"SEE AND KNOW THAT THINGS WHICH WERE CAST DOWN ARE BEING RAISED UP, AND THINGS WHICH HAD GROWN OLD ARE BEING MADE NEW, AND THAT ALL THINGS ARE BEING BROUGHT TO THEIR PERFECTION."

THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER
We are Easter people; a community called to the light of resurrection in times of darkness.

We are one. We share one table.

We are diverse. We embody the love of Christ in a variety of ways.

In this Prospectus you will see who we are, and what we hope for.

THIS IS HOW WE PARTICIPATE IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

The Rev. Andrew Thayer
A MOTHER’S CHOICE
Brooke Reid

I was raised as a Southern Baptist, so the Episcopal Church of the Ascension was not the most obvious choice of churches for me to join as an adult. I joined the church, in part, because it is where my husband grew up.

Phelps and I were recruited to participate in a ministry known as “New Beginnings,” founded by the late Florence Catledge. “New Beginnings” pairs members of our parish with children who primarily reside in neighboring public housing, to provide these children with a mentor. Every Wednesday, students join us for a meal, fellowship, and tutoring.

My pupils quickly surpassed me in math skills. I received far more from my experience with New Beginnings than I ever could have given the children.

I have grown so very proud of the spirit of inclusion, grace, and love that is the Church of the Ascension, and look forward to raising my two children in this church. As Mother Teresa once said, “I used to pray that God would feed the hungry, or do this or that, but now I pray that he will guide me to do whatever I’m supposed to do; what I can do. I used to pray for answers, but now I’m praying for strength.” I can now say with confidence that I am a member not only because it means so much to my extended family, but because of the beautiful people and ministries that the Ascension embraces.

I look forward to the positive changes that our church will continue to make in our community and beyond.

THE POWER OF STORY
Tiffany Nishbun

Godly Play is a program for teaching children the lessons of the Bible based on storytelling in a liturgical format. It begins the process of training children to participate in the worship of adult church. Just as we have readings of scripture in adult worship, the children are told a Bible story that is linked to the day’s lectionary readings. This story is followed by “wondering questions” that encourage them to think more deeply about the story; there is no “right answer.” After the story of the Sower and the Seed we asked, “What do you think the name of the sower is?” One child said, “Jesus,” and another said, “Johnny Appleseed;” a lively discussion followed. The program could be described as “EFM for children.”

Following the story there is “free play,” a story-based activity. Then they have a snack – which comes as a children’s version of adult communion. In this way the pattern of scripture, response, and Eucharist is established in their minds. At the end of the morning the teacher dismisses the children with a blessing.

Children have rich play lives. In the midst of their play when you ask them: “What are you doing?” they usually respond with a statement of being instead of action. “I’m a whale.” “I’m a mermaid.” “I’m a dinosaur.” “I’m a priest.” Children play to create their understanding of the world. They pretend to be the people they want to become: moms, dads, doctors, teachers, firefighters, singers, and so many others. One of our parish’s children put out her dolls and stuffed animals to serve them communion. Perhaps she’ll be a priest when she grows up.

Godly Play teaches our children and blesses them in their play.

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Godly Play teaches our children and blesses them in their play.
In 2007, when I came to Montgomery to work at the Alabama Shakespeare Festival, I visited different churches, and found the Ascension was my “fit.” I’m tempted to say, “I discovered the Episcopal Church” although it might be more accurate to say that the “Episcopal Church discovered me.” I had been without a church home for the entirety of my adult life, and had no idea how much of myself I would find here. While I’d always had faith in God, I’d lost faith in religion, and, to a large degree, in myself.

