

St. Thomas' Episcopal Church
Vestry Minutes

March 19, 2024

Those in attendance: Rev. Ryan Whitley, Senior Warden Mary Jane Park, Junior Warden Tom Shevlin, Pam Holley, Wade Hamby, Colin Burkhart, Michael Labbee, Kayla Mitchell, Director of Finance Joe Master, and Secretary Bill Barns.

Opening Business: The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Opening Prayer: Prayers were offered by Mary Jane Park. Bill Barns facilitated the spiritual exercise using the *Psalms of Ascents*, Psalms 120 – 134. The participants read Psalm 121 together and reflected on their personal impressions. All were invited to comment on how the poem related to their observance of Lent; their thoughts on pilgrimage in general; and how the timeless words applied to the coming Sabbatical / Renewal Leave. The consensus was that God's enduring presence and reassurance offer comfort and hope as the Vestry and congregation prepare for what lies ahead.

Community Issue: Parishioner Richard Davis was invited to provide a short presentation to the Vestry on the status of the former St. Bede's property.¹ He was appointed by Fr. Ryan to represent St. Thomas' on the Diocesan committee chaired by Chief Financial Officer Mike Booher. Among the stakeholders are other churches in the St. Petersburg Deanery, City of St. Petersburg representatives, *et al.* Richard reported that this has been a challenging process and the site of the former church has been littered; there is also an issue with erecting a fence to deter trespassing. During the committee's deliberations it was determined that the location would be ideal for workforce housing. Ann Leavine (former Vestry Treasurer) facilitated a representative from Habitat for Humanity meeting with the members to explore possibilities.

The committee's last meeting was today and it voted on a range of options: (a) the Diocese would keep land and function as developer and manager; (b) partner with Habitat for development of town homes; (c) sell the property outright. The committee voted 4-1 to have Habitat for Humanity receive the property at a rate of \$1.4M. Of note, it was reassuring to committee members and former St. Bede's parishioners to have a faith-based organization to receive land. A letter will be forthcoming for Bishop Scharf's decision prior to the Diocesan Council meeting in April.

A Motion to approve the February Vestry Meeting minutes was made by Bill Barns and seconded by Mary Jane Park. **The motion was approved.**

¹ The Vestry noted that the demise of the St. Bede's physical plant was a sad occurrence. It reaffirmed the individual and collective responsibility to remain steadfast in their charge to maintain, repair, replace, and steward the St. Thomas' property, especially in times of fiscal challenge.

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Vestry Minutes

Building and Grounds

Old business:

- A proposal for the kitchen duct work was received from Pro Attic for \$4,307; it was the best offer.
- A portion of the flat roof failed near the electrical room in parish hall and the leak also impacts Guild Room and adjacent restroom. Bids for repair and replacement were received for \$6,000 and \$19,300 respectively (the prices are for shingles not expensive barrel tile). The roof repair is considered an immediate need.
 - Previously, the Vestry has used the Columbarium Fund with concurrence by the Endowment Committee as a source for vital repairs. There is concern that these funds may be rapidly depleting as a result.
 - There was considerable discussion of all other potential funding options and the Vestry has performed its due diligence.
- **A motion to fund the roof repair and replacement and to replace the kitchen duct work** using half from the Facilities Maintenance Fund and the other half from the Fund of St. Thomas' was made by Wade Hamby and seconded by Mike Labbee. **The motion was approved.**

New business:

- The St. Thomas' Safety Committee formed as an outcome from the parish-wide Active Assailant Training held in September 2023. The committee meets quarterly and is comprised of the Junior Warden, Vestry Secretary, and three other subject matter expert parishioners. To date, the committee has implemented recommendations from the 2023 Security Assessment. Two material enhancements were dead bolts to be installed in the Sanctuary and a video surveillance camera and monitor covering the outside Sanctuary door and parking lot and the Chapel outdoor entrance. Funding requests for these items were submitted in January 2004 to the Baynard Trust and a \$5,000 grant was received for procurement. That amount represents half of the total cost; the other half is to be borne by the parish.
- Additionally, the Safety Committee researched installing an Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) for the Sanctuary and received a quote from Zoma Tech for \$1,670.
 - After discussion, the Vestry concluded that the AED represents an ideal opportunity for one or several parish members to donate for a specific item. The Safety Committee will take this for action.

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Vestry Minutes

Finance, Administration and Worship

Director of Finance, Joe Master, provided the financial update:

BALANCE SHEET

- The investments took an upward swing in February, specifically the Main investment at \$33K and the Connie Long Bequest at \$6K.

