

St. Timothy's Episcopal Church
Greenville, N.C.
Vestry Minutes
June 24, 2024

The Vestry of St. Timothy's Episcopal Church held a meeting on Monday, June 24, 2024, at 5:30 pm in the Multi-purpose Building.

Members Present: Bill Biddlecome, Steve Callender, Ashton Johnson, Angela Mallette, Marty Michaels, Barbara Shreve, Sharyn Lennox, Leslie Veach, Mary Vincent, Chuck Widney, Chip Williams

Member(s) Absent: Debbie Strickland

Others Present: The Rev. John Porter-Acee, Tommy Tucker, Martha Whitesides, Jamie Kirby, David Wilson-Okamura

The rector opened the meeting at 5:30 pm. A quorum was present.

Opening Prayer: Ms. Lennox

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the May 20, 2024, vestry meeting *were presented and approved by acclamation.*

Memorial Garden: Ms. Kirby presented information about efforts to upgrade the memorial garden. She reported that issues the Memorial Committee has been dealing with include the following:

- Drainage: During routine watering and heavy rain, a portion of the garden is flooded due to poor drainage and some of the stone markers are also under water.
- Irrigation: Since the garden was completed, above ground irrigation has been used activated by a timer device. The irrigation is irregular at times with parts of the garden getting more water than required while other areas have insufficient water. Also, there are times when the water faucet connected to the automatic timer has been turned off.
- Stone Markers: The markers in the garden are not all at the same height.

The committee contacted Fidel Bautista, who renovated the garden a few years ago, to seek changes that would enhance the area. He met with the committee, surveyed the garden, has furnished details, and submitted an estimate. He will tie in a drain line to the existing French drain to promote drainage, install an underground irrigation system that will ensure proper watering, proposed to locate the control panel in the chapel sacristy for easy access and operational safety, level markers, and replace mulch. These steps should result in more efficiency and attractiveness. The estimate is \$4,760. Ms. Kirby said that the committee is considering the purchase of additional flowers, which the contractor will plant, creating a potential additional cost. The vestry was told that the balance in the Special Gifts and Memorials designated account is \$9,070. A comment was made about a type of control box that can be easily operated, even remotely, but would likely incur an additional expense. Ms. Kirby said she would discuss with Mr. Bautista.

After Ms. Kirby departed the meeting, the vestry discussed the proposal. It was agreed that the source of funds should come from the Special Gifts and Memorials designated account. Ms. Kirby will be asked to contact the Buildings and Grounds Committee for consultation.

Mr. Callender moved that the church approve up to \$5,000 from the Special Gifts and Memorials designated account for the memorial garden project. Seconded by Ms. Veach, the motion passed unanimously.

Action Item: Mr. Tucker will communicate the vestry action to Ms. Kirby.

Formation: Ms. Whitesides was introduced as Director of Christian Formation who was invited to talk to the vestry about formation and was joined by the members of the committee. Ms. Whitesides stressed the importance of Christian formation at St. Timothy's not only offering the standard Sunday programs but to also emphasize intergenerational ministry. Ms. Kirby, Mr. Wilson-Okamura, Mr. Callender, Ms. Shreve and Ms. Veach are members of the committee. She thanked the members of the committee for their participation. She asked the committee members to speak about formation.

Ms. Veach talked about the "why" of formation, families, children, senior citizens, the importance of intergenerational activities and being intentional about what is offered. Ms. Kirby talked about her experience as a member of the altar guild when an eight (8) year old daughter of a guild member wanted to and began helping to prepare the church for Sunday services. The child has since been added as a member of the guild. Ms. Shreve urged more intergenerational activities. She said that some younger parishioners are being considered to join the Formation Committee. Mr. Callender stressed that having young people involved would be a good learning opportunity for adults. Mr. Wilson-Okamura believes that serious engagement with children is essential to the growth of the church.

The committee continues to explore avenues to incorporate intergenerational opportunities as one part of a comprehensive formation program. The vestry expressed appreciation for the work of the committee and shared comments in support of their work.

Vestry Goals Updates:

- **Fiscal Responsibility:** Mr. Williams spoke for the committee. Cash flow has decreased significantly from last month. If the trend continues, it is likely that reserve funds will have to be transferred into and used to support the operating budget. He distributed and discussed a chart with the vestry showing the revenue and expenses from 2024 compared to the same periods in 2023. One difference was that in 2023 several people who are not members of St. Timothy's made contributions that were not repeated this year. At the last committee meeting they discussed ways to find funds to pay for extra projects.
- **Community Connection:** Ms. Lennox gave an update on this goal especially with outreach projects. She talked about plans for a Joy Community Center and Soup Kitchen food drive and a painting project at Operation Sunshine. Church volunteers will help sort books in their library by age group. She gave an update on the Community Crossroads groundbreaking. Several parishioners recently sang at the Council on Aging. Ms. Vincent gave an update to include new chairs for the Inreach Committee. Starting July 1, 2024,

Bitsie Harwell and Linda Lane will be the new leaders of this ministry. Ms. Vincent told the vestry about a recent Inreach meeting and the work that is being done. She has prepared information about Inreach that will go in the next Blast.

