

St. John's Episcopal Church, Tower Grove
Vestry Meeting Minutes, December 18, 2022 at 11:45 a.m.
Revised Vestry minutes, with closed session, December 18, 2022

In attendance: Rev. Nancy Emmel Gunn, Ann Balsamo, Liam Clements, Brent Brower-Toland, John Eads, Correne Murphy, Mary Anne Pikrone, Margarita Tschomakoff

Absent: Ann Quay Rushing; Ronya McCool
Pikrone took minute notes for McCool

Opening prayer: Rev. Gunn

Declaration of a Quorum and Reminder of Behavioral Covenant: Rev. Gunn

Appreciations

- Susan Brower Toland's work on Advent program and teen education.
- Ann Balsamo's work on Bingo night.
- Allyce Bullock for work on renting our office space.

Accept minutes from October

--There was no November meeting. John Eads moved and Brent Brower-Toland seconded that we accept the October minutes. Approved unanimously.

Requiem and Renaissance

--Murphy said the Requiem or Renaissance committee did not meet in November. She said she felt we are getting close to point where we must present something to the congregation about what we are doing. From the beginning, the Bishop has been making suggestions. She feels we need to propose something that the neighborhood can take advantage of. But we don't know what the neighborhood needs.

--Rev. Gunn said Matthew Green will take leadership on this. She added that she talked to St. Paul's rector, Rev. Rebecca, about the possibility of a merger with St. Paul's and her sense is they are not interested.

Committee Updates

--Buildings and Ground: Tschomakoff said the Parish Hall reroofing is finished. Rev. Gunn said it cost \$1,000 under the estimate. Sexton Gary is staying on at \$4,500 per year.

Our recommendation: We keep upkeep at \$16,000 in the budget.

Liam Clements said a professional chef working on Peace Meal two weeks ago noted our oven is not calibrated. He recommended we have it professionally calibrated.

Other discussion touched on the need for a grease trap in the kitchen and how the dishwasher needs to be looked at. Rodney Malone and Keith Morehead will pursue getting tuckpointing done on the north side of the church. Malone can get his brother to paint the ceiling.

Rev. Gunn told Tschomakoff they need to meet about cleaning. We are now paying a cleaning service \$100 a week to clean the downstairs only, not the upstairs.

--**Worship and Music:** Murphy said thanks to Rev. Gunn, we had a lovely and meaningful service in memory of parishioner Dana Stewart. Murphy said she will be organizing rotation of readers and communion ministers.

Communion ministers had numbered eight and are now down to six. The Altar Guild has four members. She said Jonathan Cureton is a real help.

--**Communications:** Pikrone asked how vestry members felt about the communications committee's proposed new logo for St. John's.

Ann Balsamo said she did not like it and Rev. Gunn asked whether we might use the Gay Pride logo that Dana Stewart had made.

--**Fundraising:** Balsamo reported that Chili Bingo night was fun and raised \$2,000.

Unfortunately, 12 people got covid. Our success lies in getting donations. Gina Malone did an awesome job in driving attendance to the event. Balsamo said we need to consider the circumstances regarding whether we have such events. Do we want to ask people to take a covid test before they attend? Whatever, an event is not in the future before April. Other fundraising ideas are being kicked around. Murphy said she would talk to Tracy Baker about an outreach to the community and Balsamo said that is fine. Balsamo said her goal is to write a playbook for a Bingo game and have someone else follow it. It took her 30 to 40 hours of work.

She thinks we can continue to hit that \$5,000 fundraising number.

Rev. Gunn said they came within 71 percent of their goal of raising money this year.

Tschomakoff will write thank-you notes to businesses that donated items.

--**Finance:** John Eads reported pledges are down a little but guesses it will even out. Building expenses had been down, but now they're back on track with Gary's return. Rental income is steady. We cut back on the projected deficit significantly for 2022, from \$17,000 to \$7,800 now. Next year, we look to pass a deficit budget with not as big a deficit as this year. Murphy commented that she doesn't see why the diocese shouldn't be supporting us more, because we're serving a particular need. She has told the bishop that since he's suggesting things we might do as part of R&R, we be considered a spotlight in the city for the Episcopal church.

Rev. Gunn said we currently receive \$45,000 from the diocese in yearly assistance. In 2023, it will be \$42,000: \$30,000 clergy support and 12,000 church assistance. We have been receiving funds from the diocese for more than 15 years, since Rev. Teresa Daniely became rector.

Diocesan Assessment—we've paid our full assessment \$14,599. It represents our commitment of 12.5 percent of our parochial report line A income. In 2023, it will be going down to \$13,420 because income on line A was down.

Rev. Gunn said we have more than \$50,000 in our checking account. She recommends we move all but \$5,000 into savings. Eads recommended that Judy Headley, Bob, Jim our bookkeeper and Rev. Gunn explore what to do with \$45,000.

We had a near bank debacle, when Commerce Bank was ready to shut down our account over seven missing checks. There have been a lot of check thefts in Webster Groves. Judy Headley went to the bank to straighten it out.

--**Stewardship:** Balsamo said that as of last week, pledges totaled \$78,000. We're now at 23 pledging units, as opposed to 33 which we had this year. Some veterans have not pledged. Brower-Toland will finish writing thank-you notes. Discussion followed on how to contact non-pledges. Rev. Gunn said we need to have a quick meeting on this.

-- **Outreach:** Clements said two weeks ago the Peace Meal volunteer coordinators and church leadership met at Phyllis and Keith Jacobson's house to discuss 2023. He said they decided to test a "hybrid" model of serving food: We'd still prepare food to go but guests had the option to eat indoors. They found that most did (Clements estimates 70%) and anticipate more will follow when word gets out that we're offering indoor dining again. Pikrone raised concerns about covid. Clements added that with people dining in, we discovered we have to replace two broken tables. Also, Phyllis is actively working with the diocese to secure funding for next year. She estimates we need \$6,000 from them
That new stand mixer in the kitchen is a gift from St. Mark's, which is a strong supporter of Peace Meal and St. John's in general.

--**Education:** Brower-Toland said Susan Brower-Toland taught an excellent Advent series entitled Faith as a Way of Life, which drew on the curriculum she created at SLU for Philosophy as a Way of Life. She also offered a version of this series to the Teen Sunday School class Rodney Malone leads. Around Homecoming, we re-commenced in-person Children's Education including Teen Sunday School and Kids Godly Play (coordinated by Travis Hall). These have had regular offerings all fall and plan to continue. With the return of nursery care for infants and toddlers lately, we hope to see more families with children back in person.
Rev. Gunn has mentioned that there is interest in an Episcopal 101 (new members) class in the spring, and she is coordinating with the Worship Committee to produce this. Rev. Nancy said we've hired two women to provide nursery care at \$15 an hour.

--Housing resolution: Clements moved, Eads seconded that Rev. Gunn's 2023 housing resolution be approved. Unanimously approved. Resolution is attached to minutes.

--Vestry members: A discussion followed regarding the terms of service for those now on the vestry. Clements moved, Eads seconded that we go into executive session to discuss possible candidates.

--**Meeting dates:** Next Vestry meeting: Sunday, Jan. 15. Executive meeting, Wednesday, Jan. 11. Annual Meeting, Sunday, Jan. 22.

--Closing prayer: Murphy.

Closed session minutes December 18, 2022

We discussed possible Vestry candidates: Gina Malone, Christine Cannon, Keith Morehead and Dale Cannon. Vestry members cannot serve more than two consecutive terms of three years. We also approved Matt Green's nomination to Vestry with the limit that he abstain from discussions about his husband, music director Tracy Baker.