

hello
SUMMER

Clergy

The Rt. Rev. Glenda S. Curry,
XII Bishop of Alabama

The Very Rev. Richard Lawson,
Bishop-elect

The Rev. John "Jack" T. Alvey, Jr.,
Rector

The Rev. Emily C. Collette,
Associate Rector

Program Staff

Mike Sparks,
Organist & Choir Master

Ashley Monachelli,
Director of Family Ministries

Kathy Lounsbury,
Senior Life Coordinator

Sam Herman,
Youth Minister

Rebecca Posey,
AEDS Director

Support Staff

Olivia Sheffield
Parish Office Manager

Karyn Watts,
Finance & Databse Officer

Martin Hoerner,
Sexton

Paige Reese & Tiffany Jones,
Nursery

Summer Edition
June & July 2026

Ascension on the Mountain



Parish Photo

Episcopal Church of the Ascension

1912 Canyon Road

Vestavia Hills, AL 35216

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Dear Friends,

I want to remind you of something I said on Ascension Sunday as we anticipate the summer months:

"For us, we know Jesus is the New Temple, the New Jerusalem. We wait with him in spirit and in truth, wherever we are this summer – here in Birmingham, or at the lake or beach, or on the road, or wherever the next few months take you."

I explored that pastorally with you then and now I want to offer a few ways to live into that truth. As you know, sometime around Memorial Day the calendar starts to scatter. Families head to the beach, to the mountains, to Disney World, to grandparents, to Camp McDowell. College kids come home and disappear into summer jobs. And it's easy to feel, both as a parishioner and as a priest, like the church goes a little dormant in June and July.



I'd like to push back on that. I don't believe the church does or should go dormant during the summer. Rather, church looks different.

The whole point of the Ascension is that Jesus is no longer confined to one place. He is not waiting for you back at the building. He is with you in the car, at the lake house, in the hotel room, on the porch at your in-laws'. The blessing he gave as he ascended into heaven still hangs in the air and now rests on you wherever you go.

So here's what we're offering between now and August to help you remember and embrace that blessing:

On the Road Again | Summer Podcast. A short weekly conversation from your clergy and members of your staff dropping every Monday. We'll wrestle with questions about our faith and even offering different perspectives. Listen in the car, on your run or walk, in the gym, while doing housework/yard-work. There will be six-episodes.

Flat Jesus. Pick one up on your way out of church and take him with you. To the beach. To the ballpark. To your in-laws' kitchen. Post a picture and tag the church. It started as a kids' project, but it turns out grown-ups need the same reminder children do – that Jesus comes with us.

Summer Reading List. Clergy and staff are each picking a book or podcast that has shaped us as Christians. We will post the entire list soon and then feature the books throughout the summer. We may even find some time to discuss them more in depth. Stay tuned!

None of this is meant to replace Sunday morning. Streaming our services live. Come when you can. We'll be glad to see you. But for the weeks you can't, remember that the blessing of Jesus travels with you. The risen and ascended Christ doesn't stay put.

I hope to see you soon!

Jack Alvey
Rector

Financial Summary as of April 30, 2026

	Actual	Budget	Difference
Pledge Income	\$ 280,640	\$ 273,456	\$ 7,184
Other Income	\$ 44,507	\$ 40,444	\$ 4,063
Total Revenues	\$ 325,147	\$ 313,900	\$ 11,247
Personnel	\$ 185,528	\$ 193,156	\$ 7,628
Program	\$ 11,879	\$ 13,629	\$ 1,750
Outreach	\$ 31,053	\$ 32,532	\$ 1,479
Admin & Bldgs & Grounds	\$ 57,968	\$ 72,458	\$ 14,490
Total Disbursements	\$ 286,428	\$ 311,775	\$ 25,347
Net Surplus / (Deficit)	\$ 38,718	\$ 2,125	\$ 36,593

Dear Friends,

We are approaching the summer months when life generally slows down to a more relaxed way of living – much needed after the busy month of May! At Ascension, some activities will take a break, while others will be introduced to keep us connected in a more casual way.

Your vestry has had a busy year so far, with its committees being tasked with different responsibilities. One of these committees, Strategic Planning, has created a vision for Ascension looking ahead into the future.

The vestry has approved this vision in the form of a statement as follows:

Grounded in the sacramental life of the Episcopal Church, Ascension seeks to grow as a vibrant and welcoming parish where people of all ages deepen their faith, build meaningful relationships across generations, and are equipped to make Christ known by our love for all.

As we grow from a pastoral-sized parish toward a program-sized parish, we seek to strengthen spiritual formation, raise up lay leaders, deepen intergenerational connections, and expand our witness of Christ's love within our community.

