

**The Church of the Ascension
Minutes of the Vestry
January 18, 2017 Meeting**

Present: Rev. Stewart Tabb, Rector, Michael Murphy, Sam Webster, Suzi Montagna, Bill Willey, Susan Meredith, Courtney Wheeler, Suzanne Tate, Lynn Farlin, and Anne Doyle.

I. Opening Devotion: Rev. Stewart Tabb called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and led the opening devotion, the Order of Worship for the Evening from the Book of Common Prayer, page 109.

II. Register: The minutes of the December 20, 2016 meeting were reviewed and amended. The minutes were approved. The minutes of the November meeting were then amended to include Courtney Wheeler's presence and were then approved.

III. Treasurer's Report: Michael Murphy gave the treasurer's report prepared by Jane Webster. He noted that December's pledged receipts of \$35,742 were above December's budget (\$30,612) by \$5,130. This brought the full year 2016 pledged receipts to \$336,070, \$3,542 below the 2016 budget of \$339,612. Total 2016 income of \$389,332 was \$5,670 over the year-to-date budget of \$383,662. December expenses of \$37,073 were \$2,821 above the month's budget of \$34,252. For the year 2016, expenses of \$409,473 were under the budgeted expenses (\$418,943) by \$9,470. The difference between income and expenses for year 2016 is \$20,140. This actual budget deficit is lower than the projected budget deficit of \$34,281. Regarding fund changes, investments increased \$5,472 for the month of December. In addition, proceeds from various fundraising efforts were moved to the following intended fund destinations: the Playground Fund, the Mission Trip Fund, the Building Reserve Fund, the Outreach Fund, and the General Fund.

Michael Murphy distributed the proposed 2017 budget to the Vestry. It includes the measures approved by the Vestry in December: the 1% pay raise to the staff, the rector's housing allowance, and the diocesan pledge. To summarize the 2017 budget: projected pledges are \$345,000, bringing total projected income for 2017 to \$394,050. Expenses are expected to total \$408,673, bringing the projected 2017 budget deficit to \$14,623.

Significant, feasible cuts to the budget were found, including cost savings in building maintenance and in the stewardship program. There were questions regarding the placement and definition of specific line items of the budget, including continuing education, professional expenses, and other staff items. Sam Webster will get answers to all staff questions. Stewart suggested that a committee form to focus on office expense details. Michael made a motion to approve the 2017 budget and amend it if needed next month once all of the line-item questions are answered. The motion was seconded and the Vestry unanimously approved the Church of the Ascension's 2017 budget.

IV. Wardens' Report:

Sam Webster circulated thank you letters from staff members who received gifts from the Vestry.

Bill Willey's report: Concrete has been poured for the bell tower. Larry Bergmooser has done a fantastic job of digging the holes for the bell tower. Larry Bergmooser does many wonderful fixit jobs around the church. Fundraisers: Bill requested Vestry approval to hold two fundraisers: A Taste of Virginia event on 2/18 hosted by Shirley Vineyards, and a number of fundraisers for the EYC mission trip: 2/28 Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper, other catalog sales, Easter cake ball sales, 5/7 Taco Luncheon, partial proceeds from an evening at Your Pie restaurant, work crews, and flamingo flocking. Motions for the above fundraising activity was approved unanimously by the Vestry. Bill noted that it cost \$550 to get the parking lot snow shoveled. Bill also thanked Stewart for her virtual Morning Prayer held during the snowstorm.

V. Clergy Report: Stewart discussed the virtual service, noting that it was viewed by over 400 viewers. There were requests to have a virtual service every Sunday. Stewart checked and learned that it would be expensive to stream the service due to the lack of Wi-Fi. In other technical challenges, the ushers report that there are still complaints about not being able to hear the service. The ushers believe that the sound system can be turned up. Stewart will further discuss this matter with Mark Wheeler.

Stewart has received feedback that parishioners desire additional communication on church matters. She noted that with Tracy Frank's departure, there is no successor to produce the newsletter. There is a need for clearer and more creative communication in asking people to become involved in the missions important to Ascension. Also, we need to continue to discuss Ascension's mission, growth, and generally, why we're here and what we do in the community. Susan Meredith responded succinctly that Ascension's job is to grow Jesus. The Vestry discussed that, in order to grow, some ministries may need to change and be replaced by other ministries. Stewart led further discussion: Are you feeling a little lost? What excites you when you talk about the gift of the Holy Spirit? Our job is to be like Jesus in the world. How is this church going to grow Jesus both within and in the world? Stewart's hope is that the Vestry will grow together to discern what it means to grow. Stewart needs the Vestry to discuss these tough issues. She noted the Vestry will be talking again and again to discern what it is to be able to grow Jesus in our lives and in the world. Stewart asked the Vestry to be thinking of new Vestry members in advance of the parish meeting on May 21, 2017. Vestry members discussed the importance of looking for faith in potential Vestry members.

Stewart reported on the Laundry Love ministry. She announced that Genevieve Nelson would be coming to speak during adult fellowship on February 12, 2017. Stewart concluded by thanking the Vestry for their service and inviting them to continue conversations at Ascension on growing Jesus.

VI. Schedule: The next Vestry meeting will be held Tuesday, February 21, 2017. Suzi Montagna will lead the opening and closing devotions.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Doyle