

**St. John's Episcopal Church, Tower Grove**  
**Vestry Meeting Minutes, October 16, 2022 @ 12:07 pm—in person**

In attendance: Rev. Nancy Emmel Gunn, Ann Quay Rushing, Correne Murphy, Ann Balsamo, Brent Brower-Toland, John Eads, Ronya McCool, Mary Ann Pikrone. Not present: Liam Clements, Margarita Tschomakoff

Opening prayer, Nancy Emmel Gunn

Declaration of quorum and Reminder of Behavioral Covenant, Nancy Emmel Gunn.

**Appreciations**

- Mary Anne Pikrone for hosting space for September's Vestry meeting with the Bishop
- Bishop Deon for meeting with vestry

**Accept minutes from September**

Ann Quay moves to accept minutes; Ann Balsamo seconds; vestry unanimously approves minutes.

**Requiem and Renaissance (C. Murphy)**

The most recent meeting focused on methods for resolving conflict, best way(s) to make selves a part of community and how to move toward a conclusion/agreement about future of St. John's.

- Members participated in a neighborhood walk to identify potential community connections.
- Vestry discussed the gifts of a small congregation, including ability to personally motivate people, and how to serve the community with the resources we have, eg. opening doors for prayer hours and engaging with Black Lives Matter communities.
- Several members expressed interest in learning nonviolent communication

**Committee updates**

● **Buildings & Grounds**

- Gary has replaced items and repainted various places for a fresh look; new handle on Fellowship Hall door
- Roofing contract has no start date – not signed until start date in November; Ann and Nancy will follow up with company.

● **Worship** (C. Murphy, A.Quay)

- The vestry discussed suggestions from the Bishop's meeting about what is welcoming to community in terms of the building and music and worship.
- First attempt at returning to common cup at communion went well; the congregation will continue using common cup and the worship committee will monitor and discuss a return to communion at the altar rail.

● **Communication** (M. Pikrone)

- M. Pikrone presented a draft of a new church logo for consideration.
- Vestry discussed what defines the parish and could be used to symbolize the church in order to incorporate a bold logo that best represents St. John's.

- **Welcome (M. Pikrone)**
  - Nothing to report other than we celebrate the continued presence of Sunday newcomers
- **Finance (J. Eads, pass)**
- **Outreach (Rev. Nancy)**
  - Tower Grove Pride was a success; Bishop Deon and Rev. Nancy administered 100+ glitter blessings.
  - A neighborhood walking vigil against gun violence is scheduled for October 21
- **Education (B. Brower-Toland)**
  - Sunday school for littles is off to a good start.
  - The education team is considering teen Sunday School but need teen quorum to enact. We are a small enough congregation that all our teens (3-4 families) are involved in other things on Sundays, but hopefully can start in January.
  - Vestry discussed possibility of a youth group and asking the youth involved to help organize it.
- **Hospitality**
  - Homecoming picnic will take place next Sunday October 23.
  - Hospitality has run out of money due to 2021 items going on 2022 budget but church will still support events;
  - Hanging of the Greens on December 11
- **Fundraising (A. Balsamo)**
  - A combined bingo night and chili cookoff will take place on Friday, November 11, with Gina coordinating the chili and food and Ann coordinating the bingo night and prizes. Ann emphasized promotion and donation requests for bingo prizes.
- **Stewardship (A. Balsamo)**
  - Ann is coordinating this committee to brainstorm and manage a Sunday series on stewardship for the annual stewardship campaign.
  - Members of the congregation will speak on three Sundays in November, covering worship, Christian formation and outreach, and worship, capped by a sermon from Nancy on pastoral care for Stewardship Sunday.
  - Let people speak from heart but submit presentation to Ann B, Ronya, or Nancy;
  - Ronya and Mary Anne will oversee invitations.
  - Vestry discussed raising money for holiday decorations following the same model for Easter where we solicited donations of Easter lilies and anything left over goes into the discretionary fund for community assistance.
- **Budget (J. Eads)**
  - Raising rentals from \$26 to \$33 per square foot.
  - Drafting preliminary 2023 budget; we have increased income but increased expenses; we are \$623 in red which isn't bad but we want to avoid a downward trend. Expect budgeted pledges to hold steady. Contributions expected to be the same or go up.

- Budget must be done by annual meeting in January to be approved.
- Gary returning as sexton.
- **Bishop's visit**
  - Vestry discussed suggestions from the bishop—how to identify the community we are trying to serve.
  - Do we make a difference to our community?
  - How do we define ourselves uniquely? Do we send out a survey about who we are and what would you like us to do as members of this community?
  - We are too small to be all things to all people but we can be who we are to more people. Pick a few things, promote them and do them well to avoid burnout
  - How to incorporate Bishop's suggestions about hospitality for Sunday mornings
  - For announcements, we have two audiences—newcomers v. congregation; the one who needs to be reached is the newcomer.
  - Rev. Nancy will write up blurb so we can be more intentional about announcements and events
  - Vestry communicate more with ushers and greeters; help pair people with like people
- **Priest's report**
  - Welcome Neighbor (A. Balsamo) and what entails a partnership
  - Sponsoring a family (drive the family places; talk to schools with the family, etc)
  - Hosting a February Welcome Neighbor dinner & set date
  - Interfaith Bus Tour – hire bus, sold tickets to visit variety of houses of worship & end with meal on a Saturday during Holy week in May/June
  - Need point person in congregation to assist with migrant & immigration issues.
  - Covid numbers are low; masks optional.
  - Vestry discussed distribution of communion
  - Rev. Nancy gave an update on childcare to resume in fall. Interviews in process for 2+ alternate child care aides

### **Loose Ends**

- Ronya will send out vestry minutes earlier to entire committee
- Ann will finalize a schedule for committee rotation (eg. finance report after quarter ends) & reformat vestry meetings

### **Reminder of Next Meeting Dates**

Next meeting is Sunday, November 20 with executive meeting on Nov 16; Brent Brower-Toland will represent vestry.

### **Closing Prayer, 2.07 pm (Nancy Emmel-Gunn)**