

Episcopal Church of the Ascension
Vestry Minutes
May 1, 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), Andrew Kullberg (Director of Music).

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

Kristen invited Andrew to do his presentation. He started by saying that he would like to expand the organ. He has been speaking with some people about it. The organ is a valuable piece of equipment. He shared a powerpoint slide he had prepared. The pipes are still good but the organ is aging and there are limited capabilities. As music changes, so should the music played on the organ. He compared our organ to a box of crayons. It is pretty good but once you lose one color, it changes what you can do. The bigger box of crayons means you can do more with it. Quality music keeps people engaged in worship. It helps to experience God's presence when they are in church. Churches that have a successful music program are able to grow the participation by putting out quality music from week to week. One of the things we can do is purchase and install a digital organ console with new speakers and leave the pipes as a facade. Option two-we can purchase and install a new organ console and pipes from Cassavant. It is good but extremely expensive and inconvenient. One rank of pipes costs between \$5,000 and \$10,000. Option three is, purchase a hybrid organ console and connect it to the pipes that we already have which is the most cost and space effective solution. A hybrid organ uses both the wind blown sounds and a digital organ sound.

Andrew shared a diagram of the hybrid sound production and how it is connected. He also played one at the R. A. Daffer Organ Company in Jessup, Maryland. Andrew played a second time at the company where their vice president demonstrated more features on the hybrid organ. The depth of sound was incredible. After speaking with the vice president and after their audio expert's visit to our church, his recommendation is the custom Rogers Imagine 351 with a cost of \$117,900 (\$122,500 with add-ons such as an adjustable bench). The Rogers Infinity 367 is the high end model priced at \$167,500. It has all the Imagine has and more. Since it was released in April 2022, it has the most recent technology. The organ is built in Oregon, shipped to Howard county, then our console will be disconnected, removed, replaced and finished in three days. It means we will not go a single Sunday without music. We may have to go without the pipes because that also takes three days to connect. It will take about two weeks to complete the installation.

The payment specifics were shared on the slide show presentation. Andrew wants to set up a committee to raise funds for the organ. Randall asked if this will require any changes in the electrical power. Andrew said all that will be needed is placing speakers in the pipe chamber and the back of the church. Lauren asked if there is a market for a used organ console and Andrew said no. She also said that the organ sounds like it is a more complicated instrument to use. She asked if guest organists will be able to use it. She also asked if he would need extra training. He said not, really and that guest organists adapt to the instruments. Kristen asked if the new organ will need more space. He said that the Imagine series is about the same as what we have now. The Infinity is bigger; it will fit but take up more room. Kristen asked if there are wheels on them. It sits on a moving platform but Andrew thinks where the organ is at the moment is the best and we may not need to move it. What is the timeframe for this? Andrew's goal is to provide the information and see if the leadership wants to move forward. If we have the down payment, then we can move forward. He also said that the price is for the instrument and installation. As a church, we have to come up with what we have and our priorities. Roger asked if Andrew has any ideas for revenue generation and he said yes but did not say specifically.

He foresees other people using it and he thinks pairing the organ with the Canadian pipes is unique. He also thinks other organists in the area may want to play it. Ruth Anna asked if recordings can be made on it and he said yes. Danielle suggested that if the old console can be made into a desk, we can keep it in the church. Andrew agreed. Roger said he would like to see this as a five or ten year music program so that this will not burden the facilities' needs. Andrew feels we can focus our attention on multiple things. A church's music is never complete. Gary wants to make sure that Andrew will be around to see this through. He said he wouldn't have started this and put in the time for research if he wouldn't be around. He is invested in the ministry at Ascension and the people. Padre and Kristen thanked Andrew for the presentation.

CONSENT AGENDA: Roger made a motion to accept the agenda and Lisa seconded. It passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS: Gary is excited about the mortgage closing papers. It has been signed and it is on its way to Chicago. Hopefully, the mortgage will be finalized and the check will come soon to pay for the elevator. In trying to make the transition in the office, we do not have the financial statements but we will have it next month. This month is good with \$46,000 in income and \$42,400 in expenses so we have \$3,600 remaining. Gary does not have the non-operating expenses but when the stock market goes down and we lose money. We don't have to do anything now and hopefully, it will grow back when the market bounces back.

We received a total of \$2,100 for the rice bowl and we will send it to Jose Andreas' organization. Ed said inflation is hammering everybody and he is wondering if it will affect giving. He also asked if there is anything of concern in our expenses that will require revisiting our budget. Gary

said that he does not see anything significant in terms of inflation showing up in his numbers. He is aware it could in the future but not now. Because of the delay in receiving the money for the elevator, in April/May we owed \$80,000 in our mortgage. The elevator expense rose to about \$115,000 but with the Bishop's gift, that amount was reduced as well. We will have some excess money after the elevator is paid off so the vestry will decide on its use. Gary suggested that we pay the \$40,000 in excess back in the mortgage to reduce that expense. Kristen thanked Gary for working hard on the mortgage documents.

