

ST. MARY'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
VESTRY MEETING
MINUTES
September 26, 2024

Present: Senior Warden-Richard Updegrave, Junior Warden-John Corbishley, Treasurer-David Brierley, Clerk-Mattie Gustafson, Lauren Lema, Jerry Culver, Cory Thurston, Anne Wood, Sarah Barker, Alex Simmons, and Associate Rector Meaghan Brower

Attending via Zoom: David Burke

Absent: Rita Verespy, and Jason DeFalco

Meaghan opened the meeting at 6:03 p.m. by reciting the Collect for Sunday. Then two folks read a passage from the Gospel of Mark. Meaghan asked "What stumbling blocks are keeping you from feeling the fullness of God's grace?" The vestry shared responses.

Associate Rector's Report – Meaghan

- Things are going well. Brian and Stephanie are very supportive.
- The Christian Formation Team has launched a new, monthly Christian Formation newsletter, the first edition of which went out in September. Special features include a video "Read-a-Long," and "Ask a Priest." The newsletter will also keep folks up-to-date on formation opportunities both at St. Mary's and elsewhere.
- The first Family Dinner of the season attracted 60 people, 20 of whom were children. Meaghan pointed out that although there are sometimes not a lot of families here on Sunday morning, we have a lot of families who think of St. Mary's as their church. Sunday morning is often hard for families, but our church is important to them, and it is key that we provide a connection and support, and help eliminate some of the stress of parenting.

Rectory Renovation and Parish Meeting - Rick

- Rick will give a brief historical look at what campus and building projects the vestry has addressed over the past years – the parish house, the historic church, and Gibbs House. We have not addressed the rectory, especially the interior, which now requires some significant attention.
- John C. will then talk about details of what is happening, and why the vestry made the decisions it did.
- David Brierley will wind up the presentation by outlining the costs. The total cost of the renovation is \$275,000. We have already raised \$108,500 in restricted donations, and will be seeking addition gifts. No funds from the operating budget will be used for this project.

- The bottom line in this project is that the vestry has an obligation to provide a suitable living space for our rector, and a fiscal responsibility to be good stewards of the land and buildings that are part of St. Mary's church.

Junior Warden – John C.

- Looking Upwards lease for Gibbs House is up on January 1, 2025. They are intending to renew with a 4% increase.
- There is a possibility that we will need a bigger dumpster. John will observe it for a while. We might also try locking it.
- Property Day is scheduled for Sunday, November 3rd. If anyone has any project ideas, please tell John about them. In general, this day is more about building community than actually getting work done, but it would be nice to have some projects that would be helpful to accomplish.

Senior Warden – Rick U.

Budget Task Force

The Budget Task Force is morphing into an actual Budget Development and Finance Committee. This group intends to meet monthly, and the next meeting is scheduled for October 9th. The final vote on the annual budget is usually held at the December vestry meeting.

A Request

Marlo asked if the vestry would be willing to host the after-worship coffee hour on Sunday, December 1st. This will be the first Sunday of Advent, and Jennifer's first Sunday back. All agreed. At the vestry meeting in November, we will circulate a sign-up sheet so folks can volunteer to bring specific items.

Treasurer – David Brierley

Accountant Issues

For the past 4 years, Chris Bartlett's firm has been acting as our St. Mary's bookkeepers. His firm will cease to perform this service on December 31, 2024. Chris recommended Account-eze, another accounting firm, and David has contacted them and received a very reasonable price of \$7500 a year to do St. Mary's books. David has accepted this initially, and is waiting for the firm to write up a formal proposal. The transition from Chris's firm to Account-eze still needs to be sorted.

While attending a Diocesan-sponsored Treasurer's meeting, David found out that electronic payments need to be formally approved by the vestry.

In order to be fully compliant with Diocesan guidelines, David Brierley would like to make a motion that the treasurer be authorized to make electronic payments to the following companies:

Cox Communications
Rhode Island Energy
BankNewport credit card
Pitney Bowes (postage meter)
PEAC Connect (Marlin Leasing) (printer/copier)
Vanco
Monk Development (web site)

Richard U. seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Any additional electronic payments will be presented for approval to the vestry as well.

Consent Agenda

David Brierley made a motion, seconded by Alex Simmons, that we pass the Consent Agenda, consisting of the Stewardship Report, Minutes and Treasurer's Report for August 2024. The motion passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Mattie E. Gustafson
Clerk