

**St. Francis Episcopal Church  
November 19, 2024 Vestry Meeting**

The Vestry convened (in person) on Tuesday, November 19, 2024, at 7:30 p.m., Fr. Mark presiding. Members attending: Ms. Tendall, senior warden, Mr. Hunter, Ms. Hurdle, Ms. Oleson, Dr. Schneider, Mr. Tester, and Ms. Warren. Also attending: Mr. Smith.

**Invocation**

Fr. Mark led the invocation.

**Bible Study**

Ms. Warren led devotions focused on a collect from the Book of Common Prayer, focusing on God's presence in turbulent times and how the Vestry can bear witness to things being raised and made new again by Jesus Christ. We discussed worshipping together, hearing the message, and congregational fellowship.

**Rector's Report**

**Vestry Nominating Committee**

The Committee will consider candidates for the January 2025 election to the Vestry.

**Budget**

Fr. Mark said the Budget Committee has prepared two draft budget based on the actual budget for January – December 2024. With the church is now operating on a total cash basis, one budget was prepared without a cost of living increase (COLA) and one includes a 2.5% COLA. Many 2025 pledges have been received and the budget incorporates these, while projecting totals from pledges that have not yet been received from active parishioners. In December, the Committee will have the final totals for the budget.

Father Mark pointed out that he used the actual totals for pledges and non-pledged gifts in the budget draft, working directly from the records in Realm, our data management program. These totals are slightly different from those shown in the monthly financials (the actual non-pledged gifts amount is higher). Some parishioners make a pledge some years and not in others, but Realm's default is to count each gift from a person who has ever pledged as a pledge gift, and all transactions related to gifts from a person who once pledged but did not in the current year must be manually changed. Fr. Mark reviews the records and gives Shanti a list of changes each week, but sometimes these are not perfectly executed, causing the discrepancies.

The budget includes a 5% draw from the Legacy Fund, as allowed by the terms of the gift. Fr. Mark said that the budget does not include capital expenses. It does include funding for significant repairs, including the patching of cracks in the North Parking Lot and major repairs to the wooden windows in the school. Major repairs or a replacement of the hot water heater in the school may also be necessary. There will be a final phase to the HVAC work, but we are now expecting that this may be delayed for several years.

The diocese has asked parishes, like St. Francis, whose giving to the diocese falls short of the requested 10%, to increase their giving by at least 10% per year. This year's budget includes such an increase. Father Mark also asked the vestry to consider including a seminary donation in the 2025 budget, if final projections would allow this.

After these various funding items were presented, the Vestry discussed budgeting for evangelism, youth group activities, general stewardship, worship, the audio-visual system, the music program and special singers, and general administrative functions, including a 2.5% COLA for clergy and staff. The Vestry also discussed various activities that could produce revenue for the church, including the Lobsterfest, bling sale, contributions from the Men of St. Francis, and other activities; and expenses for the clergy and staff, including their medical insurance.

*Motion to Add a 2.5% COLA for Church Clergy and Staff in the Proposed 2025 Budget*

Ms. Warren made a motion, seconded by Ms. Tendall to add a 2.5% COLA for clergy and staff to the proposed 2025 Budget. The motion carried unanimously.

**Stewardship Campaign**

Fr. Mark said he is encouraged about the progress of the Stewardship Campaign, and Mr. Hunter concurred that the numbers look very good at this point. They are waiting to see the number of pledges – many people have increased their pledges, and they are further encouraged by the responses. There is some concern that on-line pledging process may present difficulty for some of those using it, particularly older parishioners. The Vestry was presented with an estimate of non-pledge donations this year. Last year's estimate, which brought forward the amounts of prior year pledges for people who did not pledge in 2024, has proven to be accurate. We are using a similar approach to project next year's non-pledged giving totals.

The Vestry reviewed a list of those who have pledged in previous years, but have not done so this year. Unlike the last few years, we are not just reaching out to those who pledged in the immediate prior year, but not yet this year. We are including a number of regular non-pledged givers in the group we plan to contact.

Each Vestry member was given a list of parishioners to contact. Fr. Mark said he is available to answer any questions or concerns concerning pledging. The Vestry may survey parishioners on their views on the proposed budget, church needs, pledging and other, related issues.

**Time and Talents**

Father Mark noted that Pastor Allison and Kathy Herrmann solicited tributes from parishioners and recognized those who have been generous in sharing their time and talents at the Stewardship Ingathering Brunch on October 27.

**Federal Employee Retention Credit (ERC) Checks**

Fr. Mark said the church has received the first checks from the Federal ERC program. The funds will be allocated to non-operating purposes, in accordance with our intention when we applied for the tax credit.

