

**St. Francis Episcopal Church
August 19, 2025 Vestry Meeting**

The Vestry convened online on Tuesday, August 19, 2025, at 7:30 p.m., Fr. Mark presiding. Members attending: Ms. Byam, Ms. Davis, Ms. Hurdle, Ms. Oleson, Mr. Ruf, Dr. Schneider, Mr. Tester, and Ms. Warren. Also attending: Mr. Smith.

Invocation

Fr. Mark led the invocation.

Bible Study

Ms. Byam led the Bible Study on Psalm 103: 8-14. This psalm tells us the Lord is merciful and grateful to all when we put our trust in him.

Consent Agenda

Approval of the July 16, 2025 Vestry Meeting Minutes.

Fr. Mark said the final draft has a minor correction from the earlier draft.

Rector's Report

HVAC System Environmental Controls Contract

Fr. Mark and the Vestry discussed the proposed maintenance contract with Harris Environmental Controls (HEC). Mr. Ruf said that the new digital controls for the HVAC system require a maintenance contract, and that standard practice is to award the contract to the company who designed and installed the system. Because the system has not yet been “commissioned,” expenses related to Harris’ work thus far have been billed to Bradleigh Mechanical, but once the system installation is completed, we will need a maintenance contract for ongoing oversight of the system.

The new HVAC system is digital and heats and cools the entire system centrally. This kind of system is ultimately more efficient and cost-effective (the old HVAC system used pneumatic heating/cooling processes).

Mr. Feagles said that he believed this expense was likely within the definition of “operating expenses” in the lease with Georgetown Hill Early School, and that they should be asked to pay 75% of the costs associated with this contract (as they do with other utilities). The estimated maintenance yearly fee is \$6,500.

Fire Alarm System

Ms. Maria Steyn conducted a comprehensive review of our fire alarm system inspections, and determined that the 3-and 5-year inspections needed to be conducted as soon as possible. Bids for this work (and for repair of the fire gong, which had been cited on several earlier inspections) were obtained from Johnson Controls and from our regular fire alarm system maintenance contract holder, Guardian Fire Protection Services.

The Johnson Controls bid was lowest, at \$5,484.78, and the rector and wardens recommend approval of this project, which may also be considered as “operating expenses” under the terms of the Georgetown Hill lease (and thus, a shared expense).

Undercroft

Fr. Mark said the stove will be removed from the undercroft on the recommendation of the projects committee, as it wasn’t being used regularly, and the expenses involved in installing the necessary fire protection system for it were significant. The undercroft still has a microwave for cooking purposes.

Building Use and Funeral Fee Documents

Vestry members discussed the documents passed on by Father Mark, which had been revised by staff to address issues encountered in sharing space.

Ms. Warren said the documents should not allow for the use of kitchen items, dishes, and tablecloths, and that those renting the space should not be encouraged to enter the kitchen storage closet, because it is used to store items belonging both to St. Francis and to Zion Church.

The vestry confirmed that the regulations affecting the space would be the same for weddings and for funerals, and that the standard rental interval was four hours, and that additional fees would be imposed for longer usage. They also agreed that there should be a fee (forfeiture of the security deposit) for failure to leave church facilities clean and tidy.

Father Mark promised to review these suggestions with the staff and to report back about this at the next meeting. It is not envisioned that the vestry will formally approve these regulations, given the importance of working out details with staff, who need to implement them.

Interim Parish Administrator

Fr. Mark said Chesley Hurdle is working well as the interim parish administrator that he is also managing Fr. Mark’s appointment calendar.

Fr. Mark’s Office Hours

Fr. Mark said that he has had only one person come by during his office hours over the last month, but that he was willing to continue the practice of setting aside 90 minutes twice a week with no meetings or visits to be available to people who wish to drop in for a visit.

New Vestry Members

Fr. Mark said at least two parishioners were considering volunteering to fill the vacancy created by Sue Tendall’s resignation.

Diocesan Delegates

The church has an opening for two diocesan delegates with the resignation of Pat and Erica McNeilly, who have moved away. The vacancy must be filled before the Diocesan Convention in January.

Zion Church

Mr. Feagles summarized the final version of the license agreement, which was signed by St. Francis and Zion in June. It will be up for renewal on an annual basis in November.

He said their participating in the Vacation Bible School was very positive. Dr. Schneider and Ms. Hurdle said Zion Church has requested various changes in the rental agreement to allow for more use of church facilities for their planned events, which St. Francis will consider.

Property Updates

Fr. Mark said the maintenance work on the church's grounds included completion of the work on the walkways to make them level – these activities are listed in the property maintenance log.

HVAC Phase 2

Mr. Ruf will supervise the inspection and commissioning of the HVAC's Phase 2, which is the final step in completing the renovation.

Motion to Approve the Contract for Harris Environmental Controls.

Mr. Ruf made a motion, seconded by Ms. Davis, to approve the \$6,500 contract awarded to Harris Environmental Controls for the HVAC system. The motion was approved unanimously.

Motion to Approve the Award of the Alarm System to Johnson Controls

Ms. Davis made a motion, seconded by Mr. Ruf, to approve necessary inspections and repairs to the fire alarm system by Johnson Controls in the amount of \$5,484.78. The motion was approved unanimously.

Vestry Cocktail Party

The vestry will host a cocktail party on September 13th. Mr. Ruf has asked for volunteers to assist with setting up for this event.

Financial Report

Mr. Tester, church treasurer, reported church's cash flow is going well, although expenses are over budget by \$37,000. This is due to the expenses related to the deferred maintenance projects. Other expenses are in line with the budget projections. Zion Church has paid \$25,000 in rent so far this year, which includes their security deposit.

Motion to Approve the Consent Agenda

Ms. Davis made a motion, seconded by Dr. Schneider, to approve items on the Consent Agenda. The motion was approved unanimously.

Motion to Approve the Treasurer's Report

Dr. Schneider made a motion, seconded by Mr. Ruf, to approve the August Treasurer's Report.

Savy Seniors

Ms. Warren said she has lined up programs through February 2026 and is asking for suggestions for more program events.

Potomac Day

The annual Potomac Day will take place on October 11th. The church encourages parishioners to participate and to suggest ideas for the church's participation.

Children's Chapel

Ms. Davis and Ms. Herrmann are organizing a children's chapel to occur once each month during the Adult Forum time. The children will make a formal entrance into the church for this program.

Confirmation Class

Ms. Hurdle said there are ten children in the confirmation class group. The vestry want to encourage these confirmands to participate in the church youth group it co-sponsors with Christ Church in Rockville and St. James in Potomac

Motion to Adjourn

Ms. Byam made a motion, seconded by Mr. Feagles to adjourn the vestry meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

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