



Saint Timothy's Episcopal Church

Vestry Handbook

2nd Edition, July 2022

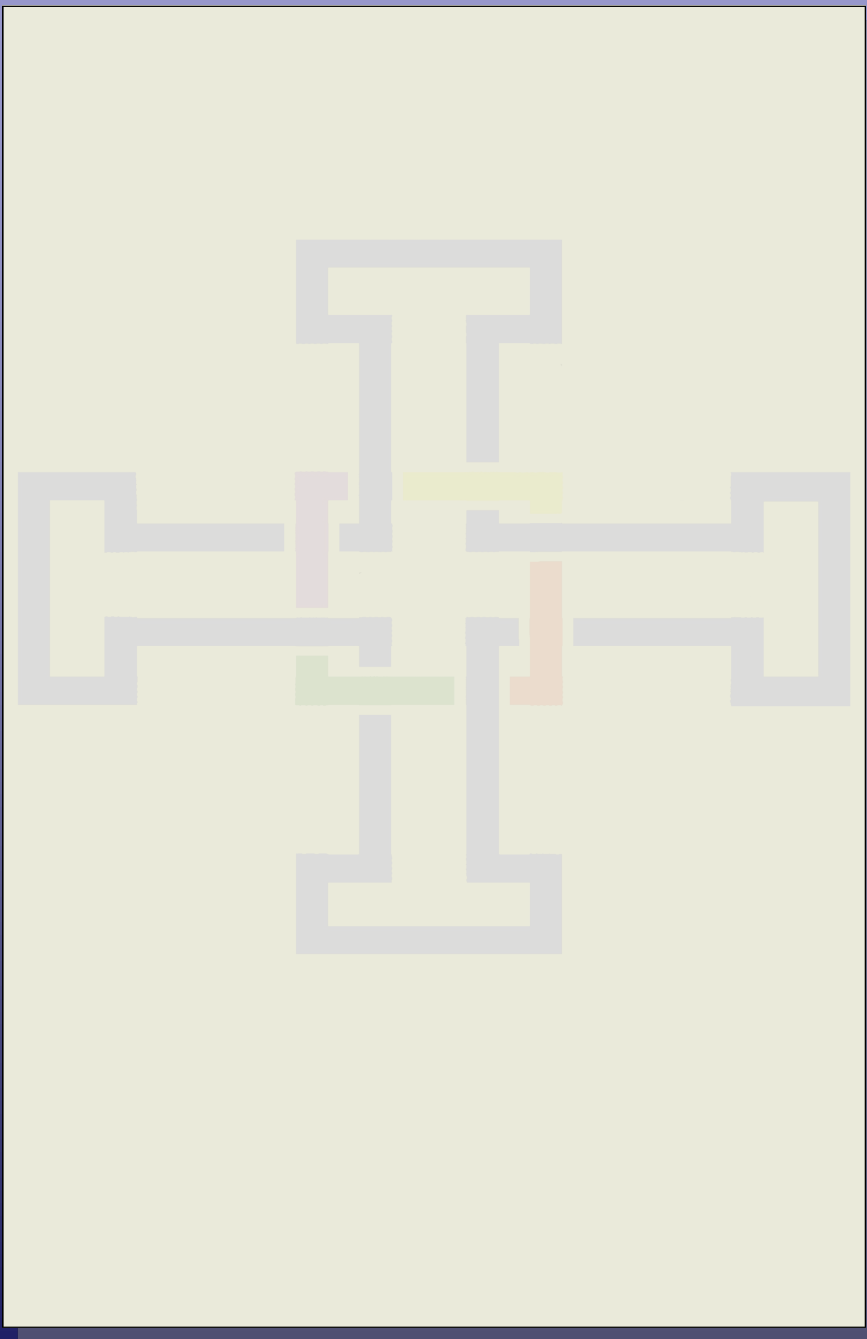


Table of Contents

Welcome	4
I. What Is Vestry?	6
Membership	8
Term	8
Officers	8
II. Leadership Expectations	10
III. Administration and Logistics	11
IV. Vestry Commissions	13
V. Guidelines for Commissions and Commissioners	19

Welcome to the Vestry

Dear Vestry Member,

Thank you for responding to God's call to serve St. Timothy's Church as a member of the Vestry. Yours is an important role in the life of this parish. You have been called by your fellow parishioners to exercise leadership and oversight. It is important that you remember several things. You are called to be both a generalist, acting with concern for the overall health and vitality of the parish, and also a specialist, responsible as a liaison with a specific ministry area (or "commission") in the church.

