

Episcopal Church of the Ascension
Vestry Minutes
May 22, 2016

PRESENT: The Rev. Randy Lord-Wilkinson, Betsy Hasegawa, Rose Buck, Janet King, Denise Lionetti, Gary McLaughlin, Zadinga Ogada, John Pruessner, Najma Stubblefield, Paul Whitmore; **Absent:** Enid Cole and Avin Lalmansingh.

The meeting opened with the usual Lambeth Bible Study, concluding at 2:05 when the business part of the meeting opened. Najma was appointed Timekeeper for the meeting.

Denise commented on the Health and Well-being Committee's contributions to the congregation, especially the monthly blood pressure screenings, and that the committee is having a positive impact.

CONSENT AGENDA: Paul moved that the consent agenda be adopted as presented; Denise seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

Parish Life Committee. Betsy and former Vestry member Lauren Kingsland had prepared a list of anticipated events per year that require Parish Life support (included in the information packet distributed prior to the meeting). There are five parishioners who have indicated willingness to share the committee's responsibilities on an ad hoc basis; Megan Didavi, Lovetta Willie, Anika Lalmansingh, Dorett Sutherland and Lauren herself. Betsy and Lauren attempted to have them attend the meeting, but none of them could make it. Randy suggested we try to get them to come to the next meeting.

The annual Ascension picnic is coming up shortly, and Janet, as Vestry liaison, asked how Ascension gets the supplies needed for events. Randy explained that sexton Betty Lavern purchases items as needed for the church.

Renovation. Randy went over the costs associated with the items the congregation supported to upgrade the church building:

- Sound system (already done with existing dedicated funds): \$7,799 for two Bose nave speakers, a chancel monitor speaker, and a wireless handheld mic
- Lighting improvements in the nave: \$23,500 for two LED "halos"
- Accessibility (flooring modifications): \$45,000 for lowering the chancel, putting the pulpit and altar on platforms, and updating the flooring
- Lighting enhancement in the narthex: \$8,362 for new main entrance doors with glass

Excluding audio improvements which have already been completed and funded by the Worship Memorial Fund, the total comes to less than \$80,000. The Vestry plans to offer a three-year building renovation pledge to the parish to finance the improvements. John has contacts in the lighting arena; Randy asked him to do some research to see if we can reduce the planned cost of the lighting.

Facilities – garbage disposal. Randy reported that, although a garbage disposal in the kitchen is needed, WSSC does not allow it. No churches in the WSSC area have one. The Vestry discussed the continuing problem of the bad smell and agreed that more frequent (non-emergency) cleanings of the grease trap – 6 times per year vs. the current 4 - might alleviate the situation. Betsy will have Kathy, the Parish Administrator, call the cleaning company and ask about the feasibility of 2 more cleanings per year.

NEW BUSINESS

Sunday School survey. The Sunday School teachers have developed a survey that has been sent out to all email congregants. They, and Randy, have asked that all parishioners take it – the early questions are generic to all. After that the questions only pertain to parents; those without Sunday School age children do not need to answer anything beyond that point.

Counters. Paul reported on money counter events; two computers have been donated for the sole use of weekly income counting. Paul has been working on developing a program to replace the outdated adding machine approach, and has written and/or updated counting instructions. Departing Head Counter Hollis King is supportive of doing the count electronically. The new Head Counters are jointly Janet King, Gary McLaughlin and Paul himself. Paul reported that there are now six teams of two counters each, and he would like to add two more teams (or 4 more counters), particularly in order to facilitate substituting for one another as needed.

Gary reported that he had attended training at the Diocese on handling of money. It was stressed that every possible protection be instituted to ensure the sanctity of the weekly count. In this vein, the Diocese recommends that instead of established two-person teams, counters be assigned different counting partners each counting session. As more of the counters become proficient with the computerized counting, flexibility will increase.

Youth Group Work Camp fundraising. The Youth Group wants to raise funds for their annual summer trip to Philadelphia for work camp. Adult scholarships and transportation costs for work camp are their primary goals. Among thoughts for fundraising were game and/or movie nights, asking area restaurants to share a portion of profits on a specific night, Krispy Kreme coupon sales, a “charity” basketball game, and a silent auction. All fundraising must be approved by the Vestry. Janet moved that the Youth Group be allowed to proceed with fundraising for financing the work group project; Gary seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Enid’s discernment for the diaconate. Enid’s studies and discernment for the diaconate leave little time for her to fulfill her responsibilities as Senior Warden. It was with regret and gratitude that her resignation was accepted. Betsy has agreed to succeed her as Senior Warden. Janet King

was chosen to complete Betsy's term as Junior Warden. A new Vestry person will be selected to take Janet's place.

OPEN MIC

Cottage Meetings for the Budget. Janet reported that the outcome of these meetings seems to be that the parish should continue to support our current programs and outreach. In order to do so, various approaches to increasing income were suggested. We need to find something to replace our former income-producing events (Montgomery County Fair, the Holiday Bazaar, etc.). Randy pointed out that we already have great presence on electronic media. Possibilities included doing a better job of advertising what we have to offer, perhaps at Gaithersburg community events (e.g., the Book Festival, Old Town Days).

Agenda Items and Long Vestry meetings. Gary's concerns, brought up at the previous Vestry meeting, were addressed. Regarding how to get an item on the Vestry agenda, Betsy explained that an email to the executive committee (rector and wardens) is the path. In addition, the length of the meetings was discussed. At the beginning of each meeting, agenda items are assigned an estimated allotted time by the person(s) who will address them, but actual discussions are always many times the estimate. The problem, Betsy pointed out, is not that the Vestry spends too much time on each item, it is rather that of unrealistic time setting.

Missioner position. Randy told the Vestry that financial campaigns can be for items other than building improvement; specifically, they can be used to finance personnel such as missioners. He mentioned that such a position could even be one shared with another parish.

Wear and tear. Janet reported that the cardboard inserts (slid into the wooden holders on either side of the nave) that are used to identify the current Sunday (e.g., Trinity Sunday, 10th Sunday after Pentecost, 1st Sunday of Epiphany) are old and have become somewhat tattered. . Randy said that this was OK as they are no longer needed. The liturgical date is indicated in every bulletin.

ADJOURNMENT: At 4:27 p.m., Rose moved that the meeting be adjourned. Janet seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Sari Stoddard
Clerk of the Vestry