- **Growing Together:** Ms. Michaels gave an update on this goal particularly on their work to learn more about Realm to improve communication within the parish including a parish picture directory. She said that other software packages had been explored although there may be other programs to consider. Mr. Callender raised the idea of having parishioners take their own picture that could be used for a directory. There were comments about meeting with Megan Roberts to get a more complete understanding of the Realm features. The consensus of the vestry for the group to pursue access to Realm.

Transportation for Parishioner: Ms. Lennox brought up the request about arranging transportation to church for a parishioner. The Pitt Area Transportation System does not operate on the weekends. She has investigated the possibility of private companies but the cost is prohibitive. She asked for and received suggestions from the vestry on how to proceed.

Action Item: Ms. Johnson and Ms. Lennox will continue to investigate possible ways to arrange transportation.

Executive Committee Award: The “Rocking Chair” award was presented to Ms. Vincent for her tremendous work as chair of the Inreach Committee. The vestry applauded.

Ministry Architects Proposal: The Rev. Porter-Acee began a discussion with the vestry about the proposal where there was active participation by members regarding the pros and cons of contracting with Ministry Architects to be consultants for St. Timothy’s. The rector gave a brief history of his conversations with Sara Bailey representing Ministry Architects that has been discussed both in the Executive Committee and at the May 24, 2024, vestry meeting. The Executive Committee agreed that any decision about engaging this company should be decided by the entire vestry to have consensus and considering the cost of the program. The rector said that after reading the latest fiscal responsibility report that a suggestion was made to discuss the program parish wide. He expressed interest in having a vestry decision whether to move forward or delay action. There was a brief discussion about whether to have Ms. Whitesides involved as a pro-bono consultant.

The vestry asked questions and offered comments about the potential benefits of the program; which option to adopt, what is the best timeline, seeking and receiving parishioner involvement for commitment and participation, impact on the budget, source of funds and other funding options, e.g., grants and/or contributions. There were other topics discussed including, what designated accounts would be available, the strain on the parish in the fall from the stewardship campaign coinciding with the lobster fair, when the anticipated DOT condemnation award for the Firetower Road expansion would be received, possible effects on stewardship pledges for next year, waiting until more is known about the operating revenue, if the program was started could it be suspended, and the overall value of and benefits using outside consultants.

The rector presented an idea of the timeline to begin with Ministry Architects in August and said that it could be possible to combine strategic planning with the annual stewardship campaign. There was at least one (1) vestry members who favored a combined approach while other members

felt they should be separate. The Rev. Porter-Acee has reached out to other churches. There may be resources from the Diocese and/or National Church.

The rector said that if the decision is not made at this meeting, the next opportunity will be at the August meeting. If decided in August, the likely start would be no earlier than November. He does not want Ministry Architects and the stewardship campaign to be going on at the same time unless they are tied together. A comment was made to use the present time to explore grants. The rector said the church would likely have to make an initial financial commitment even if a grant is award.

The rector concluded the discussion by saying that he felt there was vestry consensus to delay making a commitment and will be reaching out to the vestry over the next three (3) to five (5) months about this program. At the end of the conversation, the vestry *moved to Table the issue about a decision on hiring Ministry Architects.*

Junior Warden Report: Mr. Widney reported on the following:

- **Education Building Project:** The project has been completed. The moisture issue will continue to be monitored.

Treasurer's Report: Mr. Williams reported on the following:

- **Stewardship Campaign:** A chair is still needed. The rector asked the vestry whether a chair for the campaign was really needed. There was a comment that a chair would be good to help focus on the campaign. The Rev. Porter-Acee asked for suggestions of parishioners who may want to serve in this capacity.

Clergy Report: The rector complimented the vestry for being engaged in the meeting that represents good news, growth, and momentum.

Ministry Updates:

- **Challenges:** No comments.
- **Accomplishments:** Ms. Lennox talked about the recent Department of Social Services, Foster Children's project, asking for small suitcases as donations. When Royalyn Ponder, who works in real estate, heard about the project, she managed to enlist co-workers to procure many suitcases for the children.

Closing prayer: Ms. Shreve

The meeting ended at 8:38 pm. The next scheduled vestry meeting is Monday, August 19, 2024, at 5:30 pm in the Multi-purpose building.

Respectfully submitted:

Tommy Tucker

Clerk to the Vestry