

Church of the Ascension + 2020 Vestry Leadership Overview

At the January 2021 Annual Meeting we will elect one new Warden and three new Vestry Members. A slate of candidates will be presented by the Vestry's nominating committee. More than one candidate for each seat may be presented, and tradition at Ascension allows self-nominations, nominations by parishioners of other parishioners and floor nominations at the Annual Meeting. To learn more, contact Nominating Committee Chair **Ken Kelling**. To the left, below, is basic Vestry information. The box to the right below shows some potential Vestry endeavors in 2021 that may, in turn, suggest Vestry leadership qualities that may best serve Ascension going forward.

Definition(s). Technically, for the purposes of both church canon and civil law, the term Vestry refers to a Rector and elected Wardens and Vestry Members, together entrusted with fulfilling church canons and fiduciary responsibilities. In common parish parlance, the term Vestry also normally includes the Treasurer and Clerk, and may include a Chancellor (parish legal counsel). These individuals (treasurer, clerk, chancellor) are appointed by the Vestry and may be Vestry Members or other parishioners in good standing. Unless Vestry Members, they do not have voting privileges.

Elections. Elections for Wardens and Vestry Members take place at the parish Annual Meeting. Warden candidates have normally had prior Vestry experience and are elected for staggered two-year terms. Nine additional Vestry members – three each year – are elected for three-year terms.

General Roles of the Vestry

- ♦ Has both accountability and authority to fulfill requirements of both civil law (as a corporation) and church canons (as a congregation of the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Chicago).
- ♦ Shares with Rector, other lay leaders and staff in strategic planning and implementation.
- ♦ Seeks to embody the Church's faith as the Body of Christ.

Expectations of Individual Members

- ♦ Vestry membership assumes regularly taking part in worship and in the overall life and well-being of the parish through an expanding network of relationships and particular ministries and events.
- ♦ Members attend monthly meetings, the parish Annual Meeting, a Vestry retreat (if held), and other Vestry-related gatherings as needed. Members preview meeting materials; start meetings on time; and contribute to positive facilitation of meetings.
- ♦ Members normally assume responsibility for participation in and/or leadership of at least one committee, task force or special project and/or are identified as 'liaison' to an area of parish ministry.
- ♦ Rector, Wardens and Treasurer normally meet once monthly to identify and prioritize matters and to draft Vestry meeting agendas.

Agendas and Reporting. Agendas include action items, information items and advisory items. Often the agendas are annotated, meaning that we not only identify the matter that will be considered but also include some background information.

Responsibilities of All Parishioners.

- ♦ Share in leadership by participating in ministries and by taking part in the governance of the parish at Annual Meetings, including nomination and election of Wardens and Vestry Members.
- ♦ Stay informed and participate in parish committees, projects and decisions. Vestry meetings are open to all members. Members may request for items to be included on agendas.

2020 Vestry Leadership Priorities

A preliminary look ahead suggests that the 2020 Vestry will be devoted to a mix of short-term and long-range commitments, including ...

- ♦ **Navigating the pandemic and how we will emerge from it:** Related leadership will include reestablishment of fellowship connections and evaluation of human and financial resources. How will we prioritize as circumstances, needs and opportunities continue to evolve?
- ♦ **Media Development:** Live-streaming Ascension masses seemed unthinkable a year ago but will now likely become routine post-pandemic. How will we make the best use of new technology in which we are now making a significant investment and that will soon to be in place? How can we continue to use and improve social media to connect with present members, parish alumni and newcomers?
- ♦ **Young Adult Connections.** A number of young adults drawn to Ascension before the pandemic have maintained connections. How can we be more intentional about welcoming and supporting the faith of young adults?
- ♦ **Adult Education** is of interest to some. What leadership can the Vestry provide in identifying or cultivating interest in adult spiritual formation and developing related opportunities?
- ♦ **Buildings and Grounds—** a primary responsibility of any Vestry. Are there ways we can better monetize our facilities or increase week-day use for Ascension's mission and ministries?
- ♦ **Order of St. Anne/Convent.** Become more intentional about the parish relationship with OSA. How can we address concerns and build on strengths and opportunities?
- ♦ **Financial Management and Stewardship:** Continuing to build on the positive leadership and transparency of the past few years; continue to build parishioner's confidence and to encourage more robust financial participation.