

# Senior Warden's Report

## Annual Meeting: January 15, 2012

Report prepared by Jim Kenney  
Senior Warden

Last year was, for our parish, a year of change, self-evaluation and preparation. This year has been a year of success and fulfillment on a particular and most important front. Through the hard work of the Search Committee and discernment of the Vestry, we prayerfully call the Reverend Sherrill Page to be our third rector and she accepted. She brings calmness and a quiet confidence, to borrow from the Book of Common Prayer, that will serve us well at this time in the history of Ascension. From comments from our members, I have every reason to believe that she is the right person to follow in the shoes of Chuck and Rona as we seek to understand and do God's will as a congregation and as individuals.

At the same time, the Diocese has a new bishop. Bishop Budde has already spent time with this parish by presiding at our service of new ministry with Sherrill along with other visits to St. Mary's County. She has shown a special interest in congregation building and shared ministries. That will be important to all of the Episcopal parishes in this region and throughout the Diocese. In that regard, Sherrill, Margaret Maupin and I have participated in a Region Six Collaborative Ministries Committee that was tasked to explore ways that parishes in Region 6 can work together to serve more efficiently and effectively our parishes and our communities.

Other than that, and to paraphrase Garrison Keillor, it has been quiet year in our parish community. Not quiet in the sense that nothing was happening, but quiet in the sense that things ran rather smoothly and efficiently because we are blessed with talented parishioners that get things done. When there is a problem, they find a way to solve it. We see that in the continued success of our outreach and inreach ministries in these times of greater need with HOPE, Heath Share, Three Oaks, the Food Pantry, Souper Sundays, WARM, and the Coat Drive, just to name a few. We have continued to meet our financial obligations even when there have been some surprises along the way and through generous donations we were able to purchase new hymnals to expand our music offerings. We have maintained our worship services and our Sunday School, especially at the younger level, with the help of Sarah Chen and a core of dedicated teachers and this year they have been aided by story tellers from the congregation. We have been able to provide Melanie Dement with help in the nursery. We have done this because of the hard work and dedication of many people; the AMEN Group, the ECW, Lay readers and Lectors, our Acolytes, the Choir and our musicians, Joe Gough, Debbie, the Dynamic Davis Duo, and Diane, just to name a few. When there was a need, people stepped up to take their place in the life, worship and the ministries of Ascension.

Even in a quiet year, there are surprises and challenges, many of which cost time and money. This year we became aware that we needed a new fire suppression system and a new refrigerator in the kitchen to meet safety and health department requirements. At the

Essex House, a new water heater was necessary along with new air conditioning. These events certainly added more grey to George Merchant's hair, but he dealt with it effectively. Through the efforts of Tom Meiser, we got the lower parking lot re-surfaced at no cost. We hopefully have solved the sewage system problems that have delayed our on-site participation in the WARM program. We recognize that our HVAC with electrical systems are of concern and that at some point in time, a new roof will be necessary. In addition, our stained glass is in need of protection and enhanced support. For these reasons, the Finance Committee and the Vestry have included a line item in the budget for necessary maintenance and capital improvements to prepare for the future.

During the year, a committee headed by Susan Stachelczyk has been considering the feasibility of acquiring the adjacent property now housing the Rescue Squad. There is consensus that we should move in that direction if at all possible. This will be an important focus for the Vestry in the coming year.

In summary, much has been done, but there is still much to do. On behalf of an appreciative Vestry, I want to thank our church family for all that you do in making this a very special place to come together for worship and to work, pray and give our time, treasure and talent in building the Kingdom of God.