

St. Thomas' Episcopal Church
Vestry Minutes

January 16, 2024

Those in attendance: Rev. Ryan Whitley, Senior Warden Mary Jane Park, Treasurer Ann Leavine, Russ Ball, Pam Holley, Mary Clark, Director of Finance Joe Master, and Secretary Bill Barns.

Opening Business: The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m.

Opening Prayer: Prayers were offered by Ann Leavine.

A Motion to approve the December minutes was made by Bill Barns and seconded by Mary Clark. **The motion was approved.**

Building and Grounds

Old business:

- With respect to the Canterbury Elevator's status, Ann Leavine will work with Head of School Hollis Amley to obtain documentation for the elevator's condition and plan moving forward. Repair and upgrade may become an item in the capital campaign.
- The Parish Hall floor is on the capital campaign objective list. This is a church asset and legally a church responsibility. The church will identify the most cost-effective floor for its needs and confer with Canterbury if they desire and are willing to contribute to a different type of floor. Ann Leavine will discuss with Hollis Amley. Laura Labbee will seek bids on behalf of the Capital Campaign committee. There are some samples available in the church office and a bid will be solicited to help scope the project.

New business:

- **Building & Grounds:** Interior painting of offices in administrative wing along with repair of the outdoor benches (using a TREX product) is a priority matter for Sexton Jon Ward and the projects will commence soon.

Finance, Administration and Worship

Ann Leavine provided the financial update:

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As a result of careful fiscal management, we have a carry-over of \$69,000 for the 2024 budget.

BALANCE SHEET

- The investment ended strong: in December there was a ~\$60K increase to the main investment and ~\$14K to Altar / Youth.
- The clearing account balance will clear to zero in January once the \$5,479.79 in proceeds are distributed to Pack-a-Snack and Maui fire relief as designated by the Stewardship committee.

RESTRICTED ACCOUNTS

- Unused endowment distribution funds totaling \$7,459.75 will be reinvested as per the endowment policy. Niche revenue totaling \$9,000 will be reinvested permanently as per the endowment policy. These funds will be sent in January.

A motion to approve the December financials was made by Ann Leavine and seconded by Mary Jane Park. **The motion was approved.**

Other financials:

- The final 2023 Stewardship pledge total is currently at \$503,932. Repeating pledgers increased their giving by \$63,000 (13.4%) and 10 new families pledged. However, approximately \$40,000 remains outstanding in non-renewed pledges. The Vestry discussed follow-up options.
- Fr. Ryan reminded everyone that this is a circumstance of faith-based pledging: *"God will provide what we need going forward."* All Vestry members were encouraged to pray about this.
- The Treasurer presented the 2024 Proposed Budget and discussed it in detail. In view of the shortfall from the \$600,000 goal, the increase of over 30% in insurance premiums, the termite warranty increasing by 5X, spending reductions and funding alternatives were identified.
 - Fr. Ryan reminded the Vestry that reoccurring expenses should not be paid from bequests, but it will be acceptable this year due to the enormous insurance premium increase.

A motion to approve the 2024 St. Thomas' \$909,084 budget was made by Ann Leavine and seconded by Russ Ball. **The motion was approved.**

Senior Warden's Report

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Making a difference for others because God is making a difference for us.

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Mary Jane reviewed the Vestry candidates and slate requirements. She also enjoined the Vestry to pray for our Rector as a year of promise and challenge is ahead.

Rector's Report

- Organist / Choir Director search. The effort is proceeding well with more than 20 applications in hand. Reviewing the submissions represents an immense amount of work for the committee to evaluate candidates by listening to sample work and reviewing each *curriculum vitae*. Zoom interviews for approximately nine candidates will begin next week with an aim of interviewing three candidates on-site at St. Thomas'. The committee's assessment is that 'we are in a very good place with the search process.'

- Sabbatical Planning. Fr. Ryan explained the rationale and justification for a three-month sabbatical in 2025. This is merited by his seven years of parish leadership here and in line with the Episcopal Church's eligibility guidelines. He is pursuing a Eli Lilly Corporation grant which represents a \$60,000 award (\$40,000 to the Rector and \$20,000 to the parish).
 - In concept, Fr. Ryan would like to undertake a combination of approximately one month of study and spiritual growth in Europe, one month at a location in the U.S., and a final month at home.
 - The precise details will be emerging and to facilitate preparation – both for the Rector and the congregation – Fr. Ryan has appointed Mary Clark, Pam Holley, and Bill Barns as a Sabbatical Planning Committee.

- The Vestry Goals for 2024 will be reviewed during the Stated Mtg. following the Annual Mtg. The proposed items were circulated separately by e-mail.

- A Vestry Retreat will take place in February 2025 at Day Spring. The Vestry considered other venues for 2024, but instead chose this as the preferred option.

Affirmations

The Vestry recognized:

- (1) The Stewardship Committee for their tremendous efforts throughout the year encouraging parishioners to prayerfully offer their time, talent, and treasure to God's work in the parish while successfully completing the fall Stewardship campaign; and

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(2) Pam Hamby for creating the outstanding charcuterie table at the Hawaiian Luau Stewardship event.

The meeting adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Barns, Secretary

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Rector, Wardens and Vestry, Director of Finance, Director of Communications,
Endowment Committee Chair

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