

Episcopal Church of the Ascension
Vestry Minutes
November 6, 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).

Meeting started following prayer by Padre.

CONSENT AGENDA: Kristen noted an incorrect name spelling to be corrected. She also removed Sandy Ridge from the agenda. Kristen will prepare a final report in Sandy Ridge before the December vestry meeting. An addition to the agenda is the snow removal and three bids have already been sent to the vestry. Monty moved to accept the consent agenda and Ed seconded. It passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS: The positive part about our finance is that Clay has been working a lot of hours to clarify and classify many of the accounts. There is a nine month total and a year to date amount. We have really come a long way to straighten and reclassify some of the accounts as far back as 2021. The Profit and Loss show a \$20,000 loss for the month. In 2022, we spent 215,000 on facilities even though some of those amounts have been placed in different accounts now. The \$100,000 for the elevator and \$85,000 we spent on the HVAC are examples. Year to date we have lost \$65,000. This is a trend to be mitigated. We have been spending money because we need to so this is not a matter of irresponsible spending. However, it would behoove us to curb expenses if possible. Lauren agrees with Gary that we have spent a lot on the facilities but she thinks that those things we fixed were one time issues and hopefully we will not have to deal with them next year. Randall thinks we need to fix the other roof and that will be about \$80,000. Monty thinks that we may be able to use volunteers to do some of the work. Gary thinks that it is possible but for something like a roof, he doesn't know who can volunteer to do that.

Ruth Anna thanked Randall for all the work he has done. She asked about a separate pledge drive for the facilities fund. Roger thinks that the capital campaign will start in January or February and needs to focus on the accumulated deficit in the facilities fund. Monty feels that if it is focused on one particular thing like the roof, it may get more traction. General funds don't excite people too much. Gary said that we have a chance to get some funds from the insurance company for the roof replacement for about \$15,000 or more. Danielle intends to post some of the pictures that Randall sent of the roof so that people will see what else has been worked on apart from those that are very visible like the lights in the parking lot and the signs being lit. With things like the roof, unless you are with the choir and have seen the closet or the drainage pipe that fell and had to be replaced you will never see the repairs. We want people to know we have put a lot of work in the church and there is more to do and it will cost a substantial amount of money so we need the continued support.

Padre gave some words of comfort to understand our position in the pledge drive and 2022 annual giving. Since we are coming back from the pandemic, some people are still not comfortable coming back into the church. We have some new members but they are on zoom and other social media. Many people died during the pandemic and they were donors and who contributed regularly. The new people do not have that relationship with us yet. Padre reiterated that the things we have fixed needed to be done and we should see less in the way of fixing things. Kristen brought up the contracts that we need to renegotiate. During the pandemic, we gave discounts on our contracts but now that the pandemic is over, they need to go back to pre-pandemic terms and potentially increased donations.

Pledge Campaign: Roger referred to his report and said that he needs to send a reminder letter next week to those who have yet to respond. The total amount of pledges we have received is 29 below what we had last year. We had a big hit on covid last year and this year we are coming back so it is a bit concerning we are this much behind. Danielle asked Roger what he thought the difference in the amount of individual pledges were. He said he had not done that analysis and it may require some research on Julie's part. Roger thinks we should focus on pledging units and based on the numbers we have, it appears we are losing units.

Padre also said we have a lot of families who have moved to Frederick. Some have also moved to their home countries like Liberia. We need to do something to increase our membership and also some fundraising. Lauren made a point that if we have lost membership, then the comparison to where we were last year may not be accurate since we are not the same population. Roger said that Ruth Anna's idea to place pledge cards in the pew is good. Lisa said we have to be careful not to beat people over the head with the reminders especially to new people. She asked if the vestry can reach out to those who have not pledged yet.

Ruth Anna suggested having the cards in the pew that says "I pledge online" to be placed in the plate for those who pledge online. She feels awkward at times when she does not place anything on the plate. This may encourage those who do not give when they see everyone put something on the plate. Danielle asked if there will be people speaking about why they give. Roger said it is a good idea but he is not available for the next four weeks. He asked if Danielle will take that on. She will discuss it in Open Mic.

Facilities: Randall said we have had some big hits this year but this kind of work is cyclical in the five, ten or 20 year range, everything comes up in its own time. Next month, he will update the long term capital spreadsheet for repairs and hopefully, next year we will only have lesser charges for repairs.

In preparing for the roof repair, it took time to find records and history of the previous repairs. Together with Jesse, Randall has been successful in finding the records. In the last page of photos from the roof, it shows that there is significant rot in the sheeting and some more on the higher part of the sanctuary roof. When they replaced the ice and water shielding, they placed it a

little higher (about four feet) on the sanctuary roof so that it fixed any possible leak or seepage into the sanctuary or education wing. There was evidence of leaks and seepage. Moving forward, Randall said he will work with Gary on budgeting the items. Randall said the shingles on the education wing are in bad shape. They were originally made for 20 or 25 years and they have been on the roof for almost 40 years. Moreover, the shingles were recalled by the manufacturer but they were never replaced. Randall will get more information to share with Gary and the vestry next month. Roger asked Randall if the document he is working on is good to use as a guide for our fundraising effort in January and Randall said yes even though the amounts may change each month as prices change.

