

**St. Anne's Parish
Vestry Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, May 10, 2022**

Clergy and Vestry Members Present

Rev. Manoj Zacharia
Linda Adamson
Howard Buskirk
Thea Chimento
Al Collins
Katie Creely
Phyllis Everette
Kara Friedell
Kevin Hays
Jason Houser
Paul Pope
Bill Silva

Vestry Members Absent

David Huggins
David Jackson
Townsend McNitt
Susan Thaxton

Non-Vestry Members Present

Glen Mortoro, Treasurer
Frances Burke, Reconciliation Ministry
Katie Burke, Clerk of Vestry (& Reconciliation Ministry)

Welcome and Opening Prayer

Manoj+ opened the meeting with a prayer at 6:00 pm. Having returned to the Vestry after some time away, Al asked new Vestry members to introduce themselves. Jason then handed it over to Linda for the Secretary of the Vestry's Report.

Secretary of the Vestry's Report, Part One

Linda reminded everyone that, as Secretary of the Vestry, she continues to promote greater communication at St. Anne's by asking representatives from various ministries to give in-depth reports of their activities at Vestry meetings. She explained that tonight she had asked representatives from the Reconciliation Ministry and from the Partners in Mission in Guatemala Ministry to give updates on their latest activities.

Reconciliation Ministry Report

Two of the three Reconciliation Ministry co-chairs, Frances and Katie Burke, were present. Frances spoke first, outlining the Reconciliation Ministry's oral history project. She gave some background on a time in the 1960s when the St. Philip's congregation was worshipping at St. Anne's, since they had lost their original church on Northwest St. to the county. There was some discussion of the two churches becoming one church, but at the same time some painful racial situations also occurred (the St. Philip's congregation was and is predominantly black, while the St. Anne's congregation was and is predominantly white). For a variety of reasons (church size, church population transience, the difference between being the perpetrator and being the recipient of unkind words and actions), general knowledge of those times has persisted among the St. Philip's congregation, while the entire situation has mostly been forgotten at St. Anne's. The Reconciliation Ministry believes that re-incorporating an understanding of what went on during this time period into St. Anne's own understanding of itself is a critical step in the goal of racial reconciliation.

To that end, the History Subcommittee of the Reconciliation Ministry is working on a project to interview any current or former St. Anne's members or other related folks who might still remember the time in question. At the same time, St. Philip's is working on a project to interview those among its own members who have first-hand knowledge of what took place. Each congregation is conducting its own oral histories, and each church will have complete control over what happens to the interview recordings and transcripts produced by its members, but the hope is that, once the projects are complete, the findings might be shared between the churches, so that everyone can have a better understanding of a difficult and somewhat painful chapter in both churches' histories.

Members of the History Subcommittee, along with some members of the St. Philip's Anti-Racism Ministry, participated in an oral history training in early March with local historian Mame Warren. The purpose of this training was to teach potential interviewers how to conduct oral histories professionally, effectively, and respectfully. The History Subcommittee has been gathering potential narrators to interview, but has not yet conducted any interviews. The subcommittee is now at the point where it would like to start sharing this project with the general congregation at St. Anne's, so that people will know what's being done and why, and so that they might be encouraged to share their own stories if applicable.

Katie then gave a report about the other major project the Reconciliation Ministry is currently participating in, the development of a county-wide Racial Reconciliation Collaborative based out of St. Philip's. The project was conceived by the St. Philip's Anti-Racism Ministry, but its structure and initial projects have been jointly developed by members of that ministry and members of the St. Anne's Reconciliation Ministry. These representatives have been meeting as a small group since the beginning of the pandemic for the purposes of greater reconciliation between the two congregations, and as the idea of the Racial Reconciliation Collaborative took hold at St. Philip's, the small group has been working together to make it a reality.

The small group issued invitations to many faith organizations around the county (participants from all faith communities, not simply Christian ones, are welcome), and so far two large meetings have been held. The meetings have been very well attended, with numbers ranging from 35-60 and including representatives from 15+ faith organizations. The initial project the RRC is working on is a project to create a banner promoting racial justice and healing that all member organizations will hang outside their buildings. Many faith organizations, including St. Anne's, have hung banners promoting similar sentiments already, but the RRC believes that the power of such a statement of our values will be magnified exponentially if organizations all around the county hang the same banner. The RRC organizing committee hopes to build upon the energy generated by the banner project to develop other services and programs that will be sponsored by the RRC in the future.

