

St. George's Church Vestry Meeting Minutes
August 17, 2023

Present: Sean Albert, Jon Ewbank, Carol Gaige, Meg Hughes, Sandee Hughes, David Kennison, Gloria Kishton, Lynn Paska, Paul Smigelski, Rich Unger, Jeff Wengrovius

Senior Warden David Kennison convened the meeting with a prayer at 6:30 p.m.

David moved that the July minutes be approved and Rich Unger seconded the motion. The majority of Vestry agreed with "aye" votes and Gloria Kishton abstained from voting as she was not in attendance last month. Jeff Wengrovius voted against approval, and asked that the following statement be recorded in this month's minutes:

"All Vestry members deserve the right to have their concerns properly heard and recorded into the minutes. Attempts to have concerns cancelled sets a bad precedent for our Vestry."

Senior Warden's Report

Rectory Repairs/Cleanup

David updated Vestry on the vast amount of work that has been accomplished at the Rectory to prepare for Fr. Pettigrew's move-in next week. There is a bit of cleaning and painting left to do, and one of the upstairs bathrooms is getting a new floor next week. David plans to repair a couple of toilets that have been running. Another chore that needs to be completed is the cleaning of the gutters.

Recently the back steps were power-washed and stained. The garage was cleared out and power-washed. The door opener was repaired. Two new air conditioners are ready for installation and two gas fireplaces have been repaired. Drapes have been cleaned and re-hung.

Opportunity to Provide Input on Bishop Search

David and two other St. George's parishioners (Anne Kennison and Bob Paska) will represent our congregation on September 9 at a special convention to elect the Diocese's next bishop. Each lay delegation of three representatives will be able to cast one vote, which presumably they will have discussed and agreed upon in advance. David asked Vestry for their feedback on preferred candidates. Q&A sessions were held this week in Albany, Cooperstown, Glens Falls, Potsdam, and Plattsburgh, and each of us had the option of attending in person or viewing the proceedings via YouTube. Meg Hughes has seen some of these public forums online and she voiced her support for the Very Reverend Neal Longe of Saint Ann's Church in Amsterdam. Jeff

Wengrovius has also investigated the candidates and his recommendation was the Rev. Jeremiah Williamson from Grace and St. Stephen's in Colorado Springs.

Activities Calendar

Due to a shortage of volunteers, Brian Taylor is shortening the hours for the Stockade Art Show Cafe on September 9. He intends to have it open from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. instead of 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. He continues to seek willing volunteers.

Our next major liturgical activity is All Saints' Day on November 1. Fr. Tom is also beginning to plan additional parish activities and would like to arrange a parish field trip.

Potential Power Interruption

Relocation of a power line nearby may necessitate St. George's Church to be without power for up to five days. This is an inconvenience for obvious reasons but even more concerning is the fact that our security alarms would be temporarily disabled. David is still investigating solutions and will not consent to any option that leaves the church vulnerable.

Junior Warden's Report

Jon Ewbank noted that the team working on the boiler may be able to complete assembly by the end of August. He also offered a status update on the Church Mutual mandated work. Only two items remain to be completed: 1.) installation of premade custom handrails in the choir loft stairway and at the sacristy entrance; and 2.) clearing the tangle of vegetation in the alleyway behind Great Hall (please refer to Garden Ministry report below for further details).

Still pending is the work needed on windows and a ceiling in St. George's House. A contractor hasn't yet been selected.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Jeffrey Wengrovius announced that the transition to Scotia First National Bank is complete, and we will soon be able to close out the account at TrustCo.

We urgently need a quote from Mid-State on repairs to the ceilings of the church and St. George's House so that we can close the loop on our roof leak claim with Church

Mutual. We have hopes of recouping an additional \$5,600 on that claim if we can supply the necessary documentation in a timely fashion. David agreed to contact Midstate.

Jeff explained the plan for switching to Power Church software. This platform is gradually being populated and run in tandem with our current system. In 2024 we will solely use Power Church.

Pledge giving is holding up, with some new givers. A couple of reliable members have been neglectful in contributing and Jeff has followed up to encourage these folks to resume their generous donations.

