

MINUTES OF THE VESTRY OF
EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION
Committee Reporting Session
November 28, 2021

On Sunday, November 28, 2021, the Episcopal Church of the Ascension held committee meetings and a reporting session, following 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 Youth & Outreach Center at 12:46 pm for the reporting session. Those attending the reporting session were:

Rector Father Paul Klitzke	Jane Burruss
Mother Teresa Terry	Mark Unkenholz
Junior Warden Andrew Marshall	Suzan Fenner
Laura Warner Gilmer	Todd Rutenbar
Julie Baker	Jon Dunfee
Ashley Rector	Joan Romanosky
Harry Breda	Jane Taber
Andrew Bolt	LaBau Bryan
Hope Harbeck	

Senior Warden Allen Myers and Vestry members Jonathan March and Shade Badejo were not present. Vestry member Harry Breda continued to perform duties as Clerk of the Vestry.

Ascension Day School (Brett Rector, Board President)

- Father Paul reported on behalf of Brett, who shared that families at ADS have started a fundraising campaign to replace the mulch in the north playground area with artificial turf.

Evangelism Committee (Julie Baker, reporting)

- Julie reported that there is a need for additional training for ushers. So far we've had largely on-the-job training, with newer ushers shadowing more experienced ones. They are looking at the January/February time frame for new training sessions.
- The committee discussed a Lenten series of speeches or conversations. They will seek to coordinate their efforts with the Formation Committee and the Anti-Racism Task Force to discuss topics and/or potential speakers.

Finance Committee (Jane Burruss, Treasurer)

- Jane reported that there was lower income for October, not an unusual occurrence given the time of year. Parishioners typically increase their giving in the last months of the year, to fulfill their annual pledge. Year-to-date figures are more promising and in line with projections.
- Jane and Father Paul will meet soon to discuss the draft of the annual budget, progress on pledges, and other year-end items.
- A question was asked regarding quarterly statements – Jane replied that we no longer send out quarterly information; the data is available on the church database through FellowshipOne, accessible to all members. There is also no annual tax statement sent to parishioners; that document is also available on FellowshipOne.

Formation Committee (Joan Romanosky, Chair)

- The committee will meet in December to prepare for the formation fair on January 9, along with preparing for the Advent Festival on December 12.
- Speaking of the Advent Festival ... there will be many activities and events for children under 11, including arts and crafts, cookies, prayer beads, stories, and so on. The youth group will be volunteering, and they need additional volunteers as well.

Liturgy & Music Ministry (Father Paul, reporting)

- The committee discussed some seasonal changes with the beginning of Advent.
- Also, the committee discussed that starting after the first of the calendar year, they would begin removing some of the text from the bulletin. This would allow us to reintroduce the Book of Common Prayer and the hymnals to the worship process. For those watching at home, the text could be placed on the screen during the live stream.

Outbound Committee (Hope Harbeck, reporting)

- The Food Pantry gave out 103 bags of food to 70 families for thanksgiving. Some people waited in line for more than an hour; the process was slowed by providing options for families when they reached the front of the line.
- Diane is looking to add some cameras for security in the garden area.
- Kathy Wendling is looking to host a book drive in February, before Lent.

Pastoral Care (LaBau Bryan, Chair)

- The committee provide lunch for the gathered members today – much thanks to them.
- The committee sent cards to veterans on Veterans Day, and Mother Teresa also organized an activity for veterans.
- Laura Warner Gilmer noted that St. Michaels has new people interested in the Steven Ministry; our group will join them for join training.
- Lay Eucharist Visitors will begin their efforts soon, and Mother Teresa will do training.

Property, Plant & Equipment (Todd Rutenbar, reporting)

- A small workday is scheduled for December 4, and volunteers are still needed. The various beds on the property need preparation for shrubs, and some work can be done in the easement, to remove debris and overgrowth. We have a big dumpster that we've rented to remove tree debris, and we should do our best to try to fill it.
- Todd reported that he offered to the firefighters some firewood from the tree that had fallen on the south end of the property. There remains some significant debris, including heavy stuff and branches, destined for the dumpster.
- John Johnson has fixed the exhaust fan in the parlor.

Radical Hospitality (Suzan Fenner, Chair)

- Radical Hospitality did not meet. Plans are moving forward for a progressive dinner on January 22, 2022.

Stewardship Committee (Jon Dunfee, Chair)

- The committee is about a week behind on thank you notes, but working through them. They will follow up with more notes and calls soon.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 1:09 pm. The Vestry meeting would start in ten minutes.

