

# Vestry Handbook

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## Introduction

This Handbook is intended to be a dynamic document and therefore frequently updated to reflect current ministries, responsibilities and customs. Please read the parish bylaws for specific legal details of Vestry members' responsibilities.

## Current Vestry Configuration

- Lead Team: consists of Clergy, Senior Warden, Junior Warden, and Treasurer.

Clusters:

- Christian Formation
- Communications & Welcoming
- Facilities
- Parish Life
- Social Ministries & Congregational Care

Each Vestry member oversees the ministries under their cluster. These various ministries are usually coordinated by members of the congregation, therefore, the Vestry members are not responsible for doing all the work. However, the Vestry members are responsible for seeing that the work gets done and that appropriate resources are requested from the Vestry.

Each year the Vestry is responsible for:

- Appointing the Clerk of the Vestry
- Appointing the Treasurer
- Appointing the Chair of the Stewardship Committee

- Appointing the Endowment Board new members and officers (as recommended by Endowment Board)

All correspondence with other agencies or companies that concerns church business must be sent to the church's mailing address, not to your private home address:

St. James' Episcopal Church  
 PO Box 457  
 Fremont, CA 94537-0457

Any contractors doing work on campus must be licensed with the State of California and provide St. James' with a Certificate of Insurance showing at least \$1mil of liability coverage and naming St. James' Episcopal Church, Fremont, CA, as an Additional Insured. The Rev. Lori must also be kept informed of when vendors are expected on the property.

## Financial Policies

1. Expenditures equal to \$250.00 or more require a vestry vote. (Exceptions: ongoing items, payroll, assessment, insurance, utilities, etc.)
2. Check Requests
  - a. Family/Vestry members may not authorize expenses for family members.
  - b. Vestry members/Wardens/Clergy may not authorize their own check requests. They may not sign family nor their own checks.
  - c. Checks for \$500 or more must be signed by two people, usually the Rector and Sr. Warden or Jr. Warden. Treasurer may sign in the absence of the Wardens.
3. Receipts: For reimbursement/payment requests, receipts must be clean, i.e., not co-mingled with personal purchases.
4. Reimbursement requests are due within 45 days of the expense.
5. Invoices from vendors are due immediately, no later than a week after the receipt.
6. CHECK YOUR IN-BOX FREQUENTLY!

## Lead Team & Finance

- **Clergy**
- **Endowment Board** - Encourages the development of endowments made to St. James' and recognizes those who have included the church in their estate planning.
- **Fundraising** - Several fundraising events occur throughout the year, including a concert with folksinger John McCutcheon, "Ducks For Bucks," silent auctions, used book & media sales, and more.
- **Stewardship Committee** - This committee educates the parish in giving of time, talent and treasure, and promotes the annual pledge drive.
- **Technology**

- Audio / Video - These are the folks who make sure the microphones are working and assist with sound and screen projection for special events.
- Office Systems & Machines
- Computers and IT
- **Treasurer / Finances**
- **Wardens**
- **Worship** – Under the leadership of the Rector, the lead team will assist in making sure worship is planned and running smoothly.
  - **Acolytes** - Trained preteens through adults participate in our services by carrying the cross, candles, the Gospel book, and assisting the priest at the altar during Communion.
  - **Altar Guild** - Teams set up the altar and sanctuary for Sunday services and special events.
  - **Choir** – Under the guidance of our music director the choir meets weekly for rehearsals and is involved in regular worship and special events. We also have a **Children’s Choir**.
  - **Eucharistic Ministers** - Eucharistic Ministers lead the Prayers of the People as well as assist at the altar during worship services.
  - **Eucharistic Visitors** – lay people specially trained to bring the sacrament to the homebound and hospitalized.
  - **Evangelism** – The Lead Team is responsible for education and leadership in this area.
  - **Lectors** - Members from the congregation read the lessons during worship services.
  - **Liturgical Design Team** - Creative people help make our worship facilities look appropriate for each season.
  - **Ushers** - Ushers meet and greet each person who comes through the doors for a church service, assist people to find a seat, collects the offering and directs those who partake in the Eucharist.
  - **Worship Committee** – This committee works with the rector to design, critique, and implement worship services. They meet seasonally at the rector’s request.

### **Senior Warden**

The Senior Warden is the rector’s warden, appointed by the rector from the ranks of the Vestry once a year in January before the Annual Meeting. If there is no rector, the Vestry elects a Senior Warden among themselves.

Typically, the Senior Warden oversees the financial aspects of the Vestry, the budgets, the Stewardship Committee, the Endowment Board and the fundraising activities.

