



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

## Ascension Highlights What's Happening This Week

- Family Eucharist - Tuesday, Dec. 24 @ 5:00 PM
- Festive Eucharist - Tuesday, Dec. 24 @ 10:30 PM
- Christmas Eucharist - Wednesday, Dec. 25 @ 10:00 AM
- Lessons & Carols - Sunday, Dec. 29 @ 10:30 AM

From the Rector...

Tomorrow marks the beginning of the Christmas season which lasts from December 25 through January 5—twelve nights. It also marks the start of Hanukkah which, as Adam Sandler put it, lasts “eight crazy nights.” Most Christians will celebrate around a Christmas tree, opening gifts, and eating turkey. Many Jews will celebrate by lighting a candle, exchanging gifts, and eating brisket. For both Christians and Jews, we celebrate the light that has entered the world, even though we perceive that light in different ways.



Christmas and Hanukkah are a time for us to shine the light of love and peace into a dark world that has forgotten its possibilities. Instead of focusing on all the trappings of the holiday season, we have the opportunity to glorify God through the way we treat one another—by sharing in one another’s lives and seeking understanding and commonality rather than division.

Throughout the season of Advent, we have been lighting the Advent wreath each week, growing the light of Christ as we anticipate his coming. Hanukah follows a similar pattern; growing the light of God by lighting an additional candle each night until all eight candles of the menorah are aflame. John 1:5 says, “The light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it.” In the shortest days of the year, when daylight fades quickly into night, the lighting of a candle brings hope and peace. It chases away the shadows and illuminates the darkness. Whether you are lighting the Christmas candle or the menorah tomorrow, you are celebrating the light that has come into the world.

Hanukkah and Christmas are not only times to remember the light that has entered the world but also times to shine that light for all to see. We do that by taking care of those in need, offering hospitality to the stranger, and receiving the kindnesses of others with grace and gratitude. Rather than striving for a “perfect” holiday, we embrace the messiness of faith—Christ was born in a stable, and Hanukkah celebrates a time when humanity’s scarcity became God’s abundance. Both are deeply rooted in the theology of liberation. For Christians, Jesus comes to save us from our sins. For Jews, Hanukkah celebrates liberation of the Temple and the land from the Seleucid Greek Empire in the second century BCE.

We may not agree on politics, religion, or much else, but most of us can agree on a desire for freedom—freedom from suffering, fear, and anger; freedom to know peace and joy. We all want to love and be loved. We are all a child of someone—parents, spouses, or a friend of someone. We all have hopes and dreams. In these basic ways, we are all connected to one another. It is in this great connection of one human to another, that we can shine God’s light into the world.

I pray that this Christmas you find ways to shine the light of Christ into the world. Maybe it is in wishing your Jewish friends a Happy Hanukkah or even swapping some leftovers—turkey for brisket doesn’t sound like a bad trade off. Maybe it is in simply practicing generosity and trusting in God’s abundance, knowing that there will be enough—just as in the tradition of Hanukkah when one day’s supply of oil lasted for eight. Maybe it’s in reaching out to those who are alone and spreading good cheer. When we are intentional in staying connected to one another, there is no wrong way to shine God’s light into the world.

I wish you the blessings of peace and the light of Christ this Christmas season.

Merry Christmas and Happy Hanukkah!

Light and Life,

Candice+

[candice@coascension.org](mailto:candice@coascension.org)

## WORSHIP

### CHRISTMAS 2024

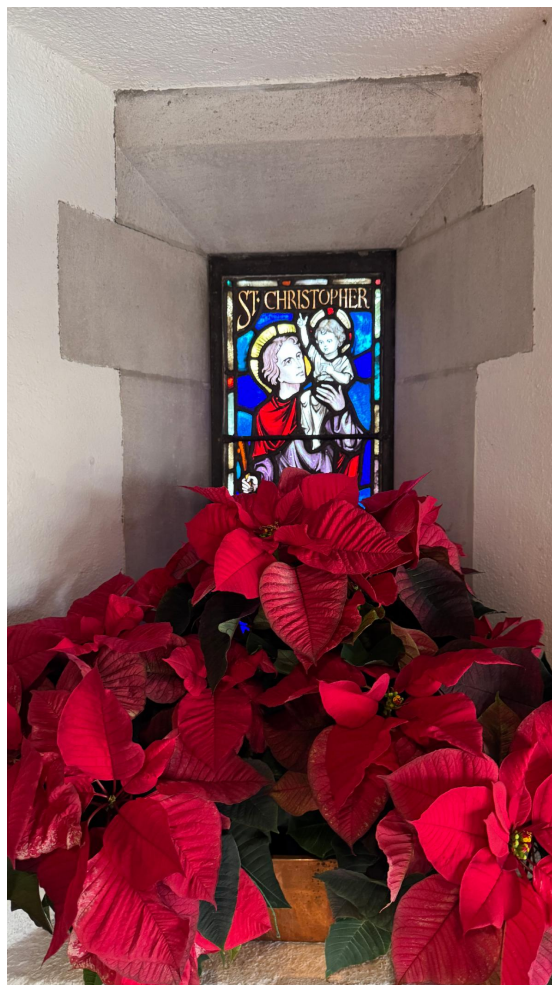
- DECEMBER 3      MESSIAH SINGALONG      7:00 PM**  
*JOIN THE MONTGOMERY CHORALE, ORCHESTRA, AND SOLOISTS IN THE CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION NAVE IN A GROUP SINGALONG OF HANDEL'S IMMORTAL WORK*
- DECEMBER 15      THE CHRISTMAS PAGEANT      9:15 AM**  
*JOIN CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN ASCENSION HALL FOR THE TELLING 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 PM**  
*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*





Thank you to all of our Ascension elves that worked so hard to decorate for Christmas!





