

Pages 10 and 11 are the month's calendar which is in a separate attachment.

The Episcopal Church of the Ascension

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The Rt. Rev. Charles G. vonRosenberg, Bishop of East Tennessee
The Rev. Dr. Howard J. Hess, Rector
The Rev. Robert P. Travis, Associate Rector
The Rev. Brett P. Backus, Assistant to the Rector
The Rev. Mary Lee Bergeron, Priest Associate
The Rev. Amy H. Morehous, Deacon

January 2010

Alpha

A new year; a new start. Be part of the Alpha course to bring new life and understanding to your faith journey.

This eleven-week course is open to anyone, no matter where you are on that journey.



Join us for the
Celebration Dinner

January 14, 2010
6:30 PM

See article by David Johnson, Alpha Director, on page 8.

Deadline for February *Parish Paper*: January 18

Service Schedule for January

Sunday, January 3 - Christmas II

8:00 AM Holy Eucharist I

10:30 AM Holy Eucharist II

Appointed Readings: Jeremiah 31:7-14; Psalm 84; Ephesians 1:3-6, 15-19a; Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23

Sunday, January 10 - Epiphany I: The Baptism of Our Lord

8:00 AM Holy Eucharist I

10:30 AM Holy Eucharist II

5:00 PM Taizé service

Appointed Readings: Isaiah 43:1-7; Psalm 29; Acts 8:14-17; Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

Sunday, January 17 - Epiphany II

8:00 AM Holy Eucharist I

10:30 AM Holy Eucharist II

Appointed Readings: Isaiah 62:1-5; Psalm 36:5-10; 1 Corinthians 12:1-11; John 2:1-11

Sunday, January 24 - Epiphany III

8:00 AM Holy Eucharist I

10:30 AM Holy Eucharist II

5:00 PM Taizé service

Appointed Readings: Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10; Psalm 19; 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a; Luke 4:14-21

Sunday, January 31 - Epiphany IV

8:00 AM Holy Eucharist I

10:30 AM Holy Eucharist II

Appointed Readings: Jeremiah 1:4-10; Psalm 71:1-6; 1 Corinthians 13:1-13; Luke 4:21-30

Wednesday, January 6, 2010 — 6:00 PM

Festival Eucharist for the Feast of the Epiphany

featuring the trebles of Ascension and Cindy Hicks, harp, in

John Rutter's "Dancing Day."

Catered dinner following service. See p. 7 for details.

a letter from Father Howard

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As a sign of our times I'm actually writing this letter during Advent, but you will not receive these words most likely until after Christmas. However, what this day and the days to come share is our sense of anticipation and newness. In the spirit of the birth of Our Lord and our own rebirth as we receive him and enter into a new year, there are several thoughts about newness that I'd like to share with you. In early spring 2010 we will be beginning our third year of shared ministry together. The excitement of our new relationship has evolved into a deeper knowing and familiarity with one another. All of our staff have been in place for over a year and we, too, have established more comfort and predictability in our ministry together. This is a good thing.

At the same time in order for familiarity not to lead to less excitement at Ascension, we will need to continue to be clear about our mission, open and free in our communion, and innovative and enthusiastic in our programming. First, it is most important for all of us to remember that our reason for existence as the Church of the Ascension is to praise and glorify God and follow Christ as his willing disciples. All that we do, every decision that we make, and every program we begin should support this mission as the Holy Spirit continues to give us the specific guidance we yearn and pray for.

In terms of communication, I want to reiterate something that I have shared with you in the past but probably not frequently enough. I welcome and appreciate your questions, your feedback, and yes, even your critiques of anything we do or aren't doing at Ascension. Sometimes our politeness can inhibit our sharing of important insights. Believe it or not, I continue to learn new things about Ascension regularly. For example, until a week ago I did not know that we have a history of Wednesday night Eucharists and some have missed that service. I have missed that as well, and after Epiphany we will institute a 5:45 service of Holy Eucharist



each Wednesday evening. This is a small example of a larger issue. Please tell me what you believe I need to know. Especially please continue to tell us about members of our community who need special care and assistance.

There will be many opportunities to share more about our dreams and visions for Ascension in the upcoming year. My promise as your rector is that very special attention to all aspects of the Great Commission and our youth programs will have a distinct priority in the year ahead. At the same time our other programs will need to receive full support and attention.

God bless you all and may God richly watch over you and care for you and those you love in the year to come.

