

# THE CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION

*IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK*

*FIFTH AVENUE AT TENTH STREET*

*A PARISH OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN THE DIOCESE OF NEW YORK*



## Annual Report for 2024



# **Annual Meeting of 26 January 2025**

## **ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2024**

Given at the Annual Meeting of The Church of the Ascension  
Fifth Avenue at Tenth Street, New York City  
Parish House (Offices and Mailing Address): 12 West 11th Street, New York, New York 10011  
Telephone: 212-254-8620 • Internet Address: [www.ascensionnyc.org](http://www.ascensionnyc.org)

**January 26, 2025**

### **CLERGY AND STAFF**

The Rt. Rev. Matthew F. Heyd	Bishop of New York
The Rev. Elizabeth G. Maxwell	Rector
The Rev. Edwin Chinery	Associate Rector
Dr. Dennis Keene	Organist and Choirmaster
Br. Andrew Jones, OSF	Parish Administrator
Kelli Long	Business Manager
Sajia Choudhury	Parish Bookkeeper
Dwight Roberts	Sexton
Rashean Thompkins	Assistant Sexton
Carolyn Braden	Choir Assistant

### **2024 VESTRY MEMBERS**

David Cholcher, Warden
Isabel Spencer, Warden
Charles E. Schmidt Chancellor
Mary Gaillard, Treasurer
Andrew Lin, Clerk

<b>Class of 2025</b>	<b>Class of 2026</b>	<b>Class of 2027</b>
Elizabeth Adams	Kyle Cheseborough	Sabra Brock
John Grimes	Ned Fitch	Zachariah Hennessey
Steve Hubbard	Richard Mitchell	Gale Lynch
Madonna Stack-Barker	Michael Surabian	Phoebe Norcross

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## **2025 Annual Meeting Agenda**

The Annual Meeting is convened immediately following the 11:00 service. Ballots were distributed electronically on the Wednesday prior to the annual meeting, January 24, and polls remained open until 12 noon, Friday, January 26. Run-off ballots were not required. Results of the election will be announced at the Annual Meeting.

Opening Collect

Call to Order

Appointment of Secretary

Minutes of meeting of January 29, 2023

Treasurer's Report for 2023 and 2024 Budget

Legacy Society Report

Spring Showcase

Rector and Warden's Remarks

Questions and Answers

Small Group Conversations and Report back

Necrology

Recognition of Retiring Vestry Members and Warden

Announcements

Announcement of Election results

Benediction:

O God of unbounded grace and abundance, we thank you for the Church of the Ascension, our spiritual home and an island of light and beauty in the vibrant life of this city. You have drawn countless worshippers to this place, known and unknown, to love and to serve you. Be with us now as we seek to renew our parish through the year ahead. May your spirit of benevolence and generosity inspire us to be your faithful people in our day, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Adjournment

## Minutes of the 2024 Annual Meeting of the Church of the Ascension

### DRAFT Minutes of the 2024 Annual Meeting of the Church of the Ascension

1. At 1:00 p.m., the Rector of the parish, the Reverend Elizabeth Maxwell, called the meeting to order and offered a prayer.
2. The Clerk of the Vestry was appointed secretary of the annual meeting by acclamation following nomination by Mother Liz.
3. The Agenda was approved by a unanimous voice vote.
4. John Grimes gave the Treasurer's report.
  - The parish had another year of deficit and we were able to draw down from the endowment.
  - The operating results for 2023 ended the year with a deficit of \$12,277. We have been making drawdowns from the endowment income. The diocesan assessment relief resulted in savings of \$117,000. We will return to our full share of the assessment in 2026.
  - Government relief programs have helped us to get through the pandemic. We have had relief from the PPP loan, which was made into a grant.
  - In October 2023 we filed an additional claim for the employee retention ERTC funds.
  - Mary Gaillard added we had an interim mid-year budget adjustment.
  - The operating 2023 deficit was \$12,277.
  - The projected deficit for 2024 is \$281,621. The diocesan assessment reflects the 50% credit approved by the diocese. In total expenses are expected to be \$1,462,040.
  - The projected income in 2024 is \$1,180,419. The budget includes 2024 pledge income of \$365,000 which are consistent with last year. For the 2024 budget we will need to draw down \$169,000 from the endowment which reflects an additional 1% drawdown from our unrestricted funds other than the General and Endowment Fund.
  - We have formed an income generation task force with Mike Surabian to assist as we will need income from other sources to meet the 2024 budget. This includes looking at our real estate for income, event planning, leasing space for TV filming, fashion shows, etc. Gale Lynch and Michael Surabian are looking for a few more people with contacts in these areas and possible for leasing working space.
  - Because of the writers' strike there were fewer opportunities to lease to filming locations.
  - Gretchen Dumler spoke about are many "angels of the past" and invited everyone to consider becoming a future angel by leaving part of your estate to the parish. Ascension has a special book with names of all of our "angels" listed.
  - An opportunity to ask questions of John was offered, but there were none.
5. Rector's and Wardens' remarks
  - Mother Liz referred us to her report in the Annual Report that was distributed today.

- David Cholcher, warden, thanked John, Steve and Mary for their help with the Finance Committee and also the Vestry.
- Isabel Spencer, warden, chaired the nominating committee this year.
- Comments were made about the success of the Open Door ministry and of the Forums after coffee hour. A time for questions and answers was offered, but there were no questions.

6. Small Group meetings made reports to the following questions: How do you see signs of life in the church community now? How does the church contribute to the wider community? In an ideal world, what resources would be helpful to the church?

Father Ed presented the comments from his group:

- We have a devoted base of people in the parish
- New people do attend services weekly
- Broader outreach is needed.
- We already have professionals in our congregation who can contribute to outreach.
- Younger people even in their 40s-50s have a spiritual hunger but may not see the church as a place to fulfill it.

Vin Knight presented the comments from his group:

- Younger vestry members and new faces.
- Our adult education and forums; Wednesday lunches.
- Contributions include food pantry, immigrant support, the “open door”
- Our resources include our location and congregation.
- Some churches have glass doors in front and can be seen better from the outside

Jeffrey Johnson presented the comments from his group:

- Food pantry - many people from neighborhood are assisting, and young people too
- AA meetings - several regularly meeting 12 step programs
- Various musical offerings
- An interest in getting out into the immediate community – to minister directly to people in the neighborhood, not necessarily wait for others to come to us.

