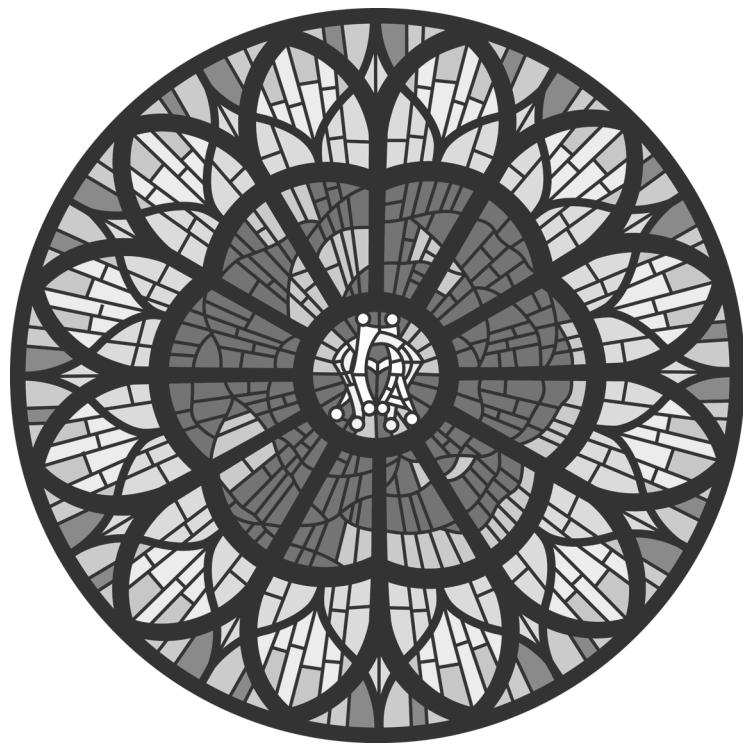


# Ascension Episcopal Church

*Established: 1961; Mission: 1962; Parish: 1966*

## Annual Parish Meeting Organizational Report



**12 January 2020**

Ministries are listed alphabetically. The head of the ministry and contact information is given in bold lettering at the beginning of each entry. If no information is given, and you would like more information, please contact the office at [office@ascensionepiscopalchurch.org](mailto:office@ascensionepiscopalchurch.org).

**Acolytes, Jr. & Sr.****office@ascensionepiscopalchurch.org**

We currently have 18 children who serve as an acolyte – two Jr Acolytes and 16 Sr Acolytes. We welcome Cooper McDonald to the ministry and welcome back Jana Rafaat. We are always looking for more children to serve as both Jr. and Sr. Acolytes. We will hold a training in the near future as a refresher for our current servers and for any newbies who wish to join the ranks. To be a Jr Acolyte your child should be in Kindergarten through 2nd grade., Sr. Acolytes are in 3rd grade or above.

**Adult Christian Formation****Fr. Mark McDonald** **mark@ascensionepiscopalchurch.org**

Our adults have multiple options to deepen their individual study of God's word. Fr. Mark leads Sunday morning Christian Formation following the 10am service, a discussion based on the day's readings. Any and all questions are welcomed. When we have a supply rector, the adults participate in a self-led discussion based on the day's readings. We look forward to adding parishioner led Adult Christian Formation opportunities in this year.

**Ascension Episcopal Church Endowment Fund, Inc.****Alan Burton****ab607@comcast.net****THE LIVING TREE**

*"People have made at least a start at understanding the meaning of life when they plant shade trees under which they know full well they will never sit."*      David Elton Trueblood

**PURPOSE**

*THE purpose of this FUND is to enable the PARISH to develop ministries and maintain its facilities beyond what is normally included in the annual operating budget of the PARISH.*

There are many ways to contribute to guarantee the continued life and growth of Ascension Episcopal Church, other than your regular pledge that keeps the doors open. You can make a contribution with no strings attached, make one designated for a single purpose or one that assures a continuous income stream as long as Ascension exists. The Purpose explains "continuous income stream".

