



St. Paul's Vestry Information

Serving on the vestry is a unique experience — not unlike serving on a board of directors, but also very different. The most obvious difference is that vestry members are first called to follow Christ and to work together in God's name. The vestry has a responsibility for making sure the spiritual mission of the church is maintained, as well as for carrying out the business of the parish related to church property, finances and personnel.

The vestry is a *shared ministry*, meaning the rector and the vestry are part of a team that works with many other parishioners in a variety of leadership and supportive roles. Serving on the vestry can be a joyful experience that can enrich your spiritual life and increase your feelings of connectedness with other vestry members, the rector and the entire church community.

This document will cover the following topics

- What is a vestry
- What are the duties and requirements for vestry membership
- How are vestry members selected
- What is expected of vestry members
- How is the vestry organized

What is a vestry?

On a very general level, the Canons of the Episcopal Church state, "Except as provided by the law of the State or of the Diocese, the Vestry shall be agents and legal representatives of the Parish in all matters concerning its corporate property and the relations of the Parish to its Clergy" (Title I, Canon 14).

In summary, the Vestry is the chief governing body of the Parish. It is responsible for all finances, investments, property, personnel policies, programs, and diocesan/community relations.

What are the duties of the vestry?

- Help define and articulate the mission of the congregation
- Support the mission by word and deed
- Develop and manage the budget for the parish
- Manage resources effectively in leadership and in financial stewardship
- Determine that appropriate programs, policies and procedures have been developed in conjunction with the rector within the mission of the parish

- Select a new rector, in the event of a vacancy
- Assess its own work and effectiveness at all levels of the parish
- Be visible within the congregation – be aware of the congregation’s needs; be a resource for parish ministries and welcoming newcomers and visitors to the congregation

Responsibilities of Individual Vestry Members

In order for the vestry to be effective, each vestry member is expected to:

- Regularly prepare for, attend and participate in vestry meetings
- Attend the annual vestry retreat
- Attend the orientation session at the beginning of each term of vestry service
- Faithfully contribute to the mission of the church through an annual pledge to the parish
- Learn about the mission, goals, programs, services, activities, strengths and needs of the congregation, diocese and the Episcopal Church
- Maintain confidentiality on sensitive topics
- Support the mission of the church, putting overall interests of the church above personal or group interests
- Be receptive to individual parishioner's concerns and, if necessary, be willing to discuss these concerns with the rector, wardens and/or vestry.
- Help parishioners discern their own gifts and suggest ministries where their talents would be useful.

How does one do this?

- Be an active member in the parish’s ministries
Each Vestry Member has a responsibility to serve on at least two committees or sub committees of the Vestry and is expected to report the activities of their committees to the vestry each month. This is the way the vestry members keep in touch with each other and have the opportunity to discuss their work for St Paul’s.
- Share in the social activities of the church
Generally, the congregation and ministries host parish events throughout the year. Vestry members need to attend and help with as many events as possible. Additionally, the congregation depends on vestry members to be present for post-service times and be available to hear their input, answer questions and get to know those sharing our services.
- Regularly attend worship services, especially Major Feast Days of the church.

Who can be a vestry member? And what are the requirements to serve on the vestry?

According to the St. Paul's By-Laws members of the parish who are sixteen years of age or older and are voting members and communicants in good standing shall be eligible for election to the Vestry.

(See these definitions at the end of this document.)

How is the vestry elected?

The vestry is elected at the Parish Annual Meeting in January of each year.

Parishioners who qualify may submit applications to be considered as vestry candidates after consulting with the Rector. It is strongly encouraged that people first attend a vestry meeting and discuss with vestry members about the role and the time commitment.

The nominating committee meets in December to formally propose a slate of candidates to the congregation. The nominating committee will supply each candidate with parameters for supplying one's interests and skills as a prospective vestry member, which is to be returned before the slate is released.

Additional names to stand for Vestry may be added to the nomination slate so long as they are provided, in writing, to the Rector. There will be no floor nominations accepted at the Annual Meeting.

What if I would like more information?

Please feel free to reach out to any current vestry member or one of the Wardens if you have any further questions about serving on St. Paul's vestry. You can also attend a vestry meeting as an observer to get a good idea of how meetings are conducted.

Here are also some suggested readings:

God's Grace and Robert's Rules

ECF Vital Practices <https://www.ecfvp.org/vestry-papers>

How is the vestry organized?

Wardens: The Wardens are the lay officers of the congregation, and often the most recognizable persons beyond the Rector for those wondering what is going on in the parish. Both serve as the principal liaisons between the parish and the rector.

The **Senior Warden** is appointed by the Rector annually at the Parish Annual meeting and shall serve for one year. The Senior Warden is the senior lay officer of the Parish and exercises canonical authority in the absence or disability of the Rector.

The **Junior Warden** shall be elected annually from their number by the newly constituted Vestry at its first meeting after the Parish Annual Meeting.

Clerk: The clerk may or may not be a vestry member. The clerk, together with the parish administrator, is responsible for keeping minutes of vestry meetings and parish meetings, for correspondence related to vestry business and for maintaining vestry records.

Treasurer: The treasurer, who may or may not be a vestry member, maintains the financial and business records of the parish, prepares monthly financial reports for the vestry, and prepares annual financial reports.

Term of Office: 3 years, beginning with election at the annual meeting of the congregation
Vestry Meeting Time: Monthly meetings are held 2nd Tuesdays each month, with occasional additional meetings, as needed.

Vestry meetings are open to all parishioners, except when the vestry goes into executive session.

DEFINITIONS

Definition of "Member":

All persons who have received the Sacrament of Holy Baptism with water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, whether in this church or in another Christian church, and whose baptisms have been duly recorded in this church, are members thereof.

Definition of "Communicant in Good Standing":

All members of this church who have been faithful in corporate worship, unless for good cause prevented, and have been faithful in working, praying, and giving for the spread of the Kingdom of God, are to be considered communicants in good standing.

Definition of "Voting Member":

All communicants in good standing who are sixteen years of age or older and who accept the authority of the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church and the Episcopal Diocese of Utah are eligible to vote and hold office in the Parish, either by election or appointment.