With great affection,
Father Howard

The People We Select in our Life Journey

The second offering in the series *The People We Select in our Life Journey* will be on Sunday, January 10, from 3 to 5 PM. Dr. Jerry Vreeland will speak on *Examining Our Fears and Prejudices in Relationships*. Following the talk, there will be a wine and cheese reception. The Taizé service will be held in the chapel at 5 PM.

On Sunday, March 14, 2010, the speaker will be Glenn Graber, PhD, on *Facing Mortality with Friends and Family*.

Plans are in process for the May meeting which will feature the Rev. Charles Fels, Rector of Good Shepherd Episcopal Church and a former criminal defense and prosecution attorney, and Knox County District Attorney Randy Nichols speaking on *Crime, Punishment, and the Christian Religion*. The date of this meeting will be announced at a future time.

SENIOR WARDEN'S ANNUAL REPORT 2009

This report was given at the annual Parish Meeting on Sunday, December 6, 2009.

In starting, I would like to take a moment to thank the outgoing vestry members: Courtney Zirkle, Robin Kell, Jim Phillips, and Randy Nichols — a very, very talented group that worked together in a very congenial way for the betterment of the parish. Thanks to each of you.

If you have not noticed, the Church of the Ascension is a complex organization. This parish has done many, many wonderful things this year that were designed and implemented by many different people to bring fulfillment and meaning to those of us who are actively involved here. Because we are all very different personalities, the things that we do are done in many and varied ways and, I am convinced, we must count on God to help us, in spite of our individual preferences, to provide for the whole in what we do.

Of course, these many things that we have done are all important and should be continued. But my purpose today is to emphasize a very few things that it seems to me are important for us to focus on in the coming year if we are to improve in carrying out our mission here.

The parish has an official mission statement that was adopted long ago by some very wise, God-fearing people. The mission statement reads this way:

To enable ourselves and others to experience God in Christ, to seek and serve Him in others, to grow toward Christ, and to proclaim Him to the world.

This carries a strong theme — sharing our faith with others. If you would, keep that in mind for a few moments.

One area where we would all agree that we must do well is in imparting and passing on our faith to the children and young people in our midst. The young have been entrusted to us. They are within our care at an impressionable time in their lives, and we owe it to the future of this world to help them come to understand why God's way, God's teachings, are far superior to the ways that sometimes popular culture in this world promotes. If we are to be successful in this, we

as a parish must be committed with all of the time, talents, and resources we can muster to gain their attention and to persuade them by our word and by our example, and with God's help, that His way is far superior than any other way.

Let's not kid ourselves. We are in a serious battle for their hearts and minds, and to win that battle it will take intentional effort, resourcefulness, and dedication. But if there are a people who are up to the challenge, I am convinced it is the people of Ascension once they have resolved to do so.

Another area where we have a noticeable gap in our programming is in activities designed for singles. Regardless of their ages, singles have one profound thing in common — for much of the time they live their lives alone. In the absence of relationships that they establish, they go it alone. Of course, singles and couples alike are invited to participate in all that we offer here. But what better place than the Church of the Ascension could there be to work, in an intentional way, to facilitate the development of those relationships for singles of all ages.

It is my belief that 2009 has been a tremendous year of progress in another area which is essential to the accomplishment of our mission. What is that area? I will call it the four I's — *invite, inform, include, and involve.*

Early in the year, we sent a very informative and inviting DVD produced by parishioner Steve Land's production company to all new residents in the area around our parish. If you have not viewed it, you should. It depicts parishioners describing what it is about Ascension and life at Ascension that draws them here. It is very appealing.

The vestry has also formed a new commission, the Great Commission Commission, whose purpose is to guide our efforts in an Anglican/Episcopal way in reaching and inviting those whom we do not know to join us here — and to embark on their own spiritual journey among us.

What was called the Visioning Task Force was formed to help us articulate in an accurate, yet effective way, what it is about the personality of this parish that makes it a unique and inviting place. They developed a concise and comprehensive statement describing the DNA of this parish, as Chris Baker likes to call it, and are now studying different ways to incorporate the content so that it can be communi-

cated to those with whom we are not now acquainted.

Father Rob has recently started a group of parishioners to serve as shepherds for new parishioners. The idea is one that we have flirted with around here for many years — to help, on a one-on-one basis, new parishioners become plugged in or involved in ministries that will more fully engage them with others in the parish. I think all of us would agree that while worship here is wonderful, it is only the "tip of the iceberg." Becoming involved in a ministry group in a meaningful way is an important step toward a deeper spiritual involvement here.

Finally, we are about to restart the Alpha Course which, if you don't already know, is a course that examines how new Christians can deepen and strengthen their Christian faith.

