

The Vestry of St. Philip's Episcopal Church

The vestry is the parish council of laypersons, elected by other active members of the parish, who, with the rector, have responsibility for the care and control of church property and the transaction of the business of the congregation. The vestry should try to represent the interests of all parish members.

The vestry has three primary responsibilities:

1. To take care of the parish finances
2. To take care of the parish buildings
3. To choose individuals to fill positions of parish leadership and representation
 - Election of a rector
 - Choice of delegates to the diocesan convention
 - Selection of other individuals as diocesan canons and parish by-laws may stipulate

The parish vestry is the leadership of the parish family. It is a most important ministry in the life of any congregation. In fact, in order for a parish to exist, there must be a priest and a vestry to oversee church operations, provide direction, and support the mission and ministry of the parish.

Individual Vestry Members - Responsibilities and time commitments

- Work with the Rector to promote attendance on Sundays and at other times of common prayer
- Attend the Congregational Meeting
- Attend monthly vestry meetings
 - Currently, 4th Thursdays at 6:30pm
 - Normally, no meetings in July and August unless deemed necessary
- Attend emergency/call vestry meetings
- Attend the vestry retreat-
 - Annual retreat two weeks after Annual Congregational Meeting/Vestry Election
 - For 2022: Friday, March 11, 6-9pm; Saturday, March 12, 9:00am – 4:00pm
- Serve as a liaison to a vestry commission
- Serve on vestry committees
- Attend congregational and parish events, and other services and activities
 - May include ushering, greeting, hosting, serving, etc.
- Participate in leadership training
 - Includes mandatory diocesan training: Misconduct Prevention (Safe Church)
- Participate in Mutual Ministry Review
- Obtain a working knowledge and understanding of St. Philip's By-Laws
 - Also, the Constitution and Canons of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia
- Participate in diocesan activities
- Be in daily prayer

Other Commitments

- Be accessible and responsive within 24 hours by telephone, text, or e-mail.
- Participate actively at Vestry meetings. The meeting is a safe place to express ideas, wonder, question, and even disagree (respectfully, speaking the truth in love).
- Speak with one voice outside the meeting.

Eligibility and Qualifications for Vestry

“Only lay persons, sixteen years of age or over, who are confirmed members in good standing of the Church shall be eligible for nomination and election as vestry members.” (*Article II, Section 2 – St. Philip’s Episcopal Church By-Laws*)

✚ Member = Any person who has been baptized in The Episcopal Church or any other Christian Church, in the name of the Holy Trinity, whose baptism is recorded in the Episcopal Church and who is registered as a member of this parish; who during the preceding year has received Holy Communion at least (3) times at St. Philip’s, Richmond.

✚ Confirmed = Confirmation, Reception, or Baptism as an adult, by a Bishop of the Episcopal Church, recorded in the parish register

✚ In good standing = During the preceding year, has been faithful in corporate worship, prayer and giving financially to the operating budget of this parish.

- Faithful in corporate worship = Regular, weekly attendance at worship on Sunday mornings
- Faithful in giving financially = Regular, periodic giving, and if pledging, fulfilling the pledge

Additionally, our *Vestry Policies and Procedures* state:

- Two or more members of the same household cannot serve concurrently on the vestry
- Relatives cannot serve concurrently on the vestry

The Vestry Nominating Committee, after seeking suggestions from the congregation and due deliberation, will nominate a slate of candidates to fill the vacancies. (*Article III, Section 6*) As part of the deliberation, the Treasurer will provide information to the Vestry Nominating Committee as to the candidate’s financial giving during the preceding year.

Candidates’ prior year giving summaries will be provided to each candidate to assist them in discerning if they qualify as a confirmed member in good standing.

Election

The canons of the Episcopal Church state that members of the vestry shall be elected by the parish at an annual meeting. The vestry at St. Philip’s is comprised of nine members classified into three classes. Each class shall serve for a term of three years. Each year we elect three members. Our Annual Meeting is normally the last Sunday in February.

- Vestry Nominating Committee presents qualified nominees to fill each vacancy
- Other nominations may be made from the floor
- Persons receiving a majority of the votes cast shall be elected to the vestry

When elected, Vestry Members subscribe to the following declaration:

"I do believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the Word of God, and to contain all things necessary to salvation; and I do yield my hearty assent and approbation to the doctrines, worship and discipline of The Episcopal Church; and I promise that I will faithfully execute the office of Vestry member of St. Philip's Episcopal Church, in the Central Region, in the City of Richmond, Virginia, according to my best knowledge and skill."

If you run for the vestry and are not elected, please know there are many other ways to serve the church. The Wardens and other members can assist in matching you with a ministry. Also, you may run for the vestry again in 2023 or in subsequent years.

What's Next?

Think about it, pray about it, talk with your family and friends about it. Discern any of these answers:

- 1) yes, this is a ministry God is calling me to now;
- 2) yes, this may be a ministry God is calling me to, but later, not this year;
- 3) no, this is not the ministry in which God is calling me to serve.

If it is determined you are a qualified nominee for this ministry, you will be asked to submit a short biography and a photo to the Vestry Nominating Committee by January 30, 2022. You may also be asked to attend specific church services during February 2022 for introduction to the congregation.

Serving on the vestry is an important ministry and can be a time of extraordinary spiritual growth. The vestry will be praying with you as you pray about the possibility of being a servant leader of our church.

Reference: St. Philip's Episcopal Church By-Laws, Adopted January 18, 2018

Vestry General Powers and Duties

Article II, Section 1. The Vestry and the Rector shall be mutually responsible for the leadership of the Congregation. The Vestry shall: (a) call the Rector and see that the Rector's salary and other obligations are paid regularly and punctually and annually review such salary, (b) cooperate with the Rector in promoting the spiritual welfare of the Congregation and extend a hearty welcome to newly baptized, confirmed, received, or transferred members of the Congregation, (c) continuously encourage the members of the Congregation to support the programs of the church and to give generously toward the support of those programs, (d) provide for the appointment of Trustees authorized to hold the legal title to the property of the Church, such Trustees to be appointed under the applicable statutes of the Commonwealth of Virginia, (e) make and execute all contracts for erecting, furnishing, preserving, and insuring the Church edifice and other property, (f) observe the provisions of Diocesan Canon XIII related to business methods, (g) make all necessary provisions for Church music, with the advice and consent of the Rector and subject to his/her control, (h) screen and recommend candidates for ordination, and (i) generally as the constituted agents of the Church and in cooperation with the Rector, transact all of its temporal business.