

St. Anne's Parish
Vestry Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, February 14, 2023

Clergy & Vestry Members Present

Rev. Manoj Zacharia
Alvin Collins
Lauren Dana-Evans
Kevin Hays
Jason Houser
Townsend McNitt
Glenn Mortoro
Susan Thaxton
Howard Buskirk
Phyllis Everette
Tom May
Emily Langston
Katie Burke

Vestry Members Absent

Katie Creely
David Huggins
Bill Silva

Welcome & Opening Prayer

7:03 Meeting began with Manoj+ telling stories of Sts. Cyril and Methodius. Reading from *Lesser Feasts and Fasts 2006*. He concluded with the comment that being all things for all people is the model of people who are willing to translate the truths of scripture and tradition to a culture that desperately needs it and hoped that the vestry may work for this.

Manoj+ then offered prayers of thanksgiving; for the church; the presiding bishop; the bishops diocesan; the candidates for bishop; all who labor in any denomination for peace, justice, and the integrity of creation; for all those in civil authority at the federal, state, and local level and that they may be guided by wisdom and spirit of justice and mercy; those in the parish family who are suffering in body, mind, or spirit and that they may be able to endure; for the iron rosary requests; for those who asked for prayers; and for those suffering from gun violence and natural calamities like the earthquakes in Turkey.

Houser began by thanking new vestry members. Invites any questions that newcomers may have.

None were offered.

Rector's Report

Manoj+ began by stating that he has no formal rector's report and would instead like to turn everyone's attention to the Parochial Report.

Parochial Report

Manoj+ noted that the Report can be found in the vestry folder. He then explained these are canonically mandated to be filed by the Episcopal Church that is then handed over to the local diocese. It keeps track of attendance and other numerically based activities at the church. Manoj+ then ran through many of the line items which can be found in full in the report, pointing out the following statistics:

- St. Anne's has 1660 total congregants.
 - This is a rise from 1637 last year.
 - The congregation age cohorts are:
 - 315 children
 - 133 youth
 - 181 young adults
 - 514 middle adults
 - 517 senior adults
- The Church's total attendance is calculated at 15665/52 Sundays =301 people per Sunday
- The only difference from last year is that increase in both membership and attendance.

May asked how inactive status is determined.

Manoj+ responded that it is determined by financial contribution and attendance, ie. parishioners who haven't come/given.

Houser asked if the total operating income and revenue determines the church's disbursement to the Diocese.

Mortoro responded saying it can either be determined by 18% of operating revenue plus 4% of operating expenses. Looking ahead to 2024, the disbursement will be \$10,000 less than this year. There are two ways of calculating this: either do a three-year running average or just the last year. Because of the Payment Protection Program, that added in as income which is why the church "took a big hit" this year. The Diocesan disbursement for next year will be determined by this year's income because that is \$10,000 less than the three-year average.

Houser entertained a motion to approve the Report before inviting questions.

Langston asked if weekly attendance was counted in addition to average attendance.

Manoj+ responded that they are different and that the church is not allowed to include the weekly attendance into the average Sunday attendance.

Houser clarified that online attendance doesn't count.

Manoj+ responded that it counted for line 20b but no other part.

May added that it counts for God.

Houser invited any further questions.

Everette asked if specifics are tracked on streaming.

Manoj+ responded that they are not and doing so would require tracking IP addresses.

Buskirk then asked where the church peaked for membership.

Manoj+ answered that the church didn't take many off the roles for many years. During the interim 1200 people were removed due to death, moving, absence, etc.

Buskirk then asked about the cutoff for communicants in good standing.

Manoj+ answered that for 400 communicants a church gets one diocesan delegate.

Unfortunately, they don't round up, which is good because then we'd pay more in assessments.

Houser asked if there were any further questions and then reintroduced the motion to pass the Parochial Report.

May motioned and McNitt seconded.

Motion passed unanimously.

Manoj+ then signed the document and passed it over to be signed by the Warden, Treasurer, and Registrar.

Standing Committee Discussion

Manoj+ noted that the church is in the process of reducing the number of standing committees but it's a slow process. Next month people on standing committees will be announced.

Cemetery, stewardship, memorial gifts, etc. are standing committees of the vestry and many of these haven't been filled in the past and so the first step is to look at the fiscal policy and determine what is actually germane to the vestry at the moment and then offer policy recommendations for the vestry.

Houser pointed out he wasn't aware of the memorials committee as an example of what may need to be reviewed. He then opened discussion for questions.

