



February 4, 2024
Epiphany V

RE: Response to the Congregation Regarding the January 28, 2024 Parish Annual Meeting

Dear Church Family,

In the Name of the Father, Son, Holy Spirit: One God. Amen.

The Annual Meeting took place at 12 noon on Sunday, January 28, 2024. The church membership elected the vestry class of 2027 over two ballots. It was a canonically sound election. Even though it was a canonically sound election, we, as a church, operate in a space of doing what is both canonical and pastoral. The nominating committee brought to the attention of the vestry several concerns about last Sunday's election. The nominating committee, vestry, and rector met with the chancellor of the diocese, who is the chief legal counsel and advisor for the diocese. He expressed the opinion that there was nothing wrong with Saint Ambrose's annual meeting and the election that took place. It was a sound election with the class of 2027 being duly elected. His words to us were that if we, as a vestry, thought it to be in the best pastoral interest of the congregation to extend the annual meeting to a different date and have balloting for the two candidates who were in the runoff, then that is the right course of action.

Saint Ambrose will convene a continuation of our January 28th annual on Sunday, February 25th following the 10:15 AM worship service. That Sunday is Cultural Sunday with our annual Unity Feast. We can still have the Unity Feast and hold balloting. There will be an option to cast one vote for the two candidates who were in the runoff at the January 28th annual meeting: Mrs. Lauren Barnett and Mr. Larry Stroud, Sr. Those are the only two names that will appear on the ballot. The other individuals who stood for election, Mrs. Emily Cadogan, Mr. Peter Henderson, and Mr. Michael Minor, were duly elected to the class of 2027 by receiving the majority of votes.

Voting will take place in three ways: in-person, mail-in, and proxy voting by phone. Diocesan Canon D-V.4 outlines who is eligible to vote at annual meetings. Qualified voters are Baptized, Confirmed Communicants in Good Standing of the parish who are at least 16 years of age. Confirmed Communicants in Good Standing are members of the parish who have received the Sacrament of Confirmation or reception and who for the previous year have received Holy Communion in The Episcopal Church at least three times either in-person or through spiritual Communion, have been faithful in working, praying, and giving for the spread of the Kingdom of God, and are financial contributors to the parish. Those are the requirements to vote in-person, mail-in, and by proxy phone.

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The following is the process for the mail-in ballots. Visit the church's website, stambrosraleigh.org and click on the sliding panel labeled "Annual Meeting" or by navigating to the dropdown menu on the "About Us" tab/Annual Meeting. Ballots must be sent via USPS mail and received in the church's office by Friday, February 23. Be sure to write "Ballot" on the outside of the envelope. Ballots will not be picked up by hand and delivered to the church. All ballots will be opened in the annual meeting, not before. Those needing assistance getting ballots who are not able to download it from the website can call the church's office. If another runoff happens, those who mailed in ballots will not be able to vote.

Those who wish to vote by telephone proxy can call the church and leave a message with your name and telephone number that you wish to receive a telephone call from the church's leadership on February 25th during the annual meeting. Telephone messages must be received by Friday, February 23. It is recommended that those who receive mail-in ballots also do proxy voting.

If you plan to attend the meeting via Zoom, it is recommended that you elect to have a mail-in ballot or proxy vote or both. You will not be able to vote via Zoom.

If you meet the qualifications to vote and were not present at the January 28th annual meeting, you are eligible to vote at the February 25th meeting. Attendance at the January 28th meeting does not preclude you from attending and voting at the February 25th meeting.

Any candidate proven to engage in campaigning by sending emails, phone banking, or through personal soliciting, requesting votes or support, will be disqualified from standing for election. Campaigning for election to the vestry is not in the polity of The Episcopal Church.

The vestry and I appreciate your prayer and support as we chart these new waters with the Holy Spirit as our guide.

Faithfully,

The Rev'd Robert Jemonde Taylor,
XI Rector

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