.

Cooler/Freezer- We will need to get this fixed and back to working order. This will enable us to store more food and buy at a discount to save money. Especially as we work to getting the fellowship back to where it was when Mrs. Jean was here.

Organ- While it is in great shape, it is aging very gracefully and we as a congregation need to be prepared for the need to upgrade it in the future. It is wiser to start preparing now then be surprised in the future.. There may need to be a capital campaign or something similar as they are not inexpensive and the people who install them are few and far between..

Even though I am rolling off of the Vestry, I am 100% sure that we are a strong church and our Church is strong with a great foundation to build on, and the actual facilities are in great shape also!

Your Brother In Christ

Bryce Godwin

# Treasurer's Report 2025

In January 2025 at the annual meeting the 2025 budget that was presented planned for operating income to be \$708,300.00 with expenses expected to be \$651,700.00, leaving a good cushion of \$56,600.00 for unexpected expenses. Although our actual 2025 income increased by \$16,000, our expenses exceeded our estimated budget by \$64,000.00.

For 2025, our stewardship pledge payments, and plate offerings were over our estimated budget. The overage of our 2025 expenses that were incurred were largely due to the replacement of two air conditioning units (Kitchen area of Coughlin Hall and the 10-ton unit for the Church) and miscellaneous labor services provided by an Ascension Episcopal School employee. The cash position at December 31, 2025, was \$1,650,284.00 compared to December 31, 2024, of \$1,496,234.00 generating an overall increase of \$154,050.00. The largest increase is attributable to the Community Foundation of Acadiana (CFA) funds which had an increase of well over \$100,000.00.

Looking ahead for our 2026 Budget, we are taking a conservative approach with projecting an increase of only 3% totaling \$22,164.00 for our operating income. Our overall pledge income has decreased by 6% compared to 2025. While our number of pledgers has contin-

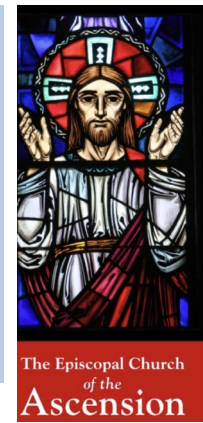
ued to decline and now stands right under 100, I am happy to report that we have received a total of \$34,000 from 6 new pledgers and 24 current pledgers have pledged an average increase of \$800.00.

Expenses for 2026 are projected to be \$832,574.00 which is higher than last year's budget by 22%. This increase is largely due to employee compensation and building and grounds expense. Although this number appears to be high, I would like to remind you that last year's budget did not reflect any additional employee compensation for our new Rector or the added labor services provided by the school.

Although we are projecting to incur a net operating loss for 2026 as our expenses exceed our operating revenues, Ascension is a growing parish and its financial position remains stable, which is verified by its strong cash reserves to support future growth.

Joan Martin  
2026

<b>Operating Cash</b>	<b>\$ 143,819.97</b>
<b>Restricted Cash</b>	<b>144,304.70</b>
<b>Memorial Cash</b>	<b>35,371.49</b>
<b>MMA</b>	<b>76,675.44</b>
<b>TOTAL 12/2025</b>	<b>\$ 400,171.60</b>



Ready for tomorrow today.

