

**The Church of the Ascension  
Minutes of the Vestry  
November 15, 2016 Meeting**

**Present:** Sam Webster, Bill Willey, Donna Killmon, Suzi Montagna, Mark Strickland, Michael Murphy, Susan Meredith, Suzanne Tate, Courtney Wheeler. Also present Lynn Farlin, Christian formation, and Stewart Tabb, rector.

The meeting was called to order at 7 p.m.

**I. Opening Devotion:** Bill Willey led the opening devotion that focused on St. Margaret of Scotland.

**II. Register:** On a motion by Bill Willey and seconded by Sam Webster, the minutes from the October 18 meeting were unanimously approved, as amended.

**III. Treasurer's Report:** Michael Murphy gave the treasurer's report prepared by Jane Webster. He noted that October pledges of \$34,638 exceeded the monthly budget (\$28,000) by \$6,638, and brought the year-to-date balance to \$273,097, or \$7,903 below the YTD budget of \$281,000. Monthly expenses (\$37,766) were slightly above the monthly budget of \$36,532. There were no significant fund changes during October. Investments for the month were down \$4,973.

**IV. Wardens' Report:**

Senior Warden Sam Webster said there are two positions to be filled at the day school (lead teacher and substitute). He reminded the Vestry that Ascension and Royster will have a joint service on Sunday, Nov. 20, and that the Christmas dinner will be Dec. 18 following Advent Lessons and Carols, and that the greening of the Church will be Thursday, December 22 following a soup and salad dinner.

Noting that Christmas Day is on a Sunday, the Vestry agreed with Stewart's recommendation to have one service at 10 a.m. on Dec. 25, 2016, with no organist.

The church will have two services on Sunday, Jan. 1, 2017, but no Christian formation classes.

Junior Warden Bill Willey gave an update on the tidal marsh project. Colonial Tree Service will remove a large pine tree and a large tree partially felled in a recent storm for \$5,300 (this expense was previously approved by Vestry). Bill also said a variety of small electrical issues will be repaired on Nov. 16, including needs in the kitchen, women's restroom, near the outside trash bins, the parish hall coffee pot, and wiring for the new bell tower.

Mark Strickland updated Vestry about the bell tower, and noted that the posts will be painted brown. Mark Wheeler has worked to tune the church sound system. Strickland also updated Vestry about methods to absorb water leaking through the Day School doors during storms (bentonite "snakes"), the maintenance of the kitchen sink grease trap, and asked Vestry to check the updated vendor list.

**V. Clergy Report:** Stewart presented stewardship information to Vestry. On Consecration Sunday the church received 76 pledges totaling \$306,436. There are 22 possible pledges outstanding representing a possible \$55,276. The hoped for pledges for 2017 is \$361,712. The church has eight new pledges, 38 donors increased their giving, five donors decreased their giving, and 6 donors have circumstances that have changed (moving, illness, etc.) Vestry members agreed to contact the 22 donors who gave last year, but have not committed for 2017 yet.

Stewart shared a “wordle” created from the search committee’s statement about Ascension. This is a visual analysis of text. Stewart encouraged the Vestry to consider who God is calling us to be, and asked if that is reflected in the wordle she shared. Vestry discussed their views, and how they want to see a greater focus on God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, faith, and service to others.

Stewart told the Vestry that she had contacted her friend, Susan Sherard, to be a facilitator for small group discussions the Vestry aims to have regarding marriage. Marriage should be tied to our mission and focus on inclusion and love, she said. After talking about the group meetings, Susan suggested having a larger meeting, but giving parameters or rules for the meeting. The aim is to create an opportunity for people to share their views and concerns in a respectful way. Stewart said she would revisit this meeting plan with Susan and aim to discuss it again after the start of 2017.

Old business: The walls in the entry way need painting (paint is peeling) and some photographs of bishops need to be removed or repositioned. Lynn Farlin will move the photographs this week.

Christian Education: Lynn suggested Ascension participate in the Heifer International project, which uses donations to purchase livestock like goats, ducks, etc., for families in need. On a motion from Sam Webster, seconded by Bill Willey, Vestry unanimously approved participating in the project. Farlin also asked for approval to plan another mission trip with the Appalachian Service Project. The Vestry approved the trip by acclamation.

Donna Killmon noted that pastoral care created baskets for 13 members for Thanksgiving, and will also make baskets for them at Christmas.

Susan Meredith agreed to deliver the devotions at the Dec. 20, 2016, Vestry meeting. Bill Willey gave a closing devotion and the meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

**VI. Schedule:** The next Vestry meeting will be held Tuesday, December 20, 2016.