



## St Margaret's Episcopal Church Vestry

Subject: Minutes for 20 April 2021

Attending: Peter Mayer (Rector), Patti Sachs (Associate Rector), Kristen Berthelotte (Senior Warden), Paul Schurke (Junior Warden), Elizabeth Radley (Director of Operations), Katherine Wiernicki (Treasurer), David Allen, Stacia Bontempo, Marti Engstrom, Cory Greene, Barbara Friedmann, Alden Gross, Elizabeth Kopack, Kathy Lang, Luke Morgan, Chris Prender, Susan Roberts, Ella Tomko, Jim Barnett (Clerk)

Not present: Charlie Lang (Asst Treasurer)

**This meeting was held virtually (platform was Zoom) as dictated by the prevailing pandemic.**

A Quorum was noted per the SMC Bylaws.

- 1. Opening prayer was given at 7 pm by Cory Greene.**
- 2. The meeting was called to order by the Rector and the March 2021 Vestry minutes were approved.**
- 3. Grants Report:** Christine Feldmann, the Grants Coordinator, presented the slate. (Attached)

There were 31 applicants which is about average for our program. Of 13 interviewed, 12 were funded. The selection process focused on organizations serving critical crises situations; food, clothing, housing, and education. They cover global needs as well as those of our more local community.

**MOTION: That the funded grants, list as provided, be approved by the Vestry out of the Grant's draw from the Endowment. Moved, seconded, and approved unanimously.**

#### **4. Submitted reports:**

##### **A. The Treasurer's report.** (Posted to Vestry)

The treasurer noted that revenues continue to run ahead of expenditures. \$203,000 was moved to the Endowment per the previous Vestry's direction. This was largely due to the PPP program and will be retained in the cash account to cover pending organ expenditure requirements. The

Rector reaffirmed his commitment to raise the required funds for the organ and has seen a very positive response from “anchor donors” and will expand the opportunity to give to the rest of the congregation shortly.

**B. Rector’s Report.** (Posted to Vestry)

The Rector reiterated the success of the Organ funding campaign. He hopes to raise as close to the required \$390,000 as possible to reduce any pressure on the Endowment. The Treasurer reiterated that the first \$69,000 for the organ was drawn from the Endowment but will be returned as pledges continue to come in. The Rector wanted to clarify that while \$277,000 has been pledged, we have realized \$131,000 to date. Leadership hopes to continue to raise the entire \$390,000 and hopes this can be accomplished in the near term. The Rector reiterated that he will get the message out to the rest of the congregation by the end of this week. The Rector is somewhat concerned with messaging and communications. He hopes to wrap up the campaign by Pentecost in 3 or 4 weeks.

It was suggested that perhaps a graphic can be generated like a thermometer to show progress and sustain enthusiasm for the campaign. The Senior Warden took an action to investigate this potential with the Director of Communications.

While a time objective is laudable, given the current climate, some parishioners may find it necessary to extend the limits to satisfy their pledge. The Rector indicated this is not a problem and that all donations will be appropriately applied after the campaign is completed. The Treasurer indicated that once we understand all the moving parts, we can work with our investment counselors to provide guidance.

The Rector indicated that the three speaker casements are being set up and will really be beautiful.

Training is being conducted on the audio set up and still need volunteers.

It was suggested that renters (wedding hosts and such) can be asked to contribute as well.

**C. Trust, Reconciliation and Reparations Report.** (On Realm)

The Task Force (TF) leader indicated that a current copy of the draft survey has been provided to all Vestry members. She is hoping for approval to proceed at this meeting.

It looks good but does the TF envision quantitative analysis and focus groups? The TF will review the results that are received from the Congregation and see where we need to dig deeper. The survey will help us understand where the Congregation stands in its level of understanding of racism.

It was noted that the words “equality” and “equity” appear throughout the survey but are not clarified. It was recommended that each term be identified to reduce ambiguity and this suggestion will be incorporated in the next iteration.

Participant confidentiality was stressed and specifically, the questions 8-11 which could be parsed to identify specific respondents. The TF will ensure that results will protect anonymity and preserve all confidences.

We hope that the survey will gauge what our parish wants to do with regards to reparations and reconciliation with our neighbors in the Broadneck Community. When our house is in order, we will be better positioned to reach out to those neighbors.

It was noted that the very notion of racism is personal and differs considerably from individual to individual. In an attempt to better define those differences, the TF has posted to Realm a great deal of material from a wide variety of sources. We hope that more parishioners and Vestry access the information available to better set the baseline of understanding.

