

Episcopal Church of the Ascension
Vestry Minutes
August 27, 2017

PRESENT: The Rev. Randy Lord-Wilkinson, Betsy Hasegawa, Janet King, Rose Buck, Luis Pedron, Zadinga Ogada, Gary McLaughlin, Meredith Horan, Berenice Rodriguez. Absent: Avin Lalmansingh, John Pruessner. Guest: Katie Beth Miksa, World Council of Churches intern.

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

ORAL REPORTS. Guest Katie Beth Miksa, an intern with the World Council of Churches and a parishioner, needs a church to manage the funds she has raised for an unfunded (by the WCC) internship in Switzerland on religion's role in escalation and resolution of conflicts. We would receive and disburse those funds. Gary moved that Ascension sponsor Katie Beth Miksa, WCC intern, by providing a line item in our budget to handle her funds. The motion was seconded by Gordon and passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

Cuban refugee update. The family of Cuban refugee (Rev.) Mario Felix Lleonart, the recipients of our 2016 Rice Bowl money, are now living in LaPlata, MD, where Mario is now pastor of a small Baptist congregation. He e-mailed Randy with a big thanks for Ascension's help in getting him and his family on their feet. He asked if Ascension could be of any further financial help as the family had incurred some unanticipated legal expenses. There was still \$500 and some change in the Rice Bowl that had come in since Easter, and the consensus was that this money, collected for them, be forwarded to Mario. Future requests would be reviewed on a case by case basis.

Financial "Tiger Team". This and the other tiger teams formed at the Vestry retreat were ad hoc and would disband once their objectives had been achieved. The Financial tiger team has completed its work. Rose felt the tiger teams should report back to the church on their activities, and it should be before the upcoming September 24 town hall meeting.

Church Office Updates. Randy outlined his search to become bi-vocational, with its ups and downs. He has some possibilities, but nothing definite at this point.

Randy then told the Vestry about our new Parish Administrator/Bookkeeper Lin Keene, who was recommended by Melissa Burgos, owner of Primebooks, the accountancy firm Ascension has retained for many years. The transfer of Primebook's duties to Lin (which Melissa is overseeing), will save us \$1,800 each month. She has thus far done a spectacular job of cleaning up the office and restoring it to good order. She keeps volunteer Steve Hasegawa very busy and could use one or more volunteers to help in the office on a regular basis.

Church Facility Rentals. Lauren Kingsland has developed a brochure on renting our chapel for weddings. She shared it with Vestry member Meredith Horan, who stated that there is a bridal show coming up in Kentlands where the brochure could be handed out to attendees. Our website

will be advertising available rentals, especially in the chapel. A Brazilian church had indicated interest in renting the main church on Saturday evenings, but Randy has not heard back from them to date.

Ascension House (AH) rentals. Ascension's Frank Sanya is acting as our listing agent for the rental of AH. Frank has been in talks with a woman who is interested in the entire building for a multi-function beauty shop. This would entail creating a housing allowance for Javier who wouldn't be able to live in AH anymore. Janet stressed that Frank's initial concern is that the woman doesn't have a history of this kind of business and would need strong financing. So far, this proposal is just in discussion.

Sanctuary Movement survey results. Janet was disappointed to report that there were only 27 surveys handed in after the Sanctuary presentation last month. Of these, only three came from the English-speaking-only congregation, which may indicate a lack of interest. However, she feels that the interest is there, just without the interest in filling out the form. The big need right now is transportation – to and from hearings and related events. To start, we would need a list of people willing to drive, often with very little notice. Ascension could also provide a location for seminars such as “Know Your Rights” and the like.

NEW BUSINESS

Discernment for Treasurer position. Our longtime treasurer Howard Holland has announced his retirement; a new treasurer must be found. One prospect was contacted but turned it down; another prospect will be contacted shortly. The person selected should have some financial background. There is an outdated and quite short job description that needs to be updated. Betsy will ask Howard to develop a bulletized list of tasks the treasurer does. When a candidate is chosen, the Vestry will elect the person to a two-year term as Treasurer.

2017 Giving Campaign. Kickoff is the first Sunday in October. Meredith and Avin attended a diocesan workshop on annual giving campaigns and reported on what they learned.

