

**Episcopal Church of the Ascension**

**Vestry Minutes**

**August 1, 2021**

**PRESENT**; Senior Warden Zadinga Ogada, Junior Warden Kristen Keating, Danielle Allen, Adoma Baffoe, Wadai Dennis, Arturo Rodriguez, Monty Petersen, Lauren Kingsland, Ruth Anna Skowronski, Ed Armstrong, Gary McLaughlin (Treasurer), **ABSENT**: Wendy Quijada, Padre Javier

Meeting opened at 2:07pm following prayer by Zadinga

**CONSENT AGENDA**: Arturo moved and Lauren seconded the motion to accept the agenda.

**OLD BUSINESS**; Gary said that the month of June was another month in the red. We lost \$3,500. We expect the summer months to be slow. He reminded the vestry to let everyone in the congregation know we need all their commitment to the church. Zadinga asked if people who have pledged are keeping up? Lin is the best person to answer that question. For those who give in the plate, how many have transferred to electronic giving? According to Gary, nothing much is happening to the plate. Janet has agreed to chair the Stewardship committee. What we will do this year is to ask the vestry to be prepared to make their pledge when we expect it. Last year, we thought we would ask the vestry to walk to the front of the church and drop their pledge and to add an amount later. This year, Gary asked the vestry to be prepared to do it. We will start the campaign mid-September. Lauren asked about doing a virtual presentation on that day. Gary hopes the committee will come up with a way to do it. He worked with Wendy and she came up with a call list. This list will be used to ask for donation. If there is anything wrong with the list, let him know. Please make the calls and be sensitive to what is going on with the members so that they do not feel we only call for money. Be patient and make several calls if no contact initially. Ruth Anna thinks a message should be sent so that when contact is made it is easier to make the request. Gary said it is not wise to ask for pledges over the phone. Texting may be the way to go. Gary is relying on the vestry to report back after the calls are made. Arturo clarified that the calls should not be about stewardship and Gary said yes.

**Call List**: Zadinga said the calls will be a year round stewardship so they need to be made. She asked that the calls be completed this week.

**NEW BUSINESS**:

**Elevator repair**: Kristen said we need to decide whether it is necessary to go ahead and do the elevator repair. Should we address it now and if not, when. Monty sent the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) file and it mentions that we are not required to have an elevator between two floors. If you have one, you have to comply. Arturo added that he looked at the two proposals and his question is, do we need to modernize the elevator? What can be done without going the distance with the repairs. Kristen said she will make a motion to repair the elevator

within the next calendar year. Zadinga asked if this means doing the entire repairs in a broad sense and includes modernization and Kristen said yes; enough so that it will pass the inspection for next year and a few years to come. Ed asked if the proposal we have is good through December 31, 2021. Will we need a new RFP if it expires? Kristen said yes. In addition, if we do not pass inspection next year, we will have 30 days to complete the repairs. Randall explained in detail what needs to be done. The elevator inspection is a safety inspection required by the state. It is not a mechanical issue. If any elevator company is asked to shut an elevator down, they will say no because the state controls elevators and not elevator companies. There are steps to take in order to accomplish the shut down. We will have to apply to the state of Maryland to have the elevator decommissioned. That will cost about \$2,500. The contractor will have to bring equipment to be able to remove everything associated with the elevator. The car, door, smoke detectors and heat detectors. Then the doors get bolted shut and that will cost about \$5,000. Total cost will be about \$7,500. Then at that point we will not be ADA compliant. Randall stressed that this is not an elevator repair, it is a rehabilitation. It is impossible to get parts for the control panel, CPUs and hydraulics. We have to replace the air conditioning units, and lights; the hydraulic cylinders inside the hoist way can be retained because they are still good.

Other than that, the three proposals we have are apples to apples regarding the scope of the work. Time wise, all the proposals will take about five months to complete from the time the contract is signed. It will not be down all the time but due to the pandemic, we may not have the time to wait. Expect a price increase to come October 1<sup>st</sup>. Arturo wants to know why there is such a difference in amount in the three proposals. Randall said Thyssen is our elevator contractor and we have worked with them for many years. OEM (Original Equipment Manufacturers) is about \$10,000 over Thyssen's pricing but their pricing is good too. Thyssen Krupp has generic parts. Smart Rise Controller is top of the line. OEM is not budging on the price. The church does not need a top of the line equipment. Thyssen is best for us. They are non-proprietary.

