

**St. Anne's Parish  
Vestry Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, October 11, 2022**

*Clergy and Vestry Members Present*

Rev. Manoj Zacharia  
Linda Adamson  
Howard Buskirk  
Thea Chimento  
Katie Creely  
Kara Friedell  
Kevin Hays  
Jason Houser  
Townsend McNitt  
Paul Pope  
Bill Silva  
Susan Thaxton

*Vestry Members Absent*

Al Collins  
Phyllis Everette  
David Huggins

*Non-Vestry Members Present*

Glenn Mortoro, Treasurer  
Katie Burke, Clerk of Vestry

**Welcome and Opening Prayer**

Manoj+ told the story of Philip and the eunuch from the Acts of the Apostles, and then opened the meeting with a prayer at 7:04 pm.

**Vestry Resource Guide Discussion**

Jason led a discussion on chapter 6 of the *Vestry Resource Guide*, “Stewardship & Vision.” He shared that his big takeaway is that he’s really proud of what St. Anne’s has in place regarding stewardship – he thinks that St. Anne’s pretty much has the bones of everything outlined in this chapter.

Vestry members shared their reflections on the chapter as follows:

- Katie Creely: I appreciate the focus on year-round stewardship formation. Our annual stewardship campaign is really impactful, but we really need to be including year-round stewardship in our strategic plan.

- Linda: I liked that the book is clear that stewardship isn't about the monthly, "By the way, give more money!" line. The chapter focuses on showing public corporate gratitude for all the volunteers who give their time and talent as well. How impactful would it be if St. Anne's issued a list at the end of every year of everyone who had volunteered their time doing anything at the church?
- Linda: Page 54 also talks about having a mission-oriented endowment, which is the one piece I'm not sure St. Anne's is doing as well as it might. The more mission-oriented the endowment, the more gifts it will attract. [Jason agreed that in that section they also talked about taking money from the endowment and using it as seed money for mission-oriented projects – this is something the Vestry has talked about, but hasn't really done anything about yet.]
- Kev: I like the idea of committing to 100% participation in pledging to the church – why shouldn't we make something incredibly large a goal? In *Learning from London* they call those types of goals "wild goals" – why shouldn't St. Anne's set a wild goal?
- Manoj+: What if we change the tone of our pledging conversation next year and say that we want all of you to pledge, no matter the amount? Less focus on setting a number and more focus on everyone giving together. Could we move more in the direction of building a mission-based budget? At a previous church of mine, of the 4.5% of the endowment that was drawn down every year, most of it was going toward ministering to people in need – how could St. Anne's do more of that?
- Paul: From my own experience, the thing that really got me hooked was being asked to do something very small, like bring the offering up. That very minimal time ask is what eventually brought me into a commitment to actually give money.
- Thea: Nurturing an invitation is key – it's hard for people to want to part from their hard-earned money if they don't feel invested in other ways.
- Townsend: I don't think people really understand that the mission of giving is to support the local church you're involved in. I love the idea of saying, here, let's get you involved in a small way, and as you come along in your faith I think you'll understand that God is calling you to give in other ways too.
- Howard: I've been thinking about this a lot as I write my stewardship talk – giving is about supporting the church, but it's also really about the giver. I want to give to St. Anne's because I want to give of myself, I feel called to do that, it's a spiritually important part of the deal.
- Jason: One last piece I'd take from the chapter is the importance of developing lay leadership with respect to stewardship. Dave Huggins and I will be leaving the Vestry next year, so we're looking for a continuity of folks to take that on.

## **Rector's Report**

The first thing to discuss from the Rector's Report was the fact that David Jackson has resigned from the Vestry. Manoj+ shared that the Vestry has several options for filling his seat – they could wait until next year to fill it, or they could fill it right away. The Executive Committee has a strong preference for filling it as soon as possible. Paul asked if Kara could use previous notes from last year's nominating committee to provide a list of Vestry candidates who had been previously vetted.

