

Episcopal Church of the Ascension Vestry Meeting September 25, 2016

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**Episcopal Church of the Ascension
Vestry Meeting Agenda
Sunday, September 25, 2016**

- I. **Relational Bible Study: Randy**

- II. **Set Agenda Times**
Consent Agenda for Acceptance
Questions/concerns should be raised in advance of the meeting. Acceptance of the consent agenda implies approval of the following:
 - a. Minutes from previous month's Vestry Meeting
 - b. Current month's Treasurer's Report
 - c. Mission Area Reports

- III. **Oral Reports:**
By Exception for Discussion or Action items

- IV. **Old Business**
 - a. Treasurer's Report and Recommendations for 2017 – Howard Holland
 - b. Kitchen cleaning/Kathy's email
 - c. Worship/acolyte training - Gary/Randy
 - d. Review of 11:15 Service – Betsy/Randy
 - e. Parish Life/eliminate sexton position? – Randy
 - f. RenewalWorks Survey; evaluation committee, progress - Randy
 - g. Personnel - Randy:
 - 1. Kathy's annual review
 - 2. Magda - nursery
 - h. Annual Giving Campaign - Avin
 - i. Facilities Reserve Fund – Betsy/Randy

- V. **New Business**
 - a. Youth group project – Angie Hight-Walker
 - b. Fifth Sunday Brunch on 10/30/16
 - c. Ad Hoc group on "Shape of Things to Come"- to recommend how to align our mission with our resources, human and financial.

- VI. **Open Mic**
 - a. Fund raising idea – Gary
 - b. Ministries Fair review – how did it go? Can we do better to support it?

- VII. **Adjournment and Closing Prayer**

Closing Prayer: Denise Lionetti

**Next Vestry Meeting
Sunday, October 23, 2016**

**Episcopal Church of the Ascension
Vestry Minutes
August 28, 2016**

PRESENT: The Rev. Randy Lord-Wilkinson, Betsy Hasegawa, Janet King, Rose Buck, Avin Lalmansingh, Denise Lionetti, Gary McLaughlin, Zadinga Ogada, John Pruessner, Najma Stubblefield, Paul Whitmore and Treasurer Howard Holland. **Absent:** Maria Estela Rodriguez.

The meeting opened at 1:40 with a Lambeth Bible Study, concluding at 2:00 when the business part of the meeting opened. Since the treasurer was present, his part of the meeting was held first so he could depart.

TREASURER’S REPORT: Betsy opened the meeting by thanking Howard for all he does, and for being with us. He presented the Vestry with the church’s current financial situation and walked us through the 5-page Treasurer’s Report. The current year is likely to end with spending about \$15-20K less than planned. Howard anticipates that we will have a deficit of \$80-85K in the 2017 budget. That will require cashing in assets in our endowment, and with the stock market at all-time highs, he asked the Vestry for guidance in whether to get the cash now or later, when it is needed. The consensus was to do both; get some now and some later. Howard is planning discussions with our auditor and our bookkeeper on the subject, and offered to prepare a “skeleton” budget for our next meeting. Knowing that we cannot continue taking money from the endowment, Randy and Howard both stressed that for 2018, we must think in new ways and think of new possibilities.

Gary noted that he has been keeping track of our Sunday attendance, and overall, we have about three more congregants per Sunday this year than we did last year. Randy agreed that we are showing small signs of growth.

CONSENT AGENDA: Paul moved that the consent agenda be adopted as presented; Denise seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

Update on small groups/Floris UMC. Paul prepared a report on how Floris UMC welcomes and adopts newcomers. When a “seeker” arrives at Floris, they are actively welcomed, supplied with a newcomer’s card, and tracked. When they arrive a second time, they are given a list of small groups and encouraged to join one, without any discussion of joining the church. It was agreed that at Ascension, additional Welcome Team training regarding newcomers would be a sound investment. John suggested a creating a catalog of our cell groups, outside of Together We Shine. Paul was asked to get specifics from Floris, and to report back in the September meeting.

Seminarian Jason Cutshall. Randy said that Jason will be with us very soon, although the exact Sunday is yet to be determined. Jason will preach the sermon on September 25th.

