

VESTRY MINUTES
Grace and St. John's Episcopal Church
Tuesday, January 16, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.

NOTE: The meeting was on Zoom for all participants due to the weather.

Present via Zoom: Bob Bergner (Rector), Sue Stanley (Senior Warden), Sue O'Connell (Junior Warden), Linda Rolstone (Co-Treasurer), Linda Simmons (Co-Treasurer), Renee Janes (Clerk), Jenneifer Campbell, Brian Gray, Jessica Kott, Kelly Mattox, Cindy Turner, Whitney Batson, Robin Zenobi

Visitor: Gretchen Pritchard

Excused Absences: Kate Aitkenhead, John Graham

Unexcused Absences:

An executive session was called to order at 7:03 pm by senior warden Sue Stanley; the meeting was to discuss salary changes for 2024. The changes were approved.

After the executive session, the meeting was called to order at 7:20 pm following an opening prayer led by Fr Bob Bergner.

Agenda:

- The draft agenda was approved. (Sue S, Jessica)

Minutes:

- Minutes of the December 19, 2023 meeting were approved as amended. (Linda Rolstone, Robin)
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Treasurer's Report:

- Linda Simmons reviewed the 2024 proposed budget. We have a projected deficit of approximately \$73,000. This compares to an actual deficit of approximately \$72,000 for 2023.
- Because of technology issues, Linda was not able to share the budget documents. She will email the docs and we will circle back to the budget.
- Checking/savings totaled \$75,244; \$28.5k is D4\$ and \$17.5k is Journey of Discovery.
- Pledges are down around \$5,000 but that is expected to be made up by the end of the year.
- There is a deficit in building use because the insurance adjuster next door has not donated so far this year.
- Expenses are unfavorable due to building repairs.

- The figures do not include SJE funds.
 - Approved by Sue S and Kate, subject to review.
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Rector's Report:

- We have been invited to host this year's Ash Wednesday evening service with Church of the Good Shepherd, Hamden Plains Methodist Church, and two congregational churches. The vestry agreed to support the service by attending. However, partner churches need to be notified of parking locations.
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Calvin Grant: Gretchen Pritchard reviewed the grant proposal, what is involved and the project timeline.

- The goal of the project is to “forge ties between our outreach ministries and a deeper and richer Sunday worship.”
 - The two parts of the project are music (through “Music that Makes Community”) and a mural on the outside wall near the “in” driveway.
 - The music workshop is on March 9th at Grace & St John's; the public is invited to participate.
 - Mural conversations within the parish are scheduled to begin in April. The completion date is slated for September or October.
 - There will be a steering committee working with Gretchen and Bob on the implementation of the program. Gretchen and Bob have identified individuals for the steering committee; Gretchen will send emails to those people.
 - Gretchen will explain the project at the annual meeting.
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Treasurer's Report, Part 2:

- Total pledges are \$132,154 from 48 pledge units. That includes three brand new pledges and four who converted from plate to pledge.
 - Total income is up 9.5%.
 - Facility expenses are budgeted to be down 5.8%.
 - Overall expenses are budgeted up 6.9%.
 - The budget was approved. (Sue S, Renee)
 - We reviewed the balance sheet as of December 31, 2023.
 - The SJE money has been moved to GSJ's Ion Bank account.
 - The December 2023 financials were approved by Linda R and Sue S, subject to audit.
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Committee Reports:

Communications Committee:

- Bob has determined we do own the graceandstjohns.org URL. Transform currently holds it but it will be passed to us. Kim will follow up with them.
- The committee did not meet in January so there is nothing new to report.

Worship Committee:

- There are 5 Sundays in Lent; 3 will be Holy Eucharist and 2 are morning prayer.
 - During Lent, we will line up at the altar rail for communion.
 - The committee reviewed Advent and Epiphany worship.
 - Jessica raised the issue of hymns and including more music that people know and enjoy. She will briefly discuss at the annual meeting.
 - We should encourage GSJ attendance at the meeting with ECCT Bishop Mello and Bishop Hazelwood from ELCA on February 21 at Christ the Good Shepherd.
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Dinner for a Dollar and the Food Truck:

- Christian Tabernacle served over 200 meals on January 11th.
 - Kelly met with Mike Degen from United Way. They are awaiting word if there will be another round of federal funding; there might be an opportunity for additional funding in 2024.
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Other Business:

Annual Meeting: The Calvin Institute grant and a few of the ministries will be covered briefly at the meeting. Each of those ministries will also include a short write-up in the annual meeting packet.

Investment policy:

- Sue Stanley presented the policy which was developed to use the money from the sale of the SJE building in a thoughtful manner.
- Renee and Linda R asked Sue to add Meriden to the policy – i.e. “the Towns of Wallingford and Meriden.”
- Jessica suggested opening a brokerage account so that all the investments are on one statement, and returns would be rolled over. She also recommended some Treasury bonds.
- The committee will be appointed at the February vestry meeting
- The policy was approved (Renee, Linda R)

Outreach facilitator: table to February.

ChildFund International: Linda R recommends we end the program which was a hold-over from SJE. She will cover January and February donations, and notify Child Fund we are stopping.

Annual outreach donations: these are the annual donations SJE did that we committed to continuing post-merger. After discussion, it was agreed to have the new investment committee determine the organizations for this year.

Sidewalk access to the side door: John Graham questioned if we would like a larger blacktop area. It was agreed that we do not need that, but just a utilitarian sidewalk. Cindy mentioned the light over that door does not work. Bob asked Linda S to convey this to Bill Menosky

Gift card program: it would be good to have a supply of gift cards available (such as Dunkin' Donuts, Stop & Shop, etc.) to donate to individuals who need quick help. On a side note, should we also have warm coats on hand. A family who comes to D4\$ would like to have a coat drive in the Guilford area; they would donate the coats to us to use as needed. Linda R noted her employer has a similar emergency gift card program and she suggested we develop guidelines for distribution. Linda R will send those metrics to Sue O. Linda S asked for a list of "where's and how much's" for parishioners.

Sanctuary candle from St John's: Renee purchased a battery-operated candle and will work with Bob on placement of the hanging sanctuary light in the chapel.

The next meeting will be February 20th at the church and on Zoom.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 pm (Renee, Linda R).

Acronyms used:

G&SP = Grace & St. Peter's Episcopal Church
SJE = St. John the Evangelist Episcopal Church
SPOTH = St. Peter's on the Hill Episcopal Church
ECCT = Episcopal Church in Connecticut
TEC = The Episcopal Church in the US
FTAC = Food Truck Advisory Committee
D4\$ = Dinner for a Dollar
S2P = Swords to Plowshares