I doubt that for the audience here these questions need to be asked, but I will rhetorically ask them anyway in order to make a point that I think we Episcopalians struggle with sometimes.

Why should we seek to include others?

Is it about the numbers? Is it about creating a mega-church?

Why should we want to encourage people we don't know to join us here in this place?

For me there are two reasons, different but similar and come from the same place.

The first reason is that God calls us to do the following in the last four verses of the book of Matthew:

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in Heaven and on Earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

The second reason is the same reason that we engage in outreach of any kind. Let me ask you a question. Why do you come here? I submit that everyone who comes here comes here for a reason that is deeply personal to them. Those reasons are different for each of us, but they have something to do with fulfilling a deep inner need. God fulfills that need when we come here. Whether we think of it in this way or

not, the fulfillment that God provides when we come here is important to us as it helps us live our lives better than we can live them without God.

When we care for other people we want them to have good in their lives. When we support FISH, or Family Promise, or any other outreach ministry, we are trying to bring people to a better place in their lives.

I ask you, "Why is it any different when we seek to bring others to active participation in this place where they can find the fulfillment that only God can provide?" — that same fulfillment that each of us seek when we come here week after week, month after month, and year after year.

When we truly care about others, isn't it right that we want the very same thing for them? It is not about numbers, friends; it is about doing what God clearly seeks for us to do and about helping others get to a better place in their lives.

The ground work, the foundation, has been laid, largely by the very talented and hard working staff that we are blessed to have had assembled here, for us to invite, inform, include and involve as we continue toward the accomplishment of our mission. I hope we each will individually make a personal commitment in our own way to participate in the accomplishment of the mission of sharing our faith with others.

As Jesus reminded His disciples, *The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves.* Luke 10

My food, said Jesus, is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. Do you not say, 'Four months more and then the harvest'? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. Even now the reaper draws his wages, even now he harvests the crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together. Thus the saying 'One sows and another reaps' is true. I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labor. John 4

This is our calling. We are poised to do this work.

Tom Hale

Vestry Election Results

Congratulations to our newly-elected vestry members who will serve a three-year term:

Lida Barrett
David Baumgardner
Leo Beale
Claire Eldridge
Culver Schmid

We thank all who agreed to have their name put in nomination. Officers of the 2010 vestry will be Julie Hembree, Senior Warden, Bert Ackermann, Junior Warden, Mike Terry-Cochran, Treasurer, and Larry Jones, Clerk.

We extend our thanks and appreciation to the outgoing members for their service and commitment to the parish during their three-year term: Tom Hale, Robin Kell, Randy Nichols, Jim Phillips, and Courtney Zirkle.

Stewardship Campaign Update

290 Pledges
Over \$1,157,451

Our goals are:
+/- 335 Pledges
\$1,250,000

So, we are well behind where we want to be in both total dollars pledged and number of pledges. The theme this year was all about opening our hearts to God's love so that we can receive the full bounty of His grace. It seems that those who have pledged have accepted the challenge and opened their hands because our average pledge is approaching \$4000, sharply up. But, for one reason or another, many people are still uncommitted.

We know that times are tough and a quick recovery is not likely. But, strangely enough, that is exactly when we should

heed God's call. Because returning some of God's generosity now, when there is no way to be sure things will all turn out right, is the kind of leap of faith He is asking us to take. Certainly, giving means most when the giving means sacrifice.

For those who have taken that bold step and have returned their pledge cards, we thank you. And, we are excited for you. We hope the Holy Spirit races through that opening and starts changing your life immediately. For those who are still considering their pledge, we wish you the best luck with the difficult issues to be considered. It won't be easy. A good place to start is to add up the amount of money you spend over the course of a year on just one "guilty pleasure" (like going out to eat, or vacations, or that new car, or even those football tickets), and then compare that with your financial support of Ascension. Are your priorities reflected by your spending choices? It was an eye opening experience for many of us and just may be one for you, as well.

We need to wrap up this year's Stewardship Campaign, so please turn in your pledge cards as soon as possible.

Thought of the Day - Does anyone else find it ironic that the phrase "In God We Trust" is printed on every piece of U.S. currency? Even the money itself is telling us where to place our faith.