HVAC update. The new system servicing the main church is working well; there have been no problems. We are awaiting the delivery of another new system for the Undercroft and lower level of the admin wing where the day school and Sunday school classrooms are.

RenewalWorks survey. The survey, which costs \$500, will be up and available for everyone to take in September. The survey will again help us learn what is important to our parishioners, and where the church is on our spiritual journey. Gary pointed out that it is very important to get everyone to take the survey.

Job retitle. The Vestry decided after discussion that the job formerly held by Pia should be titled Media Specialist instead of the former title of Minister of Information, since the new name is a more accurate rendering of the job description.

Interviews for sexton and nursery coordinator. Randy said that we have had a number of applicants for each of our open positions. But we may have to have a buffer period using volunteers from the congregation. Current sexton Betty Lavern has said she will work on into September if needed. And interim Minister of Information Carol Bruno is doing great – she is one of the applicants for the permanent position.

NEW BUSINESS

Review of office staff pay. The Vestry discussed what the office staff does and how that compares with position descriptions, and recommended that Randy hold reviews with the staff, reporting results to the Vestry. John moved that the Office Coordinator be given an increase in salary; Paul seconded and the motion was passed.

Grease trap treatment. Betsy has been communicating with an EDOW staff person about the problem. This problem is widespread throughout the Diocese and elsewhere.

Annual Giving Campaign (AGC) and Facilities Reserve Fund (FRF) Campaign. Gary reported that we are on Diocesan consultant John Johnson's schedule for the fall. Suggestions for the AGC included specifying a pledge goal in dollars, and during services each Sunday naming those who have submitted pledges and thanking them. Another suggestion was for the children to have their own pledge campaign, to give them the feeling that they are part of and important to the church. The Sunday School teachers have talked about this and are committed to it; Denise will take the Vestry's suggestions to the teachers.

The question of the timing of the two campaigns was brought up. The consensus was to hold them simultaneously. Tentatively Randy will write the letter for the FRF and Avin will do the one for the AGC, and they will go out together in one envelope, with either a single pledge card with an area for each campaign, or as two separate pledge cards.

One congregation's solution to having an \$80K deficit. This report was sent to the Vestry by email. It was briefly discussed and Vestry members agreed that much of what the cited congregation found to work has been done at Ascension already. There are recommendations at the end worth looking at.

Women's Retreat report. Betsy and Janet reported enthusiastically about the retreat. They brought back the following thoughts and ideas:

- Redesignate Newcomer's Brunch as Fifth Sunday Brunch. Some parishioners have not been attending, thinking the brunch is only for newcomers, hence the need for a new

name. The suggestion was received well overall. Vestry members were asked to email any thoughts to Betsy and Janet.

- More and varied retreats. The women suggested having a variety of half-day, close by retreats, maybe as cell-group activities, perhaps with lunch before or dinner after. Silent retreats are available at the nearby Dayspring retreat center in Germantown.
- Silent auction. Ascension has held these as part of previous events; the retreat participants recommended holding a standalone silent auction in our narthex area in November. Ophelia Yalley-Ogunru and Suzyn Gonzales offered to arrange it. They welcome volunteer help.

OPEN MIC

Calendar suggestion. A parishioner suggested that we sell the Episcopal Kalendars as a money making idea. After discussion, the Vestry decided not to pursue the idea.

Teacher's retreat. Zadinga reported that it had been quite productive, with the teachers getting to know one another. She and Denise are preparing for the next school year, setting schedules, identifying materials needed, and other logistical plans.

ADJOURNMENT: At 4:55 p.m., Avin moved that the meeting be adjourned. Zadinga seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Sari Stoddard
Clerk of the Vestry

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

OPERATIONS AND FINANCE COMMITTEE, Howard Holland, Chair

To be delivered under separate cover and/or at the meeting.

CHRISTIAN FORMATION FOR CHILDREN, Megan Didavi, Chair

Our big news is that Joyful Path (3-5th grades) and Godly Play (preschool-2nd grade) will be joining together to sing with Howard Hanson during both the 9:00 and the 11:15 services. The 9:00 group will go to the chapel right after taking communion and the 11:15 group will meet Howard in the music room during the sermon.

