

**St. Francis Episcopal Church
October 15, 2024 Vestry Meeting**

The Vestry convened online via Zoom on Tuesday, October 15, 2024, at 7:30 p.m., Fr. Mark presiding. Members attending: Ms. Tendall, senior warden, Ms. Byam, Ms. Hurdle, Dr. Schneider, and Mr. Tester. Also attending: Mr. Smith.

Invocation

Fr. Mark led the invocation. The meeting could not be called to order for lack of a quorum.

Bible Study

Ms. Hurdle led a Bible study on Luke 16:11 and Corinthians 8:21 that focused on stewardship. She said conversations about finances are notoriously uncomfortable and sometime contentious. During this season of stewardship, reflecting on these verses, she asked how can the Vestry assure the congregation that we are being “faithful and righteous” with their money? Ms. Hurdle said 1 Peter 4:10 encourages believers to use their diverse gifts in service to one another, reflecting the manifold grace of God. She cited the five principles of stewardship: time, treasure, talent, temple (your body’s health and well-being), and asked how can we expand our stewardship campaign beyond the “treasure.”

Rector’s Report

Fr. Mark said the church had received a large, unrestricted gift of \$100 in October to use for non-operating purposes.

Nominating Committee

Fr. Mark said that the terms for three Vestry members (Matthew Hunter, Gaines Hurdle, and Tom Whitlock) and the senior warden will end at the Annual Meeting in January. The four will serve as a nominating committee. All except for Mr. Whitlock are eligible to stand for reelection.

Minutes of September Vestry Meeting Minutes

The Vestry postponed approval of the September minutes, lacking a quorum to approve them.

St. Francis Hall Flooring

Fr. Mark said the flooring project was finished, and the church now had full use of the Parish Hall.

Facilities Projects

Fr. Mark said that Phase 3 of the HVAC project is underway, and that two major repair projects are planned for 2025, repair of the wooden windows in the school and the patching of cracks in the North Parking Lot. Dr. Schneider said the church should experience lower utility bills with the new HVAC system, which should help with the 2025 budget planning.

Organ Renovation

Fr. Mark reported that Mr. Widmann, church organist, said the voicing on the organ should be completed soon, and that Mr. Michael Hart, a local organ builder, would evaluate the instrument

and develop an itemized list of eventual repairs, with cost for each. We expect that most of the work will be done as part of a future Capital Campaign.

Accounting Firm

Mr. Tester, Fr. Mark, Mr. Ruf, and the wardens will determine who should serve as our future accountant at a meeting on Monday, October 21st. They have asked Ms. Riddle, former church accountant, and others with accounting experience to suggest people to interview and Mr. Tester has conducted interviews. The church has received 5 bids for accounting services that range from \$20,000 to \$60,000 per year for the estimated 5 – 6 hours needed per week for the accounting work.

Budget Planning

Fr. Mark said the church has received a more generous response in the pledge drive so far this year. Ms. Hurdle urged that we be certain that the Realm stewardship link is active. The Finance Committee is still evaluating areas for cost reductions as a result of the HVAC work and in reduced accounting fees. The Committee will set a November meeting to review a 2025 budget draft for the Vestry to discuss at their November meeting. Ms. Hurdle said the Finance Committee will need information about costs for various activities like the newcomers' receptions, etc., to prepare the budget estimate. Ms. Byam said the Flower Guild has a lower budget because many who donate flowers do not ask the church for reimbursement.

Evensong

Ms. Hurdle said the next two evensong events are planned to include activities after the service for families to encourage them to bring their children.

Motions for Adoption

Fr. Mark said that since this Vestry Meeting lacked a quorum, they would postpone any motions for consideration until the November meeting.

Financial Report

Mr. Tester said the September financial report was very good as donations were up 3% over budget. On-line giving has alleviated the summer cash flow situation from previous years.

Volunteers

Dr. Schneider asked how the church can encourage more parish participation. Fr. Mark said it is often difficult to recruit volunteers than in earlier years because of the many other activities and other demands parishioners have on their time. Dr. Schneider said the church should recognize the contributions of the parish's current and past volunteers, during a service and also their work in the "Sounds" parish newsletter.

Potomac Day

The annual Potomac Day event is being held on Saturday, October 19th. There are 35 vendors who will set up their displays in the church parking lot for business from 9:00 – 2:00. Ms. Hermann has changed this activity to suit the vendors' needs

Adjournment

Fr. Mark led the Vestry in the closing prayer:

Keep watch, dear Lord, with those who work, or watch, or weep this night, and give thine angels charge over those who sleep. Tend the sick, Lord Christ; give rest to the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering, pity the afflicted, shield the joyous; and all for thy love's sake. Amen.

Respectfully submitted,

Les Smith

Clerk