It’s hard for me to put into words how much was missing in my life. It wasn’t that my life wasn’t full... it just wasn’t... rich. Even before being confirmed, the church had already become so much a part of me, so by faith, not blood. I have celebrated with the people of Ascension; I have grieved with them. Ascension has been my anchor, the tie that I hold on to between heaven and earth. My husband was confirmed on its broad step. What Jesus did not mention was the fact that it’s perfectly normal for the crying of babies and the giggling of toddlers is a blessing in worship. I’ve always been taught that the crying of babies from birth are to be honored. Jesus himself said that children are the Kingdom in its purest human form. What Jesus did not mention was the fact that it’s challenging to hear the voice of God in the sermon over these particular citizens of the kingdom. So I tried not to be annoyed and just listened harder.

I was determined to get it right this Sunday. Having been an Episcopalian all of thirty seconds, I’m still learning the intricacies of Anglican liturgy. What makes it so opulent in meaning and beauty is also what makes it such a daunting task for newcomers to master. Too often, I find myself concentrating exclusively on when to kneel, when to make the sign of the cross, which page of the BCP is coming next, the proper etiquette for the Eucharist, and what does the word oblation mean again? I’m so obsessed with getting the form right that I sometimes forget to actually, you know, worship.

But this Sunday I was going to focus. I was going to let the physical trappings of liturgical posture take a backseat to the Holy Spirit. I was going to let the language and symbolism and candlelight and tolling bells wash over me as I listened for Her whisper in my ear. As Andy presented what was, at least to me, an interesting and novel approach to the Bread of Life passage, I found it a bit hard to hear him over the little boy one pew up.

I’ve always been taught that the crying of babies and the giggling of toddlers is a blessing in worship. Faithful parents who bring their children to praise God from birth are to be honored. Jesus himself said that children are the Kingdom in its purest human form. What Jesus did not mention was the fact that it’s challenging to hear the voice of God in the sermon over these particular citizens of the kingdom. So I tried not to be annoyed and just listened harder.

The Eucharistic portion of the service began and I grabbed for my program. When we began to sing the Lord’s Prayer, the little boy, who had been conducting a war on his pew with his action figures, suddenly grabbed for my program. When we began to sing the Lord’s Prayer, the little boy, who had been conducting a war on his pew with his action figures, suddenly grabbed for my program. When we began to sing the Lord’s Prayer, the little boy, who had been conducting a war on his pew with his action figures, suddenly grabbed for my program. When we began to sing the Lord’s Prayer, the little boy, who had been conducting a war on his pew with his action figures, suddenly grabbed for my program.

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I walked into the sanctuary that morning with the goal of hearing what the Spirit had to say to me. She spoke to me, not through the Bible or the liturgy or the music or even the Eucharist, but through a pre-schooler. She reminded me what true worship is. So much of my spiritual life has been dedicated to trying to get...things... exactly...right, especially when it comes to worship. I doubt I’m alone in this. But if we could all let go of that impulse, at least a little, and muster up a fraction of that little boy’s sheer joy in our worship, our church – our lives – would be transformed.
The second Saturday of the month, August 2011, marked the first time that the Beans and Rice Ministry set up shop in front of the Joshua House to offer beans and rice to our neighbors; we have continued to use the second Saturday of each month as our distribution day for the last four years.

On that first morning the volunteers arrived and we were ready with a large number of bags filled with three pounds of long grain, white rice, two pounds of dried pinto beans, a recipe and a blessing, all nicely secured in an easy to carry bag. That day only twelve people showed up, but the word slowly spread and presently we average over forty a month.

Unanimously, the volunteers who participate in the Beans and Rice Ministry agree that the best parts of this outreach are the relationships that grow from these interactions with our neighbors. One long-time volunteer noted, “At first our clients seemed shy and somewhat hesitant to walk up to our table. Once they learned that we are accepting and friendly, they opened up and become friendly with us; we have created a rapport with our neighbors.”

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My name is Sam Bolger. I’m five years old. I don’t know how to write yet. The grown ups are helping me. I like going to church, and we go a lot. I mean every Sunday and most Wednesdays and then special stuff like Vacation Bible School. It’s cool though because everybody is really nice. I have some really good friends like James and Natalie, and I always get to see them there.