In the choir room remediation, Servpro suggested we contact our insurance company to see if the repairs can be reimbursed. There is a good possibility that the insurance company will reimburse a portion of the roof repairs. Servpro's estimate is \$1,901. Gary Hann looked at it and he suggested that we should not use Servpro. There was very little mold under the plyboards on the roof after Randall removed them so Gary Hann suggested that once Aftershock (which will kill 99.9% of the mold) is sprayed on the affected areas, there will be no problems with mold so we do not need mold remediation.

Randall has two estimates from contractors but he is yet to receive the last one from Mr. Handyman. One of the estimates is for \$1,180 from Hann & Hann. The other one is from Howl, for \$1,900. It is more expensive but his work is good. Randall's suggestion is to go with Gary Hann. He made a motion to accept the Hann & Hann contractor's estimate of \$1,180 to restore the closet in the choir room. Lauren seconded and it passed unanimously.

There are three snow removal proposals and one is from Mike's American Lawns who has been doing our snow removal for many years. His proposal is \$405 when the snow has accumulated 2-3 inches. Midnight Plowboys will come when it has snowed 2-3 inches as well for \$475. The third is from Wilfredo Landscaping for \$650 for the initial three inches. Based on what he has on hand, Randall recommends Mike's American Lawns. After discussion, Randall moved that we accept the proposal from Mike's American Lawns for \$405. Ruth Anna seconded and it passed unanimously.

Tending Our Soil:

Ruth Anna reported that many cards collected for the project and what came through loud and clear are a sense of community and prayer. Elizabeth Baker spoke briefly about this at last week's luncheon but there will be a write up about the findings to be shared with the congregation. It is a three year project so as the next step, there will be a church wide survey in December. Martha Lubet submitted our findings to the leader at the diocese, Jenifer Gamber. The next meeting is on December 12th where they will learn about their next task. With Rosa's mission at our church to be more involved in the local Spanish speaking community, it will meet some of our goals.

NEW BUSINESS;

Banners to Promote Programs and events:

Some people have mentioned that we could put a banner on the lawns so that when people pass by, they will know the events that take place at the church like the Youth Group and that all youth are welcome. The vestry thinks this is a good idea. The next step is to involve Angie and Trevor for their input. Ruth Anna also suggested a banner in front of Ascension House for the Youth Group. Kristen said the Outreach committee will take responsibility for the banners.

Nominating Committee:

The committee members are Monty, Susan and Lisa. Padre will speak with them to come up with a list of names for candidates for vestry and delegates at the annual meeting.

Parish Council reminder:

The meeting is scheduled for November 15th. He asked the liaisons to speak with the committee chairs to plan for Advent and Christmas. Danielle also added that we need to do the fall planting for the spring bulbs so she will discuss that at the meeting.

OPEN MIC;

Susan and Katherine Froelich would like to have some time to discuss the columbarium with the vestry. They have done some work on it and there are some issues that the vestry needs to be involved with having to do with the upkeep and keeping things as they should be. There are things that we could be doing that we are not. It will be on the agenda for next month.

Randall said the deficiencies on the fire and safety report has been scheduled to be fixed by ARK. They will replace the lights that were out. There were two deficiencies scheduled to be corrected by Kolb Electric and last week he called to say that the helper came up with covid so those are yet to be corrected.

Jesse called this morning to say that it was hot in the sanctuary. Randall instructed Jesse on what to do to bring the temperature down but it was still warm when he got to church. He checked the temperature again after the service was over and it was even warmer. It didn't appear anything was wrong with the HVAC except that the thermostat had been tampered with. Randall will check again in the morning to see if everything is right, if not he will call to get instructions on how to reset it.

Danielle asked if there are any vestry members who would like to speak at the services on why they give. Danielle will speak at the 8am service and Kristen and Shirley will speak at the 10am services for two weeks. Danielle wondered if the finance committee members would find people to speak. Ruth Anna said she will do it on November 20th. Padre said he can translate at the Spanish service if necessary. After discussion, it was decided that the vestry and parish council should speak as the leadership of the church.

Roger said he sent a link to the vestry and he recommends it highly that we look at it because it is very interesting.

ADJOURNMENT: Kristen moved to adjourn the meeting and Danielle seconded. It passed unanimously. Ruth Anna provided closing prayer and the meeting ended.

Respectfully submitted,
Ophelia Yalley-Ogunro
Secretary of the Vestry