

MINUTES OF THE VESTRY OF  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION  
Regular Vestry Meeting, February 2022

March 5, 2022

The Vestry of Episcopal Church of the Ascension held its annual retreat on March 4 and March 5, starting with dinner at new Senior Warden Ashley Rector's home the night of March 4. On Saturday, March 5, the Vestry met beginning at 9 am, setting ground rules and expectations for the coming year.

The Vestry began its regular February business meeting at the end of the retreat. Attendees for the meeting included Father Paul Klitzke, Senior Warden Ashley Rector, Junior Warden Andrew Bolt, and Vestry members Julie Baker, Laura Warner Gilmer, Harry Breda, Jonathan March, Tom Dwyer, Marsha Gadsden, and Joan Romanosky. Jonathan March serves as Treasurer, and Harry Breda also serves as Clerk of the Vestry.

Father Paul called the meeting to order at 1:45 pm, sharing the meeting agenda.

Devotional

Father Paul read a short devotional, followed by a moment for centering.

Prayer Requests

As a Vestry and a congregation, we pray for ...

- The people of Ukraine, responding with courage to an invasion;
- Linda Cox;
- Rita Sands;
- Anne Vernon;
- The Bolding family;
- All who grieve for the loss of family and friends
- All who have been impacted by Covid, including those who have been sick as well as those who are caring for the sick;
- Doctors, nurses, caregivers, and first responders dealing with those impacted by the pandemic;

Following a moment of silence for centering and prayer, the Vestry read aloud the mission statement of Episcopal Church of the Ascension.

Ordinary Business

Meeting Minutes

Minutes for the Annual Meeting in January, and the short meeting held immediately following the annual meeting were distributed earlier to all Vestry members. There were a couple of minor edits proposed to

the minutes, which were documented and will be included in a future version to be distributed to Vestry and the parish. Ashley Rector moved to approve the minutes as amended. The motion was seconded by Marsha Gadsden, and approved unanimously.

Following the meeting, it was discovered that the minutes from the January 2022 meeting, held on January 9, have not been reviewed or approved yet by the Vestry. The clerk agreed to distribute the minutes via email, where they would be reviewed prior to the Vestry's next scheduled meeting.

Finally, Father Paul noted that meeting minutes were often distributed to the parish six to eight weeks after a Vestry meeting, a lengthy delay that inhibits transparency with the parish. He suggested that draft minutes be distributed within the week following a Vestry meeting, and that Vestry could review and consider approval via email, during the week. This was agreed to by the clerk and the Vestry, changing the schedule starting with this set of minutes for the February 2022 meeting.

### Financial Reports

New Treasurer Jonathan March distributed financial reports during the week prior to the meeting. He noted that we had a very strong January for pledges, attributing that to quarterly pledges that were made in the month.

Tom Dwyer moved that the financial reports be accepted as presented. The motion was seconded by Marsha Gadsden, and approved unanimously.

Next, Jonathan noted that the primary checking account, a non-interest-bearing account, held nearly \$500,000, above the limit for FDIC insurance. Some time ago, the Vestry had transferred about \$100,000 from its primary investment account, a short-term money market account that earns interest, to cover needs for the Capital Campaign, rather than borrow from a financial institution and incur additional interest and financing costs. Discussion ensued on whether to restore the funds into the investment account from the general checking account.

After some discussion about the role of the investment account and the timing of the move, Harry Breda moved that the Vestry direct the Treasurer to pay back Ascension's loan from its investment account. The motion was seconded by Tom Dwyer, and approved unanimously.

### New & Continuing Business

#### Insurance for "Property in the Open"

On reviewing the physical plant and the insurance policies held by the church, it was determined that we were likely underinsured for "property in the open," essentially any property that is not enclosed or directly connected to the campus buildings. For example, the playground structures, the large barbecue pit, the electronic sign in front of the building, and the bell tower would be considered property in the open.

We currently have a \$10,000 deductible for each of the main building, the Youth & Outreach Center, and property in the open.

Discussion ensued on the appropriate level of insurance, and the resulting premium, that Ascension should carry. It was agreed that an additional premium was appropriate for the potential loss of church

property in the open. Ashley Rector moved that the church seek an additional \$200,000 of coverage for Property in the Open. The motion was seconded by Joan Romanosky, and was approved unanimously.

### Parochial Report 2022

The annual Parochial Report was filed with the Diocese of Dallas on March 1. The Vestry reviewed the document online, via email, and provided comments. The document was signed by the Senior Warden and the Clerk, and submitted on time.

Discussion ensued during the meeting, where the Vestry asked if there was any way to see how Ascension compared to other parishes in the Diocese and nationally, based on attendance, finances, growth in membership, and so on. Laura Warner Gilmer provided some insight and said she would forward links to the Vestry for additional background.

