

St. Matthew's Episcopal Church
Vestry Meeting Minutes - August 22, 2023 @ 6:30 pm
Location: Hybrid in-person in B-14 (Wilson Room) and on Zoom

Vestry Members in Attendance: Joyce Statz (Senior Warden), Bob Ascott (Junior Warden), Natalie Lynch (Clerk), Jason Bagshaw, Christopher Hansen, David Kennedy, Stephanie McCollum, Gary McNeil, Ann O'Connell, Carole Taxis,, Steve Ryder, Jenny Watson, Blythe Wilson

Vestry Members Absent: Armando Ruiz, Anne Webster

Clergy in Attendance: Rev. Katie Wright (Rector)

Business Manager: Chris Schumacher (present)

Treasurer: Lisa Ottenbacher (present)

Guests: Chi Chi Armstrong, Christine Brunson (Associate Priest), Lise Harding (Exec Asst to the Rector), Allen Juneke (Curate)

Observers: Jack Robertson

The August 22, 2023, meeting of the Vestry of St. Matthew's Episcopal Church was called to order by the Rector Katie Wright at 6:35 pm who determined that a quorum of members was present and introduced the guests. Jason opened the meeting with a story about a sense of community highlighted by the history of members showing up for individuals in hard times. He explained the many and various ways he experienced the community appearing for his family and everyone who loved them because Jesus said to love his family.

There was unanimous consent to tweak the order of the agenda to respect participants.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Lisa Ottenbacher profusely thanked Jack Robertson for decades of stewardship and investment. Lisa led a discussion of the Six-Month Financial Review (January-June). Non-pledge income has been low all year, so the monthly plan looks poor. We have reserves and other programs that will keep us in fine shape. The Day School made their June reimbursements in July, so that line item was low during their delay. We received a credit back from the Diocese for health insurance related to a transition last year. The utilities are high because of the temperature extremes and utility rate increases. There was also an unavoidable substantive increase in insurance. VBS was profitable, so even though we received less income, we also spent less because we only ran a program for older children. (There was coordination with the school to tend to younger children.) Each of the financial reports was reviewed with moderate detail. The reduction in non-pledge income trickled through every report. We are now charging more for external organizations to use our space. The landscaping expenses were discussed as being more expensive than in the past but intended to save money in the long run. Lisa then led a brief review of the July financial reports. It was noted that things historically look down during the summer months, and we will remain diligent in the monthly budget plan.

BUSINESS MANAGER'S REPORT: Chris Schumacher

He presented the report on the screen and addressed the "significant Events." He has found a company that will bring in all the HVAC filters with a 6-month warranty, and our maintenance sexton can maintain that. It will cost about \$1,000 every six months. In another example where we keep costs down with our maintenance sexton, Pedro spent \$50 to fix a faucet and urinal in the day school that the plumber quoted \$600 to repair. The AC vendor had not been providing the maintenance assigned, it was causing expensive and noisy problems, but Chris has a new arrangement with that vendor. We also cleaned the

carpet, which was filthy. The tile stripping has been too expensive to move forward. We have asked the electrician to replace the lights damaged by the ice storm so they are closer to the ground. This will improve the lighting. The cost of that work is covered by insurance. The diocese is paying the deductible; we have already received the rest from insurance. The new nursery in B16 I

Approve Consent Agenda Items:

After resuming the initial/typical agenda, the first order of business was to approve the consent agenda items provided in the pre-read folder, including Vestry Meeting Minutes, and Commission/Committee/Council Reports. **Jenny made a motion, seconded Joyce, and passed unanimously.**

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Katie reported that the fence project still needs to be finished. It had been expected that the project would be finished before the start of school, but there is an expectation that the kids will like watching the construction.
2. Allen's housing allowance was approved.