The Ascension Foundation

2025 Closing Balance  
**\$1,250,112.61**

PARISH MEETING	2025 BUDGET	2025 Actuals As of 12/31/25	2026 BUDGET
<b>INCOME</b>			
1. Pledge Payments	\$ 520,000.00	\$ 550,018.56	\$ 528,517.00
2. Non-Pledge Contributions	\$ 60,000.00	\$ 55,235.47	\$ 60,000.00
3. Plate Offerings	\$ 22,000.00	\$ 22,880.00	\$ 22,000.00
4. Previous Yr. Pledge Payments		\$ -	\$ -
5. AES Reimbursement	\$ 36,000.00	\$ 36,000.00	\$ 36,000.00
6. Interest Income	\$ -	\$ 16.98	\$ -
7. Gain/Loss Sales of Investments	\$ -	\$ 363.60	\$ -
8. Other Income	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 22,635.61	\$ 33,646.68
9. Clergy Sabbatical	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
10. Transfer From CFA/ATG Fund	\$ 13,000.00	\$ -	\$ 13,000.00
11. Transfer From Caillouet Property Sale	\$ 37,300.00	\$ 37,300.00	\$ 37,300.00
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$ 708,300.00</b>	<b>\$ 724,450.22</b>	<b>\$ 730,463.68</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>			
1. Outreach - Diocesan Asking	\$ 52,000.00	\$ 52,000.00	\$ 52,000.00
2. Outreach - Community	\$ 7,000.00	\$ 1,247.98	\$ 7,000.00
3. Church Salaries	\$ 208,936.57	\$ 209,247.45	\$ 243,460.97
4. Part-time Personnel	\$ 18,351.00	\$ 16,675.75	\$ 18,351.00
5. Payroll Taxes	\$ 12,189.61	\$ 11,046.76	\$ 11,588.64
6. Insurance - General	\$ 115,773.04	\$ 115,773.04	\$ 115,773.04
7. Insurance - Health & Life	\$ 877.80	\$ 7,793.80	\$ 44,713.80
7.5 Insurance - Health Savings Account	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
8. Pension Fund - Clergy	\$ 1,162.62	\$ 5,184.87	\$ 25,462.62
9. Lay Retirement Fund	\$ 3,052.90	\$ 3,052.80	\$ 3,052.90
10. Travel Allowance	\$ 3,000.00	\$ -	\$ 2,000.00
11. Housing Allowance - Clergy	\$ 15,563.96	\$ 26,397.28	\$ 80,563.96
12. Continuing Education	\$ 3,000.00	\$ -	\$ 1,500.00
13. Parish Discretionary Fund	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 405.16	\$ 2,400.00
14. Publications-Clerical & Liturgical	\$ 500.00	\$ 226.38	\$ 500.00
15. Office Expense	\$ 27,500.00	\$ 25,547.82	\$ 27,500.00
15.5 Audit	\$ 12,500.00	\$ 13,500.00	\$ 13,500.00
16. Telephone Expense	\$ 3,500.00	\$ 3,360.00	\$ 3,500.00
17. Utilities	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 30,451.61	\$ 30,000.00
18. Building & Ground Maintenance	\$ 55,000.00	\$ 115,407.65	\$ 68,182.56
19. Organ & Piano Maintenance	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 3,000.00
20. Advertising	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,041.19	\$ 1,000.00
21. Parish Hospitality	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 19,813.08	\$ 18,000.00
22. Diocesan Convention	\$ 800.00	\$ -	\$ 800.00
23. Altar Guild Expense	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,230.17	\$ 1,500.00
24. Music & Choir Expense	\$ 39,000.00	\$ 39,000.00	\$ 39,000.00
25. Newcomers Ministry	\$ 1,000.00	\$ -	\$ 1,000.00
26. Christian Education - Adult	\$ 250.00	\$ 375.87	\$ 1,500.00
27. Christian Education - Children	\$ 675.00	\$ -	\$ 675.00
28. Youth Ministry Expense	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 380.89	\$ 1,000.00
29. Children & Family Ministry	\$ 13,500.00	\$ 13,500.00	\$ 13,500.00
30. Acolytes	\$ 100.00	\$ 30.47	\$ 100.00
31. Nursery Ministry Supplies	\$ 300.00	\$ 77.39	\$ 300.00
34. Lay Readers	\$ 150.00	\$ -	\$ 150.00
35. Lyle Parratt Lecture Services	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
36. Clergy Sabbatical	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
37. Stewardship	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
38. Benevolence Gifts	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$ 651,682.50</b>	<b>\$ 715,767.41</b>	<b>\$ 832,574.49</b>
<b>NET TOTALS</b>	<b>\$ 56,617.50</b>	<b>\$ 8,682.81</b>	<b>\$ (102,110.81)</b>

## Nominees for the Vestry of the Episcopal Church of the Ascension

The nomination period for vestry was opened in November and closed December 2025.



Allyson Womack

**Mrs. Allyson Womack:** My name is Allyson Glasgow Womack and I have a long history with the Episcopal Church of the Ascension. My family moved to Lafayette in 1978 and joined Ascension at that time. I started preschool and attended Ascension Day School until my father's job moved us to Ft. Worth in 1986. I was an acolyte and very active in EYC at All Saints' Episcopal Church, Ft. Worth, TX. I graduated from All Saints' Episcopal school and then graduated from Louisiana Tech University. After college, I worked at All Saints' church and school, teaching and had the privilege of working with clergy to establish a mission school in Africa. My husband, Lee, and I moved back to Lafayette and joined the church in 2004. Our daughter Aubrey was born in 2005 and our son Campbell was born in 2008 and as a family, we have been very involved with many aspects of the church and school. This is my 15th year teaching at Ascension Episcopal School, I have been involved with Ascension's Vacation Bible School, taught youth Sunday School classes, and served as a Lay Eucharistic Minister. I would like to be an active member of the Vestry to share my experiences as a church member, a faculty member, and a parent of Ascension School.