Contributions are made for many reasons. They are made in celebration of a wonderful event, a memorial, a birthday, an anniversary, last will and testament or any reason that you have to see Ascension Episcopal Church will have resources above and beyond the annual operating budget.

Here are two important provisions to remember regarding the Endowment Fund. One, the FUND shall be managed as a true endowment employing the restriction that the principal shall not be invaded. Two, No portion of the principal amount of the FUND shall be "borrowed", including any "temporary usage" for other parish needs

*God Bless Ascension Episcopal Church*

**Altar Flowers****Ann Burton****apb53@comcast.net**

The flower ministry is part of the Altar Guild. Flowers are ordered each week for the Altar and the cost is \$100.00 including delivery. Donations were down in 2019 but due to generosity of donors we were able to provide fresh flowers weekly.

**Altar Guild****Dana Sutton****desutton22@gmail.com**

The Altar Guild is an important ministry of the church – working behind the scenes to get the church ready for worship – preparing for Sunday services and other special services such as Maundy Thursday, weddings, baptisms and funerals. We take care of the communion vessels, candles and linens as well as preparing the hymn boards and marking the Bible for the Sunday readings. We also make palm crosses for Palm Sunday and set up the poinsettias at Christmas.

**WE NEED NEW MEMBERS!** We currently consist of four teams but would love to have new membership and expand the number of teams. With four teams, each is on duty about once per month. Teams usually meet on Saturday morning to set up for Sunday. This usually takes about an hour or two. Clean-up and set up on Sundays after the services typically takes about 15 minutes. Team members become close and it's a great way to get to know others. If you think you might be interested in joining, please contact me or someone on altar guild. We'd love to tell you about our ministry.

**Audio Ministry**

**Kathleen Hannah**

**[kathleen.hannah@att.net](mailto:kathleen.hannah@att.net)**

This ministry operates the sound system for all services held in the church. This includes the two Sunday services, funerals, weddings, and any weekday services. We make recordings of the homilies that are posted on the church's website. We change batteries in the listening devices that are available to anybody who needs help hearing in church services. We have two full-time members and two members who will help out when asked. Additional members are needed. New volunteers are asked to work once or twice per month as your time allows. **Anybody that can operate a cell phone can operate the sound system.** Training is gladly provided.

**Ascension Episcopal School**

**Nancy Clausey**

**[nclausey@aeshouston.org](mailto:nclausey@aeshouston.org)**

This has been a year of change, hard work, increased enrollment, and the addition of a Middle School! We also added students in our lower grades so our enrollment for 2019-20 is 117 students in PK to 8th grade and 59 in ELP. We now have 176 students on our campus. This transition began when Wesley Academy was no longer supported in their facility. The School Boards of both schools worked together to merge our schools and have everyone a part of Ascension Episcopal School. We spent the summer of 2019 moving items from Wesley and organizing teachers, classrooms, and supplies.

Heather Williams became our Associate Head of School, leading Middle School, Teacher Development, Social and Emotional Training, and involvement in every area of our school. She is a true blessing to our school and families. Heather and I have blended our staff and students, working to be stronger together. Our Annual Fund for this school year is Stronger Together as we work each day for every child on our campus.

We continue our Ascension traditions for the 2019-20 school year, our chapel services twice weekly, and special services for All Saints, Grandparents, Veterans, St. Nicholas, and two Christmas programs. We also had our first Middle School Social. Our Middle School teachers hosted this event for 25 students and their friends. It was a huge success, everyone enjoyed the games, White Elephant gift exchange, and Christmas snacks. We were blessed to have several Middle School Families help us with this project also.

