

**St. John's Episcopal Church, Tower Grove
Vestry Meeting Minutes, July 16, 2023 @ 12:12 pm – in person**

In attendance: Rev. Nancy Emmel Gunn, Liam Clements, Jonathan Cureton, Ronya McCool, Correne Murphy, Mary Anne Pikrone, Margarita Tschomakoff.

Absent: Ann Balsamo, Brent Brower-Toland.

Opening prayer, Nancy Emmel Gunn

Declaration of a Quorum and Reminder of Behavioral Covenant – Nancy Emmel Gunn and Vestry Members; Welcome to Liam as Senior Warden, and Jonathan Cureton as vestry member completing Matthew Green's term.

Appreciations –

Accept minutes from May and June

C. Murphy motioned to approve; M. Pikrone seconded. Unanimous approval.

Checkin— Sundry voluntary reports on vestry members' well-being.

Requiem and Renaissance

Good report from R&R retreat; diocese and St. John's feels optimistic; Diocese has retained a land-use consultant who will visit in fall to help Christ Church Cathedral and St. John's do a little reimagining of their offerings. Spirituality retreat to be scheduled in the fall; training on hospitality and holding conversations with visitors.

Committee updates

- **Buildings and Grounds (M. Tschomakoff)**
 - No new report; discussion of bids for plaster repair and electrical for janitor's closet
 - Gas expenses too high for this time of year; Bob Gunn working on location of sensors and whether or not they are in the wrong places.
 - No vent for a/c or heat in chancel; issue in summertime

- **Communications (M. Pikrone)**
 - Renew ads for Tower Grove South and East directory

- **Finance (N. Emmel Gunn & Executive Committee)**
 - ended with \$9,918 at close of June; at close of May it was \$2,567; what constitutes the loss of \$7,351? Of that, a little more than half is Diocesan pledge paid in full in June; organ maintenance, water, and higher costs for office expenses constitute the rest.
 - Have advised Bishop that we are facing a deficit for the whole year; now may not be the time to decrease our assessment.
 - Income sustained a 30% loss during covid; this has eased to 21%--we are on somewhat of an upward trajectory, but need to stop the loss now or the church will be in dire straits with a budget loss of \$22K in 2025-26.

- M. Pikrone will collaborate with Rev. Nancy to procure \$ from Brown Paper Tickets, now Events.com, and advise the Attorney General; for future events, due diligence will be required for selecting ticketing services.
 - HVAC for sanctuary is main issue with gas expense--A/C is electric; gas is heat.
 - Transparency conversations about budget with congregation to take place in September and lead into Stewardship campaign.
- **Priest's Update**
 - a. Nancy reports a promising inaugural, collaborative youth event with Oak Hill and Compton Heights churches in Tower Grove Park with fantastic leader Clayton Delaney—kids had a blast; “we had to tell them to go home.”
 - b. Diocesan budget request—instead of requesting \$45,000, we will request \$50,000 to assist with deficit. Knock down gas on 2024 budget. Let congregation know we have \$46K in savings. Vestry discussed investing in T-bills, T-strips, or 12-month CDs. Will also be difficult to replace Tracey who did everything—what do we want in a music program and how should it be directed? Jonathan will investigate. Potential for retaining pianist on PT basis in future.

Motion to approve budget request—M. Pikrone motions to approve, seconded by J. Cureton, and the vestry approves unanimously.

- c. Vestry discussed grant for collaborative youth group; Rev. Nancy will finalize with leaders from Oak Hill and Compton Heights and submit to vestry for vote before July 28 due date
- d. Visit from Bishop on August 27; Katie has agreed to play piano for the event; Nancy provides updates on search for organist.

Loose Ends

Reminder of Next Meeting Dates

- Executive committee—August 16; vestry representative will be Jonathan Cureton, 6.30 by Zoom
- Next Vestry meeting: August 20

Closing Prayer (Nancy Emmel Gunn)