Gary said that in general, the statement from Bank of America checking account has a balance of \$179,000 and savings is \$52,500. We have about \$230,000 sitting in the bank, However, it is not good, financially, to spend it. If it is spent and something else comes down the road, we will not be able to finance it. He spoke to the people at the Episcopal Church Building Fund and they are ready to work with us. He would want us to get a loan for the project. Gary has other ideas on how to finance this but he does not want to make decisions alone. He supports the elevator rehabilitation. It was suggested that we could fold in the price of the elevator with our mortgage if we borrow the \$100,000. In that case, we will have only one payment. Gary did not like the idea. If we borrow the money, we have many options on how and when to pay back. If we have difficulty paying back, we still have \$230,000 in the bank to use.

Lauren noticed that in addition to the checking account, we have one \$400,000 in the endowment Fund. She wants to know if we are making money on that amount. Gary said we make about \$9,000 to \$10,000 a month on it. Lauren said that in that case, we shouldn't worry about the plate when we have resources. Zadinga asked Randall if he foresees anything that will take precedence over the elevator since he is putting together a list of all the jobs that need to be done; he said no. He will put together a spreadsheet of capital expenditure and life expectancy and an

estimated cost against it but nothing that he expects soon. Kristen asked that a motion be made to go ahead with the elevator rehabilitation in time so we can take advantage of the price before the price increase in October 2021. If we do so after October 2021, the price will increase by 5% to 10%; 5% will be \$5,000 and 10% will be \$10,000. Kristen motioned that we vote to refurbish the elevator in time for the June 29, 2022 inspection date. Arturo seconded and it passed unanimously. Zadinga asked Gary to let the vestry know what he needs to move forward. Randall will reach out to Thyssen Krupp.

**Yard sale money:** Zadinga asked Wadai to talk about how the yard sale preparation is going. Wadai said she has a lot of volunteers and all things have been sorted. She needs more skirt and pants hangers. If she gets donations of about \$20 from each person, she will be able to order more since they are not available in the local stores. They are about \$17.99 for 30 hangers at Amazon. Some things are already on hangers and on racks so when the additional hangers come in, we can finish the job. Zadinga asked that folks sign up for a set-up crew and clean-up crew. Wadai added that Arturo cleared all the damaged stuff and trash off of the porch sat Ascension House and sent them to the dump. Kristen asked that the vestry volunteer for the day of the yard sale which is August 21, 2021. Ruth Anna said we can use the sign up genius to have volunteers sign up. Kristen asked that Wadai join the Outreach committee meeting. Kristen will ask Angie and Trevor to ask the youth to volunteer and receive SSL hours. Zadinga asked about a car wash and it was confirmed that there will be one. Arturo said he spoke to Freddy and he said he will have the machine for the car wash. What he needs is the manpower. Gary reminded the vestry that the original discussion was what to do about yard sale money. After discussion, it was decided that the funds be put in the general funds (unrestricted). Wadai asked if the church has a way to receive funds by credit card. Kristen will check and let her know. Monty moved that the yard sale funds be placed in the General Funds and Lauren seconded. It passed unanimously.

**Coffee hour:** Zadinga and Kristen met with the diocese's Senior and Junior wardens. Most of the churches are cautious. Zadinga asked for the vestry's thoughts about having coffee hour outside. Lauren has been attending church all summer and folks hang out outside for a while after the service. She thinks we should bring back the coffee hour outside. Arturo said he has been tracking the COVID data in the state of Maryland and Montgomery county. It is still trending upwards and we should be cautious but it can be done especially if it is outside. Danielle said we should be cautious as well and if we do it outside, we should have it at Ascension House so that the members attending the third service will not have to pass through the crowd. After discussion, it was decided that coffee hour will begin on One Ascension day. Zadinga will reach out to Janet, Parish Life committee chair.

**Parish Council:** All must be present for the Parish Council meeting to be held on August 19<sup>th</sup>. Arturo asked what the Parish Council is. Kristen explained that it is the opportunity to have the vestry and committee chairs to meet and talk about the programs. Not sure what Padre has in mind since it is our first.

**Date for next vestry meeting:** After discussion it was decided to be held on August 29<sup>th</sup> since the first Sunday of September falls on a holiday weekend.

**OPEN MIC;** Meredith has a suggestion for use of Ascension House. She was talking to Michelle Wood about Mobile Med and the idea came up. Zadinga and Kristen will meet with her so they can report to the vestry.

**Fire panel proposals:** We still need \$1,159.14 to fix the issues that came up after the inspection. Ed moved that we move to approve the \$1,159.14 up to \$1,200 to resolve the fire panel inspection discrepancies. Monty seconded and it passed unanimously.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Kristen motioned to adjourn the meeting, Lauren seconded and it passed unanimously

Monty provided closing prayer. The meeting ended at 4:08pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Ophelia Yalley-Ogunro  
Secretary of the Vestry