Frances then offered a very brief update on a third Reconciliation Ministry project, the drafting of a message honoring those whose labor built the three St. Anne's churches, which will be placed on a plaque in the narthex. The drafting of the plaque's text has begun, but is only in its very early stages.

Kev asked which other parishes had offered leadership help under the direction of St. Philip's, and Frances explained that the structure of the RRC is still being developed, but that participation from other faith groups at the leadership level will be key for its success. She shared that a leadership appeal is planned for the next RRC meeting, which will take place in two days.

[Update: As of the drafting of these minutes in early June, representatives from St. Margaret's, St. Luke's, and Calvary United Methodist have volunteered to take up RRC leadership roles.]

Kev then asked whether the RRC had considered contacting the mayor's office about the banner project – since the intent is for a community-wide message to be developed, what kind of true community adoption might be considered by the local government? Frances said that yes, being in touch with the mayor's office and also with the press is part of the RRC's plan for promoting banner adoption among organizations that might not be part of the RRC itself.

Al offered thanks to everyone involved in these projects, and also to God for how things have developed over the past several years. He noted that the community of those interested in racial reconciliation is clearly growing.

Manoj gave a word of gratitude to the St. Anne's RRC representatives for their support and leadership, which he said was very visible behind the scenes. He also asked for an update on the representative from St. Mary's, who had been the only attendee at the first meeting to insist on a specifically Christian perspective for this effort. Katie reported that St. Mary's had sent a different representative to the second meeting, and that person had had no difficulty with the multi-faith nature of the RRC.

[Update: As of the drafting of these minutes in early June, Fr. Woods from St. Mary's has returned to the RRC meetings, but his perspective seems to have changed significantly. He has embraced the idea of creating a message that could be shared by people of all faiths.]

Partners in Mission in Guatemala Ministry Report

Keve shared that the Partners in Mission in Guatemala are in their 3rd year of the latrine campaign. There are years of research behind the common latrine design and structure that is currently being used. The cement that holds the latrine block in place is lime-based, so when the old hole is full you dig a new hole, then simply take a rubber mallet and break the cement holding the latrine block in place over the old hole, move the whole block to the new location, and reseal it in its new place using the lime-based cement. This system doesn't require replacing materials every time a new latrine is dug, since the latrine block is able to be reused.

Each village has a local Latrine Committee, and each committee decides which families need latrines the most. St. Anne's role is to purchase the materials, and then the families transport all of the materials to their homes. One village has been completely outfitted with needed latrines, and work on a second village has begun.

The first mission trip since the pandemic began is set to depart on June 24, returning on July 1. There will be ten travelers on this trip: four from St. Anne's and six from Colorado. The Colorado connection is that Mary Hearing (formerly Mary Purnell, daughter of Claire and John Purnell) attended several Guatemala mission trips in the early 2010s and is now on the Executive Committee from her new home in Colorado, where she works as a teacher. The Colorado attendees will be Mary herself, her husband, and four of her students. The mission trip's main purpose will be to listen to village residents and to come to understand their needs and how to help empower them towards fulfilling those needs.

Keve also shared his succession plan for Partners in Mission in Guatemala. The Adamsons, after many successful years heading the ministry, had transitioned leadership to him, and he expects to transition leadership to Mary Hearing when the time comes for him to step back. He does not anticipate, however, that this will happen for a number of years!

Al shared that he remembers a time in his own childhood when many people didn't have indoor toilets, which makes the latrine campaign particularly meaningful to him. Linda said that another meaningful component of this project is that the latrine committees are managed by women, a rarity in the local male-dominated culture.

Rector's Report

Since the Rector's Report had been shared on the drive prior to the meeting, Manoj+ simply asked whether anyone had any questions about it. He also shared that, per the report, St. Anne's is looking for volunteers to fill all liturgical roles at the church, since participation in these roles

has dropped off significantly during the pandemic. The Executive Committee has decided to go in a very traditional direction and to have clipboards in church for the next several weeks with ministry sign-up options on them. Manoj+ asked for volunteers to man the clipboards, and Kev, Katie Creely, Phyllis, Al, Paul, Howard, and Thea all volunteered.

