

**Minutes: St. Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church Vestry Meeting
December 17, 2024**

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

Vestry Members: Gretchen Sullivan, Margareta Knopik, Beth Lee, Betsy Ordonez, Joe Adkins, Linda Brown, Erik Coon, Teresa James, and Leslie Malle

Absent: Justin Anderson, Jaime Keltner, and Hank Stratemeier

Mr. Henderson called the meeting to order at 6:34 PM.

Mr. Coon led the evening devotions with a reflection on Matthew 3: 1-6.

FORMATION

Fr. Cox plans to wrap up the conversation about *Navigating the Future* before the March Vestry Retreat (March 28-29, 2025). The concept of “traditioned innovation” identifies a perennial challenge to the institutional church, to balance stability with exploration. A further challenge is to listen to and address people not currently within the church who do not understand the promises of the Gospel.

DISCUSSION

Junior Warden’s Report

Reviewing his written report, Mr. Reasoner noted the difficulties impeding the installation of a chair lift on the stairway by the west entrance. The first concern is whether the State Fire Marshall will allow the width of the stairwell to be reduced. An inspection by the Fire Marshall in January will answer this question. Further, when the lift is at rest, it will obstruct either the Day School traffic at the foot of the stairs or the door to the Rector’s office at the top of the stairs. Also, installing an electrical outlet will cause additional expense. The lift itself costs \$4,500 to \$5,000.

The Day School Board meets on December 18 and is expected to accept the new contract with increased fees. The Day School Board hopes to strengthen its relationship with St. Michael’s and would welcome having a vestry member attend its meetings. Mr. Reasoner plans to attend the meetings when possible. Now that the Scouts’ Christmas tree sale is over, the tree trimming project will take place as soon as weather permits.

Parishioner Trish Unruh has been researching ways that St. Michael’s might coordinate with United Community Services to provide a warming center for those in need of shelter in cold weather. Mr. Reasoner included Ms. Unruh’s

report with his own. Three critical issues to be resolved are security, regulations related to the Day School, and permission for pets to be sheltered. Ms. Unruh is also investigating partnerships with other churches. Her report includes a detailed statement describing warming center requirements, issued by United Community Services. Ms. Unruh would welcome participation by the vestry. Janeé Hanzlick, a former parishioner and a Johnson County Commissioner, is working with Ms. Unruh.

Mr. Reasoner's last item was a pavement issue. Tree roots by the west fountain have lifted pavement slabs, creating a tripping hazard. The Carpenter Ants will rent equipment to grind down the uneven edges.

Ms. Zoellner asked when the Day School would begin paying the increased rental fee (September 2025). Mr. Henderson thanked Mr. Reasoner for taking time to negotiate and build the relationship with the Day School. Vestry members talked about past and present cooperation with the Day School. Clergy are no longer invited to conduct a chapel service. Finding a vestry member or a St. Michael's parishioner to attend Board meetings is a priority. Welcoming Day School parents and their children to explore church membership is an opportunity for the church.

Treasurer's Report

Ms. Zoellner distributed the November Financial Report and a packet with the 2024 year-end forecast and 2025 budget information.

November pledge income is "off the charts," \$35K favorable to the budget for November and \$104K favorable Year-to-Date. Typically, there is a favorable "bump" in December. Ms. Zoellner cannot be sure this December will be typical, given the November "bump." Non-pledge income is lagging by \$20K YTD, suggesting a lower non-pledge estimate for the 2025 Budget.

November YTD expenses for Program and Worship show a \$6K favorable balance. These funds were transferred from designated funds to cover an anticipated shortfall. Ms. Zoellner plans to restore any excess to the designated funds to avoid the appearance of excess income.

The second page of the November report tracks the usage of supplemental funds from the Memorial Fund and the Building and Grounds Fund. Ms. Zoellner's intention was that the Building Administrator's salary would be paid with a supplement from the Building and Grounds Fund. Instead, the Parish Administrator used money from the Memorial Fund for this expense. Ms. Zoellner intends to restore this amount to the Memorial Fund from the Building and Grounds Fund.

Expenditures for repairs, paid by the Building and Grounds Fund, stand at \$61K YTD out of the \$63K budgeted for the year. An additional \$16.6 K from the Building and Grounds Fund was approved by the vestry to pay for replacing the HVAC and a fan in the kitchen.

The third page of the November report is the list of Unrestricted and Restricted Funds, showing the change from December 2023 to November 2024. \$120K

from these funds was transferred to the Operating Fund for specific uses in 2024.