John Grimes presented the comments from his group:

- Ideas for new income generation: new (and younger) Vestry members, new ideas, open door, removal of scaffolding soon. Our contributions to the wider community include the “open door”, musical offerings (including Voices concerts), and Ascension Outreach (food pantry)
- Our assets and contributions include our location and visibility, the garden, BBQs, Pride parade, coffee hour outside, Palm Sunday procession.
- Our endowment, the organ, Zoom, congregational support--educated, welcoming, diverse
- Helpful resources would include: money, connections (list servs), pooling resources for organizations in common, sharing lessons learned from other parishes such as Heavenly Rest.

7. Reading of the Necrology by Mother Liz, preceded by a prayer from Mother Liz.
8. Acknowledgement of Retiring Vestry Members: Thanksgiving for their work, and the gift of the book
9. Results of the Vestry election: David Cholcher was re-elected Warden. Sabra Brock, Zachariah Hennessy, Gale Lynch, Richard Mitchell and Phoebe Norcross were elected to the vestry.
10. Announcements
11. The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 pm.

### **Parish Statistics**

*As of 31 December 2024*

<b>Attendance at all services:</b>	<b>8,325</b>
Sundays (in person and online):	5,176
Weekday Services	3,149

### **Services conducted**

Sunday Eucharist	156
Weekday Eucharists:	65
Weekday Daily Office:	256
Marriages:	2
Burials/ Memorials:	5
Baptisms:	4

### **Baptisms and Confirmations**

Children (under age 16) baptized:	2
Adults baptized	2
Adults confirmed, received or reaffirmed:	1

### **Baptisms:**

John Pierre Calaba	4
Iram Gabriel Hernandez	
Theodore Xin Nyren	
Clinton Chimeremezer Wohocha	

### **Received**

Anibal (Hannibal) Ramon Insfran de Silva	1
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### **Burials**

Barbara Burns	5
Andrew Foster	

Gregory Rossi  
Rick Sygar  
Betty Thompson

**Transfers In**

0

**Transfers Out**

0

**Marriage**

2

Laura Ruik and Suzan Whelan  
Ali Walton and Cort Weatherley-White

**Baptized Members**

Baptized persons on Record, 31 December 2023:	206
Added through baptism in 2022: 4	4
Added through Confirmation, Reception or Renewal of Vows:	1
Added through Transfer:	0
Lost by Death:	2
Lost by Transfer Out:	0
Total Baptized Members, 31 December 2022:	209

**Rector's Report**

Last Sunday we celebrated ten years of ministry together with the anniversary of my arrival as Rector of Ascension. It was a day full of the special things about Ascension: beautiful music (spirituals!), heartfelt words both from Fr. Ed in the pulpit and at the reception afterwards, lots of delicious food, laughter and such a lot of love. I am so grateful. It is hard to believe it has been ten years, but by God's grace, here we are!

This year has been one of both endings and beginnings. We finally finished the tower restoration just about half a year later than I predicted at last year's meeting. With the scaffolding down, it is wonderful to see our church building again, and visitors ("I didn't realize this church was open!") are drawn to come in and check us out. I am very proud of what we accomplished, raising over \$1.2 million and completing the payments so that we have no debt from the project. Huge thanks to everyone who contributed to this effort! We are of course very grateful to the Manton Foundation, and the Lydia De Forrest trust, the Hyde Watson Foundation, and the Diocese of New York for their support as well. The younger generation of the Manton family visited Ascension this summer to learn about their grandparents' connection with the church and see what they have helped to build and sustain all these years.

I am very grateful to the parish leaders and staff who steered this project to its successful finish: the Buildings and Grounds Committee chaired by Steve Hubbard; Chancellor Charlie Schmidt who helped us with both routine and delicate legal situations; Kelli Long our Business and Project Manager; sexton Dwight Roberts; our wardens and the entire vestry. Thank you all!

In this year of special fund-raising, we have also reached a significant goal for our parish stewardship. For several years we have aimed to reach \$400,000 in pledges- but this year we have

done so, with 91 Pledgers committing to \$399,806.28 We have a few pledges still to be received, I believe, and so hope to surpass our goal. Thank you, stewardship committee: Eric Achacoso, Elizabeth Adams, Peter Clark, Zachariah Hennessey and Rachel Sedor, as well as everyone who reached out to their fellow parishioners, spoke in lay homilies about why they support Ascension financially and stretched in support of our parish. As you will read elsewhere in these pages, we continue to deal with significant budget deficits, but we are making progress. Your generosity and commitment mean a great deal and I am very grateful.

Our vestry this year included several new members and a lot of new energy. We began our work together with a retreat at Holy Cross monastery last February which allowed for more expansive story sharing and visioning, as well as prayer, silence and rest. New areas of vestry engagement this year included Inviting All, Filling our Space and Social Justice: some of the fruits of these endeavors are described elsewhere in this report. Thanks especially to our outgoing vestry members: Elizabeth Adams, John Grimes and Steve Hubbard (who are running again) and Phoebe Norcross and Madonna Stack-Barker (who are stepping down).

I am especially appreciative of the hard work, dedication, and wise counsel of Isabel Spencer, who has served as warden for the past six years and has reached her terms' limit. Who could have imagined all that we have been through? For your leadership, sense of humor, devotion to our church, keen intellect, proof-reading skills, hard questions and generous heart (and of course those devilled eggs), thank you, thank you Isabel.

Thanks also to our continuing warden, David Cholcher for his steady, thoughtful leadership and kindness. I'm so grateful for your wisdom and calm perspective as we move forward into 2025!

We said good-bye to our beloved Priest Associate, the Rev. Posey Krakowsky, in June of this year. I miss her but wish her very well in her next endeavors both vocational and familial.

Throughout this year, the regular work, worship and mission of the church continued, the bread and butter of priestly vocation, full of joys, some struggles and daily grace. Here are some of the moments that were especially meaningful to me.

- Pastoral conversations and sharing soul stories
- Preparing parishioners for baptism and confirmation/reception, and welcoming new people into the life of faith
- The hard and holy work of preparing funerals and commending our beloved dead to God. We had a very special memorial service for my predecessor, Fr. Andrew Foster. A number of clergy who were raised up for ordained ministry during his tenure participated, with the Rev. Jennie Owen preaching.
- The whole Episcopal Church celebrated the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women in 2024. As part of that observance, Ascension showed the film, the Philadelphia Eleven followed by a panel featuring women ordained in every decade.
- Our Racial Justice group read and watched videos, struggled, shared poetry, and continued to examine our own lives and faith and seek to grow.
- The People Who Lunch and our 20s/30s ate and talked and built some beautiful community.

