

St. John's Episcopal Church
Minutes of the Vestry Meeting
September 24, 2023
Held In-Person

In Attendance: Joseph Claro, Sara Coles, Laura Daly, Mary Davis, Michael Del Nin, Fr. Hahneman, Susan McFeely

Excused: Jay Bauer, Rebecca Bent, Worth Bracken, Veronique Dulack, David Gillespie, Andris Kalnins,

Geoff called the meeting to order at 11:25

Opening Prayer

Geoff opened the meeting with a prayer.

Voting on Minutes from August 13th Vestry Meeting

The Vestry approved the minutes from our August 13th 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 the Vestry accepted.

David thanked Worth and his team for the wonderful parish picnic. To date, contributions received toward the cost of the picnic total \$50.00.

We have engaged Eric Kauk to represent the parish in filing a claim for the employee retention tax credit ("ERTC"). Based on the information provided, Mr. Kauk is now estimating a refund amount in the range of \$8,000-15,000. I sent Mr. Kauk a note pointing out that the IRS has announced that it has concerns about the number and quality of ERTC refund claims being filed, and that it is placing a moratorium on processing of such claims until 12/31/23, or longer. Mr. Kauk questions the authority of the IRS to suspend the processing of such claims. In any event, any ERTC refund the parish may receive is highly uncertain as to both amount and timing of receipt. So, given these circumstances, for budgeting purposes at this time, I would place a value on the claim at zero.

The mid-year pledge appeal continues to be important, and we need to increase these contributions. We continue to be impacted by a loss of rental income from the rectory.

Property Report

Susan reported that the windows for the rectory have been ordered. While we have not had formal permission from the town's historical committee, we expect that this will not be an issue.

There has been a lack of potential renters who meet our minimums for rental fee and length of lease. Part of the challenge is finding a renter who does not mind the lack of privacy as well as no real protection from Rte. 47. As we are suffering from a significant lack of rental income the Vestry gave Susan permission to see if we can secure a renter at least through the winter months as any rental income is better than none.

The Vestry noted that we need a long-term plan for the rectory as part of the planning for the future of St. John's.

Holiday Fete

Planning for the event is underway. Susan noted that we need more silent auction items that have proven successful, such as dinners and other experiences.

Homecoming Picnic

As Worth was not present, Mary reported that the picnic was a great success, with 50 people in attendance. The Vestry thanked Worth for his efforts. Corrine and Veronique were also thanked for their work on the event. The Vestry agreed that this should be an annual event, with planning beginning in early summer.

Wardens Report

Mary discussed scheduling a parish-wide meeting to continue the discussion about the future of St. John's. It was agreed that we would schedule wine, cheese and chat on Saturday, 11/4 at 4PM. Joe will contact County Wines to get a special price. A planning committee needs to be formed.

Rector's Report

Geoff informed the Vestry that St. John's is in good standing. There is a report that Geoff needs to full out for the ECCT regarding St. John's efforts toward racial healing, justice and reconciliation. This report is due in March 2024 as part of the parochial report.

Stewardship: It is recommended that we set a goal of 11/19 for parishioners to turn in their pledges for next year (aka, Stewardship Sunday). There needs to be a Stewardship Committee to increase pledges and the size of pledges. Geoff will populate this committee and Mary will speak with potential members.

Family Service: To increase attendance, Geoff will consider making this a Eucharist service vs. Morning Prayer.

Regional Entrepreneurial Fund (REF): This fund, established by the ECCT, is intended for exciting, innovative, new or expanding ministries that engage and energize parishes, Ministry Networks, and community partners within our Regions. Two or more Episcopal parishes or a Ministry Network embody the grant requestors, enabling efforts within a Region to catalyze energy and engage collaboratively across parishes and within/across regions. This grant is not awarded for efforts focused on single parishes or capital improvements.

Geoff mentioned that there is a possibility of St. John's working with the church in Sharon, and Laura mentioned a potential project with St. John's, New Milford.

Geoff asked Vestry if they approved of getting involved in a potential REF application and the Vestry agreed.

Closing Prayer

Geoff closed the meeting with a prayer.

Meeting Adjournment

Geoff adjourned the meeting at 12:55

NEXT MEETING: October 15 at 11:30

Submitted by Laura Daly