# Lessons and Carols



DECEMBER 29, 10:30AM IN THE 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!

CONNECT

Team Registration ends Friday, January 3rd!

A graphic for a chili cook-off. It features a white chili pot with a black handle and a red chili pepper on the left. The words "Chili" and "COOK OFF!" are written in a stylized font across the pot. Below the pot, the date "January 6th!" and time "5:30 PM" are written in green. There are orange and yellow flames at the base of the pot. A small green chili pepper is at the bottom center. The background is black with yellow stars.

Chili  
COOK OFF!  
January 6th!  
5:30 PM

Sign Up

A QR code with a white border, used for signing up for the event.

& Bonfire for The  
Feast of the Epiphany

On Monday, January 6, we will assemble for its annual Feast of the Epiphany bonfire liturgy, followed by our 7th Annual Chili Cook-Off! Team registration is open and you can sign up by clicking the link above or by using the QR code! If you have any questions please contact [Gina Curvin](#). For more information click [HERE!](#)

A background image for a winter solstice party. It shows a snowy landscape with evergreen trees under a sunset sky with orange and yellow hues.

*Winter Solstice Party  
Sat. 12/21 5:00pm  
In Joshua Commons*

Bring your favorite winter dish to share  
**Look At Saturn Through A Telescope!**  
Solstice themed crafts for the kids

*For more information contact Tina Harstad*

RSVP

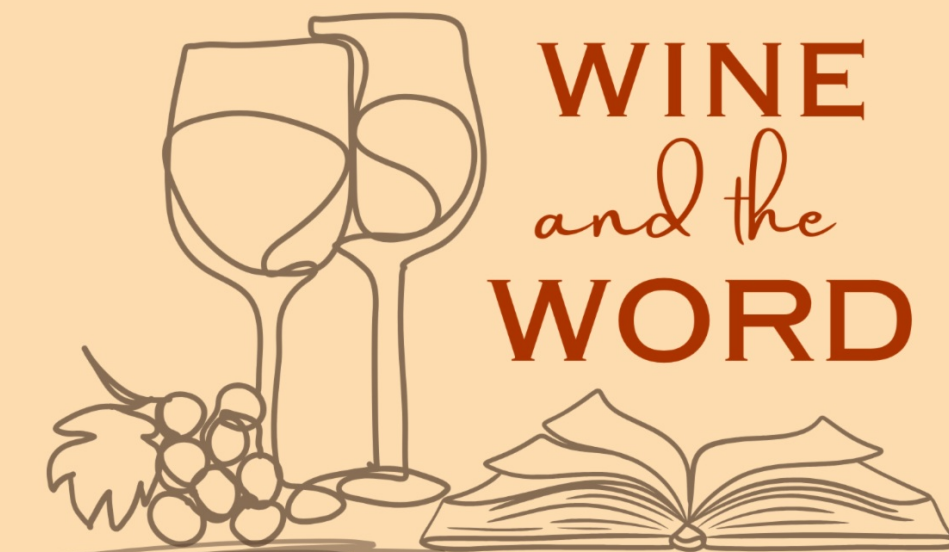






If you haven't turned in your pledge card please do so as soon as possible. Thanks! If you would like to fill your pledge card out online click [HERE!](#)

## GROW



# 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  
HOPE

WINE AND ALTERNATIVE BEVERAGES WILL BE PROVIDED.

Returning January 8th!

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## The Weekly WORD

### LOVE

“Love Actually” explores the messiness of LOVE. This contemporary Christmas classic reminds us that (as cheesy as the song lyric is) LOVE is all around us. It is joyful and messy. It is easily threatened and sacrificial. LOVE is a feeling but it is also a choice. The story lines of the various characters interweave in a tangled web —we are all connected to one another.

You may or may not like the movie, but it portrays a truth about LOVE that reflects the greatest LOVE story ever told. We cannot predict LOVE, nor can we define or control it. LOVE is perfect in its own way even when we cannot understand it. The great mystery of LOVE is summed up in that cheesy line, “LOVE is all around us, c’mon let it show.”

LOVE is all around, if only we have eyes to see.

## SERVE



## NOMINATIONS

**OPEN THROUGH JANUARY 10TH**

It's that time of year already. It's time to nominate and elect our class of 2026! The Vestry Nomination form can be found [HERE](#). Forms need to be turned in to Fay and be received by Friday, January 10th. The new Vestry members will be elected at our Annual Meeting on Sunday, January 26th.

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## 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.



Thursdays  
11:00 AM - 1:00 PM

## 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 Rev. Candice B. Frazer, Rector [candice@coascension.org](mailto:candice@coascension.org)  
The Rev. Drew Brislin, Associate Rector [drew@coascension.org](mailto:drew@coascension.org)  
Becky Taylor, Music Ministry [beckytaylor@coascension.org](mailto:beckytaylor@coascension.org)  
Will McQueen, Facilities Manager [will@coascension.org](mailto:will@coascension.org)  
Tracy Hinton, Parish Administrator [thinton@coascension.org](mailto:thinton@coascension.org)  
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Nick Mielke, Youth Family & Faith Formation Minister [nick@coascension.org](mailto:nick@coascension.org)  
Fay WorriLOW, Administrative Assistant [fay@coascension.org](mailto: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.

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