- *First, you have been called to a ministry. This is not a job, and it should not be a burden, but an experience of growing in faith and joy. You have been asked to serve the members of your parish. You are in a position to help them grow in their knowledge and love of God. As you help guide St. Timothy's in its work, you also help to guide its people in their spiritual journeys. Every aspect of the life of the parish, from child care to window washing, from choosing hymns to raising funds, affects the life of the entire parish, and our primary purpose of supporting God's mission in the world.*
- *Second, you have not been asked to do it all. Your position is that of an enabler, or facilitator. You are asked to lead and guide, not to be the one doing all the work. The Church is most effective when all of its members work together. It is your responsibility to help them work together. If you try to do it all yourself, you may soon burn out.*
- *Third, you are not alone. Your fellow Vestry members, and especially the Senior and Junior Wardens, are here to help you. Also feel free to call on former Vestry members who have worked in your specialty area as well. They can give you*

Welcome

insight and guidance on what has and has not been done in the past. The Rector and Associate Rector are here to provide you with direction and experience. And God is always with you. Be prayerful in your work and it will prosper.

- *Fourth, communication is a key to success. Don't keep things a secret. Share your thoughts, ideas, plans, frustrations, etc. with the Rector, Wardens and other Vestry members. We are all in this together.*

This Handbook is a guide to help you understand your new role, and the responsibilities and protocols of our Vestry. Together we welcome you into one great company of disciples, following our Lord Jesus and serving Him in His mission to the world.

God of all, may our congregation be aware of your part in our church. May God guide the vestry to grow our church, to perceive what is right, and grant us both the courage to pursue it and the grace to accomplish it; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Sincerely,
Clergy and Vestry*

I. What Is Vestry?

The vestry is the elected lay leadership team of the church and works with the rector to oversee the parish. Vestry members share leadership responsibilities with the rector and are the legal representatives and agents of our parish, charged with specific responsibilities by the canons of The Episcopal Church [Title I Canon 14](#), The Diocese [Canon XI Sec. 11.11](#), and St. Timothy's [BY-LAWS](#). In addition to defining and communicating the mission and vision of the congregation, the vestry looks after the business affairs of the church and functions much like the board of any nonprofit, with responsibility for finances and management of the church's property and staff resources. It is the responsibility of the Vestry to make decisions that affect the life of the parish based on the research, advice, and counsel of Commissions, Committees, church leaders, and the Rector. Many aspects of the vestry's role are defined by entities beyond the congregation. They include local, state, and federal laws and the Diocesan canon. At St. Timothy's, the vestry collaborates with the Treasurer and the Vestry Clerk who are non-voting members in achieving our mission. For vestry members, the following are very important:

Leadership involves

- **Envisioning:** Creating a vision of the future, along with strategies to make the vision real.
- **Engaging:** Getting people to understand and commit to the vision.
- **Empowering:** Enabling others to make the vision real.
- **Energizing:** Generating enthusiastic, inspired, determined efforts.
- **Exemplifying:** Modeling the vision and the desired values and behaviors.

What Is Vestry? contd...

Management involves:

- Planning: Budgeting, allocating resources and setting objectives.
- Organizing: Establishing structures, policies and procedures.
- Staffing: Hiring, training, role development, coaching, performance evaluation, compensation.
- Controlling: Monitoring results vs. the plan, corrective action, re-planning.

In addition to the above administrative roles, the canons of the Episcopal Church stipulate that the vestry shall:

- Be agents and legal representatives of the parish in all matters concerning its corporate properties; and the relations of the parish to its clergy. [Title I. Canon 14, Sec 2](#)
- Ensure that standard business methods, as outlined, will be observed. [Title I. Canon 7, Sec 1](#) (Paraphrased)
- When the parish is without a rector, the officers of the vestry are responsible for the continuation of worship, including the calling of a new rector. [Title III. Canon 9, Sec 3](#) (Paraphrased)
- The vestry has responsibility for nominating persons for holy orders. [Title III. Canon 5, Sec 2](#)

What Is Vestry? contd...

Membership

Being a member of the vestry is a sacred ministry, and members accept a call to lead the congregation to a closer relationship with God through various ministries. At St. Timothy's, there are twelve elected members and two appointed members of the vestry however the size of the vestry can vary per St. Timothy's [BY-LAWS Article II Section 2](#). Vestry terms are three years. About a third of the elected vestry members roll off each year and they are replaced with new members. Before the annual parish meeting, the current vestry nominates a slate of candidates, including self-nominations, to replace members whose term is scheduled to expire. In January/February, at the annual meeting, candidate nominations are presented to the congregation which votes to fill the open vestry seats.

