

**St. Thomas the Apostle Episcopal Church**  
**Vestry Meeting Minutes**  
**November 16, 2021**

**Vestry Members Present**

Joe DeuPree, Senior Warden  
Michael Legacy, Junior Warden  
Andrew Besterman  
Kathy Carson  
Murray Followill  
Randy Hering  
David Hess  
Lisa Pearson via Zoom  
Ruth Woodward

**Vestry-Elect Members Present**

Jerry Knight  
Stephen Toon

**Staff Present**

Father Christopher Thomas, Rector

**Officers Present**

Laura Giffin, Controller via Zoom  
Paul McCright, Clerk  
Rusty Rippamonti, Chancellor

**Absent**

Alyssa Montague, Vestry-Elect

**Guests**

Caroline Hoffman

**Summary**

These minutes contain the following Vestry actions:

- 1) Motion to approve October Financial Reports.
- 2) Motion to create the position of Assisting Priest and invite Mother Virginia Holleman to accept it.
- 3) Motion to approve new agreement for the Community Garden users for 2022 and to terminate the Community Garden as of December 31, 2022.
- 4) Motion to adopt new Room Usage Fee Schedule and agreement.

## **Narrative**

### **1. CALL TO ORDER AND OPENING PRAYER**

**Rector**

The Vestry meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m. in the South Room by Father Christopher, who opened the meeting with a prayer. The following agenda was covered during the meeting.

### **2. RESOURCE PERSON FOR MEETING NAMED – Murray Followill**

### **3. SHARED THOUGHTS**

Each person had the opportunity to share anything on their hearts. Both Joe and Stephen are having medical procedures done tomorrow. Ruthie told a story about Ernie Bel, who was an interim many years ago at St. Thomas. Kathy asked for prayers for the contractor working on her house.

### **4. FINANCIAL REPORTS**

**Treasurer**

Our new Controller Laura Giffin attended via Zoom to make the Financial Report. Laura comes to us with significant experience from the Episcopal Church in Houston and also St. Mark's Episcopal School.

Laura offered to answer any questions Vestry members have concerning the Financial Reports. She noted she has not yet had the opportunity to thoroughly explore the Church financials and will have a more complete report next month.

She will be able to get the next set of Financials a little sooner as she has just come on board. She is working on documenting the pledge income. She will pass along any issues that affect the Financials.

In a new policy, prepaid pledges will be retained as a liability and released at 1/12<sup>th</sup> per month. We are shifting from a strictly cash basis to a more accrual basis. We will be operating on a modified cash basis that will allow certain income and expenses to be spread across the year and recorded in the proper month. This is a more business-like operating method.

Motion to approve the October Financial Reports.

Moved by Michael Legacy

Seconded by Kathy Carson

Motion approved by unanimous vote.

### **5. RECTOR'S REPORT**

**Rector**

< Father Christopher thanked everyone for their participation in the wrap-up of the year's Vestry Retreat. He felt it was an excellent meeting. He expressed gratitude for Frances' leadership, noting that she has not been compensated since the first meeting. She is also providing him with some consultation monthly at no cost. He expects we will continue to work with her in the future. The work done on Saturday was really important regarding value statements. During the retreat time next year, we will deal with Vestry structure. We will reframe our work through the lens of the baptismal covenant. Many of our ministries will require some changing in their language into the language of ministry. The new Vestry structure will model these changes to the rest of the congregation. He foresees this as an exciting challenge for all, one that will create fertile ground for all who come into the Parish.

< Advent book study begins the Wednesday after Thanksgiving. The meeting will be at 6:00 in person and on Zoom and led by Chris Reed and Mother Virginia Holleman. This will be a guided discussion on Christian formation. Father Christopher encouraged all to participate.

< Father Christopher shared that Mother Virginia Holleman is a valuable ongoing resource for the parish. He wants to find a way to honor her and invite her to be formally connected with St. Thomas. He proposes to establish a new position called Assisting Priest for Mother Virginia and put it before the Diocese to accept it.

Motion to create the position of Assisting Priest and invite Mother Virginia Holleman to accept it.

Moved by Joe DeuPree

Seconded by Randy Hering

Motion approved by unanimous vote.

< Father Christopher wants to recognize the very hard and dedicated work done by Fred Ellis in getting Church Services online. Without him, we would not have been able to do this. This will be a tool for people who are not able to attend in person. Fred will be retiring from these duties this week as we now have a paid position to take over.

