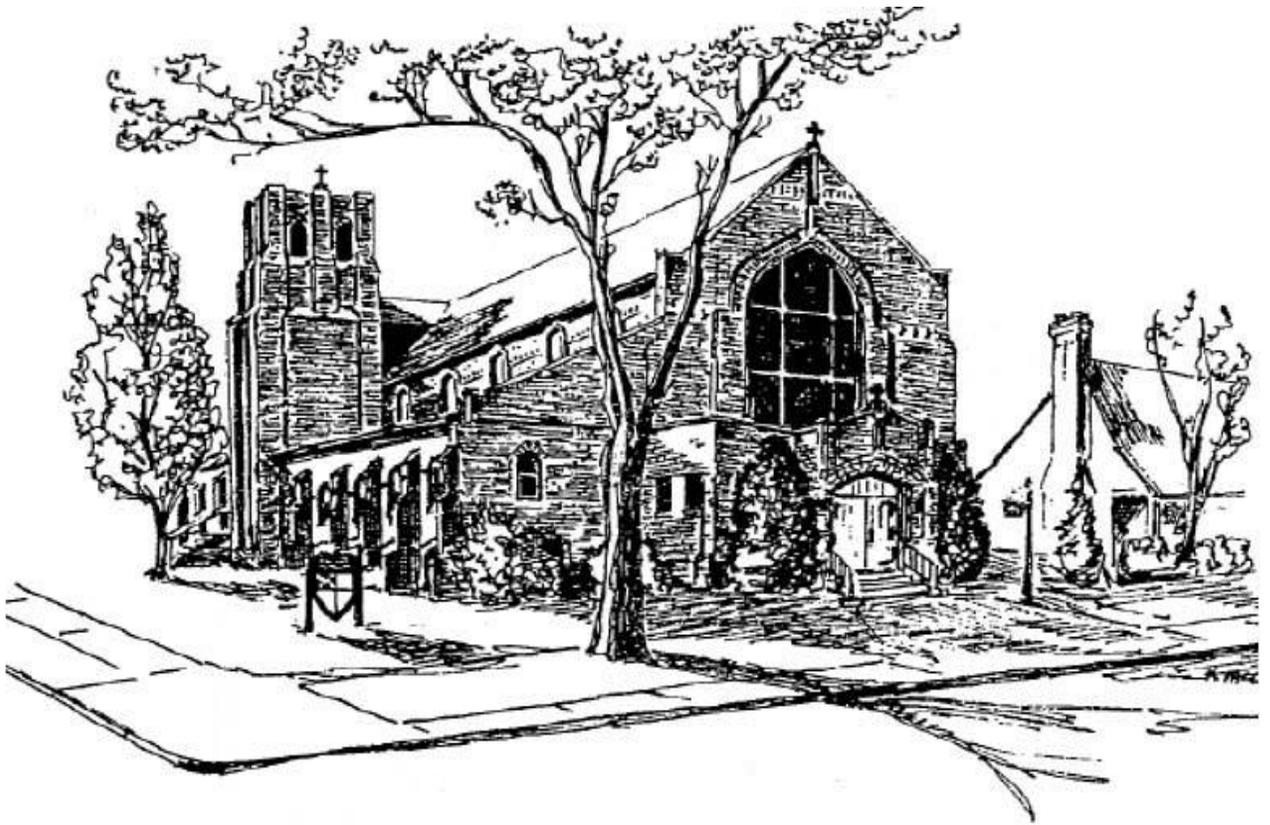


Annual Report 2021



Church of the Ascension and Holy Trinity

18th Street & Grand Avenue, Pueblo, CO

January 30, 2022

**Church of the Ascension and Holy Trinity
Annual Meeting Agenda**

January 30, 2022

In-person and Live Stream at 11:30am

Call to Order.....Rev. Karen LaJoy Smith, Interim Rector

Establish Quorum

Appointment of ClerkHarry Tournay, Sr. Warden

Approval of January 2021 Meeting MinutesHarry Tournay, Sr. Warden

Rector Report.....Rev. Karen LaJoy Smith, Interim Rector

Senior Warden ReportHarry Tournay

Junior Warden Report Stan Goodin

Treasurer’s Report Mike Apker

Budget Review and Ratification..... Mike Apker, Treasurer

Search Committee Report..... Paul Plinske

Vestry Slate of Nominees

- Jim Feickert (3-year term – 2025)
- Mary Segall (3-year term – 2025)
- Aaron Armstrong (3-year term – 2025)

Thank outgoing Vestry Members & OfficersRev. Karen LaJoy Smith,
Interim Rector

Q&AAll

Closing Prayer.....Rev. Karen LaJoy Smith, Interim Rector

Adjournment.....Senior Warden

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Opening Prayer

Leader: Let us pray

Almighty and ever-living, God source of all wisdom and understanding, hear our prayers for this parish family. Be present with us here as we take counsel for the renewal and mission of your church. Grant us all things necessary for our common life. Guide us by your Spirit as we make decisions and give us grace and unity in your love. In Jesus name we pray,

All: Amen

Closing Prayer

Leader: Let us pray

All: Ever-living God, whose will it is that all should come to you through your Son Jesus Christ: Inspire our witness to him, that all may know the power of his forgiveness and the hope of his resurrection; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Ascension Staff

The Rev. Karen LaJoy Smith Interim Rector
Roz White..... Parish Administrator
Jan Parlett..... Bookkeeper
Dr. Zahari Metchkov..... Music Director
Roni Rael..... Ascension Preschool Director

Choral Scholars: Cody Saunders

Preschool Teachers: Miranda Romero, Lindsay Midboe and Michal Juarez

Wardens and Officers

2021 Wardens and Officers:

Harry Tournay..... Senior Warden
Stan Goodin Junior Warden
Mike Apker Treasurer

**2021 Annual Meeting
Ascension and Holy Trinity Episcopal Church
January 24, 2021**

2021 Annual Meeting Ascension and Holy Trinity Episcopal Church January 24, 2021 The proxy and voting process having been published multiple times in the weeks leading up to the event, the members of our parish gathered via Zoom for the Annual Meeting of 2021. The 2020 Annual Report and the proposed 2021 Budgets for both the church and preschool were sent to the membership by mail and email prior to the meeting.