Term

Members serve a term of three years but terms can be shorter if a vestry member resigns or passes away before the end of their term.

Vestry Officers

There are two wardens who are also members of the Vestry:

- **Senior Warden** - Elected to vestry by the church and appointed by the Rector each year. Convenes and chairs Vestry meetings. Serves as an advisor to the Rector and takes special care for the well-being of the rector and his or her family.

What Is Vestry? contd...

- **Junior Warden** - Elected at a meeting of the Vestry after the annual parish meeting. Responsible for the stewardship of the parish buildings and property.

Treasurer - A non-voting member elected at a meeting of the vestry immediately following the annual parish meeting, the Treasurer coordinates and manages all the financial activities of the parish under the direction of the vestry and according to Diocesan [Canon XI Sec. 11.22](#). The Treasurer is also the chair of the Finance Committee, an advisory group appointed by the Vestry to assist in the work of managing the financial activities of the parish. The treasurer collaborates with the Diocesan Finance group on all finance, book keeping and tax matters.

Vestry Clerk - Elected by the vestry for a one-year term at annual meeting. A non-voting member, the clerk coordinates, schedules and takes notes of all vestry meetings and archives all meeting minutes per Diocesan [Canon XI Sec. 11.22](#)

II. Leadership Expectations

Every year, about 2-4 vestry members roll off as their terms expire. It is important that vestry members identify and engage parishioners as potential candidates for the vestry and other leadership roles. In addition to managerial and financial responsibilities, vestry members are encouraged to help keep an inventory of potential vestry and leadership representation candidates through social interactions:

1. Worship regularly at St. Timothy's as well as financially support the community.
2. At services and whenever appropriate, wear your name tag with the vestry ribbon so that the parish can know you and feel free to interact with you.
3. Participate in as many parish activities as you can and be an enthusiastic ambassador for the vestry's mission and vision. Talk with members of the congregation informally. Tell them what you have learned and share the vestry's process, how enriching it is for you and its hope.
4. Spend some time listening. Some will be anxious about change; others will be excited and energized. In that second group, you will find the leaders our church needs to keep moving forward. The more diverse that group, the better. The church needs experienced leaders, and it needs beginners. It needs longtime Christians and people who have just walked in the door. It needs leaders from the congregation's heart and from its edges. It needs leaders who reflect the rich mix of the community.
5. Talk to people and learn what they care about. Learn about their skills and experience. Look beyond the usual suspects. Don't be afraid to take a chance on someone who is new to the community. You can stay in touch and help them along. New leaders grow and flourish with some support.
6. Plan to host a coffee hour. After services, notice and engage newcomers, occasional attendees and visitors. Introduce yourself, invite them to coffee hour and make them feel at home.
7. Occasionally, you may be asked to call and check on parishioners to see how they are doing.

III. Administration and Logistics of the Vestry

The Vestry Clerk is responsible for overall administration of vestry meetings and logistics in collaboration with the Rector and Senior Warden:

1. Vestry meetings are held once a month.
2. Vestry members are expected to attend all Vestry meetings. In the event that you are not able to attend for any reason, it is important that you notify the Vestry Clerk or Senior Warden or the Rector of your intended absence.
3. Vestry members will receive an agenda and pre-reads before or during the week of the Vestry meeting including date, time and location and if necessary, a Zoom link for virtual meetings.
4. In order for the vestry to conduct business, a quorum of seven voting members must be present. In the event that it is known that a quorum cannot be present, the meeting will be rescheduled by the Vestry Clerk.
5. If a vestry member plans to include or present a topic in a meeting, it is essential that the Rector or Wardens be notified as soon as possible so that this may be added to the meeting agenda.
6. It is the duty of the Clerk to prepare the full minutes of Vestry meetings. Meeting highlights are published in Tidings after they are approved at a subsequent vestry meeting. Minutes are stored on [Google Drive](#).
7. Vestry members have an official mailbox in the parish office which identifies their commission. Check your mailbox regularly.
8. Vestry members and/or commissioners are expected to prepare an annual budget for the assigned functional role.
9. The Treasurer forwards and presents monthly financial reports. Vestry members are responsible for monitoring the associated expense line items of their budget items on a periodic basis.
10. Any Commission seeking to expend funds outside budgeted amounts require consultation with the Treasurer. Requisition and check request forms are available in the parish office and on the [website](#) for requesting funds and reimbursement.

