

**Church of the Ascension  
Vestry Election 2022 Candidate Questionnaire**



**Name (as you wish it to appear on vestry ballot):**

Elizabeth Adams

**Member of Ascension since (year):**

2018

**Occupation (including title and company):**

Compliance Specialist CT Corporation System

**Please list up to five of your activities at Ascension that you feel would be useful to you in your service as a vestry member:**

Clerk of the Vestry

Organizer for Lenten Devotions

**Please list up to five of your activities elsewhere in the Episcopal Church or in the community that you feel would be useful to you in your service as a vestry member:**

I am a member of the Interfaith and Ecumenical Commission for the Diocese.

**1. What drew you to Ascension?**

I was drawn to the welcoming community and the beautiful liturgy and music.

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

I believe that Ascension's greatest strengths are its loving and inclusive community, its music and liturgy, and a clergy that takes pastoral care seriously.

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

My vision for Ascension in the next five years is a parish with more outreach and ecumenical programs. That has started and I want to expand it.

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

I am extremely organized, I meet deadlines, and bring zeal and enthusiasm to an task I take on.

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**Your Name (as you wish it to appear on the vestry ballot)**

David Cholcher

**Member of Ascension since (year):**

1998

**Occupation (including title and company):**

Digital Transformation Senior Analyst for God's Love We Deliver

**Please list up to five of your activities at Ascension that you feel would be useful to you in your service as a vestry member:**

Former warden and Vestry member  
Food pantry volunteer and Ascension Outreach board member  
Personnel Committee member  
Discernment Committee member  
Ascension Choir volunteer

**Please list up to five of your activities elsewhere in the Episcopal Church or in the community that you feel would be useful to you in your service as a vestry member:**

Choral Society of Grace Church member  
Church Club of New York member

**1.What drew you to Ascension?**

Liturgy and music  
Beauty of the spaces  
Warm, welcoming community  
God's presence in word and action

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

A long, ongoing tradition of faithful witness to Greenwich Village and the wider world  
A loving, dedicated community and leadership  
Praising God with exceptional beauty, skill, and love

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

Continue to build upon the positive work of the recent past with parish management and space use to help meet the challenges of ongoing mission and community sustainability

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

Non-profit management  
More decades of church-going than I care to admit  
A sense of humor

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**Your Name (as you wish it to appear on the vestry ballot)**

John Grimes

**Member of Ascension since (year):**

1990

**Occupation (including title and company):**

Managing Director, JPMorgan Chase Bank

Please list up to five of your activities at Ascension that you feel would be useful to you in your service as a vestry member:

Finance Committee chair, Altar Guild chair, acolyte, Evening Prayer participant, Racial Justice Group participant

**Please list up to five of your activities elsewhere in the Episcopal Church or in the community that you feel would be useful to you in your service as a vestry member:**

Voices of Ascension, Board Member and President

**1.What drew you to Ascension?**

I had just moved to New York to go to law school at NYU and was looking for a spiritual home. I was not an Episcopalian, but I was looking for a liturgical church, and I was immediately drawn to Ascension's liturgy, music and the warm welcome I received.

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

Our community and its care for each other, especially during this pandemic time, including expansion online; our liturgy and music; dedicated and caring clergy, staff and volunteers/parishioners.

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

I would like to continue to build on the expanded sense of community that we have experienced in the past two years, which reminds me of the early church. In particular, I believe this includes a Christian calling to inclusivity for all persons, and a reckoning with our church's and country's history of racism. I would like us to return to a balanced budget, and to continue the stewardship of our historical buildings in a thoughtful manner. I look forward to celebrating our 200th anniversary in 2027, which is within the next five years!

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

I have great love for Ascension and the Episcopal church, and I would bring this devotion to the ministry of a Vestry member. As chair of the Finance Committee, I can provide continuity and input on financial matters, working together with Mary Gaillard as Treasurer. As a lawyer by training, I believe I would be able to exercise good judgment on a broad range of matters that come before the Vestry. I have previously served on Vestry and as Warden, and I believe that experience would serve me well if elected.

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**Your Name (as you wish it to appear on the vestry ballot)**

Steven Hubbard

**Member of Ascension since (year):**

2003

**Occupation (including title and company):**

Senior Data Scientist, American Immigration Council

**Please list up to five of your activities at Ascension that you feel would be useful to you in your service as a vestry member:**

Head of the Usher Guild, Former Warden, Reopening Committee, Welcoming Committee

**Please list up to five of your activities elsewhere in the Episcopal Church or in the community that you feel would be useful to you in your service as a vestry member:**

Teaching, coding, data visualization, and management

**1.What drew you to Ascension?**

I was drawn to Ascension by its sense of community. I remember the first time I walked into Ascension. People (both volunteers and parishioners) were greeting each other and working together to prepare for church. I instantly knew that this was the type of community I wanted to be a part of.