- Fr. Ed kept feeding the folks- cooking wonderful meals, organizing our pantry, tending volunteers, pastoring, preaching, making all sorts of events happen and generally being the most supportive colleague anyone could wish for.
- We again spent Lent in scripture study featuring the work of Amy-Jill Levine, this year on the gospel of Mark
- In collaboration with the Episcopal Peace Fellowship and Lutheran colleagues, Ascension hosted a service of Prayer for Peace in the Holy Land featuring the Rev. Munther Isaac of the Christmas Lutheran Church in Bethlehem as our virtual preacher. It was powerful.
- Our faithful online Evening Prayer community evolved into more lay leadership, and continued to be a blessing.
- Sr. Shane Phelan, CMA, led a forum on her memoir, *Big Queer Nun*. Other forums featured explored moving beyond plastic, spiritual practices for difficult times, how Christians can engage faithfully in public life, Mary and the Magnificat and much more.
- We celebrated the Season of Creation enthusiastically, featuring special liturgy, Blessing of Animals, and guest preacher and teacher Allegra Lovejoy of the Center for Earth Ethics.
- Following the election, we hosted a service of Prayer for Peace for our Nation and the World. It was attended by some thirty people from our community and beyond, who then stayed for tea, cake and conversation. I would like to offer more such services in the coming year.

We have a new and energetic diocesan Bishop in the Rt. Rev. Matthew Heyd, who was installed in February. He loves to tell us that “the Holy Spirit moves at ground level”, calling us to attend to our care for each other in this community. At the same time, I continue to co-chair the Creation Care Committee in the Diocese as well as working on a variety of initiatives for Convention and for the Cathedral. This summer Elizabeth Adams and I attended the College for Congregational Development, returning with a wealth of ideas for our parish life.

The coming year will surely be a challenging one in our nation and in the world. Our gospel for this Sunday calls us to follow Jesus who brings good news to the poor, freedom to prisoners, healing and liberation and jubilee. We are called to discern how in particular we can do that with attention to our neighbors’ needs and our gifts. I give thanks for the Ascension community, in which to pray and sing, listen and learn, laugh and cry, grow our faith and deepen our witness as we care for one another and welcome strangers. Let us love one another boldly, dear people of Ascension. I am honored and grateful to be your rector.

The Rev. Elizabeth G. Maxwell, Rector

### **Nominating Committee Report**

There are six vacancies for the election of Vestry members to upcoming terms. We are presenting four candidates for the class of 2028. The nominating committee has reviewed the qualifications of the candidates and affirms that they meet the requirements in our parish bylaws. The committee recommends the following slate for election at the annual meeting on Jan. 26, 2025: Elizabeth Adams, John Grimes, Steve Hubbard, and Tom Rice.

In addition, the vestry has nominated Vin Knight for a second two-year term as warden.

David Cholcher, Chair

## Finance Committee and Treasurer's Report

The Finance Committee experienced another challenging year in 2024, with increased expenses due to continued inflation and the rise in the cost of living. Our programs and therefore expenses are robust, but our income is still working on catching up post-Covid. While not invading principal, we have drawn heavily from our endowments, where permitted, to resolve budget deficits for many years, including 2024.

PARISH OPERATING INCOME	Budget 2024	Actual 2024	Actual Compared to Budget 2024	Budget 2025
Pledge and Offering Income <i>(includes pledges, loose collections, special offerings at Easter and Christmas, flowers)</i>	396,550	390,261	(6,289)	428,950
Facility Use and Outside Contributions <i>(Gifts from individuals, weddings, donations from groups that use church facilities, La Petite Ecole)</i>	228,577	299,301	70,724	341,726
Endowment Income and Special Funds <i>(Income from various endowment funds and other sources designated for operating purposes)</i>	555,292	557,771	2,479	519,105
<b>Total Operating Income</b>	<b>1,180,419</b>	<b>1,247,333</b>	<b>66,914</b>	<b>1,289,781</b>

PARISH OPERATING EXPENSES	Budget 2024	Actual 2024	Actual Compared to Budget 2024	Budget 2025
Administration <i>(Includes auditor, telephone &amp; internet, office supplies, equipment maintenance, insurance, diocesan assessment, loan interest, bank fees)</i>	346,681	356,819	10,138	381,619
Building Maintenance <i>(Includes utilities, building supplies)</i>	80,579	86,644	6,065	82,307
Music and Worship <i>(Includes Choir stipends, altar guild, and flowers costs)</i>	122,615	129,395	6,780	121,060
Payroll and Related	893,065	896,476	3,411	868,666

*(Includes salaries, health and dental insurance, pension, clergy related expenses, other payroll related expenses for all employees)*

Committees and Outreach	19,100	24,231	5,131	24,050
<i>(Includes evangelism, hospitality, special events, church school, and stewardship)</i>				
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>1,462,040</b>	<b>1,493,565</b>	31,525	<b>1,477,702</b>
<b>Operating Income/(Deficit)</b>	<b>(281,621)</b>	<b>(246,232)</b>	35,389	<b>(187,921)</b>

Highlights of our financial picture during 2024 are:

- Pledge Income: Parishioners have been loyal about paying their pledges, and we give a big thanks for their generosity. For 2024, we received \$362,773 of the \$365,000 pledges budgeted. Most exciting is that we have exceeded our goal of \$400,000 for 2025 and expect to receive just over that amount in 2025! Parishioners have listened to our messages about our financial woes and taken them to heart.
- Tower Brownstone Restoration Project: The project has been completed with a total cost of \$1,276,000. It was paid for by the incredible generosity of our parishioners, a substantial contribution of over \$700,000 from the Manton Foundation (we are so thankful for their continuing support over the years!), and grants from the New York Episcopal Diocese and the Lydia Collins DeForest Charitable Trust. As promised, we did not have dip into any extra funds from our endowments. Refer to the Building and Grounds section for a full report on the restoration of our historic bell tower.
- We paid down \$320,409 of our outstanding line of credit with Fiduciary Trust Company International, reducing the principal amount to \$722,506 from \$1,042,925. The funds came from accrued income from several of our endowment funds. With today's high interest rates, this reduces our annual interest on the loan by \$30,000, to approximately \$57,000. As a reminder, the Parish obtained a line of credit of \$2.5 million from Fiduciary Trust in 2008. This allowed us to manage our cash flow, as we completed the restoration of the Church and the renovation of the Rectory. The loan was structured so that we only drew down from it the cash that was needed at the time to pay our invoices, paying interest quarterly. We previously had paid back some of the loan with funds from our capital campaigns, as well as from some of the accrued income from some of our endowment funds.
- Diocesan Assessment: We applied to the Diocese for relief of our diocesan assessment, stating that our income had not returned to pre-Covid pandemic levels, although our programs and expenses had. The Diocese responded favorably, granting us a 75% reduction for 2023, a 50% reduction for 2024, and a 25% reduction for 2025. For 2024 our reduced share was \$93,279, and for 2025 it will be \$151,038. In 2026 we will return to paying the total amount.
- Endowment Income: Our endowment funds performed well in 2024, reflecting the experience of the broader market. Under the Vestry's longstanding spending rule, the amount we draw from our endowments is a percentage of the average of the most recent 12-

quarter end periods, which is intended to limit exposure to any particular market. For 2023 and again for 2024, we increased the spending percentage from 5% to 6% for several funds in order to provide a modest increase to pay for operating expenses. For 2025, we are budgeting a drawdown of 5.5% from most funds. In addition, we drew down an additional \$176,434 from various funds in order to cover the deficit. This is not sustainable.