Administration and Logistics contd...

11. All vestry documentations should be stored in [Google Drive](#) to facilitate collaboration. Google Drive is the vestry's repository for all administrative documents including historical records:
- Correspondence and work files
 - Budget and financial reports.
 - Links to edit draft documents of proposals or actions (with the author's permission).

Overall, Google Drive helps the vestry to work more efficiently as a team and it also assists to orient new clergy and vestry members.

12. Note the following policies already approved by the Vestry on [Google Drive](#):
- Alcohol, Smoking, Cannabis, Prescription Drugs Policy
 - Contract Governance Policy
 - Expenditure and Reimbursement Request Approval Policy
 - Gift Accept Policy and principles for Designated and Unassigned Gifts over \$5,000
 - Guidelines and Principles for Social Networking
 - Social Media & Digital Communications Guidelines
13. In the event that a Vestry member should find it necessary to resign before the completion of their term, such resignation must be put in writing and given to the Rector and Senior Warden.

IV. Vestry Commissions

At St. Timothy's, our governance model is based on a commission system that was proposed, formed and adopted by the Vestry in 2012. The system identifies a functional role for Vestry members to lead and facilitate church ministries. Each year in early February, Vestry members participate in a retreat to discern the Vestry's main focus areas for the year. During the retreat, the structure of the commissions is evaluated and/or adjusted to ensure they are meeting the current needs of the parish. Also during the retreat, Commissioners are assigned and objectives are set. While all Vestry members are assigned to lead a Commission, some commissions are led by parishioners. It is a general goal to have every member of the parish be involved in some capacity in a Commission. At St. Timothy's, full incorporation is our goal. Parishioners need not be actual "Commission members" in order to be involved in the work of the Commissions. Currently, there are twelve commissions:

Commission	Roles and Responsibilities
1. Administration	<p>Responsible for support and advocacy in the business and administrative needs of the congregation. Plans and manages the administration and maintenance of office technologies, tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Computers, printers and related equipment• Software applications for computers, membership management, publications and the website• Phone system• Wi-Fi system• Google Drive and File Storage• Office processes documentation• Personnel onboarding, as requested by the Rector or Senior Warden

Vestry Commissions contd...

Commission	Roles and Responsibilities
2. Adult Formation	<p>Engages clergy and lay volunteers in teaching ministries. Christian formation is a life-long process of growing in the knowledge, service and love of God as followers of Christ. St. Timothy's is committed to the formation of all Christians throughout life as we work, study and serve God together for the purpose of carrying out God's work of reconciliation, love, forgiveness, healing, justice and peace. The ministry includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EFM • Bible studies
3. Children and Youth Formation	<p>Visioning for youth and children's community and education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design, publicize and carry-out activities for youth and children • Oversees Vacation Bible School and Youth Ministry programs
4. Communications	<p>Coordination and guidance for external and internal communications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist commissions and ministries with communication needs • Announcements • Facebook and other social media • Parish Policies and Guidelines • Press Releases • Tidings • Website

Vestry Commissions contd...

Commission	Roles and Responsibilities
5. Fellowship	<p>Works with the parish and parish groups and ministries to coordinate and facilitate their activities in support of evangelism and welcoming visitors. Help newcomers integrate into parish life; cultivate the relationships among members of the parish family and newcomers and support parish members in their life journey:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Book Club • Coffee Hour • Foyer Groups • Greeters • Men's Group • New Episcopal Women • Writing Group • Neighborhood Groups (<i>currently inactive</i>) • Senior Ministry (<i>currently inactive</i>)
6. Stewardship	<p>Plans and manages the annual stewardship campaign for gifts of service and financial offerings to the church. Effectiveness will be enhanced by the Sr. Warden and Treasurer assuming an ongoing leadership role in informing the congregation of the church's financial status and needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop annual plan • Facilitate congregational awareness of the church's finances and stewardship efforts

Vestry Commissions contd...

Commission	Roles and Responsibilities
Stewardship contd...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate personal testimonies • Host appreciation events • Provide real time operational cost information on fiscal realities to expand the congregation's understanding of operational costs • During the Stewardship Program (and on a regular basis) provide statistics on number of pledges per range and the resulting revenue for each, including average pledge but more importantly, clarifying that larger pledges are very difficult to replace with nominal pledges • Coordinate mailing of regular pledge statements (quarterly) and quarterly updates to parishioners
7. Treasurer	<p>Assists the Rector and Vestry in the financial management of the parish including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with vestry to prepare annual budget • Prepare monthly and annual financial statements (Income and Balance Sheet) • Reviewing new contracts and recommending vestry action(s) • Reviewing Commission expenditures that are not currently covered by the current budget and recommending vestry approval or disapproval. • Reviewing and recommending any changes to parish investments

Vestry Commissions contd...

