



**Church of the Ascension
Warden Election 2021 Candidate Questionnaire**

Name: Isabel Spencer

Member of Ascension since 1985

Occupation: For 40 years, I was a newspaper editor and reporter in various troubled cities, including Wilmington, Del., Chester, Pa., Philadelphia, Newark, Trenton and New York. My final jobs were as managing editor of the Denver Post and political editor of the NY Daily News. In part-time work following retirement, I was chair of the Tinker Association for Women, which assisted needy retired women artists.

Five activities at Ascension: Chair of Ascension Outreach, co-chair of Buildings and Grounds during church and rectory renovations, vestry member for 13 years, altar guild, chalice bearer, warden for the last two years.

Five activities elsewhere in the Episcopal Church or the community:

Chair of various co-op and condo associations, warden of a church in Philadelphia, EFM, class editor and fund-raiser for my school and college.

1) What drew you to Ascension?

Well, proximity, since I lived two blocks away. But once through the doors, specific people: Dr. Keene, Father Goodness, Mother Tanya, Arthur Anderson, John Grimes.

2) What do you see as Ascension's greatest strengths?

In the broadest sense, our worship together.

3) What skills, experiences and/or talents will you bring?

As a city editor and managing editor, I tried to bring out the best work from each person with whom I interacted. I continue to pray to do that.

4) What is your vision for Ascension in the next five years?

As we recover from the pandemic, our challenge will be to carry forward the spirit of community we have developed while exploring new approaches to worship and self-knowledge. With Mother Liz and our staff, our core is strong and we must branch out to help, nurture and learn from others.



**Church of the Ascension
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Name: Elizabeth Adams

Member of Ascension since: 2018

Occupation: Senior Customer Representative, CT Corporation

Please list Activities at Ascension:

Reader
Acolyte Guild
20's/30's Group

Activities elsewhere in the Episcopal Church or in the community:

Volunteer Tutoring with the Brooklyn Public Library
Various political volunteer work

1. What drew you to Ascension?

The open, instantly loving community, the beautiful liturgy and music.

2. What do you see as Ascension's greatest strengths?

The open and welcoming community that makes anyone—whether they're a lifetime Episcopalian or from any religious denomination—feel like home. I think this comes from managing to balance the high liturgy without making it feel exclusive.

3. What is your vision for Ascension in the next five years?

A larger parish that is deeply engaged with the larger New York community through further expansion of our outreach programs that not only serve the poor and marginalized but also seeks to stand in solidarity them.

4. What skills, experiences, and/or talents will you bring to the work of the vestry?

I am a candid speaker and writer, creative thinker, and possess an openness and enthusiasm for learning.



Church of the Ascension Vestry Election 2021 Candidate Questionnaire

Name: Garrett Dangler

Member of Ascension since: 1988

Occupation: Interior & Architectural Design, retired.

Activities at Ascension:

Building & Grounds Committee, Altar Guild, Usher

1. What drew you to Ascension?

In 1987, a fellow member at St. Thomas 5th Avenue told me he attended a Sunday evening service at Ascension which was conducted by a female priest and the service & church were impressive. The priest was Rev. Lauren Auckland. Donald Goodness made us feel understood & welcomed transfer of our memberships to Church of the Ascension.

2. What do you see as Ascension's greatest strengths?

The welcoming Garden. A beautiful, peaceful, refined artistic church interior. Clergy that is impressive and show depth of empathy & spirituality. Outstanding Sermons. Elevating music. A welcoming open-hearted congregation. Active pursuit of social justice. A commitment to integrity & truth. This builds into a rich content that encourages a person to become a member and grow. Building our social programs will be a driving force in this changing world & encourage new members. This will require us to further open our hearts.

3. What is your vision for Ascension in the next five years?

Church of the Ascension will continue to be a beacon to many. As Ascension opens its doors when the Pandemic subsides, many of the world's problems will have increased. Subsequently, personal challenges will increase also. Ascension will creatively evaluate and orient programs to address these needs. We will actualize direct participation in social justice causes. Caring for others and an open heart to all will be a moving force for us. A calling may be to envision and engage with church members, local and national communities. Zoom has opened new vistas for any organization, creative programming will be developed.

