

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

Clergy and Vestry Members Present

Rev. Dr. Manoj Zacharia
Jason Houser
Tom May
Emily Langston
Glenn Mortoro
Katie Burke
Katie Creely
Howard Buskirk
Lauren Dana-Evans
David Huggins
Townsend McNitt
Kev Hays

Vestry Members Absent

Susan Thaxton
Al Collins
Bill Silva
Phyllis Everette

Non-Vestry Members Present

The Rev. M. Dion Thompson (Senior Associate Rector)

1. Opening prayer @ 7:02 by Fr. Dion
2. Rector's Report and opening remarks – The Rev. Manoj M. Zacharia

What has The Church done to combat hatred, poverty, and violence, and what will we do in this meeting to do this work? During his final address as Bishop of The Episcopal Diocese of Maryland, The Rt. Rev. Eugene Taylor Sutton charged the convention to answer a poignant question at every vestry meeting: What has The Church done to combat hatred, poverty, and violence, and what will we do in this meeting to do this work?" This question is asked as a reflection of love. It is out of love that we experience the pain of others and cultivate a sense of empathetic mission. That love is rooted in gratitude.

William Cowper once prayed:

Gratitude and Love to God

All are indebted much to thee,
But I far more than all,
From many a deadly snare set free,
And raised from many a fall.
Overwhelm me, from above,
[Daily](#), with thy boundless [love](#).

What bonds of [gratitude](#) I [feel](#)
No [language](#) can declare;
[Beneath](#) the oppressive weight I reel,
'Tis more than I can bear:
When shall I that blessing [prove](#),
To [return](#) thee love for love?

[Spirit](#) of charity, dispense
Thy grace to every [heart](#);
Expel all other spirits thence,
Drive self from every part;
Charity [divine](#), draw nigh,
[Break](#) the chains in which we lie!

All [selfish](#) souls, whate'er they feign,
Have still a slavish lot;
They boast of liberty in vain,
Of love, and feel it not.
He whose bosom glows with thee,
He, and he [alone](#), is free.

Oh blessedness, all bliss above,
When thy [pure](#) fires prevail!
Love only teaches what is love:
All other lessons fail:
We learn its name, but not its powers,
[Experience](#) only makes it ours.

Love, gratitude, and service. And so we return to the question: What has The Church done to combat hatred, poverty, and violence, and what will we do in this meeting to do this work?" This question is what we need to ask ourselves in everything we do. As a vestry, we at St. Anne's ask and hopefully answer this question based on our core values. Remember, "as a community of prayer, we preach the good news, seek justice, walk with humility, practice hospitality – guided by the fruit of the Holy Spirit."

Sometimes, I feel a disconnect as the Rector who is called to be the C.E.O. of an institution that has thrived since 1692 and the call of a pastor. One challenge and learning that I will need to grow into is how to integrate the pastoral sensibility in being the C.E.O. of an institution." I have been reflecting a lot on this over the past few years. I am sure many of you, particularly those on the Executive Committee, ask the same question. How do we integrate the values of Christian love with the reality of leading and managing an institution that has all the ups and downs of any human organization?

Just like our relationship is not a traditional Board relationship but centered on Christ and the table, one way to think about our 'leadership and administrative responsibilities' is to ground ourselves further in another way of thinking. In an essay entitled "Why Bother with Theology," William Placher writes, "how do the way we allocate church funds, the advice we give, or the stands we take connect to our Christian faith?" Doing this is theology. Leading these questions – questions of ultimate value and mapping them onto perceived reality or reality as given – is our call as a Vestry.

So today, along with managing the “affairs of the parish,” I invite you to draw on the wellspring of the eternal waters of Christ. Sometimes we feel depleted, but know this: the well is never dry. The river flows, and the water is ready to drink. All we need to do is take a sip.

What can we, as The Church, do to combat hatred, poverty, and violence? What will we do in this meeting to do this work?

May the waters of Christ renew us in days, months, and years to come to accomplish this task by relying on the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

3. Call to duty: We need Vestry members to help position the chairs for the Christmas eve services
4. Treasurer’s report
 - a. We are running at a negative balance (\$136K over budget)
 - i. Cemetery and PASA are positive
 - ii. Endowment at a 1% loss
 - b. 128 pledgers @ \$434K
 - c. Preliminary budget intended for December Vestry (DRAFT)
 - i. Treasurer will not be at Vestry in January; budget approval in February
 - ii. Pre-reading material will be sent to Vestry nominees
 - d. Employee Retention Tax Credit (ERTC) rules have changed; St. Anne’s is eligible for a tax credit
 - i. We will know in 2024 if we do get a credit, and the value
5. Registrar’s report
 - a. Quick review of the Vestry Liaison Report
 - b. Key points: Iron Rosary, Docents, Grants Committee need more membership
 - c. Howard: Structure announcement of the Grants Committee, Iron Rosary, HR and Docents and work with Claire to get the word out
 - d. Data management: Will be using Microsoft 365
 - e. Grants Committee: Kev motioned, Bill seconded, unanimous approval of the revised guidance posted in the Vestry’s SharePoint November folder
6. Sr. Warden
 - a. Susan Thaxton, Jr. Warden, has resigned due to work and academic pressures. Her position on the Vestry will be replaced by a nominee that will be voted upon by the congregation during the annual meeting
 - b. Al Collins regretfully communicated (to Kev) his resignation due to continuing health issues (and he remains in our prayers!)
 - c. Nomination Committee announcement: The candidates for Vestry are Bob Biddle, Jaclyn Houser, Hutchey Doley (full 3-year terms), Madeliene Hughes, and Kirsten Chapman (1-year term each)
 - i. The Diocesan Delegates are Katherine Hilton and Cindy Hartman (Primary) and Tad Wood (Alternate)
 - ii. Vestry endorsed the list of nominees; cleared to call the congregation for nominees
 - d. Stewardship
 - i. Focus on participation vs. Monetary goals
 - ii. Vestry to start making calls to the congregation
 - iii. Howard voiced a desire to shift the focus in the next years to a more prayer-centered campaign

- iv. A sign-up sheet was passed around to get volunteers for speaking to the congregation
 - 1. Themes reinforced:
 - a. All aboard. Meeting a goal of expanding the number of pledgers
 - b. Stewardship as a force for good in Annapolis and beyond
 - c. The theology of stewardship and how giving of our time and money is an expression of faith in action
 - e. All Vestry are invited to bring Holiday treats to the December Vestry meeting
- 7. Executive Session
- 8. Grants Committee announced: Holly Bentley, David Huggins, and Tad Wood
 - a. Townsend has a potential candidate and will feed back to Holly Bentley when she confirms
- 9. October minutes approval moved by Kev, seconded by Glenn, and unanimously approved
- 10. Closing prayer at 8:25 by Jason Houser
- 11. Meeting adjourned at 8:30