

Episcopal Church of the Ascension
Vestry Minutes
December 4, 2022

PRESENT: Senior Warden Kristen Keating, Junior Warden Danielle Allen, Monty Petersen, Ed Armstrong, Susan McLaughlin, Roger LeCompte, Lisa Blanc, Shirley Allen, Randall Adams, Lauren Kingsland, Gary McLaughlin (Treasurer), Elizabeth Baker (Tending Our Soil, Chairperson), Kathryn Froelich (Columbarium).

Meeting started at 2:01pm following prayer by Padre.

CONSENT AGENDA: Kristen made changes in the order of the agenda. Randall moved to accept the changes and Lauren seconded. Susan made a motion to accept the consent agenda and Roger seconded. It passed unanimously. Kristen invited Kathryn and Elizabeth to make their presentation before the vestry meeting.

Susan asked if any of the vestry members have visited the columbarium lately. A few members of the vestry showed by hand they have. She visited yesterday with her grandchildren who asked how many niches there were and there are about 120. They also asked how many have people in them; approximately 50. How many can fit in one box and that is about three. This is information most people do not know. There is a lot of work ahead of us. The columbarium is aging and it also has structural issues. She introduced Kathryn Froelich who will be the custodian of the columbarium.

Kathy thanked the vestry for allowing her to make her presentation. Her family has been worshiping at Ascension since 1977. Her father Richard dedicated the columbarium in honor of her mother Grey. The most important thing for the vestry to know is that the vestry is responsible for the management and care of the columbarium. Susan said they looked at all the facilities of the columbarium and it is functional but raggedy. The records are missing data. Kathy has spent a lot of time on it but it is not ready. The landscaping and hardscaping is messy but salvageable. Applying ourselves to this it will be necessary and to tell people in the pews about it.

We will have a committee so that the responsibility of telling others about it does not fall on Padre or the custodian only. Kristen said that it is her understanding that the regular landscaper cannot do the work there because people are buried in the soil. She is wondering if the job can be done by a landscaper. According to Susan, a regular landscaper cannot dig around; we have to be respectful and not just hand it over to a landscaper. Susan would like to have a group called "Friends of the Columbarium" who will also like to take care of it. Kristen asked for clarification of the vestry's responsibility and is it only that the vestry needs to be aware of what is going on. Lauren asked if the old niches were moved to the ground and it was clarified that it is a choice to have your remains in the ground or in the niche. Randall reaffirmed that he has done a lot of weeding in the last two summers. Kay Kolle has also planted some annuals.

Randall has also told the landscapers what they can and cannot do in that area. He is willing to work with the committee.

Elizabeth Baker said that what will be happening next with the Tending Our Soil program is to survey all the congregation. This is to let the vestry know ahead of time. The survey will take about 20 minutes and they are online. There may be a few paper copies. Danielle asked how the vestry can support the cause and she said the vestry needs to take the survey. Lauren asked if it will be helpful to bring computers to help those who may need help and she said it is a good idea.

OLD BUSINESS;

Nominating Committee: Susan said that they have had a hard time finding people to commit as candidates. There is one and another two have accepted to be nominees as delegate. In the past, there were people who wanted to serve. It does feel like there are people who are drifting from people and the church and Zoom may be the cause because it is comfortable. We should put out a call in the bulletin. Susan feels that the good thing about asking is that the people feel honored. Kristen said that people on Zoom can serve on the vestry. The committee asked that more time be given until the end of the week to come up with more people. Padre said we should pray for the right candidates who want to do God's work to come through.

Pledge Campaign: Roger referred to his report which is self-explanatory. He suggested we end the campaign at this time because we have about 85% of the number from last year. He said we should officially end the campaign and move on to the capital campaign.

Gary said that we ended the month with a loss of \$32,000 and that is a lot of money. The last three months have been losses. The \$24,000 for the repair of the roof is accountable for most of the deficit. We will have some of these expenses and we need to get Funds in the Facilities Fund. Monty asked why rent is down but there is no explanation since this is all that was collected for rent. After further discussions on the balance sheets and salaries, Kristen recommended that we move on to the next item on the agenda.

Facilities: Randall reported that he is happy with the budget for facilities. We are still working with ARK on the inspection of the work done and we are waiting for that. The gutters will be cleaned sometime next week. The budget he sent to the vestry this morning shows the 2022 budget in the green outline. He explained in detail how the budget was spent. He had to negotiate on electricity and it went from 9 cents to 12 cents a kilowatt hour. Other expenses fluctuated a bit. Randall proposes that he will renegotiate the contract with ThyssenKrupp. He also wants to renegotiate with Pepco.

The temperature in the sanctuary will remain at 65 degrees and the humidity is good. The capital expenses were \$219,000 and that was not budgeted. The education wing roof and the chapel fire panel are all things that were not budgeted for 2022. There are lots of things that were not budgeted for 2022 and we had to do. He also said that at Ascension House there was a roof leak

in the office area. He will have someone look at it for temporary measures that will last for about two to three years.

Gary went over the proposed 2023 budget with the vestry. A question was asked about why payroll processing went down. Clay explained that the payroll will be processed in-house now. Gary also said that the diocesan pledge was cut by \$8,000. A question was asked if there is a guideline as to what each parish should pledge to the diocese; there is and it is 10%. Padre feels we should give what we have promised. Kristen will look for and share the document that directs parishes on how to pledge to the diocese. After discussion, it was suggested by Kristen that since the Bishop gave us \$10,000 for the elevator project as a gift, we should maintain the same amount as the previous year if we do not want to increase. She also feels that we have to present an unbalanced budget and itemize those things we worked on as the reason for the deficit. It may give the congregation more information for the FRF and the Capital campaign that may encourage them to support the FRF.

Padre suggested that we take the budget and send suggestions to Gary and Clay so that the vestry will vote on it at the January 2023 meeting. Gary asked the vestry how much of a deficit should be presented. There was opposition to presenting a balanced budget if the numbers don't add up. Clay suggested that the vestry should come up with their feedback quickly so that the finance committee can work on it before the next vestry meeting.

NEW BUSINESS;

OPEN MIC;

Lauren said she did something for the Washington Grove community to encourage people to join committees. She has to sing and she thinks it will be fun to do the same at the annual meeting.

ADJOURNMENT;

Ed provided closing prayer. Danielle moved to adjourn the meeting and Kristen seconded. The meeting ended at 4:54pm

Respectfully submitted,
Ophelia Yalley-Ogunro
Secretary of the Vestry