The Agenda was displayed and our Rector, Rev. Christy Shain-Hendricks, called the meeting to order with prayer at 11:34 a.m. Given the current condition of pandemic, she established that we have a quorum. The total in attendance via Zoom numbered 35.

Harry Tournay, Senior Warden, proposed that Jan Eppinette be appointed Clerk for the meeting and the proposal was approved. He then requested a motion for the approval of the 2020 Annual Meeting Minutes. Ann Ladd so moved. There was a second by Jim Feickert and the motion carried.

Harry then turned the meeting over to Rev. Christy. She first expressed her appreciation for all those who have joined in for this meeting before stating that it is hard to encapsulate the past year with all the weeks and months of changes that have come into the church. We began change by trying to live within our means and we gave thanks even though it was hard. And there were hard times including broken ankles, months of supply priests, significant deaths, total boiler failure and a pandemic. There were good things too, the emergence of able lay leadership, our faithfulness and responsiveness and with gratitude in action we trusted God and the leadership of Ascension. She is grateful to each of us for the ministry we have shared with her. It has been a gift to her. The resilience of this community is a gift. With grace, hope and discernment we have what we need to continue and have demonstrated that. She is grateful, also, for the support given her during the difficult times in her personal life.

One of our biggest gifts is how to preserve and enrich good classical music in the community. Ascension has a history of gifting the whole community in many ways, the hospital, the preschool, the Cooperative Care Center and beyond. We have developed an online presence and are seen as a welcoming community during this pandemic. We are building on the gift of welcome, service and care by increasing our connection with the University. She thanked us for our gifts of love and care, faithfulness and generosity and will keep us all in her prayers during her retirement.

Harry turned the meeting over to Lillian Bui, Treasurer, for the budget presentation. Highlights of the budget were displayed. Lillian reported that she is anticipating a decrease in pledges. This is disappointing but it is a year of changes. She encouraged those that did not lose their jobs and didn't need their stimulus checks to consider donating at least part of them to the church or to charity. Overall our investment fund balances grew and we have well more than a month's expenses in our checking account. She went on to compare the actual 2020 budget to that which was budgeted for the year. We do have a surplus but we will need to withdraw from that in 2021 due to decreased income. Despite cutting everything that we can, we are left with a \$30,000 deficit and we must begin to re-envision the budget for 2022.

Lillian announced that she will not be staying at Ascension. Now that her term has expired she and her husband will be moving to Chicago. Harry thanked her for all her help in understanding our budget in a transparent way. She has been a gift to Ascension.

In response to a query about expense of a columbarium, Rev. Christy and Lillian explained that there is an endowment for the long term support of the columbarium. There are expenses related to the tools needed for opening and closing, the rosettes which are rather expensive, and general upkeep.

In answer to the question if another PPP would be available, Harry stated that we have asked PB&T to help us look at the loan. We are in the first steps and have to show a loss of revenue of 25% over 2019-2020.

In answer to the question of the first PPP being forgiven, Lillian said that we have not received a final notification of forgiveness but have filled out the paperwork and she expects that it will be forgiven.

There was a question about significant changes from last year, with an admission from the enquirer that they had not reviewed the 2021 budget in detail. Lillian responded that there are not significant changes, especially in terms of salaries. We have removed the expenses of Supply Priest since we have had such good results with Morning Prayer. There will be no Nursery Attendant and the money that was added in the 2020 budget for Supply Musician but not used has been taken back out for 2021. She added that the proposed budget more closely resembles the one in 2019 than the one in 2020. Harry went on to clarify the Interim salary and insurance expenses.

Harry asked for a motion to accept the 2021 budget. Judy Weaver moved to accept the 2021 budget as presented. The motion was seconded by Ken Butcher and it was approved.

Stan Goodin, Junior Warden, was recognized and he provided an overview of maintenance and repairs. He reported being satisfied on the whole; there were no calamitous repairs and the expenses were on track to what was budgeted. There was significant electrical rehabilitation done. A tool room was created resulting in better preparedness and organization for whatever needs come up. The downstairs carpet was restretched and the pad replaced eliminating the safety issue. The pews and railings in St. James Chapel were repaired and rebolted. He said Russell Gomez has been a great help; he is self motivated and did a lot of work. Stan requests that we express our thanks when we see Russell.

Stan went on to say that we have an older complex and every year there will be things that need doing. He finds pleasure in working in the church and thinks others could also and he would welcome anyone who wishes to volunteer. He will continue to monitor the utilities, which did not go down as much as he had hoped, and there is extensive work that needs to be done with repair and painting on the south side of the buildings.

The Rectory is in good shape. It is a fine house and nearly 100 years old. Rev. Christy and Glenn have left it in good repair. Harry added that a revamp is needed in the upstairs bathroom and there is a maintenance issue in the mudroom possibly due to a roof leak. Karin Hill remarked that the curb appeal is much improved and Jan Parlett commended Rev. Christy and Glenn for how well they have cared for the property.

Truly Johnson reported that, in terms of maintenance, significant work needs to be done in the archives. Stan said he was thankful for both Rev. Christy and Lillian. Now we all have to get in the boat and pull oars together.

Harry announced the candidates for Vestry who are Truly Johnson and Joanne Snyder. The third position and Treasurer is in discernment. Ann Ladd thanked both Truly and Joanne for putting themselves forward and moved that they be elected. There was a second by Jim Feickert and the motion carried.

