

St. Anne's Parish
Vestry Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, June 9, 2020

Clergy and Vestry Members Present

Rev. Manoj M. Zacharia
Linda Adamson
Thea Chimento
Betty Creighton
Carrie Dana-Evans
Mark Grimes
Kev Hays
Katherine Hilton
Jason Houser
David Huggins
Sharon McElfish
Townsend McNitt
Sarah Morse

Vestry Members Not Present

Al Collins
Paul Pope
Susan Thaxton

Non-Vestry Members Present

Howard Buskirk, clerk of Vestry

Welcome and Introduction of Guests

Vestry met through a Zoom call because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Manoj+ opened the meeting at 7:05 p.m. with prayer.

Rector's Report

The Rev. Jess Sexton, associate priest, will be leaving after July 12 to serve as priest in charge at historic Trinity Episcopal Church, Long Green, in Glen Arm, Maryland, Manoj+ said. The Parish is already looking for a replacement. "We will be praying and discerning through this," he said.

Jess+ she was one of the two candidates whose name was submitted by the Diocese to the Vestry at Trinity, Manoj+ said. "It's a great first call for an associate," he said.

Plans are to reopen the church for services as early as June 21, Manoj+ said. Jason and Caprice Turano, director of buildings and grounds, have been spearheading efforts.

Plans are to hold two in-person services each Sunday with a 9:30 a.m. service only offered online. The church will revisit the issue in August, he said. Under a plan submitted to the Diocese, only 84 will be allowed to attend each service because of the imperative of social distancing. The last in-person service before the church was closed was the 8 a.m. Holy Eucharist service on March 11.

It remains very important to continue a video version of services for all who can't attend, Dave said. "That will keep people involved." Our goal is to "create the safest space possible" for people to return to, Jason said. Thea noted many people who are younger than 60 are also considered at risk should they contract the virus.

"This is far from ideal and we're asking everyone to make serious, significant sacrifices," Mark said.

Facilities Report

The big item for the meeting is preparing to livestream services, Jason said. The necessary equipment has been identified and includes two stationary cameras, one camera that can be rotated and a switcher and control mechanism. The estimated price is \$12,000 based on recommendations by Spire AVL, the Parish's audio-video contractor, Jason said.

"This is a big new commitment for us," Jason said. "It's an exciting thing, but it is a commitment."

Linda asked how long the equipment is likely to last. Jason said generally such gear has a 10-year life cycle but he will get more accurate projections. The hope is equipment would be installed by the beginning of July, Jason said.

Jason offered the following motion: "The Junior Warden - in consultation with St. Anne's staff - is authorized to spend up to \$15,000.00 from the Capital Fund for the procurement and installation of live stream equipment in the Church. A vendor for the purchase and installation will be chosen after full diligence is done to solicit and gain 3 proposals from reputable vendors." It was acknowledged that this deviates from our typical approval practice, but the Vestry agreed that it was necessary given the urgency, importance of this project and the July Vestry hiatus. It was proved on a unanimous vote.

Treasurers Report

Mark presented the Treasurer's report in the place of Susan, who had a family commitment. The Parish had a "surprisingly good month" in May and the church is now over budget for the year, Mark said. The Preschool for the Arts at St. Anne's and the cemetery are on track financially, he said.

"I don't think we're out of the woods yet" but "we seem to be in a pretty good situation," Mark said. "We're just seeing an outpouring of generosity," Linda said.

Organizational Development Task Force

Linda presented an update saying 65 different ministries and groups have been identified within the Parish. The task is planning to send leaders of each a questionnaire to provide a new way to gather data. Thea and Al are also working on the project.

The EC received a "very good proposal" for a ministry related to Naomi's Village in Kenya, Manoj+ said. That new ministry sought guidance on how to become an established ministry and Manoj+ sought Vestry counsel.

"Clearly we can't have 65 committees reporting to the Vestry," Mark said. "We need some organization to help us with that."

Thea said she has investigated. There are a lot of ministries doing various things and "maybe the Rector knows about it and maybe not," she said. "I don't think there is a formal route."

