

Episcopal Church of the Ascension
Vestry Minutes
July 10, 2022

PRESENT: 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), Andrew Kullberg (Director of Music). **ABSENT:** Senior Warden Kristen Keating.

Meeting started at 2:07pm following prayer by Padre.

CONSENT AGENDA: Roger asked about the total amount collected for World Central Kitchen since the numbers don't add up. Should we just say we received more money and the total amount sent is \$2,100? Lisa and Danielle also noticed the discrepancy. It was decided that the minutes will be edited to say the total that was sent. Gary's report should be titled April 2022 and not May as submitted in the packet. Both corrections will be made. Roger moved to accept the consent agenda with edits and Lisa seconded. It passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS: Gary said we had a good month in April. We had \$39,000 coming in and \$35,000 going out. If we have three or four thousand net income every month, we will be in good shape. Our operations for April are good. For May, it is not so good. He is concerned about the cash. The mortgage company said they are working on giving us the money and they will give us the money on Thursday. It has been so since October 2021 when we started this process. Instead of waiting for it, we took the cash out of our own money and that is why we are short on cash. We do not have any extra money. We do have some for payroll and we are bouncing checks. Gary said that for Zoom, there are no more than 30 people and he wants some space in the newsletter to remind people to pay attention to their pledges and for those who donate in the plate, to do so. We expect summer to be quiet but it cannot be dead. We will struggle a bit until the fall season. We have been consistent in paying the bills as they are due. This is where we are. Roger asked Gary if he was saying that we will be okay for the next two months, but then he also implied that we will be okay after Thursday, which is which? Gary said that if the money comes in, we will have the flexibility of paying our bills but operation of the church will be tight.

Facilities: Randall reported that the sanctuary humidifier is close to being finished. Precision HVAC is working on it when they have some spare time since we don't need it till fall/winter so there is no rush. It also gives us time to make the payments. The county came by and passed our inspections. The inspector noticed the two double doors in the fellowship hall were rusting out and he missed it the other time. We have to replace the aluminum or stainless steel plates at the

bottom to keep rats and mice/insects out. Right now the holes are big enough for mice to squeeze through and get to the kitchen. Randall will find contractors who can fix the doors inexpensively so that we can pass the next inspection in six months.

The red oak trees' estimates were sent to the executive committee. The one has a disease called hypoxylon and it is more than 50% dead. If a big storm comes through, the big limbs will fall on the roof of the sanctuary. Bartlett diagnosed the disease and gave a \$10,800 estimate to remove it plus \$1,400 to grind the stump. Alemon's Landscaping's estimate is \$8,500 to remove plus \$700 to grind the stump. Italy Tree Service, \$8,500 including grinding the stump. If the stump is excluded, it will be \$8,000. Nancy Reding recommended Sanchez Tree Service and their estimate is \$6,000 to remove the tree and the stump. Another referral from Nancy is Relondo Jimenez and he came for a site visit but he has not submitted an estimate yet. Jose Renados is also a referral from Nancy but has not responded to Randall's calls yet. They are all insured and licensed. Randall's thought is that before any of the contractors is hired, we should ask for a certificate of insurance so we are covered if the roof or the church is damaged. Randall asked for any thoughts from the vestry.

Danielle asked if we have a written estimate from the \$6,000 company and Randall said no. She asked Randall if the trees can be trimmed now and removed later. He said it is not a good way to handle the situation because costs could go up. Susan asked if there is any monetary value to the wood that is cut down. Randall said the spoils/wood go to the company that removes it and they scrap it if it is diseased. Ed asked where we stand right now as far as insurance if a storm should affect the building. Gary said Berenice knows more about our insurance and we can check with her. Ed asked if the deductible is less than \$6,000. It is not that expensive to get a permit from the city to cut down the trees. They will also suggest we plant a tree to replace the one that was cut down. It will be about \$1,000 to \$2,000 to trim out those trees behind the library. Danielle asked Gary when it would be safe to deal with the trees. He said to push it as far back as two to three months and we should be in a good position to do it. Randall suggested we table this until the August meeting. Danielle suggested we keep it under old business.

We have already spent about \$500 to \$600 on the first floor HVAC to do the necessary repairs. Randall sent the estimate for \$660 for the roof top unit to the executive committee since the amount does not require a vote from the vestry. The following is just information for the vestry; about 70% of the pole lights are out. We have very little light around the parking lot and Ascension House. We have estimates Randall received from Jaffe Electric is the least amount for \$4,910 about six months ago. Randall thinks we should get them fixed by September when it starts getting darker earlier. Lauren asked if we are replacing the lights with the same kind and Randall said yes, they are LED lights. Susan asked if this is a natural degradation of the light or is it a result of vandalism. Randall confirmed it is normal wear and tear.

