

ST. MARY'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
VESTRY MEETING  
MINUTES  
June 22, 2023

**Present:** Senior Warden-Marlo Pratt, Junior Warden-George LeBlanc, Treasurer-David Brierley, Clerk-Mattie Gustafson, Lee Ferreira, Cory Thurston, Alex Simmons, Richard Updegrave, Rita Verespy, Anne Wood, John Corbishley, Lauren Lema and the Revs. Jennifer Pedrick and Meaghan Brower.

Before the meeting began, Jennifer notified us of an agenda change, i.e., moving the Minutes from the last (May 2023) meeting off the Consent Agenda and into the "regular" Agenda.

Jennifer opened the meeting at 6:00 p.m. with a prayer.

**Reconnecting with each other in the presence of God – Jennifer**

Anne Wood read Luke, chapter 10, verses 38 and following (the story of Martha and Mary).

Jennifer then asked – "What have you been experiencing in this "new season" at St. Mary's?

Where have you seen God's presence in this new season? Some responses include:

- The pot-luck was an example of joy and togetherness
- Meaghan gave a sermon on "rest and play" that was applause-worthy
- Jennifer is feeling much less pressure, as she is not responsible for everything!
- Meaghan has been meeting with various ministries to learn about them and their mission
- SMC has put in place good systems that allow important ministries to happen
- This is a time of (good) change, but change nonetheless – which can cause difficulties.
- We are all in new circumstances and we are looking for God's presence in this change and these circumstances.

Jennifer closed this discussion by saying a prayer by John O'Donohue – *Blessings for a New Position* – one line of which is – "May the work fit the rhythm of your soul."

**Rector's Time** – Jennifer

**Gibbs House** – Sea Rose Montessori has paid the lease amount for June and July. Their last day in the school is July 31<sup>st</sup>.

John Corbishley will be our point person going forward with Gibbs House issues. He will field questions, and do some research on fair market value and gather other pertinent information. Our job is to envision some possibilities for this space, but it is important that those possibilities be compatible with the church and its mission. Also – at some point in the future, St. Mary's might need to use space in this building.

Vestry members are encouraged to post questions and ideas on Basecamp. John will post an initial report on Basecamp before our next meeting.

### **Island Child Care**

Jennifer has communicated the following policy to Island Child Care for special, per-day use of the parking lot. - St. Mary's will require 3 days' notice and it will cost \$10 per space, per day, paid in advance.

### **Priorities for 2023 – 6-month check-in**

Here are the four priorities we established for 2023 and some of the growth that has happened within each category.

- 1) A focus on deepening spiritual growth for all ages
  - Bible study
  - Creation Care Kids
  - Music ministry
  - Rest and play as spiritual practice
  - Kids at altar
  - Website / ENews / social media
  - Fellowship
  - Online Evening Prayer
- 2) An intentional emphasis on service to and support of children and families
  - Acolytes
  - Special welcome to families – parking spaces, bulletin boards, greeters, etc.
  - Creation Care Kids
  - Focus group
  - publicity and welcome video
- 3) Continuing attention to stability and support for our mission
  - Day of service
  - Alternative products display
  - Community outreach
  - Strong worship attendance
  - Bequest
- 4) Development of an organizational, staffing and volunteer plan to serve as a foundation for future growth
  - Given new staff, we will need a broader based leadership structure.
  - Explore what we need to do; what we *don't* need to do anymore
  - We want encourage sustainable progress that will move us into the future

Meaghan suggested that we look at how we use our incredible campus. Richard U. suggested we put some people together to look at this issue. Jennifer agreed that in the future this will be very important.

### **Staff Retreat**

Will occur June 28<sup>th</sup>. The purpose of the retreat is to continue to form and deepen staff relationships. K.T. Boyd will facilitate.

### **Housing Allowance for Associate Rector**

Richard U. made the following motion:

Whereas the Rev. Meaghan Brower is employed as a minister of the Gospel by St. Mary's Episcopal Church, Portsmouth, RI, which does not provide a residence for her, the Vestry resolves that of the total compensation of \$46,667 to be paid to the Rev. Brower during 2023, that \$21,000 be designated as a parsonage allowance with the meaning of that term in Section 107 of the IRS Code of 1986.

Alex S. seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Invite, Welcome, Connect Update** – Lee F.

Plans for the pictorial Church Directory are in full swing.

We are planning a labyrinth walk, led by Jenny Williams, in July. This will be free and open to the public. We are planning to put some PR in the Portsmouth newspaper.

Jennifer suggested that a standard list of what should be done in the way of publicity for various church events be created. This would be especially important for those events to which the public is welcome.

### **Junior Warden's Report** – George L.

**Beech Trees:** Rhode Island has a major beech tree issue, and so do we at St. Mary's. There might be a cure for this infestation, and George is working with Bartlett Tree Company to explore options. Bartlett will be inspecting the beech trees to see the extent of nematode infestation during the last week of June 2023.

**South Lawn Repair:** We have filled in a number of divots in the south lawn in front of the worship shell to make it safer for parishioners to walk on the lawn.

**Birds in Church Building:** We hired J. M. Cooper Company, a local contractor on Aquidneck Island, to install screens under top covers on 2 roof vents. This appears to have prevented any more birds from entering the building. We are monitoring the situation and so far, no birds have been seen in the building since the screens were installed 3 weeks ago. We are planning to clean the carpets later this month. The total cost, including renting a lift, was \$2500.

**Dead Trees:** We are getting quotes to remove 2 dead trees near the back of the cemetery, one of which could fall into the churchyard.

Jennifer and the Vestry thanked George and his committee for all their hard work.

**Minutes for May 2023 Meeting**

There was a brief discussion of the motion made at the May meeting regarding the bequest. Rita made an additional motion, that the Rector will maintain a confidential file containing the details of this bequest, which will be released upon Vestry approval. Lee F. seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**Consent Agenda**

Richard made a motion, seconded by Ann, that we pass the Consent Agenda, consisting of the Treasurer's Report for May 2023. The motion passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Mattie E. Gustafson  
Clerk