

**Episcopal Church of the Ascension
Vestry Minutes
March 2019**

PRESENT: The Rev. Javier Garcia Ocampo, Senior Warden Betsy Hasegawa, Junior Warden Zadinga Ogada, Gordon Donnelly, Meredith Horan, Janet King, Bob Waters, and Susan McLaughlin, Berenice Rodriguez, and Luis Pedron. Absent: Rose Buck, John Pruessner. Others in attendance: Ascension Minister of Music Andrew Kullberg.

The meeting opened at 2:08 p.m., with an opening prayer and check in around the table.

CONSENT AGENDA: Zadinga moved that the consent agenda be adopted, Bob seconded the motion, and it passed.

OLD BUSINESS

Facility Committee. Luis explained that with the completion of the roof, the office could be repaired. On Saturday, the flotsam from the roof was removed from that space in addition to the carpet being cleaned. 99% of the rust was also cleaned. The remainder would be covered by paint on Friday/over the weekend. The office should be ready for use pending some minor cleanup of debris on the desk. We need to consider replacing the carpet in the office and start considering replacing the carpet in the Sanctuary as well.

Emails from Sandy Ridge indicated they still had a heat problem. Javier changed the HVAC company from Parker Pearce to Precision HVAC. Background: Parker Pearce eventually fixed the Chapel heat visiting three weeks in a row and not completing the task while charging for each visit. They left holes in the wall when replacing the thermostats with smaller units. They could not diagnose the problem downstairs in the church. The new company, Precision HVAC, fixed the heat in Ascension House immediately. They also diagnosed the problem in the church, a box was turned off and turning it on resolved the problem. They also plugged in a cable that was the cause of heat not working downstairs. Precision HVAC works with others in the diocese. Susan asked if the company will report the other problems with the building; they will. Parker Pearce was supposed to do a similar report but did not; they were also contracted to replace the air filters on a regular basis. According to Precision, the air filters had not been changed in over a year.

Betsy recommended files on the work be kept by Lin and it is suspected that she is already doing so. Luis stated we need to ask Precision to check the AC. Gordon followed up with asking if we should get a preventive maintenance contract with Precision. Javier stated he did sign such a contract with them prior to the repair work they've already completed. This reduced the costs of their other visits. The contract is ~\$300 more than the previous contract.

Candidate Forum/Annual Meeting/Retreat. March 15th will open the Retreat at Ascension, 6:00pm in the Library for a potluck. Janet won't be available to attend. Meredith and Betsy volunteered to create a signup sheet for what to bring. On Saturday the 16th, meet at St. Luke's to begin the retreat at 8:30am. Brown bag lunches should be brought and breakfast is TBD.

Good turnouts for the 8am and 10am services during the candidate forum weekend. Only one person was present for the 12pm service (it was a snowy day). Suggestions were made including for small groups and social activities outside of church. Betsy suggested having open opportunities for people to speak to the Vestry now and then.

Contract Status. Currently waiting for St. Barnabas to return their signed contract.

Sandy Ridge: A recent version of the lease was sent on February 3rd with Ascension's view of outstanding issues. Sandy Ridge has asked to meet and they have been invited to speak at the Vestry meeting. Ascension received a written response, but no meeting confirmation. Negotiations are derailed by the heating problems. Sandy Ridge claims it has been a problem for two years. They also outlined a toilet plumbing problem. The fire marshall pointed out that fire exit signs haven't been working since the last inspection and are not yet remediated. Sandy Ridge wants a one year contract. Montgomery County will offer free preschool for three year olds and Sandy Ridge expects that will compete with them. Sandy Ridge has also expressed some problem with tables and chairs in Room 6. This is something that was agreed to years ago.

Room 6 is in Sandy Ridge's space (with the connotation that the space belongs to them and not that they are using a space that belongs to Ascension) and ask that Ascension not make it available to others during school hours. The Vestry agreed that this is a reasonable concern.

A 5% increase in Facility Usage per year is typical. Sandy Ridge is asking for only a 2% increase. Ascension countered with 4%. Sandy Ridge doesn't want to pay for additional cleaning and paper supplies. The original contract stated additional supplies would be billed to Sandy Ridge but this has never occurred. They've asked for a reprieve for a year; Ascension has offered three months since they have not yet signed the lease (it would have been six months if they signed sooner as they only have the space until July). They want to include a clause allowing them to make repairs if Ascension doesn't make them upon request. This sparked discussion regarding why that is not acceptable.