### Reports

#### Junior Warden's Report – Andrew Bolt

- Andrew shared that he had met with Andrew Marshall (former Junior Warden) and Todd Rutenbar to discuss priorities and work processes. They agreed to plan for a work day in May, and begin gathering items to accomplish.
- At the moment the top issue is faulty light bulbs in the nave – the manufacturer hasn't responded to requests.
- Another issue percolating is a broken divider in the classroom adjacent to the Chapel. They have gotten one bid for repair and/or removal, and they are seeking a second bid. There will not be a need for a Vestry vote on the issue; the sense of the Vestry was that removal was likely the best (and least expensive) option. The fix will be paid from the maintenance reserve budget.
- Last, some stones were moved from the base of the barbecue pit, in a likely act of vandalism. Todd took some time to replace the stones, though there is more work to be done.

#### Senior Warden's Report – Ashley Rector

- Ashley reported that she had meetings with Father Paul and with outgoing Senior Warden Allen Myers, to help set plans and expectations for the coming year.
- Priorities include reviewing and obtaining signatures for a space use agreement with St. Philips. We will likely increase the fee over time, changing to a rolling one-year agreement.
- Ashley also raised the idea of developing a standardized template for staff evaluations. There currently is no set process for annual or semi-annual reviews for staff. Laura Warner Gilmer offered her assistance on the project. Father Paul agreed and would appreciate a formal process.

#### Rector's Report – Father Paul Klitzke

- Father Paul noted that January and February were largely consumed with personnel issues, and that he's excited to shift to programming for March, focusing on the Lenten season.

- He shared with the Vestry his schedule for the prior week, and the challenges he has to deal with on a daily basis. It was eye-opening for the Vestry to learn about the regular demands on Father Paul's time.
- Going forward, Father Paul mentioned that he's looking to open the Nursery again, and is taking steps to find paid staff to manage that project.
- Finally, Father Paul mentioned that he plans to be out the week of Spring Break (March 20-27), as well as May 25-29 to attend Noah's graduation.

#### Calendar of Upcoming Events

- March 8 – Taco Tuesday with Father Paul
- March 9 – 40 + 5 Speaker series
- April 2 – Eggstravaganza Workshop

#### People to Thank

- Nancy Johnson, Mary Lou Howell, and Jordan Hammons, for their help with the Shrove Tuesday event held on March 1;
- Todd Rutenbar, for his ongoing help with the audio and web production;
- Ernie McAfee, for stepping up to help;
- Hope Harbeck, for her formal and informal ministry;
- Jane Taber, for managing ushers.

#### Next Month's Meeting

- Ashley will provide the devotional

At 3:35 pm, Father Paul and the Vestry left the meeting room to go to the Chapel for a closing prayer.

The meeting was adjourned until Sunday, March 6. Committees were scheduled to meet immediately after the 10:30 am services, and committee heads and the Vestry would meet for their regular reporting session.

MINUTES OF THE VESTRY OF  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION  
Committee Reporting Session  
March 6, 2022

On Sunday, March 6, 2021, the Episcopal Church of the Ascension held committee meetings and a reporting session, following 10:30 am Sunday services. Committees began to meet at about 11:45 am, spread out across the campus, meeting in the Parish Hall, the Parlor, the Youth & Outreach Center, the courtyard, and other rooms.

Father Paul called committee leaders to the regular meeting in the Parish Hall at 12:27 pm for the reporting session. Those attending the reporting session were:

Rector Father Paul Klitzke	Brett Rector
Senior Warden Ashley Rector	Mark Unkenholz
Junior Warden Andrew Bolt	Jon Dunfee
Laura Warner Gilmer	Joan Romanosky
Julie Baker	Audry Lee
Jonathan March	Jane Taber
Harry Breda	LaBau Bryan

Vestry member Harry Breda continued to perform duties as Clerk of the Vestry.

Father Paul began the meeting by welcoming committee members and encouraging those present to stay if they wished.

Before the reporting session began, Father Paul shared the Ascension Google Calendar, and pledged to take further steps to coordinate calendars with committees, vestry members, and staff. The Google Calendar is also used to support the At A Glance newsletter. The goal is to ensure that staff, Vestry, committees, and other church leaders are communicating and on the same page for future events.

With notes completed, we moved to committee reporting.

Ascension Day School (Brett Rector, Board President)

- Brett reported for the ADS board. He noted that ADS is licensed for 99 students and is currently at capacity, with 17 staff members.
- The school has had a few positive cases in the spring, and had to close some classrooms in January. The month of February was much smoother, however.

- For the first time the school has built up a reserve fund, which will help them weather a storm similar to what happened in 2020.
- ADS is planning a seven-week summer camp – more details to come.

#### Stewardship Committee (Jon Dunfee, Chair)

- Jon reported that he will be looking to hold a meeting with Father Paul and Catherine Miller in the very near future, with the goal of obtaining additional data and metrics to help inform the stewardship committee of what methods of outreach have worked, and what hasn't. The goal will be to create better stewardship offerings, better messaging and better results.
- The committee is also looking to host a job fair in May.

