



St Margaret's Episcopal Church Vestry

Subject: Minutes for 21 December 2021 Approved

Attending via Zoom: Peter Mayer (Rector), Patti Sachs (Associate Rector), Kristen Berthelotte (Senior Warden), Paul Shurke (Junior Warden), Elizabeth Radley (Director of Operations), Katherine Wiernicki (Treasurer), David Allen, Stacia Bontempo, Marti Engstrom, Barbara Friedmann, Elizabeth Kopack, Kathy Lang, Luke Morgan, Chris Prender, and Jim Barnett (Clerk).

Not Attending: Alden Gross, Cory Greene, Susan Roberts, Charlie Lang.

This meeting was conducted in Zoom.

A Quorum was noted per the SMC Bylaws.

- 1. Opening prayer was given at 7:01 pm by the Rector.**
- 2. The meeting was called to order by the Rector. The November 2021 Vestry minutes were approved.**
- 4. Submitted reports:**

A. The Rector's report. (Posted to Vestry)

B. Treasurer's report. (Posted to Realm)

Operating results for November 2021 report expenses in excess of revenue of (\$1,092). This amount is ahead of the year-to-date budget through the end of November by \$20,800. For the year 2021 we will be in a good place. The treasurer is happy to see where we are. For November, the Endowment went down a bit. This was due in part to market fluctuations. For the year, the Endowment is up. The 2022 budget has not come up for Vestry vote pending a better understanding of pledge numbers. We do not have a budget number yet, but we should be able to vote on the budget at the January 2022 Vestry meeting: By the end of December 2021, we will have a much better sense of Pledge numbers. With more information on numbers, it will be easier to have a good budget at the end of the year for approval.

It was noted that nationally, 35% of budgets in churches come in after 1 January. We are further along than others. We will pass the budget before the Annual Meeting. It will be close but not

unprecedented. We need to pass something in January to let the Parish know we are on this and have a plan.

As for the budget shortfall, it was noted that St Anne's used all of their annual Endowment draw to cover their deficit. The Rector doesn't feel we are doing badly relative to other parishes, "it is not just us."

We also need to remember that we raised \$392,000 for the organ during the last year, and we should feel very good about that.

Other similar churches are experiencing a loss of about 1/3 of their pledges. We are at 91% of our pledge goal.

"Thanks be to God that the Endowment has done so well" and we can potentially draw on the Endowment to close the budget.

We do need to build back our pledge base.

We need to be careful of over emphasizing our ability to draw on the Endowment to reduce the deficit so as not to reduce the pressure on potential pledges who have not signed on to date.

We should be comfortable with drawing from the Endowment to cover our deficit, that is what it is there for.

Vestry needs to remember that the Endowment has several parts. Are we going to continue to fund other things from these parts? Maybe it is time to look at internal requests more carefully.

We are trying to shake the tree for the last 30 or so potential pledgers. We will try sending them individual pledge cards in the mail. We will work with new members and past pledgers who have not committed to date.

In a years' time we need to get our pledge base up from 170 or so to 220.

If our "outreach" budget was cut, folks might see that and respond. We don't want to threaten folks. It is not quite time for that carrot and stick approach.

Thanks to Beth Kopack for working with the Stewardship Committee on behalf of the Vestry.

It was reflected that Missions has experienced unprecedented donations this year. People who are attentive to that might respond. After 2 January 2022 we might use that tactic. We need to run it by the Stewardship Committee.

We need to remember that the Endowment is not there to save us if we can't make the hard decisions.

Could someone from Vestry raise their hand during announcements at each service and request greater attention to pledging? Since we are down to the last 30 or so potentials, this was not the preferred approach. But we do need to keep our apertures open to other opportunities.

Are our new congregants responding with pledges? The Rector thinks it's pretty good. But we do need to make sure that newcomers are reminded that there is no reason not to pledge for the new year having pledged for the previous year.

Of the 151 pledges we have received so far, 9 are new, 72 are increased, 55 remained the same, 6 were decreased. (This math doesn't work but it is what I scribed).

We are not anticipating cuts to compensation or programs; we will balance with any deficit with the Endowment. This may not be optically appropriate, but we need to get through December and into January to better understand where we are in this regard. We are not contemplating letting people go or cutting programs.

The operating budget is what we are concerned with here, but we need to keep in mind the Endowment and Capital Improvement budgets as well.

We will need Vestry approval to draw from the Endowment to balance the budget if that is the decision that is made with respect to the Endowment. At the same time, we need to do what we can to reduce the deficit. We need to make it smaller, then full speed ahead.

It is not a problem to wait until after the first of the year to make these decisions.

Does the recently completed audit need to be "approved" by the Vestry? Article V of the existing Bylaws states the annual audit "shall be filed with the records of the Church."

C. Bylaws update David Allen

The draft Bylaws are to be passed at the Annual Meeting in January. Discussions have been held with Vestry, Officers, and Parishioners.

