

St. George's Church Vestry Meeting Minutes

November 18, 2021

Present: Sean Albert, Jon Ewbank, Meg Hughes, Sandee Hughes, David Kennison, Debbie Lambeth, Lynn Paska, Paul Smigelski, Rich Unger, Jeff Wengrovius

Excused absent: Jeff Wengrovius

Vestry opted to meet virtually (via emailed reports/comments only).

Senior Warden's Report

David Kennison informed Vestry that Fr. Matthew R. Stromberg submitted his resignation on November 18, 2021, effective immediately. Vestry voted unanimously to accept the resignation and will prepare a formal severance agreement.

The eviction of former sextons Sondra and Jeremy Kravetz, meant to occur on November 17, was delayed because the Sheriff's Department had not yet received the warrant. Our eviction consultant Matt Lyman has promised he will get it to the Sheriff's Department ASAP.

David provided a few details regarding the Diocesan Convention and changes in St. George's classification, based on our most recent Parochial Report, which will impact our 2022 budget.

The wedding of Nathaniel Wisenburn and Angela Marion took place October 30 with Fr. Richard Lehmann officiating.

Treasurer's Report

Jeff Wengrovius being absent, his report was unavailable the evening of the virtual meeting. The following information has since been made available to Vestry:

Pledge income has slightly exceeded the budgeted amount for the year, and we have not overspent the budgeted amounts for gas and music ministry. Cost overruns are extensive, however, notably for boiler repairs, but also for electricity and telephone; website/tech support/ video ministry; printing/office supplies/copier; snow removal; organ maintenance, garden ministry, equipment replacement; building repairs; waste removal; property and liability insurance; and supply clergy.

Jeff reported that he has extracted \$19,000 of endowment interest (\$8,000 from the Education Fund and \$11,000 from the Howe Lecture Series Fund) to cover shortfalls. This was authorized by the Vestry in August. Another \$7,725 of other accumulated endowment interest was taken from RBC in October, and \$12,059 in September.

The church has received a check for \$42,150 from Church Mutual to cover our claim for the cost of failed electrical equipment. Indoor Weather Controls will complete the work on December 1.

The 2022 budget can be finalized once we have the details of Father Matt's severance package. Jon Pearson has estimated endowment income, and Vestry has received a draft of the budget for review (but please ignore all entries related to Father Matt's salary and fringe benefits, and be aware that sheet #1 has the most current data on our 2021 income/expenses).

Junior Warden's Report

Jon Ewbank noted that not much has been accomplished in whittling down a growing list of outstanding maintenance items, as personnel issues have taken center stage and the church is currently out of funds to address repair needs in any case. Jon gratefully noted that the door handle of the rear entrance to Great Hall, which was close to falling off, has been repaired.

Community Liaison Report

Rich Unger offered details on three upcoming holiday events in the Stockade:

- The Stockade Tree Lighting will occur December 5 beginning with a social gathering at Arthur's Market at 4:30 p.m., followed by the tree lighting at 5:30 p.m.
- The annual Festival of Trees, a fund-raiser for the Schenectady County Historical Society and YWCA, will run from December 4 through 23. Decorated trees will be displayed at both buildings on Washington Avenue. Admission is \$6 for adults; children under 12 are free.
- The Schenectady County Historical Society will also conduct walking tours of the Stockade December 14 and 18, 6 to 9 p.m. The cost of \$11 entitles guests to view seasonal Stockade sights and learn how past generations celebrated the season, and enables them to tour the Festival of Trees display and enjoy light refreshments.

Garden Ministry

Meg Hughes informed Vestry that Garden Ministry has welcomed two new members: Gloria Kishton and Joyce Cockerham. The group is finalizing seasonal garden cleanup.

Book Club

The next meeting of All on the Same Page will be January 16, 2022, during coffee hour. The selection will be the Niall Williams novel *This is Happiness*. It's set in rural Ireland, circa 1950. Other titles on the roster for the upcoming year include *The Thursday Murder Club*, *Harlem Shuffle*, *Bloody Mohawk*, and *The Extraordinary Life of Sam Hell*.

Hospitality Committee

Sandee Hughes has prepared a sign-up sheet for providing coffee hour treats. She hopes all on Vestry will encourage our fellow parishioners to sign up for a slot.

Vestry contributed the food for a reception on November 14 for Bishop Smith. Sandee was appreciative of everyone's support, particularly for Meredith and Jon Ewbank who set up the Great Hall and served wine. She also thanked Brian Taylor for orchestrating the event and the clean-up.

The status of the kitchen, which fell into disuse during the pandemic, continues to be a concern. We need to get people trained to use the new dishwasher. We are unsure if the oven is even working. Sandee would also like to know the extent to which Liz Catalan (cleaner) will be responsible for maintaining the kitchen. A core group of Vestry and other volunteers needs to get in there and restore the functionality of the facility.

Communications

Lynn Paska reports that pictures are up on the website of the events of November 14, including: Bishop Smith celebrating Mass; the subsequent reception; and Tom Schofield, Director of the Food Service Pantry at SICM, who was a guest speaker at Choral Evensong.

The deadline for the December *Georgian Report* is Friday, December 3.

Archives

On November 11, Sean Albert convened with Debbie Lambeth and Bob Paska at the archive room to shred outdated financial documents. They were unable to make much headway and Sean wonders if the church should take advantage of free

shredding events or perhaps rent an industrial shredder. He would also like to hear any ideas we may have for digitizing architectural plans that have been unearthed. Another future project will be to investigate the vault in the office, which allegedly has Revolutionary War era documents in it.

New Business

Senior Warden David Kennison outlined tasks Vestry will need to handle shortly:

- Review of the Diocesan Convention 2021 takeaways, particularly those affecting any future Rector's salary and our diocesan assessment.
- Review of the 2022 budget, which should reflect a change from a full-time Rector to supply clergy.
- Approving electrical work needed to bring the church up to code.
- Decisions and a process for maintaining control of church campus keys. A volunteer is needed to head up the effort.
- A volunteer is also needed to handle the church's Facebook account. (Note: Meg Hughes has volunteered to bear this responsibility, and is eager to work with Brian Taylor and Lynn Paska to support the church's social media programming).

Next Meeting

The next regularly scheduled Vestry meeting will be at 7 p.m. December 16.

Respectfully,

Meg Hughes, Vestry Clerk