

Did you ever wonder what goes on during vestry meetings at St. Philip's? I was privileged to serve as clerk of the vestry for several years after moving to Southport in late 2016 and had a birds-eye view during our transition to a "program" church. As such, we are organized under ministry boards, which operate the various functions of the parish. Those include Faith Formation, Worship, Parish Life, Finance and Facilities, Outreach, and Pastoral Care.

As clerk, I recorded the minutes of the meetings, with the rector opening them with a prayer. After minutes of the previous meeting are officially approved, the treasurer delivers his monthly and year-to-date report, and opens the report to questions by vestry members. Under parliamentary procedure, the vestry votes to receive the report. Following the treasurer's report are comments from the rector, senior warden, and junior warden.

Canon Jim Hanisian, who shepherded our parish before Father Eric Mills was called, was instrumental in having the vestry develop various strategies necessary to move St. Philip's forward in its transition. Each strategy has been composed of several vestry members who work together to develop its goal. New strategies are created annually to meet newer long-term goals. Monthly the various strategies deliver their reports during vestry meetings. Should action need to be taken by the vestry, motions will be made, seconded, and voted on by the vestry. All of this will be reported in the minutes, which are made available on the St. Philip's website.

For 2022, the strategic initiatives include "Growing the Church," "Campus Utilization" and "Communications."

Vestry members also serve as "chaplains" to the various ministry boards listed previously. Chaplains serve as liaisons between the boards and the vestry and offer guidance from the vestry to the boards. Chaplains attend board meetings and offer their reports as well during vestry meetings.

During the last several years, the status of our capital campaign to raise funds for our new parish hall has also been reported during vestry meetings. Currently the vestry receives updates on the status of the building construction.

Vestry meetings are held monthly and generally last two hours. When all reports and new and old business have been concluded, the rector closes the meeting with a prayer.

If you have any questions and want to learn more, please contact me at margaretbearden@sbcglobal.net or 501-993-8833.