

Vestry Policy on Vestry Structure and Function

The Vestry of a parish of the Episcopal Church in the United States is the legal corporation of the Parish. Canon Law requires that:

- it be made up of the Rector, two Churchwardens, and three “classes” of Vestrymen (serving staggered three year terms) with no more than four and no less than one Vestryman per “class”
- it be the body which has final authority and responsibility for
 - (1) the raising, budgeting, and managing parish funds and
 - (2) the maintenance of parish buildings and grounds.

In addition to these canonical requirements the Vestry of St Paul's Parish believes it must:

- be the administrative overseers of parish life in general
- role model the vision of adult Christian life and ministry to which all members of the parish are called by the Rule of Life
- provide spiritual leadership for the congregation
- be ...and be perceived as...ministers to the entire parish both in terms of concern for all areas of parish life and in building relationships with all members of the congregation.

Therefore The Vestry has established the following structure:

- In addition to the Rector, the Vestry is made up of two Churchwardens and three Vestrymen, all of whom are nominated from those members of the Parish Council who are canonically eligible (and who continue to serve on the Parish Council at least throughout their Vestry terms)
- The Vestry has four regular meetings a year to be held after Mass on the second Sunday of March, June, September, and December. These meetings last no longer than one hour. The canonical Vestry meetings involve no committee work or extended discussion, only clarifying questions and discussion;

The Vestry acts as a body which oversees and responds to all proposals presented to it in one of the following ways:

- "yes"
- "no"
- "perhaps, but not at this time" (tabled until another time)
- "yes, but not in that way" (i.e. referred back to committee)

Short meetings of 10 minutes or so after Sunday coffee hour may be called on other occasions when immediate Vestry action is needed on some specific matter.

Members of the Vestry must also attend the Annual Parish Financial Meeting on the Second Sunday of Advent, the Annual Parish Meeting on the second or third Sunday of January, and the Annual Parish Planning Meeting on the fourth Tuesday of June.

All reports and proposals must be submitted in writing and be in Vestry members' boxes no later than the Sunday preceding the Vestry meeting.

- The Vestry has the following standing committees to do detailed management and developmental work and to report back to the Vestry:
 - Executive Committee (made up of the Churchwardens and Rector)
 - Resources Development Committee (Marketing, Stewardship, Endowment Development, Newcomer incorporation subcommittees)
 - Resources Management Committee (Finance, Buildings & Grounds, Audit subcommittees)
 - Parish Development Committee

Other task forces may be appointed to respond to special matters and report back to the Vestry.

The Vestry members are also *ex officio* members of the Stewardship Committee and the Diocesan Convention delegation, in addition to being active members of the Parish Council.

The Rector and Churchwardens are *ex officio* members of the Finance Committee as well as constituting the Executive Committee.

The Rector is an *ex officio* member of the Parish Development Committee.

All Vestry, and Parish Council, members, however, are free to be members of any parish committee or task force, so that they may always be a part of the development and/or management of any area of parish life in which they are personally interested.

The Executive Committee (made up of the Churchwardens and Rector) meets at least monthly at a mutually convenient time. In addition to seeing that nothing "falls through the cracks," the

Executive Committee (1) fills the pastoral administrative function to the heads of parish programs and ministries and (2) acts as an official "Council of Advice" to the Rector.

- Membership on the Parish Council is open to all adult parishioners who:
 - have successfully completed Adult Theology Class
 - make a commitment to living out the full three levels of the parish Rule of Life
 - assume leadership responsibility for some area of the parish's ministry.

Participation in the Parish Council with its two annual meetings, however, is required only of those parish leaders who are members of the Vestry.