Leo Beale, Co-chairman
Stewardship Committee



from our Associate Rector

Membership at Ascension

Having grown up in the Episcopal Church, I somehow took for granted that the church where I worshipped, tithed, and was active was where my membership was placed. This conception was not helped by my being at parishes which were lax in their policies about voting in annual meetings. It was not until I began discerning a call to ordained ministry that I had to confront the question of where my membership was recorded, and I found, to my surprise, it was not at the church in which I was actively participating. Of course, one becomes a member of the church through baptism, or recording a baptismal date from another church and being received into the Episcopal Church here, if one has started the Christian life in another denomination. But for Episcopalians who change churches for whatever reason (moving, for example, to a new com-



munity) one's membership does not change until that person requests that their membership be transferred from the parish in which their membership is recorded.

At Ascension the person who takes care of these membership transfers is Bettie Corey, our registrar. It may seem like a superfluous procedural issue, but membership in a specific church is important. When people say to us, "I want to transfer my membership to Ascension," that indicates a greater level of commitment to our church. It tells us that these people want to partner with us in our ministries, and become a part of our parish family. Oftentimes the question of membership gets answered only when one goes to vote at our annual meeting and finds that he or she is or is not registered as a member of Ascension.

If you are not sure if your membership has been recorded at Ascension, check with Bettie and we'll make sure it happens. We invite all of you to become full partners in our ministry here, starting by making sure that your membership is with us.

Father Rob

Festival Eucharist for the Feast of the Epiphany

Wednesday, January 6, 2010

Service at 6:00 in the evening

with the Choirs of Ascension singing

"Dancing Day" by John Rutter.

Dinner catered by The Entertainer following the service.

\$15 per adult & \$6 per child under 10 years old

~maximum of \$40 per family~

Sign-up sheet is available at the front desk.

Alpha - Lifestyle Evangelism!

This month we will begin the Alpha course here at Ascension. I am very excited (and I confess a little nervous, too) about our mission! But as we move through Advent and Christmas, I can't think of a better time to offer a program that is for renewal of the faith and the spirit and a great place to start for newcomers – to learn about who we are as Christians and why we believe what we believe!

The Acts of the Apostles tells us that the day of Pentecost clearly demonstrated God's intention that the gospel go to all peoples and that the church shall consist of every tongue, tribe, people, and nation. This was the very beginning of Global outreach. For us at Ascension, it means we are called to invite and welcome our friends, associates, and families to participate. We seek to provide a comfortable setting where questions of faith may be addressed and an environment where no question or point of view is unimportant or stupid! As a vital church we will grow by the work of the Holy Spirit and the receptivity of the people. We bring friends to Christ - friends with needs (just like ours)! While in the early church there were enormous miracles - and we shouldn't have those expectations - we will see miracles of conversion as people sense and exhibit the healing of the Holy Spirit, if we pay attention!

The early church was diverse, so it was important then, as it is now in the 21st century, to include All people. This means people of no faith, people of other denominations, and people with a desire to deepen their faith. All are welcome! As a vital church, the whole body of Christ is involved in this ministry, so participation in Alpha may be a way for you to share your thoughts and questions with others in small groups and by doing so illuminate Christ's life for all to share. For some, Alpha can be a way to fill in the gaps or, maybe, just to experience Jesus in a new and profound way.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

If you are excited and/or intrigued (and a little nervous)! about where participation in Alpha may lead you or someone you know.....You are ready!! We invite you to join us at 6:30 PM on January 14 for the Celebration Dinner.

If you have any questions or would like more information, you may contact Father Rob or me. *We do need some more people to be a part of the team in the area of hospitality - so let us know if you are interested in helping!

David Johnson, Alpha Director

Episcopal School of Knoxville Hosts January Open House

Please join The Episcopal School of Knoxville for an Open House on Sunday, Jan. 10, from 2-4 PM. Enjoy coffee and homemade cookies as you tour classrooms and meet with faculty and staff to learn about the curriculum and programs of the school.

Episcopal School Headmaster Jay Secor and Assistant Headmaster Peter Klekamp will be on hand. Parents may bring children or come alone. No reservations are required.

Now in its 12th year, the K-8 school offers an interdisciplinary curriculum, daily chapel, three foreign languages, a range of courses in the arts and a full sports program. Its interscholastic activities include Youth Legislature, Model United Nations, and Destination Imagination.

The school is affiliated with the Episcopal Church and offers a faith-based environment, but actively seeks children of all faiths and background. Info: call 865-777-9032, visit www.esknoxville.org or contact Peter Klekamp at klekamp@esknoxville.org.

Noteworthy —

news from our Director of Music



One of the most satisfying things about Christmastime here is the visitation of alumni who have gone off to college or moved out of town. Former members of both the parish choir and the boys and girls' choir frequently offer to sing on Christmas eve, occasionally at all three services! It is always a treat to sing the rich trove of Christmas music, and seeing old friends and former singers of course brings its own joys.

