

St. Anne's Parish

Vestry Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, February 13, 2024

Clergy and Vestry Members Present

The Rev. Dr. Manoj Zacharia (Rector)

Kevin Hays (Sr. Warden)

Townsend McNitt (Jr. Warden)

Hutchey Doley

Glenn Mortoro (Treasurer)

Bill Silva

Jaclyn Houser

Kirsten Chapman

Katie Burke

Howard Buskirk

Phyllis Everette

Tom May

Clergy and Vestry Members Absent

Lauren Dana-Evans

Emily Brooker Langston

Madeleine Hughes

Non-Vestry Members Present

Nathaniel Borden Watkins

1. Opening Prayer- 7:00 by Fr. Manoj
2. Rector's Report and Opening Remarks – Fr. Manoj

In his final address as Diocesan Bishop, The Rt. Rev. Eugene Taylor Sutton suggested that parishes in the Diocese of Maryland focus on the questions: "What has the church done to combat poverty and violence, and what have we done in this meeting to do that work?"

Today, the church commemorates the life of Absalom Jones. He was born enslaved to the Wynkoop family in Delaware.

Given Absalom's natural intelligence, he was trained to be a house slave, where he was given instruction in reading. His valued goods were a spelling book and a bible. Years later, Absalom was brought to Philadelphia, where he was permitted to attend a night school for black people established by the Quakers. Ultimately, in 1784, the Wynkoops freed Absalom by granting him manumission. Absalom continued to work for them in a paid capacity.

St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church provided spiritual sustenance for Absalom. Although the membership of this church included both blacks and whites, the white members decided to

relegate black members to seats in the balcony. When Absalom Jones and his friend Richard Allen learned of the decision, they led a revolt where all the black members walked out. Subsequently, Absalom met with The Rt. Rev. William White, The Episcopal Bishop of Philadelphia. Bishop White agreed to create an Episcopal parish - The St. Thomas African Episcopal Church. After a period of study, Absalom was called to ordination and ultimately service as the parish's rector.

What can we learn? Jones, despite the barriers that the institutional church placed on him, was tenacious. In the words of Sam Portaro, "Jones and those like him led the way to justice and face tenacity in the face of a racism that erupts violently with hot blasts of hatred, touching our deepest fears, and threatening to destroy us....Portaro continues to write, "we cannot rationally decide not to be racist, not to be afraid, for fear does not behave rationally." Perhaps that is why Jesus commands us to "love." Love opens the door to transformation.

Friends, what will we do today to combat poverty and violence? What can we do in our vocation in leading this parish to love more deeply?

As we reflect on blessed Absalom's legacy, let us strive to combat these issues and work towards creating a more just and loving world. Let us honor the courage of Absalom Jones by embodying the reconciling love and true freedom of the children of God.

Let us pray in the words of the Collect used for today's observance:

Set us free, heavenly Father, from every bond of prejudice and fear; that, honouring the steadfast courage of your servant Absalom Jones, we may show forth in our lives the reconciling love and true freedom of the children of God, which you have given us in your Son our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

3. Resolution for "Resolved: The Vestry of St. Anne's be authorised to review and pass the parochial report by the last day of business in February using electronic vote when needed"
  - a. Moved by Glenn Mortoro, seconded by Tom May- Passed unanimously- No debate
4. Sr. Warden contact information
  - a. Senior Warden informed the vestry of personal contact information and confirmed all members present were receiving vestry-related emails correctly.
5. Committees
  - a. Vestry unanimously endorsed the Sub-Committee appointments for Chancellor, Clerk, Outreach Grants, Cemetery, Planned Giving, Investment and Budget
  - b. The need to appoint stewardship, memorials, strategic, nominations, and capital were acknowledged
6. Strategic Plan
  - a. Milford Marchant was named as possible chair, a background of finance and service noted
  - b. Historically, Strategic Planning leadership searches have been unsuccessful

