

**The Church of the Ascension
Minutes of the Vestry
March 20, 2018 Meeting**

Present: Rev. Stewart Tabb, Susan Meredith, Bill Willey, Michael Murphy, Courtney Wheeler, Tim Westfall, Susan Motley, Suzi Montagna, Mark Hattler, and Anne Doyle.

I. Welcome: Stewart called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Suzi Montagna led the opening devotion.

II. Register: The Vestry approved the minutes of the February meeting as written.

III. Staff Reports – no Christian Education report; Day School report: Using the scenario and goal presented last month for a revenue neutral Day School program, Mark Hattler updated the Vestry on his draft budget plan. His desire is for a four percent wage increase for all Day School staff. He noted that a five percent wage increase for teachers would cost \$30,000. He will compare the Ascension Day School's wage/salary levels with those of other area day schools. Mark has also considered the option of two additional classrooms upon the program's financial self-sufficiency. When asked about grant opportunities and fundraisers, Mark noted that the school's best fundraiser (the casino event) raised \$12,000. The Vestry discussed the possibility of Ascension collaborating with other Talbot Park churches, particularly Royster Presbyterian Church, Talbot Park Baptist Church, and Trinity Lutheran Church, to improve the area's offering in early childhood education. Finally, ideas for improving the school's cleaning services were discussed.

IV. Buildings and Grounds Report: Bill Willey and Tim Westfall reported on the committee's March meeting and action items as shown on Tim's written report. Bill noted that Ascension had received the \$7,000 refund from Dominion Energy for its interior lighting conversion. Bill discussed future annual savings from the \$12,863 project. Bill also announced the grounds clean-up taking place, weather permitting, on March 23-24. Tim discussed the proposed dumpster project. He noted that its proposed exterior location had been physically marked. Several Vestry members expressed the desire to see a site plan, and noted possible location challenges. Tim recommended emailing Chuck Beers with all questions and concerns. Tim also noted that the committee has begun a project for carpeting the front of the sanctuary where the pews have been removed.

V. Pastoral Care Report: Suzi Montagna reported that the team had visited parishioners, and would be preparing Easter baskets on March 26th. Suzi asked Stewart to bless the baskets on that day.

VI. Fellowship Report: Lana was ill but Stewart wondered if it would be possible to switch the Vestry lunch that is scheduled for April 15 to April 8 in order to help cover a reception for the planned joint service with the neighborhood churches.

VII. Treasurer's Report: Michael Murphy gave the Treasurer's report for February, noting a concern that pledges were \$6,170 under budget. Expenses for the month of February were \$4,577 above budget due primarily to insurance payments and overpayment of the Diocesan pledge. There were no significant fund changes except the investment account, which reflects a \$10,733 decrease.

VIII. Wardens' Report: Susan Meredith noted that the plans in preparation for Lynn Farlin's departure would be discussed during Stewart's report.

IX. Clergy Report: With regret, Stewart announced the fact that Ascension would be required to shutter the Food Pantry in April. Based upon an external review, its Food Bank privileges had been suspended and it remains on a three-month prohibition from distributing USDA supplies. The Food Pantry's oversight and recordkeeping standards were the two major issues/findings cited by the official. Stewart noted that she would have a meeting of the Pantry volunteers on April 10th to discuss next steps.

Vestry Candidates: Stewart noted that, thus far, Chuck Beers and Anne Doyle would be Vestry candidates. It is hoped that other candidates would be proposed.

Christian Education Interim Plan: Subsequent to the meeting, Patti Glowatski agreed to serve as interim Christian Education Director. The Vestry discussed the job description and agreed to email ideas to Stewart, who would be responsible for finding a future leader.

Vestry Tasks: Stewart asked the Vestry to prayerfully consider two important tasks: 1) the value to be placed upon Christian education (for children, adults and seniors) and 2) the engagement of our parish's collective faith by connecting the dots among the following inputs: ecumenical conversations regarding neighborhood needs, children and youth formation, and technology. Stewart noted that she would be meeting again with the pastors of Talbot Park Baptist Church and Royster Presbyterian Church and would continue to explore additional ways to collaborate. Finally, Stewart announced the following dates: May 6th is the Parish meeting, and June 1-2 is the Vestry retreat.

Communication: Susan Motley prepared and shared a *Balancing Act* exercise as a means to communicate the many challenges of preparing an annual budget for Ascension. A pie chart exercise was also suggested for use as a visual. Stewart asked the Vestry to look at the budget in terms of a mission, noting the need to put the money in the context of ministries so that parishioners would get an understanding of how and what they invest in order to achieve the goal of being a faithful congregation.

X. Schedule/Devotions: Suzi Montagna led the closing devotion. The next Vestry meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 17, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. Susan Meredith will lead the devotions for this meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Doyle