It has taken a while for this reunion aspect of Christmas to develop, at least in the music department. I have long thought that even as some of our choir members travel out of town for the holidays, theoretically there ought to be other persons who are visiting family in Knoxville at Christmastime who might be choir members in their own churches around the country. If these persons were to come forward offering to sing, shouldn't the net change in personnel be zero? I am beginning to get my wish, and I am most grateful to all our singers, both present and former, who furnish the lovely music we all enjoy over the holidays.

This phenomenon is not unique to the choir. The acolyte corps and the ushers, for example, both benefit from college-age or other young adults who serve over the holidays. Christmas Eve, along with the two Sundays after Christmas, can resemble a giant party as we all revel at being in each other's company.

And this year the party, of sorts, extends all the way to the Epiphany on Wednesday, January 6. A festival Eucharist is planned for that day, complete with an elegant dinner afterward catered by The Entertainer. A centerpiece of the Eucharist will be the presentation by the trebles of the choir of John Rutter's cycle *Dancing Day*, with Cindy Hicks playing harp. We ask for reservations for the dinner; a sign-up may be found at the front desk. Pricing is \$15 per adult, \$6 per child, with a maximum of \$40 per family. Pianist Charles Goan will tickle the ivories for a last opportunity to

hear holiday favorites. Susie Stout and her luminary team will again have the entire campus lit with luminarias. So, for one more opportunity to have a holiday experience, this one without stress, make plans to come to our celebration of the Epiphany on January 6 at 6 PM.

Jim Garvey

January LAUGH

In January, on a date to be announced in the Sunday bulletin at a later date, Ascension's women's group, LAUGH, will meet at 7:00 PM at the home of Pam Harris. The program:

Rest and Relaxation: After the hustle and bustle of the holidays, come rest and relax with a 15-20 minute massage, compliments of the Tennessee School For Massage. While you are waiting for your massage, enjoy the company of your LAUGH friends while you indulge in tasty treats and beverages. What a wonderful way to start the new year with a relaxed body, mind and spirit.

The Travis Family is expecting a new baby boy.

Let's help them get ready for their bundle of joy!

Please join us for a Parish Baby Shower in honor of Jackie and Father Rob Travis in celebration of the upcoming birth of their son.

A date in January will be announced soon in a formal invitation.

from our Director of Christian Education

My younger daughter, Grace, is struggling to learn her multiplication tables. I'm afraid we're struggling along with her. We all dread the moment when it's time to pull out the flash cards, endure the tears, repeat the numbers over and over again. Gracie has invented a new word to describe the experience: "mathsick." It's analogous to the word "carsick" and, just like carsickness, signifies a nauseating, unpleasant overexposure to a boring stimulus, along with a desperate desire to jump up out of one's seat and run away. The situation reminds me of my own unpleasant memories of learning times tables. I still remember exactly where my mother and I sat and how I felt when she quizzed me those many years ago.

It's a strange thing that every generation has to learn these things anew—the alphabet, how to read, basic math skills.

Why can't one generation just learn it all, then pass that knowledge along through their genes to the next generation? Why does each and every individual have to suffer through the same basic steps? My older daughter once told me she wished there were a "middle school pill"—a pill she could take that would give her all she needed to know from middle school, instead of having to wake up day in and day out and go to class and do the work, over and over again.

As a parent I'm tempted to give my kids the standard, boring lecture about hard work and perseverance. They have it easy. But when I stop to think about it, so do I. I don't have to bother to grow or hunt or even prepare our food—I can just stop by the 24-hour market or restaurant. I don't have to walk places, or care for and saddle an animal for transporta-



There are many days I wish there were such a thing as a "faith pill," a pill I could give my children to ensure that they would grow up with the values and practices I hold true. But there is no such pill. I have earned my own understanding of God through experience.

tion -- I just turn the key and press a pedal to get where I want to go. Through cell phones, texting, e-mail, pagers, Google, I reach people and information instantly. Just like my children, I find that routine, repetitive tasks bore me. They seem onerous and old-fashioned, like having to lug something across town in an ox-cart. The ones I enjoy least, the ones I can afford to hire out, I gladly do—whether it's having the dry cleaner press my husband's shirts, washing the car, or mowing the lawn.