**Motion: That the Trust, Reconciliation and Reparations survey be authorized, with applicable modifications as noted, and be provided to the SMC congregants. That funds be authorized from the Grant's Committee to pay for the Survey Monkey platform and generation.** Moved, seconded, and approved unanimously.

An edited version of the survey will be provided to the Vestry this week. A full report will be provided to Vestry when completed. This may be followed with a Parish forum to discuss the results.

**D. Senior Warden's report.** (On Realm)

The Senior Warden attended (via Zoom) the last Task Force meeting and found it informative. She was particularly drawn to the history of our church and neighborhood in this regard.

She very much appreciated the Vestry call to pledge to the Organ Campaign.

She was very pleased with the first instantiation of reengaging in live services this past weekend. The dynamics of open church was interesting and positive.

**E. Junior Warden's report.** (On Realm)

The Junior Warden walked the grounds with Al Todd and together they assessed what needed to be done as annotated in his report. Volunteers are needed to accomplish the tasks identified.

The Rector noted that it is not "all doom and gloom."

**5. What to bring and what to leave behind.**

The Rector led an open discussion centered on individual Vestry members appraisal of what we have learned over the past year, what we need to continue to do as a church, and what we might be able to do without as we move forward and through the COVID pandemic. Each Vestry member was called upon around the Zoom Room in no specific sequence. The following comments were recorded by the Clerk:

I (the Vestry member) was blown away and inspired by the giving to the mission and the church. The generosity has been inspirational. Jeff has done a wonderful job with keep the youth together.

One of the things to consider is how we focus on our neighborhoods and keep them connected to the mission of the church. It is fun to be back in live church and find it comfortable. We can now move forward to live streaming when practical.

The Rector added that Coffee Hour has been suspended but that a Parishioner has stepped forward to attempt to restart the process. We need more of that where the people step up to build ministries of their own and take on the challenge to make it happen.

I enjoyed being outdoors last Sunday. It felt very connected to God. Having said that, Zoom church service is still wonderful.

Going back to in person church may make some people uncomfortable. We still need to do both for now to allow for more ways to retain connection into the future. The Rector indicated that we are working hard to move forward to a "Hybrid Church."

I loved this weekend, we need more physical weekly check in.

I ditto what others have said. We cannot give up Monday and Wednesday night fellowship. What does our future hold for lay people? The Rector indicated that if people feel the call, they need to step up and feel empowered. We need to clone ourselves.

I was impressed with how close our community really is. Families love coming together.

We need to sustain online services.

We need to work to reduce the Director of Communications work load. I met with her to see what we could do to help. There seems to be room for support with Facebook postings. We need to use our social media outreach to let the congregation know what the Vestry is doing. The Rector mentioned that this is a good way to connect horizontally to strengthen the bond between parishioners and the Vestry.

We need to ensure that the Vestry minutes are posted for transparency. I will help with this in any way that I can. I really enjoy the postings from the Associate Rector. The video services are huge. What to let go? Christmas and Easter Services have lots of stuff going on and it takes a great deal of effort to put those services together. Just an observation.

What to give up, New Year's Eve. People have really responded to online services. We need to improve our online outreach.

It is a tribute to the Rector and Associate Rector who are keeping the Parish connected. Keep the book group engaged. I am eager to get into live meetings again.

I want to lend my voice to two things: Meeting in person and encouraging people to rejoin in live church. Remote needs to remain an option but focus on getting back into church. The Rector reiterated the move toward Hybrid Church as well as Zoom Hybrid meetings. We are working on it.

I am ready to come back into the world. Balance is tough but I am ready.

What can we give up? Perhaps the online meetings for very young children. Some things we do as a church are simply not amenable to online engagement. Music needs to be figured out as well

as engagement with very young children. We need to figure out how to reduce staff burden and engage in our volunteer ministry again.

The Rector indicated that this engagement with Vestry has been very helpful.

The Assistant Rector opined that Jesus said, "Feed my sheep, don't count them."

The Senior Warden wanted to ensure that while we will need to table meeting in person, if people have trouble with that they can contact her or Clergy. We need to engage the congregation with similar actions to see where they are and how they see us moving forward.

#### **6. For the good of the order**

The quarterly Day School report is on Realm. Let SMDS Liaison know how the school is doing.

The meeting and Zoom call were ended at 8:43 PM.

Respectfully Submitted:

Jim Barnett