MINUTES OF THE VESTRY OF
EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION
Regular Business Meeting
November 28, 2021

The Vestry of the Episcopal Church of the Ascension held its regular business meeting following committee reporting. Remaining for the Vestry meeting were Father Paul Klitzke, Associate Rector Mother Teresa Terry, Junior Warden Andrew Marshall, and Vestry Members Julie Baker, Andrew Bolt, Laura Warner Gilmer, Ashley Rector, and Harry Breda. Also attending was Treasurer Jane Burruss. Absent from the meeting were Senior Warden Allen Myers, and Vestry Members Jonathan March and Shade Badejo. Harry Breda also served as Clerk of the Vestry.

The meeting came to order at 1:20 pm.

Devotional

Andrew Bolt read a devotional, centered on “Thankfulness, Gratitude, and Happiness.”

Prayer Requests

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

- Carole Brickell;
- The Bolding family, during this difficult holiday season;
- Fred Shuster;
- 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 October meeting were distributed to the Vestry via email. Ashley rector moved that the minutes be approved as presented. The motion was seconded by Andrew Bolt and approved unanimously.

Financial Reports

- Treasurer Jane Burruss sent financial reports earlier in the week to all vestry members. She noted that income has been lower than expenses for roughly three months, though for the year-to-date we remain in the black, with greater income than expenses.
- She also noted that December is typically a “catch-up” month for pledges.
- Jane noted that we’ve received pledges from about two-thirds of families at Ascension, and we are at about 80% of last year’s pledge amount.
- Laura Warner Gilmer moved that the financial reports be accepted as presented. The motion was seconded by Andrew Bolt and was approved unanimously.

New and Continuing Business

Ascension Day School – Fundraising Project and Board Composition

- As noted in the committee meeting, ADS is hosting a fundraising drive to change the playground on the north side from mulch to artificial turf. There were no objections to this program by the Vestry, as it had been discussed previously.
- Father Paul noted that the ADS board would like to add two new members; one being a parent at the school, and a second a long-time church member. The proposed board members have been vetted and screened by Father Paul and Board President Brett Rector, before being presented to the Vestry. The proposed members are:
 - Patrick Tam, a parent at the school
 - Janey McDermott, a long-time church member.
- After a brief discussion, Laura Warner Gilmer moved to accept both proposed board members. Julie Baker seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

Draft Budget 2022

- A draft budget was shared with the Vestry members. Jane Burruss and Father Paul worked collectively on the process, including estimates from committees.
- Discussions on the budget began among vestry members, including large items as well as specific line items.
- After some discussions and clarifications, Jane suggested that all committees review and discuss their proposed budget figures. The Vestry agreed to continue to review the data and to have further discussions at the next meeting, scheduled for December.
- Regarding the stewardship effort and pledges for 2022, it was noted that we are in line with expectations for pledges.

Andrew Marshall asked that the following additional topics be added to the list of new and continuing business for the Vestry to discuss.

Preparations for Coronavirus – Omicron Variant

- Given recent headlines regarding a new variant of Covid-19, Andrew Marshall asked if any preparations are being made at this time for an expected increase in cases during the winter.

- Father Paul noted that he is monitoring the situation, but it's hard to know what steps to take at this moment. He said he consults with his brother-in-law at Palmer Memorial Church in Houston. They are moving to "mask optional" soon. Father Paul doesn't feel we are ready for that step yet, given a likely increase in travel as well as seasonal colds.
- During the pandemic, we have not sought to be a "first-mover" on any changes to worship or gathering.

Online Security of Church Databases and Assets

- Given recent headlines about data breaches and online security issues, Andrew Marshall wanted to discuss the precautions being taken to secure the church's data.
- Father Paul noted that we replaced our Wi-Fi network as part of the capital campaign. We also use Google Suite in the office, including Gmail. We are often the target of phishing and other scam emails, but the staff has been vigilant.

Reports

Junior Warden – Andrew Marshall

- Andrew reported that he's working on the listing of fixed assets at the church, as directed by the audit committee. He and Suzanne are discussing with experts on the valuation of certain items. The initial guess is that we are underestimating our assets significantly.

Senior Warden – Allen Myers

- The Myers family was traveling, and Allen was unable to attend the meeting.

Associate Rector – Mother Teresa Terry

- Mother Teresa had nothing additional to report, having shared everything during the committee reporting session.

Rector's Report – Father Paul Klitzke

- Father Paul reported that he enjoyed his time away, connecting with the family the previous two weeks. He noted appreciation for Mother Teresa and staff holding down the fort.

Calendar of Events

- The Advent calendar has been published and shared with the parish – also available on the web.
- The Advent Festival is scheduled for Sunday, December 12.

People to Thank

- Todd Rutenbar for organizing the parish workday

- Ashley Rector for managing thank you notes all year.

Next Month's Meeting

- Scheduled for December 19. Services will be at 10:30 am, so committee meetings will begin later than usual.
 - Jane Burruss to provide devotional
 - Outbound Committee to provide lunch
- January meeting will be on January 9, following the Formation Fair.

Father Paul Klitzke offered a closing prayer.

With there being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at about 2:31 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Harry Breda, Clerk of the Vestry