



Ascension
Memorial Church

A Parish of The Episcopal
Diocese of Massachusetts

Winter 2017

Vestry Voice

Glad Tidings from Your Vestry!

Thank you to all parishioners who attended our 150th Annual Meeting on January 29th. An Annual Meeting is a pivotal time for all of us as we reflect and project. In reflection, we consider what we have accomplished, what is progressing, and what is yet to be done. In projecting, we envision the possibilities and opportunities in the coming year. And this is a particularly special year for all of us at Ascension – our 150th Anniversary.

The *Vestry Voice* highlights the work of committees and activities at Ascension. We hope it inspires you to become involved with this vibrant community. Please join the Vestry at one of our hosted coffees after a service or our monthly Vestry meeting (3rd Wednesday, 7:30pm). Also, Vestry members are listed in the weekly service bulletin; so feel free to reach out to us at any time.



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Fall 2016: Bishop Alan Gates Visits Ascension

Sunday, September 11, 2016 was a landmark day for Ascension as we welcomed Bishop Alan Gates to Ipswich for his first visit to our parish. That Sunday, significant as the anniversary of 9/11, was also marked by the joyous occasion of six parishioners either being Confirmed or Received into the Episcopal Church.



The Rt. Rev. Alan M. Gates with Rev. Brad Clark just before the service

The magnificent service was followed by a delicious lunch reception in Dorman Gym and then words from Bishop Gates. Bishop Gates spoke about his own faith journey and family, and about the new Diocesan Mission Strategy. He spoke of three general areas under the theme of “**Embracing Brave Change**”:

1 Reimagining Our Congregations

Currently the world around us no longer holds a “presumed value” for the church – this has implications. We need to embrace new models of leadership, new ways of feeling confident about what we are doing, and new confidence about telling our own stories of faith.

2 Building Our Relationships

Deepening Diocesan connections between parishes and people. Making reference to St. Paul’s metaphor of the parts of the body all having their own function and how each differing part makes the whole be at its best. How can we come to know one another better and deeper?

Bishop Gates Visits (con't)

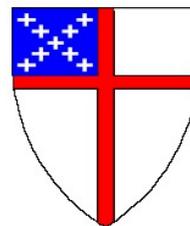
3 Engaging Our World

Deepen relationships with our neighbors in order to work side-by-side for a more just and peaceful world. It's important to have a renewed emphasis on taking action to engage more deeply with our surrounding communities.

Bishop Meets with Vestry

Following the reception, Bishop Gates met with the Vestry to discuss AMC's parish priorities. Given that Boone Hall is a priority, members of the **Boone Hall Steering Committee** attended the meeting as well.

Bishop Gates invited the Vestry to speak about how they are moving AMC in ways similar to the Diocesan mission strategy he spoke of at lunch. A brief



Newly Confirmed and Received Members of the Episcopal Church



Front row: Kate Turner, Teagan Phinney, Hailey Granger, Cassidy Smith, Wesley Smith.
Back row: Rev. Brad Clark, Josh MacDonald, acolyte Ben Gibbs, Bishop Alan Gates

Bishop Gates Visits (con't)

overview of our core values was discussed with emphasis on how these core values are intended to guide us moving forward. A historical perspective on Boone Hall was shared, outlining its original purpose as a place for the community and of the community.

Bishop Gates observed that we are, then, the stewards of this place. Boone Hall is an intersection between the church and the community, a town resource. He pointed out that the history of Boone Hall and the community connections are significant. How will we go forward?

Bishop Gates said that many churches in the Diocese have space use issues. He asked us to look at Boone Hall through the lens of stewardship – are we good stewards of a space if we use it 4 hours/week? Mission-driven discernment is thinking of potential non-profits as space-users and whether they align with AMC's mission. Bishop Gates emphasized that when you align yourselves with organizations that match your mission, it helps to put your own mission out into the world.

Bishop Gates gave all of us much to think about – how will we go forward with Boone Hall? The Boone Hall Steering Committee, a dedicated group of parishioners, has been wrestling with that very question. We look forward to regular updates from the committee as they continue their research on behalf of Ascension and our mission.

