

Vestry Roles and Responsibilities

Background: Governance of an Episcopal parish is shared between the rector or priest-in-charge and the Vestry. The Vestry, as the elected lay governing body, serves as the “agent and legal representative of the parish in all matters concerning its corporate property and the relations of the parish to the clergy” (Title 1, Canon 14, Section 2). St. Alban’s Vestry consists of the Rector, Senior and Junior Wardens, 12 lay members and one to two non-voting Youth Representatives. As part of their duties under the by-laws, the parish Secretary and Treasurer also regularly attend Vestry meetings. Vestry members serve a three-year term. While Vestry slates are chosen to represent a cross-section of the congregation and to ensure that members bring a variety of needed skills and abilities to the Vestry, members are responsible for making decisions for the good of the whole and do not represent individual constituencies. The following provides a broad overview of Vestry responsibilities.

Leadership

- Envisioning the future: developing, communicating, and assessing the congregation’s mission
- Establishing and monitoring programs and services
- Engaging others: communicating with the wider community, including the diocese and the neighborhood
- Exemplifying or modeling vision, mission, values and behaviors

Management

- Planning: setting objectives and allocating resources
- Budgeting: developing and approving an annual budget; producing an annual report on receipts, expenditures, and property held
- Assuring fiduciary responsibility: ensuring all canonical requirements in fiduciary matters are met; producing an annual report on receipts, expenditures, and property held
- Controlling: monitoring, taking corrective action and adjusting plans if needed
- Maintaining property

Governance

- Organizing: establishing structures, policies and procedures for the good governance of the parish
- Assessing own performance

Caring for the Worship Life of the Parish

- Supporting the rector by engaging in open and honest conversation about what is going on in the life of the parish
- Paying attention to clergy and clergy family wellness issues
- In absence of the rector, being responsible for the continuation of worship, including arranging for supply clergy
- Notifying the Bishop if the rector is unable/unwilling to perform services
- Consenting to the resignation of a rector and consenting to the choice of an interim rector
- Calling a new rector
- Nominating persons for holy orders and consenting to their candidacy and ordination

Expectations: Every Vestry member is expected to pledge financial support to the parish, actively participate in one or more ministries of the parish, and be prepared for and attend one monthly meeting (currently on third Wednesday evenings), occasional retreats, and specially-called sessions. Vestry members are to maintain the confidentiality of discussions affecting personnel or other sensitive topics, and do nothing that would compromise the fiscal integrity of the parish. All Vestry members sign a [covenant of expectations](#) to which they agree to adhere.