



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

From the Rector...

Roger Federer recently gave a commencement speech in which he reflected on his career victories. Over the course of his professional career, he has won more than 1,000 matches—about 80% of his total matches. In all those matches, he only won 54% of the points. In other words, he lost almost as many points as he won. Federer pointed out that you can't dwell on the points you lose. If you do, you risk getting stuck in a rut and unable to pull yourself out. Negative energy is wasted energy. Instead, it's important to let the past go and focus on what happens next. This mindset is the path to success—not fixating on past setbacks but looking forward to the possibilities of what happens next.



I often wonder what drives people to feel the need to defend themselves, others, or their belief systems. If the motivation is to introduce a concept and help others understand it better, then that seems like a worthwhile purpose. But there is a fine line between clarifying an idea and attempting to persuade someone to change their beliefs. If you have a clear understanding of your own identity and beliefs, it should be enough for you to accept that others have their own identity and beliefs as well. Any desire to make others conform to your views is, at its core, an exercise of the ego.

Jesus rarely calls for those around him to conform. One of his most powerful and often used methods for offering people new ways of thinking is storytelling—particularly through parables. He tells parables to those who have gathered to listen to him or, sometimes, so that others in the vicinity might overhear him. Most of his parables are rather offensive to

the hearers, starting with a familiar situation and ending with a twist that challenges their assumptions. Those who hear the parables aren't even sure why they are offended—and don't fully understand what Jesus is trying to say—and they walk away, mulling over the disruption to their thinking. Jesus doesn't give the naysayers that much attention. If his disciples ask for clarification, he is quick to explain, but he often advises them not to go explain it to others. I believe this is because Jesus knows what Federer knows—negative energy is wasted energy.

When we try to prove a point or convince others that their beliefs are flawed, we often find ourselves talking to a wall. Nothing gets through and the other person becomes more entrenched in their position. We get frustrated and the relationship suffers. We may respond by doubling down on our own beliefs'—consequences be damned—or we may grant a one-sided ceasefire no longer participating in conversations that we perceive as divisive. Neither of these options feels satisfying or true to authenticity in our relationships. Occasionally, we find a way to “agree to disagree” in a civilized manner, maybe even finding common ground. It is in these moments that I think we discover a neutrality that can help us heal and move forward into the possibilities of the future.

If negative energy is wasted energy, one might think that positive energy would be productive energy. That is not necessarily the case. Positive energy can be just as wasteful as negative energy, especially if it leads us into false hope or unrealistic thinking. We might find our dreams dashed or our fears encouraged in such a way that saps our optimism and drains our energy. Neutral thinking, on the other hand, helps us stay engaged without putting too much emphasis on outcomes. Neutral energy allows us to step back and allow things to unfold without being so outcome oriented. Instead, we focus on maintaining our identity in any situation and make space for whatever happens next to happen, trusting that the Holy Spirit is present in the midst of things. When we are no longer motivated by fear, anger, or anxiety we become more open to the possibilities of God's presence in the world. We nurture our hope and joy because these are no longer tied to an outcome but to the knowledge and love of God always present in our life.

Neutral energy is more about releasing and less about resisting. It makes space for God and takes away our perceived responsibility in making something happen. We enter into what some might call “flow.” That creative energy that draws us into the greater possibilities of the world.

Light and Life,

Candice+

candice@coascension.org

GROW



An Ordered Life

Forming Us in Faith

New Facebook Group!

An Ordered Life

A place to come and discern how God is crafting your inner disciple. Be encouraged to post thoughts and inspirations related to growing a spiritual rule of life that guides who you are at home, work, play, and church. This is a safe place where we treat one another with reverence and respect.

Click [HERE](#) to go to the Facebook group page and request access!

The Weekly WORD

REFINE

There are two definitions for the word REFINE. The first one starts with “remove” and the second one begins with “improve.” There is a slight juxtaposition in that. Defining the same word through what is taken away and what is added seems contradictory. To REFINE something you can either take away the impurities or add subtle changes. Though contradictory, it may well reflect the tension we are called to live as people of faith.