Ascension Celebrates 150 Years of Flourishing, Family, and Community

One hundred and fifty years ago, on February 7th, 1867, a group of town residents held a formal gathering for the purpose of establishing an Episcopal Church in the Town of Ipswich. Our 150th anniversary year is a milestone opportunity for us to reflect on the life of our church and to gather new confidence to move into a future of expanded service to our community. The Vestry is asking parishioners, by way of a brief online survey, to share ideas for commemorating our 150th birthday. How can we creatively mark this historic occasion in festive ways that welcome and invite our fellow community members to join in the fun?

Helen H. Ayer Children's Enrichment Fund

Named after a much beloved parishioner, the Helen H. Ayer Children's Enrichment Fund was established in August 2015. The mission of the Ayer Fund is to enrich the quality of life to the Ipswich community by supporting non-profit organizations, individuals and programs that focus on the wellbeing, education and development of children.

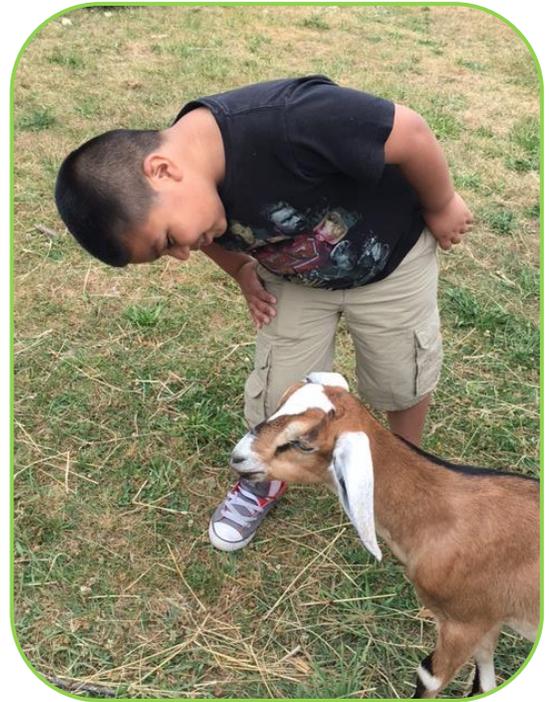
Led by Vestry member Jennifer Clark, the committee has been working to establish the Ayer Fund guidelines, application and allocations management of an estimated \$2,000 funding that will be available annually. Once the Ayer Fund program is approved by the Vestry, an announcement will be made about the new funding source.

We are proud and thankful for the Ayer Fund, as it provides a meaningful way for us to live out our Community core value by giving in fullness.

Ayer Fund Committee Members: Jennifer Clark - Chair, Doug Brendel, Patsy Calhoun, Rev. Brad Clark, Karen Esperson, Phyllis Greene.

Missions/Outreach Ministry Delivers “Good Works”

Under the leadership of Ralph Johnson and loyal parishioners, the Missions/Outreach Ministry continues to “do all such good works” of Ascension. We have much for which to be thankful as this dedicated group identifies and serves the needs of local, regional and international organizations on behalf of Ascension.



Thanks to our Missions/Outreach Ministry, this B+SAFE camper shares a moment with a goat at Appleton Farm, summer 2016.

In addition to working with non-profit organizations, Missions/Outreach established the Winter Warm-Up Sale. Now in its 11th year, this local sale features gently used and new winter clothing sold at nominal prices. This event fills a need as each year more people from surrounding communities attend. Proceeds from the Winter Warm-Up Sale are donated to local non-profit organizations.

Our Missions/Outreach Ministry is a vital part of who we are, as it connects Ascension outwardly to our communities. Each of us is invited to serve on the Missions/Outreach Ministry as we all seek to live out our mission.

