

CHURCH OF THE EPIPHANY – TEMPE
Vestry Meeting, February 17, 2024, 9:00 a.m.

Present: The Rev. Hunter Ruffin, Rector; Alex Davis, Senior Warden; Curtis Wood, Junior Warden; Pat Blackman; Kathy Carney; Beth Hunt; Heidi Thomas; Aaron VanBriesen; Jan Wagner; Jude Wickelgren; Cece Wilhite; Ann Neal, Treasurer; Andrea Stewart, Clerk.

Absent: Steve Geislinger.

The Vestry Retreat began approximately 9:00 a.m. with Morning Prayer and introductions.

Fr. Hunter reviewed the Vestry Covenant.

Minutes for the January 2024 Vestry meeting and 2024 Annual Meeting were not presented for review and approval.

BUSINESS MEETING

Parochial Report: The 2023 Annual Parochial Report is due to the Diocese March 1. It was not yet available for approval by the Vestry. Once completed there will be a vote via email with confirmation at the March Vestry meeting. One of the questions in the Parochial Report asks for a breakdown of parishioners by racial/ethnic category. It would require a survey of the parishioners which would be skewed if parishioners did not want to answer the question(s). It was decided to decline to answer the question.

Vestry Relational Calls: Alex Davis, Senior Warden, introduced the subject of regular contact through phone calls or face-to-face conversations with parishioners on a monthly or quarterly basis. The purpose would be to keep parishioners informed of events and activities in the parish and to listen to parishioners' concerns. The timing and details will be finalized at the March 2024 Vestry Meeting.

Treasurer's Report: Ann Neal, Treasurer, presented the report. Pat Blackman moved to accept the January 31, 2024, Treasurer's Report as corrected, seconded by Kathy Carney. The motion carried.

Confirmation of Vestry Appointment: The Vestry voted via email to appoint Beth Hunt to fill the third open Vestry position for a one-year term. Kathy Carney motioned to affirm that vote; Pat Blackman seconded the motion. The motion carried.

CLIFTON STRENGTHS SURVEY

Fr. Hunter gave an overview of the Clifton Strengths model. Thirty-four talents are rated in order of high to low for each person completing the survey. Fr. Hunter presented a spreadsheet which listed the top five talents for each member of the Vestry, the Senior and Junior Wardens, Treasurer and Clerk, and himself. Each of the talents fits into one of four "Domains". Discussion followed as to how many of the vestry possessed a specific talent, how many talents no one on the vestry possessed, and how we might encourage members of the parish to take the survey.

VESTRY LIAISON ASSIGNMENTS

Fr. Hunter asked what is the purpose or role of the liaison in relation to the various committees. The Vestry offered:

- Communicator between Vestry and parishioners; to clarify information

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- Cheerleader
- Host meetings
- Equip with resources
- Coordinate priorities
- Connect people to responsibilities
- Gather information; transition a ministry by allowing it to “die” or combine with another ministry

Vestry Liaison assignments for 2024 are as follows:

- Alex Davis: Stewardship
- Kathy Carney: Children, Youth and Family Formation
- Heidi Thomas: Pastoral Care
- Pat Blackman: Adult Formation
- Curtis Wood: Property
- Vacant: Community Engagement
- Beth Hunt: Worship
- Aaron VanBriesen: Serve
- Jude Wickelgren: Welcome
- Cece Wilhite: Fellowship
- Jan Wagner: RenewalWorks

TWO LOOPS MODEL

Fr. Hunter explained and demonstrated the “Two Loops Model” for viewing/determining the stage in which the parish is operating and where we would like to be.

The Vestry took a 30-minute break for lunch about 12:46.

At 1:19 p.m. the Vestry resumed the meeting.

YEAR IN REVIEW

The Vestry discussed the 2023 Goals and the extent to which they were completed.

1. Continue work for the capital campaign with the potential launch in the fall of 2023.
2. Build a robust welcome ministry inclusive of new “members” up to 18 months. A working group will be established by Holy Week, and an ongoing ministry will be in place by August 1, 2023.
3. Form task groups for key parish functions:
 - 6-month planning calendar with Vestry “shepherds.”
 - Study the implications for parish restructuring based on task experiences.

Areas/events in which the Vestry saw success included the following:

- Established an ongoing Welcome Ministry (Welcome Committee).
- Hosted Parish Listening sessions.
- Determined through the listening sessions that the parish is not ready for a capital campaign.
- Through the listening sessions decided to launch RenewalWorks.
- Raised capital funds in a matching gift campaign.
- Relunched the annual dinner and auction to raise funds for outreach and other ministries.

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- Welcomed new participants in the worship ministry.
- Experimented with the Alpha Course.
- Progress in establishing Vestry Liaisons.
- Successful turnout for the Halloween Chili Cookoff.
- Obtained staffing for the nursery.
- Effective financial stewarding.
- New pew cards.
- Renewal of MOE.
- Resurfaced and painted the parking lot.

Challenges in 2023 included:

- Struggled with events getting “caught short” (not planning ahead)
- Getting volunteers for different ministries
- 10:00 coffee hour
- Departure of the Black Mothers’ Forum school
- Struggled to get the budget done with effective parish input and approved prior to the start of the fiscal year.
- Mortgage.
- Attendance.
- Doing effective evangelism.
- Roof leaks.
- Unanticipated building maintenance.
- Reliant on outside income for solvency.
- Spirituality deficit.

INTENTIONS FOR 2024

As they were inclined to share, Vestry members presented a question that might lead us to name the intentions for the parish for 2024. The pattern or theme of the questions presented led to the final question to be answered: How do we sustain and nourish spiritual vitality in and through the ways we love God and our neighbor?

Through much discussion the Vestry identified three goals for 2024:

1. Implement initial action items from the RenewalWorks process by Advent I 2024.
2. Vestry members will invite one-on-one relationships with parishioners each quarter.
3. Vestry liaisons will encourage and equip each ministry to incorporate spiritual practices within every gathering by Pentecost.

The meeting closed with prayer and adjournment at 3:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Andrea Stewart
Clerk of the Vestry