Myra Tener

**Ms. Myra Tener:** I am Myra Tener, a life long Episcopalian. I have been a member of Ascension for 22 years, since I moved **back to** Lafayette. Through the years at Episcopal churches in Texas and Missouri, I have taught Sunday School, been an usher and a member of the Vestry, served on the Diocesan Finance Committee and Standing Committee, and been the Church Treasurer. At Ascension, I have served as a layreader, been on the Finance Committee, sung in the choir, and served on the Vestry and the Ascension Episcopal School Board. Most importantly, I have received many prayers from parishioners, and my cancer is now in remission, I would be honored to serve on the Ascension Vestry.



Susan Owen

**Ms. Susan Owen:** I am a member of Junior League of Lafayette - present sustaining member. I have previously served on JLL board of directors. Other previous placements included coordination of rotations for Tinsel & Treasures, Junior League placement committee, Miles Perret Center, and Young at Heart, among other volunteer work.

Here at Ascension Church, I have helped with Nada's Tea for the last several years and was on the committee when Nada's Tea was first initiated, I have also been a Ascension book club participant, and served as previous chair of Greens Committee.

I have previously served on altar guild at St. Barnabas Church (prior to joining Ascension). I have also Co-chaired the annual Ascension school auction, served PTA as a committee member, and previously volunteered as room mom and on the yearbook committee



David Joseph

**Mr. David Joseph:** My family and I started attending the 11:00 service about 3 years ago and are very grateful to be part of the Ascension community. I have been involved in the men's group and my two children have both served as acolytes. I am married to Jamie, who serves our community as a breast radiologist. Our oldest, Perry, is a freshman in college and our daughter, Chaney, is a freshman at ESA. I graduated



Harrison Michael Immel

**Mr. Harrison Michael Immel:** I have been an Episcopalian since I was confirmed in 1953 at Trinity Church in Columbus Georgia. It has been my privilege to serve as an Acolyte, Sunday School Teacher, Eucharistic Minister 1 & 2, and Vestry member at churches in Georgia, Alabama, and Louisiana. I am currently a first alternant to our Head Usher Sundays when requested.

We became members of Ascension in 1994 where I have participated as Ascension School board Treasurer, Vestry, Senior Warden, Church School relation Committee, Finance Committee Chair, Ascension High School organization and development committee. I am a retired medical group practice manager, administrator, director having also served on various foundation boards both regional and national. I previously worked as a commercial lending officer in the banking industry.

My wife Penny and I have 2 adult children, 6 grandchildren and shortly we will have our second great grandchild. I have been asked to fill a one year unexpired term on the vestry and look forward to serving.

## Head of School Report 2025

I am grateful for the opportunity to share this report at a unique moment in the life of Ascension Episcopal School. After eighteen years in independent school education and four years as Ascension's Head of Upper School, I was approached in July of 2025 to serve as Interim Head of School. Following a period of discernment and prayerful consideration, I accepted and will carry dual leadership responsibilities through June 2026. In November 2025, I was honored to be named Head of School and will transition to serving exclusively in that role beginning July 1, 2026. This continuity of leadership has provided some stability while allowing us to move forward with clarity and purpose.

During this time of transition, we have maintained a commitment to excellence— we have onboarded highly-qualified and passionate educators who are deeply committed to student learning and formation. We have expanded academic and co-curricular offerings, including cross-divisional programs such as PACE [performing arts and creative expression] and the entrepreneurship, stewardship, and finance program— designed to foster problem-solving and real-world application. Our students have engaged in a wide range of service initiatives that cultivate empathy, leadership, and a commitment to others—including, but not limited to— Prefects and class leaders hosting our record-breaking annual chili cookoff in support of Miles Perret; Lenten free dress in support of our sister school in Uganda; participation in *Gators for Others* and the adopt-a-family program with Faith House; athletic teams volunteering at St. Joseph's Diner; middle school students serving their very own teachers and staff in preparation for the new school year. In addition, through new leadership, we have fostered greater cohesion within the fine and performing arts and athletic departments, ensuring consistency and collaboration. Alongside these programmatic advances, we have continued to develop our framework for faculty expectations and strengthening communication with families, fostering ongoing transparency within the school community.

