

# Ascension Episcopal Church

## Vestry Minutes

December 19, 2017,

**Present:** Fr. Flick, Tom Sutton, Margo Kaplan, Liz Goodman, Glenn Criswell, Doug Meyers, Clement Falayi, Fay Armstrong, Cheryl Coppock, Michelle Feagin

**Regrets:** Lee Nirider, Alan Burton

The meeting was called to order with a prayer at 7:09 p.m.

**Motion #1:** Tom Sutton moved to approve minutes from the previous meeting. Margo Kaplan seconded. The motion carried.

### Stewardship Report:

Liz Goodman reported that we have 78 pledges to date. This compares to 107 pledges we had last year at this time. The goal for this campaign was 114 pledges. Tom Sutton said that this year we lost members who were significant donors, mostly due to death. There have been years where pledges have been turned in right up until the annual meeting. Margo Kaplan said our current pledge level is close to \$300,000, and our budget is \$346,000. It was acknowledged that parishioners experienced major events during the year which likely placed making a pledge a lower priority than in previous years. First, we lost our rector. Second, there was the impact of Hurricane Harvey. The fact is, some of our members that suffered major damage to their homes, are living in temporary housing, and are trying to determine their next steps concerning housing. Fr. Flick said that our over \$300,000 a budget places Ascension among the larger churches in the diocese. Our big issue going forward is the way we spend the money. He said that a church our size we should have a more robust parish staff. Some of the solutions to the spending and staff management issues will need to be thought through and eventually solved with the new rector. Also discussed was the issue of Fr. Bryant's higher-than-average compensation package.

### Rector report:

Fr. Flick reported how he tries to be responsible to his duties. Administratively, he tracks his hours and his mileage. He also mentioned that the worship committee has planned services through Lent.

**Motion #2:** Tom Sutton moved to accept reports posted on the Google Drive. Michelle Feagin seconded the motion. The motion carried.

With reference to the Stewardship campaign, Faye Armstrong asked for the number of current members. Liz Goodman and Leslie Nirider had tried to make the determination of which members were

“in good standing” as stated by the Canons of the church. She reported that the criteria is not completely spelled out, therefore it is somewhat difficult to find that number.

Miscellaneous: On Sunday morning, December 24, Fr. Flick will set up the library room for the Reflective service. After the new year, he said that we will begin to prepare job descriptions for the lay employees.

**Financial Report:** Glenn Criswell reported that the budget posted on the Google Drive did not yet have the numbers from November. He said that the finance committee made a few “tweaks” so that they could create the preliminary 2018 budget. This budget assumes that we begin to pay a rector effective July 1, 2018. Discussion of the 2018 budget centered around whether to consider reduced revenue of \$320,000 which is feasible, instead of \$346,000 which we had in 2017. Either way, the church will be going into a negative budget. Tom Sutton said we can approve it with for \$320,000, but if additional pledges come in we can approve the higher amount. We are now giving the budget a more realistic goal at \$320,000. Our current to-date pledges total \$297,000, and Fr. Flick said being this close, it is not unreasonable to expect another \$23,000. If we use the lower amount of \$320,000, we have to review the budget and find the specific places where our expenditures can be reduced by \$23,000. Tom Sutton said that we can show a negative in the budget, and state that it is because people have not stepped up with their pledges. In any case, we have to be as upfront as possible. In the discussion the vestry decided to wait until the just before the annual meeting before stating that final number, as maybe more pledges will come in. Fr. Flick said it would really be good to look at all expenses related to the school; that this congregation cannot be funding the school at the current level for the long term. Fr. Flick said that there can be a strategy to presenting an unbalanced budget, however we need to begin talking with the school about cutting their expenses or paying more of their actual share of expenses. The AES board has good members, and we can show them how the school and the church can support each other.

Tom Sutton gave an update of the search committee. He said that he is trying to get 12 people for the search committee, and he hopes to have it in place by the annual meeting. Also, to date, the rector survey had 54 responses. These responses will be used by the profile committee.

Fr. Flick had hoped to have a method to select qualified people to represent Ascension at diocesan council to be held in Waco, Texas in February. It was noted that the church has never paid travel expenses for delegates, and this factor likely eliminated potentially qualified people. **Motion #3:** Margo Kaplan moved to pay hotel expenses for delegates to the council, and Michelle Feagin seconded. The motion carried. Fr. Flick will approach some people about representing the congregation at the convention. The church will need a new selection plan for selecting delegates, and that will be left to the new rector.

**Motion #4:** Glenn Criswell moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl Coppock, Secretary

