St. Andrew's Episcopal Church
Ayer, Massachusetts
Faith, Community, and Love

Vestry Covenant

St. Andrew's Episcopal Church - Ayer, Massachusetts

Vestry Covenant 2007

Recognizing Holy Scripture as the authority that should govern our behavior and relationships with one another and with the congregation, and acknowledging St. Paul's directive to Timothy (1 Timothy 4:12) concerning his role as church leader to be "an example to the believers in speech, life, love, faith and purity", we therefore agree to the following covenant:

I. We will support one another by:

- Using "I" statements to reflect ownership of our ideas and opinions.
- Respecting each other's opinions.
- Striving toward consensus.
- Supporting decisions agreed upon by the Vestry.
- Committing to bring unresolved issues/divergent opinions back to Vestry meetings for further discussion.
- Using a modified version of Robert's Rules of Order in Vestry meetings.
- Agreeing to be time-sensitive during discussions at Vestry meetings.
- Honoring any member's call for prayer and/or silence during Vestry meetings.
- Limiting Vestry meetings to two (2) hours in duration by:
    - Creating a priority list of agenda items.
    - Taking a time check mid-way through the meeting.
- Using emails selectively, sending copies to all Vestry members and clergy.
    - Votes can be taken by email. To pass, the vote must be unanimous except in the case of urgent safety matters. The Wardens and the Rector shall decide and notify the Vestry if they determine that a matter needing Vestry approval by email is an urgent safety matter. In any such case, to pass, the vote must be by a majority of all of the Vestry members.
    - Any Vestry member can call a halt to the email debate.

II. We will be an example to the congregation by:

- Creating a positive environment where all parishioners can voice their own thoughts.
- Warmly welcoming all parishioners at Vestry meetings.
- Beginning Vestry meetings with a time of spiritual focus led by the rector.
- Bringing comments & suggestions on behalf of identified/named parishioners only.
- Agreeing not to act on behalf of anonymous critics.
- Ensuring that the minutes of Vestry meetings are as transparent as possible, except for:
    - Rare confidential portions of meetings.
    - Personal testimony by Vestry members.
- Posting the minutes of Vestry meetings on the parish web site, as soon as possible after each meeting.

Adopted by a unanimous vote of St. Andrew's Vestry, 11 July 2007. Amended 20 May 2008. Further amended 20 April 2010 and 29 February 2012.