Manoj+ shared that something that has come from this situation is the realization that the process for onboarding new Vestry members has gotten rather hazy during the pandemic. Next year the Vestry will be returning to the model of having an in-person retreat early in the new Vestry's tenure so that relationships can be built and institutional knowledge passed on. A major topic of conversation will be the process by which the Vestry enacts governance, and this should help improve the onboarding process.

Jason also added that it has been the practice of the EC to sometimes bring things to the Vestry for approval that don't technically require Vestry approval but for which the backing of the Vestry in explaining them to the congregation would be very valuable. Making sure that all Vestry members are familiar with that process and when and how it might be enacted will also be important going forward.

Manoj+ then introduced another item from the Rector's Report for discussion. Milford Marchant, a member of St. Anne's, has expressed a desire to refurbish the Parish House Library, a project that was put on the table during the tenure of Interim Rector Tim Mulder. Milford would like to benefact the library to make it a warmer and more hospitable place that can be used for comfortable reading and reflection.

The request to the Vestry is that it officially accept this gift. The process will be for the Vestry to expend the funds from its own resources, and then for Milford to write a reimbursing check for that same amount. It is intended as a true gift, so if the Vestry votes to accept it, then we should express thanks to Milford.

Susan made the following motion: "I move to accept the restricted gift of Milford Marchant toward the re-decoration of the Parish House Library. The Treasurer is authorized to expend the necessary funds and contract with Price Modern in executing this project." The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

## **Nomination Committee**

Jason shared that, while Kara has done an amazing job getting the Nomination Committee off the ground, she will now step down from the committee due to family commitments, and Jason himself will take her place.

The Vestry needs to approve the rector's appointment of the Nominating Committee, so Kev made the following motion:

"I move that the Vestry approves the Rector's appointment of Jason Houser, Susan Thaxton, William Silva, Stanley Ward, and William Knight as member of the Nominating Committee for 2022."

The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

### **HR Committee**

Jason shared that the HR Committee has only a very brief announcement: a part-time position for communications has been designed, and the committee hopes to put out the job announcement for this position soon.

### **Nature Sacred Proposal**

Returning to the issue of the MOU with Nature Sacred, Jason reminded everyone that we do not technically need Vestry approval to proceed with the MOU, but given the confusion during the discussion last month, it seemed prudent to bring it up again and reach Vestry agreement on how to go forward.

Katie Creely recapped the situation as it was left last month: the Executive Committee, under its function as stated in the bylaws, agreed with the Cemetery Committee's recommendation that we enter into the MOU with Nature Sacred. The issue before the Vestry last month was to approve the fundraising effort that will be associated with the Nature Sacred project. What Jason is saying now, however, is that, because of the procedural confusion last month, the Vestry will also take a vote to approve the MOU itself, even though this is something that does not normally fall within the Vestry's purview.

Linda asked whether anyone had any questions about the explanatory document she'd shared regarding the MOU and our relationship with Nature Sacred, and Paul said that he'd found the document very helpful in answering any remaining questions he'd had.

Jason then moved that the Vestry approve the MOU. The motion was seconded and voted on. Manoj+ was the only nay vote – he explained that he wanted his vote to register the fact that he was strongly against this type of vote becoming precedent, since a vote to approve this type of project is not a direct governance issue, and is therefore not within the Vestry's purview. The motion passed because everyone else voted yay.

Jason then made a second motion, that the Vestry approve fundraising for the execution of the MOU with Nature Sacred. Glenn asked whether the Cemetery Committee would be able to use anything they raise that's more than the amount needed for Nature Sacred for other projects, and

Linda explained that this was indeed what the committee hoped to do. Manoj+ then moved to amend Jason's motion, striking out "for the execution of the MOU with Nature Sacred," so that the Vestry now would simply be voting to approve fundraising by the Cemetery Committee. That way there would be no trouble if the committee wanted to use additional funds gathered through fundraising for projects other than Nature Sacred. This motion was seconded and passed unanimously. Jason thanked Linda and the rest of the Cemetery Committee for all their hard work on this project.

