

ST. MARY'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
VESTRY MEETING
MINUTES
July 27, 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, John Corbishley, Lauren Lema and the Rev. Jennifer Pedrick.

Absent: Anne Wood and the Rev. Meaghan Brower

Adjustment to Agenda: Moved the Vestry Minutes, Treasurer's Report and Historic Church Funding Report out of the Consent Agenda.

Jennifer opened the meeting at 6:00 p.m. by reading our mission statement, suggesting that it's always a good idea to read (or re-read) the Vestry covenant, and saying a prayer.

Reconnecting with each other in the presence of God – Jennifer

Jennifer introduced the discussion's theme by having 4 vestry members read short scripture passages that spoke of *abundance*. She then asked us to break up into pairs and discuss 1) where do we see abundance in our lives and 2) where do we see abundance at St. Mary's?

Here are some of the ideas shared for the second question, "Abundance at St. Mary's"

- The people of St. Mary's are incredibly generous – with time, talent, and treasure
- At a recent funeral a relative of the deceased was very appreciative of all that went into the service
- We have two incredible leaders, who exhibit joy and are thrilled to be working together
- We have the financial stability to help us accomplish our goals
- We have a goodly amount of people in attendance at worship
- There is joy in our summer worship
- The Rest and Play summer theme is helping people become more comfortable – new people and new faces are feeling welcomed
- We have an abundance of comfort, community, and commonality - an abundance of joy and trust in each other.

Gibbs House Update – John and Jennifer

John has determined what the rental potential for Gibbs House is given his research into fair market value. It is zoned for residential use, so we will need a special use certificate for any other use other than residential. This variance would be easier to obtain if the use was related to our mission.

Jennifer reported that we have had several parties express an interest in using Gibbs House. She is exploring all options.

Stewardship – Rita

September 17th will be this year's Stewardship Kickoff. The theme this year is *Rooted in Abundance*. Rita mentioned that she needs Sunday morning counters, as two counters have recently resigned.

Treasurer's Report – David

David presented the Treasurer's Report for the first 6 months of 2023, and gave an overview of income and expenses. Jennifer asked David to investigate the overages in two expenses: Office Supplies and Worship.

Richard U. made a motion, seconded by Alex S. that we accept the Treasurer's Report. The motion passed.

Historic Church Funding Status – Rita and David

David and Rita are working together on the funding report to make sure it is accurate and will report back to the Vestry in August.

Invite, Welcome, Connect Update – Lee F.

Lee gave an update on all the projects IWC is involved in –

- Meaghan met with Creation Care Sunday School Teachers for their assessment of the program and what the future might hold.
- The pictorial Church Directory is progressing well. Pictures are being taken now, and the "finished" directory should be ready sometime in September.
- The map of St Mary's campus is finished and waiting for the reverse side to be designed. A larger one will also be made, to hang somewhere in the Gathering Space.
- The Labyrinth 101 presentation went well. There are brochures about the labyrinth at the entrance for anyone to use.
- We are developing a standard list of PR contacts with addresses and phone numbers for use by anyone who needs to publicize an event.

Clothing Shed – Marlo

Marlo has investigated two firms that are interested in installing a clothing donation shed on our property. She recommended using St. Pauly's Textile. This is the same one who has a shed at Holy Cross Church. Her sense of them is that they are really trying to make a difference. We would need 2 to 4 people who would agree to check in on the shed regularly, to make sure all is going well. We also might need to think about locking our dumpsters. No formal contract is required. It was the consensus of the Vestry that we proceed with this project.

Beech Tree Issue and Jr. Warden Report – George L.

A disease that can kill beech trees has arrived on Aquidneck Island. Beech leaf disease is caused by a nematode – a microscopic worm – called *Litylenchus crenatae mccannii*. First detected in Ohio in 2012, it has spread east and was first found in Rhode Island in June 2020. The disease causes leaves to wither, curl and lose tissue between the veins. The disease can kill a tree within six years. It affects American and European beeches, including the weeping and copper varieties. We have 13 beech trees on St. Mary's property.

We recently requested that Bartlett Tree, who works on many of the Newport Beech trees, inspect St Mary's beech trees and they found that all the trees have the disease. They have developed a treatment protocol which appears to be 90% effective in killing the nematodes.

- They quoted a price of \$15,600 to provide 4 treatments spread over the July – Sept 2023 timeframe. We have \$4200 in our operating budget for the first treatment.
- We are going to take the balance of \$11,400 from the Churchyard Fund, as the trees are in the cemetery yard.
- If we don't treat these trees, they will not survive and we will eventually need to take them down at a cost which will likely exceed the cost of treatment.
- Note that we may need to repeat this treatment next year and possibly the next, as Bartlett continues to learn about the disease.

George also reported that the property budget is running a bit over, due to birds in the church and the breakdown of the freezer in the kitchen!

Minutes for June 2023 Meeting

Jennifer asked for two corrections, which were incorporated into the minutes. Richard U. made a motion, seconded by David B. that we accept the minutes as amended. The motion passed.

Consent Agenda

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

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Mattie E. Gustafson
Clerk