



# The Episcopal Church of the Ascension

Hickory, NC

January 11, 2026—10:30 a.m. | First Sunday after the Epiphany: The Baptism of our Lord  
+ The Holy Eucharist, Rite II +

**Prelude** “Liebster jesu, wir sind hier”

J. S. Bach

**Hymn #121** “Christ, when for us you were baptized”

CAITHNESS

**Opening Acclamation**

BCP 355

Celebrant: Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

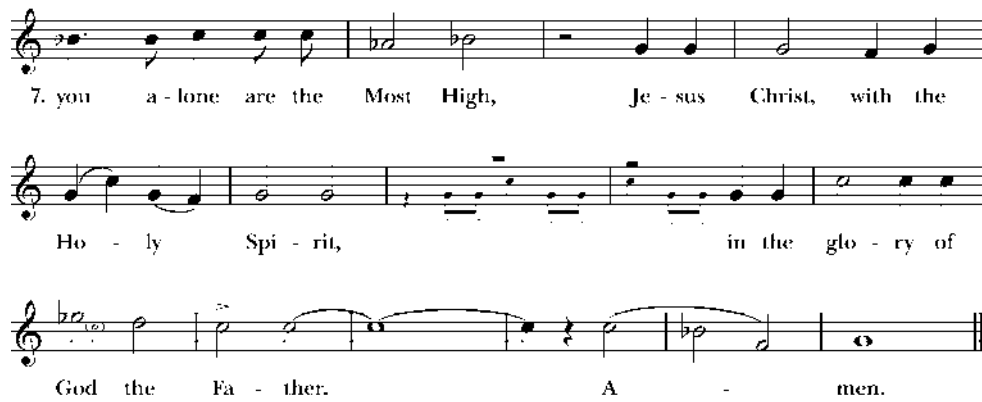
**People: And blessed be his kingdom, now and forever. Amen.**

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**Hymn of Praise** “Glory to God”

S-278

1. Glo-ry to God in the high-est, and  
peace to his peo-ple on earth. 2. Lord God, heaven-ly King, al-  
might-y God and Fa-ther, we wor-ship you, we give you thanks, we  
praise you for your glo-ry. 3. Lord Je-sus Christ,  
on-ly Son of the Fa-ther, Lord God, Lamb of God, 4. you  
take a-way the sin of the world: have mer-cy on us;  
5. you are seat-ed at the right hand of the Fa-ther: re-  
ceive our prayer. 6. For  
you a-lone are the Ho-ly One, you a-lone are the Lord,



## The Collect of the Day

BCP 357

Celebrant: The Lord be with you.

**People: And also with you.**

Let us pray. Father in heaven, who at the baptism of Jesus in the River Jordan proclaimed him your beloved Son and anointed him with the Holy Spirit: Grant that all who are baptized into his Name may keep the covenant they have made, and boldly confess him as Lord and Savior; who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, in glory everlasting. **Amen.**

## The Old Testament Reading

Isaiah 42:1-9

Here is my servant, whom I uphold,  
my chosen, in whom my soul delights;  
I have put my spirit upon him;  
he will bring forth justice to the nations.  
He will not cry or lift up his voice,  
or make it heard in the street;  
a bruised reed he will not break,  
and a dimly burning wick he will not quench;  
he will faithfully bring forth justice.  
He will not grow faint or be crushed  
until he has established justice in the earth;  
and the coastlands wait for his teaching.  
Thus says God, the Lord,  
who created the heavens and stretched them out,  
who spread out the earth and what comes from it,  
who gives breath to the people upon it  
and spirit to those who walk in it:  
I am the Lord, I have called you in righteousness,  
I have taken you by the hand and kept you;  
I have given you as a covenant to the people,  
a light to the nations,  
to open the eyes that are blind,  
to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon,  
from the prison those who sit in darkness.  
I am the Lord, that is my name;  
my glory I give to no other,  
nor my praise to idols.

