

St. John's Episcopal Church
Minutes of the Vestry Meeting
February 22, 2021
Held Via ZOOM

Present: Joseph Claro, Laura Daly, Susan McFeely, Veronique Dulack, Sara Coles, M.B. Witt, Mary Davis, Hunter Brown, David Gillespie, Bob Futh, Andris Kalnins, Larry Littlefield, Fr. Geoff Hahneman

Absent: Joan Beattie

Opening Prayer

Fr. Hahneman opened the meeting with a prayer.

Welcoming of new Vestry Members and brief Overview of Vestry Duties

Fr. Hahneman welcomed the new Vestry Members: Joseph Claro, Laura Daly, Veronique Dulack. Fr. Hahneman also reminded all to review previously distributed documents regarding duties of the Vestry and highlighted that the Vestry is canonically responsible for the parish's finances and church property. L. Daly will take over J. Beattie's duties as clerk until Joan can resume her duties.

Voting on the Minutes of the January 2021 Vestry Meeting

Fr. Hahneman pointed out that the date on the January minutes was incorrect (should have been January 18). The Vestry then approved the minutes.

Treasurer's Report

Mr. Littlefield reviewed the budget as of January 31, 2021, stating that St. John's is "on solid ground" financially. Specifics he pointed out:

- There was \$120,246.99 in the checking/savings account
- Other current assets total \$580,617.43
- Net income was \$32,414.57
- In lieu of donations for Christmas flowers, we received \$2,400 in donations for the local food banks.

Mr. Littlefield reported that we currently have 37 pledges for 2021, totaling about \$158,000. In January, income from pledges totaled \$48,000. Our budget goal is \$160,000. Current pledge levels represent a 20% decrease in pledges compared to 2020. Pledge income is currently ahead of budget.

Mr. Littlefield also gave an update on our second PPP application for \$28,000. Union Savings Bank did not commit to a timeline for them to respond so the turnaround time may be slower than our first application.

Holy Week Services

Ms. Witt began a conversation about Eastertide donations. The Vestry agreed that Fr. Hahneman will prepare a letter requesting donations for Easter flowers and local food pantries. It was agreed that the budget for flowers will be modest in order to donate a maximum amount to local food pantries.

Fr. Hahneman and Mr. Littlefield agreed that although there is no separate budget line item for music for Easter, that funds are available in the general budget for music. Fr. Hahneman will discuss arrangements for special Easter music with Mr. LaFleur.

Foundation Report

Ms. Davis reported that the Nominating Committee nominated 3 Foundation Board Members (Hunter Brown, Rod Pleasance, Rebecca Lambert) to serve for an additional year. The Vestry voted to extend their service. The Foundation's bylaws specify that Fr. Hahneman (as Priest in Charge) and Mr. Littlefield (as Treasurer of the parish) also serve on the Board.

Ms. Davis proposed that the Foundation underwrite a project to repair the east side and front doors of the church, plus adding an awning over the east side door to mitigate water damage. The Vestry approved the proposed project. While the Foundation has the means to pay for these repairs, M. Davis suggested that the Foundation undertake fundraising efforts in connection with this project.

Also discussed was the need to develop a planned giving campaign for the parish and the Foundation.

Wardens' Report

Mr. Gillespie, on behalf of the Parish, thanked those who are part of the Sunday Church services that are being broadcast while the church is closed to worshippers due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Ms. McFeely noted that the church will increase the monthly use fees earned in connection with the yoga classes by \$100 for an extra yoga class. Additionally, the current lease for the Rectory is in effect until July 21, 2021 and it is expected that it will be renewed for another 6 months.

Priest-in-Charge Report

Parochial Report

Fr. Hahneman submitted the Parochial report (attached) for approval by the Vestry. The Vestry approved the report. Ms. Daly will send to Ms. Beattie to upload to St. John's website and Fr. Hahneman will send to the ECCT.

Formation of Committees

The Vestry approved the formation of the following committees at the suggestion of Fr. Hahneman:

Finance – to keep tabs on finance, develop the annual budget, stewardship campaigns and oversee audits.

Property – to oversee building use and maintenance.

Christmas Bazaar/Fundraising (Due to the pandemic, the form the Bazaar will take, or other method of fundraising will be determined at a later date).

Parish Attendance at Vestry Meetings

There was discussion about facilitating parish attendance at Vestry meetings in a manner consistent with concerns about Covid protocols. Although not required by the Canons or the parish's by laws, it was generally agreed that such meeting should be open in the interest of transparency.

Concerns (non-action items)

The biggest concern mentioned was the inability to be back in church due to COVID-19 restrictions, which is disruptive to the feeling of community. Fr. Hahneman was concerned that the current situation was a source of disgruntlement among our parishioners. While there is frustration, there does not seem to be discontent among parishioners as some churches have experienced. It was noted that Bishop Ian has left the decision to local priests whether or not to open churches but approves of following CT COVID-19 restrictions (i.e., if a parish is in or has proximity to a red zone).

Closing Prayer

The meeting was adjourned with a closing prayer.

Foundation Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of the St. John's Foundation was held following the close of the Vestry meeting.