INCOME STATEMENT

INCOME

- Pledge income is on track with the effects apparent of the prepaid pledges with a high % of budget at 35% (budget % for February should be 16.67%).
- Non-pledge revenue is down considerably. This may be partially due to those last year who were non-pledgers who are now pledging in 2024.
- There should be a Canterbury rent adjustment to bring us in line with our budget
- Overall, we are about \$2K under budget for the month due to non-pledge revenue and rent.

EXPENSE

- ACCT 511937 Piano Repair – This is for piano tuning which happens about 2 times annually, budget is straight-lined across 12 months the reason it looks as if we are over budget.
- ACCT 525812 Organist Supply – This is basically the same reason as above with a straight-lined budget.
- ACCT 511966 Filing fees – We may not even have any more expense on this line for the remainder of the year. This fee is annual filing for our registering as a corporation with the State of FL.
- ACCT 554810 Building Maintenance – Elevated monthly expense due to paint supplies for the office.
- Overall, expenses fell below budget.

NET INCOME

- Without expense down for the month, we ended doing better than budget.

RESTRICTED ACCOUNTS

- Will need to monitor altar (ACCT 800028) as we are showing a negative balance and youth (ACCT 800008) is getting low. Most likely will need to move funds from the bequest to fund these two accounts.

A motion to approve the February financials was made by Mary Jane Park and seconded by Wade Hamby. **The motion was approved.**

St. Thomas' Episcopal Church
Vestry Minutes

The Giving Plate. Thankfully, \$735 was received in loose plate offering designated for the Kairos ministry on Sunday, March 17th. This is the first of the scheduled third Sunday monthly recipients and the Vestry appreciates the work by Outreach Committee member and Kairos Coordinator, Dudley Savage, preparing for the May weekend.

Senior Warden's Report

- Safe Church Training. Each Vestry Member is required to take on-line course and a course link will be provided for those who need to complete it.
- Mike Labbee sent letter to St. Cate Fine Arts to recoup a \$1200 expense for track lighting that was not received.
- The Flower Guild, Altar Guild, Hospitality Guild have done phenomenal work in a compressed timeframe. While these members are not recognized formally through Vestry affirmation notes, their ministry is sincerely appreciated and all everyone is encouraged to extend personal thanks to those Guild members.

Rector's Report

- Parish Administrator. Jenn Dorosh has been hired for this position and began on March 18th. She comes to St. Thomas' with a solid background of experience, and we are happy to welcome her aboard.

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Vestry Minutes

- Organist /Choir Director search. Two candidates have been interviewed and two more remain to be accomplished.
- Vestry Goals

<u>Goal</u>	<u>Progress</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
1. Enhance Church Security and Safety through material and procedural upgrades		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed Active Assailant Training • Received funding for locks and camera from Baynard Grant • Researching AED procurement • Assess signage / way-finding needs
2. Deepen the Canterbury School Relationship by realizing parish membership growth		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include education and educators theme in Prayers of the People • Continue Benison Farm workdays • Coordinate physical property rqmts.
3. Consolidate the Outreach Initiatives by maturing existing and creating new programs		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinvigorate Outreach Cmte. and synchronize all ministries and activities • Establish an Outreach budget line item • BF arts. of incorporation at Diocese CFO
4. Plan and Execute the Capital Campaign for physical campus improvements		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct all-parish meeting with Next Level Generosity – <i>Horizons Stewardship</i> in fall
5. Revitalize the Music Program with measurable growth in adult and youth music ministries		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalize hiring decision from four remaining candidates
6. Grow number of participants in key ministries		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focusing on Ushers, Flower Guild, Greeters, Healing Prayer Ministry, <i>et al</i>
JAN FEB APR MAY JUN	MAR	JUL SEP OCT NOV DEC

- Save the dates:
 - Faith and Action for Strength Together (FAST) Rally April 11th
 - FAST Nehemiah Action April 30th
 - Vestry Retreat January 31 – February 1, 2025 at Day Spring Retreat House

Affirmation

The Vestry recognized Richard Davis for his dedicated work on the Diocesan St. Bede's property disposition committee.

The next Vestry meeting is on April 16th; Prayers Pam Holley and Refreshments Colin Burkhardt.

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Vestry Minutes

A motion to adjourn was made by Tom Shevlin and seconded by Mary Jane Park.
The meeting adjourned at 9:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Barns, Secretary

DISTRIBUTION:

Rector, Curate, Deacon, Wardens and Vestry, Director of Finance, Parish Administrator,
Endowment Committee Chair

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