

**St. Anne's Parish  
Vestry Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, February 9, 2021**

*Clergy and Vestry Members Present*

Rev. Manoj Zacharia  
Howard Buskirk  
Thea Chimento  
Al Collins  
Katie Creely  
Betty Creighton  
Kara Friedell  
Kevin Hays  
Jason Houser  
David Huggins  
Sharon McElfish  
Townsend McNitt  
Sarah Morse  
Paul Pope  
Susan Thaxton

*Vestry Members Absent:*

Linda Adamson

*Non-Vestry Members Present*

Katherine Hilton, Registrar  
Katie Burke, Clerk of Vestry

**Welcome and Introduction**

Vestry met through a Zoom call because of the continuing COVID-19 pandemic. Manoj+ opened the meeting at 7:04 p.m. with prayer. The Annual Meeting of the parish having taken place on February 7, 2021, and new Vestry members having been elected at that meeting, Manoj+ then introduced new Vestry members Howard Buskirk, Katie Creely, and Kara Friedell, and new Clerk of the Vestry, Katie Burke.

**Swearing in of New Vestry Members**

The new members of the Vestry all took the Vestry oath, and the current members of the Vestry decided to join in and take the oath again with them.

**Election and Swearing in of Officers**

Nominations were then taken and seconded, and the following people were elected to the following roles for the upcoming year:

Senior Warden: Jason Houser  
Junior Warden: Sarah Morse  
Treasurer: Susan Thaxton

Registrar: Katherine Hilton

Katherine Hilton, who is no longer a member of the Vestry, and who therefore had not taken the Vestry oath with everyone else a moment before, then took the oath as Registrar. Katherine then excused herself from the rest of the meeting, since she is no longer a member of the Vestry.

### **Liaisons/Committee Signups**

As the new Senior Warden, Jason then took over administration of the meeting. He reminded all Vestry members that he had sent out a list of Vestry liaisons to the various parish committees. While some Vestry members will continue in the liaison roles they had previously held, Jason encouraged more people to sign up for the committees that do not yet have Vestry liaisons.

### **Rector's Report**

Manoj+ began by encouraging the Vestry to prioritize discerning God's mission and vision for the congregation. He himself would like to see the return of prayer and Bible study on the regular meeting agenda. Manoj+ asked that the Vestry consider the following questions:

- 1) If God's vision for us is what the church and the world would look like after our mission has been fully realized, then what is our particular mission in Annapolis?
- 2) How do we accomplish that mission?
- 3) Since we're in a period of exile, how do we rebuild during this exile and after our return?
- 4) What can we learn from faith communities who have been in exile historically?

Related to the final question, Manoj+ encouraged the Vestry to reflect on Ezra and Nehemiah as source books for our return to the church building and to our community, and how we might make an impact going forward (an Ezra and Nehemiah book study is forthcoming – it might be led by Rabbi Goldstein).

Manoj+ also shared bullet points from a document from the Tamarack Institute on making collective impact. The Collective Impact Framework contains five core conditions including the development of a common agenda, using shared measurement to understand progress, building on mutually reinforcing activities, engaging in continuous communications, and providing a backbone to move the work forward. Manoj+ feels that this framework might be helpful for the Vestry as it considers St. Anne's mission/vision. He asked that one or two of the Vestry members might facilitate a strategic discussion around the mission/vision, and Susan agreed to work with Jason to do so.

Manoj+ also shared the news that, after a thoughtful period of discernment, Alyssa Pasternak Post has tendered her resignation. St. Anne's will also be welcoming Becky Roemer, who is coming on staff as communications consultant. Betty asked where Alyssa was going, and Manoj+ replied that she is still in discernment about that – it was a mutual understanding that it would be best for her not to continue her path at St. Anne's.

On the topic of St. Anne's mission, Kevin Hays pointed out that normally there would be a Vestry retreat where members could talk more about how to make sure what they're doing is supporting St. Anne's mission. He asked if there would be a Vestry retreat this year, despite the unusual circumstances. Manoj+ said that yes, there will be a virtual Vestry retreat, and reiterated the importance of the Vestry getting together to work out a shared vision for St. Anne's going forward. Kevin also reported that he is a representative of the Blue Sky group, and he will be getting together with the Outreach chairs in the next few weeks to see how Blue Sky can assist with Outreach.

### **Facilities Report**

Jason reported that the water fountains that were approved last month have now been installed. One of the video cameras used for online services was not communicating with the controls, but Spire returned yesterday and installed a new one, so that problem should be fixed. Jason has been in touch with Ernie Green about the camera, and he will work with Sarah now that she is the new Junior Warden (the position that traditionally liaises with the Facilities Committee) to make sure it is working correctly.

Jason also explained that Bill Wilbert (chair of the Facilities Committee) and Caprice Turano (Director of Buildings and Grounds and primary staff liaison to the Facilities Committee) have the following priorities:

- 1) Repairs and upgrades in the bathrooms
- 2) Repairs and upgrades to the Charles St. patio and parking lot
- 3) Generating a "gripes list" as people reenter the church once it is reopened – as folks notice things that need attention, they can submit them to the Facilities Committee

This last item, according to Jason, is included because the Facilities Committee has knocked off many of the items on its running to-do list, which is a good thing. (This does not include the issue of the rain coming in everywhere, however – that remains a perpetual problem).