It has been an amazing journey and we see God's hands in so much of what we do and have accomplished. We are thankful for this blessing and look forward to the remainder of this school year. Faithfully, Nancy

**Breakfast Teams**

**Deb DiPuma**

**[debdipuma@hotmail.com](mailto:debdipuma@hotmail.com)**

In the past year the breakfast ministry has simplified our offerings to continental style, this is the result of smaller cooking teams. We served approximately 20 persons each Sunday. In previous years more were served, possibly fewer diners due to the fact we are not offering a hot meal and also due to the timing of services. Now that Sunday school is after church, we are no longer serving the children arriving for Sunday school as in the past. While most team members have remained very committed, there have been a few changes in membership. There are 5 teams, each chef is responsible for planning and preparation once every 5 weeks. Alan Burton is instrumental in his weekly shopping and supply of breakfast basics. Each weekly chef will supplement these items with their menu ingredients as needed. This ministry is supported through the simple donations of those who dine. I am very thankful for all who continue to enjoy this ministry-both chefs and diners!

**Children's Formation****Fr. Mark McDonald****mark@ascensionepiscopalchurch.org**

Children's Sunday School serves children in grades PK4 – 5th grade. We have one primary teacher who meets with them each Sunday along with several volunteers who take turns serving as helpers so that our classroom always follows proper Safeguarding God's Children policies. Our Youth Group serves children in grades 6th and above. We have 3 dedicated teachers who serve this group.

**Daughters of the King****Glorianna Foster****gloriannafoster@yahoo.com**

This group of ladies meet the second Saturday of each month at 10 am. They focus on prayer, service and evangelism. Any woman of the congregation who wishes to join them in their walk with Christ may attend any meeting or contact Wendy for more information. If you would like to learn more about this organization, please contact Glorianna.

**Hey Lollies****Jo Wilson****jo.wilson44@yahoo.com**

The Hey Lollies Square Dance Club has enjoyed "Friendship in Motion" for 54 Years. We appreciate and would like to thank you for sharing your church hall with us. We hope we'll be able to call it home for many years to come. About us..... Our club started with 25 couples who upon completion of a learners' class on April 8, 1965 voted to organize a non-profit club to perpetuate the fun they were having and to offer the same opportunity to other married couples. Our Club now enjoys a membership of a little over 200.

Each September, we invite new couples and would like to invite all of you to join the Hey Lollies learners' class that runs from September through May. To keep the class balanced, we request you have a partner. Upon graduation at the end of May, married couples are invited to join the club. Others may attend the dances as Visitors. We dance every Thursday evening from 7:30 to 9:30 PM.

The Hey Lollies are committed to having fun and developing close friendships through square dancing and other social activities throughout the year such as, our annual picnic, Christmas Party, Graduation Weekend, Dance Visitations and after parties. Square Dancing has been recognized as one of the activities you can do for both mental and physical exercise. "FRIENDSHIP IN MOTION"

**Junior Daughters of the King****Karin Hanson****tkket5@yahoo.com**

Ascension's Lydia Chapter of the Junior Daughters of the King currently has 11 members. The order holds meetings once a month, during the school year. In addition to monthly meetings, the girls participate in service and social events. Junior Daughters initially go through training and make a promise to pray and serve daily. All girls ages 7-21 are invited to participate. Please come to a meeting!. Membership is extended to all baptized girls, regardless of denomination,. Please contact Directress Karin Hansen for further information. Special thanks to our assistant, Julie Collins and to the Daughters of the King for their prayers and support.

**Kidventure**

Kidventure has had many great summers here at Ascension and we look forward to their return in summer 2020.

**Lay Eucharist Visitor**

This ministry discontinued in Spring of 2019. If there is interest in renewal, please speak with Fr. Mark. An LEV, or Lay Eucharist Visitor, acts as a representative of the congregation to bring communion to those who are unable to attend service, due to illness, age, or declining health.

**Lay Ministry:** **Pamela Schwabrow** **wtretire@hotmail.com**

During 2019 we added two new lay ministers Ken Kingdon and Joni McDonald. After many years of service, we had resignations from Adam Brown, and Wendy Willeford. We are truly grateful for their service and sad to no longer have them serve with us. Currently, we have fourteen active lay ministers. They are Ngozi Adimora, Mike Black, Sharon Black, Eric Caulcrick, Glenn Criswell, Glorianna Foster, Allison Garcia, Ken Kingdon, Joni McDonald, Carroll Prasad, Pamela Schwabrow, John Searle, Paul Searle, and Dick Stabell. Please join me in thanking them all for their dedicated service to our Lord and His Church.

