

Report from the Vestry June 10, 2008

The Vestry met on June 10, 2008. We need your help! We all need to work together to reverse a trend that has been a characteristic of the financial picture of this parish for many years. Historically, our parish collects a disproportionately high amount of its pledged and unpledged contributions in the month of December, and a disproportionately low amount in June, July, August, and September. For some reason that we do not understand, this year the lower-than-average trend in revenue started in May, a month earlier than normal, with revenue being approximately \$24,000 less than budgeted for the month. Of course, our expenses do not follow this trend. The result is that we are forced to seek other sources of funds to pay our bills with the hope and expectation that sufficient revenue will be received during the latter months of the year.

We had a great stewardship campaign and we budgeted accordingly. On behalf of the Vestry, I encourage every parishioner of Ascension, those who pledged, as well as those who did not pledge, to review the status of your giving to the parish with an eye toward making its needs a priority going into the summer months.

Our parish is tremendously blessed to have wonderful clergy serving part-time positions — Father Harry, Mary Lee, and Amy. But their efforts are not a substitute for the second full-time priest that we have planned to hire, and that is critical support needed for Father Howard to fully provide for the needs of a parish the size of Ascension. The Vestry is united in its opinion that this is our top priority in the coming months. We see this additional clergy support as necessary in continuing to capitalize on the many, many positive things that are going on in the parish. This position has been budgeted, but it will add to our regular monthly expenses. If we could approach this hire with confidence in the continuity of our revenues, we would all be much more comfortable. It goes without saying that the sluggish state of our economy makes this year different when it comes to predicting how the year will end. Your help in ensuring that our income does not drop off during the summer months would be a tremendous boost to our collective confidence.

OTHER NEWS Julie Hembree reported on recent activities of the Outreach Commission. Ascension-led FISH Hospitality Pantries is now in its twenty-third year of operation and is very appreciative of the strong parish support it receives. The number of families being served has doubled compared to this time a year ago. The Vestry was invited to attend the new building dedication on Wednesday, June 18. Family Promise was a big success in May, serving three families, four adults and seven children. The neighborhood board is in place for the Lyons View Land Trust and is holding meetings at Ascension. Children of Promise (a Montessori-based program being offered to Family Promise and neighborhood children) received a grant of \$5000 from Family Promise and one for over \$7000 from the Diocese. The Outreach Commission is also supporting The Refuge by contributing \$325 each month to provide direct client services. Additionally, Ascension is supporting the building campaign of Volunteer Ministry with a \$5000

donation. Outreach is also discussing ways to contribute time and money to our youth and children to enable them to further plan and implement service projects not currently possible within their budgets.

Father Howard ended the meeting on a high note by reporting that 128 children attended Ascension's Vacation Bible School. Several members of the Vestry received comments indicating our VBS has a very good reputation in the community.

Tom Hale, Senior Warden