In Sunday School, I like learning new Bible stories like “Jonah and the Big Fish”. Jonah got thrown out of the boat because he didn’t listen to God. God sent a big storm with a big fish. The fish swallowed Jonah because he disobeyed God. Then he prayed to God, and he said, “This time I will go to Ninevah.” So the fish spit him out. I don’t think it would be fun to be swallowed by a fish. There would be a lot of food in his stomach, and blood. That would be disgusting. I like having Sunday School with Miss Nan. With her we get to play games and cook stuff like the time we made Rice Krispy treats.

In Children’s Church I like having prayer time in the circle. That’s when we sing songs and read a Bible verse. Also, in Children’s Church we do “Awesome/Not Awesome” with Miss Tiffany. That’s when we get to tell something that happened to us that was good, like “the other day I got to go to my grandparents’ house.” Then we tell about something bad, like “I busted my lip today.” After everybody does that, we go around again and tell something else that happened that was good – like “I learned how to ride my bike without training wheels.” I really like Miss Tiffany a lot.

When we go into grown up church I like singing. The song I like best is “Our Father in Heaven.” I don’t usually do the hand gestures. I just like the singing part. When church is over, I like to help the ushers by going around to all the seats and picking up papers. Sometimes someone leaves their purse and when I find one I always take it up to the ushers, because in a couple of minutes a lady always comes in saying, “Where did I leave my purse, I think I was sitting here.”

Then I go eat a snack and play.
THE LIST SAYS IT ALL: at Church of the Ascension we have a deep, abiding commitment to walk with each other through times of sorrow and hardship, through times of crisis, through life passages that change everything, as when a new child comes to be a part of our family. We are able to be with those who are in need because we ourselves have known what it is to need and have a loving hand extended to reassure us of God’s presence with us. Truly, the Ascension is filled with angels of mercy.
As a life-long member of Ascension and having been blessed by experiencing 64 + years of worship and music thus far, I have witnessed a number of changes here. Some were expected while others were not. Who can forget moving from the 1928 Prayer Book to the “new” one? To her death Mama said the old General Thanksgiving but at least it was under her breath. I remember well rejoicing when the first female acolyte served. And of course allowing laypersons to assist with administering communion was a roof-blower.

But no matter which way the pendulum swung, always at the center of the pendulum swings were worship, music, and prayer. When we worship we offer God our praise and share our concerns. How we worship may evolve, but the meaning of what we do has remained the same.

Serving as a member of the Altar Party and particularly as a Verger has made the transitions smoother because I am learning why we do things the way we do them. Some actions have neither a right nor a wrong way, but are matters of preference and tradition. (Do we stand here or kneel?) They encourage setting aside my “I know it all” attitude and facilitate opening my ears, mind, and heart to listening and learning.

Dr. Albert Schweitzer, German physician, theologian & winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, said, “The only ones of you who will be really happy are those who will have sought and found how to serve.” Verging allows me to serve my church family by helping to create through music and worship a special place and time to feel close to God and His people.

God is spirit and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth. – John 4:24

I found Ascension in 1977 but as I was a Music Ministry director for another local church I attended only as I was able. In 1985 Mark Waldo asked me to come and work with the children’s choir – the rest is history. “Later, I began playing the organ and then conducting the choir.”

In 1997, I tearfully left Ascension to pursue a Master’s Degree in Tuscaloosa – “my years of wandering in the desert.” Initially, I did not think we would come back to Montgomery but I found myself experiencing a complex longing for the people gathered in this Church and for this building. We returned to Montgomery, Ascension was my home.

When the church “split,” came I worshipped, sang, and prayed alone in the Nave every day. One morning I invited a good friend with a strong prophetic voice to join me, praying in the Nave. We sat and worshiped for long time before she spoke, “this is your own little private Garden of Eden that God has given you to worship in and these windows are a picture of what God is going to do. He is going to take all the shattered pieces of the life of Ascension and put them back together again to make something beautiful.” I never again questioned whether or not Ascension was going to be all right.

