

**St. Anne's Parish
Vestry Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, January 9, 2024**

Clergy and Vestry Members Present

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

Vestry Members Absent

Susan Thaxton
Bill Silva
Phyllis Everette*
Glenn Mortoro

* Note: Phyllis was present for the Listening Sessions; however, due to a loss of power at her home and subsequent battery exhaustion of her phone, Phyllis was not able to participate in the Vestry meeting that followed.

Non-Vestry Members Present

Rev. Dion Thompson

PRE-VESTRY ACTIVITY: Listening session with Bishop Carrie Schofield-Broadbent

Those St. Anne's parishioners present for the listening session: Phyllis Everette, Fr. Dion Thompson, Townsend McNitt, Jason Houser, Dave and Eleanor Huggins, Tom May, Howard Buskirk, Mary Greczyn, Fr. Manoj Zacharia, Madeleine Hughes, Bishop (ret) Creighton, Betty Creighton, Tad Wood, Katie Burke, Emily Langston, Bill Silva, Lauren Dana-Evans, Tempest Strunge, Katie Creely, Claire Miller, Cindy Hartman, Kev Hays

The Bishop's Top Priorities: Build trust and relationship. Help resource our congregations.

Fr. Dion asked, "What is your greatest concern?" Response: The farther she is up the chain, the less she will hear the "truth".

1. Opening prayer @ 7:02 PM by Fr. Manoj
2. Open discussion about the Bishop's listening session and our observations

- a. Tom: great admonition of being young, female, etc. was honest and real. Acknowledged that she is taking care of herself. She conveyed compassion for the diocese and her role.
 - b. Howard: from the standpoint of a journalist, the lead was that Bishop Carrie plans to not appoint or start a process for selecting as assistant bishop. That was very interesting and would seem to indicate she is still working through the process going forward over the next year.
 - c. Dave: handled the whole matter very well
 - d. Lauren: she was relatable and spoke truth
 - e. Katie C: “She called a spade a spade.” Also she called out youth ministry as a gap. Liked that she communicated the sharing between parishes.
 - f. Lauren: Youth isn’t the whole focus. Appreciated that the Bishop was engaged in acknowledging that youth are not the whole focus.
 - g. Howard: He and Mary help with Sunday school, but there are just not kids to teach. It isn’t from a lack of trying
 - h. Manoj+: Frank discussion of developing trust and listening. No solutions offered (wise), but her honesty and frankness to be a younger Bishop. First time attending in a small group and he appreciated her vibe.
 - i. Dion: appreciated how she is using the time she has now with two bishops and doesn’t have to drive the bus herself. She is intentionally having listening sessions and connecting. Noted her patience in taking the time to listen before taking action.
 - j. Kev: Good two top priorities
3. Rector’s opening remarks – The Rev. Dr. Manoj M. Zacharia
- a. In his final address as Diocesan Bishop, The Rt. Rev. Eugene Taylor Sutton suggested that parishes in the Diocese of Maryland answer these questions at each vestry meeting: “What has the church done to combat poverty and violence, and what have we done in this meeting to do that work?”
 - b. During our meeting today, I’d like to focus on two individuals in Church history who have answered these questions throughout their lives.
 - c. One of my favorite hymns during Epiphany-tide is “Brightest and Best” by The Rt. Rev. Reginald Heber. Particularly, I love the Southern Melody rendition of the hymn (Hymn 119, Hymnal 1982 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uSY2MYEvGBI>). This poet-theologian served as Bishop of Calcutta. He was committed to preaching the Gospel abroad and helped establish the British and Foreign Bible Society. He supported the Society of the Propagation of the Gospel and the Church Missionary Society. The new bishop worked fervently to translate “Christianity” in ways relevant to the culture and practices of a diverse place like the Indian continent, particularly working in places where the notion of Christ was entirely foreign. Not only did he face some opposition from clerics within his episcopal jurisdiction - as they disapproved of his openness and embrace of others- but he also faced the ire of the British East India Company. One of his concerns was that the East India

Company systematically used colonial power and practices to suppress the indigenous Indian population from ascending to power. He also believed in the role of Christianity in abolishing the caste system that continues to shackle Indian society. He died a tragic death while on an episcopal visit to Southern India. Charlotte Young, in a text entitled *Pioneers and Founders*, wrote this of Heber: "He was one of the first English churchmen who perceived that to enlarge her borders and strengthen her stakes was the bounden duty of the living Church."

