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St Margaret’s Episcopal Church Vestry

Subject: Minutes for 18 April 2023

Attending: Peter Mayer+ (Rector), Patti Sachs+ (Associate Rector) Z, Kristen Berthelotte (Senior Warden), Katherine Wiernicki (Treasurer), Dave Boyce, Austin CanuelZ , Matt ChasseZ, Mary Holstine, Alden Gross, Janice John, Lana Keelty, Kathy Lang, Chris Prender, Susan Roberts, Dan Tootle, Ernie Tucker, Carol Williams, and Jim Barnett (Clerk).

Not Attending: Elizabeth Radley (Director of Operations), Paul Shurke (Junior Warden) AWOL

This meeting was conducted in Hybrid format. Zoom attendees are noted by a “Z” after their name.

A Quorum was present.

1. Opening prayer was given at 7:00 pm by Chris Prender.

2. The meeting was called to order by the Rector. The March 2023 Vestry minutes were approved as amended.

3. Submitted Reports:

**B. Rector’s Report (posted):**

The Rector indicated that he has been considering the question for Parishioners regarding how much to pledge. A Vestry member indicated that she had gotten exactly that question from a new congregant and advised her “to give what you are comfortable with.” That question comes up all the time and sometimes the questioner is looking for a number. Is there a number that is available such as an average. We need to remember that we have several parishioners who have young families, and that average might represent a scary number. And we don’t want to scare folks into giving more than they should. We want them to give within their means but stretch. If you get that question, you can low ball but please try to get them on the pledge list. It might be good to sit down with them and “get quiet.” Let the Holy Spirit answer the question with them. Many times, people pledge a number and hope it will work out. You can always talk to the parishioner about “giving” of their time in any number or volunteer position. We want people to feel comfortable about giving. Our budget may seem a bit secretive, but it is available. Remind those asking that the more we have in our budget the more we can do in the areas they care most about. We may want to consider moving away from the word “pledge” and remind folks that giving is a spiritual event that is very important. God never takes, he only gives. The kids going up to put money in the plate each Sunday engenders them to the spirituality of giving. Spiritual rewards flow from a life of giving.

The Rector spoke to the importance of finding good candidates for Vestry each year. His hope is that the third year of Vestry membership will be a good time for considering and nominating good candidates for the next year.

**B. Treasurers Report (posted):**

Operating results for March 2023 report revenues in excess of expenses of $38,579. This amount is ahead of the year-to-date budget through the end of March by $57,770. Pledge receipts are currently ahead of budget by $29,703; however, donations are behind budget by $(4,373). Note that the timing of Pledge receipts does not equate to an increase in the overall pledged amount for the fiscal year. For the month of March, total expenses are running behind budget by $(30,582). All budgeted expense areas continue to run under budget including Building & Grounds, Formation, Church Administration, Clergy Expense, Missions, Parish Life and Worship.

During the month of March, we have been dealing with the ongoing ramifications of the check fraud reported at the last Vestry meeting. On March 21st, a New Operating Account was opened with Truist and new checks were ordered. At that time, Truist recommended we freeze all debit transactions on the Church’s Old Operating Account until we were sure there were no other fraudulent checks to be presented against our account. On March 29th, we learned that Paychex would not be able to set up our New Account in time for the March 31st payroll and we provided Truist with a listing of debit transactions that should be allowed to draft against the Old Operating Account. Unfortunately, they did not correctly enter this information into their system, and we were notified by Paychex that our March 31st payroll transfers did not clear. Most recently, Paychex refused to process our April 14th payroll using the Church’s New Operating Account because of discrepancy in the name on the Truist account vs. Paychex’s records, although the name on the New Account at Truist had not changed. Needless to say, we are exploring a new payroll processor.

The Rector noted the hard work the Treasure and Bookkeeper were putting in over the past two months and the Vestry relayed with their applause. “We cannot do this without you.”

**C. Worship Team Report (posted):**

The unanimous sentiment is that Rev. Patti did an amazing job holding down the fort during Holy Week.

More volunteers are needed for many of our basic functions. Leaders need to be reminded to ask newcomers and be on the lookout during one on one conversation for volunteers for various tasks. Coffee hour is always looking for volunteers and we need lay people to step up. Ministries are not gender specific. While we need to recruit more young people, we need to recognize their constraints relative to maintaining a young family. The Vestry was reminded that high school students have a “service requirement” and supporting a church certainly counts.

**Scheduling** of volunteers, traditionally a considerable time commitment from staff, is a need that is being rectified by Realm’s automated tools. One action item brought up is a need for more transparent schedules, that are accessible by coordinators of various teams.

Requirements remain for specific departments for volunteers: Acolytes can be adults, Alter Guild needs help with weddings, Lector coordination remains a mystery, and there is a constant need for ushers.

It may be time to increase the occurrence of meetings for both the Worship Committee and the various groups. A regularly scheduled quarterly or bi-monthly meeting might bring some additional coherence to our processes.

**E. Junior Warden (absent/no written report):**

**F. Senior Warden’s Report (posted):**

We are looking to implement a weekly nametag system with the goal of 100% name tag participation every Sunday. Below is the proposed process. The initial list of names will include all pledging members, and regular volunteers. Any individual that is not on the list may request a nametag. Process: In preparation for nametags, on Sunday 4/16/23, we will announce that they are coming and provide a printed list of the names. We will ask parishioners to check that their name is included and that it is spelled correctly (or that their preferred name is used). We will explain the process, including the requirement to return nametags to the baskets before leaving the church. Baskets will be provided at all of the exits (Narthex, Sunday School, parish hall and fellowship hall) Beginning Sunday 4/23/23 - nametags will be available for parishioners each Sunday, set up in alphabetical order on a magnetic board in the Narthex (adults only). If a nametag is missing, the congregant will be directed to a paper and marker to create a temporary nametag, along with a card to fill out to request a permanent magnetic nametag in the future. There are several benefits to having name tags and all will benefit.

Masquerade Ball is scheduled for October 14th. Plans are coming along. We have now added Anne Sessions, Fran Becker, Lana Keelty, Mollie Flounlacker, Ben Galloway and Christine Feldmann to our committee, so we are very fortunate to have such talent to lead us. Save the date and try to think of ways to get the word to the greater audience to come join us in the fun.

**5. For the Good of the Order.**

It is requested that the Vestry arrive for the next Vestry meeting 30 minutes early to tour the archive committee spaces.

The Outreach council is doing a great job in terms of moving SMC forward.

Matt Chasse offered a remembrance.

The TRRTF will continue to host speakers. There are several community events scheduled, see Dragon Tales. Engagement is deepening and doing well.

The Parochial Report has been submitted electronically to the diocese.

Keep our Director of Operations in your prayers as she continues her recovery from a fall.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 PM.