**Mission and Outreach** **Michelle Feagin** **mfeagin1@comcast.net**

**Mission of Yahweh**

Lunch with Friends continued on the 1st Saturday of the month with the cooking team led by Michelle Feagin. We usually have 4-6 members cooking and serving lunch for 80-100 residents. It is always much appreciated by the residents and staff. The residents join us in blessing the food when we are ready to begin serving and they usually lead the prayer. We received an award at the annual volunteer dinner for the best cooking team.

We receive an email with the monthly prayer list of the residents. It is passed on to the Ascension prayer team, Mission of Yahweh cooking team and the church office so we can all lift them in prayer.

We had a school clothing drive in August for back-to-school. Donations were used to purchase Wal-Mart gift cards in \$50 value. The gift cards were given to the office staff so parents could shop for their children's clothing needs. We were able to provide new outfits and shoes for all of the children.

**WHAM**

Our Outreach work with WHAM has focused in the winter on providing emergency warm blankets and clothing for the homeless in west Houston. We had a Fill the Bag Paper Bag Drive at Thanksgiving and collected well over 50 bags of food, **which totaled over 1100 lbs. of food**. Fr Mark Brown was extremely appreciative for the donations.

Food donations are collected and donated throughout the year in the WHAM box. Plastic and paper bags are also collected for use in the food pantry. Egg cartons are collected for WHAM to use with their supplier for eggs for their client families. Doug Meyers is delivering the items to WHAM as they continue to be collected.

**Forgotten Senior Program**

The Forgotten Senior Angel Tree program was again led by Alan Burton with the help of Ann Burton. As in the past the 50 bags were distributed and collected in a timely fashion, the Salvation Army picking them up in order to provide Christmas gifts for seniors living in nursing homes. This continues to be a very popular Christmas outreach program at Ascension. After 10 years of seamlessly managing this ministry, Alan Burton will be stepping down. We will need to find a volunteer to take over this project for Christmas 2020.

**Open Table**

This ministry concluded in 2018 and has not been renewed at this time.

**Music Ministry** **Suzanne Anderson** **usic@ascensionepiscopalchurch.org**

The Music Department provided music for the weekly 10:00 AM service and the usual special services throughout 2019. The parish choir faithfully provided musical support for all services. Christmas Eve and Easter Sunday services were special, with brass quartets added to the mix. They remain flexible and dedicated, ready for any

emerging needs, such as soloing, singing for funerals, or performing special music when requested. During the summer, the choir becomes a 'pick up' choir where anyone who wishes will have no problem joining in. Summer anthem are generally repeats from that calendar year, or less difficult, well-known anthems.

Ascension's pianos and organ are regularly serviced and maintained, and we also have a small collection of percussion instruments. After a years-long project, the Ascension Music Library is now in a clear working order, documented in the wonderful spreadsheet which Charles Jordan created during his tenure.

The most difficult issue was the sudden, unexpected loss of Miranda Griesbaum. She was happy to have the time to sing more after leaving her position on staff here at Ascension. She is irreplaceable and we are trying to adjust to the huge hole her death has given us.

Working with the Ascension staff and parish choir has been a joy and a privilege. I have immensely enjoyed my five years here. I am retiring at the end of 2019. I will still live seven minutes away from Ascension. After a period of time to allow the next musician to establish his or her own path, I will be available for substituting at Ascension.

**Nursery****Jackie Bergquist****[jackieberg@earthlink.net](mailto:jackieberg@earthlink.net)**

The nursery offers childcare for infants and toddlers during Sunday Services and other events at Ascension as needed. We are thankful for Gloria Sutter, Lilliam Rubio, and Elizabeth Gonzalez for their continued care of the babies and children at Ascension. All of our nursery workers have completed Safeguarding God's Children. The number of children in the nursery varies from 2 to 5 on average for 10:00 Sunday Service and Sunday School.