COMMISSION/COMMITTEE/COUNCIL REPORTS & ASSIGNMENTS:

1. The Endowment Committee: There have been no requests for endowment. The wardens will send a letter of thanks to Ann, Jack, and Armando for their work on consolidating years of documents into a working document. We are in an excellent position to understand the obligations to each of our grantors and the fiduciaries involved. There was no historical running document of the activities, and the paperwork needed to be more manageable. The situation prevented the committee from running well. Jack and Ann created a forensic reconstruction of that history. There is an enormous gratitude for consolidating that into only 19 pages of guidance. Jack and Ann O were applauded for their hard work.
2. Outreach committee: bylaws were created by the assigned members. There was a motion by Bob to adopt the bylaws of the outreach committee. Jenny seconded the motion. Katie commented that articulating how to participate in the outreach committee is essential. The bylaws were unanimously approved. This is a necessary foundation to start implementing aspects of the strategic plan.
3. Blythe reported for stewardship that planning for the 2024 campaign is underway. Two letters were composed to send to the parish; the drafts were distributed to the commission, and then the suggested improvements were sent to Katie for review. The letters will be finalized and signed off before the end of August. The pledge format will have a different size but the information collected is the same. The assembly party is scheduled and aims to take the letters to the post office by the end of September. The stewardship commission erred on the side of brevity. The My Journeys program will be repeated next year as well. One or two speakers will talk about their stewardship. There will be stewardship commission members available before and after the service. Everyone on the vestry will be included in the phone calls to be made, as well as the thank you note authoring.

New Business

4. There was a motion that read:
 - a. Whereas Christin E. Brunson, an ordained minister of the Gospel, is compensated in the year 2023 by St. Matthew's Episcopal Church – Austin for services at St. Matthew's; be it now resolved that \$7,500 is now designated to be a housing allowance within the meaning of the term as used in Section 107 of the Internal Revenue Code; And, it is

further...Resolved that the designation of \$7,500 shall apply to August 1, 2023, through December 31, 2023. **Joyce moved, Jenny seconded and unanimously approved.**

COMMISSION/COMMITTEE/COUNCIL REPORTS & ASSIGNMENTS (continued):

- Strategic Planning Council Vestry liaison: Jenny Bailey
 - Congregational engagement was discussed last time, and how to measure the engagement and determine the factors and definitional terms. We also discussed what is most meaningful to us about our engagement at St. Matthews. We discussed how to measure the impact of our activities and the type of activities we hope to encourage, such as a one-time trial of any action from the group. We determine the identity of the people that we serve. The same exercise was completed with the congregation. We asked:
 - What are you willing to do?
 - What would you do if money was no issue?
 - We had lots of people offer to both lead and participate in supporting many groups.
 - Jenny recapped how much we have accomplished with this process because there was a structure to support activities and scaffolding.
 - On August 30, the steps to follow up will be reviewed for bringing the strategic plan to life.

CLERGY AND WARDEN COMMENTS:

Katie explained that there is a replacement document the vestry needs to sign to correct an error in accepting the money for Allen's salary. And she said that Allen was encouraged to explore the edges of what he considers a professional challenge. He is taking on work with young adults and newcomers. Christine is taking in activities with veterans and family ministry. Allen and Christine are also doing pastoral leadership.

The shared life agreement with the day school must be revised every two years. The update for the coming years is nearly completed and ready for execution. Relatedly, the payments from the school will increase. We share insurance with the day school, but they pay their share.

The organ isn't working, and a technician is scheduled to resolve that. Some folks roll off the vestry in January, which is the time for those members to help recruit new members. Martha is looking at Advent and Lent concerts at senior living centers. Darryl Polk, our evergreen usher, noticed that the doors into the sanctuary were fixed. The staff is implementing Last Pass for password management and increasing computer security, which has frustrated the team.

Katie was impressed with Chris' recognition that the AC was not being tended to, which is impressive because vendors realize that churches don't keep track well of maintenance plans.

St. Matthew's Day is at the end of September. Included in that, we will have a nursery blessing. The parish retreat is coming up, and they work best when there are many people. She is excited about the speaker that is coming. New business cards are coming out and will be placed near the entry where visiting groups go. New St. Matthew's shirts will be rolled out on St. Matthew's Day and can be ordered in bulk and then individually after that. The prayer teams may be resurrected. The Day School will have a

safe keeper who is open-carrying. Chris had the idea to include an introduction to the Day School safekeeping in a pictorial announcement. There is a proposal that we increase the hours of the safekeeper to cover sanctuary time.

Joyce repeated the request for everyone to attend the retreat. There was a group consensus we would like to attend Vestry meetings early for a Joyful Hour.

Katie had the Vestry in teams close the meeting with sharing and prayer. Meeting Adjourned at 8:30 pm

Submitted by Natalie Lynch, Clerk of the Vestry