As Ascension looks ahead, the year 2026 represents a pivotal moment. We will complete our SAIS mid-accreditation report, providing an important opportunity

to reflect on our progress and ensure continued alignment with SAIS standards related to Mission, leadership, program effectiveness, and institutional sustainability. In tandem, we will engage in a comprehensive strategic planning process to develop Ascension's next four-year strategic plan. Together, these efforts will allow us to build upon recent growth while thoughtfully charting our path forward as both a parish and an independent school.

As Head of School, my first priority is our people. In keeping with SAIS indicators of effective leadership and personnel support, I am committed to meeting individually with every faculty and staff member across the three campuses this spring to listen and learn. These conversations will inform leadership decisions and ensure that our organizational practices support clarity and professional growth. Alongside this, we will implement best practices for the senior leadership team, including clearer structures for collaboration and decision-making, as well as a more intentional onboarding process for new team members. Another initiative for the leadership team will be in partnership with the School Board— creating a subcommittee to map out a comprehensive plan of action for campus and personnel safety and security. We have engaged with the LPSO to employ two full-time School Resource Officers on the Downtown and Sugar Mill Pond campuses; we maintain LPSO physical security in the a.m./p.m. hours at the River Ranch campus.

In addition, we will maintain a focus on long-term sustainability. Revitalizing our development and fundraising efforts will be essential to supporting programmatic growth and institutional vitality. It is exciting to witness physical growth, marked by the upcoming groundbreaking of the spring sports field house on the upper school campus— an effort driven by a few committed Blue Gator families looking to inspire possibility and promise. We look to sharpen our enrollment strategy, strengthening the full inquiry-to-enrollment process to ensure a seamless, welcoming experience for prospective families. By refining our enrollment practices, we aim to sustain Mission-aligned growth while ensuring that all families—both current and prospective—who are a strong fit for Ascension have the opportunity to be part of our community.

Equally important is ensuring that Ascension's Mission and Portrait of a Graduate are fully reflected in our daily practices. We will continue to develop teacher leadership and align academic standards and instructional practices across divisions so that our Mission is not only articulated, but lived. Progress in this area will be evident as outcomes are embedded in curriculum planning, professional learning, and effective assessments.

As an Episcopal school, strengthening the spiritual life of Ascension and deepening our relationship with the church remain central to this work. In connection with clergy and Vestry, we will continue to integrate worship and faith formation into the life of the school, fostering meaningful connections between parish and school communities. Our PreK-12 Christian Studies curriculum provides students with a faithful foundation— through learned bible stories, liturgical services, and real-world experiences like the annual Theology II [World Religions] field trip that exposes them to diverse worship traditions across Acadiana. Our students have inspired opportunities for classroom projects and performances, spiritual

life retreats, lock-ins, and Mornings with Mary in which they pray the rosary; they value Christian-centered programs, such as WyldLife and YoungLife. While our students are at varying points in their faith journeys, we strive to create opportunities that help each of them know Christ more deeply and discover His purpose for their lives.

I am deeply appreciative of the Vestry's trust and support during this season of leadership. Grounded in faith, strengthened by talented educators, and guided by a compelling vision, Ascension is well-positioned to serve as Acadiana's elite private Christian school— rooted in the values of Episcopal education— which by the way, is widely recognized as one of the most respected and revered forms of education, combining academic excellence, high moral expectations, and a focus on nurturing the whole child— mind, body, spirit.

Respectfully submitted,

**Sarah Davenport**  
Head of School

thankful for the trust that has been given me to care for the spiritual lives of our entire school.

I am thankful for the acolytes who faithfully lead and serve our congregation at the 11 am service. I am also thankful for the opportunity to collaborate with our families and Mrs. Susen Brown on Youth and Family events throughout the year.

Finally, I am very thankful that God has called Fr. Matt and his family to join and lead our Ascension family. Collaborating together has been a blessing from the start and I am excited to see how God will continue using him to bless Ascension and Lafayette.