- Outside Contributions: Contributions for meetings such as 12 step programs, rent for groups using our space, weddings, and income from other organizations using our space for one-time projects are slowly returning. We are hoping to source more regular items such as this in the future, as they bring significant income with little associated costs. As an example, our relationship with La Petite Ecole, which has leased the Rectory ground floor for a number of years, has expanded to include rental income for use of the Rectory parlor floor. We are actively looking to rent the two offices on the fourth floor of the Parish House.

Other ongoing items of interest are:

- ERTC: We engaged an outside firm to assist with applying to the Internal Revenue Service for Employee Retention Tax Credit (ERTC), hoping to obtain these additional pandemic-related government relief funds (which come in the form of refundable payroll tax credits). In October 2022, we hired JWC Employee Retention Tax Credit Advisory CPA, LLC, on a contingency basis, agreeing to pay the firm 8% of any credits actually received. The application was submitted in October 2023, and we are still waiting for the IRS's response. We expect to receive approximately \$120,000, together with interest on this amount at market rates. Unfortunately, due to unscrupulous ERTC claim promoters, the IRS "paused" processing these claims. Unlike the claims giving rise to the IRS concerns, we continue to believe we are entitled to these credits, because we continued to employ our staff during the Covid shutdown.
- Manton Covid Relief Fund: As reported previously, in 2021 we received a grant of \$250,000 from the Manton Foundation for "covid relief." In 2024, we continued to use some of the fund on streaming technology in order to provide remote access to our in-church Sunday services.
- The Deficit Reduction Task Force continued to work on new ways to generate income and reduce expenses. We remain at a critical point for our finances, and we need for every parishioner to consider prayerfully what they can do to help, including reviewing their annual pledge.

The operating results for 2024 ended the year with a deficit of \$246,232. This was \$35,389 more favorable than budgeted. Income was \$66,914 more than expected, mainly due to income from use of our facilities and outside contributions. Expenses were more than budgeted by \$31,525. Note that the diocesan assessment relief approved by the Diocese resulted in a savings of \$93,279.

The budget for 2025 anticipates an operating deficit of \$187,921. This is a huge improvement over past years where the budget projected deficits significantly over \$200,000. But we aren't there yet! The 2025 expense budget includes a 2.5% salary increase for staff, reflecting the increase in the cost of living. The diocesan assessment reflects the 25% credit approved by the diocese. In total, expenses are expected to be \$1,477,702, or just under the level of 2024.

On the income side, the amount we receive is projected to be \$1,289,781. The budget includes 2025 pledge income of \$400,000, an increase of \$35,000, or almost 10%, over 2024. Pledge income represents only about 27% of our budgeted operating expenses, making it difficult to cover our operating costs, and resulting in over-reliance on our endowment income. Faced with this situation, the 2025 budget reflects an additional 0.5% drawdown from our unrestricted funds other than the General & Endowment Fund, which has already been used to make up the deficit in prior years. Every expense line has been scrutinized, and every group has been asked to reduce expenses where possible. Even after this, we are faced with a significant deficit that must be made up from additional income or reduced expenses.

The Finance Committee and the Deficit Reduction Task Force are continually looking for ways to increase income and decrease costs, and we are open to discussions with parishioners on this topic. We have a serious challenge for 2025, although we are moving in the right direction.

The members of the Finance Committee during 2024 were Mother Elizabeth Maxwell, Wardens David Cholcher and Isabel Spencer, Finance Chair John Grimes, Treasurer Mary Gaillard, Business Manager Kelli Long, Maurice Seaton, Charlie Schmidt, Madonna Stack-Barker, and Rachel Matthai.

The Finance Committee generally meets monthly during the year or more frequently, as required, to monitor the current year's budget, comparing it with actual income and expenses and working closely with the bookkeeper. The Committee prepared the 2025 operating budget, which was approved by the Vestry at its January 2025 meeting

During 2024, the Committee continued working closely with our Business Manager, Kelli Long. We continue to be grateful for the expertise and order that Kelli brings to our finances, in addition to her many other duties. Kelli along with our bookkeeper Sajia, led the completion of our audit for 2022, working with our new auditors, PFK O'Connor Davies. They are currently working to finalize the audit of our 2023 financial statements.

Sajia Choudhury continued as our bookkeeper during 2024, and works closely alongside Kelli. We are fortunate to have them both on staff!

Fiduciary Trust Company International manages the first eleven endowment funds listed below, and the Bank of New York Mellon manages the Maintenance Fund Addition. A number of smaller funds are invested in the Diocesan Investment Trust, maintained by the Diocese of New York. Most of these funds are restricted as to their use, and others are available to be applied towards the operating expenses of the Church.

As of December 31, 2024, the following values of the endowment funds were reported:

General and Endowment Fund .....	\$1,857,285
Maintenance Fund .....	926,915
Catherine B. Fair and Esther D. Hamilton Memorial Fund.....	1,331,912
Mr. and Mrs. Charles Ralph Hayden Visscher Memorial Fund.....	570,955
Susy I. and Harriet E. Babcock Memorial Fund.....	344,669

Catherine B. Fair and Esther D. Hamilton Memorial Choir Fund.....	182,951
Marguerite W. Sinaly Memorial Window Maintenance Fund .....	1,183,695
John R. Meekin Music Fund .....	1,707,581
Robert E. Lowder Fund .....	1,943,637
Special Account.....	154,529
Manton Covid Relief Fund .....	46,212
Maintenance Fund Addition .....	3,733,669
Various Restricted Funds (DIT) (as of 11/30/24) .....	107,191
 Total.....	 \$14,091,201