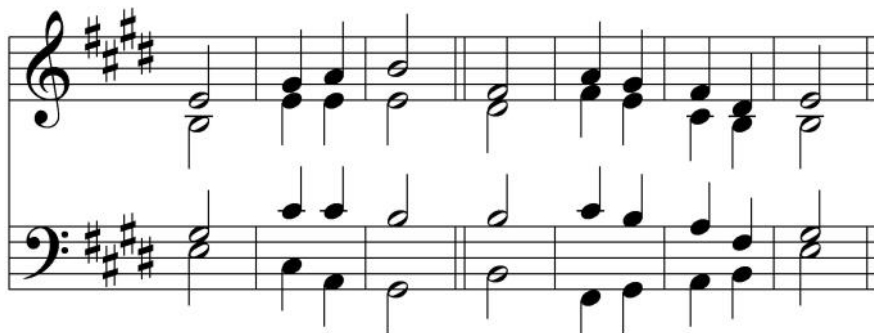
See, the former things have come to pass,  
 and new things I now declare;  
 before they spring forth,  
 I tell you of them.  
 Lector: The Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

## Psalm 29

*Afferte Domino*

*The People sing the verses in **bold** type. The Choir sings the verses in regular type.*



- 1 Ascribe to the /Lörd, you /gods, \*  
 ascribe to the /Lord /glory and /strength.
- 2 Ascribe to the Lord the glory /due his /Name; \*  
 worship the /Lord in the /beauty of /holiness.
- 3 The voice of the Lord is upon the waters;**  
 the God of /glory /thunders; \*  
 the Lord is up-/on the /mighty /waters.
- 4 The voice of the Lord is a /power-ful /voice; \***  
 the voice of the /Lord is a /voice of /splendor.
- 5 The voice of the Lord /breaks the /cedar trees; \*  
 the Lord /breaks the /cedars of /Lebanon;
- 6 He makes Lebanon /skip like a /calf, \*  
 and Mount Hermon /like a /young wild /ox.
- 7 The voice of the Lord splits the flames of fire;**  
 the voice of the Lord /shakes the /wilderness; \*  
 the Lord /shakes the /wilderness of /Kadesh.
- 8 The voice of the Lord makes the /oak trees /writhe \***  
 and /strips the /forests /bare.
- 9 And in the /temple of the /Lord \*  
 —/all are /crying, /"Glory!"
- 10 The Lord sits enthroned a-/bove the /flood; \*  
 the Lord sits enthroned as /King for /ever-/more.
- 11 The Lord shall give /strength to his /people; \***  
 the Lord shall give his /people the /blessing of /peace.

## The New Testament Reading

**Acts 10:34-43**

Peter began to speak to them: "I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ--he is Lord of all. That message spread

throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, and who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead. All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”

Lector: The Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

**Sequence Hymn #120** “The sinless one to Jordan came” (sts. 1-3) SOLEMNIS HAEC FESTIVITAS

## **The Gospel**

**Matthew 3:13-17**

Lector: The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

**People: Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” But Jesus answered him, “Let it be so now; for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he consented. And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.”

Lector: The Gospel of the Lord.

**People: Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

**Sequence Hymn #120** “The sinless one to Jordan came” (sts. 4-6) SOLEMNIS HAEC FESTIVITAS

## **The Sermon**

*The Rev. Michael Alford*

+ **RENEWAL OF BAPTISMAL VOWS** +

**BCP 292**

Celebrant: Do you reaffirm your renunciation of evil and renew your commitment to Jesus Christ?

**People: I do.**

Do you believe in God the Father?

**I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.**

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.**

**He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit  
and born of the Virgin Mary.**

**He suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried.**

**He descended to the dead.**

**On the third day he rose again.**

**He ascended into heaven,  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

**He will come again to judge the living and the dead.**

Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting.**

Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers? **I will, with God's help.**

Will you persevere in resisting evil, and, whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?  
**I will, with God's help.**

Will you proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ?  
**I will, with God's help.**

Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?  
**I will, with God's help.**

Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?  
**I will, with God's help.**

May Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has given us a new birth by water and the Holy Spirit, and bestowed upon us the forgiveness of sins, keep us in eternal life by his grace, in Christ Jesus our Lord. **Amen.**

## **Peace & Announcements**

### **+ THE HOLY COMMUNION +**

## **Offertory Sentence**

### **Offertory Anthem "When Jesus went to Jordan's stream"**

CHRIST UNSER HERR ZUM JORDAN KAM

*When Jesus went to Jordan's stream  
his Father's will obeying,  
and was baptized by John, there came  
a voice from heaven saying,  
"This is my dear beloved Son  
upon whom rests my favor."  
And till God's will is fully done  
he will not bend or waver,  
for he is Christ the Savior.*

*The Holy Spirit then was shown,  
a dove on him descending;  
the Triune God is thus made known  
in Christ as love unending.  
He taught, he healed, he raised the dead,  
yet, in his great endeavor  
to save us, his own blood was shed;  
but death could hold him never.  
He rose, and lives for ever.*

*He came by water and by blood  
to heal our lost condition;  
he cleanses, reconciles to God,  
and gives the Great Commission.  
Then let us not heed worldly lies  
nor rest upon our merit,  
but trust in Christ who will baptize  
with water and the Spirit  
that we may life inherit.*

- Martin Luther, para. F. Bland Tucker

## **Doxology #124, Stanza 5**

PUER NOBIS

To God the Father, heavenly Light  
To Christ, revealed in earthly night,  
To God the Holy Ghost we raise  
Our equal and unceasing praise.