Howard pointed out that the last time the church reopened after closing due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Diocese required an extensive plan for reopening. He asked whether St. Anne's will be able to open using the same plan as last time, or whether the plan will need to be modified.

Manoj+ explained that the plan will mostly be the same as the last time we reopened following a COVID shutdown, but there will be a few modifications. For example, we now know that contamination by touch is much less likely than we originally thought it would be, so the required 45 minutes of cleaning of surfaces in the original plan might be cut down to 15 minutes. COVID numbers are going down in Maryland, and the Diocese is monitoring the situation. Manoj+ hopes that we will be able to hold in-person services for Holy Week and Easter. The notion of opening the church up during the day is still

under discernment – the thoughts and ideas of the Vestry would be welcome. Opening the church up during the day is a safety issue, really – a lot of equipment is just out in the open right now. Bill and Ernie are working on a project to store the equipment securely, and once that happens, we'll be able to work toward reopening the church during the day.

Paul asked a question about air purifiers that use ultraviolet light – have we considered using those? Jason said that it had been discussed early on, using Carbon-X devices and the like. The issue was that, as the Vestry knows from about a year ago, St. Anne's HVAC systems are well beyond their lifecycle, so even moving forward a little bit with air purification would be complicated. Howard pointed out that an epidemiologist is speaking at the forum tomorrow night, so he'd be a good person to ask about the efficacy of things like that. On a related note, David registered that he would like the forum to return to Sunday mornings, as he cannot participate on Wednesday nights.

### **Treasurer's/Stewardship Report**

Susan let the Vestry members know that she did not have a specific report to give at this meeting, although she did relate that she'd met with the Grants committee chairs, Judy Guy and Petey Cosby, and will soon meet with Outreach chairs Ann Ziegler and Ann Carlson. Susan described some historical tension between Outreach and Finance, dating back to a time when the church wasn't in such a good financial position – it's taken a while for everyone to feel comfortable spending money again. Quoting Tim Mulder, who used to say that "the church is not a bank," Susan wants everyone to know that, if there are initiatives we should be looking at, she is happy to participate in all of those conversations. The fact that a plan would be needed for how to fund suggested projects should not preclude people from thinking about and suggesting projects for the church to consider.

David was very excited to report that, as of Sunday, February 7, the number of pledges that have come in since the new year has exceeded all but one year in recent memory. The result of this flood of pledges is that, even though our total number of pledges is down, we are in good shape in terms of the total amount pledged. "People have really stepped up," he said.

Paul thanked both Susan and David for their help in giving focus to financial and stewardship matters, and the rest of the Vestry agreed. David also shared feedback he'd received that indicated that the congregation really appreciates his numbers and graphs.

### **Repair/Healing Fund**

Jason reminded everyone that the Vestry has been discussing what St. Anne's should do with respect to reparations. He described the current position of the Diocese: the Diocese has approved a seed fund for reparations, and has called on churches in the diocese to contribute, but has not given instruction on how to do so. Articles have been appearing in the news about the contributions Memorial Episcopal Church at Bolton Hill will be making to the Diocese's reparations fund, which is good motivation for us to decide how

St. Anne's will participate. The Vestry had previously decided not to delve into operational funds to make this contribution, but it must now come up with a framework for how to make a contribution from St. Anne's. Listening to the congregation's voices on this matter is extremely important. The Diocese will be firming up its plans by summer, so St. Anne's should be operating along that time frame too.

At this point, Al arrived, and Jason recapped the discussion about reparations for him. Al thanked Jason for the recap and registered his enthusiasm for the Vestry continuing to work out what the parish should do with respect to the reparations fund. Manoj+ pointed out that the Wednesday noonday prayer sessions will be continuing, through Townsend's leadership, and that this could be an opportunity for the Vestry to be in prayer together about this issue (no policy decisions are discussed during this time, but praying together about it could be very useful).

Howard shared that Fr. Grey Maggiano, the rector of Memorial, and Deacon Natalie Conway, whose family story is intertwined with the racial history of the church, will be coming to speak to the Reconciliation Ministry at its next meeting about the work they've been doing at Memorial. Howard agreed to send out the Zoom link for the meeting to interested Vestry members, and to disseminate a recording of the meeting to the Vestry for those who cannot attend.

### **Closing Prayer and End of Meeting**

By way of winding up the meeting, Betty asked how the news about Alyssa's departure will be publicized to the congregation. Manoj+ explained that the news will be shared in the eblast on Thursday. The new person who will be hired to work on communications is not clergy, but she will be introduced sometime soon. David wanted to register that Kirsten and Connie have done incredible work over the past few months, and that additional communications support for their efforts will be most welcome.

Jason explained that he had sent out minutes from both the December and January Vestry meetings, since the December minutes had not been sent out in time to be approved at the January meeting. He then moved to waive the reading of both sets of minutes. Thea and David seconded the motion, and the minutes from the December and January meetings were approved unanimously.

Townsend led the Vestry in a closing prayer. The meeting was adjourned at 8:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Katie Burke  
Clerk of Vestry