Manoj+ was also delighted to share that he would soon be making the announcement that Olivia+ and Meredith+ will be joining the St. Anne's staff permanently. Olivia+ will be our Assistant Rector for Pastoral Care and Meredith+ will be our Assistant Rector for Family Ministries, and our PASA chaplain along with Meg Kimble.

Manoj+ continued that, since Tempest has also just come on as our Director of Children and Youth Ministries, it will now be important to coordinate a big welcoming celebration for all three of them. Tempest is starting her official duties on June 1, and will be collaborating with First Presbyterian on VBS. Olivia+ is on assignment in the diocese of Hawaii during June, so she will officially be starting at St. Anne's in July. Meredith, who is an army chaplain and will have drill duty one weekend out of every month, will officially start at St. Anne's in September. We can have three small celebrations to welcome each of them individually, but we also really need to have one big celebration after the 10 o'clock service on September 10. It will serve as a welcome to our three new staff members, as well as a welcome back to the congregation after the summer. To plan this event, Manoj+ asked for a point person or point team to take charge, and Kara and Howard volunteered. Manoj+ also suggested that the Vestry discuss the organization of the ministry fair at its meeting in June.

Jason suggested that the Vestry should reschedule the dinner from the canceled Vestry retreat for some time in June, and that they also should invite the St. Anne's staff. This way the dinner could also serve as an initial welcome for Tempest. He offered to send around a poll to pick an appropriate Friday in June.

Manoj+ explained that the reason he had chosen Acts 1 for the Vestry to reflect on this month is that he sees Acts as a visioning document for what the church is called to be. Once you receive the power of the holy spirit, you will go out into Samaria and other far-flung places – the challenge for us is to reclaim a theological perspective on what God is calling us to do in this age. When we know that there are political and theological differences in the church and in the world, what does it mean to really live out the gospel? Manoj+ reminded us that, here at St. Anne's, we are pursuing racial reconciliation, PRIDE, and radical hospitality not because of a political agenda, but because of theology. The Gospel fundamentally sides with people who are disenfranchised. We are called to do the same.

Kev pointed out that he found the concept of replacement meaningful too, since Vestry members are constantly being rotated in and out of service. Manoj+ agreed that he too, as rector, knows that his time with St. Anne's is limited. Ministry should never be about the individual – it's not a cult of personality. It should always be about growing the place in ways that are necessary for the time during which you are there. He, as rector, is always thinking about whether he is leaving St. Anne's better for the rectors who will succeed him.

Manoj+ also suggested the concept of the Vestry having its own chaplain, in deference to the fact that the true work of discernment happens when we pause and take time to pray through a decision. Linda likened this model to the way St. Anne's partner in Guatemala signs all his emails "working together with Jesus." Howard asked that the Vestry might have a discussion at the rescheduled Vestry retreat about what discipleship looks like at St. Anne's. Should we be signing everyone up to a discipleship committee the first time they come to a service? Jason agreed that the Vestry could talk about this at the rescheduled retreat.

On the topic of discipleship, Linda wondered whether Vestry members couldn't reframe their solicitation of liturgical volunteers as an offering for those folks' discipleship. This reframing might place the emphasis where it needs to be, in the hearts of those who are being asked to volunteer.

Treasurer's Report

Having shared the Treasurer's Report on the group drive, Glen simply summarized St. Anne's position as "revenues are exceeding budget, and expenses are below budget." He shared that giving is also exceeding expectations. Additional updates include the following:

- 1) A PASA budget is being prepared, and will be brought to the Vestry.
- 2) Glen met with the auditors last week to kick off the 2021 audit. The auditors did their fieldwork directly after the meeting, so Glen is hoping that they will have a draft report ready by mid-June. This would allow the audit to be completed by September.
- 3) A draft for a proposal to Investment First has been written. Vanguard is increasing our fees, so we want to test the water to see if we could get a better rate elsewhere. Glen is hoping to be able to bring an answer to that question back to the Vestry in September.

Jason thanked Glen for all the hard work he's doing keeping St. Anne's on track. Jason recognized that these administrative committees take a *lot* of work, and he commended Glen for his team's accomplishments. Jason also reflected that there have been, over the years, times of real financial stress for St. Anne's, and he shared how grateful he is for the church's current financial leadership.