Respectfully Submitted, John Grimes, Chair; Mary Gaillard, Treasurer

### **Associate Rector's Report**

Ascension Outreach continued to sustainably serve upwards of 900 individuals each month throughout 2024, adjusting the schedule of registered visitors as needed. Our service population consists almost entirely of Chinese immigrants, most of whom we have no data regarding immigration status. Toward the end of the calendar year, as a result of political changes, training opportunities arose, sponsored by Food Bank NYC and United Way NYC, meant to assist programs like ours in advocating for those we serve. The Associate Rector, who also serves as Executive Director of Ascension Outreach, Inc., is engaged in this training and our community's hopes are high we'll be effective in minimizing any risks. In addition to ensuring general operations continue as smoothly as possible, the program partnered for a third year with Choy Division, a farm upstate that specializes in the production of East Asian Heritage Vegetables, a happy development that continues to result from May to November in both volume and satisfaction regarding inventory items. On an infrastructure level, a more energetic campaign for volunteer recruitment was initiated with mixed results, and it was recognized that re-composition of Board membership would be helpful. Finally, some exciting new steps have been taken regarding fund development, the goal being to ensure the sustainability of program staffing and the sharing of costs as such in order to provide relief regarding budget constraints of the parish, our host entity. These steps include exploration by a steering committee made up of parish leaders, think-tank sessions with program volunteers who have finance expertise, and the identification of a part-time intern who will conduct Foundation Center database research.

- Other 2024 Associate Rector activities include:
- Testify at City Council hearing on “Healthier Kid’s Menus” – legislation requiring healthier choices in restaurants throughout the city of New York.
- Serve as Clergy Liaison to the NYPD 6th Precinct, hosting two of their monthly Build-the-Block meetings in the parish hall.
- Twice hosted the local project Focus Forward for graduation ceremonies. Focus Forward is a NYC based community-based volunteer organization that serves individuals engaged in court-related processes – the agency functions in a pre-trial capacity, offering a service-wrap that includes basic and financial literacy, anger management and GED preparation among other things – their outcomes are extraordinarily positive.
- Offered our neighbors, with a great team of stalwarts, another thrilling Haunted Church event!
- Kept a regular monthly schedule of pastoral visits with parishioners in need of care.

- Also helped maintain the parish's rhythm of summer cookouts, People Who Lunch events and 20's/30s group dinners.

The Rev. Edwin Chinery, Associate Rector

### **Wardens' Report**

At the church of the Ascension, 2024 was a building and rebuilding year.

For the first time in more than two decades, the vestry and clergy went on a “sleepover” retreat to Holy Cross Monastery in February, overlooking the Hudson River near Poughkeepsie. Happily, all four new members were able to attend, and it was an opportunity for idea-sharing sharing and community building. Following up on that nourishing time, Mother Liz took the ideas and asked vestry members to choose among three areas of concentration for their work: Sharing our Spaces (how we use our spaces, share those spaces, and generate income), Inviting all (welcoming and programs) and Social Justice (study and outreach). Working in community and sharing a quarterly meal courtesy of Father Ed, we have begun to made strides towards our goals. As author James McBride said recently, if change is going to come, it will come through community.

It's not enough for the vestry to model community: we have to do more to draw in everyone to strengthen our congregation and support our mission. In 2025, some of that may come from renewing traditional guilds and committees. And some may come from working together specific projects. In 2024, the most tangible building project was the tower repair work, which in the end took more than a year and cost over \$1.25 million dollars. Amazingly, we raised the money and did not have to tap our endowment funds. The buildings and grounds report gives further details; here we give special thanks to B&G chair Steve Hubbard for his hard work and to everyone who works in our buildings for their hard work and patience.

Our ongoing thanks to Mother Liz, who this month celebrated a decade with us. It's been quite a ride. We look forward to the start of the next ten.

David Cholcher & Isabel Spencer, Wardens

### **Acolytes and Chalice Bearers**

Not a lot to report on for the 2024, although we did welcome two new members to the guild, Victoria Ying and Luca Bettua.

We also said farewell to two long standing members of the guild: Stanley Weinberg, who has retired from Acolyting and Shana Weber, who has moved over to one of our sister parishes here in the city.

We also said farewell to our two seminarian interns, Cindy McCloskey and Larisa Shaterian. In 2024, Cindy was ordained a Deacon here in the Diocese of New York, while Larisa was ordained to the priesthood. While they are no longer Acolytes with us, they still, on occasion, grace us with their presence assisting on the altar as clergy.

The Wednesday night service continues at the Side Altar. Thank you, again, Richard Mitchell for your service at the weekday service.

Our current Guild Roster includes Elizabeth Adams, James Amodeo, Luca Bettua, Daniel Cole, Lisa Dunn, Janet Fisher, John Grimes, David Lehmann, Candace Lombardi, Richard Mitchell, Rusty Moore, Tom Rice, Isabel Spencer, Michael Surabian, and Victoria Ying.

As always, we cannot thank our members enough for all their hard work and dedication during the year, especially at Easter and Christmas. And, of course, we are extremely grateful to Mtr. Liz, Fr. Ed and (for part of the year) Mtr. Posey for their ever available and welcomed guidance and support. We will miss you Mtr. Posey!

Candace Lombardi & Tom Rice, co-Sacristans

### **Altar Guild**

During 2024, the Altar Guild served at the regular Sunday and Wednesday Eucharists, and at special services throughout the year, including Holy Week, weddings and funerals. As always, I am very grateful for the hard work of the Altar Guild members. In the Spring we said farewell to our Seminarian Interns, Cindy McCloskey and Larisa Shaterian, and we thank them for their work with the guild. Special thanks to Richard Mitchell and Tom Rice for their dedication to the Wednesday evening services. Sincere thanks as well to Lisa Dunn and David Lehmann for their faithful help in washing and ironing the linens.

The guild works closely with Sexton Dwight Roberts and the sexton staff, and we appreciate their dedicated and caring attention to keeping the candles trimmed and the brass polished, among other tasks.

Members of the Altar Guild in 2024 were: Eric Achacoso, Elizabeth Adams, David Cholcher, Lisa Dunn, June Fait, Mary Gossy, John Grimes, Kristin Jackson, David Lehmann, Candace Lombardi, Cindy McCloskey, Richard Mitchell, Tom Rice, Rachel Sedor, Maurice Seaton, Larisa Shaterian, Isabel Spencer and Jill Tildesley. The Altar Guild is always looking for new members--please join us!

John M. Grimes, Chair

### **Archives Report**

Historical records of the Church of the Ascension are housed in the Diocesan Archives at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. They are preserved and stored in a climate-controlled environment in acid-free archival files and boxes. Ascension retains ownership of the materials.