Some ministries started with a push from clergy and there is a lot of overlap among them, Linda said, citing the groups focused on the Clay Street Community.

Outreach Committee

The Outreach Committee approved a \$4,000 emergency grant from the outreach budget for the Partners in Mission in Guatemala emergency, Mark said. He asked for a Vestry vote supporting the grant, which passed on a unanimous vote.

The Vestry discussed a revision of Outreach Committee procedures to make it clear what the steps are and how the committee should work. Vestry shouldn't be involved in approving individual grants, Mark said. Mark will take the issue to the EC for further work with proposal in August. That was exactly why the outreach committee was created, Katherine said.

Mark also clarified that the Vestry approved at its June meeting a proposal to explore the legality of, and lay the groundwork for, drawing funds from the Sally Lewis Endowment principle in support of future Food Relief efforts provided that there no legal issues. Susan investigated and found there are no constraints, Mark said. Mark moved that the treasurer be authorized to disperse up to 5% of the principal of the Sally Lewis fund to support PIMIG Food Relief, if needed, which was approved on a unanimous vote.

Naomi's Village

The program has asked for authorization as a new ministry at St. Anne's. Naomi's Village is a children's home providing care for orphans, located near Maai Mahiu, Kenya. Mark said there is no procedure for establishing that something is an official ministry and the Vestry doesn't need to approve every ministry.

Townsend said the Outreach Committee is the natural place for new ministries to come to with plans to launch. Mark asked if there were any concerns about adding additional responsibilities to the Outreach Committee.

Kev said there should be a simple way of establishing a ministry. Linda noted all ministries aren't part of Outreach. Mark asked Townsend to spearhead a discussion with the Naomi's Village sponsors regarding the formation of a process.

SKUNK Works Update

Carrie said the name is now the Blue Sky Committee. Carrie said one goal is to not use church language. The committee still needs to determine how to bring new people onboard and how to get them caught up, she said. "We're just kind of early in the process trying to get organized." This will be a three-year or longer project, Carrie said.

The group has had one outside conversation with St. Philip's, Kev said, acknowledging that COVID-19 had slowed work. "We had to reset," he said. "It's a very long process." We have to "unlearn" before attacking any problems, he said. Betty asked about the name. The goal is to open members' minds about what the possibilities are, Kev said.

Reconciliation

Vestry has to commend Manoj+ and the Rev. Dion Thompson for their message so far on racism and reconciliation, Mark said. "We think that the Vestry needs to step up and get involved in this as

well,” he said. “We need to take a stand against racism and racial inequality. ... We believe there is a right and wrong side on this issue”

Katherine agreed to draft a resolution, Mark said. Vestry members then worked together on the language for a statement during the meeting.

The statement as agreed to by Vestry says: Jesus Christ instructs us to “Love one another, as I have loved you” (John 13:34). As followers of Christ, St. Anne’s rejects racism and racial injustice in all its forms. We will continue to spread the gospel of love, rooted in God’s justice and mercy, especially for those who suffer due to the color of their skin. Based on our Baptismal Covenant, we stand in solidarity with all who strive for justice and peace in order to respect the dignity of every human being (BCP, pp.304-305). St. Anne’s is listening and working to strengthen our partnership with those who are striving to live into the common good. We wholeheartedly support the efforts and guidance of our clergy, and we are committed to the ongoing work to end injustice. We recognize our Christian duty to help end racism in our community through direct action.

This is the work Jesus called us to do, Linda said. “I don’t think you can argue with anything in this,” Betty said.

By being in the circle in the middle of Annapolis we are engaged in the “polis,” Manoj+ said. We need to differentiate between political and partisan, he said. “Our call is to engage in the city and civic life based on the values of the gospel,” Manoj said. The Vestry approved the statement on a unanimous vote following a motion by Linda.

Approval of Minutes and Closing Prayer

Betty moved that the Vestry waive the reading of and approve the minutes for May, as altered to address PIMIG funding. The motion was approved in a unanimous vote. The Vestry together recited the Lord’s prayer and then adjourned at 9:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Howard Buskirk
Clerk of Vestry