

AR Diocesan Convention 2026

Vestry: Leading with Purpose workshop

Rev. Barkley Thompson

Part I : Role of the Vestry vs. the role of the Rector

Each role is CANONICALLY defined, everyone must understand their role

Order is laid out w/laity the 1st order of ministers, life - work - governance of the Church

Canon I.14.2: Vestry is the agent and legal representative of the parish - sign contracts, oversee the property, hire and fire rector

Canon 25.2: specific duties of vestry including upkeep/maintaining building/grounds

Canon III.9: Rector duties including worship, spiritual authority, learning, welfare and well-being of the parish

Use and control buildings and records

Rectors can serve as ex officio members of parish committees

Vestry Essentials

- 1) Be Spiritual leaders - daily prayer for church leaders, rectors, and parish lay leaders
- 2) Be present at parish events/functions
- 3) Support parish/church financially
- 4) Serve as conduits between members and rector
- 5) Working boards
- 6) Agents of transparency (knowledge and grace) - read everything that comes along, know what is happening, be prepared to explain what items are; definitely know the controversies, but watch the gossip; no shadow/parking lot vestiges; impune the best possible motives for any conflict, even in disagreements, until proven otherwise
- 7) Know the difference between secrecy and confidentiality- build trust with one another and members

Part II: Leading - Managing - Doing

Three distinct roles

- 1) Leading/Visioning/Architect - a lot of ideas, coalesce the vision, then design
- 2) Managing/General Contractor - get people, materials, then build, be on-site
- 3) Doing/Heavy-Lifting - who do the actual work - do not change the plan or redefine the vision, they bring the plan/vision into reality

Vestry (or Councils) with Rector are the Leaders; individual council members are appointed Managers who recruit the Workers who do the job. Not the council members but parishioners here. No volunteers to man a ministry? End the ministry.

Managers get Doers by making direct contact with parishioners who might do the work. Get firm commitments before proceeding.

