

# St Philip's

episcopal church

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## Minutes of Vestry Meeting January 24, 2022

**Opening Devotional** - Maryann Younger

**Vestry Members Present:** Newman Aguiar, David Shumate, Richard Ammons, Ginny Bowman, Connie Semans, Gail Albergo, Treat Harvey, Adam McClellan, Freda Tucker, Leigh Bordley, Leigh Egeghy, Amanda Fratrack.

**Clergy Present:** Maryann Younger, Gabe Lamazares

**Guests Present:** Gail Belvett, Duncan Krause, Kelly Ryan

Meeting convened at 6:12pm.

### **Consent Agenda**

1. Minutes of the December 20,2021 meeting
2. Rector's Report
3. Senior Warden's Report
4. Junior Warden's Report

**MOTION** to accent the consent agenda by David Shumate. Second Richard Ammons. Unanimously approved.

### **Old/New Business:**

#### Stewardship Update - Gail Belvett and Duncan Krause

In 2021 there was an overall increase in the number and amount of pledges with the latter being about \$40k. Of the 30 new pledges some may be "returning" meaning pledge in 2019 but not in 2020. 30% of the pledge total pledge dollars comes from 7% of the congregation. This isn't an unusual situation, but we do need to be thoughtful about how this scenario affects our pipeline.

Maryann and the entire vestry expressed kudos to the stewardship team for their amazing work. The focus on engagement and not a dollar amount was a strategy/philosophy that served the community well and philanthropy as a whole.

Debrief from the autumn campaign has resulted in the start of a manual/roadmap/calendar of activities (very granular with tasks, dates and roles/responsibilities) for the remainder of the year and the next campaign. The committee has been thinking a lot about communication and had to place an emphasis on the digital platform given COVID circumstances. The committee is hoping to establish some complementary analog elements that we can deploy when we the parish are gathered in person. The committee is also hoping to improve the stewardship web page.

The committee's next focus is to spread stewardship across the entire year by working stewardship-specific activities through the liturgical seasons as well as environmental stewardship around Earth Day. Looking forward to trying a variety of things and seeing what creates better connection, sense of community and engagement.

In general, the committee's working philosophy is that one can't say thank you too often. Gratitude is going to continue to be the big focus of the platform as well as transparency. It's important for the whole parish to understand how we are doing with budget, giving, endowment, etc. Stewardship is a way of thinking and approaching life - a custody of care - not just a fundraising activity.

#### Update on diaconate discernment - Kelly Ryan

The discernment process requires a check-in with parish/vestry during the process. Here is a summary of the very rich experience I have to do date (paraphrased by the Clerk):

I was assigned to the rural parish of St. Andrew's Haw River. The average attendance at the church is about 20 of which there is no diversity and most of the parishioners are retirees. It is so different from St. Philip's that it made me nervous about whether or not I could succeed in this ministry. I had a signed agreement to attend for 10-15 hours per week. During my time there I taught Sunday school to the two children of the parish, delivered sermons, conducted an advent program for adults, provided pastoral care, led devotions at vestry meetings, gave childrens' sermons, served as a Eucharistic minister, and led Sunday evening meditation services. I tried not to focus on the business of life and instead focused on my calling as I moved through the process. I was able to entertain lots of big questions about my vocational direction, spiritual life, and my specific calling.

I learned that when I trust God and let go, my heart opens. I also learned that my heart is large enough for more than one church. I have come to understand that St. Andrew's is now as much my home as is St. Philip's. What a blessing to have heart and life this full. Ultimately my experience with this internship and the academic work has made it very clear to me that my calling to the diaconate is genuine and not a call to laity or priesthood.

I am officially now a postulant and will be in this phase for the next 18 months. Over the next couple of years there will be more academic work. I will have a new internship this summer, and clinical pastoral education for the entire 2023 calendar year. January 2024 is my target ordination date.

Deacons are bi-vocational, so I am still working full-time. I am also applying to divinity school so that I can get a master's degree in the right area.

One of my lessons that St. Philip's might take to heart is how well and intimately a small church tends to their relationships and community. It was a deeply wonderful experience and gave me an immediate sense of mutual connection and trust. It is harder to maintain in a larger parish, but well worth the effort.

I also would like to invite you to make St. Philip's a place of calling. We have a scarcity of deacons and lay leadership. St. Philip's should be encouraging, nurturing, and nominating more folks into the diaconate and other leadership roles.

