

St. John's Episcopal Church
Minutes of the Vestry Meeting
August 13, 2023
Held In-Person

In Attendance: Jay Bauer, Worth Bracken, Sara Coles, Laura Daly, Mary Davis, Michael Del Nin, Veronique Dulack, Andris Kalnins, Susan McFeely

Excused: Rebecca Bent, Joe Claro, David Gillespie, Fr. Hahneman,

Mary called the meeting to order at 11:20

Opening Prayer

Laura opened the meeting with a prayer.

Voting on Minutes from July 16 Vestry Meeting

The Vestry approved the minutes from our June 16 meeting with no revisions. The minutes have been posted online and put in the Parish House.

Finance Report

In his absence, David sent an email on the current financial status, which Mary reviewed.

Our mid-year pledge appeal has to date generated \$8,600 in additional pledges. However, we are still experiencing a significant shortfall in pledges compared to this year's budget. The Vestry has agreed that fall Stewardship efforts should include more outreach. Stewardship efforts will begin in October. Our appeal letter will be targeted to as broad an audience as possible. The Vestry agreed to form a Stewardship Committee, which Geoff can populate.

David had recommended that we hire Eric Kauk to assist the parish in applying for the employee retention credit the government is now offering (The Employee Retention Credit is a tax credit created by the U.S. government to encourage smaller businesses to retain employees during COVID-19 shutdowns and slowdowns). His fees would be capped at \$2,000, and on a preliminary basis. The credit may generate approximately \$20,000. Eric can't begin work until execute his engagement letter, which David would like to do ASAP. Eric has performed similar services for, among others, the CT diocese, and St John's New Milford. Both Geoff and David recommend engaging Eric to do this work. The Vestry voted to approve hiring Eric for this service.

David also noted that under Liabilities/Restricted and Reserved Funds, there is a provision of \$1,500 for the "Davis Memorial Fund". There is no record of what this fund was established for. Per David's recommendation, the Vestry voted and approved the use of this fund for maintenance and improvement of parish properties.

The Emergency Center Fund, also under Restricted/Reserved Funds, supports the use of the parish hall as an emergency center. We currently can provide Wi-Fi, a propane stove and town water. We can augment our preparedness by purchasing a generator. David suggested that the Vestry vote to proceed with a proposal to add a generator. The Vestry voted to table this discussion for a future meeting.

Property Report

The Rectory is being shown as a rental property. Susan expects that we will have a renter at our preferred monthly rate within a month. The repair of the Rectory windows has been delayed, but the property will be rented prior to these repairs. Susan also noted that water was leaking from the awning on the church ramp door. Laura noted that one of the door latches has dislodged. Mary will investigate.

Holiday Fete

Planning for the event is underway. Susan said the Fete Planning Committee has recommended that this year's charity be the Washington Scholarship Fund. The Vestry agreed with this recommendation. This year, there will be no scheduling conflict between our Preview Party and The Gunn Memorial Library's Festival of Trees.

Parish Life

Homecoming Picnic: 9/10 at Waldingfield Farm after 10AM Service

Worth reported that we might get use of the farm for free or at a very reduced price. He also recommended a porta potty that has a wash station, which twill cost more to rent. The Vestry agreed with this recommendation as the rental cost for the farm is lower than anticipated. Food will be salads, hot dogs, and Hamburgers. Jay volunteered to speak with Kimberly farm for the ground beef. Corrine Johnson will coordinate the salads. Worth also showed a draft of the postcard invite to the vestry. Worth will work on the final version this week as it should be mailed to our list within the next 10 days. The vestry thanked Worth for all of his hard work.

Promotion of Family Service

The Family Service will now be scheduled within 10AM services vs. Saturday evenings. The Vestry has been asked to think about how to promote this. Laura offered to put up posters around town and to distribute them at Montessori. A mailing to attendees of the Saturday night Family Service should also be part of the promotions.

Possible Children's Production During Advent

Veronique will ask Tom about producing a children's show. There is a possibility that this can be a joint effort with the Congregational Church. Laua will speak with pastor Robyn about this when Tom has developed some preliminary plans.

Future of St. John's

The Vestry voted to renew Geoff's contract for December 2023-November 2024. We need to start visioning what our future will look like beginning in 2025. Mary suggested that our next parish-wide meeting on this topic be held sometime this November. A parish-wide survey will also be conducted to understand the hopes and needs of the parishioners.

Closing Prayer

Sara closed the meeting with a prayer.

NEXT MEETING: 9/3 from 11AM-11:30, only to discuss the Homecoming Picnic. The next full meeting for the Vestry will be September 24th at 11:30.

Submitted by Laura Daly