Along with the vision statement we have reviewed Our Core Values, Strategic Priorities, and our Collect for Ascension. Our mission has remained the same: **to Make Christ Known By Our Love For All**. In all our doings we look to God for guidance.

You may have noticed how our congregation has been growing over the past several years. Every time I share the Peace at the 10:30 service, I am surprised at how many people I do not know; during the service, when the cross leads the children to Sunday School, I see lots more eager faces following it. Growth is good, but we should have a plan to accommodate such growth – which brings me to another item on the strategic planning agenda: Master Planning.

Your vestry has been discussing ways to expand our physical space and renovate our existing space to achieve a better flow and accommodate growth. We are in a strong financial position and have decided to take the next step. We have hired Williams Blackstock Architects to work with us to create a master plan which will enable us to live into our vision.

As your senior warden and as a senior member of the parish, I give my complete support to the master plan process. It is one way I can leave a legacy for future generations, giving them a sure foundation to build upon as prior generations have done for us.

God bless you all,

Elizabeth Tanner
Senior Warden



Elizabeth Tanner
Senior Warden

When my kids were young, I always looked forward to the first few weeks of summer. The slower pace and more relaxed schedules were such a welcome relief after the busyness of May! I hope your family has time this summer to stay in pajamas a little longer, slow down, and enjoy moments of rest together.

The staff has compiled a list of books and podcasts to help strengthen your faith over the summer, including suggestions especially for children. We hope these resources encourage meaningful conversations and help your family grow together in faith.

What does faith in everyday life look like? How can we, as parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and caregivers, help nurture faith in our children while also strengthening our own?

I recently came across an article that shared practical ways families can grow in faith together through four simple faith skills.

The Four Faith Skills

These ancient practices help followers of Jesus become more like Him:

- **Pray** – Talk to God through prayer.
- **Hear** – Hearing from God through His Word. His creation and His people.
- **Talk** – Talking about faith with friends and mentors and hearing them talk about their faith.
- **Live** – Learning to worship by living life in a way that honors God.

Formation in the lives of our children and in our own lives is not fast or easy work. It is the slow, faithful journey of following Jesus. We have the privilege and responsibility of modeling intentional spiritual habits for the next generation.



Ashley Monachelli
Director of
Family Ministries

Summer Dates to Remember



June 7

Club 345 will walk to Davenport's after church for pizza! Please pick up at the church at 1:00 p.m. All rising third graders are invited!



June 15-18

Vacation Bible School



June 24

Bring your favorite game to share with friends!
Bingo included!



June 28

EYC at Oak Mountain
We will leave immediately after church and return by 3:30 p.m.



July 17

Barons Game



July 22

Help make materials for Godly Play!
Bring a snack to share and join us from 6:30-8:00 p.m.



July 24

Club 345 & EYC at Vestavia Bowl
1:00-3:00 p.m.



August 16

Blessing of the Backpacks

The Adventures of "Flat Jesus"

"Flat Jesus" was inspired by the book *Flat Stanley* by Jeff Brown. In the story, Stanley becomes flat and travels all over, having exciting adventures along the way.

This summer, "Flat Jesus" is a fun way to help keep our Ascension community connected, even while many families are traveling and enjoying busy summer schedules.

Color your "Flat Jesus" and take him with you wherever you go — to the beach, the grocery store, sporting events, family vacations, or anywhere else your summer adventures lead!

Take photos of "Flat Jesus" joining your activities as a reminder that Jesus is always with us wherever we go. You may even spark conversations about faith along the way! Please email me all your pictures and we will post on Facebook and Instagram throughout the summer.
Ashley.monachelli@ascensionepiscopal.org

Copies of "Flat Jesus" will be available in Terrill Foyer.

Scan this QR code to print Jesus at home



flat Jesus by the pool!

Food Truck Festival

The 2026 version of the Food Truck Festival was another huge success! The food trucks saw a steady stream of vendors all night. Our congregation was warm and welcoming to our neighbors. The band played tunes for all to enjoy. The kids got some of their end of the school year wiggles out. And for the first time in several years, the weather cooperated! A special thanks to Christy Smith and all who volunteered their time and talent for this annual event.