### **Facilities Committee**

Susan shared that, although the Facilities Committee hasn't needed to come to the Vestry for any approvals lately, there is some great work being done by the committee that she would like to share with the Vestry. Specifically, the Facilities Committee is completing some very important Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance work right now – Susan just wanted the Vestry to know about it.

Paul affirmed that, as always with the Facilities Committee, all this great work is being done, but if you didn't know about it, you probably wouldn't notice it. This makes it doubly important for these types of reports to be shared with the Vestry.

Susan then asked Vestry members to consider whether they knew anyone who might be a good fit for the Facilities Committee, and to let the current committee leadership know. Susan would like to get the committee staffed up with skilled people to the point where Bill Wilbert feels like he can hand over responsibilities to people who can cover them and walk away when he's ready. Thea asked if the Facilities Committee could communicate to the Vestry and the congregation what sorts of skills and experience would make someone a good fit for the Facilities Committee, and Susan said that they would do so.

### **Strategic Planning RFP**

Susan explained that the Request for Proposal (RFP) for the strategic planning position is ready, and that she hopes it will be posted this week, with all proposals due by Thanksgiving. Then the period of time from Thanksgiving to the end of the year will be used for interviews, so that the person who gets hired can start at the beginning of 2023. The RFP will be posted in some of the traditional places for Episcopal Church hires, but it will also be posted in some other places where we might get more out-of-the-box thinking.

Paul asked if this was an ongoing position, to which Susan replied that the position will be for a six-month engagement. The commitment to participate in the Strategic Committee will also be for six months, after which time a strategic plan for the next 3 – 5 years will be developed.

Jason shared that the timing will work as follows: the strategic planning consultant will overlap with the Vestry retreat, the consultant's plan will be presented to the Vestry during the summer, and we'll be ready to roll the plan out next fall.

Keve asked that, if any Vestry members had any feedback to give Susan or himself about the Strategic Planning RFP, they might do so before the end of the week.

### **Treasurer's Report**

Glenn shared an overview of the report he had posted in the Vestry files, explaining that both the church and the cemetery are in the black. PASA is in the red, but it's only two months into the school year, and it's very likely that this will not remain the case.

The disturbing part of the report is related to the endowment, which is down 8% because of the market. The problem here is that, because of this downturn, the 4.5% distribution from the endowment that the Vestry will draw for the 2023 budget will be significantly less than in recent years. The Financial Committee will be meeting with Vanguard and Merrill Lynch in November for an evaluation of the situation.

Work on the budget for next year has begun, and Glenn would appreciate being given any broad objectives the Vestry might have at the November meeting for incorporation into the budget. He is planning to get the Vestry a draft budget in December, although this draft will be based on some squishy numbers related to the investment draw. He'll be able to give better numbers in January, so the budget will be able to be approved at the January Vestry meeting.

Howard asked if Glenn could expand a little bit about why expenses are still down, when we've done substantial hiring this year. Glenn explained that St. Anne's hasn't really been hit yet with the inflation numbers he and the Financial Committee were expecting. This might have to do with St. Anne's not really working in some of the fields hit hardest by inflation (hospitality, medical care, etc.). Thea added that St. Anne's has always approached the expense budget conservatively – in her five years as the clerk and three years on the Vestry, St. Anne's has never once hit its budgeted expenses.

Paul said that the chart for 2023 looks promising, and Glenn explained that we've gotten some large gifts. The trends also look good because of the conservative giving projections – we're planning to receive less, with the result that actual giving comes in closer to the target we've set.

### **Secretary of the Vestry Report**

Having shared her report in advance of the meeting, Linda asked whether anyone had any questions about it. Katie Burke asked about Vestry liaisons – what should those ministries do who had departing Vestry member David Jackson as a liaison? Linda said that the Vestry would

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have to make a decision about how to reapportion the ministries, and that affected ministry chairs would be contacted by a new Vestry liaison sometime soon.

### **September Minutes Approval and Closing Prayer**

The September minutes were approved unanimously as submitted.

Howard then offered a closing prayer, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:27 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Katie Burke  
Clerk of Vestry