Jeff moved to amend the 2023 budget to reflect the expenses our church will bear as a result of Fr. Tom's employment beginning in September. With salary, taxes, and benefits, this amount is nearly \$10,000 a month. Paul Smigelski seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Planning for the 2024 budget is underway, and ministry leaders have been asked to give Jeff an idea of how much they will need to fund their objectives next year. Sean Albert reminded Jeff that Brian Taylor also needs to be consulted. In addition to other predictable expenses for the music program, our organ needs repairs and upkeep, which can be costly.

Community Liaison Report

Rich Unger remarked that the Stockade Garden Tour held July 22 was a big success, particularly the spectacular garden of our parishioner and neighbor, Kevin Decker.

Looking ahead, in conjunction with the Art Show Café on September 9, St. George's is once again selling chrysanthemums. Suzanne Unger is the contact. Please see Suzy to place orders for pick up the day of the art show.

Garden Ministry

Meg Hughes has been in touch with a landscaper who has done work for St. George's in the past (Giacomo Giglio), to solicit a quote for removal of invasive vines and weed trees clogging an alleyway adjacent to the Great Hall. Giacomo consented to do the work for \$1,900. Vestry agrees this is fair. Garden Ministry has about \$1,000 left in the budget for 2023 and Meg requested that this money go towards the project. She also has personally chipped in \$100 for it, and others on Vestry (including Jeff, David, Jon, Gloria, and Carol) are also planning to contribute. These generous donations are greatly

appreciated. As soon as Giacomo can file an invoice, Meg will request a check from Jeff so we can be ready to pay him on the day the work is done.

In addition to the hazardous vegetation, there is an unsightly accumulation of trash from the Redburn-owned building that shares the alleyway with St. George's. On August 11, David sent a letter to Redburn stipulating our expectation that all trash be removed and/or be properly contained on their side of the alley by August 28. If the trash isn't relocated by the time Giacomo commences work, Meg will assemble a couple of volunteers to help her drag the items over to the Redburn building so that Giacomo's work will not be impeded. We are all eager to see the matter resolved.

Book Club

St. George's book club will meet September 17 to discuss *Metrofix: The Combative Comeback of a Company Town*, by William B. Patrick. This book is available at Price Chopper.

Hospitality Committee

Sandee Hughes reports that several parishioners have volunteered to provide food for Dean Vang's farewell coffee hour reception on August 27. We can expect an array of beverages, a small cake, veggie and fruit trays, a savory offering, and small bites (sandwiches). Gloria has offered to decorate the tables with flowers from the garden.

The following Sunday, September 3, will also entail a celebratory "elevated" coffee hour as we welcome Fr. Pettigrew. Stockade parishioners Kevin Decker, Gloria Kishton, and Suzy Unger will coordinate the event to welcome their new neighbor, with support from others in the congregation.

Communications

Lynn Paska has submitted a picture from the SICM food blessing for posting online. The deadline for the fall *Georgian Report* is Wednesday, September 6.

Archives

Nothing new to report.

Outreach

Paul Smigelski notes that SICM donations continue to be strong, averaging 230 pounds a month. At this rate we will easily reach 2,500 pounds by year-end. Kudos to Carol Gaige for transporting the goods.

Paul reminded Vestry that Brian Taylor needs as much support as we can supply to make the Art Show Café a reality. Please contact Brian Taylor at cornishanglican@gmail.com to let him know how you can help.

Our next quarterly “Pillow Talk” in-gathering of bedding for the YWCA emergency shelter will be September 10. This ministry supports women and children who have escaped from an unsafe environment. Jeff remarked that he has a contact at HAWS (Healing a Woman’s Soul) that also supports this work in cooperation with the YWCA, and if Vestry felt it appropriate to deepen our commitment to this ministry he would happily reach out to his acquaintance to see what needs they have.

St. George’s has once again supported the SICM Summer Lunch program. This year our volunteers staffed a less-busy site at Faith Deliverance Tabernacle Church in Mont Pleasant. Paul himself volunteered for duty along with Tarik Wareh, Sharon and Jerry Trant, Jean Greenspan, Gloria Kishton and Bob Lemmerman, Meg Hughes, Ann Duff, and Joyce Cockerham.

Pastoral Care

Jim Wingate has been taking a well-deserved break from this ministry. Gloria reminded Vestry that she and Suzy have been visiting Jamie Taft at the Schenectady Center on Tuesday afternoons. Anyone interested in seeing Jamie is welcome to accompany them or to take the initiative to see him on their own schedule. He is making great strides in his rehabilitation.