Alongside the rector, the Senior Warden’s duties might include:

- Organize the agenda for the Vestry Retreat
- Help organize the clusters
- Formulate Vestry goals for the year
- Write articles for the Window
- Send announcements out by weekly email and on the Sunday News

- Take an active role on shaping the budgets
- Making sure the Vestry clusters are on task
- Making sure there is good communication between the clergy and the parishioners and between the Vestry and the congregation
- Keeping an eye on the spending

By national canon, the principal function of the Vestry is to manage the finances and the programs of the congregation. Within the work of the Vestry, the Senior Warden will provide primary oversight of the financial aspect of the parish, so that the parish will faithfully raise, manage, and expend funds consistent with the welfare of the community and the mission of the church in the world. This will include representing the Vestry on the Stewardship Committee; serving as an *ex officio* member of the Endowment Committee; and overseeing the faithful expenditure of general, building, and special funds.

### ***Junior Warden***

The Junior Warden is elected by the Vestry and serves on the Lead Team along with the Senior Warden, Rector and Treasurer.

The duties of the Junior Warden vary from year to year, and tend toward handling issues or projects that do not easily fall under one of the Clusters. The Junior Warden needs to be flexible and stay aware of what is happening in the Parish, being ready and willing to step up or assist as a situation arises.

On a regular basis, the Junior Warden monitors the calendar, keeping the Vestry updated on coming activities. Along with the Senior Warden, the he or she provides support and guidance to the other Clusters as needed. The Junior Warden updates the Parish on Vestry actions via a monthly recap in the Newsletter.

In the past, the Junior Warden has been the primary liaison with each outside group that uses our facility. While it is still important for a member of the Vestry to remain involved, during 2012 this role has been split between the Junior Warden and the Parish Administrator, with the responsibilities divided as follows:

### **Facility Use Division of Responsibility**

*created August 2012*

#### **Parish Administrator**

- First point of contact for all outside users and all parishioner use requests
- New User requests are referred to the Junior Warden
- Refer parishioner requests to use space to the Junior Warden
- Refer parishioner requests to use tables/chairs to the Junior Warden
- Requests for off-hour lock up or let in referred to the Junior Warden
- Generate Lease Renewals and Mail
- Secure proof of insurance
- Ensure the Shield the Vulnerable requirement is met for key-holders
- Issue and track keys

- Communicate with users any change in schedule(s)
- Keep calendar updated and current

### **Junior Warden**

- Establish New Users, in consultation with Lead Team.
- Ask Parish Administrator to generate Use Agreement and establish relationship with New User
- Coordinate any off hour lock up or let in situations
- Determine appropriateness of Parishioner use of space and communicate with both Parishioner and Parish Administrator
- Determine appropriateness of Parishioner use of tables/chairs and communicate with both Parishioner and Parish Administrator

## **Christian Formation**

Much of the work of this cluster is about supporting the teams that work at St James' to ensure the smooth running of programs and include being aware of the budgets available and keeping the teams informed of Vestry decisions that may impact them (service changes etc). Vestry members are the link between the Vestry and these teams.

The teams/groups that work under the support of this cluster are:

- **Faith Formation (Adults)** - Organizes and presents Sunday morning education classes, Lenten programs, evening programs, and other educational opportunities such as movie and book reviews.
- **Bible Studies (Adult)** - Morning Bible Study meets at 6am on Tuesdays at the home of a parishioner.
- **St. J Youth** – Plans monthly activities for youth to engage in, being intentional about providing both activities for fun and for spiritual enrichment.
- **Other Youth Programs** – the cluster may help in designing and/or promoting new and existing programs for youth such as Diocesan Camps and deanery-run events.
- **Sunday School (children)** - The goal of the Sunday School program is to teach children the art of parable, sacred story, silence and liturgical action to help them become more aware of the mystery of God's presence in their lives. Adults enjoy it, too!
- **Other Children's Programs** – the cluster may help in designing and/or promoting new and existing programs for children such as vacation bible school.

**The supervision of the Children and Youth programs fall under the guidance of the Children, Teen, and Family Coordinator. While working closely with the vestry cluster, the CTF Coordinator reports directly to the rector.**

The cluster also oversees some other areas:

- **Child Care** - In the nursery at the entrance to the big church on Sundays from 9am to 12 noon.
- **Children's worship bags** - Age-appropriate bags of quiet toys for use during services.
- **Church Camps** - Various youth camps are held throughout the year at the Diocesan retreat centers: Bishop's Ranch and St. Dorothy's Rest. The cluster should ensure people are aware of these opportunities.
- **Library** - Books of all kinds and age levels are available for checkout. The library is housed in the administration building outside of the church offices.

## Communications & Welcoming

Current ministries under Communications include:

- **Advertising and Publicity** - Assists St. James' groups with local community and diocesan publicity for our events, special services, Yellow Pages advertising, and the like.
- **E-mail list** – A group list hosted by Yahoo! Groups, for parishioners to stay abreast of parish news, prayer requests, and more.
- **Weekly Email** – An email that is sent from the St. James' Office each week with a summary of upcoming events and news.
- **Sunday News** – A weekly sheet given out on Sunday that summarizes the week's announcements and news.
- **Newsletter** - *The Window* is published monthly and all may submit news to share.
- **Parish Photo Directory** – generated from time to time to help us put the faces with the names.
- **Outdoor Banners** - For special events and holiday services.
- **Website** - We keep our web site up-to-date with upcoming events, contact information, and links to Diocesan and other Anglican resources.
- **Social Media** – maintains our current Facebook page.