In the Nave of Ascension, I am in a holy and sacred space where God’s people have worshipped for more that 100 years. Every window, architectural detail and symbol draws me to God and stirs my gratitude for the gift of Jesus’ life and example. My greatest privilege is in working with the Ascension Choir, dedicated servants, using their God-given talents creating music together.

One of my favorite hymn texts inspires me and perfectly articulates what the Church of the Ascension has meant in my life and my experience of God’s wide and expansive mercy. “If our love were but more faithful, we should take him at his word, and our life would be thanksgiving for the goodness of the Lord.”

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you for the Ascension!
Then I heard the Lord asking, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” Then I said, “Here I am! Send me.”

– Isaiah 6:8

I was lucky to be called to be part of our church’s mission trip this summer. I’m so thankful that I was able to go.

Monday through Thursday we had Bible School in the mornings at Iglesia Ascension. On the first day, I recognized Kayle, one of the children I had met on an earlier visit. The minute I saw, she recognized me! It was awesome to see her and her mom again.

Every morning, we sang songs, with Father Andy and Father Eduardo playing guitars. Then we read a Bible story then split into two groups. One group made a craft project for the day and the other would go have a snack. Seeing the children laugh and having fun showed us how much they appreciated us being there. Though we didn’t speak their language we communicated without words.

Friday we visited Hogar Escuela, an Episcopal school for children of single mothers. When we walked onto the playground, the kids faces just lit up. They ran into our arms.

¡Pura Vida!* It’s an expression you hear all the time in Costa Rica. It translates literally as “pure life”, but it means so much more. It means that no matter what your current situation is, life for someone else can always be less fortunate than your own. Life is short – life it with generosity and gratitude.
Seeking Christian Spirituality is an adult Sunday school class that meets at 9:15 on Sunday mornings. We seek to grow our understanding of God and agreed that Christianity is “A Way” to come into a right relation with God, but not necessarily the only place to find healthy spirituality.

Seeking Christian Spirituality is more than a class; it is a safe place, a state of mind, a recharge, a refocus, and a “WOW!” It is a hug from God, offered through connection with others. We generally take a subject or book and introduce the ideas of the author, and then the fun begins. The real value of the class is the people in it and their willingness to honestly share their thoughts, successes and, most importantly, their failures. Class members value the open discussion format and may participate as they choose.

I can emphatically state that I am a different person because of this class. Every single day I draw on what I have learned in the class. This class has reshaped how I see things, it has changed the lens through which I see the world. I see people, religion and the church differently and I am grateful.

Like anything else that you actively practice; you get better, but you don’t notice the change day-to-day. Before long, something seems like second nature that once was difficult.

My classmates have helped me to become less judgmental, more grateful, more in the moment, a better person and a better Christian, and I want to encourage others to experience the same thing. We walk together on this journey in our class and I hope you will join us.
Daughters of the King is organized as a religious order. Each Daughter makes a lifetime vow to live by our Rule of Life requiring a spiritual discipline of daily prayer, service, and evangelism. We are a diverse group from different backgrounds and ages but we are drawn together because we believe in prayer and service.

However we are not a service group and we are not allowed to raise money, but our Rule of Life encourages us to be involved in other aspects of the church. These include serving on the Vestry, Altar Guild, Choir, the Wednesday night tutoring program, ECW and overseeing the acolytes on Sunday morning.

We welcome women of any age who are interested in becoming members. Membership requires a period of training in which each prospective Daughter prays for the discernment to know if God is calling her to this discipline. All that is required is a willing spirit and a desire to seek and serve Christ in all persons and to proclaim, by word and example, the Good News of God-in-Christ, as reflected in our Baptismal vows.

Empowered by the Holy Spirit, our mission as daughters of the King is to know Jesus Christ, to make Him known to others, and become reflections of God’s love throughout the world.

The Motto of the Order For His Sake...
I am but one, but I am one. I cannot do everything, but I can do something. What I can do, I ought to do. What I ought to do, by the grace of God I will do. Lord, what will you have me do?