Vin Knight, Archivist

### **Ascension Investment Committee**

In the last quarter of 2024 the Ascension Investment Committee began meeting again after a period of not holding formal meetings since the beginning of the pandemic began in 2020. Thanks are gratefully extended to Peter Clark for his work as the outgoing chair of the committee and the committee is pleased he will remain a member. The members of the committee are: Sabra Brock, Kyle Cheseborough, Peter Clark, Zachariah Hennessey, Vin Knight, and Maurice Seaton. In December 2024 our two investment managers each presented separate end of year reviews of the portfolio of Ascension's investments they manage to the committee. The majority of Ascension's investments are with Fiduciary Trust, and a smaller percentage are entrusted to Bank of New York Mellon. The committee looks forward to taking a more active

role towards ensuring the continued sound management of Ascension's invested endowment funds.

Maurice Seaton, Chair

### **Buildings and Grounds Committee**

In March 2023, the Church of Ascension began a vital restoration of our historic bell tower. This project addressed urgent masonry and coping repairs to ensure the safety of our parishioners and community. The total cost exceeded \$1.2 million, a goal met through the extraordinary generosity of our congregation, the New York Episcopal Diocese, The Lydia Collins DeForest Charitable Trust, and an exceptional \$700,000 contribution from the Manton Foundation. Importantly, none of the funds came from our endowment, highlighting our congregation's ability to raise resources for large-scale projects—an encouraging sign for future initiatives at Ascension.

The restoration faced challenges, including compromised tension rods critical for the tower's stability. The weakening of connections between the rods and exterior plates required immediate attention to preserve the tower's structural integrity.

Completed in November, the bell tower is more than just a feature of our church—it's a historical and cultural landmark in New York City. Home to treasures like G. Owen Bonawit's windows with 123 illustrations, and a witness to pivotal moments like the AIDS crisis, the tower stands as a symbol of resilience and remembrance.

Amid this significant restoration, the Buildings and Grounds Committee has been diligently maintaining our church's infrastructure. From heating and cooling to plumbing, sprinkler systems, and other maintenance, their work ensures Ascension remains a welcoming and beautiful space.

This progress reflects the outstanding dedication of our Ascension staff and Clergy. Kelli, Dwight, Br. Andrew, Sajia, and Rashean have been incredible, meeting every challenge with professionalism and care. Their expertise keeps our facilities running smoothly, ensuring safety and preserving the beauty of our sacred space.

We are profoundly grateful for their contributions, which allow us to focus on our mission and provide a sanctuary for all seeking solace and community within our walls.

Steven Hubbard, Chair

### **Business Manager Report**

As I write this Business Manager report, it is hard to capture an entire year of church life in one short report. Things continue to change and yet there have been unexpected blessings during the changes. The year 2024 was a dynamic and productive period for the operations and facilities of Ascension. Numerous projects, upgrades, and organizational efforts were undertaken to enhance the functionality, appearance, and sustainability of our beloved church.

The Administration Team has guidance and oversight responsibility for issues relating to the administration of church business. Over the course of this year the team has reviewed (and switched in some cases) the contracts for phone service, office copier, the installation of a new

computer network and other upgrades. Costs were also cut by changing our ordering system as well as shopping around for the best deal available.

Weekly one-on-one meetings with staff to speak about their goals, tasks, and projects for the week have been implemented to keep us on track and make sure goals are being met. We are blessed to have an amazingly talented team and all of them have grown throughout the year. Apart from my weekly responsibilities of managing staff, staying abreast of projects and repairs needed, as well as monthly meetings, I maintain relationships with vendors, contractors and tenants and collaborate with others to offer the best possible steps for efficiency and oversee budgeting and finances for Ascension.

Ascension wouldn't be complete without the remarkable talents of our parish administrator, Andrew. Sajia, our amazing bookkeeper, does a great job. Her skills are a big asset to Ascension. Head Sexton Dwight works hard and his dedication is an example to everyone. Lastly, Rashean has been such a great team player and jumps right in to take on any tasks. Always willing to help and always giving it his all. I am grateful for everyone and their hard work!

I am excited about the opportunity that 2025 could provide for Ascension and I look forward to sharing more good news on our progress across many fronts in the months ahead. We would not exist without the tremendous efforts of our volunteers, donors, supporters and most importantly our staff. I would like to thank everyone for their hard work and dedication.

Kelli Long, Business Manager

### **Discernment Committee**

The Discernment Committee plays a role in helping individuals in our parish discover their "call to ministry." The committee enters an intentional relationship with the aspirant on the behalf of the parish and advises the Rector in her consideration of whether the person should move from the parish discernment level to the Diocesan level. The committee also serves to support those already in the process leading to ordination.

Taking a journey with someone who hears God's call in their life is a profound honor. It involves listening not only with our ears but with our hearts and challenging each other to focus on the still small voice inside the aspirant as she or he discerns what the next step might be in spiritual formation.

In 2023, a potential aspirant continued their confidential discernment process at Ascension. The committee continued to meet via Zoom.

Committee members in 2023 were: David Cholcher, Peter Clark, Janet Fisher, Ned Fitch, Sibyl Piccone, and Eve Beglarian.

Eve Beglarian, Convener

### **Deficit Reduction Taskforce**

In July 2022, the Vestry commissioned a Deficit Reduction Task Force to explore long-term options for our finances, in light of many years of significant deficits in our operating budget.

In 2024, the Task Force consisted of Finance Committee Chair John Grimes, Warden David Cholcher, Vestry members Gale Lynch and Ned Fitch, and parishioner Rachel Matthai. The Task Force met regularly to consider various scenarios to increase income and reduce expenses, and we have been discussing these with Mother Liz and the Finance Committee during 2024, in particular as part of the recent 2025 budgeting process. We sense a renewed energy around increasing income, both from parishioners (as evidenced by this year's stewardship campaign) and outside groups that use our space.

As discussed in the Finance report, Ascension still faces a significant deficit in our operating budget for 2025, but it is smaller than in recent years, and we are moving the right direction. The task force will continue to meet on an ad hoc basis in 2025 and welcomes ideas from parishioners on how to address our deficit.

John Grimes, Chair

### **Docents Guild**

On May 18 and 19, the church with the Docents Guild, headed by Daniel James Cole and Tom Rice, hosted the Sacred Sites Open House Weekend. - We had a very large turn out this year, welcoming over 100 visitors over the two days, from both the Sacred Sites invitees list as well as walk-ins.

We also hosted, again headed by Daniel and Tom, a group from Church of the Transfiguration to tour the church as well, where both Daniel and Tom gave lectures on church art and church history.

