

St. John's Episcopal Church, Tower Grove
Vestry Meeting Minutes, May 15, 2022 @ 12.21 pm – in person

In attendance: Rev. Nancy Emmel Gunn, Ann Quay Rushing, Ann Balsamo, Brent Brower-Toland, John Eads, Ronya McCool, Correne Murphy, Mary Ann Pikrone

Absent: Liam Clements, Margarita Toschomakoff

Opening prayer, C. Murphy, with poem

Declaration of a Quorum and Reminder of Behavioral Covenant – Nancy Emmel Gunn

Appreciations

New microphone! All of the service and sermon heard clearly (M. Pikrone) and this should resolve any previous sound issues. C. Murphy thanks Ann B. for cleaning entryway; Ann B. recognizes new attendee Jonathan who came to cleanup day and who joined the choir; Rev. Nancy will reach out to him in appreciation of his dedication.

Accept minutes from April

Minutes to approve – Ann Balsamo moves to approve minutes as written, seconded by Correne and approved unanimously by vestry.

Requiem & Renaissance Update (N. Emmel Gunn)

This committee met at Rev. Nancy's house to discuss their impressions of April's area-wide meeting and implications for future of St. John's. The next formal meeting is in July. In preparation the committee will schedule regular discussions.

Committee updates

- Buildings and Grounds (M. Toschomakoff, submitted via email)
- Worship and Music (C. Murphy)
 - Present opportunity for congregation to contribute toward purchase of communion tables
 - Preparations for Bishop's visit May 29; six confirmations and 1 baptism;
 - COVID numbers are up from 3% to 7%; the choir was asked to mask. Discussion of masking as optional for congregation; based on scientific precedent of community spread, the Cathedral and other congregations are asking congregants who would like to sing to wear masks.
- Communications & Welcome committees (M. Pikrone)
 - New logo in process of creating new logo with advice from Janice Greenbaum
 - Jeff and Mary working on welcome card in preparation for when contact tracing is no longer required.

- C. Murphy reports a member has volunteered to be a greeter on Sunday mornings
 - Rev. Nancy reported the church had lots of newcomers today and reiterated the need for vestry to pay attention to and greet newcomers
 - Brochures to be completed in time for TG Pride in September
- Fundraising (A. Balsamo)
 - Bingo night raised \$1000; the key to success lay in prizes donated to the effort. Another event was proposed in fall after school is back in session
 - Previously a Scott Joplin/Bryan Cather tribute was being planned for June 5 or 12, but will push back to perhaps end of June as Tracy, Matt and Ann make connections to artists.
 - Discussion of promotion for church events via special signage such as banners and sandwich boards
- Outreach (L. Clements absent, M. Pikrone)
 - Vestry discussed door hangers and how best to perform outreach to the community. The overwhelming idea is to formulate either a poll or an item on the welcome card: to ask what do you need St. John's to do for you?
 - Investigate what brings newcomers to St. John's.
- Education (B. Brower-Toland) –
 - J Eads, Young Adult/Adult Professional group restarting; investigating outdoor events such as the Botanical Garden's Whittaker Festival and Lafayette Square concerts; possibility of combining with Bethel Lutheran's (ELCA) group.
 - B. Brower-Toland is exploring options for kids' activities; to bring families back we need to capitalize on opportunities to serve kids.
 - Discussion was had about restarting Godly Play and where and when to conduct it
 - Brent, Travis, Rodney, and Emily will inventory space and report back about needs.
 - The vestry discussed new Safe Church training.
- Budget (N. Emmel Gunn)
 - Pledging down; need reminders about pledging during vestry announcements
 - Total amount of income = 34% of total; on target even with a deficit; if fundraising and pledges can pick up extra funds by end of year that puts us in a good position
 - Nancy will check to ensure we've paid our diocese pledge

- Worship expenses = 56% due to purchase of communion tables and piano maintenance
- Piano in choir room cannot be repaired; the church is in the market for a donated or second-hand purchase of an upright piano.
- St. John's has not received a bill from the sexton and will need to bump up services by end of year
- Gas through the roof, but with summer, electricity kicks in for now; gas may go up again in late fall
- Fundraising—between concerts and bingo our goal is to raise \$5000. What other opportunities can we try? foster competition in bingo nights

Priest's Update

St. John's won the appeal to lease space to Welcome Neighbor. The vestry discussed the insurance for, and legalities and revision of, a lease proposal from Welcome Neighbor to use additional rental space for Friday outreach efforts to Afghan mothers. In addition, we will commence dialog with WN about sponsoring a family and look for partnership opportunities.

Bishop Deon Johnson will visit St. John's on May 29. There will be one baptism and five confirmations. Vestry are encouraged to attend.

St. John's has applied for a diocesan capital improvement grant which would cover the majority of repairs to roof hall. In related news, no audit has been completed for a long time; a treasurer at St Stephens & St. Barnabas has agreed to conduct our audit for free and report to the diocesan committee.

Repairs are needed to the gutters over east window in the sanctuary and tuckpointing over the windows on the north side.

Rev. Nancy has been recording her work hours & began cutting back last week to compensate for next week. Requested a deacon as sermon backup and general help.

Loose ends

- Vestry members to engage with hospitality committee to plan resuming coffee hours
- Safe church program – all vestry members should attend online and obtain certification

Reminder of Next Meeting Dates

Next meeting date will be June 12, immediately following church or coffee hour; the normal 3rd Sunday is June 19. Executive meeting will precede on June 8; John Eads will attend as vestry representative.

Closing prayer (Rev. Nancy)

Meeting adjourned at 1.45 pm