Men of The Ascension re-activated the parish's Brotherhood of St. Andrew chapter early in 2015, almost a century after it was founded. Today, the nearly thirty members are engaged in several in-reach and outreach projects helping to enlarge our community for Christ.

When my family and I moved to Montgomery and joined The Ascension in 2008, it was readily apparent to me that while there were more than a few parish organizations for women, there was but one men’s fellowship group, the Thursday morning Men’s Prayer Breakfast. This is a wonderful source of weekly fellowship and I seldom miss a Thursday prayer breakfast, but I had a sense was that there was still a need for a more active organization that could serve our community in a spirit of Christian grace.

Thanks to fellow parishioner, Jerry Baxley, who was a leader in a Brotherhood chapter when he was at Holy Comforter Church, we have been able to re-activate The Ascension’s chapter smoothly and with great success.

The Brotherhood of St. Andrew is a worldwide order of men and boys of the Episcopal Church. Our mission is to develop and equip men and boys for faithful discipleship to effect changed lives throughout the world for the greater glory of God.

The Ascension Chapter meets for prayer and fellowship and we serve as volunteers for a variety of outreach projects. Projects that we are working on include helping to complete several home repair and rehabilitation projects in the central, north and west neighborhoods of Montgomery. We have worked with the Central Alabama Chapter of Rebuilding Together and we continue to explore other avenues of service and opportunities for fellowship.
How awesome is this place! This is none other than the House of God and the Gate of Heaven!

– Genesis 28:17

It’s hard to imagine this congregation was born of rain and mud, but the residents of this neighborhood founded the Church of the Ascension because of the difficulty of getting to St. John’s in bad weather, especially crossing the “Genetta Ditch.” The neighbors joined together to build a new church for their families and sought out the most accomplished ecclesiastical architect of the time, Ralph Adams Cram. Mr. Cram strove to create buildings whose designs conveyed spiritual values as a corrective to a secular and technological world. The choice of stone and slate, pointed arch windows, beamed roof, and above all the soaring vertical space inside, all speak the language of the Gothic style, considered by Mr. Cram as “the only proper style” for Christian Architecture. Through the years the building has had many additions but all the subsequent architects took Mr. Cram’s design for our worship space as their guide. The result is a complex and harmonious composition, rich with detail. This building is a treasure, and it is “Non Nobis Solum” that is, “not for us alone.”
I’m a professor of Spanish at AUM and so it was not a surprise in 2004 that I was called by a local hospital to translate for some Hispanic folks who were in the Emergency Room. That initial experience led to other opportunities and by 2005 I realized that there was a very real need and that here was a ministry to which I was being called.

We began serving our Hispanic brothers and sisters by establishing worship services in Spanish, but we realized that bringing the service to them served only a part of their needs. In order to function successfully at school and at work they need to learn English. So we offer Basic English language instruction for those who have never had any exposure to English and for those who speak some English. One-on-one instruction is given to a group of 4 to 20 students; on anything from numbers, colors, traffic signs, and how to talk to your employer. We have even coached a student in how to ask a girl for a dance!

We accompany, when asked, Spanish-speaking area residents to doctor’s appointments, the WIC or food stamp office, the Social Security office or other government agencies. We are interpreters and advocates, explaining to them the intricacies of American red tape, (which is a challenge even if you speak English!)

Our vision for the future includes initiatives to serve the Hispanic Community even more fully. One goal is to purchase and equip a mobile unit (a “food truck” kind of vehicle) to take Holy Eucharist into the latino neighborhoods of Montgomery where transportation is a problem for many and getting to church is difficult. Eventually, we hope to create a Latino community center that will offer a wide array of services and information and where survival skills, literacy in English, spiritual growth and social development can be fostered. There is much to do, but with God’s help and with yours our Hispanic family is finding it’s way in our culture and the bonds of love between us are growing stronger every day.
I was raised at the Church of the Ascension and considered it my home, but in the spring of 2005, brought shocking news and strange times for me. My family split! I lost a rector!