## The Great Thanksgiving

BCP 367

Celebrant: The Lord be with you.

**People: And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give him thanks and praise.**

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. Because in the mystery of the Word made flesh, you have caused a new light to shine in our hearts, to give the knowledge of your glory in the face of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

**Sanctus** "Holy, holy, holy Lord"

S-128

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly,  
ho - ly Lord, God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho-san-na in the  
high - est. Bless - ed is he who  
comes in the name of the Lord. Ho-san-na in the high-est.

Music: William Mathias (1934-1992). Copyright © 1976 Oxford University Press.

We give thanks to you, O God, for the goodness and love which you have made known to us in creation; in the calling of Israel to be your people; in your Word spoken through the prophets; and above all in the Word made flesh, Jesus, your Son. For in these last days you sent him to be incarnate from the Virgin Mary, to be the Savior and Redeemer of the world. In him, you have delivered us from evil, and made us worthy to stand before you. In him, you have brought us out of error into truth, out of sin into righteousness, out of death into life.

On the night before he died for us, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me." After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me." Therefore, according to his command, O Father,

**We remember his death, we proclaim his resurrection, we await his coming in glory;**

And we offer our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to you, O Lord of all; presenting to you, from your creation, this bread and this wine. We pray you, gracious God, to send your Holy Spirit upon these gifts that they may be the Sacrament of the Body of Christ and his Blood of the new Covenant. Unite us to your Son in his sacrifice, that we may be acceptable through him, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit. In the fullness of time, put all things in subjection under your Christ, and bring us to that heavenly country where, with all your saints, we may enter the everlasting heritage of your sons and daughters; through Jesus Christ our Lord, the firstborn of all creation, the head of the Church, and the author of our salvation.

By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and for ever. **AMEN.**

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

**Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy Name,  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread.**

**And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those  
who trespass against us.**

**And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom,  
and the power, and the glory,  
for ever and ever. Amen.**

## The Breaking of the Bread

*The Celebrant breaks the consecrated Bread. A period of silence is kept.*

### Fraction Anthem "Christ our Passover"

S-155

*This setting is not used in Lent.*

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia,

lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, Christ our Pass - o - ver is

sac - ri - ficed for us; There - fore let us keep the feast.

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

Celebrant: The Gifts of God for the People of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

*All are welcome to receive a blessing if you prefer not to receive communion. Gluten-free wafers are available upon request. Consecrated bread and wine are then distributed to all who desire. While at the altar, you will be given a wafer of bread. Wine is available in two ways:*

**Common Cup**—*Drink from the large chalice (it will come first).*

**Intinction**—*Dip the bread into the wine in the small chalice (it will come last). Do not allow your fingers to touch the wine.*

**In One Kind**—*You may choose to receive the bread only, which is equal to receiving the bread and the wine.*

## Hymns During Communion

#132 “When Christ’s appearing was made known”

ERHALT UNS, HERR

#116 “I come,’ the great Redeemer cries”

THIS ENDRIS NYGHT

## Post Communion Prayer

Celebrant and People: Eternal God, heavenly Father, you have graciously accepted us as living members of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ, and you have fed us with spiritual food in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood. Send us now into the world in peace, and grant us strength and courage to love and serve you with gladness and singleness of heart; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

## Blessing

Hymn #135 “Songs of thankfulness and praise”

SALZBURG

## Dismissal

BCP 366

Postlude “Songs of thankfulness and praise”

Robert Hobby

*The altar flowers are given to the glory of God,  
and in loving memory of Landen Eckard,  
Pauline Eckard, and Charles Ray,  
given by Lana Eckard Ray.*



## WORSHIP ROSTER

### Sunday, January 11

Crucifer/Chalice: Bess Fuller  
First Server/Chalice: Melissa Costin  
OT Reader/Chalice: Erin Schuermeyer  
NT Reader: Seth Herndon  
Prayers of the People: Caleb Costin  
Ushers: Bob Meek, Lana Ray  
Children's Chapel: Elizabeth Arditti,  
Suzanne Trollan  
Breakfast: Nancy Linker  
Counters: Todd Zagaroli, Paul Fogleman  
Vestry Contact: Tamara Morgan

