

Annual Meeting – January 21, 2018

2017 Vestry:

Senior Warden: Mary Margaret Florie, '18	Allison Davidson, '18	Molly Jennings, '19
Junior Warden: Alex Williams, '18	Scott Douglas, '17	Chuck Philips, '19
Anne Jones, Treasurer	Sally Fisher, '19	Adam Ross, '19
Clerk: Marte Toohill, '17	Carolyn Gibson, '17	
Lewis Dale, '17	David Grant, '18 (moved)	

2018 In-Coming Vestry members:

Kathy Biddle
David W. Howell
Margaret Metz
Carey Rowan
Jim Watrous, one year term to finish David Grant's tenure

Qualifications for voting at the Annual Meeting:

1. Joined the parish
2. Giver of record
3. \geq 16 years old

Election occurs with majority plus one vote.

2018 Diocesan Convention Delegates:

Lynn Lemmon, Robert Smoak (& Senior Warden)

Nominating Committee - Retiring Vestry members: Lewis Dale, Scott Douglas, Carolyn Gibson, Marte Toohill

Next Vestry Meeting: January 22, 2018

Vestry Retreat: January 25, 2018

Diocesan Convention in Punta Gorda, FL: October 13-14, 2018

Father John called the meeting to order at 11:33am with an opening prayer.

Father John called the meeting to order and established the number of voters and votes needed for a majority (47 + 1). Quorum is 93 voters. Old vestry (retiring) members were thanked for their 3 years of service.

Retiring Vestry members were recognized: Lewis Dale, Scott Douglas, Carolyn Gibson, Marte Toohill

New slate of vestry members was presented. Nominations from the floor were asked for and not seeing any nominations, Adam Ross moved to close nominations and seconded by Jeff Jennings to accept the slate presented. It was so moved. The next vestry meeting is January 22, 2018. And the vestry retreat will be January 25th.

A motion to accept the slate for vestry was made by Adam Ross, and seconded by Ann Crawford. The slate was accepted unanimously. A motion to accept Jim Watrous as the replacement vestry member was made by Roger Schwenke and seconded by Kyle Jones. He was unanimously elected.

Slate for the diocesan convention was presented. And accepted. Moved by Jim Watrous and seconded by Ann Crawford. Slate was unanimously accepted. In addition to our Senior Warden, Mary Margaret Florie, our two representatives are Lynn Lemmon and Robert Smoak.

Minutes for the Annual Meeting of 2017 were presented for approval. Adam Ross moved to accept and Al DeNeve seconded. They were unanimously accepted

TREASURER REPORT

Father John thanked Anne Jones for serving as the treasurer. She retired as of 2017. Molly Jennings will be our new treasurer. Father John presented the report.

2017 was another year of God's miracles. We not only raised funds for the church, we also reached out to help our community. We received a \$100,000 gift to our trust fund in July and a \$50,000 gift for the operating expenses. We received another gift of \$25,000 to the endowment fund at year's end. This year the deficit was over \$250,000 at the beginning of December.

In December we received over \$250,000 to finish the year in the black. Praise the Lord!

Endowment fund has grown to over \$1.5 million dollars.

Day School closed the year at an \$8,000 deficit. They are part of Church of the Ascension (they do not have a separate 501C-3 number). The vestry voted to gift to the Day School the money to fund their deficit.

God has been faithful and you have been generous.

Church of Ascension qualified for over \$100,000 from a BP claim. the vestry voted to spend \$50,000 on additional outreach to our community (RCS; Girls on the Run; Jamaica Mission, Ridgecrest & Belleair Reading Program, HEP, the YMCA and many others).

The budget is prepared by the finance committee, Marcia Nauman, and staff. The staff does an excellent job of cutting expenses each year. We give the Diocese a 10% tithe. This is part of our 2018 budget expenses. The staff will receive a 1% raise this year (2017 was a 2% raise)

In addition to our pledges, we have to raise \$100,000 to \$150,000 every year to balance our budget.

Pledges last year were around \$900,000. Please respond to the pledge request this year. We are just under \$600,000 at this date.

SENIOR WARDEN REPORT

Mary Margaret Florie, was our 2017 Senior Warden.

Sherry Morton left a bequest to beautify the grounds of Ascension.

The committee, Vevie Dimmitt, Sue Williams, Mary Margaret Florie, Talma Pilato, Sharon Meek, Patricia Slaughter, Bob Ferguson, Larry Clem and Alex Williams

Grounds and open spaces are the focus of this committee.

The city was contacted about beautifying the parking lot along Turner. 7 Oak trees were planted. the area around the carillon was improved.

