

**Episcopal Church of the Ascension**  
**Vestry Minutes**  
**April 3, 2022**

**PRESENT:** Senior Warden Kristen Keating, Junior Warden Danielle Allen, Monty Petersen, Lauren Kingsland, Ed Armstrong, Ruth Anna Skowronski, Randall Adams, Shirley Allen, Lisa Blanc, Susan McLaughlin, Roger LeCompte, Gary McLaughlin (Treasurer).

Meeting started at 2:02pm following prayer by Padre.

**CONSENT AGENDA:** Monty said his name should be spelled with all e's. It will be corrected. Shirley also mentioned that minutes should state that Randall suggested we remove the stickers on the carpets and on the end of the pews as well. In the minutes it states that Randall suggested we take the stickers on the carpet and end of the pews. Susan made a motion to accept the consent agenda with the corrections and Shirley seconded. It passed unanimously.

**OLD BUSINESS:** Gary said that the month was good with \$40,000 coming in. Operating expenses were quite low because most of the things we had to do regarding facilities were taken from the Facilities Reserve Fund (FRF). Right now, we are in good shape with \$20,000 in the black but he's going to ask the Stewardship committee, after Easter, to start a drive to fund the FRF. Some people pledged to five years ago and they are still sending funds to the FRF. Julie is coming tomorrow and she will be producing the reports. Gary will be training her and he doesn't know how long it will take. We have about \$45,000 to spend for the HVAC. The only hindrance on closing the mortgage is our attorney and the area where he is most concerned is that, it states in the contract that we may not go to private suing of the mortgage company, we have to go to arbitration. These kinds of items are not usually in contracts and it is being worked on to get it through. Gary is hoping that we will have the whole thing done in a week. The people needed to sign the document will be Ophelia, Kristen, Danielle and Padre.

**Facilities:** Randall gave an update on the elevator. Beginning this month Padre signed off on \$9,500 to get the contract with ThyssenKrupp (TK) completed. That brought the net amount to about \$109,500. Randall has been checking daily on the progress. The elevator is working; it is running up and down. There will be a safety inspection by a third party DLLR and it may be done in two weeks. It may not be ready by Easter but we are close. Kristen explained how the order was changed. Bishop Marianne gave us the gift of \$10,000 to complete the work. We do not have to pay it back. Kristen said that the vestry has to keep it in mind.

Randall mentioned in the last meeting that he thought there were termites in the chapel. He had Alliance Pest Control come to inspect and they found powderpost beetles in the belfry. They can do damage just like termites. They are in the roof structures and crawlspace; the underbelly is

filled with powder beetles and when you walk on certain spots in the chapel, you can feel the sponginess. The estimate to treat the powderpost beetles is \$4,270. Lauren asked if there is a need to change the floor. Randall said yes but not the entire floor there are sections that need to be done but right now we don't know for sure until the investigation is done. It should be added to the long-term plan. Randall made a motion that we pay Alliance Pest Control the \$4,270 to have the powder beetles eradicated. Ruth Anna asked if other bids were considered. Randall said no but when he checked on costs on Google it is within the range. She also asked if there's a policy on how many bids to get when we spend money. Gary said that Matt is a current vendor and we are happy with him. Ruth Anna asked that if there are monthly inspections how did he miss the powderpost beetles. Randall said it is not a routine inspection. Padre said these inspections are extras to be paid for and the routine inspections are for insects and mice on all three buildings. She asked how we would monitor them after this treatment. Randall said we may need to reevaluate our contract to include other inspections. After discussion, Roger seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

The kitchen hood suppression system pull station needs to be pulled down about 6 inches to allow people in wheelchairs to be able to pull in an emergency. Randall said that the inspector measured it and made that recommendation. The estimate from ARK is \$1,080.45 This is for time and material not to exceed. If the time they spend on it is less, it will reduce the amount to less than \$1,000 but not any more. We don't have a choice but to fix this. Randall moved that we accept this proposal and allow ARK to come in and lower the pull station. Ed seconded and it passed unanimously.

Jesse and Randall were able to locate the lamps . At this point, he will table the idea of the LED lights until later. He donated his 32 foot ladder to the church so Jesse can change the lights without renting one. There are eight dimmer switches that are shot. The proposal from Kolb Electric to fix the dimmer switches is \$1,531.12. We can delay this. We can look at the LED conversion down the road. Lauren said the choir can see now and she thanked Randall for changing the lights on the chancel area. The LED change will require rewiring. Repairing what we have is cheaper. Kristin asked if there is merit in repairing now and do the LED after research is done. Randall doesn't think the conversion should happen now. Maybe three or four years from now. Monty asked if all eight dimmers are bad. On the 300 watts floodlights are heavy duty dimmers. Two don't work at all, they just light but don't dim. After discussion Randall made a motion to have Kolb Electric fix the eight dimmer switches for \$1,500; Lauren seconded and Monty said no.

Spring cleaning will include trimming the hedges, mulching and mowing the grass to supplement the Bridge program. Randall did it last year but he can't do it this year. It will cost \$1,395 and \$125 a visit to mow and trim throughout the summer. Roger asked about the Bridge program and Randall explained. Danielle asked if it is possible not to use mulch since it attracts pests.