Buskirk asked how, logistically, where the committees come from

Manoj+ answers that there are two sources of authority: fiscal policy and vestry bylaws.

Houser then yielded to Mortoro to give the Treasurer's Report.

Treasurer Report

Mortoro pointed out that he sent out the Treasurer's Report and then proceeded to give an overview: January yielded \$12,000 positive income but looks like we're behind budget because we didn't do a good job calendarizing the budget and overstated January. Cemetery had no income in January and lost ~\$3,000 but that's expected to come back later in the year. PASA now halfway through the year and shows gains of \$6,000. The endowment gained back \$280,000 in January. The move to Merrill Lynch is nearly done. Will soon convene the investment committee to meet with Merrill Lynch, hopefully in March.

He concluded by inviting questions and then moving on to the PASA Transfer Motion.

PASA Transfer Motion

Mortoro moved to authorize the treasurer to move \$500,000 from the PASA checking account to invest in an FDIC-insured, low risk, interest-bearing income instrument such as a preferred deposit cash position, certificate of deposit, or treasury note. Merrill Lynch will offer ~4% on preferred deposit, CDs are getting close to that, and treasury notes go up and down.

Hays seconded.

Mortoro pointed out that PASA has \$825,000 in the bank but does not earn interest. PASA is not regularly charged except when the church has a cash flow problem. The money has thus grown.

He ended saying that he would come back later to ask what to do with the money earned in interest.

Motion passed unanimously.

Stewardship Update

Houser gave the report in the stead of Huggins, reporting that 85% of the goal of overall pledges has been reached.

Manoj+ noted that he believes that the church has more or less reached its financial goal but that should be checked.

Houser reported that he and Hays have made calls to newer members to ask for pledges and for previous pledgers.

Hays reported they went very positively and thinks that people reaching out asked for input and used it as an opportunity to interface with new people.

Houser pointed out people don't answer phones anymore, so texting was also done.

Manoj+ added that he was impressed that Johnnies and Middies pledge.

Houser recognized Huggins for his work for the past 6 years in raising money for the church. and concluded that fundraising should be done in a cohesive and strategic way in the future.

Registrar Update (Liaison Program & Committee Assignments)

Hays began by saying that simply reaching out to liaison with ministry leaders goes a long way and invites comments from them and opens up communications. It provides an opportunity for the vestry to learn from them. Online, there are two flows: the registrar's and the vestry liaison (which was given as a handout). He stated it was as simple as getting ahold of your ministry leaders, see what they have to report, have them send a report or write a report, and then present a summary of findings to the vestry. He noted that he prefers Microsoft Word because he plans to integrate info in his own reports.

Hays then went on to explain the flowchart he handed out and that communication was more of an opportunity and tool to reach out and let the community know that the vestry is engaged and involved in it.

Langston asked how to know who is responsible for what groups.

Hays pointed out a spreadsheet in the shared folder where one can find who they're managing which has all the relevant info. He's in the process of simplifying it and reducing the amount of information presented on the spreadsheet without losing any of the data.

Houser pointed out that every month a different liaison will brief the vestry and that this is a masterpiece of U.S. naval planning.

Hays added that it was also in e-mail.

Houser said the e-mail should be identical to what's in the OneDrive. He then asked if everyone knows what the Registrar does? He's the keeper of the 300-year-old stamp

May asked if the stamp is really that old.

Manoj+ left to bring it in.

Strategic Planning RFI Update

Thaxton began by restating that they have had a 3–5-year plan and have been trying to get away from traditional church consultants and how we can think about ourselves differently. got virtually no hits on that. One was very inexpensive, and one was very expensive. Manoj+ shared within his networks and didn't get much either. There was a sense that it felt different and like corporate church. They have since dialed back their call and are hoping for a few better options. Manoj+ re-entered the room with church seal.

May stamped the handout.

Thaxton continued by saying that Bill Wilbur has been working with an architect to make the church more wheelchair accessible. This is currently in process and has a donor who has identified funds they'd like to contribute to the process.

May asked if it comes under DDA legislation.

Thaxton corrected that it's the ADA. Churches are exempt from ADA except for staff. It's not required to but certainly should, so should do things like extending the railing coming off the altar.

Collins pointed out you don't think about barriers to entry until you're there. He then asked what the issue was about the corporate church model?

Manoj+ answered it was more of a passing comment than a thought-out criticism.