Turning to the full-year estimate for 2024, Ms. Zoellner explained how she determined who is likely to complete their 2024 pledge commitment, mainly those who have pledged for 2025. Fr. Cox noted that non-pledge income used to come from visitors at the holidays, but that sort of attendance has declined. Ms. Zoellner forecasts a net surplus of \$22K for 2024. She suggested using that apparent surplus to repay funding from the Memorial Fund and various restricted funds which was used to shore up the 2024 Budget. Otherwise, the spreadsheet would give the false impression that the church is managing to meet expenses without borrowing from the funds or receiving a grant from the Foundation.

Ms. Sullivan asked whether those with incomplete pledges payments should receive phone calls. Fr. Cox said that a year-end statement of contributions will be mailed to each person who pledged. Also, a record of giving is available in Realm. Mr. Henderson noted that some pledgers wait for end-of-year financial information before deciding on the next year's pledge amount.

Next, Ms. Zoellner reviewed a detailed pledge analysis spreadsheet for 2025 which resulted in her projecting \$848K of pledge income. To that figure, Ms. Zoellner added \$30K for non-pledged income and \$53K income from the Day School. Actually, the new rental rate beginning in September will increase that last amount.

With regard to expenses, the employee expense figure, \$512K, is \$30K more than 2024, despite a cut in staff hours. The increase is due to the change in financial support for the Rev. Bloyd-Wiseman's curacy, i. e., the loss of a subsidy from another parish. Ms. Zoellner expects property insurance and property taxes to increase, \$4K and \$5K, respectively. She proposes restoring some funding for Building Maintenance and Repair to the Operating Budget, suggesting \$29K compared to \$0 in 2024. A \$20K grant from the Foundation will support Program and Worship expense. The Diocesan apportionment amount should drop to \$190K, based on 2023 income, making it \$20K favorable to the 2024 Budget.

Without subsidies from other funds, Ms. Zoellner anticipates a \$65K deficit in the Operating Fund. In 2024, other funds were used to "protect" the Operating Fund, however Ms. Zoellner advising allowing the deficit to show openly in 2025. The other funds will be available, for now, but she sees no advantage in masking the financial situation.

The final two pages of the Budget Packet listed detailed expense line items with actual dollar amounts for 2023, the 2024 Budget, an estimate of the actual 2024 amounts, the proposed 2025 numbers, and comparisons of the proposed 2025 numbers with 2024 Budget and estimated actual 2024 amounts. Ms. Zoellner included comments on particular changes or differences, and she noted the allocation of the \$20K Foundation grant.

Vestry members commented about specific items, e. g., the spike in the cost for “Fire and Security,” the switch to in-house pest control, the increase in trash removal charges, and the reduction in landscaping expenses (thanks to the parishioner who has taken over that contract).

Ms. Zoellner concluded by advising that the 2025 Budget be set up without any transfers from other church funds.

Senior Warden’s Report

Mr. Henderson reminded vestry members of the next meeting on January 21, two days before the Annual Meeting. Ms. Zoellner emphasized that a quorum will be critical to approve the 2025 Budget. Mr. Anderson and Ms. Sullivan are continuing the search for vestry candidates, and they asked for more suggestions. Fr. Cox added that delegates are needed for the Diocesan convocation. Ms. Knopick volunteered to be considered as a delegate.

Ministry Teams

Horizons Arts Ministry

Mr. Henderson congratulated the Horizons Arts Ministry on the Nativity as Art exhibit. Ms. Sullivan noted the exceptional presentation by Ms. Brown and Dr. Pingleton in connection with the exhibit. She proposed finding the means to share such presentations with other churches. Audio recordings and Facebook videos were suggested. Also, the Diocesan newsletter, *The Harvest*, appreciates news submissions from parishes.

Stewardship Team

Ms. Sullivan asked about handwritten thank-you notes to be sent to those who make pledges. Ms. Knopik recounted the difficulty she had last year getting a good list of names and addresses. The church software cannot print such a list. Ms. Zoellner will help supply a list.

The vestry went into executive session.

DECISIONS

The vestry approved housing allowance statements for Fr. Cox and the Rev. Susan Drury. Ms. Brown moved to approve the statements, Ms. James seconded the motion, and the motion passed.

The Financial Report was accepted.

After the correction of a name, the Minutes of the November meeting were approved as corrected.

Mr. Coon read the Prayer of General Thanksgiving.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Wilcox
Clerk of the Vestry