Randall said yes. Mulching will be around the trees and hedges and columbarium. Danielle said it is only decorative and she would rather we don't use the mulch for environmental and financial reasons. Randall said it will reduce the contract significantly. Lauren supports Danielle in not using mulch because it is not ecologically sensible and sustainable and we can try not using it. Randall made a motion to do weekly mowing and trimming for \$1,200. Kristen seconded and it passed unanimously. Randall has the sign light and he has given the 50% of the money to the church as promised so the project is fully funded.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

**List of future facilities needs:** Kristen said that the list of future facilities needs is just to be aware of potential costs. Randall said it has been his goal to do this. He asked the vestry not to be too hung up on the pricing and dates since they may change. The only thing that has actual pricing is the parking lot lights, the roof and gutters which may need to be done sooner. The sanctuary roof is 40 years old and there are some patchwork and some rotten wood and soft spots as well. Until the roof is repaired we cannot put solar panels on it. The total listed is about \$171,000 and \$81,000 of that is for the roof. Gary said the \$171,000 is a lot of money but if it is divided into the four years, then priorities need to be set for each year so that we can set goals.

Randall said that realistically these are things we need to face in the next 4 to 5 years. It is a working document and meant to get the vestry thinking. Kristen said that the \$171,000 over the 4 years is \$43,000 a year. Ed said that Ruth Anna asked a thoughtful question earlier about the requirement when we exceed the \$1,000 limit on expenditure. The bylaws said we should get two or three quotes. He feels the vestry as a body needs to discuss it and possibly amend the bylaws. Kristen said that the vestry has done that in the past and that the pest control issue was an emergency so we went with a known vendor.

**Easter musicians:** Kristin informed the vestry that Andrew is hiring musicians for Easter and the \$1,000 will come out of the music budget.

**Support for Mission in Africa:** Roger explained the support for an outreach program alternative; have an outreach program that is meaningful to us and not one that changes from year to year. A relationship with a church that changes us. The relationship is a two way street and we can benefit from it too. It doesn't have to be Africa, it can be local, Mexico or anywhere else. A suggested way of making this happen; at his old church, the vestry decided to tax the plate and pledges at 4% per year to fund this program. As stated in his proposal, what he's suggesting is thinking of outreach in a different way that brings tangible benefit for others.

Randall asked Roger if he's thinking about a line item that will support the program. He said yes, on a regular basis. He thinks anywhere from \$1,000-\$5,000 but it has to be a regular thing.

Randall asked if the vestry can think about this and discuss it some more. Roger suggested we get a small group together to begin the discussion on this idea. Lisa said she liked the idea overall but we have a relationship with Gaithersburg Help and the Men's Shelter lunch program once a month. She also said we have a relationship with St. Stephen's in Liberia. She also suggested Roger work with the Outreach committee on this. Lauren said we have a long time relationship with St. James School in Philadelphia and we support them every year. In recent years, many of our systems of communication are broken and outreach is one but Roger's idea makes her think about what to do with outreach. Kristin said the current Outreach committee is about a year old and we went for about four years without an Outreach committee. We have still managed to maintain relationships with programs like the Lord's Table Soup Kitchen, Mobile Med and Linkages to Learning programs that benefit the children in our community. We have several relationships with several groups in our community. It will still be worth exploring an international relationship. She asked Roger to attend an outreach committee meeting and speak with Anne Brink to add to the agenda for the next meeting.

**OPEN MIC:** Randall said that April is the month we do the switch from heat to air-conditioning. It is scheduled for April 12th. If it is still cold they will leave the heat on. He can instruct Jesse to switch to air conditioning.

Randall asked why the lectern is not being used. In his experience, the pulpit is for preaching and the lectern is for reading. Padre said the pulpit is no longer called that and that everyone can use the lectern which is the new name.

Randall said he has seen there are funds to maintain the columbarium. He has reached out to Gordon three times and Goprdon has not responded. It is in disrepair and there are Columbarium companies that can restore it. There is a plate missing from one of the niches and it has been over a year and a half. Kristen said it was serviced a couple of years ago by a company in Baltimore . Maybe that is where we start to have it restored. Padre said he will talk to Gordon this week and if he can't do the job it will be given to someone else.

Gary said the mortgage company wants us to fix the name on the document because the vestry voted for the wrong name. He asked the vestry for permission to use the correct name of the church. All agreed.

Lisa said somebody used to collect the food for Gaithersburg Help. They have a list of specific foods that they will accept. We need to ask Mardia if we can establish a relationship with Manna so that we can send some to them. Kristen said that at the last outreach committee meeting they talked about Gaithersburg Help and Melanie is still working with them. She said we can split the holidays for Gaithersburg Help and Manna.

Padre asked permission for the 12-Step groups to come back and he will suggest a donation for cleaning. Gary said the group he spoke with requested to meet in Room one. Kristin said we need to speak with Eileen to make sure the space is free. Every vestry member is fine with getting them back in.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Kristen moved to adjourn the meeting and Danielle seconded. It passed unanimously. Roger provided closing prayer and the meeting ended at 4:06pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Ophelia Yalley-Ogunro  
Secretary of the Vestry