Sacred spaces are the focus and the courtyard between the Parish Hall and the offices.

Seating and an awning are being installed. The flooring of the courtyard will have a new look. There is a new information board being constructed for the Lambert Room wall.

The memorial Garden has been improved.

At the Convention of the Diocese I attended a seminar on Disaster planing for the parish. All of the churches (77) in the Diocese were affected by Hurricane Irma. Due to the gifts of generous parishioners our property was in very good shape and survived well.

The disaster plan will continue throughout 2018. Please keep your vestry, staff and Father John in your prayers for the work ahead.

She will serve as the Senior Warden for 2018.

JUNIOR WARDEN REPORT

Alex Williams, was our 2017 Junior Warden.

He thanked all the previous junior wardens for making his job easier.

Clean-up for Irma was a major task this year.

We should have our solar panel installation on the office building complete in a few months.

RECTOR'S REPORT: The Rev. John Hiers

Father John stated that your generosity makes a difference. We are changing lives because you share from the abundance God has given to you.

The Diocese tracks our ASA (Average Sunday Attendance) and we have seen a slight decline in our numbers on Sunday. Even so, we are healthy and thriving.

The way we welcome people to the church has changed. We must be proactive and reach out to our neighbors and colleagues to invite them in. We need to “take the next step” to invite people to church. This is what our ASA is telling us.

The diocese tracks the finances of each church. For 17 years we've finished in the black. But not just finishing in the black, we've built an endowment fund to over \$1.5 million. We've replaced all of our air conditioning units, We spent \$150,000 on refurbishing the exterior of the church and fixing our stained glass window. We raised over \$200,000 for solar energy panels. The records of our finances looks pretty good.

Church of the Ascension exists as a hospital for sinners and a factory for saints. We want you to grow closer to Christ and be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Our small group classes started last week. Over 40 people showed up on Tuesday morning and 15 showed up for Tuesday night.

We have a healing service for those who are hurting and need prayer every Wednesday morning at 10:00am. We have retreats led by Father Leo.

You can grow and encounter Jesus Christ here. The outside community will notice if the people who make up our church disappear. They are involved in every aspect of helping in the community

The Day School has been planting spiritual seeds and providing education for children for 50 years. The tuition only cover 80% of their expenses. The church makes up the difference.

We are part of most outreach ministries in our community. We also participate in the Jamaica Medical Mission trip and will begin an Education outreach ministry to the Parish community of St. Mary's.

Francis Newell comes 230 miles to be here and play the Carillon — another blessing and outreach.

We are strong and I see vitality in our Outreach. I see vitality in our Youth groups. We have connected with St. Paul's School. I see these things as good news! We need to celebrate our good news.

We have a challenge that we need to work on for the future. We want to keep our strength and vitality moving forward. In 2004, 35 families provided for 50% of our income. Today, 20 families provide \$500,000 of our income. These people are aging. What will happen? Where will we be if and when we can not rely on those 20 families. Many people still see us as a wealthy church. But we cannot carry out our mission if we are not continuing to grow in our journey of giving. Each person is important. Every person is needed. All gifts of time and talent are welcomed. All financial gifts are crucial to our growth

We have a 5-year committee, looking at our future budget concerns and inviting new members into our worshipping community.

Thank you for your prayers and continued support of Ascension.

We are blessed with a staff who see their job as a ministry. They give many extra hours each week. It's been a privilege to serve this community, to serve you, and to serve with our staff.

ASSISTANT RECTOR REPORT: The Rev. Daniel Lemley

He wants to go BEFORE Father John's report.

The Jamaica Medical Mission Trip has been going on for 30 years which began in Maryland. The church that NOW runs the mission is St. James Episcopal Church in Leesburg, FL. This is an on-going, established mission to offer free medical care to the local people in St. Mary's parish. Last year, some folks met people from a school and believe they can help the teachers and children of the school.

The Medical Mission will continue to operate. The NEW mission is the school. First step was to give aid to the students so that they could go to school, get supplies and get lunch. Ascension adopted 30 students to enable them to attend school

Phase 2 of the Education Mission is to go to Jamaica with members of our high school to interact with the children and work with them. We also hope to provide some teacher training. Goal is to discover how to best serve the children and teachers in the community in Jamaica.

As we work towards our trip, we will need to raise some funds to cover expenses.
Thank you.

CLOSING THE MEETING

Asked for Old Business. Rachael Moore invited everyone to Bella Luna.
Our Day School is subsidized by Ascension for \$40,000.

New Business: Thank you for not falling asleep.
Sara & Dan Lemley are expecting a baby girl during Holy Week.
Father John prayed for them.

Again, Father John thanked everyone for a great year.