Commission	Roles and Responsibilities
8. Outreach	<p>In addition to Outreach, also responsible for the Peace & Justice and Shawl Ministries. The commission is comprised of parishioners who volunteer and those that act as a liaison for a particular nonprofit organization.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommends a schedule for parish Outreach events – limited to 5 major events per year where parish members are asked to contribute and or participate • Recommends annual grants to organizations that have a member on the Outreach Committee to the vestry for approval • Coordinates information on Outreach programs in the parish and supported by the parish
9. Pastoral Care	<p>Collaborate with clergy and parishioners in pastoral care ministry.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify pastoral care needs • Assess pastoral care priorities • Define actions to address the pastoral care needs of the parish
10. Property	<p>Led and coordinated by Junior Warden to manage the upkeep and improvement of the church campus and other facilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parish buildings • Parish grounds • Rectory

Vestry Commissions contd...

Commission	Roles and Responsibilities
11. Social Justice	In line with Diocesan policies, is responsible for engaging the St. Timothy's community in building, resourcing and empowering advocacy movements for social justice in the community and local area.
12. Worship	Works closely with the clergy to create a worship service that is genuine and requests and requires participation. The commission works with: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify Acolytes• Altar Guild• Bread bakers• Choir• Greeters• Lay Eucharistic Ministers• Lay Eucharistic Visitors• Lectors• Liturgical Art• Prayer Ministry• Prayers of the People authors• Ushers

V. Guidelines for Commissioners & Commissions

- 1) It is the responsibility of the Commissioner to recruit members for the Commission.
- 2) Members are expected to worship regularly at St. Timothy's as well as financially support the community.
- 3) Each Commission should seek to have a Vestry chairperson and a non-Vestry co-chairperson. It is expected that the co-chair person. It is expected that the co-chair may eventually become a Vestry member.
- 4) In addition to the chairpersons, each Commission should have at least two members.
- 5) Commissioners are chartered with implementing the plans and works of their commissions.
- 6) Commissioners are expected to report to the Vestry on their activities on a monthly basis. Reports should be submitted to the Vestry Clerk, via Google Drive, before regularly scheduled Vestry meetings. Additionally, reports summarizing the year's activities should be submitted at the end of the year to be included in the Annual Report no later than two weeks before the Annual Meeting of the Parish.
- 7) Commissions should strive to meet on a monthly basis. To avoid scheduling conflicts and to help publicize meetings and activities of each Commission, it is essential that the time, date, and place of meetings be cleared with the Parish Administrator so meetings can be entered in the church calendar. Check the [parish calendar](#) on the website for conflicts and negotiate with the Administrator of any pre-existing meeting in the space to use.
- 8) Calendar Request form is available on the website, in the church office, and in the lobby of Grace House. The Parish Administrator will review the calendar request with the staff and add it to the calendar after it is approved by staff. Any activities or projects that may affect the buildings, grounds, or other activities of the church should be cleared with the Rector so as to avoid conflicts and to keep the lines of communication open.

Commission Guidelines contd...

- 9) If Commissions anticipate a need for Vestry authorization for any projects or plans, it should be put in writing and given to the Vestry Clerk at least one week prior to regular Vestry meetings.
- 10) Commissions wishing to have material published in the monthly Tidings newsletter should submit the same to the Parish Administrator no later than the 25th of the month preceding its publication.
- 11) In addition to vestry members, some commissions have mailboxes in the parish office.
- 12) Each member in their role as commissioner will provide a monthly written update to the vestry as well as review the vestry packet and agenda before the monthly meeting.

Sources and References

- i. *The Episcopal Church*
- ii. *Diocese of California*
- iii. *St. Timothy Church BY-LAWS*
- iv. *Vestry Resource Guide - Episcopal Church Foundation (ECF), 2015*
- v. *Doing Holy Business: The Best of Vestry Papers, Edited by Lindsay Hardy Freeman*
- vi. *Other Episcopal parishes*

Notes

A large, empty rectangular area with a light beige background, intended for taking notes. The area is framed by a thin black border and is positioned below the dark blue header.

St. Timothy's Episcopal Church
www.sainttimothysdanville.org
1550 Diablo Road
Danville, CA 94526
925-837-4993

