

# Ascension Episcopal Church

## Vestry Minutes

September 19, 2017

**Present:** The Rev. Bob Flick, Tom Sutton, Doug Meyers, Lee Nirider, Clement Falayi, Alan Burton, Michelle Feagin, Margo Kaplan, Faye Armstrong, Glenn Criswell (arrived at 7:25)

**Regrets:** none

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. with an opening prayer.

### **Consent Agenda:**

**Financials:** Tom Sutton asked for question about the financials. Alan Burton commented that expenses exceeded income by \$30,000 this month, and asked for the cause of this amount over budget. Tom said it was the end of the summer, and many members are not in attendance, and that the August and September receipts are regularly low. Glenn Criswell was not available at the time to address the issue of the excessive expenses. The Finance Committee had been unable to meet during the month due to the widespread area flooding. Fr. Flick had questions concerning the balance sheet, in noting that the restricted cash was significantly more than the assets. Tom Sutton agreed that the stated amount of restricted cash on the balance sheet is lower than the restricted funds. Fr. Flick's question was specifically about the \$79,000 in restricted funds on the balance sheet without the cash amount to cover the funds. Tom stated that we are a cash-strapped church in that we rely on the funds collected each Sunday. Fr. Flick wants to talk to the treasurer about this to see if the restricted funds possibly could be released from the restrictions. However, if the money is not there, this report needs to be cleaned up. He asked about an audit and Tom Sutton said that our church meets the criteria, according to the diocese, for a "self-audit." The diocese provides the form and we essentially complete the form. Fr. Flick said that will visit with the treasurer. Tom did state said that our cash reserve usually reflects the restricted funds.

**Motion #1:** In view of the questions about the financials, Margo Kaplan moved to remove the financial reports from the consent agenda and to approve them at a later date after the questions were answered. Cheryl Coppock seconded the motion. Fr. Flick agreed that we should consider the report at a time when we had answers to the questions.

**Property committee:** Lee Nirider said that the property committee met just prior to the meeting, due to the area flooding and initiated a discussion on the state of the campus.

A roof repair is required on a school roof. Lee Nirider reported that Tom Sutton knew of a roofer that can make necessary repairs at a competitive price with a proposal for patching, rather than replacing the roof. Liz Goodman asked what portion of the roof repair is paid by the school versus the amount paid by

the church. Tom Sutton said that the school pays an agreed amount for the school facility portion of the campus. He noted that we really need to review the agreement and determine the amount to be paid by the school and the amount to be paid by the church. Discussion followed about the couple in charge of campus maintenance and the scope of their responsibilities. It was noted that this maintenance person (Miguel) and his wife provide janitorial services, not the services of a full sexton. They are paid from school funds and the church reimburses the school a portion of their compensation. There is an agreement between the school and church, however this document is two or three years old and needs to be revisited. Tom noted that in terms of his responsibilities, Miguel is stretched. Margo Kaplan noted that in the hospitality industry, the compensation for someone providing this service would be between \$45,000 to \$70,000. Tom Sutton admitted that sometimes Miguel gets brought into areas that are truly beyond his level of expertise.

**Motion #2:** Michelle Feagin moved to accept minutes of the August meeting. Glenn Criswell seconded. The motion carried.

**Outreach Committee Report:** Michelle Feagin reported that the committee decided to concentrate on West Houston Assistance Ministries (WHAM) and on the Mission of Yahweh. She stated that we will limit our focus to these outreach areas because of the departure of Deacon Mary Reddick, who we know now will not be returning to Ascension. Because of the overwhelming needs in the local area we will not be handling the seafarers Christmas boxes this year, nor will we have a Christmas baby shower for “the Baby Jesus” (to collect layette items for needy mothers-to-be) as was originally planned. Ascension instead, will concentrate on WHAM. Michelle asked about people volunteering at WHAM on the third Saturday of the month. For those with “survivor’s guilt” with the local area flooding, volunteering at WHAM would be a great way to serve the local area. Tom Sutton said that it would good for Ascension for parishioners to become personally engaged in service at WHAM. Liz Goodman felt that we can engage others by personally inviting others *to go with us to WHAM to volunteer*. She also felt that the same goes for Stewardship. Fr. Flick noticed a transfer of funds of \$800 to WHAM each month, and about \$200 to Mission of Yahweh. Ascension is trying to recruit volunteers for WHAM for the third Saturday of each month. This activity is listed on the parish calendar for September 16 and October 21.

**Rector’s Report:** Fr. Flick gave a verbal Rector’s report. He met with Nancy Clausey, the school headmistress, and they made the schedule for the children’s chapel. He also met with Libby Vester concerning the altar guild. He conducts adult Sunday school following the 10:00 service. After a discussion with those present last Sunday, his plan is to lead a discussion about the Sunday readings from the lectionary.

Fr. Flick stated he had a requested a list of supplies, including a laptop computer, and John Searle followed through on this request. He has requested school board information, the by-laws of the vestry, and he is waiting on job descriptions of the staff that he is to supervise.

In other activities, Fr. Flick did establish a Hurricane Harvey pastoral care meeting beginning Wednesday, September 13, and will meet again tomorrow, Wednesday, September 20. He made note of a wedding to take place on November 4 that was originally scheduled at Emmanuel Episcopal Church, which was severely damaged by the flood. He also noted a quinceanera, originally scheduled with Fr. Bryant for October 12 or 15. Since this was a previous agreement, he will do this. The participants are

not members of this parish, but he agreed that this could be a possible evangelizing time. On Saturday, October 21, he will be holding a mental health first aid seminar, although this does conflict with our volunteer effort at WHAM. His personal calendar includes a trip to Spain from November 9 to 18. He will be gone one Sunday, which will be covered by the Rev. Mark Brown from WHAM. He reiterated that Deacon Mary will not be returning to Ascension. She has moved toward a different outreach ministry that was approved by the bishop. Fr. Flick stated that we will need to address scheduling of activities for this fall. Since he is here part time, events and meetings must be scheduled in advance. He stated some of the projects for this coming fall and into 2018 that will include the Stewardship campaign, vestry retreats, vestry workshops, building vestry community, nominating committee for 2018, financial audits, the annual report, the annual meeting, diocesan council. Tom Sutton noted that Samantha had worked out a schedule with Fr. Bryant.

Fr. Flick asked the status of the vision and strategic plan set forth from 2017 through 2022. Tom Sutton said that the visioning committee completed work to a point, then Fr. Bryant left. He said that there has been no chair for the visioning committee, and that the committee fell by the wayside when Fr. Bryant left. The committee was going to use the work of the visioning committee to create a church profile for attracting a new rector. Interestingly, the profile committee was part of the visioning committee. The profile committee members are Liz Goodman, Michelle Feagin, David Bergquist, and Miranda Griesbaum.

Liz Goodman discussed the challenges of being chair person of the Stewardship committee. She will have to recruit a committee, and would like to have a cross section of the congregation for this committee. She also is not sure that the expense of the glossy printed document used during the past few campaigns is currently a good use of the members pledges and gifts.

**Motion #3:** Liz Goodman moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:38p.m. No second was necessary per Fr. Flick. The meeting ended with "The Lord's Prayer."