### **Accountants**

The rector and wardens decided to hire Tyler Maroulis as our church accountant, after contacting and interviewing six firms and individuals. He will begin his work on December 1. We expect that this switch from Your Part-Time Controller will save St. Francis about \$50,000 per year.

### **Maintenance Worker**

Fr. Mark said that Mr. Enrique Fuentes, who performs general maintenance and grounds keeping duties, has been working as a contractor for the last several years. He does not perform work that requires a license (electrical and plumbing). He will follow up with Church Insurance to determine if there are reasonable concerns about liability if he should be injured on the job.

### **St. Francis Hall Flooring**

There continue to be problems with the new flooring that was installed this fall, i.e., sections are becoming unsealed and some of the flooring is mismatched. The Vestry thinks all the flooring should be removed and new flooring installed. The staff will follow up with the contractor.

### **Gospel Book and Aaron Dunn's Ordination**

St. Francis has been given a new Gospel Book that will be formally presented in December.

Aaron Ross's ordination to the diaconate is scheduled for Saturday, November 23rd at the National Cathedral.

### **Zion Church International**

Fr. Mark and the Wardens will meet with representatives of the Zion Church International to discuss their request to rent space for their Sunday services on Sunday afternoons. Mr. Tester reported on his family's visit to the church, which was very positive; Ms. Tendall reported on her positive conversations with their current landlord. Father Mark reported that the congregation's trial service and fellowship time on November 17 had also gone very well.

The Vestry discussed Zion's Sunday service scheduling and any potential conflicts with St. Francis's Sunday activities. The church's activities could be accommodated in a 12:00 – 4:00 timeframe on Sundays, and their activities would require renting the church nave, St. Francis Hall, several Sunday School rooms, and storage space, as well as Kincaid Library for men's Bible study during the week. The Vestry is considering charging a monthly rent of \$3,000 - \$3,500 for leasing these church facilities and agreed that there should be a "trial period" before signing a one-year lease.

### **Motion to Approve a "Trial" Period for the Zion Church International Lease of St. Francis's Facilities.**

Ms. Warren made a motion, seconded by Mr. Tester, to approve a "trial period" lease of St. Francis's facilities for the Zion Church International. The motion carried unanimously.

### **Motion to Approve the Zion Church International's Use of St. Francis's Facilities for a 1:00 – 5:00 pm Timeframe.**

Ms. Warren made a motion, which died for lack of a second.

Motion to Approve the Zion Church International's Use of St. Francis's Facilities for a 12:00 – 4:00 pm Timeframe

Ms. Warren made a motion, seconded by Mr. Tester, to approve the Zion Church International's use of St. Francis's facilities on Sundays from 12:00 – 4:00 pm. The motion carried unanimously.

Motion to Require a Two-month Security Deposit as Part of the Leasing Agreement to Zion International Church

Ms. Warren made a motion, seconded by Mr. Tester, to require Zion International Church to pay a two-month security deposit as part of their leasing of St. Francis's facilities. The motion carried unanimously.

Motion to Lease St. Francis's Facilities to Zion International Church for a Monthly Rent of \$3,500.

Mr. Tester made a motion, seconded by Ms. Tendall, to lease St. Francis's facilities to Zion International Church for a monthly rent of \$3,500. The motion carried unanimously.

Motion to Approve a "Four-month Trial Period" for the Zion International Church Lease of St. Francis's Facilities, Including a Security Deposit and One Month's Rent in Advance.

Mr. Tester made a motion, seconded by Ms. Hurdle, to approve a "four-month trial period" for the Zion International Church Lease of St. Francis's Facilities, including a security deposit and one month's rent in advance. The motion carried unanimously.

The Vestry asked if the River Road signage could be used to accommodate the Zion International Church's Sunday services.

If we successfully reach an agreement with Zion Church International, the vestry decided that a member should be given the portfolio of tending this relationship.

### **Property Updates**

Work continues on the HVAC system's installation (as noted in the Budgeting information).

### **Financial Report**

Mr. Tester, church treasurer, said the church's finances continued to be fairly good in September, but the October financial report reported a \$200,000 decline due to a payment on the HVAC system.

### **\$100,000 Gift**

Fr. Mark said St. Francis had received an anonymous \$100,000 gift, which is to be used for non-operating purposes.

Motion to Approve the Two Financial Reports

Ms. Warren made a motion, seconded by Dr. Schneider, to approve the two financial reports. The motion carried unanimously.

Motion to Approve the Nominating Committee for Vestry Members

Ms. Tendall made a motion, seconded by Dr. Schneider to form a nominating committee for the 2025 Vestry elections. The motion carried unanimously.

Approval of the Consent Agenda

Dr. Schneider made a motion, seconded by Ms. Warren, to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

Motion to Adjourn

Mr. Tester made a motion, seconded by Ms. Hurdle, to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

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