

Top 10 Resources for Vestries

(Gleaned from the Episcopal Church Fund website)

1. The Bible - Helping to lead a congregation comes from the heart, mind and spirit, so read the Bible to stay centered in your faith. Go to study groups if possible. A standard choice is the New Oxford Annotated Bible (Revised Standard Version). The Life Application Bible provides good study tips. For a new slant, try The Message Remix by Eugene Peterson.

2. The Book of Common Prayer - It's time to have your own Prayer Book, if you don't already. Be linked to those Episcopalians and Anglicans who've gone before you, back to the first Prayer Book in 1558. Read the Psalms. Say Morning Prayer. Try the Compline service with family members. The numbered prayers in the back are fantastic when you are at a loss for words.

3. Vestry Papers - The winner of some thirty awards from the Episcopal Communicators and the Associated Church Press. Vestry Papers is a must for Episcopal leaders, both lay and ordained. *Vestry Papers* is no longer available as a print publication, it has become part of the new Episcopal Church Fund Vital Practices website. This new website, www.ecfvp.org, is dedicated to the vital practices of thriving congregations and includes the *Vestry Papers* articles on which readers have come to rely on; practical resources for parish leaders; a lively blog where readers can share ideas and experiences; and content about congregational practices from readers across the Episcopal Church.

4. The Vestry Resource Guide - The Vestry Resource Guide is written for both first time vestry members and seasoned members seeking to review their responsibilities. Topics examined include the ministry of the vestry, leading in a community of faith, origins of conflict, stewardship and navigating transitions in clergy leadership. Published by the Episcopal Church Foundation, the guide is available from Forward Movement Publications at a cost of \$12. <http://forwardmovement.org/Best-Sellers/Vestry-Resource-Guide/flypage-ask.tpl.html>

5. Human Resource Practices for Lay Employees in Episcopal Churches - A Resource from the Church Insurance Company. This is a gold mine of information for those who need help with employment policies and procedures. It includes practical information on employment law, the hiring process, human resources policies and sample forms that may be tailored for your use. The cost is \$20 and it is available through Church Publishing Incorporated, 800-242-1918 or go to www.churchpublishing.org.

6. Tax Guide for Episcopal Ministers and Churches - Published by the Church Pension Fund, 800-223-6602. The guide is available for download at www.cpg.org. If you have tax and financial questions call Matthew K. Chew, 877-305-1414 or the Rev. Canon William Geisler, CPA, 877-305-1415.

7. How to Hit the Ground Running - A Quick Start Guide for Congregations with New Leadership in a convenient and practical step-by-step workbook format, this resource takes the new pastor, warden, or other leadership body from one month prior to the new leader's arrival through the first eighteen months of a new ministry. Available at www.churchpublishing.org

8. Manual of Business Methods in Church Affairs - Produced by the Episcopal Church covering all areas of accounting and internal controls for churches.

http://www.episcopalchurch.org/finance_58218_ENG_HTM.htm

9. Diocesan Safe Church Guidelines - Contact the George Mercer School of Theology for the latest in safe church guidelines. Insurance coverage often depends upon following specific procedures and training, so don't delay. Excellent training is available using the entire Safeguarding God's People series from the Church Pension Group; new materials are also available, including The Prevention of Adult Sexual Misconduct and The Prevention of Harassment of Church Workers. Contact information is 516/248-4800 x40 or mercerooffice@dioceseli.org.

10. Constitution and Canons - Each diocese, in accordance with the Episcopal Church, has its own set of canons, which will help answer procedural questions as well as increase understanding about policy, organization, and governance. This publication, updated whenever diocesan convention enact changes to the canons, is available at <http://www.dioceselongisland.org/finance/>.