Scripture has plenty of references to being REFINED. Many of these assume suffering and hardship that act as a sort of REFINER’S fire to make us pure. That can be a challenging way to understand our faith. We desire a faith that is easy and makes us feel good—we want to be REFINED but only through the subtle changes that improve us without disrupting us too much. To go through the REFINER’S fire evokes a sense of perceived pain which we would always rather avoid. It is also threatening—we aren’t completely sure what will be removed and even if we trust we will be the better for it, deep down a loss is always a loss.

God does not promise an easy path. To allow God to REFINE you is an act of trust and faith. It might not feel good in the moment but, hopefully, you’re playing the long game and putting your trust and hope in the promises of God even when they are not realized in the moment.

Men's Prayer Breakfast 7:00 AM on Thursdays



The myth of the American hero has caused us to “replace the Jesus of the Gospels with an idol of rugged masculinity and Christian nationalism.” This class will trace the history of popular culture and how it has transformed our understanding of Christianity and our communal life.

SERVE

ADS Christmas Baskets!

ADS is hosting a raffle for Christmas gift baskets! Raffle tickets cost \$5 each. You can purchase a ticket after 10:30 service this Sunday or by sending Venmo to @ascensiondayschool. For questions please email ads@coascension.org. A full listing of basket contents can be found [HERE!](#)





Milton Lewis Memorial Christmas Tree Project

Saturday, December 7th at 8:00 AM

Target @ Eastchase

Planned Give is \$100 per child

To Donate Contact Tracy Hinton

thinton@coascension.org

Mercy House Volunteer Sign-up

A new sign up is now available for volunteers to help distribute lunches at Mercy House from August-December. You can view the sign up sheet by clicking [HERE](#). Since August of last year we have been working alongside our friends from St. John's on this outreach project, and two volunteers are needed from 11:00 - 1:00 every Thursday.



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.



WORSHIP

Thanksgiving Ecumenical Service

Sunday, November 24th at 4pm



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!

CONNECT

WEDNESDAY

NIGHTLIVE

STAY CONNECTED AND JOIN US ON
WEDNESDAY NIGHTS!

