

Minutes: St. Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church Vestry Meeting
January 21, 2025

Present: Rector: The Rev. David Cox; Curate: The Rev. Ryan Bloyd-Wiseman; Senior Warden: Will Henderson; Junior Warden: Ed Reasoner; Treasurer: Carol Zoellner; Clerk: Susan Wilcox

Vestry Members: Justin Anderson, Margareta Knopik, Jaime Keltner, Betsy Ordonez, Gretchen Sullivan, Linda Brown, Erik Coon, Leslie Malle, and Hank Stratemeier

Absent: Joe Adkins, Teresa James, and Beth Lee

Mr. Henderson called the meeting to order at 6:32 PM.

Ms. Sullivan led the evening devotions with a reflection on Psalm 46:10.

DISCUSSION

Treasurer's Report

Ms. Zoellner distributed spreadsheets for reference as the Vestry worked to adopt the 2025 Budget for its presentation at the Annual Meeting on Thursday. She noted that 2024 ended well, with welcome “bumps” in December’s pledge and non-pledge income. Year-end income totals were \$89K favorable to the 2024 Budget. Thanks to this generosity from parishioners, it turned out to be unnecessary to supplement many budget line items with credits from the Building and Grounds Fund and the Memorial Fund. Originally, \$136K had been allocated from these funds to avoid draining the Operating Fund. All but \$17K was returned to the Building and Grounds Fund. As planned, a \$15K Foundation grant was applied to Program and Worship expenses. \$2K of this grant was unused and returned. For the year, expenses were \$99K unfavorable to the budget, a figure that was offset by income, so that the net loss to the Operating Fund was \$12.3K, leaving a balance of \$114K in that fund.

Turning to the 2025 Budget proposal, Ms. Zoellner forecast a pledge income total of \$818K, \$51K less than 2024 actual pledge income. Her non-pledge forecast of \$60K is \$12K less than the actual 2024 amount. Income from the Day School and other sources will increase to \$55K, compared to \$51K actual for 2024. Ms. Zoellner aims to avoid too much optimism while also avoiding excess caution and “planning down.”

On the expense side, Ms. Zoellner proposed \$512K for employee expense, \$26K less than 2024 actual. The reduction results from cutting staff hours and

overtime, and from the \$5K contribution from the Diocese to support the curate.

Administration and Office Expense is set at \$86K, \$4K lower than 2024 actual. Savings come from a more economical property insurance contract as recommended by Deacon Monte Giddings. At \$10,416, the 2024 property taxes were lower than the \$11,000 budget; however, the 2025 proposal is \$11,800, anticipating an increase.

Mr. Reasoner met with Elizabeth Beedle, Parish Administrator, to carefully forecast Maintenance and Repairs at \$59K. Lower lawn care and snow removal expense allowed a \$5K drop from the 2024 Budget.

The St. Michael's Foundation has granted \$20K to augment the Program and Worship expense budget, so the Operating Fund will only allocate an additional \$8K to that line. The Diocesan Apportionment, based on church income from 2023, is \$10K less in 2025. As in 2024, \$0 is budgeted for capital improvements in 2025.

Next, Ms. Zoellner explained a very detailed itemization of revenues and expenses anticipated in 2025. She worked to allocate the \$20K Foundation grant most effectively. \$3K is allocated for the parish contribution to the Good Faith Network. Fr. Cox noted that \$2500 would be sufficient. Pest control expense is much less thanks to the Carpenter Ants taking responsibility for this need.

Vestry members exchanged questions and comments concerning revenue and expense items. Mr. Henderson relayed a parishioner's observation that acknowledged the financial challenge and asked for completely honest communications throughout the year. Various ways to sustain that communication were considered. Ms. Zoellner offered to submit updates to be published in the newsletter every other month.

The proposed \$2025 Budget includes a \$15K shortfall for the year. Vestry members accepted the possible loss to the Operating Fund rather than impose further cuts in spending. The Net Operating Fund ending 2025 would stand at \$98K. The vestry voted to approve the budget as proposed or with minimal adjustments. (See Decisions.)