Harry recognized the continuing Vestry members for 2021 who are David Cravens, Emily Sell, John Hibler, Stan Goodin, himself and Jan Eppinette, Clerk.

Rev. Christy expressed her thankfulness for each of the Vestry members and their willingness to hang in there. For Carol Feickert's attention to detail and particularly for her work on The Trumpet, for Chad Kinney's insightfulness and involvement, and for Lillian Bui's clarity and insight she gives special thanks. Harry added that on behalf of all of us, thank you all three.

Harry said that Rev. Christy's love, hard work and dedication has given us that calm sense of our Christian mission in Pueblo as well as addressing the hard view of finances. There is a delicate balance, particularly this last year. There has been a transformation of our virtual presence online. He thanked Glenn Hendricks, also, for this and thanked the videographers who have stepped forward. This is a new ministry that is most appreciated. He thanked Roz White, a key link in everything we do, who does her job promptly and never seems to forget things. He thanked Roni Rael for doing such a wonderful job in the preschool, keeping it open and sanitized, obtaining funding and always finding something new. He also thanked the Pastoral Care Team, the Outreach Ministry, the Altar Guild and the Music Ministry.

Harry went on to explain the Interim process. Rev. Karen will be with us from the 1st of March. She will initiate a year of transition. We should be looking at who we are, where we are going and what legacy we want to leave for Pueblo as well as how we are living our Christian ministry in Pueblo. The new Rector will be looking at that. And we will have to be thinking about what the church of the future looks like. He thanked all of us who have made Ascension such a loving community and asked that we keep Rev. Christy and Rev. Karen in our prayers.

There was an opportunity for questions and comments. Carol Feickert thanked Zahari Metchkov for the wonderful job he has done. Even without the choir, he is keeping music in front of us.

Rev. Christy delivered the closing prayer.

Carol Feickert moved to adjourn and there was a second by Ann Ladd. The meeting was adjourned at 12:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jan Eppinette, Clerk

From the Rector **Karen LaJoy Smith, Interim Rector**

2021 was a year of transition for Ascension and Holy Trinity Episcopal Church. The interim time can be a one of great angst or one of great productivity and renewal. At Ascension, blessings abound. The previous rector, The Rev. Christy Shain-Hendricks, retired at the end of January. At that point, in-person services had been suspended since the prior October. Drive thru Holy Eucharist was offered. The highest priority for church members and the vestry was to resume services in your beautiful church home.

Upon my arrival on March 1st this desire was made abundantly clear. We were required to develop an updated set of Covid protocols in order to regather. This was completed by a subcommittee of the vestry. Once these were approved by the diocese we made plans for in-person services to begin. The first service in the church was on May 2nd with masks, social distancing, reservations required, and without congregational or choral singing. Dr. Zahari Metchkov has continued to provide exceptional musical offerings with the help of choral scholars as vocalists. This first service included 45 in-person attendees.

We have continued to Livestream our services. A cherished means for those who were infirm or shut-in who could now participate in Sunday services, Livestream would become an important element of emerging from isolation. A team of videographers honed their skills behind the scenes and continue to serve each Sunday as well as for special services. And speaking of working behind the scenes, the Altar Guild cleans and beautifies the sanctuary, sets the altar for Sunday and special services such as funerals and weddings.

In our absence from the church, other programs continued virtually on Zoom. A robust Wednesday Morning Prayer is attended by anywhere from 9-15 participants. Coffee with the Rector proved to be a special opportunity to connect with parishioners in informal chats. Monday School book study is rich with discussions on faith. All forms of meetings, vestry and others, meet on Zoom.

A new group emerged at Ascension this Fall, Fierce Love. The drop-in group, ranging from 8-20 participants, meets in the parish hall every Sunday from 4-5:30 pm. This was designed as a group for spiritual seekers and for those wishing to deepen their spirituality. This is non-denominational and is largely attended by people outside of the Ascension community.

Of great concern are members who have pastoral needs. The Pastoral Care Committee responds to these needs through a number of means. When a need is becomes known, the entire group prays for the person or situation. Pastoral callers make phone calls to many of Ascension's members, especially those who are alone. The committee writes and sends cards, provides meals, and delivers special Christmas and Easter treats and cards. Lay Eucharistic Visitors provide in-home Communion when possible. As well, members of Ascension, though not formally on the committee, reach out to one another on a regular basis.

All of the above, with a few tweaks to account for Covid safety, pre-existed the pandemic and, I expect, will carry forward with a new rector. This leads to the primary work of transition: The Search. The Search process includes the development of a Parish Profile, to be completed by a lay Profile Committee. This committee began its work in July, 2021. You can read more about their work within the Annual Report. Essentially, the group crafted and conducted a parish-wide survey, held focus group meetings, and wrote a profile of Ascension that is now posted on the website. A second group, the Search and Screen Committee, formed to begin training for the work of interviewing. This group of seven members will interview applicants and, if appropriate, forward the candidate on for an interview by the Vestry. Read more about their work in this Annual Report.

Even with the call to the next rector of Ascension, the transition work will continue as that person settles in and becomes part of the community; both at Ascension and in Pueblo. The congregation is encouraged to continue to develop lay involvement and ministry as the "priesthood of all believers," serving the church and the world with the guidance and encouragement of their new rector.

Faithfully,
Rev. Karen

2021 REPORTS

Senior Warden's Report

Harry Tournay

2021 presented Ascension with two ongoing challenges: the effects of Covid and the Interim Process. We are managing both challenges thanks to Vestry, the many Parishioners who have come forward in support, to the leadership of our Interim Rector, Rev. Karen LaJoy Smith and the support of Canon Vanessa Stickler Glass of the bishop's office.