Daniel continues to do research on John la Farge and the window, with the aim of contributing to the Ascension History Project as it progresses.

Members of the Docents Guild:

Daniel James Cole, chair.

Gretchen Dumler, Lisa Dunn, Vin Knight, Peter Nordeen, Maurice Seaton, Isabel Spencer, Jill Tildesley, Catherine Tinker, Madonna Stack-Barker, Nancy J. Llewellyn, Joan Castagnone, David Lehmann, Jun Fait, Sibyl R. Piccone, Tom Rice.

Daniel James Cole, Chair

### **Flower Guild**

The Flower Guild consists of Matt Vermadahl, David Cholcher, Father Ed and Matthew Snow. The flowers are purchased at the Green Market and/or local Korean deli on a weekly basis. If there is a special memorial tribute then the flowers are paid for by the friend or family of the one being memorialized. Otherwise the money comes from the church's weekly operating budget. The cost of the flowers for the high altar on Sunday ranges from \$100 to \$250 per week.

There have been discussions with Mother Liz about the substitution of artificial fabric flowers on both the high altar and side altar except for major church holidays (Christmas and Easter) and when there has been a request a special memorial tribute. The artificial flowers can be purchased in what's left of the flower district on 28th Street. They are indistinguishable from the real thing, look quite handsome and will remain beautiful and impressive throughout the weeks (particularly in summer months) whenever visitors and tourists drift through the church. This has both an

economic and administrative advantage. It will cut down on the church's weekly outlay of cash - saving the church several thousand dollars a year - and slim down on the administrative nuisance of who will arrange the flowers for any particular Sunday. When there is a special memorial request the flowers are then paid for by the person making the request. It is the intention that this plan will be put into effect on the first Sunday following Easter 2025.

Finally, it should be noted, that bespoke wooden shelves have been added to the interior church walls - one above each heating vent on each side of the church for a total of eight shelves. The purpose of the shelves is to expand the decorative possibilities for church holidays and throughout the year. The shelves were used this past Christmas to display the lanterns and wreaths, adding greatly to the festiveness of the Christmas season and the overall beauty of the church's Christmas decor, and will be used for Easter 2025 and beyond for an ever evolving display of floral arrangements. The shelves were approved by the vestry, designed by Matthew Snow to match the interior of the church and custom made and installed by a shelf maker in New Jersey. The total cost of the shelves was \$4,000.00, half of which was paid for by the church and the remaining \$2000 contributed by Matthew Snow.

Matthew Snow, Chair

### **Hospitality and Activities Guild**

*"Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares"*  
(Hebrews 13:2)

The Hospitality Guild has continued to struggle with its number of volunteers and primarily consists of and is mostly provided for by myself and David Cholcher. We have continued to offer treats both savory and sweet, and do our best to accommodate any dietary restrictions or allergies made known to us when possible. There is a handful of volunteers who bring baked goods and candies on occasion and I am very grateful - keep them coming, please and thank you! Rashean and Dwight are also amazingly supportive with setup and breakdown. A huge thank you to them!

We need to rebuild this vital ministry. Don't you want the chance to entertain angels? I hope you will prayerfully consider joining the Hospitality Guild. I am available most Sundays to speak with you personally about the opportunity or to hear any ideas on how to improve our volunteerism.

Matthew Vermedahl, Chair

### **Music Program**

For the most part, the horrible COVID pandemic quieted down and people, little by little, resumed normal lives.

Our wonderful choir sang from the Fall until Pentecost, plus Holy Week, Christmas Eve, and Ascension Day. Soloists shone forth during the summer months. I am so thankful for the exceptional talent and commitment of our choir. Their musical gifts and humanity bring so much to our worship. It is an honor to work with them. Special thanks to Susie Braden, personnel manager of the choir - a difficult task indeed! Also, thanks to Nathan Wiley, our excellent Librarian and Amy Golding who takes care of the choir robes.

Dennis Keene, Organist and Choirmaster

## **Voices of Ascension**

2024 was a year of transition but continued musical excellence. Our Interim Executive Director Leigh Taylor Mikelson expertly guided us through the year. We were sorry to see her go at the end of October. But enormous excitement followed with the hiring of Jonathan Bradley as our new Executive Director. A brilliant and energetic man of decades of experience in the classical music world, including Executive Director of The Crossing – one of the country’s greatest professional choruses – Jonathan has quickly reinvigorated our organization and is leading us forward with many new exciting initiatives. We are thrilled to have him! We celebrated our dear Liz Norman at a spectacular Gala in the Fall with record-breaking attendance and a truly fabulous party. At that event we also honored long-time friend and transformative Board member Richard Gaddes who passed away in 2023. The Voices of the New project saw two fabulous concerts this year, curated by the one and only Hai-Ting Chinn. First a wonderful concert at Brooklyn’s Roulette, featuring a collaboration with Tyrone Clinton and The Unsung Collective, and a performance as part of Latin New Wave Festival at Lincoln Center in the Fall.

Our traditional concerts began in February with a packed house for Mozart’s beloved Requiem. I had to bow out of this concert because of a successful heart procedure only 2 weeks before the concert. I simply was too weak. The first time I had ever missed a concert in my life! My colleague David Hayes filled in for me. I was able to return for the March concert featuring gorgeous pieces by the French woman composer Lili Boulanger, and Poulenc’s greatest masterpiece, his Stabat Mater. May closed the season with our first Renaissance concerts since before COVID. It attracted a huge and wildly enthusiastic crowd. In December our two annual Candlelight Christmas concerts sold out two weeks in advance.

Dennis Keene, Artistic Director

## **Needle Crafter’s Guild**

The Ascension Needle Crafters began meeting a little over six years ago. We have about five regular attendees. All are welcome regardless of skill level and we have very experienced crafters who are happy to teach and nurture novices. We are adjusting to our post-Covid world and attempting to have hybrid meetings, appealing to those who prefer in-person meetings and those who prefer Zoom.

In the past, our knit and crochet projects have included lap robes for chemo patients, scarves and caps for the Christmas at Sea program, and baby clothes and blankets for newborns, the children of young mothers at risk. Two years ago, under the leadership of Madonna Stack-Barker, we began knitting for children, many of whom live in a nearby women’s and children’s shelter, at Roberto Clemente School in the East Village. To date we have contributed 123 hats and scarves. A particularly rewarding moment for the knitters and crocheters is when the school sends us photos of children wearing our creations. This year we have begun knitting and crocheting for the large migrant ministry at Metro Baptist Church in Hell’s Kitchen.

