

**St. Anne's Parish  
Vestry Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, Nov. 10, 2020**

*Clergy and Vestry Members Present*

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

*Non-Vestry Members Present*

Sue Smith  
John Purnell  
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 7:02 p.m. with prayer.

**Stephen Ministry**

Sue said she was at the meeting to provide an annual status update. The program added two leaders and five new Stephen ministers, for a total of 11, she said. The training program that normally takes six weeks to complete has taken 10 months because it has to be conducted online, she said. There are also four facilitators. There had been few referrals this year as a result of the restrictions on contact during the pandemic, she said, but that has changed recently, and all Stephen ministers now have a “client”. Manoj+ and the Vestry thanked the Sue, the other leaders and all of the Stephen ministers for their exceptional work in the vital ministry.

**IT Committee**

John presented on new security cameras in the Sanctuary and Parish House. The current cameras are aging and need to be replaced, he said. There are 14 cameras in total, 10 in the Parish House, four in the church, he said. Some grant money may be available through PASA. The committee examined three proposals. A discussion followed.

Manoj+ expressed his gratitude to the IT Committee and for its work bringing the Parish into the 21st century.

John recommended that the Vestry approve use of technology from Verkada. The cost of the proposals from the vendors is roughly equivalent, he said. “The little extra money we pay for Verkada will pay off in the extra benefits we get,” he said. “We’re trying not to disrupt the historical beauty of this Parish, but we’ve got to put the most modern technology in to do the job. We’re not a museum. We’re a living church.”

Townsend moved that the Vestry authorize the officers to enter into a contract with a total value not-to-exceed \$32,000 (which includes a 10% contingency) with BlueCap-IT and Verkada to provide and install security cameras, plus five years of hosted recording and support services. The officers are further authorized to enter into a 5-year financing arrangement with Verkada’s leasing provider for the cost of the hosting and support services. The expenditures shall be funded out of the Capital Account and any monies received under the Maryland Aging Schools Grant. The motion was seconded by Linda Adamson. Thea recused herself because of a potential conflict. The motion passed on a unanimous vote.

### **Rector’s Report**

Manoj+ asked if there were any questions about a written report he circulated prior to the meeting.

The church will be closed for in-person worship starting this weekend at the direction of the Diocese, Manoj+ said. The Preschool for the Arts at St. Anne’s will remain open, pending further guidance from the state and health authorities. Most of the Parish’s staff has been given the option of working remotely. “We were prepared for this and we’re just going according to our playbook,” Manoj+ said. The church anticipates being back for Christmas with an outdoor service around the circle and will have a streamed Thanksgiving service, Manoj+ said. The outdoor services will be “our offering to the city of Annapolis,” he said.

Manoj+ recommended that the Vestry approve the new Outreach structure and said he has asked Linda, Thea and Al to continue working with the new Outreach Committee on operating guidelines and norms. Answering a question from Sharon, Manoj+ said the Parish is considering whether it should join Anne Arundel Connecting Together (ACT), at least at the bare minimum membership level.

Susan moved that the Vestry rename the Outreach Committee the Grants Committee, and appoint Judy Guy and Petey Cosby as co-chairs. The motion was seconded by Townsend and approved by a unanimous vote.

Townsend moved that the Vestry create a new Outreach Committee to coordinate outreach efforts and appoint Ann Guttierrez Carlson and Ann Ziegler as co-chairs. The motion was seconded by Linda and approved by a unanimous vote.

### **Facilities Report**

Jason said there has been progress on the fire pump controller, which passed city inspection with one inspection pending. The exterior painting of the Parish House is being completed and the floor refurbishing is completed, he said. There is still some leakage at the Parish House, which is being monitored. The bells are once again ringing in the tower of the church after work was completed on the digital clock. The Facilities Committee is examining capital projects for 2021 - including bathroom renovations, an audio/video suite in the Church, as well as other life-cycle investments, he said.

Plans are to continue streaming services each Sunday after worship returns to normal after the pandemic, Jason said. "We have made major investments in the technology in our church over the last year or so to where we now have fully functional, plug-and-play audio equipment," he said. "We also have a fully functional video function."

Jason urged the Vestry to approve funds for audio-visual video production equipment, including a mixer combo, microphone splitters, a snake for the chancel and a high-definition ATEM television studio. The production team is currently using equipment borrowed from Live Arts Maryland, he said.

Paul moved that up-to \$5,000 be approved from the Capital Account for the purchase of audio production equipment, which was seconded by Katherine and approved by a unanimous vote.

### **Treasurer's Report**

Susan updated the Vestry on the latest on the budget and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Parish is on target for giving at this point. "We're in a good place," she said. "Our expenses continue to be well under budget." The 2021 budgeting process has started, she said, and the audit is nearly complete.