4:30
REUNION GROUP
LIBRARY

5:15
DINNER
ASCENSION HALL

6:00
WINE AND THE WORD
SMALL DINING ROOM

6:00
YOUTH ACIVITIES
3RD FLOOR YOUTH ROOM

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

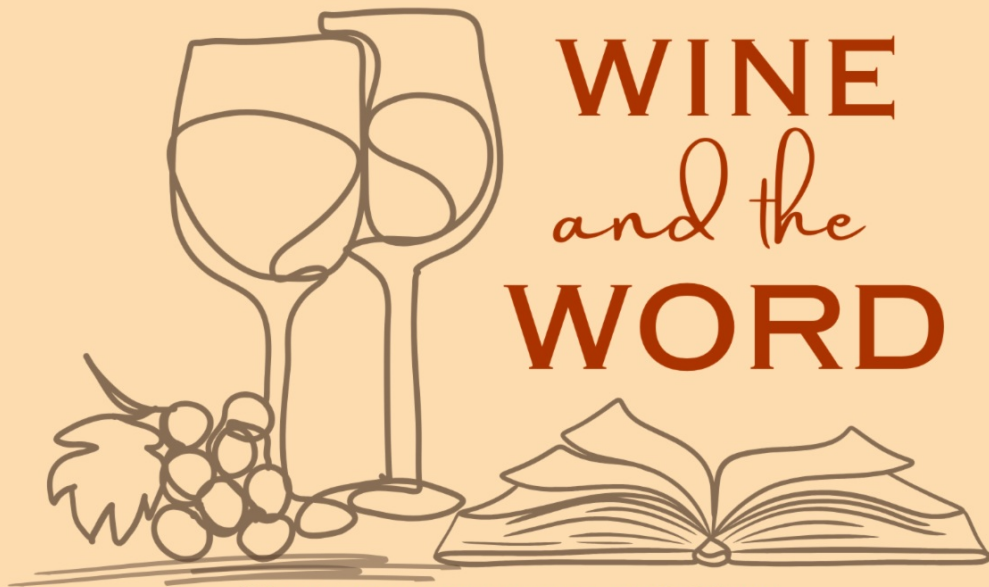
6:00
EDUCATION FOR MINISTRY
LIBRARY

6:45
COMPLINE
4TH FLOOR CHOIR LOFT

Dinner Menu:

Meatloaf
Mashed Potatoes
Salad

\$8 per person or \$20 per family



WINE and the WORD

WEDNESDAY EVENINGS AT 6:00 PM
IN THE SMALL DINING ROOM

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

WINE AND ALTERNATIVE BEVERAGES WILL BE PROVIDED.

Follow us on Instagram!



Our new Instagram account is up and running! Follow us [HERE!](#)

Stewardship 2025!



Walk in Love

Click [HERE](#) to see the 4th installment of our Walk in Love video series!

My Walk in Love

At some time in my life here at Church of the Ascension, either in Sunday School or in a sermon, I was exposed to the Apostle Paul's description of love (1 Corinthians 13: 4-8). It really struck me, so much so that I wrote it down on a 3 X 5 card and read it almost daily. In it, Paul tells us that love is patient and kind; it's not boastful or arrogant, but rejoices in the truth, and hopes all things. For me, this description says love is more than about a feeling, it's about how we are supposed to be and act in our lives with one another.

In my time at Church of the Ascension, I've witnessed much of what Paul says in his description of love. I've witnessed it in our worship. I've witnessed it in our Christian formation classes and in our fellowship. And I've witnessed it in the way we reach out to the community and the world beyond Montgomery. This witness by our church and its members, including its generosity in stewardship, has challenged me in my response to Paul's call. To be sure, my *Walk in Love* hasn't always been perfect – I'm a work in progress – but it's made my life richer and truly strengthened my relationship with God.

Thank you, Church of the Ascension, for being the embodiment of Paul's call to *Walk in Love*.

Smitty Smith



They shall be like a tree planted by water, sending out its roots by the stream. It shall not fear when heat comes, and its leaves shall stay green; in the year of drought it is not anxious, and it does not cease to bear fruit. - Jeremiah 17:8



Stewardship Update 2024

If you haven't turned in your pledge card it is not too late. You can drop in in the basket during service or bring it by the church office, For more information on pledging click [HERE](#).

Financial Gifts Offered This Week	Financial Gifts Offered This Month	Financial Gift Target Monthly
\$4,964	\$21,042	\$85,500

Total Pledged Amount for 2024 - \$1,025,396
Total Collected Amount for 2024 - \$798,360



ALABAMA CURSILLO

Episcopal Diocese of Alabama

2025 Cursillo Dates

April 3-6

June 5-8 (Steve & Candice+ on staff)

October 9-12

If you would like to attend contact Steve Frazer or Sharon Massey for more information.

ADVENT

ADVENT 2024

TRAWICK-SCOTT ADVENT RECITAL SERIES

DECEMBER 4

12:05 PM

JOEL GREGORY, ORGANIST

DECEMBER 11

12:05 PM

PRESTON WINKLES, ORGANIST

DECEMBER 18

12:05 PM

**CONCERT IN CELEBRATION OF THE 25TH SEASON
THE ASCENSION CHOIR**

CHRISTMAS 2024

DECEMBER 3

MESSIAH SINGALONG

7:00 PM

JOIN THE MONTGOMERY CHORALE, ORCHESTRA, AND SOLOISTS IN THE CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION NAVE IN A GROUP SINGALONG OF HANDEL'S IMMORTAL WORK

DECEMBER 15

THE CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

9:15 AM

JOIN CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN ASCENSION HALL FOR THE TELLING OF THE CHRISTMAS STORY.