Building & Grounds will do extensive analysis of building conditions, plan into the future and schedule work in stages. As always, continually there will be smaller items to mend, evaluate, price and maintain.

4. What skill, experiences, and or talents will you bring to the work of the vestry. In terms of Building & Grounds, my three decades in managing construction of architectural spaces has given me extensive experience working with contractors and executing both technical and aesthetic aspects of any project.

In the design field, my approach and reputation as a congenial team player came about because I am aware there is always more than one solution to any problem, and mutual discussion and understanding are key. Batting ideas around the room can often be very productive.

My interest in the Episcopal church has caused me to attend services in many churches and in various cities. I especially like to observe the Liturgy of a service, and try to visualize aspects of the soul of that church. I have attended annual meetings of two Manhattan churches, St. James and St. Mary the Virgin. Both were interesting and polar opposite.

I enjoy projects that require creative thinking, to create something new that may provide excellent solutions. And, realizing that among many ideas the quest is for the right idea.

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When appropriate, I believe streamlining the approach to the way committees work should be explored. Be specific of goals, prioritize, plan ahead and assign aspects to various people



**Church of the Ascension
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Name: Gale Lynch

Member of Ascension since: 2018

Occupation:

Senior Director, Global Engagement and International Support Services at The New School

Activities at Ascension:

Usher
Racial Justice Group
Participant in various events

Activities elsewhere in the Episcopal Church or in the community:

My work with college students and across cultures

1. What drew you to Ascension?

The overall down-to-earth feeling of the church, clergy and parishioners, Mother Liz's preaching and kindness, and the music program.

2. What do you see as Ascension's greatest strengths?

The overall down-to-earth feeling of the church, clergy and parishioners, the excellent preaching, the clergy and parishioner's kindness, and the music program. Ascension's physical location is also a strength.

3. What is your vision for Ascension in the next five years?

Ascension will continue to be a spiritually robust church focused on helping others know God's love and care with a commitment to justice.

4. What skills, experiences, and/or talents will you bring to the work of the vestry?

I am skilled in strategic thinking and planning, creating and implementing projects and programs, have strong cross-cultural skills, and am energetic and enthusiastic.



Church of the Ascension Vestry Election 2020 Candidate Questionnaire

Name: John Thompson

Member of Ascension since: 2016

Occupation: IT Support, Apple, Inc.

Activities at Ascension:

Hospitality Committee; Reparations Committee; Zoom Church; Usher; Re-Opening

Activities elsewhere in the Episcopal Church or in the community:

Past experience

- Co-Chair – Rector Search Committee, St. John's Church, Duxbury, MA (hoping not to draw upon experience here)
- Board member and volunteer- St. Paul's Soup Kitchen, St. Paul's Church, Brockton, MA
- Church School Teacher – All Saints, Pasadena – 5 yrs Kindergarten
- Acolyte – St. Paul's, Paterson, NJ, Christ Church, Totowa, NJ, St. John's, Duxbury

1. What drew you to Ascension?

My partner, Dorothy, brought me to Ascension. I stayed for the sermons, music, deviled eggs, EFM, and the many wonderful people I've met here. I especially love our space for worship, reflection, and music.

2. What do you see as Ascension's greatest strengths? Location; Strong preaching; Beautiful building; Dedicated, talented, and loving congregation core; Wonderful music; Relative financial security; Progressive leadership

3. What is your vision for Ascension in the next five years? I believe there is no going completely back to the way we were. We at Ascension will come to define our parish boundaries differently. Membership, attendance, support, pastoral care and outreach are no longer constrained by distance, public transportation or even by time constraints. Continued working together in this environment will lead to new ways to be God's Love in the world.

4. What skills, experiences, and/or talents will you bring to the work of the vestry? I have a diverse science/engineering/technology background that has honed my creative problem solving and analytical skills. I love getting to know people and through them, God. I find a touch of humor can open hearts. I'm a lifelong Episcopalian – actively participating in Parish life since Boy's Choir.