During Covid, when Ascension has been unable to meet in person, we have maintained our activities and a network of communication using electronic media such as Zoom and email. The Pastoral Care Group is doing wonders maintaining contact with those in need by calling and mailing. We have continued Zooming Wednesday Morning Prayer, the Centering Prayer group and Rev. Karen's Monday morning "Coffee with the Rector" group. Our 10 am Sunday Eucharist continues to be live-streamed thanks to the dedication of our videographers. A vital part of maintaining communications is, of course the Parish Office and the blessing of Roz White, our Parish Administrator in the office. Preschool Director Roni Real a gift to Ascension; Roni continues to jump through the many hoops required to keep the preschool open during Covid. On behalf of us all at Ascension, thank you Roz and Roni! We were also blessed to receive another PPP loan in 2021; without this, we would have not balanced the 2021 budget.

We give thanks for Rev. Karen's leadership of the Interim Process together with the work of the Profile Committee led by Judy Weaver and the Search Committee led by Paul Plinske. We continue to pray that: *"we may receive a faithful pastor, who will care for us and equip us to continue, improve, expand, and reach out with our ministries to all whom we can touch"*.

In conclusion, and on behalf of us all at Ascension, I would like to thank Vestry and the Finance Committee for their support of Ascension!

Blessings to you all!

Harry Tournay

Junior Warden's Report

Stanley Goodin

2021 significant work was accomplished in maintaining the entire Ascension complex. The church, parish hall, rectory, and preschool all received fairly extensive repairs and upgrades. In each of the buildings there were both electrical and plumbing issues that were dealt with. The electrical work also included a large effort to change our lighting fixtures to LEDs –in an effort to reduce utility costs. At this point more than half of our lighting is now LED.

From a budgetary perspective, our costs in 2021 unfortunately exceeded our budget by about \$10,000. Most of that overage can be seen in the preschool roofing repair which was almost \$9,000. The maintenance/repair budget has been reduced for 2022. Frankly, it will be difficult to stay within that allowance but we will try. There will be a concerted effort to keep work "in house" whenever we can. Being a realist, however, I know that we are already needing some major help—so it may be that we have to do some additional fundraising. We will see.

Aside from plumbing and electrical work the largest projects and expenses during 2021 involved the following: (1) the church boiler had several issues. At this time we may finally have things under control and the boiler is functioning well. (2) major work at the rectory was necessary to have it ready for Rev Karen's arrival on 3/1 (3) as

previously noted, an extensive repair of the preschool roof was completed (4) heavy pruning of 8 trees.

Repairs for each building

Church sanctuary and basement (1) As mentioned the boiler required attention several times. The most notable was when it failed an inspection. 2 items had to be corrected. (2) In the nave and sanctuary all lighting was changed to LED (3) The archive room was cleaned, repaired and painted. (4) Assorted roof, plumbing, and electrical problems were addressed.

Parish Hall. (2) A new storm door for the kitchen was purchased and installed. (2) Airconditioning unit and kitchen oven were repaired. A new garbage disposal was installed.

Rectory. This building received much attention this past year and will again in 2022. (1) prior to Reverend Karen's arrival on 3/1, repairs were done on roof, upstairs bathroom, and mudroom. Also, major yard clean-up and interior painting was done. Several windows required glass replacement. (2) The rectory air conditioning is a long story. Suffice to say we struggled there this past summer and Reverend Karen was very tolerant of many visits for evaluation and work. This is an important problem going forward and will be addressed early this year. (3) 4 large trees were heavily pruned.

Preschool. (1) Roof drains required cleaning on 2 occasions. (2) Extensive roof work was done to recoat the entire roof and repair the roof drains. A metal cap was placed atop the Chapel's parapet wall. (2) 3 trees were pruned. (3) Assorted plumbing and electrical work was done. A dozen new led fixtures were installed in the hallways. The fixtures were placed courtesy of Mr. James Rael and a co-worker and look great.

Many thanks go to Russ Gomez, Dave Cravens, Richard Riepe, Louis Bowne, and James Rael for all their hard work and effort. Each of these gentlemen deserve a word of thanks from all of us.

There are already several work projects looming that need resolution early this year. I suspect it will be a busy year. It is our goal to try and keep as much work as we can "in house"—and also to stay within our budgetary constraints.

Blessings to you all.

Stanley Goodin

Treasurer's Report

Mike Apker

Ascension had a break-even year for 2021. The total new income over expenses is \$29,375 which is adjusted by the Unrealized gains and losses on investable funds by \$23,230. This gives a total net income over expenses of \$6,145.

Expenses have remained stable in 2021 from the previous year. The main concern is the dwindling receipts from plate offerings and pledges. We collected 90 percent of our budgeted amount. 2021 pledge offerings were down significantly from immediate past fiscal years. This slide has a profound impact on current and future spending priorities. The saving grace this year was the \$40,000 in Covid relief funds. This will not be available in the ensuing fiscal year.

We have tried to monitor expenses to meet this shortfall. The preschool remains healthy, and the main concern is with being able to be open with the pandemic. If we can maintain a regular schedule, we will be able to make expenses with, perhaps, a slight income over expenses.

Mike Apker

2021 Budget Report – SEE ATTACHMENTS

Mike Apker

Altar Guild Report

Elaine Sartoris, President

The year of 2021 found the altar guild doing all of our normal duties:

1. We set up and clean the altar area for each of the services during the week. That includes the Saturday morning clean up and the cleaning after each service along with washing and ironing the altar linens.
2. We do thorough cleaning and polishing preceding each of the major events of the year including Easter, Holy Week, Christmas, and also have a fall clean up. The in person services didn't start until May, so we did not have the Easter Cleaning.
3. We usher and maintain the altar at memorials and funerals happening at church.
4. We also try to maintain the St. James Chapel even though there are currently no services being held there.