### Sunday, January 18

Crucifer/Chalice: Kathryn Carter  
First Server/Chalice: Melissa Costin  
OT Reader/Chalice: Tamara Morgan  
NT Reader: John Ross  
Prayers of the People: *Volunteer Needed*  
Ushers: Lana Ray, Robert Miller  
Children's Chapel: Erin Schuermeyer,  
Kathryn Carter  
Breakfast: *Volunteer Needed*  
Counters: Vince Trollan, Nancy Linker  
Vestry Contact: Tamara Morgan

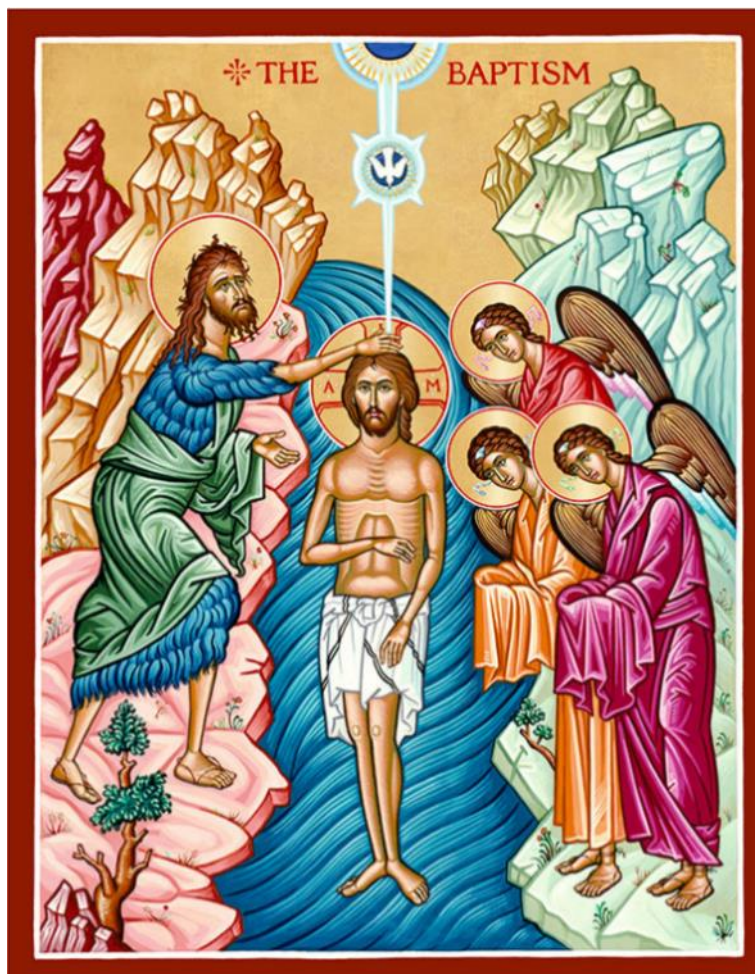
## ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Please pray for** Deedee Watson, Young Smith, George Gross, Porter Taylor, Pat Jones, Claudia Earle, Juanita Isenhower, Jean Atkin, the Evans family, Jordan Robbins, Mary Snooks, kc Gunter, Sara Ruth Halperin, Sue Huffman, The Sigmon Family, Jean Bolton, Martha Clark, Dan Meyer, John Isenhower, Liz Beard, Wendle Jeralds, Bobby Regenbogen, Dayle and Linda Smith, and Alice Turner.
- **The Thursday Morning Book Study** continues to gather on Thursdays from 10:00-11:30 AM in the large conference room. We are currently reading "I Think You're Wrong (But I'm Listening)" - a practical guide to grace-filled conversation in our politically charged environment. The book is available through Amazon or your local bookstore.
- **Annual Meeting: Save the Date** Our annual meeting will be held on Sunday, January 25 at 9:30 AM. We will enjoy a potluck breakfast/brunch in the Parish Hall. Look for more details coming soon.
- **Server's Meeting** If you are currently serving or are interested in serving, we will be meeting on Sunday, February 1 immediately following the 10:30 AM service. The purpose of the meeting is to answer questions and ensure that everyone feels comfortable with their chosen roles. Refreshments will be provided. If you have questions or are unable to attend, please contact Melissa Costin at [melissajcostin@gmail.com](mailto:melissajcostin@gmail.com).
- **Concert and Evensong** Save the date—February 15 at 5:00 PM. More details to come.
- **Thank you to everyone** who donated socks and warm clothes for our homeless neighbors. Your outpouring of generosity showed the true spirit of Christmas.
- **Breakfast Volunteers Needed** Just as the animals entered the ark two-by-two—and Jesus sent the disciples out two-by-two—we've learned that breakfast hosting may be best shared, too. Our weekly breakfast is a time for fellowship and a warm welcome to visitors. If you'd like to help with breakfast and would enjoy having a partner, email Melissa at [melissajcostin@gmail.com](mailto:melissajcostin@gmail.com) with a few dates you're available, and she'll pair you up. Hosting breakfast helps us honor this sacred time of radical

hospitality—one plate (and one partner) at a time.