Secretary of the Vestry's Report, Part Two

Jason then returned the floor to Linda, who shared the following brief updates from other ministries at St. Anne's:

- 1) The process of getting ministries up and running with Realm is continuing, and we have now brought in a consultant to help.
- 2) The Environmental Committee doubled its usual take on the plant sale this year.

- 3) ACT ("Anne Arundel Connecting Together") has made several structural shifts, and it is in the process of connecting with sister organizations in Montgomery County (AIM – "Acting in Montgomery") and Howard County (PATH – "People Acting Together").
- 4) St. Anne's is open again for docent tours, and people seem to be eager for them! There has also been a desire expressed for St. Anne's to "be St. Anne's again," meaning the one place in town that you can walk into and pray at any time of the day.
- 5) Invite/Welcome/Connect is hoping for a chance of new energy, since we are entering into a new time of opportunity in the area of hospitality at St. Anne's.
- 6) The Stephen Ministry at St. Anne's celebrated its eight-year anniversary, and is going strong.

Jason pointed out that the other piece of what Linda is doing as Secretary of the Vestry is that she's organizing the various ministries and their liaisons into a new, streamlined system. There is a document on the shared drive showing the ministry clusters Linda has arranged, and in the spreadsheet Jason and Linda have included their recommendations for who should be Vestry liaison for each cluster. Jason also plans to send out information about each ministry's new Vestry liaison (and that person's responsibilities) to ministry leaders.

Linda shared that they have tried to assign liaisons with a view to seeing the ministries with new eyes and giving fresh input, and said that she would let Vestry members know when she had contacted their corresponding ministry leaders. Jason asked wonderingly if Linda had been an admiral or a general in her previous life, and Manoj+ responded in low, respectful tones that no, she had been a teacher.

Vestry Resource Guide Discussion

Paul explained to the assembled Vestry members that Chapter 2 of the Vestry Resource Guide was devoted to the building and the structure of the Vestry. He quoted the text as saying, "Let formal Vestry duties rest lightly." Beyond being responsible for the running of the church, Paul said, Vestry members are also called to identify new leaders for the congregation.

Focusing on the fourth section, called "Building the Vestry," Paul talked a little about the nominating process, since he has just rotated off of being chair of the Nominating Committee. The process looks like this:

- 1) Invite the congregation to submit names for consideration.
- 2) Meet to discuss current leadership needs. (Paul suggested that St. Anne's needs to do this more than it currently does, and offered it as a topic of discussion at the fall Vestry retreat.)
- 3) Charge the Nominating Committee to fill those leadership needs.
- 4) Create a list of potential candidates.

Paul also reflected that some Vestries hold open discernment sessions where the congregation can learn about Vestry sessions – could this be an Adult Forum at St. Anne's sometime?

Paul then addressed the following discussion question: "When was the last time your Vestry reviewed the Vestry service section of the bylaws?" Paul looked at the bylaws and found the description of the nomination process very confusing. He suggested that the Vestry clarify the required steps and tighten up the language of the nomination process, and that it also create a timeline checklist for the entire nomination process that the Nominating Committee chair can follow every year going forward.

Manoj+ asked Kara, the new chair of the Nominating Committee, to provide him with some names of people to serve on this year's committee (the ratio is always 3 non-expiring Vestry members and 2 outside folks). His goal is to get this year's Nominating Committee set up by June.

Howard suggested that, at the same proposed Adult Forum meeting where Vestry members are planning to talk about discerning Vestry participation, they might also talk about Nominating Committee participation. Manoj+ charged Kara with contacting Dion+ and Herb Fowler (the Adult Forum leaders) to set up a session about these topics for next year, and also to improve the meet-and-greet process for prospective Vestry members.

Glen suggested that, if an Adult Forum is held, the topic could be expanded to talk about liturgical needs, volunteerism, and what every individual could do to answer their calling. He also pointed out that an operating document could be produced for the Nominating Committee chair, rather than changing the bylaws – it would be easier, and actually more appropriate, if there's nothing wrong with the bylaws that a little clarification couldn't fix.

April Minutes and Closing Prayer

The April minutes were approved unanimously as submitted.

Paul then offered a closing prayer, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:36 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Katie Burke
Clerk of Vestry