REPORT FROM THE VESTRY
June 9, 2009

The Church of the Ascension vestry met for its regular meeting on June 9, 2009. After approving the minutes of the May meeting, which were described as excellent, the vestry heard the Treasurer's report. Treasurer Vaiden Taylor described May as a good month for Ascension financially. Total operating revenues exceeded the estimated revenue budgeted for May by $9,733, with operating expenses being approximately $3,658 more than budgeted. Per the operating budget, the parish is approximately $10,000 better than anticipated at this point. The current deficit to this point in the year is $45,000, rather than the expected amount of $55,000. As part of the Rector's report, Father Howard requested comment and feedback from members of the vestry on Corky Carlisle's presentation on stewardship at the May meeting. He also requested any input vestry members wish to make on the proposed approach for the upcoming stewardship campaign. Vestry member Robin Kell noted that the creation of a stewardship statement for the parish, as proposed by Carlisle, would be a difficult task, especially in the time frame remaining before the campaign commenced. A discussion followed in which Father Howard was complimented on his comments addressed to stewardship during recent sermons. The vestry, by general consensus, voiced its concurrence with the plan for the stewardship campaign. Father Howard next noted that the parish maintained a memorials account which contained a positive balance but which had no policy providing guidelines for its use. Bob Wadley explained that such funds contributed to Ascension go into a restricted fund that is not considered operating revenue. Father Howard stated that a committee had been formed to develop a policy for memorials and endowments.

Finally, Father Howard noted that the General Convention of the Episcopal church would be meeting during July, a month in which there is no regular vestry meeting. He wanted members of the vestry to be aware that among many issues to be considered at the General Convention will be a discussion on whether to adopt, or allow the adoption of, liturgies blessing same-sex relationships. He also reported that the Bishop of the Diocese of East Tennessee was in the process of forming a task force to be positioned to consider issues on the subject.

As part of the Senior Warden's report, Tom Hale thanked Father Brett Backus for his leadership and the entire parish for its great support for the Bolivian Mission Trip. Hale commented on the very positive impact of the trip on Andrew, his son. The Senior Warden also reported on a recent meeting of the ushers at which a number of procedural steps were discussed for implementation on Sunday mornings that were intended to increase the ushers' general awareness of persons entering the premises who might appear suspicious. Members of the Emergency Response Group who have been studying this issue were present. It was also reported that Dr. Paul Banick had agreed to lead a small medical subcommittee to review the adequacy of the parish's emergency medical supplies and medical equipment, as well as to organize those with medical backgrounds in the parish to be better positioned to respond to emergency situations.

Junior Warden Julie Hembree reported that those who had not visited the chapel at Grace Point should do so as it provides a serene and tranquil environment for functions sponsored by the diocesan parishes. She noted that Ascension was well represented at the recent dedication ceremony of the chapel. Hembree also commented on the excellent performance provided by The African Children's Choir, and how well it was received by the parish. Finally, Hembree pointed out that the Vacation Bible School currently underway had 139 children who appeared to be enjoying the experience very much.

Father Backus gave a report concerning the Bolivian Mission Trip. As there will be many opportunities to hear directly from the 21 parishioners who made the trip to three Bolivian cities, we will not attempt to detail in this report the many good works and interesting events experienced by the mission team. Father Brett generally expressed his heartfelt gratitude for the support of the trip provided by Ascension parishioners. He stated that the group was very cohesive, and the general attitude made the trip an outstanding experience. Vestry member Courtney Zirkle, who was a member of the team, echoed his comments and complimented him on the great leadership he provided to the group.

The vestry next heard a report from the Worship and Music Commission given by Robin Kell. The detailed report will be copied and placed on the communication center for anyone wishing to review the details. Kell reported that a number of lessons were learned during Holy Week and Easter services. The Commission felt that the parish benefits from having rehearsals for these once-a-year services. Suggestions were also made to improve the services by making changes to the sound system, starting the Palm Sunday procession at a different point outside of the parish, and relocating within the procession where the donkey would be placed for better visibility. Kell also reported on the recent meeting of the ushers at which their general responsibilities were addressed. He noted that a document summarizing things ushers should keep in mind is being prepared. Some of the issues addressed involved attempting to decrease the amount of talking and noisemaking in the nave and narthex prior to the service, and discouraging parishioners from bringing food and drink into the nave. Kell also noted the upcoming presence of a gift from the Icon Guild of Stations of the Cross which will be displayed seasonally throughout the nave.

Bert Ackermann reported from the Inreach Commission. He noted that through the end of May 2009 average Sunday attendance for 2009 had been 413. For the same period during 2008, the average attendance had been 342. He also displayed examples of an Ascension Ministry Notebook which was created by the Commission to provide a compilation of one-page descriptions of active ministries underway at Ascension. The notebooks are available in the library, the Visitor/New Member Room and on Cathy Wadley's desk. These notebooks should be helpful in assisting visitors or new members to become more involved in the parish. Ackermann noted that Steve Catron is compiling the notebooks and keeping them as current as possible. Ackermann also reported on the Communications Commission's recent request for proposals extended to six potential website designers in the Knoxville area. The purpose of the request for proposals had been previously discussed and are intended to provide

the parish with an updated and more user friendly website so that visitors to the website will be able to find relevant information about the parish in a way more consistent with modern website design. The new website is expected to have both audio and podcast components and should be ready by late fall or early winter 2009. The budget for this project is $5,000 and is being provided through the Rector's discretionary fund.

PLEASE KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK ON YOUR PARTICIPATION IN PARISH ACTIVITIES AND YOUR PLEDGE DURING THE SUMMER MONTHS. THANK YOU.

Financial report through May 2009

	May Budget	May Actual	YTD Budget	YTD Actual
Pledge, plate, & unpledged contributions:	$86,352	88,875	430,644	436,137
All other income:	10,212	23,688	115,682	131,854
Total income:	96,564	112,563	546,326	567,991
Total expenditures:	107,009	116,640	602,000	613,677
Net Surplus (loss):	(10,445)	(4,077)	(55,674)	(45,686)