The year began by having no people at church services. The church opened up for in-person services in May and the altar guild has been performing their weekly duties consistently. At first the guild put wafers into little paper cups to be passed out to communicants. Then later, our priest switched to passing out only wafers. That is where we ended the year. All of the services were shown on YouTube. At this point, the congregation is all masked and social distanced.

Currently we do this with 10 very committed members who are divided into 4 different teams with one person responsible for St. James Chapel. That means that a person is only on duty for a week a month. We always need extra help and this year we are desperately in need of more. We would love for folks to volunteer. Members are not required to be female; we have had our first male altar guild member and would love to have more. Please consider joining altar guild to help us and the church – we really need to have more assistance when we get back to doing all our regular services. We have lost several members this past year due to health problems and other unforeseen circumstances and a few members are on hold due to health. Please speak to Rev. Karen or to Elaine Sartoris to find out more or to volunteer.

Outreach Committee Report

Harry Tournay, Outreach Coordinator

Outreach has been a challenge in 2021. We shut down our Laundry Love operation at Excell Laundry in March 2020 due to Covid-19. Late 2020 we attempted remote Laundry Love assistance using vouchers which we distributed through Posada. The Posada families made limited use of this offer.

In May 2021 we started partnering with the Pueblo Cooperative Care Center (PCCC) Shower Trailer program and funded the weekly laundering of towels and face cloths at Excell Laundry. This service was most appreciated by PCCC and their Shower Trailer clients and has run through the end of 2021. We had a show-and-tell when PCCC brought the trailer to Ascension one Sunday. Our contributions to towel laundering are reflected in the table below.

We re-opened Laundry Love in June 2021 with a re-designed program to accommodate Excell Laundry's limit of 10 clients at a time, all masked and with social distancing. This program has adapted to the changing circumstances relating to Covid and the amount spent in quarters to the needy is also reflected in the table below. We are not seeing the numbers of clients that we saw pre-pandemic. We assisted an average of 14 people per month this year in comparison with upwards of 40 clients per month pre-pandemic. We

can only speculate why this is; maybe because they are receiving increased benefits? Nevertheless, those we assist are always most grateful!

Laundry Love		Shower Trailer	
Month	Amount	Month	Amount
May	0	May	26.25
June	\$ 349.75	June	\$ 90.00
July	\$ 105.50	July	\$ 193.75
August	\$ 131.25	August	\$ 212.50
September	\$ 191.50	September	\$ 321.25
October	\$ 280.00	October	\$ 348.75
November	\$ 145.75	November	\$ 382.50
December	\$ 141.00	December	\$ 271.25
Total	\$1,344.75	Total	\$1,846.25

Laundry Love and Shower Trailer Expenses: 2021

We continue to support the PCCC. A member of Vestry serves on the PCC Board. We gave them a donation of \$500 in 2021. PCCC continues to do excellent work assisting the homeless and needy with food and other needs. They have continued operating through the pandemic even when staff members became infected with Covid. When Covid first struck the PCCC made the decision to have all volunteers stand down and to rely solely on paid staff. Unfortunately this meant that a number of faithful Ascension volunteers stood down; nevertheless PCCC activities have increased. PCCC initiated the Nutrition on Wheels (NOW) program in 2020, taking food to "shut-ins". This program continues to expand and plans are to include the whole of Pueblo County. Cooler trucks are being purchased through grants; food supplies are also being guaranteed from suppliers. This will ensure that food can be distributed through outlying centers to the needy in, for example, Boone, Rye, Pueblo West and Beulah. Let us continue our support for the Pueblo Cooperative Care Center!

Please keep up with your donations of money, clothes and food to Outreach and, in particular to Laundry Love.

Pastoral Care Report
Pam Rice



The Pastoral Care Committee provides prayers and outreach for parishioners who are homebound or in times of illness and bereavement. Our prayer team offers special prayers of need as well as gratitude. We currently have two active Lay Eucharistic Visitors who work within Covid protocols to provide in residence communion to those

who are unable to attend services. Our faithful group of Pastoral Callers, which currently has five members plus Rev. Karen, has placed approximately five hundred telephone calls this year to provide connection with the church in the form of friendship, listening, and encouragement. The church and individual committee members have sent numerous cards to bring hope and cheer to parishioners. Our meal ministry has provided dinners prepared and delivered by volunteers for members of the congregation following surgery or in times of loss.

At Easter of 2021, we sent cards including a palm cross to our homebound members. We were once again able to have a successful cookie plate distribution this Christmas. Pastoral Care members delivered cookies prepared by Mary Jane Curry to thirty-five individuals. While we encourage members to watch streamlined services, many of them do not have access to this technology. For some, these contacts are the only link they have with Ascension.

While we have successfully meant our goals during 2021, the demand for our services remains great due to the ongoing pandemic. We can always use more volunteers. We have seen a decrease in our number of certified Lay Eucharistic Visitors with an increase in the number of requests for home visits to receive the sacrament. A certification class is available through the Diocese online for anyone interested in becoming an LEV.

The Pastoral Care Committee meets quarterly, presently using a Zoom format. If you are interested in joining, would like more information, or need to request help for yourself or someone else please contact Pam Rice, Chairperson, or anyone on the committee which includes: Ken Butcher, Barbara Cravens, Marian Cowley, Mary Jane Curry, Jan Eppinette, Karin Hill, Sherrie Howey, Joyce Nims, Jan Parlett, Elaine Sartoris, Marion Schaeffer, Barbara Schneider, Joanne Snyder, Rev. Karen Smith, Harry Tournay, Linda Tournay, Suzy Ware and Margo Wilson. A big thank you to our outstanding group of volunteers!

Family and Youth Ministry Report

Emily Sell

Events were planned for September thru December for youth and families, including a combined Oktoberfest with our Preschool. Unfortunately, COVID led us to cancel these events.