April/May photo recap

8 am Congregation



Children's Chapel Choir



EYC Fresh Vibes Festival



Palm Sunday



Senior Recognition Sunday



Sunday School Olympics



Sunday Lunch



Palm Sunday



Gumbo Gala





BIRTHDAYS & *Anniversaries*



June Birthdays

- 2 George Jones
- 4 Jessica Wiley
- 5 Elizabeth Tanner
- 6 Dee Anne Poehler
- 6 Jack Young
- 7 Alice Hovey
- 9 Callahan Thompson
- 10 Buddy Sharbel
- 10 Beau Mims
- 10 Ginger Issinoff
- 12 Andrew Ault
- 12 Hope Hovey
- 12 Ann Brennan
- 13 Goodloe Lees
- 13 Joseph Gentry
- 13 Kaitlin Rothschadl
- 14 Kelly Sorrell
- 15 James Wilson
- 15 Tandy Stevens
- 16 Colleen Baird
- 16 Paula Stringfellow
- 17 Mary Claire Bandy
- 21 Sarah Parker
- 21 Liam Dews
- 23 James Young
- 24 Mary Elizabeth Jourdan
- 24 Shep Mims
- 24 Matt Tackett
- 26 Lars Porter
- 26 Helen Dolive
- 27 Sloane Sinor
- 29 Cathy McCain
- 29 Devin Dolive
- 29 Caleb Smelser

July Birthdays

- 1 Lauren Dews
- 2 George Solomon
- 2 Jeannie Morton
- 3 Lela Morgan
- 4 Sam Basu
- 5 Edmund West
- 5 Ruby Thompson
- 5 Stella Greene
- 6 Bob Carr
- 7 Sarah Jones
- 8 JT Thompson
- 8 Heidi Carrie
- 11 Caralyn McDaniel
- 11 Wyn Smith
- 15 Lucy Evans
- 15 Melissa Sinor
- 17 Joyce Harrington
- 17 Sarah Heaslett
- 19 Welles Gould
- 20 Alex McDowell
- 21 Paige Bradley
- 23 Ryan Morgan
- 23 Ella Burke
- 24 Amelia Downey
- 25 Massey Gentry
- 25 James Hovey
- 25 Martin Sparks
- 25 Wil Sinor
- 29 Mae Hoerner
- 29 Donna Rollan
- 31 Julianne Baird

July Anniversaries

- 2 Brooke & Race Banks
- 2 Doll & Gregg Bennett
- 7 Kathy & Dick Lounsbury
- 9 Mary & Jeremy Downey
- 15 Leslie & Buddy Sharbel
- 16 Elaine & Richard Graham
- 17 Davonia & Frank Buck
- 19 Barbara & Tom Cochran
- 19 Deborah & Pete Hooper
- 19 Katie & Ian Peters
- 21 Mary Anne & Jon Hornbuckle
- 22 Rebecca & Ryan Posey
- 24 Ruth & David Snow
- 24 Stacey & Vaughn Sparks
- 25 Martha & Bill Oyston
- 25 Mary Elaine & Ben Mims

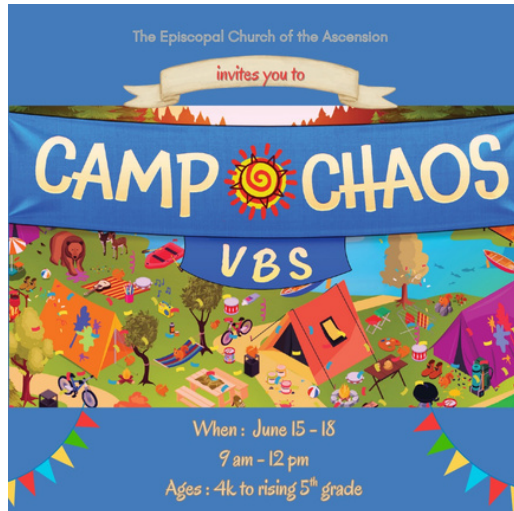
July Anniversaries

- 1 Lissa & Jay Lutenbacher
- 1 Sarah Heaslett & Mike Sparks
- 4 Sally & Martin Hoerner
- 6 Kelly & Walker Sorrell
- 12 Jamie & Charley Grimes
- 17 Carolyn & Mike Eike
- 20 Ann & Eric Brennan
- 23 Jean Marie & Glenn Banks
- 23 Marisa Mitchell & Chris Durst



Episcopal Church of the Ascension
1912 Canyon Road
Vestavia Hills, AL 35216-1799

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



Service Times
8 am and 10:30 am, Sunday
Noon, Wednesday

u p c o m i n g e v e n t s



Casual Church

June 7 & July 12



Club 345 | Pizza Lunch

June 7



Men's Breakfast

June 11



Camp Chaos | VBS

June 15 -18



Parish Game Night

June 24



EYC Picnic & Hike

June 28



Barons Game Family Night

July 17



Harp Concert

July 25



EYC & Club 345 Bowling

July 24



On the Road Again | Summer Podcast

June 8 | On Being Episcopalian

June 15 | On the Bible

June 22 | On Atonement

July 13 | On Religion

July 20 | On the Eucharist

July 27 | On Doubt

TO REGISTER, RSVP, OR LEARN MORE ABOUT THESE EVENTS, PLEASE VIEW THEM IN REALM
OR VISIT THE ANNOUNCEMENTS SECTION ON OUR WEBSITE