

ST. MARY'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
VESTRY MEETING MINUTES  
September 27, 2018

**Present:** Senior Warden-Murry Edwards, Treasurer- Chris Bartlett, Clerk- Mattie Gustafson, Peter Collins, Trish Culver, Michelle Freitas, Julie Zecher, Jenny Williams, Dave Ferkinhoff, David Brierley, Chris Barker and the Rector- the Rev. Jennifer Pedrick.

**Absent:** Junior Warden-Paul Westrom

Jennifer began the meeting at 6:03 with a prayer.  
Our Mission and Ministry Priorities were reviewed.

**Bible Study-** *Genesis*, chapters 1 and 2, from *The Path*  
Bible Study this year will be based on the text that the whole church is using as a journey through the Bible.

**Consent Agenda**

Murry E. made a motion, seconded by Dave F. that we accept the Consent Agenda, which included the Minutes for July 2018, the Financial Report for August 2018 and the Notification of Accord for Peter Spencer. The motion passed.

**Rules and Regulations for the Churchyard**

The Vestry reviewed the proposed regulations and made a few changes. Chief among these were:

- 20% of the fees collected for burials, etc. will be set aside for perpetual care. This is the amount required by RI law.
- The Vestry thought it was best to be simple rather than complex, e.g., simply state that perpetual care consists essentially of cutting the grass. The long list of "what it doesn't mean" will be omitted.
- The Vestry also removed the reference to dogs in the cemetery.

Jennifer called for a Vestry vote to approve the new regulations. The vote was unanimous in favor of approval.

**The Vestry went into Executive Session to discuss a personnel matter.**

**Invite, Welcome Connect**

Murry Edwards reported that the leaders of this committee are going to try a new approach to encourage others to take ownership and be a part of this effort. A series of

informal meetings will be held to discuss what, exactly, this effort would look like, how important it is to the entire St. Mary's congregation, and to ask for some enthusiastic participation.

### **Congregational Development**

#### ***Maintenance to Mission Conversation***

Murry, Jennifer, Peter and Kathleen Winters have been having some strategic discussions around what St. Mary's is doing, how the church is organized and where we are going. We note that on December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2018 St. Mary's will mark the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first worship service of this Episcopal Church community. We have been thinking about what St. Mary's will look like at its 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and how what we do today will impact that.

Chris B. then outlined our current fiscal issues, which primarily stem from the fact that every income stream we have (and that we have counted on)

- Pledges and Plate
- Gifts
- Gravesite purchases
- Fees and Rentals

is down significantly this year, resulting in an anticipated \$50,000 shortfall from expected income – and, more importantly, resulting in an overall necessity of making the draw from the Endowment approximately \$140,000. Just for this year.

Chris B. reminded us that there are essentially two ways to solve any such financial difficulty – raising income or reducing expenses.

Peter C. asked that important question: “Have we made this problem known to the St. Mary's congregation and asked for their help?” The answer is – not yet.

So – we are planning on calling a “All hands on deck” meeting during the first weeks of October to present the issue, discuss possibilities and ask for help. This is not a Vestry issue, but a whole congregation issue – and everyone needs to know what is happening and be asked to participate in any solutions devised.

Much discussion followed – with statements made and questions asked. The following are some of these statements -

How do we quantify and qualify the past year or so? We need to be able to present how far we've come, and the fact that all our efforts have really started to bear fruit.

We need to be honest and clear about figures and consequences. Everyone needs to see that the problem is concrete and imminent.

How many years will it take us to reduce the draw on the endowment to a “reasonable” amount? – (5.5 %) The Vestry agreed that we need to close this gap in 2 years.

There are two issues we are facing - an immediate, concrete shortfall – and a change that needs to take place in long-term, yearly pledging. We need to change people’s attitudes toward what giving can do for the church and in their lives.

What are people willing to do to close this gap this year?

What are people willing to do to make next year fiscally sound?

Ask our community to reflect on the last 12 months and what our programs and ministries have meant to them and to the people around them.

The key is to understand that giving is a transformational action, that can change an individual’s heart and life.

Dave B was asked to send out a letter to all newcomers asking for a formal commitment to St. Mary’s.

Jennifer will send out a proposed date for this All Parish Meeting sometime on Friday – to get the Vestry’s input. She asked that the Vestry pray about this matter. She will put a prayer into the Prayers of the People.

The meeting adjourned at 8:11 p.m. with prayer.

**Important Upcoming Dates**

**Executive Committee Meeting – October 18th at 5:30 p.m.**

**Vestry Meeting – October 25th at 6:00 p.m.**

**Stewardship Kick-Off – October 20-21**

**Harvest Weekend – November 17-18**

Respectfully submitted,  
Mattie E. Gustafson, Clerk