



We believe in sharing love and grace with God and one another.

From the Rector...

I will admit, I am a summer kind of girl, but last week's snow days were perfect. The staff and I came to work Tuesday morning to finalize preparations for the annual meeting, and then I spent Tuesday afternoon and all day Wednesday lazily in front of a fire playing with the Tweedles and watching too much television. It was perfect and reminded me of the importance of Sabbath rest.

I am not very good at taking Sabbath. I like to work, be it church-related or a home improvement project. I rarely ever sit around and do nothing. I'm not sure how the Victorians did it. There legalization of the Sabbath introduced several different types of laws that all encouraged people to stay home and do nothing. Sundays were meant for church and then sitting quietly the rest of the day. I'm sure this was physically restorative, but I don't know how they didn't go stir crazy.



Jewish law also requires rest and stillness on the Sabbath. You are only allowed so many steps and it is forbidden to do anything that looks like work including pushing the button on the elevator or adjusting the thermostat. When I was in Jerusalem a few years ago, one of the elevators was designated for Jews who observed Sabbath—it would automatically open at every floor of the hotel. I learned very quickly not to get on that elevator!

Sabbath is rooted in the creation story when God "rested" on the seventh day. It is called sabbath because God blessed it and made it hallowed i.e. holy. It was the moment when God finished the work he had done and could rest in all of creation. I imagine there must have been a sense of joy and wonder in that first observance of sabbath as God soaked

up the earth and all that was in it—still shiny and new.

Rarely do I feel like I have “finished” my work. Too often, one task simply leads into the next. I don’t do a good job of taking a moment to appreciate what I have accomplished, much less resting in it. The times that I have, I’ve discovered greater appreciation for my life, my work, the opportunities I have been given, the people who have helped along the way—it has sparked a sense of gratitude that grows each time I pause for even just a moment of sabbath.

Sabbath is not just a day in which we sit around and wallow in laziness—though it might be. If the wallowing helps you to appreciate all that you have and all that you give, it is offering you Sabbath rest. If the wallowing is just a way of avoiding what needs to be done or procrastinating from your responsibilities, then it’s probably not sabbath. Sabbath should offer us rest and that rest becomes the ground from which gratitude is nourished.

It is important to take sabbath time in order to rest and reflect and grow in gratitude. That looks different for every person. Some people take silent retreats, others meditate, some play sports or sew or read or watch tv. It doesn’t matter how you engage in sabbath time; it matters what it produces for you. If you find yourself just as tired and ill-tempered at the end of a perceived sabbath time, I will wager it wasn’t true sabbath and that it may well have been laziness or procrastination or avoidance. Sabbath is not about any of those things, it is about renewal. When you feel renewed, you find yourself ever grateful for the world and all that life offers you be it challenge or joy.

Winter is a great season to practice sabbath—it is as if when God created the world, he designed a season in which the days were shorter, and the temperatures were colder to encourage us to do a little less and find rest and renewal for ourselves: our souls and bodies. We may not get any more snow this season, but there is always opportunity for sabbath.

Light and Life,

Candice+

candice@coascension.org

CONNECT



DIOCESAN WOMEN'S RETREAT

CAMP MCDOWELL

Fri, Feb 28 - Sat, Mar 1

With Guest Speaker

Dr. Amy R. Baxter

*Assistant Professor of Leadership and Ethics at the
Global College of Professional Military Education*



All women (clergy and lay alike) in the Diocese of Alabama are invited to gather for a time of fun, fellowship, relaxation, and leadership development at Camp McDowell.

Register Here:
bit.ly/DioAlaWomen



Opt-In for Text Notifications!



Wednesday January 8, 2025 at 4:30p.m. "Open Reunion" for those who have attended Cursillo is back! For anyone who has not yet attended Cursillo but would like to, please reach out to Steve Frazer or Sharon Massey.

WEDNESDAY NIGHTLIVE

STAY CONNECTED AND JOIN US ON
WEDNESDAY NIGHTS!

4:30
REUNION GROUP
LIBRARY

5:15
DINNER
ASCENSION HALL

5:45
THE WORD
SMALL DINING ROOM

6:00
YOUTH ACTIVITIES
3RD FLOOR YOUTH ROOM

6:00
CHILDREN'S CHOIR
4TH FLOOR CHOIR LOFT

6:00
EDUCATION FOR MINISTRY
LIBRARY

6:45
COMPLINE
4TH FLOOR CHOIR LOFT

Dinner Menu:

Fried Chicken
Mashed Potatoes
Green Beans
Rolls

\$8 per person or \$20 per family!



