

# St. Margaret's Church

Westminster Parish, Annapolis MD 21409

## Vestry Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, January 19, 2015

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Peter Mayer; the opening prayer was offered by Karen Engelke.
2. In attendance: Peter Mayer, Jane Hague, Mark Torrence, Valery Weekley, Kirsten Tolley, Anne Sessions, Willie Williamson, Ernie Tucker, Julia Drooff, Elizabeth Bowers, Doug Castonguay, Karen Engelke, Tom Wenz, and Charlie Lang. Not present: Trish Schilling, Liesl Wheeler, and Doug Seybert.
3. The December 15 minutes were discussed and approved with specified changes.
4. Willie Williamson made a motion to insert a report on stewardship from Dave Boyce, which was accepted to be discussed after the rector's report.
5. Charlie Lang presented the Treasurer's report, which revealed a relatively optimistic financial outlook by the end of the year, with slightly more taken in as income than budgeted and slightly less spent than budgeted. The line of credit loan for the formation building has been closed since it is no longer needed. 2015 pledges exceeded the goal of \$800,000, which was welcomed, and the final 2015 pull from the endowment was made on schedule. Willie Williamson cautioned that great care needed to be exercised in determining the appropriate levels of endowment pulls budgeted for 2016, which was discussed later in the meeting (see below).
6. Peter Mayer discussed the rector's report and thanked staff & ministry volunteers for their exceptional efforts in helping coordinate large memorial services over the past two weeks. He also thanked outgoing vestry members Elizabeth Bowers, Kirsten Tolley, Charlie Lang, and Ernie Tucker for their service.
7. Dave Boyce, our current stewardship committee chairman, then discussed the stewardship report that he had sent to the vestry. He noted the encouraging rise in the number of new pledgers, and took comfort in the fact that the truly major donors to St. Margaret's were continuing to support it very strongly. He also mentioned some risks in pledging trends to be monitored, cautioning that goals for increasing pledges in upcoming years should be tempered. Nevertheless, he observed that many donors to the formation building may be finalizing their pledge contributions in 3 instead of 5 years, which would be a welcome development. Finally, he noted that St. Margaret's church rolls need to be cleaned up in order to clarify the situation

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regarding what percentages of the congregation were actually giving, and he thanked his small but highly effective stewardship committee for its work.

Anne Sessions asked him about how to keep up the momentum. Dave answered that keeping lines of communication open would be very important by giving occasional presentations on how the budget was working in real terms. He did not feel that the stewardship commission should adopt an institutional role as an advocate for the congregation, but should continue to serve as a useful conduit to identify key issues to the vestry as they emerged. He exhorted the vestry to continue "checking in" with the congregation, to always keep listening to them.

Peter Mayer asked about how much the discussions presented in forums about the church's costs had helped in promoting giving. Dave responded that the congregation wanted a focus on program costs in such discussions instead of hearing merely about facilities maintenance and repair or staff salaries. The point was raised that if staff costs could be allocated to program areas, maybe that would be helpful.

Jane Hague asked about whether there had been any focus on reaching out to newcomers, but Dave responded that this had not been a large priority at this time. Karen Engelke noted that linking staff costs in budgets to specific projects would be potentially a very good idea. The vestry thanked Dave for all of his work in promoting stewardship.

8. Doug Castonguay presented the finalized version of St. Margaret's Church "Mission/Vision Statement" that the vestry then formally approved:

**Transforming Our Lives in Christ, through Worship, Formation and Giving.**

**Our Church will be...**

**A Church of growth, sustainability, and connection**

Peter was asked to introduce this and discuss it at the annual meeting, after which these goals would be pursued in various ways.

9. Willie Williamson discussed the proposed budget for 2016, assisted by Charlie Lang, noting that the process next year should start even earlier and that no amounts designated in the budget were set in stone. He expressed the opinion that the staff should be given more leeway in allotting funds, but that there needed to be a true balance overall between the church's diverse needs. Kirsten Tolley stated the importance of trying to lower the total endowment draw.

Valery Weekley asked if there was a response to the request recently submitted by the Youth and Children's Formation Program leaders to increase Jenelle's allocation to meet her needs. Willie then asked about where the money to do this would come from, noting that the budget plan could shift. Anne Sessions asked about how these expenses compared with 2015 levels and it was observed that this new request represented about a \$4,700 increase in funds allotted to child/youth formation. There was some discussion about whether this could come from the music program, but Willie pointed out that the music budget had just been restored to previous levels after taking a severe hit in 2015. Karen Engelke stated that the vestry ought to make clear

to the congregation the real need for a sexton and Elizabeth Bowers observed the importance of keeping in mind the real costs of maintaining the Formation Building now that it was in place.

The budget discussion concluded with a return to the issue of the Youth and Children's Formation Program fund and after some further discussion, votes were taken on whether to approve its leaders' request for more funds.

The issues were split into three votes:

- i. Should \$4700 be added to the budget allocation for the Youth and Children's Formation Program? The vote was 9 vestry members in favor of this, and 1 against it.
- ii. Should \$1400 be added to the budget allocation for Nursery Care? The vote was 8 vestry members in favor of this, and 1 against it. (One vestry member had to leave the meeting just before this vote.)
- iii. Should Children's Formation Director Jenelle Mejia be compensated for 100 more hours of time over the year? The vote was 8 vestry members in favor of this, and 1 against it.

A vote was then taken to approve the whole 2016 budget with these changes, with 8 vestry members voting in favor of it and 1 abstaining on it.

10. Ernie Tucker reported on behalf of the nominating committee that there are 5 candidates for the 4 vestry slots coming open. Julia Drooff will continue as one of the youth members of the vestry but Kyle Morgan still needs to be replaced, so that search will continue. Peter Mayer asked Ernie Tucker and Karen Engelke to continue serving on the vestry nominating committee next year, and they both agreed to consider this possibility.

11. Mark Torrence then presented the Junior Warden's report. There was discussion about whether or not it was appropriate to exceed drawing 5% from the endowment each year. It was resolved that there needed to be greater clarity on what amount was permissible to draw and whether there had been any formal restrictions on the annual draw imposed by previous St. Margaret's vestries. It was officially agreed that the projected 2016 draw of \$244,838.37 was the correct amount and an amended preliminary Endowment Budget was approved. Mark mentioned that the VOIP telephone issue would be discussed at a later meeting and vestry members were urged to complete the "Safeguarding God's Children" training.

12. Anne Sessions presented her Senior Warden's report and recapped discussion on various action items introduced at the Mutual Ministry Review that were proceeding in preparation for the upcoming vestry retreat at the Bishop Claggett Center in mid-February. The meeting was adjourned at around 9PM.

Submitted by Ernest Tucker, temporary clerk