

## INTRODUCTION TO ST MARY MAGDALENE VESTRY

**Thank you for your interest in joining Vestry!** This is an exciting opportunity to make a valuable contribution to your parish, to develop deeper relationships within the parish, to provide new ideas to improve outreach and service within our community, to develop a deeper relationship with God and a better understanding of how our parish is already serving God in our community. In short, you will be contributing to the life of the parish in a meaningful way.

**But what is Vestry and what do Vestry members do?** The Vestry is an elected body of eligible parishioners (usually between 12 and 15 members) who are called to assist in the operation of the parish. Vestry works with the Corporation, (the two Wardens, two Deputy Wardens and our priest) to facilitate the practical matters of finances, church programs, worship services, property management are taken care of, (all in keeping with civil law and the Canons of the church, of course.) The Vestry seeks to encourage spiritual growth in individuals as well as our parish as a whole; it is also the role of Vestry to consider ways of reaching out in meaningful ways in our community. The execution of such outreach requires the imagination, inspiration, energy and willingness of all parishioners to pitch in!

**The basics.** The Anglican Church is governed by a set of rules called Canons. Canon 22 sets out the requirements of Vestry members. Vestry members are elected for one to three year terms. They are expected to regularly attend monthly Vestry meetings (the 4th Tuesday of the month except July) where they will share their ideas in areas like social concerns, Christian education, youth, worship and visiting. They will counsel the priest and Wardens. They will join together in some of the practical tasks of church life, like counting the Sunday offering, unlocking the Church on Sundays, locking up after everyone else has left. They may be asked to notify other parishioners about important information such as church closures or emergencies. They may be asked to take part in a committee separate from Vestry, where they will continue to learn. Any parishioner can attend Vestry meetings but only Vestry members can vote on proposals.

**Vestry is renewing** efforts to be welcoming, interesting, and engaging. Initially, Vestry may feel somewhat new and unfamiliar so you may feel unprepared to participate. But members are encouraged to share their opinions and ask questions frequently especially if something doesn't make sense to them. Experienced members will offer insight to remind us of our history and foundation. Newer member can offer new insights and perspective. New members can opt to have a mentor who can be a source of information and provide explanations during and after Vestry meetings. In order that we all continue to grow and learn, all Vestry members participate in a half day orientation during which we learn more about the Anglican Church, the function of Vestry and to tour our own church. We will also take time for a Vestry retreat (within the constraints of covid-19 restrictions of course), where we will learn more about each other and cover some of the Vestry guidelines. **Vestry is an opportunity for each of us to get to know one another in a new and deeper way.**