

Vestry Covenant - 2018

The Church of the Good Shepherd, Dunedin Florida

Believing that Holy Scripture is the authority that governs our behavior including the relationships we share with each other and with our congregation that we are guided by the First Epistle of Peter 5:2-3:

“Shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock.”

Therefore the members of the Vestry faithfully enter into this covenant:

Our work together:

- We will support each other and everyone in the congregation in their individual passions for worship and ministry.
- We will participate in major parish events to ensure leadership accessibility and visibility while reinforcing the event’s importance in the life of our parish.
- We will attend the annual Vestry retreat to ensure a full understanding of our mission and goals.
- We understand that we are bound to follow our bylaws, the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church and the Diocese of Southwest Florida, as well as state and federal law.
- We will exercise fiscal stewardship to protect our parish from future financial hardship.

Our expectations:

- We understand that regularly attending Vestry meetings is vital so that we will effectively represent everyone in our work. If that is not possible we will notify the Rector that we cannot attend the meeting.
- We will make stated contributions of record to demonstrate our commitment and offering an example to all of the importance of financial stewardship in a balanced spiritual life.
- We will adequately prepare for meetings in advance to ensure active participation and successful consideration of the actions before us.
- We will give our full and complete attention and focus during all meetings.
- We will provide timely information to support effective communication.
- We will offer honest expression of support or concern to facilitate consideration of each issue while considering each other’s opinions respectfully even if they differ from our own.

Worship and Prayer:

- We will attend worship regularly so that we will experience prayer with our parish community sharing Holy Communion with our congregation.
- We will begin and meeting with prayer.
- We will participate in opportunities to promote growth in our understanding of our mission and ministry.
- We will use prayer to help us to overcome our differences and provide us with spiritual direction.

Remaining outwardly focused:

- We will actively solicit and gather information from parishioners to facilitate consideration for all aspects of our parish life.
- We will seek participation from others outside the Vestry to fill leadership roles so we might strengthen our foundation and nourish the future leadership of the parish.
- We understand that as Christ’s Disciples we are called to serve God in the world, beyond our parish walls. We therefore will continue to seek, support and encourage ministry to express our faith and spread Christ’s word in our community.

Maintaining a positive outlook:

- We will talk about Vestry decisions with one voice to support our decisions.
- We will respect opinions that differ from our own to encourage honest expression.
- We will harbor no resentment when others, either those on the Vestry or in the congregation, seem not to appreciate our commitment.
- We will hold all confidences to protect our trust in one another.

Our goals:

- We will establish goals annually.
- We will openly discuss our goals with parishioners.
- We will actively seek ideas and suggestions from parishioners about our goals.
- We will candidly evaluate our progress and modify our goals as warranted.

Our agreement:

We will faithfully strive to fulfill these obligations. If we fall short, we will renew our intention. If we find we cannot meet these expectations, we will acknowledge that we are not providing the leadership expected of our position and we will inform the Vestry that we can no longer serve.

We will always look to the greater whole and, after prayerful consideration, counsel any fellow member who is clearly not living into this covenant. As members of the Vestry, we each accept that encouraging and ensuring appropriate participation from all Vestry members is part of our responsibility.

We are each other’s keeper.

Mark 10:44-45 - and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all. "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

Signed: March 28, 2018

Joseph Nixon

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Sandy Kneen

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