After Kelly's presentation, the vestry recognized Kelly's hard work and the generosity of her story and observations. The vestry recognizes its responsibility to support candidates and does not want the money required for the classes to be a barrier to entry. Vestry members pledged ongoing support of Kelly as she continues with this process. There was also unanimous agreement that we would like St. Philip's to be a place of calling not only for the diaconate, but for many other things. It is an essential part of stewardship and creating a beloved community.

#### Garden Close - Adam McClellan

Running a little behind on garden close due to weather constraints. Looks like mid to late February. Budget seems to be on track.

#### Recognition of outgoing vestry members - Richard Ammons

We have been blessed with 4 outgoing vestry members who have lived up to their own calling and have served us well both on the vestry as well as in other ministries and services. Collectively they will leave a large hole. We owe them a great debt for their service.

#### Vestry nominee straw poll - Richard Ammons

We are so exceptionally fortunate to have a very strong list of candidates this year. That said we can only appoint four. Wes Newman, Liz Sappenfield, Rebecca Hix, and Shameika Rhinehart were the top four candidates in the poll. Maryann will contact the other four candidates to express our gratitude and let them know that we are eager for them to be involved in other ways. Committee members will follow up with personal phone calls. Our new vestry members will be announced on 1/30.

**MOTION** Richard Ammons moves to appoint the slate to fill the empty seats left by the retiring vestry members. David Shumate seconded. Unanimously approved.

#### Update on Vestry Leadership - Richard Ammons

Richard will be stepping down as Senior Warden. He has served over two exceptionally challenging years. We could not have asked for a better, more committed leader and are grateful for his service during this incredibly difficult time. The role of Senior Warden will be taken over by Connie Semans.

#### Presentation of final 2022 budget - Ginny Bowman

Finance Committee has presented a slightly better than breakeven budget which is remarkable given the climate and circumstances of coming off a pandemic. The committee

recommends approval of the budget. Minutes from December 20 reflect that the vestry has already approved that the 2022 budget be retroactive to January 1st once finalized.

**MOTION** Richard Ammons moved to accept the 2022 budget. Adam McClellan seconded. Unanimously approved.

There is also about a \$70,000 surplus from 2021 (exact amount TBD). Ginny would like to recommend that \$15,000 of the surplus be set aside in a vestry discretionary fund. Those funds can be used for things such as supporting discernment calls. Maryann has also requested about \$6,000 to address some staffing issues. The remainder of the surplus would give us a modest fund to cover small expenses as they come up throughout the year.

**MOTION** Richard Ammons moved to allocate \$15,000 from the 2021 unrestricted operating surplus to a vestry discretionary fund. Freda Tucker seconded. Unanimously approved.

#### Updates from Vestry Ad-hoc Committees

1. Staffing - David Shumate & Leigh Egeghy: Committee just getting rolling. Meeting this week.
2. Ministry - Amanda Fratrick, Newman Aguiar and Gail Albergo: Committee has updated the ministry leader list and drafted a ministry survey that will provide a status, needs, and issues. The results of the survey will help inform next steps as well as contribute to a narrative update for the upcoming annual meeting.
3. Outreach - Leigh Bordley: Committee is working on assessing whether or not the outreach we are currently doing is actually aligned with our mission and processes.
4. Infrastructure (Technology, Security, Facilities) - Adam McClellan: Adam is still trying to gather a critical mass for the sub-committees.

#### Update on Current Operations and Diocesan Recommendations - Maryann Younger

Diocese recommends that we stay virtual for now even though our numbers are beginning to trend down. Hoping we might be able to shift in February. Durham does have a high vaccination rate, so we may be able to open earlier than other places in the state. We have members including some families with small children that seem to be getting through Omicron infections relatively easily and are grateful that to our knowledge our parish has ridden out this COVID wave reasonably well.

#### Calendar Reminders - Maryann Younger

Vestry orientation 2/7.

Vestry Retreat at St. Philip's in the Trees 2/11 and 2/12

Annual meeting 3/27

#### Celebration of Ministry (Rector Installation) - Maryann Younger

This service is usually held on a Wednesday or Thursday evening so that priests from neighboring parishes can attend. It's a beautiful service and a great community builder. It was scheduled for February, but given the Omicron wave it looks like it will be postponed.

Outreach Update - MaryAnn Younger

The housing for our Afghan refugee family fell through. Landlords are requesting credit reports which is problematic. The team is currently in negotiation with an individual who is moved by the situation and is excited to be a part of this effort.

**Pastoral Concerns** - Gabe Lamazares

**Closing Prayer** - Gabe Lamazares

Dismissal 8:36