WORSHIP COMMITTEE, Carleton MacDonald, Chair

Report from the Ministries Fair: We have eleven ministries within Worship, and all are updated to reflect their current status. Ministries are acolytes, Altar Guild, chaliceists, chapel services, choir, Eucharistic visitors, flower delivery, healing prayer ministers, 11:15 musicians and cantors, lectors (readers), and welcome teams (ushers). The worship committee and the Mobile Med displays are from 2016 are stored in the robe closet in the choir room.

Three people signed up; 1 lector each at 9:00 and 11:15, and a chaliceist at 9:00.

I hope more ministries are represented next year. The only three that were there were Mobile Med (a program within Outreach), A Joyful Path (from Christian Formation for Children), and Worship. In previous years there have been as many as 8-10 tables downstairs. Maybe it would do better to have the tables upstairs, in the narthex and along the halls. With coffee in the narthex, people tend not to go downstairs.

Additionally, the choir is back, with 16 dedicated members, and we are working hard on music for the fall and for Christmas. I'm assuming there will be a choral evensong on November 6, the Sunday in November closest to All Saints Day, and that the Christmas Eve schedule will be the same as last year, with the choir at both services.

No other committee reports received.

Episcopal Church of the Ascension
Email regarding Kitchen/Need for Cleaning

From: **Kathy Van Arnum** <office@ascensionmd.org>
Date: Tue, Sep 20, 2016 at 3:26 PM
Subject: Cleaning
To: Randy Lord-Wilkinson <ral@ascensionmd.org>, Betsy Hasegawa <grhasegawa@verizon.net>, Janet King <bkmechanical@aol.com>

I have been having an issue with a mouse in my desk for the last couple weeks. Our exterminator has been here and is trying to take care of the issue but there are a couple problems.

The sinks in the chapel [sacristy] need to be clean[ed] out underneath and disinfected to get rid of the rodent smell that is attracting more mice.

The downstairs kitchen is very dirty. He says this is the source of the mouse in my desk and that we will have another infestation if we don't take care of it. He says everything needs to be cleaned downstairs including pulling out all the appliances to clean under them. He also said that one of the walls has a large amount of grease on it that needs to be cleaned. The sinks need to be cleaned out and under and everything needs to be disinfected.

Until we do these things, we won't get rid of the mice. We don't want another problem with the health department.

Thanks,
Kathy

Episcopal Church of the Ascension
Review of the 11:15 Service
September 4, 2016

The purpose of the meeting was to share visions and preferences for the service and what, if anything, should be changed. Attendees were people who regularly attend this service.

1. Randy shared the contents of an email sent by Sarah Rubin, who could not attend. She had several specific requests many of which would move the content of the liturgy closer to the 9:00 service, including singing the alleluia, psalms, acclamation, and a piece at communion; choice of music; collect selection and placement; penitential prayer addition; and timing of the peace. She also noted that her guitar cannot be heard by the congregation or by herself, and suggested use of an amplifier.

The idea of collect selection generated some discussion, with agreement that more variety would be nice. Howard Hanson suggested a conclusion to the prayers of the people such as a concluding verse or statement. Randy noted he felt the hymn at that time served as a collect but all ideas remain possibilities, e.g., Substituting the collect for the day for the collect for purity.

Jerrold recommended, to somewhat universal agreement, that the collect for purity stay where it is, and the collect for the day follow the prayers of the people.

2. Claire Rosser and others noted that because of the current acoustics and inability of the ensemble to hear the singing that perhaps the service should move back to the Chapel. Lots of discussion followed. Jerrold disagreed that moving was a solution to the acoustics issue; he suggested instead that, based on his experience, the acoustics in our main church have to be permanently improved by physical, not electronic, means. Specifically, removing carpet in the nave (among other methods) will improve our acoustics. He also described how acoustics in the Chapel would not be much better with the current ensemble because acoustically, the Chapel is actually two rooms.

Randy added that there was a potential political aspect of the Spanish-language service taking place in the main church, i.e., a visitor walks in, hears the entire service taking place in Spanish, thinks that's all there is, and leaves without talking to anyone.