Church of the Ascension Vestry Election 2021 Candidate Questionnaire

Name: Rachel Sedor

Member of Ascension since: About 2011

Occupation: Pharmaceutical Sales Representative, Mental Health with Intra-Cellular Therapies

Activities at Ascension:

Stewardship Committee (5 years), I coordinate and lead the Harvest Dinner. My goal each year is to include and encourage as many people as possible in our celebration. Blessing of the Animals, Most years I sew dog toys to hand out. My best years have been those where I bring them, then enlist someone else (ideally someone with a child) to hand the toys out. It helps make this more of a community-minded event. Altar Guild, I often set up/serve/read/close the 9 am service. Our 9 am community, although small, is familiarly bound together in our worship.

Activities elsewhere in the Episcopal Church or in the community:

EFM-I am in my fourth year. This best-night-of-the-week for me has defined how I view worship and fellowship in the Episcopal Church. I am the only Ascension member in this group of 14. This and my friendships with EFM graduates has taught me to better see myself as part of our greater church.

Single Parents Resource Center (SPRC)- I am a board member of this non-profit offering services for our families with single or separated parents. Our programs revolve around parental bonds with their children, gambling addiction services for parents, post incarceration programs and more. Our small group helps parents expand their loving bonds with their children.

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) – I am team leader at their corporate events such as the walk or gala. No matter what company I work for, NAMI knows I will bring a team in to support it.

1. What drew you to Ascension?

When I first attended mass at Ascension, I was at a crossroad. I found community and began this spiritual journey.

2. What do you see as Ascension's greatest strengths?

Our parishioners try. We try to be good supporters, to understand God's message, to be good neighbors. I am proud to be a part of this trying.

3. What is your vision for Ascension in the next five years?

With our current programs, making our outside community aware of what is going on here. We can bring Ascension powerfully forward.

4. What skills, experiences, and/or talents will you bring to the work of the vestry?
I am a pretty positive, hardworking person. I have an MBA and have worked on corporate teams for 25+ years. Experience has taught me the best ideas most often come from others.



**Church of the Ascension
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Name: Vin Knight

Member of Ascension since (year): 2001

Occupation: Actor (Elevator Repair Service + freelance)

Activities at Ascension:

1. Current Vestry member
2. Canvasser for annual Stewardship drives
3. Edit weekly meditations and post on YouTube & Facebook Ascension pages
4. Indexed and transferred historical records to Diocesan archives for preservation and storage

Activities elsewhere in the Episcopal Church or in the community:

Teach workshops on devising theater from non-theatrical sources. Students range from middle schoolers to senior citizens.

1. What drew you to Ascension?

I was looking for a new church home (and a new denomination) after several years of irregular attendance. Immediately upon entering its doors, Ascension felt like the right place for me. The beauty of its buildings and grounds, the music, the liturgy and most of all the people quickly confirmed my initial reaction. Even after moving from Chelsea to Brooklyn, I had no doubt that I would continue to make it my home.

2. What do you see as Ascension's greatest strengths?

This has always been, to my mind, a very dedicated and loyal congregation. This past year has clearly shown me the strength of our leadership – clergy, staff and laypersons. With remarkable smoothness during a chaotic time, our leaders stepped up and kept things going – always with respect for protocols and willingness to adapt.

3. What is your vision for Ascension in the next five years?

At the moment it's hard to think too far ahead, although growth and financial stability are always longer-term goals. We obviously need to balance our deep desire to begin in-person once again with the absolute need to provide a safe environment. I would also like us to preserve some of the unforeseen benefits of offering online services and other gatherings for those unable to participate in person.

4. What skills, experiences, and/or talents will you bring to the work of the vestry?

My work requires a constant and generous spirit of collaboration, which I certainly try to bring to all situations. I have a relatively long fuse and try to take the long view as much

as possible. Most of all, I want to ensure that Ascension remains strong and vital for those who will be here after us.