

**Episcopal Church of the Ascension**  
**Vestry Minutes**  
**June 5, 2022**

**PRESENT:** Senior Warden Kristen Keating, Junior Warden Danielle Allen, Padre Javier, 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 2:07pm following prayer by Kristen.

**CONSENT AGENDA:** Randall made a motion to accept the agenda and Kristen seconded. It passed unanimously.

**OLD BUSINESS:** Gary said the closing of the mortgage to pay for the elevator and refinance the church has not happened. The title company said there was a document that left the word “Episcopal” out of the document and they are fixing it. He is not getting any response from the title company. We are waiting for the monies from the loan which is about \$180,000; we do not have any money in the checking account. We have paid for the elevator entirely. The HVAC company is entitled to about \$30,000 and they are being patient. We owed them \$44,000 for the first part of the job. As soon as we have the cash flow, we will pay them the remaining amount. Other bills are in very good shape, it is just that we have a cash flow problem. We only have \$25,000 and it is not good for a business. The goal is to get the financial statements prepared for the vestry. We had a very good month in terms of net. The expenses were low. The expenses were about \$23,000 and the income \$40,000 that gives us about \$15-\$16,000 in net and that brings our year-to-date net to about \$35,000. We have some money in the operating budget, we just don’t have that much cash.

Gary said he had reported that we received about \$1,800 for the Word Central Kitchen (Rice Bowl) and we now have a total of \$2,100 to send. Padre asked if we do or do not have money for payroll. Gary said we need another \$40,000 in the bank to make our monthly budget work. The monies we are paying for the HVAC and elevator projects will come back in our checking account. Right now we have about \$20,000 and if the end of the month comes and we need more, he will find some money. Padre said he doesn't know if we can pay the staff. Gary said the staff will get paid and that Padre shouldn’t worry.

**Facilities:** Randall said everything listed in his report is completed. The elevator project was completed. We finally have our certificate and it is working. The kitchen deficiencies have been taken care of and everything is fine. Thanks to Jesse, Julie the electrician and plumber. The Health Department has been notified. Our annual life safety equipment inspection is due on June 24 and Randall and Julie are working on scheduling them. There have been some scheduling issues so Julie is working with the city on extending the date for the inspection. Outstanding projects are the HVAC and we are working with Precision on that. The humidifier is in but they have staffing issues and we also need time before we begin making payments so we are not hurrying them up to get it done. Everything is working well and hopefully, all will work well through summer without spending a lot of money on service calls. The sanctuary dimmer switches are in and they have issues with staffing as well but their manager is scheduling it to be fixed next week. Randall said he is very conscientious about our financial situation and he is pleased with where we are with the machinery and with the church as a whole. The next projects he will consider working on in September/October. Susan said she looked at the two big trees behind the chapel and they have lots of dead branches and considering how expensive it can be to trim them, she is wondering if Randall has thought of what can be done and possible damages if they should fall. Randall will discuss it in Open Mic.

**Tending Our Soil:** Padre said the first class was held with Jennifer and we have our team formed. He needs to schedule a meeting to plan before the beginning of the program year in September. He also said it is a very interesting program. Padre said the first thing we need to work on is our mission and vision statements. They need to be changed every other year or three years. We have to walk our neighborhoods and know the neighborhoods; see who lives there.. Padre shared the Team Timeline and he also said it is a full year of activities. We have to meet with the trainer because the diocese is paying for the service. Every congregation is required to do this. He referred the vestry to the EDOW website to learn more.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

**Juneteenth:** The original plan was to have a barbecue but now it is a coffee hour celebration. Janet looked into providing the meat and it will cost about \$250 without any sides. Kristen said she wasn't part of the decision to change it to a fancy coffee hour. Danielle said Ed was also at the meeting when it was decided to be done inside. Janet was concerned about having the picnic outside since she has not been part of planning one outside. The other concern was people not sticking around when a film is shown after food is served, people will not stay to clean up. The AEJC was thinking about how to enhance the celebration but was afraid people would not stay to eat or clean up. Janet felt it was not a good day since it is Father's Day.