**The Rev'd Jake Schlossberg**  
Chaplain and Associate for Youth

## Chaplain's Report 2025

The Spring 2025 semester found me continuing as the Interim All School Chaplain: I continued the Upper School Chaplain role with occasional planned visits to the other campuses. In collaboration with former Head of School Jeff Pinnow and then Upper School Division Head Sarah Davenport, I began planning for a more fulsome All School Chaplain role for the 2025-26 school year. I now split my time between all three campuses, with the Upper School and the Preschool getting most of my attention. The Upper School has Morning Prayer two days a week and Eucharist nearly every other week. I am part of the Lower and Middle School chapels on Thursdays and Friday, collaborating with the campus Christian Education teachers. The Preschool has chapel every Wednesday and I teach Christian Ed there on Thursdays and Fridays, creating a curriculum inspired by two other programs: Catechesis of the Good Shepherd and Godly Play. I am thrilled that Sarah Davenport has been named Head of School and I am

## School Financial Report

### Ascension Episcopal School

#### Comparison of Activity Through December YTD 25/26 & 24/25

<b>REVENUE</b>	December YTD 25/26	December YTD 24/25	Difference in 25/26 v 24/25
Net Tuition (a)	4,753,046	4,854,738	(101,692)
Fee Revenue	681,122	696,063	(14,941)
Operating Revenue	489,232	450,061	39,171
Fundraising/Grants/Donations (b)	605,114	240,844	364,270
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>6,528,514</b>	<b>6,241,706</b>	<b>286,808</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>			
Employee	3,966,169	3,989,734	(23,565)
School Expense (c)	969,823	772,309	197,514
Administration	523,195	520,429	2,766
Departmental	335,557	372,193	(36,636)
Depreciation	278,964	278,964	0
<b>TOTAL EXPENSE</b>	<b>6,073,708</b>	<b>5,933,629</b>	<b>140,079</b>
<b>YTD Revenue over Expense</b>	<b>454,806</b>	<b>308,077</b>	<b>146,729</b>
<b>Cash Balance</b>	<b>1,972,051</b>	<b>1,998,100</b>	<b>(26,049)</b>

#### Notes:

- (a) Increase in tuition cost not enough to offset enrollment decrease of 599 to 575 for 25/26  
 (b) Majority of the difference is in Restricted Donations with \$298,000 for Field House in 25/26  
 (c) School expense increases in Athletics, tuition assistance and timing of class trip expenses

## Deacon's Report 2025

As Pastoral Minister, my ministries include pastoral visits to parishioners who are in need, most times with Eucharist and anointing. I visit those who are new, old, ill, at home, in facilities or hospitalized, the sick and the dying. If needed to be reached, please contact me through the church office, my cell or email.

I participate in all regularly scheduled services and I may officiate as well. I officiate and/or assist also at funeral and burial services and I also lead other services at the Church. I have privileges from Bishop Owensby to preach and officiate services with Eucharist from the reserved sacrament. Currently, I officiate the weekly Wednesday noonday service at church, at The Vincent retirement facility chapel twice a month on Saturday's, which also includes preaching and Eucharist.

Part of my ministry is to train Eucharistic Ministers and Eucharistic Visitors. If you have interest in learning more about any of these important ministries, please contact me.

A new part of my ministry is one that I have labeled the Flower Ministry. Once the altar flowers have served their purpose, they are divided and shared with those in our church who we want to remember, those who are ill, homebound or hospitalized. The person who heads this is Courtenay Littlefield, who has become known as "The Flower Lady"; she is assisted by Ellen Patton and Kathy Hidalgo. So many in our church have been blessed by this ministry. I am grateful to these ladies for their pastoral care.

I also chair the Outreach Committee and I have oversight of the individual ministries, which consist of calling and leading the regular monthly meetings and assisting each ministry when possible and applicable. Currently, our local ministries include: United Christian Outreach where we feed the hungry and give clothing to those in need,

led by Carol Bares and assisted by Gayle Lafitte and Janet Leigh; Faith House, led by Anne Patin and Carol Dore, where we serve women and children who have been abused. We have recently re-connected with ULL and Wesley House in offering lunch and hospitality to students on a regular basis. Those involved are: Anne Patin, Gayle Lafitte, Ginger Norvell and Carol Dore. If anyone is interested in any of these ministries, please contact me or the person who spearheads them.

Our two global ministries include: "Reaching the Pygmies" and "Roots and Fruits". Reaching the Pygmies is our annual ministry to the Batwa people in Africa and is partnered with Ascension School. Funds are sent every year that help sustain and promote their Epiphany School. Roots and Fruits is our ministry to the educational program for Christian children in the Holy Land, which is led by The Rev. Kamal Farrah. Funds are received from churches and individuals across the country and with our funding, is sent to the Holy Land annually.

Another aspect for me in Outreach, is to oversee our fundraising event, which is the annual "Festival International Car Park." The monies netted from this endeavor assist in funding our other outreach projects, as prescribed by the Bishop. We are also partially funded by monies from the church, which we are most grateful for and which assist us in serving others as well.