My family and I had long discussions about matters of faith and the direction of the Episcopal Church. The discussions were mirrored by the talks I had with my friends. I knew that I wanted to be with my EyC. This was the church for me, a close-knit group of young people with the same questions and commitments that I had.

After several conversations with my parents, I decided that I would keep my membership at Church of the Ascension, and they decided to attend the newly formed Christ Church.

The Church of the Ascension was and always will be home for me. Having to make that tough decision was a step toward adulthood and it gave me a new sense of commitment to my faith. EyC guided and strengthened that commitment.

I was blessed with several great youth ministers and advisors through the youth group. I am deeply grateful for the generosity and love that they brought to the challenges of leading us. I think of my work here as an opportunity to “pay forward” those gifts.

Being a teenager is a tough job. There’s a lot of stuff kids are sorting through and it’s confusing to try and figure your life out without some help. EyC brings young people together with their friends and with experienced and loving mentors who can show them a way forward into lives, with and in Christ.

We have many exciting things happening this year at the church, some old and some new. There will also be many opportunities for service and growth in diocesan activities around the state. I hope you will join us and help to joyfully grow this vital ministry.

...I press on toward the goal of the upward call of God in Jesus Christ.
- Philippians 3:14

Six years ago I started going to church here at Ascension. Before that I went to Trinity Episcopal in Wetumpka, my Mom’s church when she was a kid. She knew everybody, of course, and that was really awesome for her. I didn’t have that same experience.

My Mom talked me into going to camp at Camp McDowell and that made a big difference. I realized something at camp that year. All these people were so amazingly nice and welcoming. I felt at home almost immediately. I don’t know what it was, but whatever it was–it just felt right. I fell in love.

After that “glow” began to fade I felt like I’d somehow lost my faith because I didn’t want to attend anything, EyC, camp, or even church itself. I thought I was “above it all.” I thought I was too cool to be part of something so “dumb.” By the time Holly, our youth minister, got here in my ninth grade year I’d stopped participating in everything. She stepped into the church and the doors began to open again for me. She, like my mom, is a persistent one. I started getting involved in the New Beginnings tutoring ministry, but then after a while, I went into another slump and kind of stopped going to anything until spring of 2013. That’s when I had another turning point in my faith journey–I attended “Happening”, but only after fighting with Holly about whether to go or not, she won as usual.

It was one of the most beautiful weekends of my life. Just like my earlier camp experience, over the span of those three days at “Happening”, I got close to some people in ways I didn’t think possible. Before the weekend, I didn’t know any of them, but by the time the weekend ended, I loved all of them and I knew the Episcopal Church was my real home.

Ascension has blessed me with so many beautiful people that love me just for being me. Murray, our new Holly, has taught me to be comfortable with myself and to understand that I was made in God’s image – and that’s perfect. I can’t believe I ever thought church was “dumb.”
I have been an Episcopalian all of my life, and became a member of the Ascension forty-seven years ago when Bubber brought me to Montgomery as his wife. He was very active in the church and his lifelong love for the Ascension influenced my participation through all of these years. The Ascension became an essential part of the fabric of our marriage, and I am eternally grateful.

There are many service projects and volunteer opportunities at the Ascension. Perhaps the work that has meant the most to me has been serving on the altar guild. Almost every item used for our Holy Eucharist was given to the church in memory of a beloved member; these give me a sense of the history and continuity of our church membership. Preparing the altar for worship, with the linens and various vessels taught me to experience the celebration of the Eucharist in a new and deeper way.

I think the word that best describes how I feel about the Church of the Ascension is joy. Joy in the beauty of the church, the friendliness of my fellow worshippers and the inspiration of the liturgy, the music, and the teaching — all of this culminating in the joy of the Eucharist.

Being part of this church brings me joy because we are trying to live into the commandment of our Lord to love Him with all our heart, mind and soul, and to love our neighbors as ourselves. This informs everything we do and how we do it, from our worship services, to the classes, the outreach and service projects, the fellowship - and on and on. We are joyfully doing the work of the Lord.