Susan said that together with Ophelia, they looked at what is in the kitchen and it looks ragged and feels it will be hard to create the kind of gatherings we have had in the past. Kristen said the things in the kitchen did not disappear, they were put away in the closet so that we can pass inspection. After discussion, it was decided that Kristen would make the announcement to have people commit to clean up after the celebration.

Ruth Anna thinks it will still be harder for people to stay since it is Father's Day. Keeping it the simpler the better. Bring foods that are easy to clean up. Ruth Anna said that rather than showing a video, it will be better to share a message from our Bishop Marianne or Bishop Curry that we can incorporate in the service especially at the end of the before everyone is dismissed. Susan said if the announcement is made, someone can take names right away. Padre named Laurie and Danielle said Janet may be the one to do it. Padre said he will make the announcement and then give the name of the one taking the names of volunteers. Ed recommended that after the announcement, it will be good to send an email as well to get the word out. He asked if we would have a guest preacher on that day. Padre said yes and Danielle

said her name is Rev. Caron Gwynn. Ruth Anna asked if it is related to the Juneteenth celebration and Padre said yes.

**Choosing a Liaison Assignment:** Kristen asked the vestry members who have not signed up as liaisons for committees to do so. Roger signed up for two via email. Randall chose Ascension House.

**OPEN MIC;** Randall discussed the two big oak trees. They are huge and historic and he is aware of the dead wood on them. His thought is that he is not prone to taking down trees if they are healthy but they do need trimming. He suggested going to Bartlett trees to get a professional arborist or surgeon to evaluate and give recommendations. They may be expensive but not as much as we might think. Randall thinks that in the City of Gaithersburg they have to come out and look at the trees before they will give you a permit to take them down. Our best bet is to get estimates to evaluate and groomed and trimmed. They look healthy so later in the fall may be okay.

Randall said he took a walk on the grounds with Jesse and the summer landscaping has weeds. He cleaned the fence between us and the neighbors across from Ascension House during spring. Now there are weeds and kudzu growing feet high. There are weeds in the mortar joints in the sidewalks, the flower beds, bank along 355 and the bank along the daycare. Randall bought two gallons of RoundUp and a sprayer so Jesse said he will take care of spraying the RoundUp in the crevices and sidewalks to clean the weeds. Last year after the Bridge program left, we hired a landscaper to do the summer mowing, edging and trimming. He thinks we need a landscaper to do the landscaping. It may cost about \$1,000 or less. We should get that done before the Juneteenth celebration. Fredi Diaz said he will do it for free but Randall thinks we shouldn't take advantage of his good will. Randall asked what the vestry thinks. He suggests we talk to Freddie Reyes Landscaping (Sergio); expensive but he clears our gutters as well. Padre said he will contact Fredi Diaz tomorrow and if he is unable to reach him, we can use Freddie Reyes Landscaping (Sergio).

Gary said he spoke with a realtor who handles church properties. He is from PG county and he has referred Gary to an agent in Bethesda who visited twice. They think Ascension House is leasable space but we need to renovate it first. They suggested an Airbnb. Gary also asked that if anyone comes up with an idea on how to use the space, they should send it to the wardens.

Kristen said it is time to do the backpacks again. Anna Schmidt, the contact person at the school gave the list for this year. She wants to know if the vestry is interested in doing it this year. Kristen said we have money in the backpack fund so she will check how much. Ruth Anna mentioned that we did not do the drive last year because Anna had leftovers of backpacks and we collected supplies and Kristen confirmed that. It is possible to fund the backpacks and then we will ask for the supplies again. There were no objections.

Danielle said we are coming up on the next Parish Council meeting and she wants to know if it should be scheduled now. Padre said he will send an invitation and we may need to schedule it in July even though it is supposed to be scheduled in June. Most people are busy with summer holidays.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Monty moved to adjourn the meeting and Lisa seconded. It passed unanimously. Lisa provided closing prayer and the meeting ended at 3:20pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Ophelia Yalley-Ogunro  
Secretary of the Vestry