First Presbyterian invited us to join their youth group functions and several of our youth have joined them. Our younger children were invited to attend their Critters Around The Creche in December to learn about the Advent Season.

We will continue to plan and host events thru the rest of the year.

Prison Ministry Report – Angel Tree

Jan Parlett

Angel Tree: Angel Tree is an organization that provides gifts to inmates' children for Christmas. The purpose of the gifts is to foster the relationship between the inmate and child while the parent is away and help provide for families in a time of need. Ascension has a long history with Angel Tree, and in 2021 we sponsored 27 children. For each child, members of the congregation provided one clothing item and one toy or fun gift. Thank you to everyone who purchased gifts for these children. I would especially like to thank Chuck and Barb Schneider, John and Beth Thatcher and Pam Rice for delivering all the gifts.

Music Program Report

Dr. Zahari Metchkov, Ascension Music Director

2021 continued to be dominated by COVID dictating what is possible and what is not. In the first part of the year continued the pattern of presenting service music via organist and choir scholars. I thank Cody Sanders and Shai Herrington for their vital leadership.

Starting in August the Bell Choir and Adult Choir began rehearsals and commenced participating in services on regular bases.

Measures to improve safety during rehearsal included: mask wearing, discontinuing the use of the choir room due to lack of proper ventilation and appropriate size of space. The Bell choir tables were positioned several feet apart and the practice of two ringers sharing a table was discontinued except for families. The Adult choir rehearses in the Sanctuary, wearing masks at all times. To alleviate issues during choir instruction, the music director uses a microphone during rehearsals.

While our start in August was humble, including about 30% of the singers we had prior the pandemic, during the Fall the Adult choir grew in confidence and numbers. Returning to singing after almost 18 months of not singing was a dangerous and difficult path to follow. I am thankful to the singers who laid aside their concerns and trusted the process of restoring our practice to sing in services. By the Christmas services the Adult choir had restored to about 75% of its size and significantly improved its confidence and quality of singing through the consistent hard work on weekly bases. The Bell Choir performed a number of times this Fall enhancing the services and adapting to new seating pattern and circumstances.

It is essential to restore the Organist Scholar in Residence position in Ascension as soon as possible. This is not a new paradigm idea but in the bases of staffing pattern since 2014. Currently both Ascension Choirs do not have a conductor. I currently am the Accompanist of the Adult choir in the absences of an Organ Scholar leaving the ensemble without a conductor. In the case of the Bell Choir, I have not conducted a single presentation this Fall but instead have played in the ensemble to fill spots of Bell ringers who have had an emergency and has not been able to attend the scheduled presentation. This is not a temporary pattern and it has occurred consistently including on Christmas Eve. It is not the Bell ringers' fault that they have family emergencies or sustain significant injuries which require months of rehabilitation. However without an Organist in Residence there is no mechanism to give the week after week stability to the ensemble that leads to consistent and rewarding experience. It is important not to settle or accept this pattern as the norm as in the long term it will lead to adverse effects which are not reversible.

I am proud of the work our choirs have done this Fall and am thankful for the dedication of each singer and ringer! I look forward to exploring how we can serve the congregation as we move towards Lent and Easter.

Archives Report

Truly Johnson

The Archives have been a state of transition for the last two years after a period of neglect. I volunteered to work in the Archives although I have no training in this area. Items were out of order and the room was physically in poor condition. There was an obvious need to provide better protection for the written history of Ascension Episcopal Church. Our Senior and Junior Wardens agreed and, in the last year, with the help of volunteers, had the room completely renovated. It is now safe and dry. I am in the process of setting up a new inventory.

We have records from the founding of St. Peters, the first Episcopal Church in Pueblo, from Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, Ascension Episcopal Church, and records of the merger of Holy Trinity and Ascension.

The plan going forward is to digitize these records under the leadership of Emily Sell. The vestry has allocated a budget for the technology to do this. Hopefully, we can accomplish a great deal in 2022.

Live Stream Report

Jim Feickert

Ascension's live streaming video program during 2021 is illustrated by the attached graph. While the program operated smoothly as the year began, with Glenn Hendricks at the helm, it hit some bumps after he left at the end of January, as indicated by some gaps here and there as our current videographers gained experience.

Clearly, viewership steadily declined over the course of the year, but we must remember what not just Ascension, but the world was going through last year with the pandemic. In reality, our viewership through mid-April held relatively steady in the 60s, but for the two spikes you. These each have clear explanations: January 31 was Reverend Christy's last Sunday; and March 7 was Reverend Karen's first Sunday. Mid-April was when we began to invite worshippers back into the nave in limited numbers, hence the drop into the 40s. From there, the continued decline can be partially attributed to the growth in in-person worshippers over that period. More people in the pews translates to fewer people at home to watch on YouTube.

After Glenn's departure, our team of videographers discovered just how much we had depended on having him as our mentor and resource. Together, we all learned a lot through trial and, yes, error, as shown by the dates that nothing went out, and we have put in place solid procedures that make the entire process easier and more dependable.

We would like nothing better than to be able to recruit and train one or two more videographers to give us more flexibility in scheduling. Considering that we have been asked to live stream weddings, funerals, and concerts, in addition to regular worship, our current team of four gets spread pretty thin, sometimes.

Parish Profile Committee Report

Judy Weaver, Chair

In July of 2021 the Parish Profile Committee was appointed and began its work. Our objective was to inform the Search Committee, Vestry and parish regarding our congregation's views about our church and its selection of a new rector. Our committee was comprised of a group of talented and committed church members which included: Aaron Armstrong, Mary Jane Curry, Jan Eppinette, Brett Ford, Elaine Sartoris, Barbara Schneider and Judy Weaver. Dave Cravens was the committee's liaison to the Vestry and Rev. Karen LaJoy Smith and The Rev. Canon Vanessa Stickler Glass provided consultation as needed.