- d. Today, we also commemorate the life of Julia Chester Emery. Julia was Secretary of the Women's Auxiliary Board of Missions, established by The General Convention of the Episcopal Church in 1871. A fervent missionary, she focused her efforts on raising up a generation committed to proclaiming the Gospel by living into the Great Commission of Christ. According to the text, *Lesser Feasts and Fasts*, "she traveled around the world visiting missions in the remote areas of China, in Japan, Hong Kong, the Philippines, Hawaii, and then all the dioceses on the Pacific Coast...with hope for enlargement of vision, opening up new occasions for service, and acceptance of new tasks." Part of Julia's legacy was the creation of the United Thank Offering and the cultivation of Christian leadership among women.
 - e. These two individuals were committed to striking down barriers, not because it was "fashionable." Instead, they were rooted in the words of the Gospel. Part of our work is to commit resources to spread the Gospel. In that vein, it is delightful that our Christmas collection raised significant monetary funds for our Partners in Mission in Guatemala and the Friends of the Stanton Center. In addition, what if our task is to raise local and globally minded Christians committed to mission and shaping the Gospel in our local neighborhood - Annapolis - and our global neighborhood?
 - f. What will we commit to in living out the vision of proclaim in the Gospel? What does renewing ourselves in that commitment look like? Perhaps a meta-question is: how can we best inspire connection to God and connection with each other in living out the vision of the Gospel?
 - g. In the words of Heber,

"Vainly we offer each ample oblation,
vainly with gifts would his favor secure,
richer by far is the heart's adoration,
dearer to God are the prayers of the poor."
 - h. We have an opportunity in this increasingly un/de/non-churched era to be the arms and feet of Jesus. Perhaps we do this through our conversion of life and commitment to the cause of the Gospel. Rooted in that commitment comes our challenge: what will St. Anne's do to combat hatred, poverty, and violence and what will we do in this meeting to do that work?
4. Rector's report

- a. Jason: Mark LaBuda and Paul Manning's positions are terminated. We are looking at some interim transition steps in anticipate of hiring a Facilities Manager.
5. Sr. Warden's report
 - a. Stewardship is doing well. 240 or so pledgers, \$780K
 - b. There is still a rich field of candidates for pledging
 - c. Tom: St. Phillip's lists the pledgers in the bulletin; should we do the same?
 - d. Vestry decision: Do we publish, or not publish, pledgers?
 - i. This will be an agenda item at the first Vestry after the Annual meeting
 - ii. Manoj: Should we also include those who have given a plate offering and are "known to the Treasurer".
 - iii. Howard: The flip side to shaming people is thanking people
6. Annual meeting
 - a. Pictures will be taken for the directory at the annual meeting
 - b. Logistics are in place.
7. Other business:
 - a. Katie: Stewardship talk was superb! Repeated the appreciation that a St. Anne's Food Pantry saint, Steve Agriesti, voiced for St. Anne's involvement in that mission
 - b. Term limited Vestry acknowledged: Dave Huggins, Jason Houser, Katie Creely, Al Collins
8. December minutes: Moved: Jason, Seconded: Lauren, unanimously approved
9. Closing prayer at 7:52 by Jason Houser:

Almighty and gracious God, we gather before Your presence after this Vestry meeting, our hearts filled with gratitude for the time spent in discernment, fellowship, and service to Your divine purpose at St. Anne's Church. As we prepare to depart, we are inspired by the echoes of Your Amazing Grace, a melody that transcends time and draws us nearer to Your boundless love.

Lord, we acknowledge the richness of Your mercy that has brought us to this sacred space, guiding our steps and shaping our collective journey. Just as the words of Amazing Grace remind us of the wondrous truth that saved a wretch like us, may we be humbled by the awareness of our shortcomings and find solace in Your unmerited favor.

In the spirit of this timeless hymn, we pray for Your grace to abound within the hearts of the leaders and members of our beloved St. Anne's Church. Grant us the wisdom to navigate the challenges, the courage to embrace change, and the compassion to extend Your love to all who seek refuge within these walls.

As we close this meeting, may the refrain of Amazing Grace linger in our minds, a constant reminder of Your redemptive power and the transformative love that binds us together as one body in Christ. Inspire us to go forth from this place with renewed dedication to Your mission, mindful of the grace that sustains us and our responsibility as stewards of Your divine grace.

In Jesus's name we pray, *Amen*

10. Meeting adjourned at 7:58 PM