

VESTRY MEETING
July 16, 2024
St. John's Episcopal Church – Midland, MI

Members In Attendance: Alissa Anderson, Eric Carlson, Angela Garcia, Sue Rye, Paul Tolly, Eric Heglin, Gail Hoffman, Fred Schuster. **Members Absent:** Bill Kent, Deb Blackhurst.

Guests: Lowell Youngquist (via Zoom).

Meeting called to order at 6:33 p.m.

Growth & Learning

Video: "Dr Brené Brown on Blame" and discussion. Sharing and prayer.

Business

- Approval of Agenda: Motion to approve by Fred, seconded by Gail; passed.
- Consent Agenda, consisting of the Rector's report, and Building & Grounds report. Without objection, declared approved.
- Approval of Minutes for June meeting: Motion to approve by Gail; seconded by Angela; passed.
- Request to make Vestry minutes available via the website: Vestry has no objection; Eric C will talk to Ellen about getting that started.

Discussion Agenda

- **Treasurer's Report:** Lowell reports that as of July 1 we had just over \$100,000 in the checking account and \$185,000 in BNY savings, although that has been reduced this week by \$76,000 to make the final payment on the roof. Our endowment report won't come until next week, but is probably over \$13 million now. Lowell referred us to the June financial report, which reports everything for the first half of the year. Revenue appears to be down, but that's because we didn't take draws for big Building and Grounds projects in the first half of the year. Pledge revenue is pretty close to budget (about \$1000 under). Expenses for salary/benefits look high because of correction to errors on posting medical & pension. Year to date: Our revenue is above budget and our expenses are under because of big projects – but that is changing including paying for the roof in July, and anticipating probably having the Williams Hall floor expenses upcoming. Utilities remain about \$5000 under budget. Work with RFM on the audit continues; we have begun to get monthly bills from them. Lowell notes that the 1st quarter report from BNY Mellon was inadequate and he has worked with them to get it redone and make future reports more responsive to our needs. Future goals for the Treasurer: exploring alternative investments firms, and begin 2025 budget.
- **Second Sunday Sharing 2024:** Review of July ("Stump the Rector") presented by Gail. General feeling that it went well, but we can do a better job communicating with the Vestry members responsible if there are some changes in format. At the end of the year we will review the original protocols and see if we need/want to make changes. Gail suggested that we make notepads available for those who want them; Angela knows where some are and will put them with the SSS materials. August will be on "Promoting St. John's in the Community" with presentation by Denee Koonce.
- **SAMS Pantry Volunteer Coordination:** Dana Pressnall and Anthony Dizan-Webb met with Alissa; Anthony will be co-coordinator, but neither of them wants to do volunteer

scheduling and coordination beyond this summer. In the past this was part of a larger paid position (Carol Sullivan) but was folded into Jim Harrison's duties and then fell to Dana by default. Alissa suggested that having this as a six-month position while we thought about the long-term might be a way to go. For now, Angela will post an announcement asking for volunteers for this, and we will revisit this next month.

- **Stewardship Goals:** Alissa suggested the idea of 100% participation as a goal, but also going hard on education about what pledging means, especially (1) the idea that there is no minimum for a financial pledge to be meaningful and (2) that it includes time and talent, and praying for St. John's on a daily or weekly basis. Alissa also distributed a report that Angela compiled on pledging units, average Sunday attendance, pledges, and actual giving. Alissa raised the possibility of publishing names of those who pledge, but the response to that was not positive. Sue noted the importance of having multiple ways to plug into the church for growth. Eric C suggested that we could go through the mailing list and identify folks who maybe are more "friends of St. John's" rather than active members and could get a different letter with a different approach. We could also follow up with phone calls to folks who don't respond. Consensus is that the Vestry will participate 100% before the campaign opens for the congregation. Gail will convey the key points of our discussion to the committee.
- **New parish banner:** Angela reported on the rationale for a new banner and the process of selecting the new banner from the four submissions. Voting will continue through the end of August, so that it can be produced in time for the Diocesan Convention. If there are questions/concerns, we should refer them to Angela.

Action Agenda

- **Columbarium Approvals:** Eric C moves that the Columbarium applications listed in the document "Columbarium Approvals" and requiring Vestry approval be retroactively approved and be signed, as required, by one of the Wardens. Seconded by Fred; passed.
- **By-laws revision:** Eric C presented the following **Motion:** "The Vestry recommends that the parish approve the following changes to the By-laws necessitated by the juncture of the Dioceses of Eastern Michigan and Western Michigan to form the Episcopal Diocese of The Great Lakes: change "Eastern Michigan" to "The Great Lakes" in Article I, §1.2 (3 instances), §1.3; Article V, §5.3; Article VI, §6.6(a); Article IX, §9.8, §9.9; and Article X." Seconded by Gail; passed. Eric C will prepare a copy for the Annual Meeting file.
- **Organ purchase contract:** Eric C moved to approve the Sales Agreement with Westfield Organ Company; Angela seconded. Discussion: Eric C suggested that we counteroffer a total downpayment (including the trade-in) of \$125,000. We also need to reach out to the Finance Committee about draws from the Ashmun Fund and the "Rainy Day" Fund. Angela reported on plans for the "quiet campaign" for larger donors and then a broader campaign during August. Lee Smith has suggested that we call the fund the Mair Alsgaard Memorial Organ Fund, and there would be a plaque near the organ with the name of the donors. The Vestry was asked for 100% participation in pledging to the organ fund. Paul suggested contacting members of the A.G.O. and the Mid-Michigan Music Teachers Association and the Midland Music Society as people who worked with Mair. Vote on the Sales Agreement: passed. Consensus that we ask Travis to negotiate down the down-payment to \$125,000; Fred and Eric C will approach the Finance Committee about the endowment funds.

Review of Action Items

- Cloister Garden fundraising – **pending**
- Garden blessing (Alissa) – **ongoing, but has reached out to Lee**
- Signing the new lease with preschool (Alissa) – **ongoing**
- Continuing discussion with preschool (Alissa) – **ongoing**
- Thank you note for Colleen (Eric C) **done**
- Talk to Colleen about budget line for organ donations (Eric C) **done**
- Talk to Faye Ebach and Lee Smith about fundraising (Angela) **done**
- Talk to Hailey Fader about grant writing (Eric C) **done**
- Get response from Don Davidson about financial commitment (Alissa) **done**
- Contribute reasons for supporting Chris's ordination (ALL) **done**
- Inform B&G about October SSS (Deb) **pending**

Summary of New Action Items

- Work with Ellen on getting the minutes posted electronically (Eric C)
- Get notepads together for Second Sunday Sharing (Angela)
- Prepare an announcement re. SAMS Pantry volunteer coordinator (Angela)
- Prepare the by-law motion for Annual Meeting folder (Eric C)
- Communicate with Travis about the organ contract (Alissa)
- Approach Finance Committee about endowment contributions toward organ (Eric C and Fred)
- Parish survey discussion for next month (Fred)

Executive Session

The Vestry moved into executive session to discuss the Diocesan Discernment Form for Chris Lauckner.

Closing prayer. Motion to adjourn by Fred; seconded by Eric H; passed. Meeting adjourned at 9:20.