

**St. Francis Episcopal Church
January 21, 2025 Vestry Meeting**

The Vestry convened on-line on Tuesday, January 21, 2024, at 7:30 p.m., Fr. Mark presiding. Members attending: Ms. Tendall, senior warden, Mr. Hunter, Ms. Hurdle, Ms. Oleson, Mr. Ruf, Mr. Tester, Ms. Warren, and Mr. Whitlock. Also attending: Mr. Smith.

Invocation

Fr. Mark led the invocation.

Bible Study

Mr. Whitlock led the Bible Study on “The Power of Faith.” He presented passages from Hebrews 11 and James 2, and vestry members talked about times in which their faith was tested and strengthened.

Consent Agenda

Rector’s Report

Zion Church’s Rental

Fr. Mark, Ms. Nanan, Mr. Feagles, and Ms. Tendall met with leaders from Zion Church on January 12 about their request to rent space for St. Francis for their Sunday service and fellowship activities, and reported that Zion Church is excited about this arrangement. Fr. Mark presented remaining questions for the vestry to resolve about the lease’s start date, the time at which rental could begin on Sundays, the term of the lease, and the required notice for termination.

Zion Church wants to rent space on Sundays for four hours, from 11:45 to 4:00 pm, and some space has been set aside for them to store equipment in a closet in St. Francis Hall and in the Church Undercroft kitchen. Their usage would be only on Sundays, except for several pre-arranged times for special services and events. They would like to begin the lease in April 2025, instead of in May, as had been previously proposed. The Vestry found these requests acceptable.

The Vestry would like the lease to be a one-year lease initially, with a six-month trial period. A multi-year lease would follow, with an annual rental increase of 2.5% or CPI, whichever is lower. A three-month notice would be required if either party wishes to terminate the lease.

Father Mark has received a lease template from St. James Church, which Clay Hough is using to develop a draft for negotiations with Zion Church. Members of the vestry supported the concept of using lease income for capital purposes instead of operations, which could help to delay the need for a capital campaign.

Parochial Report

The new Parochial Report form poses several narrative questions, and Father Mark asked for guidance from the Vestry about them.

They included (1) Efforts to reduce the carbon footprint: The Vestry cited installation of new LED lighting and a new HVAC system; (2) Programs that best exemplify the congregation's Christian activities: The Vestry cited several fellowship activities, the clergy and lay outreach, and the music and worship services; and (3) Programs that show hope for the future of the parish and the Episcopal Church : The Vestry cited the Christmas Pageant and the reintroduction of Vacation Bible School.

New Water Heater

Fr. Mark said the water heater and water tank had to be replaced due to the water heater's failure last week. The new water heater and water tank, with installation, cost \$6,928.54, and the work by Tucker AC of Frederick has already begun.

Legacy Fund

Fr. Mark said action on the Legacy Fund had to be moved to next month due to Mr. Feagles's absence due to a business trip.

Vestry Portfolios

Fr. Mark said the Vestry Portfolios are somewhat uneven in their duties and responsibilities and asked that Vestry members consider rearranging them. Portfolios associated with finance and property, which remain the vestry's primary responsibility, would remain consistent. The staff responsible for church programs have proposed several roles where fuller lay leadership would be really helpful.

Father Mark will create and distribute a form that allows vestry members to rank their preferences for portfolios, and he and the wardens will distribute them.

Mr. Tester volunteered to help with tech issues, one of the areas of leadership noted by staff, in addition to his duties as Treasurer.

Vestry Membership

Mr. Whitlock is retiring from the Vestry after serving for four years. Ms. Caroline Davis has agreed to stand for election as his replacement.

Vestry Retreat

The Vestry will hold its annual retreat following adult forum on Sunday, February 23, 2025 in Kincaid Library. The Rev. Canon Victoria Heard will lead a discussion of spiritual leadership.

Stewardship Campaign

Mr. Hunter reported the church has received more pledges after the 2025 Budget was approved.

Diocesan Reparations Program

The Vestry will refer parishioners who have questions about this initiative to Father Mark. There does not seem to be widespread interest in teaching and programming on this subject.

Motion to Approve the Consent Agenda

Mr. Hunter made a motion, seconded by Ms. Tendall, to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion carried.

Motion to Approve the Capital Expense of \$6,928.29 for a New Water Heater and Water Tank

Mr. Ruf made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hunter, to approve bid from Tucker AC for the purchase and installation of a new water heater and water tank for \$6,928.28. This is a capital expense. The motion carried.

Motion to Approve Terms Related to Zion Church International's Possible Lease

Mr. Ruf made a motion, seconded by Ms. Oleson, to approve the following terms: a starting date of April 1, 2025; a starting time of 11:45 am on Sundays, a one-year term for the first year, a multi-year term in following years with an escalation of the lesser of 2.5% or CPI, and a three-month notice for termination. The motion carried.

Annual Parish Meeting

Ms. Tendall said the Annual Parish Meeting is on Sunday, January 26th after the worship service. The parish will elect a slate of Vestry officers.

Financial Report

Mr. Tester, Treasurer, gave the monthly financial report (details in the attachments). He said that the year-end Financial Report shows a surplus of \$276,000, but that this can be misleading, as it includes \$336,000 in revenue that was or will be used for non-operating purposes: capital gains on investments that were cashed out for the HVAC project, a \$100,000 gift for non-operating purposes, and the Employee Retention Tax Credit funds, which were previously designated to pay for the organ project. There is actually a \$16,000 operating loss for 2024 – not a major problem, but one that is not easily captured from a quick read of the financial statements.

Temperatures in the Church on Sundays

The Vestry discussed the temperature during Sunday services. Some of this has been caused by miscommunication between the contractors installing the new boiler and its associated controls, and should be remedied. Mr. Ruf also encouraged the ushers to close the doors to the narthex and the bell tower to prevent heating loss and to maintain a consistent temperature in the nave.

Motion to Adjourn

Ms. Oleson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Whitlock, to adjourn. The motion carried.

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