Recommendations included:

- Have a formal cut-off date, but continue work on the campaign “underground” so that it doesn't appear to be an endless campaign
- Get some prominent parishioners to pledge prior to kick-off and then talk about it at the One Ascension luncheon
- Promote the campaign using appropriate scripture during each part of the campaign
- The committee should include the Vestry members and consultants
- The message should be more than just “we need your money”. A mission statement could be a start, as could testimonials from pledgers
- Have Randy and Javier preach on opening Sunday
- Break down our expenses into amounts used per mission area; i.e., Christian Formation, Mission, Hospitality, Liturgy and Music, and so forth
- Have people write a 3”x 5” card stating briefly “Why I Pledge” and post the cards in a visible location
- Go to coffee hour and introduce yourself to someone new to you

Ministry Fair. We started this too late last year and it didn't go well. This year Betsy has already made e-mail contact with many of the leaders of the various ministries, including ones that haven't been represented before, such as the Ascension Adventurers. The Vestry agreed to hold the Fair upstairs in the narthex and hallways for more visibility. A good idea is for all of us to reach out to other congregants, inviting them to go to the Fair.

Changing the Immigrant Narrative. Berenice suggested that we create a video – “An Immigrant’s Story” – by and from members of the Spanish speaking community, to introduce others to real people, the problems they’ve had, how they’ve overcome them, and why they are part of Ascension.

Ascension Goes Live! Berenice also suggested having streaming video on the internet, of the weekly 11:00 Spanish language service, as well as other liturgies in the Chapel. Luis said the cost wouldn't be much, since some parishioners could use their own equipment and the items that would need to be purchased wouldn't be expensive. Randy asked that Javier provide him with a list of all the items needed and costs, including running wire cable to the chapel, and said that the cost could be covered from the restricted Memorial/Worship Fund, whose balance was \$3048 as of the end of July.

Roof Repair. Janet said that we have 2 estimates for either repair (\$1,100) of the roof or replacement (c. \$34,000). Gary moved that we accept the proposal from the Scates Corp to fix the roof, in accordance with their proposal, for \$1,100; Luis seconded the motion and it was passed.

Banner Stand and Pressure Washing of the Chapel. A top to the new banner stand, to be in the style of the one in front of the church, is needed in front of the chapel. In addition, the chapel is in bad need of a pressure washing and gutter cleaning. W. Lam submitted a bid to do all the work. Due to the lateness of the hour and the rest of the subjects to be covered, the discussion tabled for an online vote later in the week.

OPEN MIC

Gordon reported that the Christian Formation for Children team had met, and the two formation classes are ready to start the new school year. He had thoroughly cleaned both rooms. The team is considering offering parents a program at the same time related to what their children are learning. This would help parents discuss the lessons with their children. **Zadinga** added that the classes for 9:00 and 11:15 had been joined into a single one, meeting from 10:15 to 10:55.

Zadinga reported that the cookbook is in the home stretch. The goal is to submit it to the company she's working with by Thursday 8/31; if it's in by then, we will get a discount. Since we are a non-profit, there are no upfront costs.

Gary and wife Susan have adopted Room 1. They did a thorough review of all items in the cupboards, etc, and threw a good amount out. There are still some items in the corner – all are welcome to take them.

Strategic Financial Strategy. The diocesan Strategic Financial Resources Commission project was formed to support parishes as they experience diminishing financial and membership

resources. Ascension has applied to participate in this 18-month pilot program. Randy proposes that he, one of the wardens, and one or two Vestry members represent us if we are accepted. The next step is a phone interview in the next week or two.

ADJOURNMENT: At 4:46 p.m., Janet moved that the meeting be adjourned. Rose seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Sari Stoddard
Clerk of the Vestry

**Episcopal Church of the Ascension
Vestry Action Report #2017-4
September 4, 2017**

SUMMARY

The Vestry meeting of August 27 involved a great many topics and ran late. The Vestry decided to discuss and vote by email on the proposal from W. Lam Home Improvements LLC to (1) pressure wash the chapel and clean the gutters (the cost for these items was under \$1,000 and therefore approved by the Executive Committee), and (2) create a new top for the front message board.

VOTE TALLY:

Yes 9
No 2
Not exercised 0
Randy Yes

BACKGROUND

On Thursday 8/21/17, Gordon Donnelly emailed:

I move we approve the spending for the proposal from W. Lam Home Improvements LLC that we discussed at our Vestry meeting on August 27, 2017. The proposal is for \$1,124.00 for constructing a new message board in the same style as our other outdoor signage; funding to be a capital expenditure.