Ms. Brown urged vestry members to recruit some "divergent thinkers" who could come up with outside-the-box ideas for generating more revenue for the church. She will bring this up with the new vestry in March.

Junior Warden's Report

Mr. Reasoner succinctly noted four maintenance issues. The Fire Marshall has rejected the idea of a stairway chair lift by the west entrance that leads to the parking lot. The lift would impede the ability for a lot of people to exit quickly. On December 30, the tree trimming project was completed, and the contractors were paid with a donation from parishioners. The snow clearing contractor had to make two passes to clear the ten inches of snow from the January 5 storm. Mr. Kirkwood, the Building Manager, got another bid for a cleaning contractor to clean the Day School. The current contractor responded by assigning a new team, in order to retain the business, and that team is working out better.

Rector's Report

Fr. Cox noted that Christmas attendance at the later service was up by 40 worshippers, though the earlier service was lower by 13. He is pleased by improvement in the church's financial situation. There is a good turnout for the Sunday School class he is teaching, based on the book *The Path*. He feels the class addresses a core need for education about the fundamentals of Christianity. During Lent, Fr. Compier will teach a Wednesday evening class on the Nicene Creed. In the fall, Fr. Cox and Fr. Compier will present a class on fundamental terms in the Christian vocabulary. Ms. Zoellner commented that the Sunday School classes would be well-suited to allow parishioners to drop in when they can.

Fr. Cox is grateful for the Invite Welcome Connect volunteers. Deacon Giddings' new Diocesan assignment has shifted a big workload onto these volunteers. There's a new opportunity for support for this ministry since the Diocese has subscribed to the national IWC organization. Every church in the Diocese now has access to IWC materials as well as to a visit from an IWC coach. Fr. Cox intends to use this resource, with a particular interest in the "connect" initiative. Ms. Keltner asked the date of the next New Member Luncheon. It will be May 4. Ms. Wilcox noted that parishioners haven't enabled access to their phone numbers and addresses on Realm for fellow church members. Mr. Coon explained how that is done and proposed a Realm Coffee Hour to familiarize parishioners with the features of Realm. Ms. Zoellner suggested that vestry members write thank-you notes to pledgers, now that most pledges have been received. Mthr. Bloyd-Wiseman said that Ms. Beedle can provide a list of names and addresses. Last year's notes went out later, after the vestry retreat.

Senior Warden's Report

Mr. Henderson announced that the Bishop will visit to confirm the members of the current confirmation class on March 9. He relayed a concern expressed in the Men's Bible Study that parishioners need to wear their name tags so newcomers can be noticed and greeted. Ms. Keltner added that tags should be worn during the coffee hour. Mr. Henderson noted that Ms. Wilcox is unable to continue as clerk for the coming year. She was thanked for her service. Suggestions are welcome for a successor.

Ministry Teams

Family and Children's Ministry

Mr. Coon reported that GPS is going well, despite the usual absences due to winter illnesses. Finding Sunday School volunteers is still a challenge. Mthr. Bloyd-Wiseman related recent last-minute arrangements to cover Children's Chapel. Volunteers must complete the Safe Church video series, which they can do on personal computers on their own time. Mr. Coon's wife has offered to make an announcement about the need for volunteers, and she will set up a table after the service to sign up interested parishioners.

Candidate Search Team

Mr. Anderson and Ms. Sullivan have identified three candidates of the four needed to be elected to the vestry at the Annual Meeting. Several names were suggested for the fourth candidate. (Ms. Knopik volunteered at the last meeting to be a candidate for the Diocesan delegation.)

DECISIONS

Ms. Knopik moved that the vestry adopt the 2025 Budget as proposed by Ms. Zoellner, allowing for minimal last-minute adjustments. Ms. Keltner seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

The December Minutes were approved.

The December Financial Report was accepted.

Closing

Ms. Sullivan read the Prayer of General Thanksgiving.
The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Wilcox
Clerk of the Vestry

Addendum

In an email on January 22, Fr. Cox requested a budget modification raising his continuing education allowance from \$1K to \$2K. Mr. Henderson responded by requesting vestry members' emailed votes on this change. The increase passed unanimously the same day.