### **Stewardship Committee**

Dave said the size of the pledges coming in is surprising. During the past week the Parish had 10 pledges for \$41,620, with an average of \$4,162. The average pledge so far is 6% higher than last year, he said. Year to date, there have been 163 pledges, which is 50% of the goal, with an average of \$3,734, which is higher than the \$2,900 target. Of the 163 pledgers, 14 are new for \$41,620, he said.

Dave said he will need volunteers to make calls in the next few weeks to check in with congregants. "The thing that we do face is that we are going to have to chase after the remaining pledges," he said. "I'm going to look for as many volunteers as possible."

Manoj+ said the Parish is an "anomaly" in that giving has stayed high in light of the pandemic. On average, parishes are seeing giving down by 20-25%, he said. "To see this sort of anomaly is refreshing," he said. Manoj+ said as they make calls, Vestry members should report back on any pastoral concerns they are hearing. "That is the primary work of the Parish, to care for souls and to be there in the midst of life's journey," he said.

### **Cemetery Plaques**

Linda updated the Vestry on proposed plaques for St. Anne's Cemetery. Mark said he didn't want to "wordsmith" the language at the meeting. It has already been presented to the EC. A plaque will go at each entrance, probably attached to a steel post. Research is still being done on the cost, which would depend on the material, Linda said.

The proposed plaques would say: "St. Anne's Cemetery began in Church Circle as the City Cemetery in 1692 and was moved here in 1790 to be a sacred burial space for all Annapolitans without distinction for race or religion, providing healing and hope for all. Simple stones and ornate monuments erected by the loved ones of those buried here reflect the full history of our country from colonial times to the present. We acknowledge that the painful history of secession, civil war, and racial injustice, evident in this cemetery, compels our church to redouble our efforts at reconciliation among all people as we build God's Beloved Community."

Mark asked if members of the Vestry had concerns. Thea said she wondered if the language and the goals could be more clear. Linda agreed with the questions Thea raised. Linda encouraged Vestry members to attend an upcoming Adult Forum by the Reconciliation Ministry. "This is a much bigger issue than signage," she said.

Paul said he would like to see "substantial" markers. Mark said the Vestry need not make a decision yet, since we still need cost estimates for the markers and there was time to make "tweaks" to the language before the December Vestry meeting.

### **Bylaws Committee**

Townsend said she, Thea and Sarah had examined the bylaws with an eye on any necessary changes to be considered during the Annual Meeting. Townsend said she spoke with Ed Hartman, who serves as counsel to the Vestry and is very knowledgeable about the bylaws. Ed advised strongly not to amend the bylaws unless absolutely necessary, she said. "As an attorney, I agree," she said. "I don't ever like to amend bylaws unless I really have to."

Ed and the committee were confident that the bylaws permitted a meeting over Zoom and voting in such a meeting was both permitted and logistically feasible. Mark noted the bylaws specifically call for a secret ballot. Townsend said she is convinced that can be done through a virtual meeting. Kev said the technology is available to do discrete voting.

### **Devotional**

Manoj+ offered reflections on his personal history and reconciliation. "I had to come terms with the fact that the only reason why the church changed its mind on the enslavement of people was not through rational discourse, but was through a deep fervor ... of coming and understanding God's grace and a touching of the heart."

The beloved hymn "Amazing Grace" was written by the 18th century English poet and Anglican clergyman John Newton, who had been in the slave trade before he became a priest, Manoj+ said. Newton formed a movement that inspired William Wilberforce and

the British Parliament to abolish Trans-Atlantic slavery, Manoj+ said. “The only reason why they were able to do that was because they organized around prayer,” he said. “It was not purely a legal battle. ... It was a moral and spiritual battle borne out of conversion of the spirit and prayer.”

As the Parish examines what it must do on reparations and reconciliation its work must be “borne out of prayer,” Manoj+ said. “It has to be borne out of a deep spiritual commitment and a conversion experience where we are called to address deep issues not because of where the political tailwinds go. Politics come and go. That’s the nature of politics. But it has to come out of a moral core, based on our commitment to Christ and our commitment as disciples of Christ to live into the words of Jesus, into the words of the early church.”

Mark said the Parish still does not have all the details following the Diocesan Convention’s creation of a reparations fund with an initial \$1 million investment, which was discussed in more detail at the October Vestry meeting. “There has been no ask” or further clarification on the fund, Mark said. “We’re going to get there soon, I think,” he said. The Vestry may need to hold a special meeting to consider next steps, he said.

Townsend asked if others were interested in joining virtual prayer on a recurring basis. Manoj+ said he would be happy to lead prayer.

#### **Approval of Minutes and Closing Prayer**

Mark moved that the Vestry waive the reading of the October minutes and approve them as amended. The motion was approved in a unanimous vote. Susan led the Vestry in the Prayer of St. Francis. Vestry adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Howard Buskirk  
Clerk