Facilities: Randall made reference to his report for details. He said the elevator needs a pump for the CPU unit that raises the car twice as fast and TK has ordered it but they don't know when it will arrive. Otherwise, the elevator is complete and operational. The electrician will come in to connect some wires due to some change orders to connect a safety circuit to the smoke detectors in the pit, the mechanical room and the top of the shaft. Precision HVAC did not finish the work with the humidifier. As far as the elevator, on April 21, 2022 when ThyssenKrupp left, they had broken the smoke detector and they didn't tell us. ARK was called to fix it when it was TK's fault so we should back charge them. Kristen asked Randall if the problem is documented and he said yes.

For the kitchen inspection, we had a break in the last two years because of covid but at this point, we have a few items that need to be fixed within the next 30 days. The three biggest items Jesse said he will do them for about \$500; paint and patch holes. One plumbing problem to fix is the faucet and some electrical problems when the dishwasher was removed that will cost about \$500. The rest are some pest control issues. In lieu of actual estimates, Randall thinks it will cost about \$1,500 total to fix these things. Randall mentioned that Jesse will purge some of the things in the kitchen that appear to be trash. Danielle made a motion to approve up to \$2,000 to clear up the issues related to the recent health inspection on April 28, 2022. Lauren seconded and it passed unanimously. Ruth Anna asked for the things in the kitchen that belong to the Men's Shelter lunch program to be given to Edith to store in the storage room. Kristen will tell Jesse at the next staff meeting. The inspector asked if we have a licensed food service person available. If we don't, we can't even cook pancakes; we will deal with a hefty fine if we do. Padre said Janet may have one but he will check.

The powder post beetles have been treated. In the process, it was found that there is termite damage as well. Matt asked his father and he confirmed it was treated about 15 years ago. Matt is suggesting bait stations around the church and it will cost \$850. If he finds evidence of termites, he will treat it for additional costs. Randall's suggestion is that we have the bait stations put in to find out if we have termites. Lauren said that in the inspection report it was mentioned that there was no evidence of termites so why are we trying to find out? She doesn't think that we should at this point. Randall said the building is historic and we don't want to find out later there is more damage. Ruth Anna said it is not termite season so why are we looking for them?

Randall said that when Matt went in, he found the possible termite damage. After discussion, it was decided that we will have the bait traps put in for \$875. A new contract to include termite and powder post beetles will be researchth ed.

NEW BUSINESS:

Tending Our Soil: Padre said we were accepted to the Tending Our Soil program for 2022/2023 at the diocese. We need to come up with a group to be part of a committee. Lauren suggested Zadinga Ogada, Jonathan Black, Anika and Avin Lalmansingh and David. Danielle mentioned Roberta Koomson, Monty Petersen, Kay Kolle and D-Win Allen. Kristen gave Adoma Baffoe's name.

In-Person Vestry Meetings: Shirley asked if the vestry will be having in-person meetings. Padre said the hybrid meetings did not work with the book club and he is not trying to convince the vestry one way or another. Lauren thinks there is value in seeing each other but she likes to be at home for the meetings. She suggested a vestry dinner or social time if we do not meet in person. Ophelia said she needs the recordings to do her job properly. Kristen said she has an old-fashioned tape recorder and she can offer it for the meetings. Danielle asked that if we decided to go back to the in-person meetings, would we make a plan of expectation that makes it optional to join through zoom or the plan of expectation to be there in person unless there are extenuating circumstances that prevent one from being there? Kristen said that the expectation is that we will all be there in person as long as it is safe. Kristen asked how many people want to meet in person and three people said yes so we will continue on zoom.

Growing Young: Danielle reached out to the people who were on the list for Growing Young. Two people responded and agreed to participate out of all those who contacted. It is possible we will not participate if we cannot put a group together. Someone asked if we could get a banner to be posted outside the church with "Love Thy Neighbor" on it.

OPEN MIC:

Columbarium: Gordon asked Kristen to ask the vestry to approve \$6,000 to replace the on eplate and have the other plates engraved. Lauren asked if he gave a breakdown of the amount he requested. Kristen said that it is for the one slate plate and for the brass plates in the church to be engraved as well. After discussion, it was decided that Gordon should itemize what needs to be done before the amount is voted on.

Danielle said that not everyone has chosen to be a committee liaison role so she asked that those who have not been assigned look at the table and pick a committee.

Padre said that on May 22, the Bishop of Mexico will be visiting Ascension and hopefully, we can all be there to welcome her. Kristen said a prayer for Randall's surgery and quick recovery.

ADJOURNMENT: Danielle moved to adjourn the meeting and Shirley seconded. It passed unanimously. Lisa provided closing prayer and the meeting ended at 4:41pm

Respectfully submitted,
Ophelia Yalley-Ogunro
Secretary of the Vestry