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St Margaret’s Episcopal Church Vestry

Subject: Minutes for 20 September 2022

Attending: Peter Mayer+ (Rector), Kristen Berthelotte (Senior Warden) Z, Paul Shurke (Junior Warden), Elizabeth Radley (Director of Operations) Z, David Allen, Austin Canuel, Matt Chasse Z, Marti Engstrom Z, Alden Gross, Elizabeth Kopack Z, Kathy Lang, Chris Prender, Susan Roberts, Dan Tootle. Ernie Tucker, and Jim Barnett (Clerk).

Not Attending: Patti Sachs (Associate Rector), Janice John, Katherine Wiernicki (Treasurer),

This meeting was conducted in Hybrid format (Zoom participants annotated with a Z after their names).

A Quorum was present.

1. Opening prayer was given at 7:00 pm by Austin Canuel.

2. The meeting was called to order by the Rector. The June and July 2022 Vestry minutes were approved.

The Vestry expressed their appreciation for the solo performed by the Senior Warden during Sunday services.

The Rector noted the outstanding leadership provided by the Associate Rector, lay ministers, and the Vestry during his absence this past summer.

**3. Submitted reports:**

A. **The Rector’s Report** (posted)**:**

The Rector requested the Vestry consider allocating funds in the budget for “Sabbatical Funding” for other staff beyond the Clergy. Other churches set aside one half of one month’s pay and allow that to accrue year over year to be allocated for Sabbaticals. Consensus was positive, although no vote was taken on any measure.

The funds would be set aside for things such as travel to spiritual sites.

The Rector indicated that we don’t have to take an action at this meeting, he just wanted to put it out there. Patti is coming up on 5 years and is considering taking a sabbatical next year.

During a sabbatical, as with normal leave, pay is continued.

A question was raised with respect to “how far down into the staff” such leave opportunities would be afforded?

Other not-for-profits provide paid time off. It is difficult for our Director of Operations to take more than a month off because of the imperatives of her duties.

The staff does get “PTO” (Paid Time Off) but not under the guise of “Sabbatical.” If they need a week, they can get the week. Each employee gets two weeks off per year but if they need more, they certainly get it.

The Rector then wanted to discuss the SMC (and community) evolving “masking policy.” Are we ready for singing in church without masks? It may be time to rephrase our position to “strongly encourage” masking during song but that they are no longer “required.” There was productive discussion regarding risk management and mitigation to include such things as separating the congregation by preference or vaccination status. Is there real pressure to change the existing policy? People are becoming more accustomed to not wearing masks and we need to be mindful of those who choose to continue to wear masks. It was noted that the ushers are often asked by congregants who enter the sanctuary to provide masks if they forgot theirs. There has been one situation involving SMC where parishioners were positive after a specific event but this was not Sunday worship nor conclusively relational to events at SMC. We need to continue to stress that if someone doesn’t feel well, stay home. Everyone needs to make their own risk assessment and act accordingly. People who do choose to wear a mask need to be made comfortable with their decision in our congregation. The conversation evolved into advocating during the service for vaccinations. But it was noted that we are not a community health organization and our congregants have heard this over the evolution of the pandemic now maturing into an endemic.

The Director of Music has purchased a set of bells and practice is underway. The bells cost a total of $15,000 with a $4,000 gift off setting the total. Money from different approved expenditures centers under the purview of the Director of Music was moved to make up the difference. The Vestry was reminded that any funding requirement over $5,000 needs to be approved by the Vestry according to the bylaws. There may now be unfunded requirements in those lines that were decremented but we will have to see. Best practice, and the bylaws, dictate that such purchases should be run by the Vestry. The good news is that we have a committed group of hand bellers and it will no doubt grow. There are several cross overs from the existing choirs.

There was a brief discussion regarding the bylaws limit of $5,000 for expenditures without Vestry approval. There is no need at the current time to raise this limit but we can continue to look at that into the future.

The Vestry and clerk signed the requisite nomination forms for the Karin Ekholm to become a postulant in the diocesan process for Holy Orders. The Rector suggested putting an amount of $500 in the support line with an eye towards including a more substantial amount during budget discussions.

**B. The Treasurer’s report (posted)(in her absence)**

Operating expenses through August 2021 are in excess of revenues, resulting in a loss of $19,219. Pledges are currently ahead of budget by $4,652. Donations are also ahead of budget by $14,655 plus the $6,000 unrestricted donation that was received in February. The Vestry will need to decide what to do with this donation: off set the deficit or commit the funds to the endowment. It is possible to put the funds into the endowment and then draw them as needed, no decision needs to be made at this time.

The Vestry was reminded that the TRRTF has submitted its budget request for the coming year. As there is no operations budget allocation for the TRRTF for this year, application for funds for Coffee Hour Chat speaker honoraria have been made to the Missions Commission. The Safety Committee may also submit a request for funds against their developing needs.

**C. Day School Report (posted).**

The transition of the director is going very well.

There will be a Vestry and Board visitation day. This will offer the Vestry a chance to go down into the school and see how it functions. Vestry doesn’t have to stay long but please consider attending. It will either be 19 or 20 October soon after the next Vestry meeting.

SMDS did get a grant to enhance security and the enhancements were made integral to overall campus security.

**D. Junior Warden’s Report (posted).**

The “Caring for Creation” program is going very well with the next Cleanup Extravaganza scheduled for this Saturday from 9 to 11. We will deploy 8 yards of mulch and have native plants available.

We are having to deal with a myriad of minor issues in the Formation Building.

Roof replacement and solar panel extension is currently on hold. It would cost over $100,000 just to replace the roof. For the near term it is all about triage.

**E. Senior Warden’s Report (posted).**

The Stewardship Campaign runs from 25 September until 30 October. The goal is to have each Vestry member pledge before the campaign starts. You can pledge on Realm or by contacting Elizabeth Radley. We are going to emphasize to our congregants that it takes between $1.2 and $1.3 million to run the church and a campus of our size. We are hoping people will dig deep to answer the call. We would like to get out of the endowment draw to cover the deficit. We will probably ask Vestry to contact selected parishioners as we did last year. Some of our Committees remain unfunded, such as the Archive and Stewardship Committees.

The organ console is scheduled to be delivered in October and we will host a choral workshop on October 21st all day on campus. In November we will have a recital and hymn sing to celebrate and show off the new organ system.

4. The meeting was adjourned at 8:22 PM