The fact is, repeating and memorizing are for those tasks and times when we need to get to know something so well that it becomes a part of us. I want my children to practice their letter sounds until they can't remember what life was like before they knew them. I want them to know their number facts the way they know their own house. The girls' skating coaches and dance instructors drill basic moves just this way-

over and over until the girls can produce them without apparent thought or effort, as if by instinct. The fundamentals in life, the things we do over and over again, become part of who we are and how we move in and through the world.

What does that mean when it comes to teaching our children our faith? Are there fundamental building blocks like letter sounds and multiplication tables? What are the practices we need to repeat day in and day out? Is this a task I can hire out? As a person of faith, and as a parent, I have to decide these things for myself. There are many days I wish there were such a thing as a "faith pill," a pill I could give my children to ensure that they would grow up with the values and practices I hold true. But there is no such pill. I have earned my own understanding of God through experience. I have spent time reading the Bible stories that tell us who God is and how God acts through time, then looked for evidence of their truths in my life and the lives of those I know. I pray, day in and day out, even when I am bored and have other things I'd rather do. I practice prayer in community, week-in

and week-out, even when I am tired or grumpy, or would prefer to be alone. I have learned, in short, that there is no faith without faithfulness.

Learning the times tables takes practice, but it's the only way for Grace to make them her own -- a skill I hold basic and necessary to becoming an educated and competent person in the modern world. Likewise, I know from my own life, that knowing God requires taking the time to learn the stories of his goodness and mercy, passed down through the ages; I know that discerning God's love and purpose in my life comes from prayerful, repeated encounters with God's Holy Spirit, alone and with my church community.

When I tell Gracie I'm writing my *Parish Paper* article about her math facts, she asks, "What does that have to do with holy stuff, Mom?" And I answer her with a truth that I have learned by heart, "Practice and learning are holy stuff," I tell her. "Holy stuff."

Jacqueline Soltys

Lunch Bunch plans January meeting

The January Meeting of the Lunch Bunch on the third Tuesday, January 19, will have as its program a presentation by several member of the parish. Chris Pannell, Hank Barker, George Nennstiel, and Dave Traver will talk about their experiences in World War II. Social time begins at 11:30, lunch at 12, program starts at 12:30 and will be over at 1:00. Please sign up on the sheet at the information desk (or call the office) Let us know if you will bring a salad, vegetable, or dessert or if you would prefer to make a monetary contribution toward the meat dishes.

All are welcome. If your activities permit you to come to a noon time gathering, please do come.



Winter,
snow(maybe),
fire in the fire-
place,
comfortable chair.

Need a good book to read?

Try out our Ascension Library.

You will find books that are informative
challenging
comforting
entertaining



Second Group of Stephen Ministers will begin training in January

The Stephen Ministry Leadership Team is very pleased to announce a new group of at least fourteen Stephen Ministers who will participate in training for Stephen Ministry at the Church of the Ascension.

Parishioners in the second Stephen Ministry training group are:

<i>Mary Ellen Bohm</i>	<i>Ellen Lovett</i>
<i>Bettie Corey</i>	<i>Ann O'Connor</i>
<i>Nancy Davidson</i>	<i>Jim Phillips</i>
<i>Pam Douglass</i>	<i>Virginia Schall</i>
<i>Sandra Emond</i>	<i>Bob Sleeman</i>
<i>Catherine Greer</i>	<i>Mike Terry-Cochran</i>
<i>Janice Kell</i>	<i>Mitzi Terry-Cochran</i>

We also have at least one another applicant in discernment.

The new group of Stephen Ministers will meet for training each Tuesday evening from early January through May. The current and new groups will meet together for a welcome dinner in the parish hall January 5, 2010. The new group will begin the training program the following Tuesday evening. Current Stephen Ministers will continue to meet for continuing education and peer supervision group meetings on the first and third Tuesdays of each month.

Following the completion of the 50-hour training curriculum, the new members of this parish ministry will be commissioned as Stephen Ministers in May. They will then join the program's current Stephen Ministers in providing care with people in our congregation and community who are experiencing problems in life such as hospitalization, grief, depression, and loneliness.

Working under the guidance and supervision of the Stephen Ministry Leadership Team (Bob Barnes, Laura Barnes (Co-coordinator), Peg Hess (Co-coordinator), Fr. Howard Hess, Jane Phillips, and Fr. Rob Travis), Ascension's Stephen Ministers have extended the capacity of our congregation and clergy to care. As the current Stephen Ministers are quick to confirm, being a Stephen Minister requires commitment of time and effort, but it also brings joy and fulfillment!