VESTRY DISCUSSION AND VOTING

That same day, Janet King wrote I second the motion.

“Yes” votes, in order of receipt, were emailed by:

Berenice Rodriguez	Gordon Donnelly
Avin Lalmansingh	John Pruessner
Zadinga Ogada	Gary McLaughlin
Betsy Hasegawa	Meredith Horan
Janet King	

“No” votes were emailed by Luis Pedron, who thought funding should be further discussed and by Rose Buck.

The motion passed.

Respectfully submitted
Sari Stoddard

**Episcopal Church of the Ascension
Committee Chairs' and Liaisons' Reports**

OPERATIONS AND FINANCE REPORT, Howard Holland, Chair
Budget Development and Implementation

We continue to work with the Rector and Wardens to implement changes to 2017 budget to reduce operating expenses and bring our income and expenses more closely into alignment. Our goal remains to narrow the gap between income and expenses during 2017 and achieve a balanced budget by mid-2018, if not sooner.

For the town hall meeting on the budget, we prepared the [separately] attached summary of Ascension's monthly income and expenses thus far in 2017. The figures through July represent actual income and expenses; the figures for August-December are projections based on our budget so far this year. Once we have actual figures for both August and September, we will be able to create a far more accurate projection of where we might be financially at year's end.

The net income figures along the bottom of the spreadsheet represent the difference between our normal operating income and our expenses, with the exception of May. In May, we recorded the \$50,000 gift from the Brooke Estate, which is also reflected in the projected year-end total deficit shown on the spreadsheet. In other words, the deficit would be higher without the gift, which was credited as Miscellaneous Unrestricted Income.

August Financials

As of today, we have not yet received the detailed August financial figures, including income and expenses for the month. As soon as we receive those figures, we will develop a summary report and share separately with the Vestry.

The balance in the Endowment Fund stood at \$288,427 as of July 31. Our Unrestricted Cash Reserves were at \$64,112 as of month's end. In addition, with the continued donations that we have received, we now have \$34,874 in the new Facilities Reserve Fund.

No other reports received.

**Episcopal Church of the Ascension
Parish Life Events Calendar
2016 - 2017**

Annual events:

Fifth Sundays	Potluck Luncheons May 29, 2016 July 31, 2016 Oct 30, 2016 Jan 29, 2017 (cancelled) One-Ascension Sundays with luncheon April 30, 2017 July 30, 2017 Oct 29, 2017 Dec 31, 2017
Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper	Tuesday, February 9, 2016 Tuesday, February 28, 2017
Annual Meeting and Potluck Lunch	Sunday, March 13, 2016 Sunday, March 12, 2017
Pledgers' lunch (catered)	Sunday, April 10, 2016 cancelled for 2017 and in the future
Ascension Day International Potluck	Sunday, May 15, 2016 Sunday, TBD, 2017 (probably 5/28)
Parish Picnic at Bohrer Park Pavilion	Sunday, June 5 th , 2016 cancelled for 2017; replaced by July OneAscension
Special Events	Usually 2-3 per year (welcomes, farewells, dedications, etc.)

**Episcopal Church of the Ascension
Committee Chairs and Vestry Liaisons**

Standing Committees	Vestry Liaison	Chairperson
Christian Formation for Children	Gordon Donnelly	Megan Didavi
Christian Formation for Youth	Avin Lalmansingh	Angie Hight-Walker
Facilities	John Pruessner	Ted Bedell
Outreach	Gary McLaughlin	Paul Boynton
Parish Life	Janet King	On-Call volunteers
Pastoral Care	Zadinga Ogada	Randy Lord-Wilkinson
Personnel	Rose Buck	Jean Cohn
Worship	Meredith Horan	Carleton MacDonald
 Ad hoc Committees presently in effect		
Annual Giving Campaign	TBD	Gary McLaughlin
Christian Formation for Adults	Berenice Rodriguez	TBD
Health and Wellness	Rose Buck	Laura Shay
Operations and Finance	Betsy Hasegawa	Howard Holland
Reshaping Ascension	Executive committee	Randy Lord-Wilkinson
Cookbook	Zadinga Ogada	Zadinga Ogada