

St. George's Episcopal Church
Annual Parish Meeting
January 22, 2023

Meeting Called to Order

Approximately 35 Georgians enjoyed fellowship and a buffet luncheon in the Great Hall following worship on Sunday, January 22, as a prelude to the church's Annual Meeting. Paper ballots and an Annual Report were distributed, and Senior Warden David Kennison convened the business portion of the meeting of at 12:04 p.m.

Appointment of Clerk and Ballot Counters

The first item on the agenda was the appointment of Meg Hughes, Vestry Clerk, as clerk of the meeting. Jon Pearson and Robert Paska were appointed official ballot counters.

Introduction of Candidates

Parishioners were advised of their obligation to vote on candidates for Junior Warden and Vestry. There was only one candidate for Junior Warden: Jon Ewbank, seeking a second term. Jon had a distinguished career as a Naval officer. He and his wife Meredith are valued congregants who, sadly, were unable to attend the meeting because they are settling the affairs of Jon's recently deceased son, JC Ewbank.

There were five candidates for Vestry, two of whom (Carol Gaige and Sean Albert) were incumbents seeking additional three-year terms. Mother Lisa Schoonmaker, Gloria Kishton, and Tarik Wareh were the other contenders. David introduced each in turn:

- Carole Gaige is a nurse and has served Vestry for three years. She also contributes as a greeter and member of Altar Guild.
- Sean Albert began his career as an attorney and has devoted several years as a teacher at LaSalle School, a human services agency in Albany.
- Mother Lisa Schoonmaker, a long-time Georgian who recently returned to the parish, addressed the gathering directly. She has had experience as both an attorney and a priest.
- Gloria Kishton lives in the Stockade and is a graphic artist and expert on historical preservation. She leads the nonprofit Schenectady Heritage Foundation and has

spent many hours working on the beautification of church grounds as a member of Garden Ministry.

- Tarik Wareh is well known by his fellow Georgians as a member of choir and the leader of the Albany Sacred Harp Shape Note singers. He is an author and former Union College classics professor, now employed as a secondary school educator.

State of the Parish

David went on to introduce the rest of Vestry, providing brief information on the qualifications and contributions of each. He also had complimentary remarks regarding our staff members, Dr. Brian Taylor and Robert McCloskey, and our supply clergy, the Very Reverend Dean Marshall Vang and Rev. Peter Schofield.

St. George's continues to fulfill the mission of an Episcopal Church in spite of lacking a full-time Rector, David remarked. We come together for regular worship, including weekday services and observance of all Holy Days, and our lay-led ministries have kept us active with works of charity and fellowship. We welcome the community through our doors, and have been meticulous in maintaining the condition of our buildings and grounds. David also pointed with pride to the way our congregation came together and donated more than \$40,000 towards the cost of replacing the church's ailing boiler.

The church has made great strides in securing a new Rector. Five candidates have been interviewed, and the field will shortly be reduced to two who will be invited for in-person interviews.

Financial Report—Jeffrey Wengrovius, Treasurer

Jeffrey Wengrovius addressed the congregation. He noted that he has been privileged to serve the parish as treasurer for five years. With one year left on his term, he may stand for re-election in 2024 or be replaced by another person who is willing and able to administer the church's budget. Jeff is grateful to Bob McCloskey, financial secretary, for outstanding support.

He was pleased to report that no endowment principal was withdrawn in 2022. The current year, however, is another story. Three things are converging to challenge the church's financial state: 1.) inflation and poor market conditions; 2.) replacement of the

church boiler (a \$130,000 cost that has been defrayed somewhat by the generous donations of many); and 3.) the imminent costs associated with employing a new Rector, including salary, insurance, and pension contributions.

Vestry approved a \$337,00 budget in December. Meeting the church's financial obligations will require tapping the endowment fund (a step we avoid taking unless absolutely necessary). Jeff thanked parishioners for their stewardship support, a key source of income, and reinforced the importance of attracting new membership. He also remarked that he is keenly interested in seeing progress by the Asset Management Committee, formed a year ago to investigate the possibility of selling property or maximizing rental income where feasible.

Congregants were encouraged to pose questions. There was one inquiry by Gloria Kishton: Has Vestry sought an energy audit to identify ways of reducing our gas and electric costs? Jeff responded that he and Jon Ewbank are studying actual expenditures to understand our energy spending patterns, and he agrees that National Grid should be tapped for valuable advice on cutting costs.

Election Results—Meg Hughes, Vestry Clerk

Meg Hughes announced the results of voting. Having run unopposed, Jon Ewbank was reelected. Vestry incumbent Carol Gaige was also reelected and new contender Gloria Kishton won a seat.

There was a tie between third-place finishers Sean Albert and Tarik Wareh for the remaining open slot. Meg asked that parishioners vote again immediately, casting a ballot for either Sean or Tarik. After a brief interval for voting and counting, Meg returned to the podium and announced that Sean Albert had won the run-off. All candidates were thanked for their willingness to serve and encouraged to seek office again as Vestry seats open in the future.

Closing Remarks

In his final remarks, David affectionately recognized the contributions of his wife Anne, without whom he could not do all that he does for St. George's. Anne is a steadfast and devoted worker in her own right, who calmly and quietly accomplishes an enormous

amount of work, both at home and at church. The congregation agreed with David's fond assessment and applauded the love this amazing duo bear for each other.

Respectfully,
Meg Hughes, Vestry Clerk