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

Community, adaptability, and a deep appreciation of art and music.

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

In five years, Ascension will be 200 years old, which will be a great opportunity to celebrate our community and highlight the many accomplishments Ascension completed in the past two centuries. By planning now, we can ensure our 200th birthday (and activities leading up to it) will not only include celebrations but moments to provide further outreach to our surrounding community and Ascension alumni. It will also be an opportunity to fundraise and celebrate our artistic heritage both in-person and online.

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

Teaching, management, technology, coding, and data visualization.

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**Your Name (as you wish it to appear on the vestry ballot)**

Shana Kaplanov

**Member of Ascension since (year):**

2014

**Occupation (including title and company):**

Manager of Annual Fund Giving with Union Theological Seminary

**Please list up to five of your activities at Ascension that you feel would be useful to you in your service as a vestry member:**

1. Lay Preacher
2. Sunday School Teacher
3. Convener of Women's Spirituality Group
4. Adult Education Group Leader
5. Member of the Vestry Nomination Committee in 2020

**Please list up to five of your activities elsewhere in the Episcopal Church or in the community that you feel would be useful to you in your service as a vestry member:**

1. I currently manage the Annual Fund for Union Theological Seminary and the Episcopal Divinity School at Union.
2. I have consulted with parishes in the Diocese of Pennsylvania to improve their stewardship, fundraising, and volunteer efforts.
3. I was the Volunteer and Parish Relations Manager with Episcopal Community Services, and connected parishes with community building and volunteer opportunities with programs run by ECS in Philadelphia.
4. I was a member of the Stewardship Committee at Christ Church in Philadelphia.
5. I was a Legislative Liaison for the Governor of Ohio, and have experience managing and working on several committees for the State of Ohio.

**1. What drew you to Ascension?**

I came to Ascension as a new mother, and was drawn in by this welcoming community. It was apparent on that first day that parishioners are truly invested in caring for one another. Ascension has been a place where I am challenged and can grow in my faith as my family has grown and changed. I also love Ascension's liturgy which honors the traditions of the past while reimagining what God is calling the church to be in the present.

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

The outpouring of love that we share is our greatest strength. Ascension brings the Kingdom of God into being by manifesting God's love through our interactions with one another. This community provided support to my children and me during my divorce. That commitment to radical welcome is one of the greatest assets of this church, and ensures that Ascension will be relevant to the surrounding community for generations to come. No matter where someone is on their journey of faith, Ascension is a welcoming place to help people draw nearer to God and one another.

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

1. I hope to increase the community's action around Stewardship so that our parish has a more sustainable future for generations to come.
2. I would like to use lessons learned from the ongoing experience during the pandemic to see how Ascension can provide more opportunities for connection to one another through small and large group settings (both online & in-person when possible).
3. I would like to explore how Ascension can more fully embody its history as the Church of the Open Door. What does it mean to be the Church of the Open Door today?

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

I am a professional fundraiser, and have experience fundraising with the Episcopal Church. I have grant writing, annual fund, planned giving, and major gift experience that could be useful in identifying ways to grow the financial health of the parish.

Through my M.Div., I have been trained in several aspects of parish administration. I understand the sacred ministry and responsibility that vestry members have in caring for the church community by upholding the mission, vision, and the financial integrity of the church.

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**Your Name (as you wish it to appear on the vestry ballot)**

Madonna Stack

**Member of Ascension since (year):**

2015

**Occupation (including title and company):**

Registered Nurse and health Care Consultant

**Please list up to five of your activities at Ascension that you feel would be useful to you in your service as a vestry member:**

I am presently a member of the Vestry, sit on the Finance and Reopening Committees and chair of the Personnel Committee

**Please list up to five of your activities elsewhere in the Episcopal Church or in the community that you feel would be useful to you in your service as a vestry member:**

Vice president of my coop which consists of 164 apartments

**1.What drew you to Ascension?**

My husband and I joined Ascension after having attended many Voices of Ascension concerts. During that time, we met a number parishioners who encouraged us to come to a service. We did and decided that Ascension was the place for us, despite having an Episcopal Church right around the corner from where we lived.

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

Ascension's greatest strengths are in the people who work and worship at Ascension. The congregation and staff are talented, hardworking and inspiring. A perfect example has been the skill with which Ascension was able to pivot quickly to maintain providing spiritual guidance, support and some fun during the dark days of the pandemic.

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

I would like to see us concentrate on growing our congregation, especially by attracting more young people; refining our online presence; and assisting and supporting our neighborhood in tackling the social issues of our area.

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

Having been a hospital administrator for many years, I developed financial and personnel management skills; the ability to work with small and large groups of people with diverse backgrounds and skills; and dealing with building maintenance issues including new construction.