Five people submitted detailed comments. Two from the History Committee submitted a lengthy list for consideration. David sent a detailed side by side for consideration. Overall, the History Committee was satisfied with the response.

The History Committee suggested we refer to ourselves as St Margaret's or simply SMC vice "the Parish." This appears throughout the document and was accepted by Vestry.

"National Church" should be replaced with Episcopal Church and that was also agreed.

The language in Article One, Section 7, regarding the absence of the Rector calls for specific notification procedures. This is called out to avoid confusion later. This must be a written document not an electronic message or social media notification although electronic message attachment can be used to transmit the original written document.

Ending the Call is addressed in Article Three, Section 3 with subsection (b) calling for "approval by the Bishop or Ecclesiastical authority of the Diocese of Maryland; or" While there is no conflict with the Canon's, the "Ecclesiastical authority" appears nowhere else and can be taken out.

Can you run for Vestry if you are employed by SMC or married to someone who is employed by SMC? The Rector opined that previously he had been reluctant to allow either the spouse of the

Treasurer or Clerk to run for Vestry, this was more a pastoral concern. He was not sure how Parishioners would view the potential for conflict of interest. He felt he needed to deal with each case on a case-by-case basis. In the case of SMC employees, that is different. If that is the case, then we need to codify that specific case. In the past, we used “best practice” for these cases, not Bylaw’s specificity. But having this codified in the Bylaws will provide cover but allow someone who can benefit the church to run for Vestry. We need to state it narrowly and we need to be careful to stick to conflict of interest issues. We need to be consistent with “fact and appearance.”

MOTION: That Article Four, Section 7(a) be amended as follows: Impact of employment at SMC. Any voting member of SMC who is also in the regular paid employment of SMC, whether on a full-time or part-time basis, or who is the parent, spouse, child, or sibling of one in the regular paid employment of SMC, whether on a full-time or part-time basis, is not eligible for election to the Vestry, so long as the employment relationship exists.

Passed unanimously.

There was significant discussion on the above motion regarding the definition of “immediate family.” The Clerk has drawn from the latest Draft the exact wording for completeness. Further delineation of that definitional discussion is captured and codified in the motion above.

A further recommendation was offered for consideration to include “non-voting members of Vestry.” SMC has a large pool from which to draw Vestry members. This recommendation was not addressed further.

There were a couple of comments received regarding the Youth Vestry slot, Article Four, Section 11. “Young Voting Members of Vestry.” It was suggested and concurred by Vestry that if we don’t have to change the draft as it currently reads, let’s not.

There was a comment received regarding the timing for the election of new Officers before the first of the year. The objective of these Bylaws as currently constructed is to have the Officers in place before the Annual Meeting and the election of the next class of Vestry members. It was felt that new Vestry members may not be sanguine on this issue so it was best to vote in the new Officers under the old Vestry and acknowledge that two thirds of the voting Vestry will remain into the term of the new Officers. No Vestry member in attendance objected to the draft language as it currently stands.

Article Four, Section 8 (k) addresses the assignment of lay delegates to the Convention and Annual Council. A comment was received suggesting that perhaps term limits might apply to these delegates. It is not always easy to find parishioners who are willing to accept these positions. There are currently three delegates, and they are rotated on an annual basis to encourage new thoughts and ideas. We need to make sure we are getting the rotation that will bring new thoughts and ideas to the Rector, Leadership and Diocese.

MOTION: That Vestry adopt as reviewed, the proposed new bylaws to be passed by the Parish at the next Annual Meeting.

Passed unanimously.

It was suggested that perhaps the Proxy voting procedures as called out in the draft new bylaws Article Six, Section 7 could be motioned into effect by the Vestry to ease the voting process at the Annual Meeting during the current Pandemic. It will be hard to manage and count votes under the existing bylaws, but we need to do the best we can under those existing bylaws.

D. Junior Warden's report. (On Realm)

The city water is being hooked up and the AC will be installed when the necessary parts arrive.

E. Senior Warden's report. (On Realm)

A potential Youth Voting Vestry Member has been identified and agreed to serve.

We have two confirmed Vestry candidates and will continue to seek 3 more to fill the slate.

F. For the Good of the Order.

It was great to have Patti Sachs in attendance at the meeting.

We need to pray that Susan gets out of the hospital, and we see her in Church on Christmas Eve.

While the Covid positivity rate for Maryland is 10%, the Dioceses has indicated that SMC is doing everything we should be doing and has advised us to keep doing that. They are not telling us not to gather so we will continue to have Christmas Eve and Christmas services together and online.

One Vestry member indicated that he and his family have been "attending" online and the quality is "awesome."

The Rector indicated that he has texted with Ann Lallande's spouse to convey the outpouring of love from our church. The Rector asked that we keep the family in our prayers.

He also suggested that we keep each other in our prayers during this very difficult time.

"See ya on Friday."

The meeting ended at 8:41 PM.

Respectfully Submitted:

Jim Barnett