New Business

Final Approval of Fr. Tom’s Covenant Agreement

Vestry had reviewed and approved the contract that was negotiated by David, Jeff, and Fr. Tom. Vestry’s affirming vote, performed via email, was not unanimous, so we took another opportunity to discuss the matter and hear objections.

Two concerns about the Agreement were discussed:

- 1.) The document spells out our expectation that our Rector will fulfill the directives of the Church and Gospels but does not include a statement mandating compliance

with the New York State Nondiscrimination Law. Adherence to this law is an automatic requirement of all our employees, however, and a statement to that fact is visibly posted in the church office, thus it was not deemed necessary to put such a statement in the Covenant.

- 2.) Our valuation of rectory housing remained the same as it was eight years ago. Can that be right? It's important to assess this value carefully as it could in turn affect our tax and pension contributions. Subsequent investigation has indeed revealed that the valuation is on track with similar housing for this demographic market.

David moved that the Covenant be approved as written. Carol seconded the motion, which carried with 10 "aye" votes and one "nay."

Review of Draft Procurement Policy

Another document upon which Vestry was called to comment was a draft *Procurement and Purchasing Policy* presented by Rich Unger. Vestry were supportive of Rich's efforts and thanked him for the work that has gone into the document. Overall, the policy should function well to improve communications and enhance our ability to track expenditures.

Jeff repeated a request that the treasurer's role be described more fully in the document, and Rich agreed to incorporate details on that aspect. Gloria pointed out a few inconsistencies and urged that the language be a bit more positive. Meg suggested that eventually an executive summary or flow chart be developed as a companion document so users can quickly determine the necessary steps without being distracted by too much detail. One or more forms will also need to be created.

This document will remain in draft form and comments continue to be welcomed. Eventually it will be part of a policy manual that Rich is working on.

Old Business

Asset Management Committee

Rich reported on the achievements of this committee which is overseeing work funded by budget lines #5088 (Planned Improvements) and #5523 (Rector Search).

- West End Iron Works has completed the repair and reinstallation of the porch railing at St. George's House. Cost \$2,100, as estimated.

- Image360 is currently working on repair and repainting the sign from the front of the church and adding our new Rector's name. They will also provide a UV clearcoat to cut down sun fading. Cost is estimated at around \$400-450. Rich will reinstall the sign, hopefully by Sunday.
- Parking lot sign(s) still need to be dealt with.
- We are waiting on an estimate from John Flower (a mason and carpenter recommended by Fred Leger to repair the St. George's House steps) to replace a storm window in that same building.
- We are still waiting for quotes from Mid-State to repair the ceiling damages above the stairs to the sexton apartment and in the sanctuary.

Work at the Rectory (budget line #5523) has included:

- Two new AC units are ready to be installed within the next week or two.
- A new keypad and remote for the garage were installed (thank you, Rich).
- We need a bottom sweep for the garage door.
- Schenectady Flooring has been contracted to install new hard panel vinyl flooring in the second-floor bathroom. They are scheduled to complete the job Monday morning. The cost will be \$1,230. We saved money on the original estimate of \$1,500 by having Fred remove the existing flooring, and Rich and David taking out the radiator, toilet, and door. These fixtures, and quarter-round floor molding, will need to be reinstalled after the flooring is in.
- Stanley Steemer steam-cleaned and deodorized the upstairs carpet, the stair runner, and the area rug near the kitchen on Tuesday at a cost of \$338.

Name Badges

Gloria followed through on her commitment to investigate getting name badges for church members. Vestry discussed the pros and cons of various examples as presented by Gloria. David moved that Gloria be empowered to spend up to \$100 on nametags to get us started in time for Fr. Tom's arrival. Jeff seconded the motion and all voted in agreement. Gloria plans to get some magnetic badges for Vestry members, and a supply of lesser expensive models to get others in church equipped. This will serve as a good pilot program and we hope that it catches on. We want visitors to feel more comfortable and just knowing the name of whomever you are speaking with should help support a welcoming atmosphere all around. Gloria can tailor the badges graphically with a church logo, but the only information to be featured thereon will be the wearer's first and last name.

Adjournment

Vestry adjourned at 8:20 p.m. with our customary blessing offered by David.

Next Vestry Meeting—6:30 p.m., Thursday, September 21

Respectfully,
Meg Hughes, Vestry Clerk