DECEMBER 19

BLUE CHRISTMAS

12:00 PM

SERVICE FOR THOSE WHO ARE EXPERIENCING GRIEF OR STRUGGLING WITH LOSS

DECEMBER 24

CHRISTMAS EVE FAMILY EUCHARIST

5:00 PM

CELEBRATE THE CHRISTMAS EUCHARIST WITH THE ENTIRE FAMILY

FESTIVE CHRISTMAS EUCHARIST

10:30 AM

ANTHEMS AND HYMNS WITH THE ASCENSION CHOIR

DECEMBER 25

CHRISTMAS EUCHARIST

10:00 AM

THIS SERVICE WILL NOT HAVE MUSIC

DECEMBER 29

CHRISTMAS LESSONS & CAROLS

10:30 AM

HEAR THE STORY OF GOD REDEMPTION WITH CAROLS AND ANTHEMS AND LESSONS READ BY REPRESENTATIVES OF ASCENSION MINISTRIES

JANUARY 6

FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY

5:30 PM

BONFIRE & CHILI COOKOFF

CLOSE THE CHRISTMAS SEASON WITH WORSHIP AROUND THE BONFIRE, THEN JOIN US IN THE PARKING LOT FOR THE ANNUAL ASCENSION CHILI COOKOFF



Advent Wreath Party & Soup Fundraiser



Come join us in Ascension Hall on Dec. 1st after the 10:30 service to kick off the Advent season by making wreaths! We will also have a soup fundraiser to benefit our 2025 Youth Summer Mission Trip

All ages are invited to attend & participate.



Christmas Pageant 2024

Walk-through Rehearsal

Sunday December 1, 2024 at 9:15 a.m.

Walk through for pageant participants in Ascension Hall.

Dress Rehearsal

Sunday December 8, 2024 at 9:15 a.m.

Ages 4 through 5th grade meet in the Children's Wing on the 3rd floor.

6th Grade & Youth meet in the Youth Room.

*more instructions will be sent

Pageant

Sunday December 15, 2024 at 9:15 a.m.

Ascension Hall



Stay Connected!

Christmas Tree Trim

Christmas Tree Trim
Wednesday December
11th after Wednesday
Night Family Supper
in Ascension Hall.



Progressive Dinner & Christmas Party Sunday December 22, 2024

Wear your favorite tacky Christmas sweater, bring a Dirty Santa gift (valued \$10 or less), and let's go eat some fun food and celebrate the season. We will meet at Ascension at 5:00 p.m. and your parents can pick you up there at 8:00 p.m.

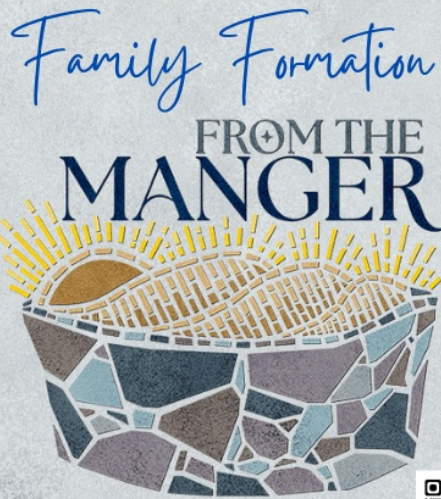
JOIN US THIS ADVENT

This year's "From the Manger" Advent devotional contains a weekly reflection, discussion questions, prayer, and family memory-making activity that easily integrates into already busy schedules.

Digital copies will be emailed to families on November 29, 2024 and hard copies are available upon request.

Laura@coascension.org

Use this QR code to help us stay connected!



BSA SCOUT TROOP 1

CHRISTMAS TREE & WREATH SALE

PLACE YOUR ORDER NOW!

FRESH CUT FRASER FIRS ARRIVE THANKSGIVING WEEK
SCOUTS DELIVER TREES NOV 29TH



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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