Please keep the new Stephen Ministers, the current Stephen Ministers and their care receivers, and the Stephen Ministry Leadership Team in your prayers as we continue our work together.

To refer yourself or a friend or family member (with their permission) to receive Stephen Ministry care, please contact Referrals Coordinator Laura Barnes by e-mail (lbarnes@etch.com) or phone (588-2321) or talk with any member of the Ascension clergy.



MUSINGS from The CHURCH MOUSE

O Christmas! My favorite time of year!
So many opportunities for goodies! I
am so blessed, yet, as in the saying, I'm
as poor as a church mouse. But, for my
Lord, that is no matter. As in the poem
by Christina Rossetti, set to music in
my favorite carol, which begins "In the
bleak midwinter" and ends with these words,



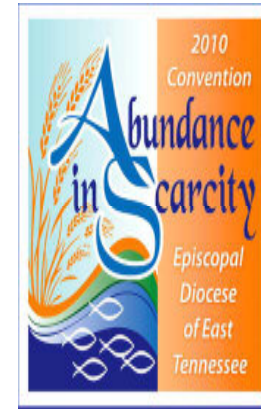
What can I give him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
If I were a wise man, I would do my part;
Yet what I can I give him –
Give my heart

Yes, if ever a time of year was about love, it is Christmas.
From another familiar hymn, which begins, "O come, all ye
faithful," the fifth verse says,

Child for us sinners
Poor and in the manger,
We would embrace thee,
With love and awe;
Who would not love thee,
Loving us so dearly?
O come let us adore him,
O come let us adore him,
O come let us adore him,
Christ the Lord.

O, thank you, Lord, for this wonderful season and for your
loving grace and blessings on my home, my Church of the
Ascension. One last hymn which says it all begins with "Joy
to the World!" and ends with

He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of his righteousness,
And wonders of his love.



**Diocese of East Tennessee
26th Annual Convention**
February 12-13, 2010
Crowne Plaza Hotel
Knoxville, Tennessee

Volunteer Opportunities

The 26th Annual Convention of the diocese will convene in Knoxville, Friday, Feb. 12 through Saturday, Feb. 13, 2010, at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in downtown Knoxville.

Ascension, Knoxville, Good Shepherd, Knoxville, and St. Thomas, Knoxville are co-hosting the convention which has as its theme, "Abundance in Scarcity." Details about the convention are posted at <http://etdiocese.net>.

You are invited to volunteer at the convention where the imaginative ways our communities "live in the presumption of abundance" through faith will be celebrated.

Many volunteers are needed for such duties as:

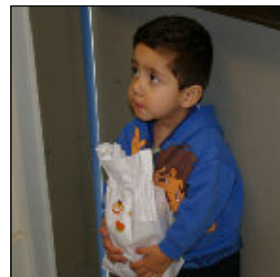
- Serving as convention pages
- Assisting with registration
- Assisting with exhibits

If you would like to volunteer, please sign-up on the Volunteer Sheet on the reception counter in the office.

For more information, please contact:

Wylene Vrba, wavrba@gmail.com or 865-945-3755

On Thanksgiving morning, many Ascension volunteers helped at the Scott Avenue FISH Hospitality Pantry and Distribution Center.



Passages

Birth



Georgia Schaler Hopley, granddaughter of **Mike and Anne Palermo**, on November 2, 2009
Carter James Page Coffey, son of **Allison Page and Connor Coffey**, grandson of **Bob and Marnie Page**, on November 20, 2009
Robert Tucker Cameron, son of **Katherine and Jason Cameron**, grandson of **Mark and Pat Medley**, on November 25, 2009

Transferred to Ascension


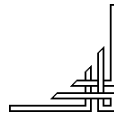
Les Jeffress and Ann Bird from Church of the Good Shepherd, Knoxville, TN

Death

Susan LeMense, sister of **Greg LeMense**, on December 14, 2009
Della Beebe McEachern, mother of **Anne Palermo**, on December 15, 2009
Jack Hamilton, husband of **Ann Gordon Hamilton**, on December 16, 2009

The January donors for the support of our mission work at Cristo, Pan de Vida church in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, are the Hoskins family.

Financial report through November 2009

	Nov. Budget	Nov. Actual	YTD Budget	YTD Actual
<i>Pledge, plate, & unpledged contributions:</i>	\$102,702	98,758	953,241	934,444
<i>All other income:</i>	6,233	10,433	170,433	239,850
<i>Total Income</i>	108,935	109,191	1,123,674	1,174,294
<i>Total expenditures:</i>	101,541	97,711	1,216,916	1,269,589
<i>Net Surplus (loss):</i>	7,394	11,480	(93,242)	(95,295)

Getting to know our Ascension Staff

This is a monthly feature in the Parish Paper through which you, the parish, will be introduced to each of our staff members. Even if you've known some of them for many years, you may learn things about them that you didn't know! This month we feature Bob Wadley.

