

About the Vestry

Origins

Originally the word referred to the room where the priest would put on his vestments, at which time local laity would meet with him to discuss the affairs of the parish. Over time the name of the room came to signify the group of people who governed a parish because it was where they met. While the vestry meeting location has changed, the name has remained the same.



Role of the Vestry

The vestry of an Episcopal church has three primary responsibilities. The first two are managerial: to take care of parish finances and the parish property. The third is to provide leadership: to choose individuals to fill various positions of leadership and representation, including the choice of a rector, the choice of members and leaders of standing committees, the choice of delegates to the diocesan convention, and the selection of others as the diocesan canons may stipulate.

In fulfillment of their responsibilities, the rector and vestry lead the parish in pursuit of its mission. The vestry establishes missional priorities, sets policy, adopts an annual budget, and ensures that the parish is organized to engage in that mission. The vestry also serves as an advisory council to the rector who by church law presides at meetings of the vestry and is the parish's chief liturgical and pastoral officer.

Membership

The vestry consists of the rector and lay members of the church elected by the congregation at the Annual Parish Meeting. The vestry of Christ Church Cranbrook currently has fifteen elected members. Each year, immediately following the Annual Parish Meeting, the vestry elects the senior and junior wardens from among its members. The remaining officers, secretary, treasurer, and chancellor, are chosen by the vestry from among the members of the vestry or the congregation at large. Vestry members normally serve a three-year term and must be members in good standing of the parish.

Meetings

The vestry of Christ Church Cranbrook usually meets on the third Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the rooms 201-202. Vestry meetings are preceded by a light meal at 6:15 p.m. in the Hospitality Center. Unless otherwise noted, all meetings are open to members of the congregation. The vestry has an annual retreat soon after the Annual Parish Meeting, which is held on the last Sunday of January.

Frequently Asked Questions

What does the vestry do?

The vestry meets each month to review and approve normal monthly operational expenses of the church, receive reports from various committees, plan and approve capital improvement projects, and attend to concerns within the parish.

Who are the officers of the vestry?

The national and diocesan canons provide only minimal guidance as to parish and vestry structures. It is common for the vestry to have two wardens, for the rector to be the presiding officer, and for the senior warden to preside in the absence of the rector. The treasurer, secretary, and chancellor may or may not be members of the vestry and, like the wardens, are elected by the vestry annually.

How are vestry members selected?

Before the Annual Parish Meeting, the vestry forms a committee to nominate qualified candidates to replace the five members whose term is scheduled to expire. The basic qualification for candidates is that they must be eligible to vote in a parish meeting. According to canons and parish bylaws, that means they are regular in worship attendance, financial contributors of record, and involved in the ongoing life of the parish. The nominating committee also

considers how potential candidates may bring certain gifts and experience to their work on the vestry. With approval of the vestry, the nominations are presented to the congregation at the Annual Parish Meeting. When the nominations are presented, the congregation is offered the opportunity to nominate candidates from the floor, with the provision that nominees from the floor must be qualified and must have given permission for their name to be placed in nomination. When the nominations are closed, the congregation votes for the candidates of their choice and the five candidates receiving the highest number of votes are elected to take the place of the members whose term is expiring at the end of the Annual Parish Meeting of that year. Vestry members are elected to serve for a period of three years. No vestry member may succeed himself or herself; however, a former vestry member who has been out of office for at least one year may be elected for a new three-year term.

What time commitment is expected of members of the vestry?

The minimum time commitment of members of the vestry is the amount required for attendance at monthly meetings and the annual vestry retreat, which is usually in February. In addition, members of the vestry serve as liaisons to various committees that advise and report to the vestry. Vestry liaisons attend the meetings of those committees. From time to time, vestry members are expected to attend special meetings or serve on task forces.

In the process of calling a rector, there will come a time when vestry members are invited to meet the candidates, followed by a meeting to receive the report of the search committee, time for prayerful discernment, and another meeting to elect the new rector. Vestry members will need to keep their schedules flexible to attend to these duties.

It goes without saying that support and understanding of the families of vestry members is very important throughout the three-year term of service. Email and telephone communication among members of the vestry is important, so members must make timely response to these communications a priority.

Who are the elected members of the current Christ Church Cranbrook Vestry?

Term expires in 2015:

Michael Froehlich, Bruce Peterson, Linda Popoff, Brian Sarver and Susan Varbedian Lucken

Term expires in 2016:

Stephanie Caponigro, Eric Linder, Rob MacGregor, Andrew McMechan and Leslie McNamara

Term expires in 2017

Rob Bowen, Bill Clemmer, John Cunningham, Deb Gollnitz, Nancy Muenchausen,

Who are the officers of the Vestry?

Senior Warden ~ Susan Varbedian Lucken

Junior Warden ~ Rob MacGregor

Secretary ~ Stephanie Caponigro

Recording Secretary ~ *Deb Vincent

Treasurer ~ *Craig Hammond

Assistant Treasurer ~ *Pam Bingham

Chancellor ~ *Meg Hunter

* *Ex Officio, without vote*