3. Randy invited all participants to share their immediate thoughts on how the 11:15 service helps us fulfill the mission of Ascension.

Alice Benson, Avin Lalmansingh, Betsy Hasegawa: simple clear language in the liturgy and lyrics allows many to quickly understand the meaning of the liturgy and take that purpose away when the worship is over. ("Worship is over. Let the Service begin! sort of thing.)

Rose Buck: In combination with the language and the ensemble music, the service takes on a lively tone that is good for family worship. She noted that Howard Hanson had been identified and admired as "Jesus" playing the guitar by a young parishioner.

Anika Lalmansingh: The 11:15 service is more inviting, or “laid-back”, making it easier for those who are not very familiar with the traditional liturgy, which does include some rules and rituals congregants must follow. The result is a more relaxed experience for 11:15 parishioners. Carleton MacDonald, present because he chairs the Worship Committee, noted that instructions for parishioners appear in the 9:00 bulletin. Others noted that they are not seen by the people who need them, perhaps because they are very busy reading the rest of the bulletin.

Laura Shay: The 9:00 liturgy is more suited for people who grew up with Episcopal traditions; Carleton agreed this could be so.

Sue Snay: The addition of the piano and the musical interludes are lovely. Alice (and others) agreed and specifically thanked Jerrold for using older hymns in the service interludes.

Randy: Noted that contrary to popular belief, “millennials” and young adults can be drawn to the classical service and to more structured liturgies, therefore, specifically attracting young adults is not a major purpose of the 11:15 service.

4. Closing Comments

Carleton: “The 11:15 service is “bringing people in who might not otherwise be here.”

Rose: Has experienced churches with speakers outside so the service and music could be heard.

Howard: Services can be streamed live.

Randy: Randy and Howard can look into online streaming

Anika: 1) Wants to be able to see all the worship leaders, including musicians. 2) Would like to see more children involved specifically because...3) Leaders are attempting to incorporate the music in Sunday school.

Meredith Horan: Very supportive of more child-involvement and shared her memories (with others) of the children’s’ choir as a “great thing.”

Jerrold: Thinks both the 9:00 and 11:00 services are successful, and believes that “marketing” the 11:15 in new ways may increase attendance

Randy: agrees with the marketing concept, and after some talk of other churches using video screens turned down that idea for Ascension.

Alice wondered why two forms of the Lord’s Prayer are included in the bulletin. Thoughts were that it was easier from a production standpoint to leave both in from week to week.

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

Annual events:

Fifth Sundays	Potluck Luncheons May 29, 2016 (may reschedule due to Memorial Day) July 31, 2016 Oct 30, 2016 Jan 29, 2017 April 30, 2017 July 30, 2017 Oct 29, 2017
Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper	Tuesday, February 9, 2016 Tuesday, February 28, 2017
Annual Meeting Potluck Lunch	Sunday, March 13, 2016 Sunday, TBD, 2017
Pledgers' lunch (catered)	Sunday, April 10, 2016 Sunday, TBD, 2017
Ascension Day International Potluck	Sunday, May 15, 2016 Sunday, TBD, 2017 (probably 5/28)
Rice Bowl Meal (Proposed)	Date TBA (May-June?) 2016
Parish Picnic at Bohrer Park Pavilion	Sunday, June 5 th or June 12 th , 2016 Sunday, early June, 2017
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	Zadinga Ogada	Megan Didavi
Christian Formation for Youth	Paul Whitmore	Angie Hight-Walker
Facilities	John Pruessner	Ted Bedell
Outreach	Gary McLaughlin	Paul Boynton
Parish Life	Janet King	TBD
Pastoral Care	Maria Estela Rodriguez	Randy Lord-Wilkinson
Personnel	Rose Buck	Jean Cohn
Worship	Najma Stubblefield	Carleton MacDonald
 Ad hoc Committees presently in effect		
Annual Giving Campaign	Avin Lalmansingh	Gary McLaughlin
Christian Formation for Adults	Zadinga Ogada	TBD
Health and Wellness	Denise Lionetti	Laura Shay
Operations and Finance	Betsy Hasegawa	Howard Holland
“Shape of Things to Come”	TBD	TBD