I have office hours and also spend significant time away visiting parishioners. Please make an appointment to visit with me regarding any of these topics.

I am richly blessed by Ascension Church, this ministry, and all of you whom I serve.

Faithfully,

**Rev. Honey Becker, Deacon**

Pastoral Ministry and Outreach

## Rector's Report 2025

The Ainsley family is so excited to be here at Ascension Episcopal Church & School. We only just arrived in late October, and yet, in some ways, we feel like we've been here for years. We are, of course, still getting settled, and I, as your rector, am still getting my bearings, but we know that this is where we are supposed to be; we are confident, humbled, and grateful that the Lord called us to Lafayette.

Many of you have asked how our girls, Windsor and Pip-pa, are doing. I am delighted to report that they are thriving. They love their new town, new friends, and their new church and school. I want to thank you all for helping make the transition smooth, for your prayers, and for the hospitality you've shown my family and me. From the welcome party to the welcome chapel at the lower/middle school to the reception after the installation, you have treated us so well. You have also fed us well, maybe too well! To those of you who have brought us meals, hosted us in your homes, taken us out to eat, and given us gift cards for the finest Lafayette fare—thank you!

As I've said a few times during Sunday announcements, a major part of my job right now and going forward is getting to know you all — the staff and the congregation, the students at the school and their families. One of the highlights of my time here so far has been hanging out with the kids on the rector's patio. Kasey and I have taken up decorating the patio for each season. Right now, it is decked out for Mardi Gras! I am still, in many ways, a youth pastor at heart, and it is life-giving to push the kids on the swing at recess, show the 7th graders what this middle-aged man can do on the basketball court, or chat it up with the teachers and faculty.

At the Downtown Campus, each day begins with chapel, that is, with praise, prayer, and the reading and teaching of Holy Scripture. It is a gift, for example, to hear the children lift their voices in song. It is precious to me and, moreover, to the Lord. Jesus said, "Let the little children come unto me," and we are obeying that command by creating an environment where the whole child—body, soul, and spirit—can be formed into the likeness of Christ. What a gift to these children, their families, and the community!

Another highlight for me was Christmas Eve. First off, the church was beautifully decorated. I told some members of the altar guild I had never seen its equal. Both services were wonderful, though they had very different "vibes." The early service was packed with families and children, who performed outstandingly in the Christmas pageant. At the very end, one of the kids blurted out, "We did awesome!" I replied, "Yes, you did!" It was a joy to minister in the midst of what I like to call "holy chaos." Children bring energy to the life of the Church; their openness to the things of God and their simplicity of heart serve as a powerful reminder to us adults that we are called to become like them. The late service was sublime: the music was second to none, and the high school and college-aged acolytes performed their service to the Lord with excellence and enthusiasm. It was a night in which the Faithful were edified, the Almighty Triune God was glorified, and one I will not soon forget.

I cannot imagine a better beginning to my tenure as rector than the one I have experienced. I am profoundly grateful to be part of this community and honored to serve as your rector. I feel like I've hit the jackpot! Additionally, I must acknowledge the exemplary clergy, church and school staff, and lay leadership here at Ascension. It is truly a privilege to labor in the Lord alongside Fr. Jake Schlossberg, Dcn. Honey Becker, Mr. John Moore, Mrs. Stacy Shumaker, Mrs. Susen Brown, Mrs. Mona Kellogg, and Mr. Steven Domingue. Furthermore, I am pleased to work with our outstanding office staff, Mrs. Linda Khalilia and Mrs. Misty Reed. I'm also very excited to collaborate with our new head of school, Mrs. Sarah Davenport. Finally, I would be remiss if I didn't mention the very high caliber of our vestry led by the (outgoing) wardens, Mr. Kelly Cox and Mr. Bryce Godwin.

I begin this new year filled with hope, that is, a confident expectation that the Lord will do a mighty work in and through us. One hundred and twenty-five years ago, the Lord began a good work here in Lafayette with the formation of Ascension as a mission, and God is faithful to bring that work to completion and perfection, provided that we cooperate with the grace He has given us. So, in the power of the Holy Spirit, may we walk as Jesus

walked. May we be devoted to the Scriptures, the Fellowship, the Breaking of Bread, and the Prayers, so that we might be transformed into the likeness of Jesus Christ our

Lord, who with the Father and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, One God, forever and ever. Amen.

The Rev'd Fr. Matthew Ainsley