



## St Margaret's Episcopal Church Vestry

Subject: Minutes for 20 July 2021

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

Also in attendance Greg Smith

This meeting was conducted on Zoom:

Not present: Charlie Lang (Asst Treasurer), David Allen, and Cory Greene,

A Quorum was noted per the SMC Bylaws.

- 1. Opening prayer was given at 7 pm by Peter Mayer for Jim Barnett.**
- 2. The meeting was called to order by the Rector and the June 2021 Vestry minutes were approved.**
- 3. Submitted reports:**

**A. The Rector's report** (Provided to Vestry)

Things are going well within the community and leadership team. We do note that we need to do a better job managing expectations given the complexity of the environment. Some things are simply out of our control. We are trying our best but there may be areas where we are frayed and not going as well as expected. It is a hard time for our organization, and everyone can help my managing expectations. There are some areas where Vestry can help, walking the grounds and working with vendors being two that were previously done by the Assistant for Facilities who recently retired. While there may be other areas where support will help, it is more psychic than hours. Just knowing that Vestry supports the staff will help a great deal. Staff understands they are falling short.

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

We are doing better in June than we experienced in May. We are \$10,582 dollars ahead of budget while running \$27,000 behind with pledges and donations for the year. Summer can perturbate

our budget, but some comparative analysis might help. Our 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter 2021 is going better than the same quarter 2020. While both were Covid impacted quarters, it might be useful to look at 2019 before the Pandemic. I have provided the Vestry with a three-year, quarter by quarter analysis for your review. I have subtracted out the Organ campaign and results. Then an attempt was made to go back to 2018 but the records are not consistent with the following two and a half years.

We continue to operate with the same \$31,000 budget deficit as we held at the beginning of the year. This adds to the risk level in hiring a new person this August and will add \$9,000 to that deficit. This does, however, seem to be a good investment for the future in bringing in more families and enhancing our profile within the community. We can hope that stewardship can add this to the goal to support the position over the longer term. This feels like a critical investment in our future. A motion was initiated but held in abeyance for discussion. Where does the money come from to support this position in the near term? There remains the \$125,000 in the operating assistant reserve account in the endowment. We can reduce our cash reserves balance and we can begin the next year with less cushion. Isn't that what the cushion is for? Hopefully, we can make that up. We need to recall that we are "reinstating" a position, not creating a position; we had this position filled and expended in the near past. When the incumbent departed, we used the residual funds for budget relief in that budget year. We did find, that during that tenure, a positive impact was experienced in growth for SMC. We need to grow our pledge base to replace those who have departed our congregation. This new hire should help into the future with that requirement. This is an important message, and we need to reinforce the position.

**MOTION: That funding be approved hire a new Children's coordinator to report to the Associate Rector to begin as early as August 2021 and a pay scale of \$22,000 per year and about \$9,000 for the remainder for the current year.** So moved, seconded, and approved without objection.

### **C. Stewardship Committee update (Greg Smith)**

Greg is the new Stewardship Chairman having served on several Committees over the past few years. The Committee has sustained activities over the entire year but will ramp up focus in August heading into the 2022 Campaign. Our theme is "Being Grateful" and we will work to restabilize our sense of community. We want to get everyone connected again given the reality that has emerged post Pandemic. Focusing on the word "Grateful" allows for individuals to provide their own interpretation. A slide depicting the years 2018-2021 was presented. It was noted that for 2021, 37 pledges will not be satisfied. We lost 27 pledges from 2020-2021. We are going to focus the Stewardship Campaign from mid-September to mid-November so we can get done before the holiday season begins. The Committee would like to see full participation from the Vestry at some level **BEFORE** the September kickoff to demonstrate leadership buy in and present a solid message. The new position will be projected in the Stewardship messaging. We will stress the importance of bringing in younger families and their friends. It was observed that it might be helpful to link pledges to specific missions and functions of our church. IF the congregation knows what it takes to run our church, they will fund it. There was some question regarding targeted or designated pledges and how this impacts budget and operations. It may be helpful to offer to tack on an increase in pledge level to a specific capital investment, but this

needs more review. There was a sensing that this may lead to more “transactional” framework, and this may not be the right message or focus. Also discussed was the Vestry pledge mechanism regarding Realm and full participation. Also discussed with the potential of a major donor providing a “matching” objective amount to stimulate pledging. We will see if we can roll out something like that later in the Campaign to renew the appeal. It is all about the message so work with the Committee to see how we can best work together. Part of that messaging should include the good work the church has done and what more can be done with increased generosity. We need to talk about strengthening SMC together, put all the ideas into one basket. We need to present our stresses and connection points.

**D. Junior Warden’s report.** (On Realm)

The Junior Warden has met with one of our neighbors to discuss various issues from the neighbor’s perspective. There is some tree work in the woods between our properties, but on ours, that probably need some attention. He will work to have that mitigated.

Thanks for help from the crew that met to attend to various needs around the grounds. The mulch pile was reduced but remains. The Junior Warden is working to develop a larger group to help with issues involving Buildings and Grounds.

The bio retention pond may need some revitalization. Our neighbor is concerned that run off from our campus is negatively impacting his property, This is not a new issue and our JW will continue researching both the problem and our complexity in remediation. The JW was cautioned to consider his words carefully when dealing with this neighbor, it could lead to a larger can of worms that really is ours.

The JW continued to seek two additional quotes for the air handling system in the sanctuary. So far, only Calvert has made a bid for the work and no one else seems interested. He reflected that the Vestry linked the additional bids to any spending in this regard. He was reminded that the approved motion in May was not conditional and can be executed for this task. (Clerk has retrieved the May 2021 motion as follows “**Motion: That the Junior Warden and Operations Officer be authorized to expend up to \$50,000 to replace the Sanctuary Air Conditioning System.**”) the work can proceed but it was recommended that Calvert investigate a better surge protection capability. Calvert has done a great job around the Campus over the years and certainly has experience with both us and our systems. It was noted that they may need to shut down the entire system to make the replacement and the JW will work with Clergy and staff to optimize any inconvenience.

The city water is proximate to the campus and there may be a window for us to hook up soon. There will be a \$1,000 assessment recurring for the county assessment. A small local company has offered to make the hook up for \$10,000.

**Motion: That SMC move forward with the small local contractor to hook the campus up to the country water system.**

A question was raised about flow. Currently the water flows from the East to West campus and the new system will reverse this flow. We will need to wait for SMDS to close to complete the switch over and cap the existing well. To cover the cost of the hook up and any incidental expenses, the Vestry authorized a not to exceed limit of \$12,000 for this work. The motion was moved, seconded, and approved without objection.

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

The replacement organ is moving forward and going well. With the funds received for this instrument and the attendant speaker system, we may be able to return the initial \$69,000 "borrowed" from the endowment.

**G. For the Good of the Order.**

Chris and Amanda will welcome their 3<sup>rd</sup> child into the family shortly and we should keep them in our prayers. Luke has co-worker who has experienced several difficult situations this past month and he asked that we keep her in our prayers. Please check your box in the office. The office is open and since we don't meet again until September there may be important messages in there for Vestry members.

The meeting ended at 8:34 PM.

Respectfully Submitted:

Jim Barnett