Luis asked what the due process is without a signed agreement. Zadinga explained that until a new lease is signed the old lease is still in effect even if it is expired. Javier stated that the costs paid by Sandy Ridge approximately covers the cost of what Ascension is paying to fix things for them. Berenice said if they don't sign a new contract that we need to tell them that, without signing it, they can be asked to leave at any time. They don't have proof of liability insurance and they broke the original lease by not having it.

A discussion followed regarding their likelihood of them planning to leave at the end of the year and if we should begin looking for another group that could use the space. Susan asked if the diocese can help find potential tenants. Zadinga confirmed that they can and she has reached out for this. Luis asked if we should consider hiring a professional to advise Ascension from the perspective of a commercial realtor since this has become a rather complex situation. Betsy asked that all read the correspondence and respond to Zadinga and Berenice on their thoughts for what to do next with Sandy Ridge.

Pancake Supper and Light Breakfast for Annual Meeting. 60 people signed up to attend the Shrove Tuesday dinner. We have enough volunteers and plenty of decorations.

Regarding the annual meeting, bring enough of your food item for 12 people. Janet will become Chairman of the Parish Life Committee.

Strategic Planning Meeting with Bishop. 23rd of March NoMoCo (Northern Montgomery County) meeting will take place and every Vestry must attend. This will take place at St. Barts from 9am-2pm.

Thursday 25 April is a Strategic Plan meeting taking place at our Ascension from 6pm-9pm. All Vestry must attend.

NEW BUSINESS

Rice Bowl/Rise Against Hunger Meal Packing. Javier began by asking if we should call it the Lenten Offering vice Rice Bowl, then the history of the Rice Bowl term was provided so he would have the background on why it is the Rice Bowl. Janet explained that traditionally alternate years a local then international organization is supported. It hasn't been an international organization in many years. Will we support an international organization this year? Other charity options were explored followed by Zadinga detailing her experience with St. Francis and Rise Against Hunger and what Rise Against Hunger does. The meals go all over the world. You need 40 people, a location, and to produce 10,000 at \$.34 per meal requiring a total of \$3,400. For every 1000 meals prepared, a gong/bell is rung to mark the accomplishment. Andrew spoke highly from past experiences.

Janet motioned that, "The Lenten Rice Bowl go toward alleviating hunger." Berenice seconded and it passed unanimously.

AIM Membership. Javier asked if we want Ascension to remain a part of AIM. There is a minimum membership fee of \$1,500 and the bill will come soon. Explanations of what AIM does was given by Betsy. Their intent is political action through congregations. They pick four initiatives per year. Those Ascension members that have participated in their activities don't have a good feeling about the organization. The decision to not rejoin AIM is the recommendation of the Vestry.

Padre's 12 Month Evaluation. This began with a reminder that he also gets to evaluate the congregation. The last evaluation came from an evaluation available on the diocese website. The worship survey will go out at the end of March. Zadinga suggested having small group discussions after the services. Will there be an online survey component? Betsy shared that only 6 surveys were done online for the last evaluation. Another survey with the same questions as the Worship Survey might not go over well. Bob asked about cottage meetings. Betsy explained that to do so we would need similar questions to ask to lead such discussions. Susan asked if this time just the Vestry should evaluate Javier. Betsy explained that with this process the entire congregation needs to weigh in. Meredith reminded everyone that if we attempt to have open discussions we need to consider privacy of those respondents to ensure the openness of member responses.

OPEN MIC

Betsy shared that the Eagle Scout project has received \$600 in donations. This week he will buy shelving and begin building them next week. He hopes to be done by the end of March otherwise, by Easter. Gordon stated that we were informed everything needs to be removed from the room for it to be painted and that it will be painted on the 23rd. Where everything will be moved is in question as is if everything needs to be removed.

Meredith brought up the question of moving the organ. Betsy suggested we need more time to discuss it. Andrew said he would put together some options.

Susan volunteered to take the place as liaison to Parish Life in Janet's place.

Javier asked that everyone bring ideas of how to grow the size of the church. Luis recommended Invitation Day in which you invite someone to come with you. Bob suggested holding some events. Andrew chimed in with a suggestion to have the services shown online.

ADJOURNMENT: At 4:19 p.m., Meredith moved that the meeting be adjourned. Zadinga seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Danielle Allen
Clerk of the Vestry