



St Margaret's Episcopal Church Vestry

Subject: Minutes for 15 June 2021 Approved

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

On Zoom: Elizabeth Radley (Director of Operations), Susan Roberts

Not present: Charlie Lang (Asst Treasurer), and Ella Tomko.

A Quorum was noted per the SMC Bylaws.

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

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

Since the merger of BB&T and Sun Trust, the investment advisors for the Endowment have reached out to request that a signed copy of St. Margaret's Investment Policy be provided for Truist's records. The Treasurer will sign the policy and return it to the Truist.

Expenses and income seem to be contracting. Pledges and donations were under budget by \$9,855 as of the end of April and through the end of May are now \$39,142 under budget. Expenses are under budget by approximately \$33,449.

The Finance Committee will be presenting at next month's Vestry meeting. Stewardship will commence in the fall so this will be a preparatory engagement.

It was expressed that with the reopening of church, and the reduction of COVID restrictions in general, maybe we should reconsider "passing the plate" during the service. There needs to be some sort of offertory opportunity as an expression of joy. Options were discussed from bringing a "basket" to the altar for gifts, to placing "baskets" strategically around the sanctuary for gifting. On the other hand, since we have evolved to giving on Realm and other online opportunities are

available, maybe we need to “give up” our perception of giving and money. While we do expect pledges to come back up with the return to in person services, the offertory plate would be a helpful reminder. Discussions evolved around options for reminding parishioners of the personal importance of their gifts to themselves as well as the church. It seems that parishioners may not be returning to weekly attendance, and we need to be attuned to that.

We may need to go back and figure out where we are and where we need to be for the rest of this year and we need to look at who has not satisfied their pledge and, for that matter, who we have not seen since the beginning of the Pandemic.

Returning to Realm and giving, do we keep statistics on giving through Realm? We continue to reinforce this mechanism for giving to provide some simplicity to both staff and parishioners as well as provide some stability to church finances. It is estimated that since the inception of Realm in 2019, 70% of parishioners have joined that platform, but we do not have any statistics to reveal the percentage of Realm gifting.

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

The program for next year is out. We need to be creative as we move forward into this new reality. It feels like we are rebuilding our congregation. We need to reengage those who are on the periphery.

We need to keep in mind what we leave behind and what we carry forward.

Even when the Church is not full, we still need to fulfill our mission. It is not just about bodies on campus. How do we sustain mission fulfillment?

We are moving forward with hiring a new Children’s coordinator. We have a job description, and it looks like, cost wise, we are looking at 19 hrs/wk and \$22.00 per hour plus FICA. We think that 46 weeks a year is about right so that works out to be about \$20,670 per year. We need to “invest” in this position. We have had a good response to this initiative in the past. The previous incumbent put in a lot more hours as does Jeff. Question revolved around the cost per hour and the weekly estimate but there is some flexibility in both estimates. What we are doing now is not sustainable as many of the functions have been picked up by clergy, staff, and parishioners. It was mentioned that finding some diversity for this position would be helpful and that remains as goal. It will take \$7,000-7,500 to fund this position to the end of this year. We need to recognize that the budget is very tight this year already.

C. Parish Life Report (Posted to Realm)

Chris Prender reporting

While overall, things have been pretty quiet over the Pandemic period, there is genuine excitement in coming back together. We hope that Coffee Hour will return soon. Per Diocese’s guidelines, we are easing back into things. Options for Coffee Hour might include bringing your own coffee.

Foyer's reemerging was discussed at some length. In the past there was a family component to this ministry. We need to schedule things like this to begin to realize returning to normal. Maybe a BBQ would reinvigorate this program or perhaps a more "community" bases for attendees. While the traditional model met in individual homes, maybe we could try some new venues. There is great deal that goes into "matching" individuals and couples/families into an effective matrix. We used to organize trips to local events such as Navy concerts and they were popular.

We need to remember that we do these things to transform parishioners' lives. "We don't do it because we like each other alone, we do it to transform ourselves and the world."

D. Trust, Reconciliation and Reparations Report.

The task force leader reiterated that the work of the three subgroups continues.

The Survey is now online with links in Dragon Tails and the weekly church bulletin. The survey will close out the end of June and analysis will begin, although some preliminary analysis is ongoing.

Survey response has been good with 90 respondents so far. We are very pleased with this number of participants. We have had a lot of positive feedback on the survey and now we must do some analysis of the written answers.

We hope to have a full report in September.

The Task Force needs your prayers so please keep them in your thoughts.

The co-leaders of the Task Force are completing a relevant workshop at the Claggett center.

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

The organ replacement remains on track and the cabinet is fully installed.

Live streaming is coming along but we continue to experience server issues.

The sewage back up problem has been solved. It turns out that the 2,000 gallon holding tank we thought we had was really 4 2,000 gallon tanks and it seems that no one knew. That situation has been remedied and we are all good now.

We continue to work with bidders on the air handling system in the church. We are looking for competence as well as competitive pricing before we move forward. When we get a best and final, we will alert the Vestry and there is a good potential that an electronic vote will be required to proceed with remediation of this urgent problem.

The Junior Warden wanted to thank everyone who almost showed up this past Saturday and the campus cleanup has been rescheduled for 26 June. The pile of mulch is outside the Parish Hall so anyone who wants to get a head start, have at it.

Jim Bowersox has retired, and not on disability, so there was a card to sign of thanks and a gift card for his farewell. There was also a card for Ella who has moved on to start college.

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

We are rapping up the organ capital campaign. The results of giving have been very positive, and we are within 5% of the total cost and hope to close that gap and not rely on the Endowment to complete the acquisition.

We continue to look for ways to alleviate pressure on staff by moving some tasks to lay members. Specifically, she could use some help with "analytics" and scheduling. It was mentioned that the Church used an app for scheduling pre-COVID and it seemed to work very well.

Once live streaming is realized, the need for a Wednesday service will be obviated. There is no question that many parishioners have become very comfortable with online services, and we need to enhance that experience and sustain that evolving ministry. We have adopted some new experiences in the virtual world, and we need to consider how we sustain those efforts without increasing the burden on clergy and staff. The Assistant Rector's "morning thoughts" were called out as getting a lot of interest but it is not easy on a sustaining basis. As we move forward with in person services, we don't want to lose the positive impacts of what we have gained through our online presence. We need to be creative about how we reengage with people.

G. For the Good of the Order.

Parishioners were not aware of the passing of several long-time congregants. We need to get the word out in some fashion in this regard. Sometimes we have to hold up until we know the plans of the family and some of the vehicles, we use for notification are simply not completely effective.

We are very excited about the potential for our live streaming efforts. The lack of sustaining connectivity within our own net remains an issue but we are working hard to close that problem. We will continue to test our system and hopefully see some sustainable results in the very near term. We do need a few more volunteers to step up to help manage the system.

The meeting ended at 8:14 PM.

Respectfully Submitted:

Jim Barnett