Looking toward the future, I hope that we will continue to seek opportunities to serve others through our outreach and mission programs, especially locally, and invite others to join us in worshipping the Lord in our beautiful space. May they know we are Christians by our love — and by our joy.

How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy we have in the presence of our God because of you? — 1 Thessalonians 3:9

A JOYFUL CHURCH

PATSY PATTON

The Ascension Day School, or ADS, has been in operation since 2009. It provides care and learning experiences for children from six months to five years old.
In 1961 Mark Waldo came to serve as the Rector of The Church of the Ascension with his wife Ann and his six children. He served as rector until his retirement in 1989. His strength and leadership at the Ascension led us during the turbulent times of the 60's and through the devastating fire that nearly destroyed the historic building. His wife Ann has been equally involved in the life of the church, serving in many different ways. They were and are deeply committed and faithful to their ministries and calling.

They are also committed to their lives as parents. “One of their greatest accomplishments has been raising six of the most interesting and intellectually curious children I’ve ever known,” observed a parishioner.

Two of those six followed their father’s example and became priests. We asked them, “what role did The Church of the Ascension play in your lives?”

**HERE ARE THEIR RESPONSES:**

I was loved into being by the people of the Church of the Ascension, Montgomery. The congregation embodied the steadfast love of God for me even though I tested the limits of their love again and again throughout my childhood and adolescence. I carry the fruit of their persistence and endurance at the center of my episcopacy.

—The Rt. Rev. Wm. Andrew Waldo
Eighth Bishop of the Diocese of Upper South Carolina

Truth be told, I am never more at home than worshiping at the Church of the Ascension. At the Ascension, I learned to be an acolyte, to sing in the choir, and to treat grownups like real people. At the Ascension, I made and kept friends; I discovered God in story and service; and I came to understand God in “the beauty of holiness.” So, it was there in those dark pews—stained with the “patina of prayer” as Dad once preached—that I was shaped to understand what worship is and what the worshipping community can be and do. The Ascension continues to fill me with awe—a shared sense of God’s presence.

—The Rev. Mark E. Waldo, Jr.
Rector, St. Michael & All Angels’ Episcopal Church
Millbrook, Alabama

Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are children born in one’s youth. Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them.

—Psalm 127:4-5
An elderly lady, who had been a faithful and active member of her church, died and left generous donations to several educational institutions and charities, but she left nothing to her church. When her son was asked if she had considered leaving a bequest he said, “Well I’m sure Momma would have if she’d thought of it, but nobody asked her.”

We don’t really like to think about making those legacy gifts or asking people to think about them, but when we begin to consider the future of the people and the charities we love, it becomes a joy to plan those gifts that we know will be a blessing to them. In 2012 Frances Tullis made a bequest of one million dollars to The Ascension Memorial Endowment Trust. I don’t know if anyone asked her, but her generosity has formed the cornerstone of our endowment.

The Trust was established in 2001 to insure the continued financial health of the Church of the Ascension and equip it to expand its ministries and walk confidently toward future opportunities to which God is calling us. The Endowment also helps the church meet unforeseeable financial emergencies. For instance, it was the safety net that funded the repair and replacement of a very large portion of our heating and air conditioning equipment when those systems failed.

The Ascension Memorial Endowment Trust currently has assets under management of approximately $1.5 million. Our advisors tell us that a church of our size and with the number of ministries that we support should have an endowment of at least $10 million. It seems a lofty goal, but with the generous support of our parishioners we believe we can attain it.

As we look to the future we hope that every parishioner will consider a gift to the Endowment fund, it doesn’t have to be a million dollars or in the form of a bequest. As you review your gifts to charity, please take some time and consider a donation. Pray about it and see how God is leading you. The decision you make is important to the continuing ministry and life of the Ascension. We welcome the opportunity to speak with you about ways you can make a gift. If you have questions please do not hesitate to contact any Vestry member or me.
An Episcopal Parish in the Diocese of Alabama

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