- **The Tuesday Arts and Crafts** invites you to join them on Tuesdays at 1:00-4:00 PM in the Parish Hall. You are welcome to bring crafts, cards, games, or just show up to be encouraged and enjoy fellowship with others! If you have any questions contact Pat Jones at 828-320-7323 or Mary Elizabeth Geitner at 828-310-3666.
- **Wednesday Walking Group** Join us Wednesday mornings at 7:00 AM and 8:00 AM as we enjoy a refreshing time of exercise and fellowship. Come for one time or both, all are welcome.
- **2026 Stewardship Drive** You can use the 2026 pledge link on Ascension's webpage, the QR code provided in the bulletin or you can email your 2026 pledge commitment to our bookkeeper, Diane Vezmar, at [financeascension@gmail.com](mailto:financeascension@gmail.com). You can also return the pledge card mailed to you or pick up one in the narthex or parish hall. As of January 7th, we have received 71 pledge commitments for a total of \$331,125 in commitments. This leaves a shortfall of (\$75,640) to meet our budget. Please consider turning in your 2026 pledge commitment today.
- **Have a pastoral care concern?** Contact Father Mike by email at [mike@ascensionhickory.org](mailto:mike@ascensionhickory.org) or by cell phone at (813)786-6307.
- **All News Welcome!** Anyone with any news to share (weddings, engagements, births, trips, baptisms, etc.), we would love to put it up on the bulletin outside the office door. Please email Heather at [heather@ascensionhickory.org](mailto:heather@ascensionhickory.org) with the details.



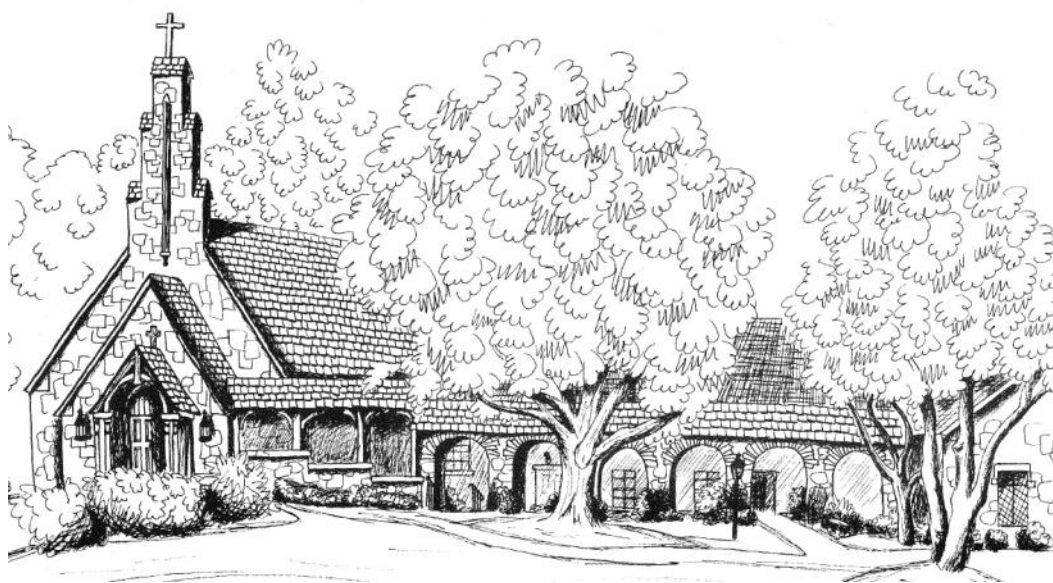


## THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION

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Bishop .....	The Rt. Rev. José A. McLoughlin
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Director of Music .....	Cory Westby
Children & Family Ministry Coordinator .....	Quintin Knight
Parish Administrator .....	Heather Stone
Bookkeeper .....	Diane Vezmar



## **The Episcopal Church of the Ascension**

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