Current ministries under Welcoming include

- **Welcoming and Newcomers** - We strive to make St. James' a welcoming community and we make available a variety of handouts and materials to learn more about St. James'. Visitors are invited to fill out a pew card with contact information or prayer requests.
- **Visitor Follow-Up** – The cluster assists the Rector in establishing and executing a systematic method of following up with Sunday visitors.
- **Events for New or Potential Members** – In conjunction with the Rector, the Evangelism cluster helps design and implement events for new or potential members.

## Facilities

Current ministries under Facilities include:

- **Facilities Committee** – A group of members who volunteer time to help maintain the campus, check for unlocked doors and windows, etc.

- **Current Renovation Projects**
- **Memorial Garden and Columbarium** - St. James' offers an indoor columbarium in the Little Church and the *Ed Abram Memorial Garden* to bury the ashes of loved ones or to memorialize others who have touched our lives. The committee tends the garden and maintains these spaces in peace and beauty.
- **Work Parties** - To keep our buildings and grounds in great shape, members gather regularly to garden and make minor repairs to our facility.

## Parish Life

Current ministries under Parish Life include:

- **"Available for Lunch"** - An informal gathering of whoever happens to be available to have lunch together at a local restaurant.
- **Food and Fellowship** - An informal gathering for starting and building friendships over a potluck meal. We meet at one another's homes to share a meal and conversation.
- **Kitchen Coordinator** - Keeps the parish kitchen stocked with paper goods, coffee supplies, and coordinates kitchen use by various groups.
- **Ladies Flatlanders** - A week of fellowship, laughter and bonding... ladies only!
- **Men's Trip** – A weekend of fellowship for the men.
- **Receptions** - Coordinates the food and decorations for church events such as weddings, funerals, Bishop's visits, and special farewells.
- **Coordinating food for any special events:** Graduation Day, Easter egg hunts, Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper, etc.
- **Sunday Morning Coffee Hour** - Coffee, tea and goodies are provided to sustain you as you chat with old and new friends after each service. Additional hosts are always needed for this ministry.
- **St. James' Day** – Annual celebration.

## Social Ministries & Congregational Care

Current ministries under Social Ministries include:

- **ABODE Kids** – a monthly outreach to children living in temporary housing that includes stories, crafts, and snacks. This ministry is supervised by the Children, Teen and Family Coordinator.
- **ABODE Services** - St. James' is an integral part of this program, which offers housing programs linked to supportive services for homeless families, single adults and youth. We serve meals, donate goods and participate in the Winter Relief Program.
- **ABODE Services - Sunrise Village** - Members of St. James provide dinner at the TCHC Sunrise Village homeless shelter on the first and third Saturdays. In the Fall, we also partner with St. Anne's to provide new shoes for TCHC children.
- **ABODE Services – Home Warming** - In conjunction with Tri-Cities Homeless Coalition, we re-house families into permanent housing by collecting funds, furniture and household goods to make the transition possible.
- **AEMCH - An Episcopal Ministry to Convalescent Hospitals** - AEMCH provides a supportive presence to East Bay facility residents, their caregivers,

and their families. AEMCH members visit residents and organize worship opportunities for them, hold educational workshops, and offer training classes for volunteers.

- **Deaf Ministry** – A new ministry being developed as of 2013 that reaches out to deaf communities in Fremont.
- **Hillside Care Center** – We visit this nursing home throughout the year to bring gifts and visit with the residents.
- **Other Outreach Efforts** – from time to time, a new outreach project will be taken up.
- **Prayer Shawl Ministry** - Meets on the second Saturday of the month; blankets, prayer shawls, caps, and baby items are knitted, crocheted, or crafted and then distributed through hospice, local hospitals, AEMCH, and others.
- **Sacred Space** – a deanery-wide effort to bring worship and lunch to the Sacred Space congregation that gathers in Hayward. On a monthly basis, we provide lunch and our clergy celebrate services.
- **Walk-a-Rock-a-thon for Homewarming** - An annual event since 2004, this fun walk raises funds for our Winter Relief program.

Current ministries under Congregational Care include:

- **Congregational Care Team** – Group of parishioners willing to provide rides, meals, and other care to those in need.
- **Healing Ministry** - Healing Ministers are available for healing prayers during and after church services.
- **Loss Support Groups** - A fellowship group which forms as needed for those who are grieving.
- **UTO** – United Thank Offering.
- **Women’s Spirituality** – group meets Thursday afternoons.