Missions/Outreach Ministry:

Ralph Johnson – Chair,

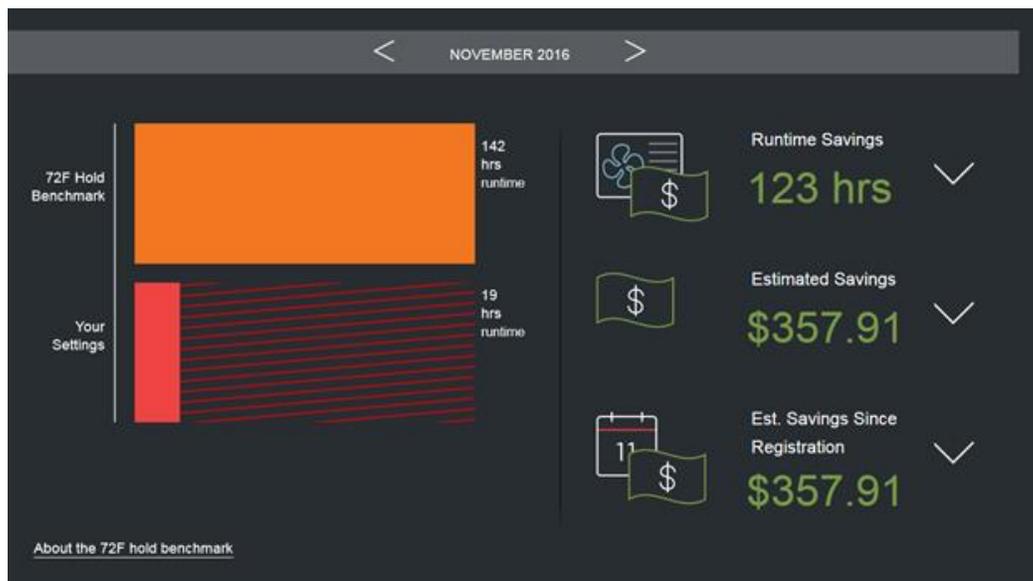
Kitty Bartholomew · Rev. Brad Clark · Charlotte Dodge · Betty Dorman

Dawn Edwards · Moira McLaughlin · Barbara Ostberg · Carol Poirier

Hope Wigglesworth · Peg Whittier.

The Buzz on Ascension's Ecobees: Real Savings

Thanks to the Diocesan Green Grant we received last spring, AMC was able to focus on ways the church could be more green. One major area that needed attention was our energy consumption during the heating season. The level of (or lack of) efficiency and the amount of money spent for oil and gas in our various buildings goes up each year. Annually, we budget roughly \$8,000 for oil and gas, or more than half of our total utilities cost.



Ecobee report for Parish Office, November 2016: shows estimated savings of \$357.91 for 19 hours of heat runtime based on office usage and Ipswich weather conditions.

We are fortunate to have parishioner, engineer and environmental enthusiast, Steve Wilson spearhead the Ecobee project. Those who attended the Vestry Pie Breakfast on Sunday, November 22 were treated to Steve's presentation highlighting our Ecobee data.

Our thanks also goes to Sexton David Paine who plays an important day-to-day role in the success of the Ecobees by knowing our facility so well, and working with our HVAC vendor to ensure our systems are running smoothly.

We are grateful for the Diocese's commitment to Creation and providing such opportunities as the Green Grant program. The Ascension Ecobee project shows us just how effective we can be in reducing our energy consumption, and in turn, being better stewards of our planet.

Camelot is Calling!

Where Are We On The Fun Meter??

The Events Committee is pleased to announce our first community event for 2017, ShamRock, an evening of fun music to chase away the winter blues. **ShamRock will take place March 11th**, in the Dorman Gym, featuring The Orville Giddings Band. The event includes a can food drive in support of Open Door.

In addition to the fun and fellowship, the funds we raise at events such as the ShamRock are crucial to our annual operating budget. Once again, the Events Committee has been charged with the ambitious goal of raising \$15,000 for the current fiscal year.

Please consider joining the Events Committee to help generate community ideas or take part in one or more of our events throughout the year. Our goal is to have different event team captains per event; this way people don't get burnt out and we keep the fun meter high for everyone. We even have training documents and notes for each event, so planning can be moderately easy. If you would like to work as an Events captain trainee, please let us know and we'll welcome you aboard.

Events Committee:

- Heather Campbell
- Frank Corbin
- Jim Field
- Marilyn Hayes
- Eric Jacklin
- Tracey Paine
- Janice Shea