Thaxton added that it also became apparent that the church didn't have staff for a "corporate church" model.

Houser pointed out that accessibility falls under purview of the Junior and Senior Wardens. The internet is point-to-point and goes down occasionally. There was a request made by the IT committee to upgrade to Verizon FiOS which is now available in circle. Additionally, the committee wants to install ethernet cables properly and have coverings/insulation for them. Lastly, a desire for a lockdown phone control installation in the event of an emergency. The Total came to a total of \$8662. Traditionally these items have been funded by the capital account.

Everett asks for expansion on lockdown procedures.

Houser pointed out that since all the mass shootings, Charleston, Charlottesville, etc. there has been a plan and has been developed over the past three years. still a lot of conversation about security and security training in church.

Everett pointed out that this is probably not going away in society.

Houser pointed out that even the car that hit the iron fence raised questions about the safety at the church. He wondered why there was no camera in the busiest intersection in downtown Annapolis.

He then entertained a motion for approval.

McNitt motioned.

Motion was seconded.

Motion passed unanimously.

Vestry Retreat Planning

Date/Venue

Houser moved on to say that May 19 and 20th Friday and Saturday were determined for the retreat after polling. Mortoro has tentatively reserved Park Place as a retreat location. Still looking at how to structure and also looking for a facilitator. Hopefully this will inform the strategic plan as well.

Goals & Objectives

He then went on to say that when asking what God is calling us to do, one is usually mired in what we can get back in service. Hope that we are in a period in the Episcopal Church where the overall church demographics are declining but St. Anne's is seeing positive numbers. He ended by saying that the best defense is offense and that maybe if the vestry is thoughtful and listens to God, then maybe they can find two or three areas to grow.

Collins added that he loves things like Clay Street Peace and when visiting, someone there asked what church wanted out of it.

Manoj+ pointed out that it was a good question. Why do we do the things we do here? Truth and reconciliation is one facet. What is God calling us to do to make an impact? This retreat will allow us to dig into first principles as to the why and then we can figure out strategic plan on the how.

Everette added that this sounds like a class she's currently taking on morality and ethics of church.

Unplanned Items

Burke was recognized by Houser.

She began by saying that her item did not require any vestry action as it concerns the Winifred and Gordon foundation for Truth and Reconciliation. It was supposed to be used to help build a relationship with St. Philip's. It was stunted by covid but now is picking back up as an interfaith group. They figured out finances as falling under the St. Phillip's Family Life Center which is a non-profit. They have a budget and a full program year including speaker series, webinars on things like the language of anti-racism, etc. At the most recent meeting, they decided to make a one-time donation to help the Truth and Reconciliation get off ground before they figure out complete finances. They decided on \$5,000 which isn't the complete budget which would go a long way. Mortoro told them that the vestry doesn't need to sign off on it. Burke just wanted to let the vestry know.

Mortoro pointed out that accounts run by a committee don't need vestry approval.

Thaxton asked if the grant is unrestricted.

Burke responded yes.

Buskirk asked about Google: should we not be using Realm for vestry business?

Houser agreed but there have been so many changes for platforms that he wasn't sure if it would make sense.

Buskirk asks if realm could begin to be populated with documents due to familiarity of Realm as a trial.

Manoj+ responded saying that it necessitates that we actually get training on Realm. Next month there will be a presentation and training for using Realm. The realm project was initiated in 2018 and it's been 5 years and we're still transitioning.

Houser invites emails for him or Manoj+ if there are some docs missing. He then invited other business.

May pointed out that it's been hard to keep track of parishioners because we don't have an updated parish directory. The old one lists landlines and outdated pictures.

Manoj+ said that it's not a hard ask and can derive it from realm, but there will be no photos. A photo directory takes a bit more.

Dana-Evans pointed out it would be helpful after COVID to have an updated photo directory.

Approve January & Minutes from Post-Annual Meeting Huddle

Houser motioned to approve minutes.

Approved unanimously.

ECF Vestry Resource Guide & Closing Prayer Sign-up

Houser then invited people to sign up.

Buskirk asked for the same book for the vestry to read.

Manoj+ chose *Learning from London*

Houser agreed.

May asked if London is a person or a place.

Houser responded that it is a place.

Manoj+ pointed out that it is not London, Ontario.

Buskirk volunteered to host a book discussion during the retreat.

Closing Prayer (Jason)

Houser offered the closing prayer.

Meeting adjourned. 8:10