When someone asks Bob how old he is, his response (for many years now) has been 103. The sign on his office door reads, "Do not speak harshly to an older man..." (1 Timothy 5:1). However, if you have seen Bob at work, you know that he is always on the move as Ascension's Parish Administrator. Although he was born in Oak Park, Illinois, his parents were from Memphis, Tennessee. Sam and Dorothy were married in Bellevue Baptist Church, Memphis, in 1934 and Bob came along in 1937. The family moved to Jacksonville, Florida, in 1953. Bob is a graduate of Florida State University with a degree in Finance. His brother, Bill, and his sister, Sharon, both live in Florida. Bill is a retired Bell South executive living in Orlando, and Sharon is a Methodist minister's wife, living in LaBelle. The three of them enjoy a sibling rivalry during football season as Bob and Sharon are serious FSU fans and Bill is, you guessed it, a Gator. Bob served in the U. S Marine Corps in the early sixties. He has two sons by a previous marriage: Kevin, 47, lives in Mt. Pleasant, South Carolina, and David, 44, lives in Telluride, Colorado. He enjoys his role as Grandpa to Eva, age 5, and Sims, 2 1/2. Bob spent most of his career prior to coming to Ascension in banking and mortgage banking, having served as CEO of two savings banks and a mortgage company. He obtained his MBA in Church Management from the Graduate Theological Foundation. He was looking for something to do when called in 2000 to Ascension to fill the newly created position of Parish Administrator by the Rev. Ladson Mills, a long-time friend, who had married Bob and Cathy Nightwine Curnett in 1986 in Church of Our Saviour, located outside the entrances to Kiawah and Seabrook Island, where he and Cathy lived for many years. Bob has enjoyed hiking most of his life and knows many of



the best places to hike in the Smoky Mountains and surrounding areas. He has been on many backpacking trips, but doesn't enjoy sleeping on the ground as much as he used to. He enjoys chess, golf, travel and most music, especially listening to Miles Davis and jazz trios, as well as bluegrass, instrumental classical music, and Puccini arias. Bob is an avid reader and has a collection of first editions, including books by Hemingway, Frost, Wolfe, and others. However, not too many people know about his collection of Hagar cartoons! Bob's alter ego IS Hagar. His favorite animal is the bear, and he has many stuffed bears and bear statues. He is a Eucharistic Minister, very active in the Brotherhood of St. Andrew, and has served for the past two years on the Diocese of East Tennessee Bishop & Council, Budget & Finance Committee and Insurance Committee.

Community Chest Collection Day

Saturday, January 2, 2010

10:00 - 11:30 AM

in the church parking lot.

Bring clothing and household items which are in good, usable condition.

The Episcopal Church of the Ascension
800 Northshore Drive
Knoxville, Tennessee 37919

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Staff

George Boling — Sexton
 John Brock — Associate in the Music Department
 Jeff Conley — Night Sexton
 Bettie Corey — Registrar/Publications Editor
 James Garvey — Director of Music Ministries
 Charis Hoskins — Financial Assistant/Coordinator of Office Services
 Sabra Martin — Program Secretary
 Byron Proaps — Facilities Plant Manager
 Jacqueline Soltys — Director of Christian Education
 Bob Wadley — Parish Administrator
 Cathy Wadley — Executive Assistant to the Rector and Director of
 New Member Ministries
 Lynn Wise — Nursery Coordinator
 Jim Wright — Director of Hunger Ministries

Office hours: Mon - Thurs, 9:00 AM — 4:30 PM; Friday, 9:00 AM — 4:00 PM

Building hours: Sunday: 7:00 AM — 3:00 PM

Monday - Friday: 8:00 AM — 5:00 PM

Saturday: 8:00 AM — 4:00 PM

Vestry

Julie Hembree - Senior Warden
 Bert Ackermann - Junior Warden

Paul Banick
 Lida Barrett
 David Baumgardner
 Leo Beale
 Louise Conrad
 Ben Davidson
 Claire Eldridge
 Ann O'Connor
 John Pannell
 Scott Poland
 Culver Schmid
 Vaiden Taylor
 Rick Turner

Mike Terry-Cochran — Treasurer
 Larry Jones — Clerk