- i. Noted that a new direction is being viewed with this
    - c. Dialogue around appointing a Strategic Plan Chair
      - i. Possibly have vestry member as cochair and vice versa
      - ii. The scope of Strategic Planning is undefined and needs definition
      - iii. Time should be taken in the Vestry retreat for further consideration
      - iv. The EC needs some involvement
      - v. Further community involvement is necessary
        - 1. Add message during service and bulletin
      - vi. Agreed no hard decision should be made at this time
7. Sr. Warden Report
  - a. Mark Strandquist hired as Facilities Manager
  - b. Grants Committee met with Lighthouse and St. Luke's Pantry - Approved new grants
  - c. The Diocesan Trail of Souls displays will extend through Lent
  - d. The Mission in Kenya requested prayers
  - e. The Guatemalan Mission has received a new grant from an NGO in TN for a feasibility study for a water harvesting system in the villages
  - f. The Adult Forum needs a new laptop
  - g. The endowment fund has outpaced expectations
  - h. The Cemetery committee is meeting on March 25th to mature the transfer of records from archives to a searchable repository
  - i. The IWC is using Microsoft Teams
  - j. The Iron Rosary Theme is "Loving One Another," as Ash Wednesday and Valentine's Day coincide
  - k. The Stephen Ministry is disbanding, current leaders will remain in service of those who are receiving fellowship; a new caring ministry will be developed
  - l. Upcoming Dates:
    - i. Conference Retreat – March 8th and 9th
    - ii. St John's Passion – March 29th
    - iii. Vestry Retreat – April 26th-28th
8. Financial Report
  - a. No trend in 1st Fiscal Month
  - b. Parish:
    - i. Net gain through January is \$106.7K
      - 1. Higher than expected pledges, non-pledge giving and back pledges drove income
      - 2. Expenses were low
  - c. Cemetery:
    - i. Net gain through January is \$9.6K driven by lot sales

- d. PASA (6 months):
  - i. Net gain through January is \$61K
- 9. Trail of Souls Report (Tom May)
  - a. The past is not dead; it is not even past- William Faulkner
  - b. The idea for the “Trail of Souls” tour grew out of the Diocese of Maryland’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s mission to discover and be reconciled with the Church’s involvement and complicity in enslavement of fellow children of God. The 2006 diocesan convention called for the establishment of a task force to “specifically research and report on the historical role of the Episcopal Church in these systems of slavery and racism, so that we as a people of God can come to make a full, faithful and informed accounting of the legacy we inherit and better understand how we can work, both individually and collectively to ‘repair the breach.’” (Is.58.12) A pilgrimage was launched All Saints Day, November 1, 2014, as a Day of Repentance and Reconciliation. To this end, parishes founded before 1864, the year a new Maryland Constitution abolished slavery, and currently active predominantly African American parishes were invited to help create an experience for our diocese which would uncover our complicity in the sin of racism. The Trail of Souls Narrative Panels trace the history of the history of our church from the Anglican Establishment in 1692 through the colonial period to its disestablishment and the founding of Pecusa in 1780, to first laws setting out the conditions of manumission; Bishops who were enslavers (Thomas Claggett) to those adamantly opposed (James Kemp and William Whittingham), on through the Civil War and post-Civil War periods, to the emergence of Jim Crow laws, until 1952, when the General Convention of the Episcopal Church passes a resolution that “the Church must consistently oppose and combat discrimination based on color or race in every form;” Bishop Nobel Powell reaffirms the policy of integration for Claggett Camp and Conference Ctr. to further resolutions by the General convention and the MD Diocese against prejudice and affirming inclusivity in hiring practices. From 1973, when the Vestry Act allows women to serve; to 2007 when the General Assembly and the Senate of MD pass an apology for slavery, as does the MD Diocese, which includes the resolution to take the next step after its apology “to find concrete steps The Diocese can take to repair the relations between races and to assist parishes as they continue this work.” In 2008 Bishop Eugene Sutton is elected the first African American bishop of Md and reconstitutes the Reparation Task Force as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, following as its model the work of South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu. In 2019, Bishop Sutton writes a Pastoral Letter outlining Beloved Community for the Diocese, stating, “There can be no love without justice, and there can be no justice without some form of

repairing the injustice.” In 2020 The MD Diocesan Convention unanimously passes the resolution that a reparations fund with an initial investment of \$1,000,000.00 from diocesan resources to the work of reparations in the Diocese of MD and to oversee its use.

- c. Requested that Panes are read in the Parish House

#### 10. Minutes

- a. Manoj moved for approval of the January 2024 minutes – approved unanimously

#### 11. Ordination Party

- a. Bishop Sutton has approved the ordination of Chip and Gale Tucker
- b. A post-ordination event must be organised

#### 12. Closing

- a. The Lord’s Prayer
- b. The Vestry meeting adjourned at 20:33