Our first objective was to develop a comprehensive, anonymous, survey for the parish to complete electronically or on paper. The committee devoted almost 100 hours to the development of this survey by reviewing examples of other church surveys, identifying important content categories and establishing an extensive bank of questions. The committee developed these questions expecting that the resulting information would be incorporated into a parish profile to be placed on the diocesan website so that applicants to the rector position might review it. Once these questions were culled and edited by the committee the survey was reviewed by the executive committee of the Vestry for final approval. Surveys then were emailed to the parish in early September and paper surveys were provided to those members who were not able to complete

them electronically. Five focus groups were held throughout September to provide another opportunity for parishioners to express their ideas and thoughts about the ministry of a new rector and fulfilling the church's mission.

In total 115 surveys were collected, including 94 online and 21 on paper, 97 surveys were fully completed and results from 18 partially completed surveys were included in the totals for applicable questions. The survey results provided some important insight of the thoughts and ideas of our parish. A complete electronic presentation was developed from the survey which included information about who we are, how we participate in the church and community, what God is calling us to be, and our vision of a new rector. The profile presentation was reviewed by the executive committee of the Vestry for final approval. It was shared with Ascension's Search Committee, Vestry and released to the parish in October by email. The Rev Canon Vanessa Stickler Glass reviewed our profile and then it was posted to Ascension Episcopal Church and Colorado Episcopal Diocesan websites.

I want to thank the Profile Committee for their tireless work on this Parish Profile Project as well as Rev Karen LaJoy Smith, The Rev Canon Vanessa Stickler Glass and Dave Cravens. It was a labor of love and devotion to God, Ascension and its members. If you have not yet reviewed Ascension's Parish Profile please go to our website at: <http://www.ascensionpueblo.org> and click on the Rector Search tab.

Rector Search and Screen Committee

Paul Plinske, Chair

The search and screen committee (Chad Kinney, Karin Hill, Jan Parlett, Paul Plinske, Pam Rice, Mary Segall and Nancy Tracey) has met regularly since October to accomplish a number of important tasks. At the beginning of the process, the committee analyzed the Parish survey results and Parish Profile in order to develop a series of interview questions for potential candidates. These questions were then used to conduct a "mock" interview with Canon Vanessa Stickler Glass and a sitting priest. That interaction served as an invaluable practice to the committee to refine its questions, understand the interviewing process more thoroughly and help the committee to analyze candidate responses carefully.

The position has been posted on our website along with *The Episcopal Church in Colorado* website, the *Episcopal News Service (ENS)* website and *The Living Church* website. The official job posting has been extended to February 15 in order to attract a broader applicant pool.

The committee chairman has had weekly communication with Canon Vanessa as she helps us find and attract qualified and interested applicants to Ascension. To date, we have one qualified applicant who will be interviewed soon. The committee chairman has been in communication with several other potential candidates and will work to solicit their application to the Diocese.

As a committee, we are anxiously awaiting our opportunity to interview. Once we complete each interview, we will determine if a recommendation is made to the Vestry to proceed with their interview process of the qualified candidate.

Your prayers are appreciated for the Diocese and our church as we wait for the "right" candidate to express an interest in Ascension.

If you have questions or concerns, feel free to direct those to Paul Plinske, chairman of the committee.

Ascension Preschool Academy Report 2021-22

Roni Rael, Preschool Academy Director

Ascension Preschool Academy Board

This Board meets monthly on zoom to discuss and evaluate the direction the preschool should be going to grow and make it successful. It consists of parents, and church members.

Staff

Miranda Romero, Lead Preschool, PreK teacher; Lindsay Midboe, Lead Preschool Teacher; part-time support teacher, Michal Juarez, Support teacher; and Roni Rael, Lead PreK teacher and support teacher.

General

The preschool generally has seven classes for children ages two and a half through six years of age and employs four teachers, one support teacher, and a director who coordinates all school schedules and activities. The director insures a safe, resourceful environment in which children are encouraged to grow and develop individually, physically, emotionally, cognitively, and spiritually in a play based Christian educational environment.

Enrollment and Staff

There are currently enrolled 40 students in the preschool capacity is 70. This year's enrollment is down due to different factors that have contributed to the low enrollment such as shortage of teachers and COVID19. We have added more classes, changed the hours from three to four. We raised tuition by twenty dollars this has not made an impact on the enrollment. We have a solid core of teachers who have helped to reassure the families of our quality program.

The Director meets with the staff to plan, encourage and monitor their needs in the classroom. The staff is required to take advantage of professional growth and training opportunities and certification in specific health and safety areas.

Education and Programs

We continue to use Creative Curriculum which centers on monthly themes focusing on the age-appropriate aspects of the growth and development of the child along with Teaching Strategies Gold an assessment tool to gage and monitor the child's individual growth. Creative Curriculum along with Teaching Strategies Gold is used by the Pueblo City Schools which allows us to forward assessments upon request.

In addition to the academic programs, children attend chapel weekly where they recite The Lord's Prayer, sing songs, memorize a monthly Bible verse and learn Bible stories.

We have included the families with take home activities. Every month we send home a family project to engage the parent and child in a special craft to bring back to the school. If you were able walk the halls you may see on the walls all their projects. The children and families are proud to see them.

We have suspended all indoor activities that had made the preschool families so interested in enrolling and attending. We try to implement any outside activity for the families to attend.

In October, we closed the school so we could do a day at the Pumpkin Patch. Everyone attended there were hayrides, a petting zoo, games, corn maze and pumpkins! We had Halloween parties with a parade, food and games for the children only. Fireman John Gacnik (church member), and other firefighters came to our school for the children to enjoy the trucks.

In November, the parents and staff adopted a family and helped them with a Thanksgiving food basket.