#### Radical Hospitality Committee (Harry Breda, Vestry liaison)

- Harry Breda reported on behalf of the committee, in Suzan Fenner's absence, as she enjoyed a visit with her grandchildren.
- The committee hosted a Shrove Tuesday pot luck dinner earlier in the week, with fifty people celebrating in the Youth & Outreach Center. Harry thanked several people for their contributions:
  - Nancy Johnson and Mary Lou Howell for helping set up and break down the room
  - Kerry Johnson, for helping onsite
  - King Cake judges Ashley Rector, Lilly Myers, and Tom Dwyer
  - And Jordan Hammons for his help with programming
- The committee will be working next on an Easter event, the Progressive Dinner for April 30, and the annual spring picnic on May 15.

#### Property, Plant & Equipment (Andrew Marshall, reporting)

- The committee is planning to set up a spring work day in early May, much like last year. More details to come.
- There were some pavers around the barbecue pit that have been moved and displaced. It's not a hazard yet, but the vandalism is definitely a problem. Todd has worked to put the pavers back into place, and there are some plans to prevent this activity in the future.
- The committee is aware that there are some lights out in the nave. This is a defect with the light bulbs, not the light fixtures. We are trying to get a lift in order to replace the bulbs.
- The youth group has volunteered to do a garbage pickup around the campus one day before Easter. The committee is working to schedule it.

#### Pastoral Care (LaBau Bryan, Chair)

- Following the departure of Mother Teresa, the committee has had to retrench a bit and adjust some activities.
- Both the grief ministry and the birthday card ministry continue to be active. The committee also had a chance to meet with Father Paul and discuss the Food for Souls offering.
- The Stephen Ministry remains active, though the next training has been delayed.

Outbound Committee (Audry Lee, Chair)

- The next Austin Street Center outing is scheduled for May 7, while the next Sharing Life pickup day is March 12.
- Audry reported that there were a number of new families at the Food Pantry, including some Afghan families, many with multiple children.
- Hope Harbeck and Father Ernie have been providing bicycles to refugees and the homeless, cleaning them up and repairing them so that recipients can use them to seek employment.
- They are looking to find a sponsor for a “blessing bag,” a plastic bag of essentials to help the homeless and panhandlers.

Liturgy & Music Ministry (Father Paul, reporting)

- The committee served lunch today – much thanks.
- The committee is seeking a new member, one who may be able to be acolyte master.
- They also need more vergers, in that there are a couple of vergers who are moving on and training to do other things.
- Finally, the committee is planning for Holy Week, with many new surprises and fun events.

Formation Committee (Joan Romanosky, Chair)

- Joan reported that the Godly Play is going well with the children, and that they have a good core of children attending on a regular basis.
- The committee needs about six or seven additional adults to help out with Children’s Chapel on Sundays. This will help with rotating adults so that the burden of the activity is not on just a few people continuously.
- Turning to summer activities, the committee is planning to host Bible Camp the first week of August. And Camp All Saints will also be happening for the Youth, likely in mid- to late June.
- On April 23, the Dallas Opera Truck will be setting up shop in the parking lot at Episcopal Church of the Ascension, for a performance of “Jack and the Beanstalk.”
- Adult formation is doing a study of the Lord’s Prayer, featuring a book by Scott Erickson, the author of *Honest Advent*.

Finance Committee (Jonathan March, Treasurer)

- Jonathan reported to the Vestry and the other leaders for the first time as Treasurer.
- He reported that income in January was well above expectations, while expenses were in line. Income was high, we believe, because some parishioners who have quarterly pledges chose to fill their pledge in January, with an outsized impact on overall pledge activity.
- Jonathan reported that the previous day, the Vestry had agreed to repay the loan from the investment account, and that he’s will do some research to determine the actual figure.
- Last, Jonathan noted that he intends to begin the annual audit process in April, to hopefully avoid a last-minute filing.

Evangelism Committee (Jane Taber, Chair)

- They held some usher training with new ushers; they have had to be flexible in scheduling and with placement of ushers.
- The committee will seek to get some additional name tabs to be held at the Welcome Desk.
- The committee is working on a handbook for ushers and greeters, to have a standardized set of material for all to learn from and reference.
- Last, she noted that the committee would like to recruit a family for the usher team. It would work well to have them all serve together.
- Jane shared that she's interested in a CPR/First Aid course to be taught at Ascension, for ushers and greeters as well as anyone who might be interested. Ushers should have this training, though, because they are often the first ones to be called on in a situation.
- The 40+5 Lenten Speaker Series starts this upcoming Wednesday, March 9.
- And finally, the Eggstravaganza will be held on April 2.

#### Final Notes from Father Paul

- The phone system in the office has undergone a few changes; it should result in more answers by live people and fewer voicemails.
- He noted that we are interested in bringing in a new Clerk of the Vestry, a position that Harry has held for over four years.
- Last, Father Paul noted that it has been some time since we have held a strategic planning session with committees and other leaders, setting priorities and goals for our long-term vision. He's looking to do something like that soon.

A question was raised from the floor regarding a blood drive on campus – Father Paul noted the question and agreed to look into it.

With there being no further reporting, Father Paul led the group in a prayer.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:08 pm.