You are invited to lunch with Candice+ and Drew+ on Thursday, February 13 in the Small Dining Room. Reservations are appreciated. Contact Fay@coascension.org to reserve your spot. Ascensionaires is a ministry of fellowship for those who are retired or partially retired to connect with one another in a spirit of joy. We hope to see you there!



If you haven't turned in your pledge card please do so as soon as possible. Thanks! If you would like to fill your pledge card out online click [HERE!](#)

Financial Gifts Offered This Week	Financial Gifts Offered This Month	Financial Gift Target Monthly
\$2,133	\$137,911	\$85,500

Total Pledged Amount for 2025 - \$912,628
Total Collected Amount for 2025 - \$137,911

ANNUAL MEETING & VESTRY ELECTIONS

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 26 - 9:15 AM
ASCENSION HALL**



**CLICK HERE FOR
ANNUAL REPORT**



Congratulations to new Vestry members Evans Bailey, Brannon Barragan, Bryan Reeves, Winston Sheenhan, and Ed Walker!

**EPISCO
PARTY**

IF YOU ARE WILLING
TO HOST AN
EPISCOPARTY IN 2025,
PLEASE CONTACT
SMITTY @
TONDSMITH@GMAIL.COM

GROW



WEDNESDAY EVENINGS AT 5:45 PM
IN THE SMALL DINING ROOM

GATHER FOR CASUAL THEOLOGICAL DISCOURSE WITH THE CLERGY
THIS WEEK'S THEME OF DISCUSSION IS
ENNEAGRAM - THE PERFECTIONIST

WINE AND ALTERNATIVE BEVERAGES WILL BE PROVIDED.

The Word
Wednesdays, January 8 – February 26
5:45pm in the Small Dining Room

The Enneagram is an ancient understanding of our gifts as children of God. The nine personality types of the Enneagram help a person get out of their own way and become who they were created to be. Some say it helps us to “wake up” to our true selves and escape the prison of our past. Studying the Enneagram is a great way to reclaim your identity and rediscover your purpose. Each week we will discuss a different personality type in hopes that participants will discover and deepen their knowledge of self and others.

The Weekly WORD



ROOTS

In the midst of the cold, dark winter, hope often lies buried deep beneath the earth. Though the grass has died and the leaves have fallen from their trees leaving their naked brown branches barren against the winds, their ROOTS remain protected from the elements. Trees, bushes, plants, and flowers are only as strong and healthy and able to persevere as their ROOTS are strong and healthy. People are not that different.

When our ROOTS are planted in fertile soil, we continue to grow and thrive meeting each season of life with courage and trust whatever it may bring. When we are ROOTED in Christ and planted in the church, hope and love bloom within us.

In the winter of our lives, our ROOTS are safe and warm, preparing us for spring and renewal. Rest in the hope of your ROOTEDNESS.

Women's Bible Study

In Trouble and In Wonder

The Gospel of St. Thomas

Monday Nights – 5pm
The Library
January 27 – April 7

The wisdom sayings attributed to Jesus in The Gospel of Thomas open in us new ways of

seeing the world. In this ten week study, we will explore various sayings and examine them in relationship to their counterparts in the Synoptic gospels.

Men's Prayer Breakfast



Exodus: Movement of the People
Thursdays at 7:15am
Ascension Hall
January 9 – February 27

Order and disorder, life and chaos, are the means through which God moves his people and liberates them for his purposes. In the book of Exodus, Moses discovers his call in the ordering of God's chosen people and the power of God's purposes over those desired by man. Join us each week to nurture the body, mind, and spirit through breakfast, study, and community.

Clergy Forum and BoL Sunday School



Jesus' Rule of Life
The Upper Room
January 5 - February 23

Adult formation will combine this winter to study **Jesus' Rule of Life**. This eight week course will facilitate conversation around understanding Jesus' "Why" and motivation for his ministry and mission as a method of shaping our lives as Christians.

SERVE

Get Involved!



Come support ADS by signing up to read to our students on Thursday's at noon! Please reach out to [Murrey](#) if you are interested.