**Parish Life****Carol Goulet****[dcskylark@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dcskylark@sbcglobal.net)**

Parish Life is a work of love and continues to run smoothly. We had a good many events through 2019, starting with this very luncheon a year ago. I'd like to invite any and all ladies of the parish to consider joining our Parish Life Committee team. Many of our team members have served for a very long time which is why we need your help so we can rotate events so as not to over load all of us. But if you can only contribute once in a while, no worry .....we'll still take you!

**Post Service Coffee****Toyin Agboola****[olutoyinagboola@yahoo.com](mailto:olutoyinagboola@yahoo.com)**

This ministry was started approx. ten years ago to encourage fellowship following the 10:00 service. Members of the church got to know one another and newcomers have an opportunity to learn not only about Ascension, but about the people of Ascension. What started as simple fare of coffee, water and cookies, has exploded into an amazing array of choices, from fruits and veggies, to meats and cheeses, and all sorts of crackers. We are truly blessed by the men and women who put together these spreads (and clean up afterward!!) That being said, this ministry needs help. We are down to four rotating teams. We need 6 teams for this ministry to run comfortably and we are asking you to step up. It can be as simple as coffee and cookies, each team does their own thing. As the saying goes, "many hands, makes work light." So, if you're interested in joining a team, please contact me (Toyin Agboola) or any member of one of the teams.

**Prayer Teams****Olive Gomes****[ogomes2010.og@gmail.com](mailto:ogomes2010.og@gmail.com)**

The Prayer Team ministry will see new leadership in the 2020 year. After several years, Michelle Feagin is handing the reigns to Olive Gomes. They currently have 10 members who serve in pairs to minister with prayer at the 10:00 service. They pray confidentially with members of Ascension during and after the Eucharist. Members of the prayer team also continue to include those intentions in their daily prayer lists. Approximately once a month the Prayer Team receives a list of prayer requests from the residents of the Mission of Yahweh and includes them in prayer.

## **Property and Grounds**

We share our facilities with numerous organizations, including ActiveStars, a non-profit program that teaches sports to children from low income families, Hey Lollies, which you can read about in this report, of course, the Ascension School, the Girl Scouts, and other groups who on occasion request space. A busy campus is a opportunity for church growth.

Aside from standard maintenance issues, the property has had relatively few issues to report on. The Sanctuary AC and heating system controls were updated with a new programmable thermostat, this will help regulate the temperature and humidity levels in the church provide energy efficient protection of our assets. A portion of the Parish hall electrical system was updated for safety reasons, and with the expansion of the school, the rector and parish secretary's offices were relocated back into the Parish hall. There were some other moving of offices and classrooms that were made to accommodate the expansion of the school.

## **Safeguarding God's Children**

We love our children and youth at Ascension and strive to keep them as safe as possible. Safeguarding God's Children is a training program for the prevention of sexual abuse of children and youth. The program provides participants the information they need to protect the children they know and care for both in their personal lives and in the ministries in which they serve. If every adult can protect just one child, they will forever change one life. If we can all change one life, together we will make a difference in this generation of children.

The Diocese of Texas requires all who are employed by the congregation, all who work for the Diocese and its institutions, and all who work or volunteer with children and youth to take this training from a diocesan certified trainer. Recertification in SGC is required every five years. Dana Sutton is a certified Safeguarding Records Administrators for the Diocese of Texas.

### **St. Phillip the Evangelist**

### **Fr. Agook Kuol**

[agookkuol@yahoo.com](mailto:agookkuol@yahoo.com)

In early 2018, the diocese contacted Ascension to explore partnership with a congregation to help them, and provide resources to allow them to establish a mission. In May of 2018, we met and established a friendship with Fr. Agook Kuol, known as Fr. Emmanuel, and St. Philip the Evangelist Episcopal Church. We share our facilities with them, have partnered with them on several occasions for unified holiday services and Fr. Mark works closely with them to share knowledge on the function of a well run parish. Their congregation continues to grow and averages 45 to 50 adults in attendance each Sunday, supporting approximately 70 youth and children.