Over the six years we have been in existence we have continued to build community, to learn from each other, and to enjoy the satisfaction of providing something tangible and useful for people to enjoy.

Joan Castagnone, Chair

## **Open Doors**

Open Doors project is a huge success with folks who come through them.... and also with us who receive them. The "moving" goes both ways... we are moved by how our visitors are moved. Please consider volunteering for a timeslot.... we are understaffed, and dismayed when one goes unfilled, and we have to close the Church to folks who come in need of Ascension peace and beauty! The busiest day is Friday and we have almost doubled the money donated yearly since the 2023 total. About 15% who come in are from the neighborhood, not including students; students comprise about 15% more and we have had an increase in students coming from The New School, most of whom want to pray or meditate. Ten percent come from the metropolitan area and the remainder from US or international.

Gretchen Dumler, Chair

## **Parish Office Report**

This year, as I passed my ten year anniversary here, we replaced our old copier and we are very happy with it. It's a Kyocera – if any one is interested. We renewed our livestream contract with Local Live and things are going well. The only glitch we've experienced is with the sound. We are responsible for the sound, which is then piped to the live feed, so sound issues are our responsibility. We have known for a while that our current system has reached its end of life and we are researching its replacement.

We installed Verizon FiOS this year which has increased our bandwidth significantly. Along with that we upgraded our wiring closet, replacing out quite old and unsupported switches. This has given us more flexibility and security. We also upgraded our out-of-date WiFi access points, giving up better connectivity.

We continue to rent space as much as we can. Our most common clients are Co-ops renting for their annual meetings. We've hosted concerts, weddings, various meetings, a film shoot, and even an ordination for an Orthodox church.

Br. Andrew Jones, OSF, Parish Administrator

## **Planned Giving Committee/Ascension Angels Legacy Society**

Who is an Ascension Angel? Each and every person who has made provision for our beloved church in their will or estate plans is automatically a member of the Ascension Angels Legacy Society. THANK YOU for being an Ascension Angel! Your generosity will help ensure that future generations of God's children will be able to enjoy all of the benefits of being a member of the Ascension community, in perpetuity. In 2025 we plan to host at least one event to celebrate the generosity of every Ascension Angel, and encourage all to undertake end of life planning and consider planned giving options that benefit our beloved parish.

Each year the annual pledge materials ask if Ascension is in YOUR will or estate plans. If you wish to discuss options for how to make a planned gift, wish to notify Ascension that you have already made provision for a bequest or other planned gift, or want to find out more about purchasing a niche in Ascension's columbarium, please contact: Andrew Jones at the parish office: 212-254-8620 or email: [apjones@ascensionnyc.org](mailto:apjones@ascensionnyc.org), or Maurice Seaton: 201-282-7283 or email: [mjseaton@yahoo.com](mailto:mjseaton@yahoo.com)

Maurice Seaton, Chair

## **Safety Taskforce**

This taskforce was created in 2023 was charged with improving the safety of our buildings and congregation. Members of the committee include three parishioners, most of the church staff, two from Voices of Ascension and Mother Liz and Father Ed. Thanks to all who are participating on the taskforce.

This past year we spent time addressing food handling safety based on applicable city and state health codes and continued our discussion of compliance with fire codes; sent a list of recommended building safety improvements to the Building and Grounds committee for their review; encouraged the Church to remove and bury the electrical cords in the church which were tripping hazards, which was completed; hung new exit signs in public areas of our buildings and submitted the first step papers for approval to apply for a Federal safety grant.

In addition, we are probably one of the only House of worship in the metropolitan area which has held a fire drill which involved the congregation. Our drill was held at the conclusion of the 11am service on May 5, 2024. We found that the ushers and altar staff did a great job directing people safely to the outside and we cleared the church within 2 minutes using all exits on 5th Avenue and the 11th Street doors. We invited them to come back to coffee hour to discuss the drill.

Madonna Stack-Barker, Chair

## **Stewardship Committee**

In 2024, Linda Stormes stepped down from the Stewardship Committee and Zachariah Hennessey stepped up to join the Committee.

The theme of Ascension's 2025 Annual Stewardship Campaign came from Luke 6:36-38, "Be compassionate, just as God is compassionate...Give, and it will be given to you." Peter Clark and Elizabeth Adams put together an attractive campaign brochure for the stewardship appeal.

In the fall we recruited many veteran volunteer canvass callers who reached out to members of our community to ask them to pledge their financial support for Ascension in the coming year.

Our annual Harvest Dinner to support stewardship at Ascension was organized by Rachel Sedor and took place in the parish hall on November 24, 2024. Our guest speaker was Rev. Canon Alissa Newton,

Canon to the Ordinary, Diocese of NY, who spoke about Congregational Development.

Our pledge goal for the 2024 Stewardship Campaign was \$400,000. As of January 21 we have received 91 pledges for a pledge total of \$399,806.28, with some expected pledges still outstanding.

Eric Achacoso & Peter Clark, Co-Chair

## **Ushers' Guild**

In 2024, the Ushers' Guild continued its vital ministry at the 11AM Sunday Eucharist. Guild members warmly welcomed and seated congregants, assisted with special needs, collected and presented the offering, and ensured an orderly flow during communion.

Being an usher is more than a duty—it's a sociable and rewarding way to serve. We always welcome new members to join this meaningful ministry and experience the joy of serving our community.

We extend our deepest gratitude to those who served this year: Robin Clements, Hannibal Insfran, John Grimes, Terry Rogers, David Lehmann, Andrew Linn, John Thompson, John Merryman, Barbara Matovu, Janet Sygar, Joan Castagnone, Madonna Stack, Kyle Cheseborough, Gale Lynch, and Charles Schmidt. Their dedication and hospitality have been essential to creating a welcoming and well-organized worship experience.

Steve Hubbard, Chair



The Church of the Ascension  
in the City of New York  
Fifth Avenue at Tenth Street  
Incorporated October 1, 1827

Parish House  
12 West 11th Street, New York, New York 10011

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(212) 254-8620  
[info@ascensionnyc.org](mailto:info@ascensionnyc.org)

Office Hours:  
Monday – Friday, 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Weekly Worship Schedule  
Sunday Eucharist, 9:00 a.m.  
Sunday Eucharist w/ Music, 11:00 a.m.  
Sunday Online Church, 11:00 a.m.  
(*Ascensionnyc.org/webcasts*)  
Sunday Meditation & Sacrament, 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday Eucharist, 6:00 p.m.

Weeknight Evening Prayer, 5:30 p.m.  
(*ascensionnyc.org/eveningprayer*)