

**St. Francis Episcopal Church
January 20, 2025 Vestry Meeting**

The Vestry convened on-line on Tuesday, January 20, 2025, at 7:30 p.m., Fr. Mark presiding. Members attending: Mr. Ruf, Senior Warden, Ms. Byam, Ms. Oleson, Dr. Schneider, Mr. Tester, Mr. Todd, and Ms. Warren. Also attending: Ms. Maria Steyn and Mr. Smith.

Invocation

Fr. Mark offered an invocation.

Bible Study

Mr. Ruf led the Bible Study on Philippians 4:8-9. This text urges us to be mindful of Jesus's presence and to keep our minds on God during the day, even though demands at work and home sometimes make this difficult.

Solar Power Project

Ms. Maria Steyn, our new parish administrator, gave a PowerPoint presentation on the proposed solar power project. She said the Power Purchase agreement is no longer an attractive offer, but new rules make a direct ownership model more attractive for non-profits. The survey she conducted last fall found a tepid response among parishioners about this project. The solar power project would give the church energy credits at Pepco for its surplus energy generation.

She explained the details of the Flywheel Company's turn-key set-up and direct ownership proposal. Flywheel's proposal includes options for grant application, design, installation and maintenance requirements as well as some assistance guiding the financing process. The company can begin installation of the project's solar panels and other equipment by the summer of 2026 deadline such that we would qualify for the energy tax credit. The best financial outlook included MEA grant approval as well as federal incentives.

The Vestry discussed Flywheel's proposal at length, including issues around potential damage to the roof shingles during the panel installation, and whether this would void the roof warranty. Mr. Ruf said that the existing shingles are practically out of warranty already. The workmanship warranty, warranty of the flat roof system and the shingle warranty (against manufacturing defect) were all discussed. The age of our roof was a key area of review.

Asking Georgetown Hill to share part of the costs was discussed, but the Vestry decided to delay such consultation until after we have made a clear decision about whether or not to pursue the direct ownership model.

Mr. Tester agreed to do some additional economic analysis (ROI) on the proposal to validate the estimates about expected benefit the church over the useful life of the solar installation and provide additional guidance on whether pursuit of this project is likely to be a wise economic decision Ms. Steyn agreed to investigate whether an inverter was included in Flywheel's proposal, and to follow up about the status of our investigations into community solar participation. It was noted that the Community Solar decision could be independent of the economic decision to install solar panels. Further, the solar panels will only supply a fraction of

the actual energy usage of the church and school; the usage from Pepco currently exceeds the capacity of the solar system that can be installed at St. Francis. Note that the installation of solar panels on the church grounds does NOT include panels on the church itself.

The Vestry agreed to take up the matter again at the February 7 Vestry Retreat, with the goal of making a decision then after review of the additional economic analysis, given the short window for the getting the work started in order to qualify for the tax credit.

Consent Agenda

The Vestry had no comments or edits to the Consent Agenda.

Parochial Report

Fr. Mark said that he plans to present the report for approval at the February vestry retreat, once Mr. Maroulis has completed the report's financial section..

Vestry Nominating Committee

Fr. Mark said that Steve Harper has agreed to fill the final Vestry slot, and that he will be part of the slate that will be presented for election at the Annual Parish Meeting.

Church Staffing

Fr. Mark welcomed new church staff members, Sarah Tester and Maria Steyn, and noted that Peter Zhang will be the new livestream coordinator, from January 25. Mr. Zhang is replacing Noah Clarke who is moving.

Rector's Report

The Vestry had no comments on the Rector's Report.

Motion to Approve Items on the Consent Agenda

Mr. Ruf made a motion, seconded by Dr. Schneider, to approve the items on the Consent Agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

Motion to Move the Annual Church Meeting to February 1, 2026 due to Inclement Weather.

Mr. Todd made a motion, seconded by Ms. Olsen, to move the Annual Church Meeting to Sunday, February 1, 2026 in the likely event of inclement weather on January 25th. The motion carried unanimously.

Financial Report

Mr. Tester, church treasurer, presented the December 2025 Financial Report. He said the church had a year-end \$124,631 operating surplus. Mr. Tester said the basis for this good position includes the significant number of pre-paid pledges, the one-time ERTC funds, and cost savings due to changes in the operating expenses sharing with Georgetown Hill.

Motion to Approve the January Financial Report.

Mr. Ruf made a motion, seconded by Mr. Todd, to approve the financial report. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Olsen's Swan Song

Ms. Olsen has concluded her time on the Vestry and will be leaving St. Francis. She told the Vestry and Fr. Mark how much she had enjoyed being a Vestry member. She reflected on her nearly 70 years as a parishioner at St. Francis during the tenure of its seven rectors - including her confirmation at St. Francis's first service and her marriage by the third rector. She said each rector had added to the life of this church.

Expressions of Thanks

Fr. Mark expressed his thanks to those who had participated in preparations for the reception honoring Kathy Herrmann and to Ms. Steyn for her solar panel project presentation.

Motion to Adjourn

Mr. Tester made a motion, seconded by Ms. Warren, to adjourn. 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