COME SERVE AT

Mercy House

**Thursdays
11 a.m. - 1 p.m.**

Questions? Call or text
Stephanie Norrell
at 334-467-6989



Mercy House is a day shelter at 2412 Council Street serving Washington Park and West Montgomery, providing access to food, clothing, shower facilities, and laundry. St. John's and Ascension members are working each week at Mercy House to help package and distribute a hot lunch to those in need every Thursday from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. and we would love for you to join us! The staff at Mercy House prepares the food and handles the distribution, but they can always use help getting the prepared meals bagged and out the door. The link [HERE](#) will take you to the sign-up sheet, but if you aren't comfortable with using Sign Up Genius, you can call or text Stephanie Norrell to sign up at 334-467-6989.



Diocesan Convention
January 30 – February 1
Decatur, AL

Please hold your Diocesan Convention in prayer this week, especially our delegates:

Camilla Austin
Bill Garrett
Anne Kimzey
Richard Norris
Christine Harrison
April McKay
Christopher Turner
The Rev. Drew Brislin
The Rev. Candice B. Frazer



McDowell Summer Camps at
Bethany Village invites you to a

MARDI GRAS BALL

supporting Special Session

Saturday, March 1st
4-7PM

Good People Brewing Co.
114 14th St. S.
Birmingham, AL. 35233

Purchase tickets, donate, become a sponsor here:

<https://mardigrasball.swell.gives>



The Food Box Ministry is asking for donations of empty cardboard boxes. Boxes around the size of office paper boxes are best and they need to be sturdy enough to hold about 40 pounds of food. Boxes can be dropped off in the foyer of Ascension Hall. Thank you!

The Vineyard Bookstore

Come see what is new at the Vineyard!

You can now Venmo at The Vineyard! Just search for **@ChurchoftheAscension** and look for our logo. Make sure you tell us it is for The Vineyard and offer a brief description of your purchase. All proceeds at The Vineyard go to outreach initiatives.



The Vineyard Bookstore has made its contributions in 2024 to the following local

ministries:

Respite for all Foundation
Mercy House
Family Sunshine Center
Boys and Girls Clubs River Region
Dream Court

Thank you for your continued support of our store, your purchases make this possible! We are blessed to be able to give back to those in need in our community.

WORSHIP

Weekly Worship Schedule



Sunday Services

8:00 AM - Rite I, 10:30 AM Rite II



Morning Prayer

Monday - Friday, 8:00 AM - Facebook Live



Compline

Wednesday 6:45 PM - Choir Loft & Facebook Live



Sung Compline

3rd Sundays 7:30 PM - Nave

Attention Venmo Users



As electronic payments become more widely used we ask that anyone who uses Venmo to **please add a short summary of what the payment is for in the description field.** We now accept Venmo for Wednesday night dinner, Sunday morning breakfast, purchases in The Vineyard Bookstore, as well as for giving. This description will help us allocate the resources appropriately. Thanks!

Staff Directory

The Rev. Candice B. Frazer, Rector candice@coascension.org
The Rev. Drew Brislin, Associate Rector drew@coascension.org
Becky Taylor, Music Ministry beckytaylor@coascension.org
Will McQueen, Facilities Manager will@coascension.org
Tracy Hinton, Parish Administrator thinton@coascension.org
Jason Pate, Director of Communications jason@coascension.org
Laura Mielke, Children Family & Faith Formation Minister laura@coascension.org
Nick Mielke, Youth Family & Faith Formation Minister nick@coascension.org
Fay WorriLOW, Administrative Assistant fay@coascension.org

PRAYER FOR THE ASCENSION

Almighty and everlasting Father, we stand in your presence, awed and silenced by your goodness and wisdom. We rejoice in the outpouring of your Spirit on the Ascension and our ministries. Help each of us to remember that we are walking in your sight, and that you are present with us at every moment. Through your Holy Spirit, guide us in our prayers and enable us to focus our thoughts on you, so that we may be filled with the knowledge of your will. Grant us the wisdom to ask what you would have us do; the strength and courage to carry out your work; and the grace to show our gratitude through good

stewardship of your gracious gifts. We ask all things in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

Church of the Ascension | 334-263-5529 | staff@coascension.org | www.coascension.org

[Visit Our Website](#)

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