Randall said a couple of months ago, there was an estimate from Gordon for the columbarium for \$6,000. He was asked to submit an itemization and he is wondering if one was submitted. Danielle said she also asked Gordon and he said he hasn't had time to prepare one. Lauren said she also spoke with Gordon and the hold up is that he needs new slate pieces to be engraved and a contractor who can do the engraving he is still looking for one. Randall said he looked at the columbarium today and wants to know if we can have someone come and take care of it using funds from the columbarium fund. Padre said he is talking to some people about beautifying the columbarium and he will inform the vestry when the plan is in place. Padre thanked Randall for all the work both he and Jesse have done around Ascension House and the church. Danielle stated that both Jesse and Randall have done a lot of yard work especially around the fences between the church and the school and Ascension House and the neighbors.

Tending Our Soil: Padre said that the group met for the first time on Thursday and the first meeting with the diocese is on September 10th and the diocese will inform us then who will be our tutor. During the summer the group is to work on their spiritual journey. Roger asked for the names of the committee members; Luis Pedron, Elizabeth Baker, Zadinga Ogada, David Beye, Roberta Koomson, Martha Lubet and Adoma Baffoe make up the group. Roger asked for a demographic list for our church and Padre said he will send a copy to Roger. There will be four meetings with the diocese; 9/10/22, 11/12/22, 2/11/23 and 5/6/23. In the meantime, the committee has to walk around the neighborhood and know our neighbors. Padre said he has a lot of faith and hope in the program.

NEW BUSINESS:

Parish Council: The Parish Council will meet on Thursday and Padre will send the link. If there is anything to discuss, send it to him before the meeting. Danielle said the Expo needs to be planned by the Parish Council since the Worship committee no longer wants to assume the responsibility; Padre said it needs to be done by September 11th. Ruth Anna asked if it would be in person and he said yes. We also need to plan the pledge campaign and Padre asked Gary to submit a plan by Thursday for the Parish Council meeting. Danielle said we need to encourage the committees that are still not meeting in person to submit a report on how their committees can support the church. They have had a couple of years to come up with ideas and if not, do their mission statements need to change to address this. Lauren asked if a decision has been made about who takes care of the Expo. It will be discussed at the Parish Council meeting. Danielle mentioned that the Parish Council is supposed to take over and collaborate.

OPEN MIC:

Padre said Andrew would like to know if the pledge campaign will include the organ. He asked Roger and Gary if they had a Finance committee meeting and if it was discussed. Roger said he had done some background research but nothing else. Gary said he has also not done much with it but he will get together with Janet to come up with the next phase of fundraising work. Janet

is in charge of the pledge drive. Andrew is just wondering if there has been progress made on the capital campaign.

Padre said he is concerned about many things and our financial situation is included. We were okay during the covid shutdown period but now it is a bit worrisome. Randall said he feels our pain and even though he did not pledge in May, he will double up on his pledge. With people paying more for food and gas, pledges have dropped. Randall asked what the vestry could do to be supportive. What can we do to initiate a capital campaign and share with the members so they are aware of our situation? Roger said that the key to success is being able to state what you want and being able to state that clearly and precisely. You have to have a specific goal to take to the congregation. When Andrew did his presentation, he thought of a capital campaign to raise funds for it. If it is an operating income problem, then we need to have some education about what constitutes reasonable pledging. Roger doesn't know what problems we have but we need to define that and tackle it rationally and properly. Randall said our capital projects are up to \$370,000 over the next three to four years. Randall shared the list with the vestry.

Padre said he will invite Roger to the Finance Committee meeting with Janet King and Gary. Roger is the liaison to that committee. Andrew said he was just pleased to hear that the capital campaign will include the organ restoration. If there is anything he can do to support the fundraising aspect, he will do it. Padre said he will be away in Kentucky on July 24th. He will be on vacation beginning August 8th through the 18th and again on October 11th through the 20th.

Danielle shared the link for the School of Christian Faith and Leadership in the zoom chat. As members of the diocese of Washington, we are allowed to take classes for free. She encouraged anyone who wants to learn more about the vestry, finance or any other committee to attend some of the classes.

Pastor Dan from the The Pine Ridge Reconciliation Center was invited to speak with the AEJC about some of the reconciliation work he is doing with the indigenous population. The AEJC would like to support it in some way. They sent a list of ways they could support the program but the important factor is that they would like to add a line item in the budget specific to add funds to the Pine Ridge Reconciliation Center that they would use to buy gift cards to distribute to the people in the program. Those can be used for food or anything they need. Roger asked for clarification on what exactly we will be supporting. Lauren also asked if this is something the Rice Bowl offering could support instead of a line item. Danielle said that since this is something the AEJC wants to support, it should be a line item in the budget. After discussion and further explanation by Ed and Danielle, it was decided that the line item will only be available for funds to be funneled into it.

ADJOURNMENT: Roger made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Lauren seconded. It passed unanimously. Randall provided closing prayer and the meeting ended at 3:35pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Ophelia Yalley-Ogunro
Secretary of the Vestry