Our annual Christmas Program in December was cancelled due to the pandemic. However, the children had pajama day and received a Christmas stockings filled with goodies. We also closed the preschool for a day to have a fun filled morning at the Children's Museum. We had a mitten tree and all the donations went to CASA.

Our Little Free Library has been a blessing to the neighborhood and our preschool families. You can take a book or leave a book. It is located on the west side of the preschool. Please donate books that have been on your shelf getting dusty to a wonderful cause or take one for your reading enjoyment.

Our annual fundraiser has been adapted to a different type of way to get donations. We miss the dinners and the entertainment. The Advisory board will be overseeing a fundraiser that is done online and in person. The children will all receive a calendar and they ask for donations for the amount of the day on the calendar. Last year the profit was \$8,000.00 no overhead cost.

Fiscal Status

The Preschool is funded primarily from monthly tuition fees. We were awarded this past year a grant of \$16,000 from the Buell Foundation to help with scholarships to offset the cost of tuition, to help families in our community that would not otherwise be able to afford to send their children to a private preschool. We also received a grant from School Readiness program which was used to purchase new shelves, and other educational resources.

Our current monthly tuition fees 2021-22 are: \$ 250.00 (four-day program) \$235.00 (three day program) \$200.00 (two day program). There is a 10% fee reduction for Parish Members and families with two or more students enrolled in the Preschool.

Donations

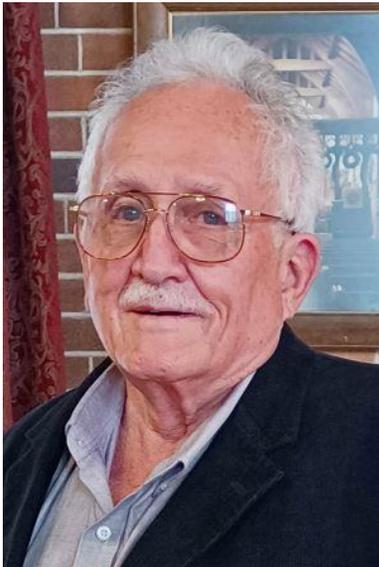
We had a private donor who gave their stimulus check to help our tuition assistance.

The Future

Ascension Preschool Academy has one direction for the future and that is up. We will continue to build back up the enrollment due to the fear of the pandemic. We will continue to hire and retain teachers. We want to continue to collaborate with Buell Foundation for our tuition assistance through grants.

Parents recognize the love, safety and faith that their children are receiving from Ascension Preschool Academy. We want Ascension Preschool Academy to continue the reputation as an outstanding Christian based educational program. We believe that the Preschool will prosper and grow for many years to come. We will endure through this pandemic just as we have for the past 70 years.

Vestry Nominees



Jim Feickert, Vestry Nominee

I joined Ascension Episcopal Church during Advent in 2015. Carol and I had been in Pueblo only since September of that year. We had done some church "shopping" but had not yet settled on a choice. You see, Carol and I had both participated in music in churches all our lives, and one of our most fervent desires has always been to be in a church with a strong music program. As we visited around, Ascension stood out and we began attending. It was a homecoming of sorts for Carol. She had grown up in the Episcopal church and had made a conscious choice when we married (a second marriage for both of us) and combined our two families to move to the Methodist church in support of my young children at the time. So, here we were in Pueblo, all the children grown and with families, and churches, of their own. When we saw the nave and heard the quality of the music at

Ascension, we decided it was my turn to make a switch. In the six years since, we have carved out a church home here. We both joined the choir immediately, and I later joined the bell choir. Along the way, Carol designed, wrote, and edited a monthly newsletter, and served on the Vestry.

Fast forward to today. Since Carol's death, I find myself at a crossroads. Part of me has considered going back to my Methodist roots, while part of me feels a responsibility and kinship to Ascension. Having been asked to be willing to serve on the Vestry at such a critical time as we search for a new priest and knowing that there will be a need to adapt to not only new leadership, but changing times as we continue to pull ourselves by our bootstraps out of this pandemic, I see an opportunity to, perhaps, bring some fresh perspectives from my past church experience to contribute to bringing about the "new order" that will lead Ascension forward.

Mary Segall, Vestry Nominee



I have been connected to The Church of Ascension for about ten years having brought my mother, Eleanor Briggs, to the church when she moved here in 2011. Karin and Tom Hill were so kind to bring "the two Eleanors" back and forth to church. I moved to Pueblo this past August and found myself warmly welcomed by members of the congregation who remembered my mother. I have been an Episcopalian since I was 10 years of age and am moved by the call for social justice for all. I would hope to serve and expand our outreach to others.



Aaron Armstrong, Vestry Nominee

I started attending Ascension as a safe place to explore my Christian faith outside of the religious right evangelical world and fundamentalist spaces that I had been around as a child and through my 20s and early 30s. I learned the Bible in my head as an argument but not so much as learned the Bible in a way that truly leads to life. This historic and catholic Christian faith of the Episcopal Church and the way the Holy Spirit has been

encouraged to work through our holy sisters in the faith, preaching and teaching, and our holy lgbtq brothers and sisters, bearing witness to Jesus, were the missionaries of sorts that opened the eyes of my heart, as it says in Ephesians. When my now wife, Angela and I started dating we started attending Ascension regularly. With thanks to John and Rachel Gardner as Priests in charge at that time we did find a haven.

Professionally I'm in the cattle business; buying and selling, cattle ranching, and cattle feeding. In the Church I've recently served on the Profile Committee and learned a lot about how talented many of us are and where we may use those talents towards God's Kingdom. I'd like to bring my talents and experiences to the Vestry with a focus on 'first things'. A Parish orders a new reality-we aren't a business, we aren't just a building, we can create new realities by nature of participating in God's Kingdom, already begun at the Resurrection, but not yet completed.