

ST. MARY'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
VESTRY MEETING MINUTES
March 25, 2021 – Via Zoom

Present: Senior Warden-Marlo Pratt, Junior Warden-George LeBlanc, Treasurer-David Brierley, Clerk-Mattie Gustafson, Julie Zecher, David Spengler, Matt Spohn, Chris Winslow, Lee Ferreira, Richard Updegrove, Peter Collins, Dave Ferkinhoff, and the Rector- the Rev. Jennifer Pedrick.

Absent: Chris Bartlett

Jennifer began the meeting with prayer at 6:11 p.m., after a few minor Zoomy issues.

Reconnecting with each other, in the presence of God.

Discussion of Chapter 1 in the *Vestry Resource Guide*. There was a good discussion, which segued beautifully into the later discussion of goals for 2021. Some thoughts include -

- We have an opportunity now because we are at a point where we can decide where and what to do next.
- We can't just go back to what we used to do and how we used to do it.
- How do we bring the comfort of God to people?
- Jesus was a great communicator – how do we improve on what we are already doing?
- We have demonstrated resilience and an ability to adapt and learn from missteps.
- We have kept our priorities clear and simplified when we needed to.
- There has been some shifting in Vestry / Rector leadership style to a more open and shared approach.

Updates from the Rector

Moving Forward Taskforce

The focus of this group lately has been on Holy Week and Easter worship. Jennifer related Holy Week plans which are a combination of outdoor (weather permitting), Zoom and Facebook Live venues. She stated it was important for the Vestry to know about and attend as many of these services as possible.

Bishop Knisely met with the clergy and said that he thought RI needed to have a 70% vaccination level before Episcopal Churches could safely regather in-person. The MFT will be focusing on regathering outdoors and not address indoor worship for a while.

Office Space Barter

The Rev. Meaghan Brower asked if she could use one of our unoccupied offices in return for preaching, pastoral help and acting as a supply priest for St. Mary's. Jennifer (and the Vestry!) approved this arrangement as a win-win for everybody.

Safe Church Training

Safe Church is a requirement of the RI (and national) Episcopal Church and Parish Administrator Karen Laroche will be organizing and shepherding us through this training. Executive Committee members are serving as guinea pigs for our initial Safe Church foray and we will report back to Karen and go from there.

Rectory Security

There have been some concerns surrounding safety and privacy at the Rectory. George is looking into three areas where improvements might be made

1. Sheltering the back yard and garden (for privacy)
2. Lighting the lower parking lot
3. Installing working motion detector lights around the Rectory itself.

Goals Discussion for 2021 – Led by Peter Collins

Peter Collins led a lively and long discussion about St. Mary's current status and what might be some goals for 2021 and even beyond.

Comments and thoughts during discussion of goals

- We should retain the energy we have now.
- Explore how to integrate our facility and use of new technologies with in-person activities. There are people out there who really need personal contact.
- Our outdoor services are very enjoyable – and brought folks to church who never attended before.
- We need to keep the openness that exists now in our church.
- We have developed a “new flavor” of church – and we need to be able to meld or integrate all flavors as we go forward.
- We need to be intentional and thoughtful about our regathering. We also need to be intentional about working through losses and any grief that may be present. (This process might take longer than we think?)
- People will need a safe and intentional place for reconnecting with each other. We can leverage our beautiful outdoor space to encourage and allow for that safe regathering.
- Our Trick or Treat success demonstrated that we can be adept at discerning what the community might need and supporting that need. Can we bring this process into other areas and needs of the community?
- Worship – we have offered a variety of ways and methods for worship – outdoor, in-door, online, etc. Each of these venues has appealed and encouraged attendance with different groups of people. Our challenge is to pull these three (or maybe more?) modes together and take advantage of their strengths and appeal.

Mattie will write up the notes she took and send them to Peter for refining and organizing. She will also put these notes on Basecamp. Dave F. encouraged folks to continue the dialogue on Basecamp Campfire.

Jennifer thanked Peter for guiding us in an important discussion.

Investment Committee Appointments

Jennifer made a motion, seconded by Richard U. that the following people be appointed for a 1 year term to St. Mary's Investment Committee –

Jeff Belden

Edye DeMarco

Ted Bierman

Michelle Freitas

David Brierley, *ex officio*

Chris Bartlett – who will serve as Chair.

The motion passed.

Jennifer clarified that it is the Vestry who appoints, annually, the members of this committee. The Vestry also selects who will act as chair.

Junior Warden Update – George LeBlanc

George thanked Vestry members for their attention to and approval of the motion made by email on March 2, 2021 regarding new furnaces for Gibbs House. (Formal motion is at the end of these minutes.)

George mentioned that we are in the process of formalizing a solar power deal with the Diocese. He also thanked some very generous parishioners for their help with some major, unexpected property issues. He suggested making a list of possible projects in the future.

Consent Agenda

A motion was made by Matt Spohn and seconded by George L. that we accept the Consent Agenda, consisting of the February Vestry Minutes and Treasurer's Report. The motion passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Mattie Gustafson, Clerk

Motion made, seconded and voted on via Email

March 2, 2021

George LeBlanc made a motion to purchase 2 new gas fired forced hot air furnaces for the Gibbs House for a price not to exceed \$8000 to replace the larger furnace (Zone 1) which has failed, and the smaller furnace (Zone 2) which is still working but is the same age and likely to fail soon.

Addition background: Two furnaces are needed because of the configuration of the rooms and the ductwork which is in place. We obtained 3 quotes from local Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning companies: Don Jestings & Sons from Middletown, RI, Sunshine Fuels & Energy Services from Bristol, RI, and Ocean State Air from Portsmouth, RI. Jon Walker and I favor the proposal from Don Jestings & Sons because: it is the lowest cost, the York furnaces proposed are widely used and have a good reputation, the manufacturer's warranty is 10 years vs 5 for the other models, we have a strong history with the company, and the work can be performed ASAP the week of March 8, 2021.

The Jestings' proposal includes a 120,000 BTU furnace for \$4211.21 for Zone 1 and a second 60,000 BTU furnace for \$3399.07 for Zone 2 totaling \$7610.28. This compares to \$10,900 from Sunshine Fuels, and \$14,065 from Ocean State Air. The Ocean State quote includes 2 stage furnaces which are not needed. The Sunshine Fuels quote offers comparable single stage furnaces. We can wait to replace the Zone 2 furnace until it fails but we recommend replacing it now to reduce the disruption for our tenant, Sea Rose.

Marlo Pratt seconded the motion.

Voting yes – Julie Z., Christine W., Dave F., Matt S., Marlo P., George L., David B., David S., Lee F., Mattie G., Chris B., and Richard U.

Motion passes