< Stephen Toon has suggested some sort of gathering between the two Christmas Eve Services. The Vestry generally accepted this suggestion.

< Saturday May 14, 2022 will be Father Christopher's institution.

## **6. JUNIOR WARDEN'S REPORT**

### **Legacy**

< We are getting an AED (automated external defibrillator) for the narthex. Fr. Christopher indicated a second one would be donated. Several parishioners have training in its use and we will get training for more probably through the Red Cross.

< He is working on replacing lights that are out throughout the property. All outside lights are being checked.

< He will put an additional security light outside in the back alleyway.

< He is working on the gutters, sealing and cleaning them out. He is seeking bids for screening the gutters. One downspout will be added on the South wing. There are still questions about getting the underground drain pipes cleaned out.

< Michael is working on adding some fall plantings to brighten the grounds.

## **7. STEWARDSHIP UPDATE**

**DeuPree**

< Joe reported the campaign is progressing well and we now have roughly 96% of our Goal. This puts us about \$10,000 below our Goal. This represents 54 pledging units.

## **8. SENIOR WARDEN'S REPORT**

**DeuPree**

< Budget Committee

Normally, the Budget Committee is comprised of Junior and Senior Wardens, Church Treasurer, two members from the 10:00 service, and someone from the 8:00 service. Michael Legacy, Joe DeuPree, Randy Herring, Lisa Pearson, Mark Woods, Keith Carney, and Laura Giffin will be on this year's committee.

< Community Garden Update

Murray Followill, Kathy Carson, Rusty Rippamonti, Joe DeuPree, and Randy Hering met to discuss the needs of the Garden. Very little produce was donated from the Garden this year. The committee has developed a new agreement that would give the Church better oversight of the Garden. Each group from the Garden should be donating 10% of their produce to feed the poor. Vestry members noted the agreement is very complete.

< The question was raised as to whether the output of the Garden is worth the amount of Parish money that is spent to support the Garden. Father Christopher pointed out that he does not sense a strong feeling within the Vestry that this is a calling for the Church. Considerable further discussion about whether the Garden should be continued or shut down ensued. If we close the Garden at the end of Dec. 31, 2021, we will meet legal obligations. We need to develop a grace-filled way to do that so that people who have put their time into it will be honored. After much thoughtful discussion, the following motion was developed:

Motion to notify Gardeners that the Church is bringing this ministry to a close effective Dec. 31, 2022, and will be providing a new lease agreement for 2022.

Moved by Kathy Carson

Seconded by Joe DeuPree

Motion approved by a vote of 8-0 with one abstention.

Further discussion involved increasing the annual plot fee and resulted in this motion:

Motion that the agreement for the Garden be accepted as proposed with the annual fee increase to \$150 per plot and termination in 2022.

Moved by Randy Hering

Seconded by David Hess  
Motion approved by unanimous vote.

< Revised Room Usage Fee Schedule  
Rusty Rippamonti and Joe DeuPree have developed a new room usage fee schedule, which was provided to the Vestry members.

Motion to adopt the agreement as presented with minor corrections as stated.  
Moved by Joe DeuPree  
Seconded by Andrew Besterman  
Motion approved by unanimous vote.

Endowment Fund

< Joe noted our Endowment Fund balance at the end of September is \$351,709.53.  
< Joe noted we need to find someone who will be Treasurer who is not on the Vestry.

## **9. GUILD LIAISON REPORTS**

< Acolytes – David Hess – Michael Legacy will take over at the end of December.  
< Altar Guild – Murray Followill – Nothing new  
< Community Garden – Randy Hering – Nothing beyond previous discussions  
< Greeters/Ushers – Andrew Besterman – Nothing new  
< Kitchen/Social – Randy Hering – Nothing new  
< LEMS – Lisa Pearson – Nothing new  
< Mission/Outreach – Kathy Carson – David Ashton is developing the Bell Choir; interactions with the Cathedral of Hope are going forward; the Angel Tree is set up and ready for people to get donation cards; consideration for Church Grants will be developed for the December meeting.  
< Readers – Ruth Woodward – Sandee Lowe is working on a schedule for January and February.

## **10. RESOURCE PERSON FOR DECEMBER MEETING – Lisa Pearson**

## **11. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:53 p.m. with a blessing and a prayer from Father Christopher, including a welcome to our new Vestry members.

The next meeting will be held on December 21 in person in the South Room.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Paul McCright*

Paul McCright, Clerk