### **Thursday Morning Men's Bible Study**

### **John Edel**

[jjeedel@hal-pc.org](mailto:jjeedel@hal-pc.org)

The Thursday morning Bible Study is alive and well even at 06:30AM. Typically we have 5 or so participants. The study is more of a discussion format and we have a couple of learned brothers that keep us on track. We are currently discussing Luke under the leadership of Jim Anderson. The next study topic will be determined by popular demand. We welcome any who would join us. We recently had two visitors from Kenya, one a Bishop and the other the headmaster of a school there. There's coffee and sometimes kolaches.

### **Tues Afternoon Bible Study**

### **Wanda June**

[dwjune@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dwjune@sbcglobal.net)

The Women's Tuesday Bible Study is still growing in number and most importantly in the love and study of God's word. We meet in the library from 1:00 to 2:00 each Tuesday afternoon. We have used many resources for our studies, but we always use discussion as the main part of our lessons. It has always been these open discussions that bring us the most results in our search to understand and put the scripture in action in our lives.

There are over 30 women of different ages, cultures, ideas, etc. registered in the class. Our usual attendance is around 15 to 20 each Tuesday, but you will always find a different mix as we come and go each week. We have a fellowship time after the hour long study time which includes snacks. We also meet for birthday luncheons throughout the year to honor the birthday ladies. (Yes, food does play an important part in our gatherings ) We will be starting a new study this coming Tuesday. Come and join a group of women who love to study God's Word. Visitors are always welcome.

<b>Ushers 8:00am</b>	<b>Susan &amp; Joe Mino</b>	<b>susanmino@gmail.com</b>
<b>10:00am</b>	<b>Gemma Williams</b>	<b>gwilliamgj@yahoo.com</b>

Each one of our team members brings a very special gift to our parish. Every Sunday morning, our team greets parishioners and guests with a smile and a positive attitude. They serve during the offertory with the passing of the plates, as well as during communion to assist parishioners to the Altar rail in an orderly fashion. These steadfast ministry members are responsible for taking the Sunday Attendance Count, assisting those who are in need of hearing devices, and helping guests and parishioners alike as needs arise. We would like to thank this group of devoted volunteers.

**8:00**—8:00 a.m. usher team needs you!! We are looking for a few more helpers to usher at the 8 a.m. service. It is an easy job and you get to meet a lot of really nice people. One trip up the aisle to get the offering plates and another trip up the aisle to help people know when to go to communion. The 8 a.m. crowd is very self sufficient and will help you out if you are not sure what to do. I will help train anyone interested also so you will not be alone when you start. Thank you for considering helping. Sincerely, Susan Mino

**10:00**—This ministry has 11 dedicated members who serve in rotating teams of 6. We definitely need one more member to fill in the whole that Ray Valenti left when they moved. If you are interested in joining, we need you and please contact Gemma. Thank you Todd and Cindy Breton, Alayne and Warren Bryant, Wesley Goette, Craig Kaplan, Doug Meyers, Edwin and Jolie Murvee, Patrick Schwabrow, and Gemma Williams.

## **Vestry**

In 2019, your Vestry carried out the day to day business of the church. They deal with all property, contract, finance, worship decisions, and numerous other issues. In 2019, the vestry met on the third Tuesday of each month, and these individuals worked diligently behind the scenes to make sure that the church ran smoothly and that God's work marches on. Thank you to these dedicated leaders: Tom Sutton (Senior Warden), Edwin Murvee (Junior Warden), Glenn Criswell (Treasurer), Liz Goodman (Clerk), Michelle Feagin, Margo Kaplan, Sharon Black, Olive Gomes, Gemma Williams, Allison Garcia, and Nigel Hypolite.

<b>WHAM</b>	<b>Marissa Goette and Craig Kaplan</b>
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WHAM, West Houston Assistance Ministry, continues to thrive under the leadership of their CEO, Mark Brown, well known to Ascension, as he has been a supply priest several occasions. Ascension provides volunteers and financial support which is much appreciated.