

## **VESTRY MEETING**

**St. James Episcopal Church**

**Glastonbury, CT 06033**

**March 26, 2024**

The meeting convened at approximately 7:00 PM.

**Attendees:** Rev. Matt Handi, Ralph Urban, Don Gardner, Bob Dugger, Joyce Reynolds, Erin Perrelli, Marie Dixon, Valerie Huestis, Cheryl Turner  
Susan Wright joined via ZOOM at 7:15 PM

**Absent:** Mitch Chester

**Opening Prayer** by Rev. Matt Handi

### **Approval of the Agenda**

Motion made to approve agenda and seconded.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Marie motioned and Ralph seconded approval of the Minutes to meetings held on October 24, 2023, November 28, 2023 and February 27, 2024. The Minutes to the January 16, 2024 remain outstanding and Cheryl Turner, former Clerk, will try to locate the notes to that meeting and transcribe. All voted in favor of the October, November and February meeting Minutes with the exception of Erin and Valerie who were not members of the Vestry until the February 27<sup>th</sup> meeting. Motion carried.

### **Annual Meeting Minutes**

Marie motioned a correction to the Annual Meeting Minutes to suggest that there was a discussion on purchasing a new lawn mower but was not voted on. Ralph seconded. The vestry will re-visit this action item to approve at a later date.

### **New Business**

#### **Priest In Charge**

- Telephone System Update: Matt worked with Granite Communications in the past, recommends doing business with the company, so we will be signing on with them resulting in lower costs.
- Joining Jesus Fund: Finance Committee discussed tithe to go into endowment. Valerie confirmed amount to be deposited of \$30,839 (Tithe of amount collected as of 12/31/23.) Second tithe will be deposited when final number is determined.
- Firewall Update: A new firewall to the computer system has been installed, the old firewall had issues and needed to be replaced.
- Vestry Retreat: St. James and St. Lukes Vestry got together and discussed joint ministries for the future. Katie from St. Lukes and Gail from St. James will serve as parish coordinators and will keep the committee liaisons updated. That action plan is on hold for now.

### **Wardens' Discussion**

- Archives Update: Ralph reported, researched the cost of shredding at approximately \$300 for the first ten boxes. Ralph will talk with the Men's Group for assistance. The two black sofas located in the Refuge Room have been removed. The space, without windows, can be used for storage of music related documents and general storage. The loft area overlooking the foyer can be used as meeting space.
- Meeting Room Updates: Cheryl reported on the plan to completely clear out contents, but keep some of the book shelves. Bring in decorators for ideas, replace the "dining room" table with a conference room table, and replace current sofas with new. Ralph and Ed Crowe offered to donate the furniture and a SMART TV.
- Room Rental Rates: Don headed up the discussion. Our current rental rates were last reviewed in 2017. Valerie and Joyce did some research on what facility rentals are going for in today's market. Valerie presented rates from the Riverfront Community Center and Joyce presented information from the Knights of Columbus in Glastonbury. Valerie will put together an updated rate sheet, considering what some other facilities are charging.

### **Vestry Items**

- Hosting Toddler Groups Idea: Erin reported that she has been in contact with the Town of Glastonbury regarding events run by Parks & Recreation; one idea was hosting music groups and others that would be parent supervised. Erin will keep the Vestry updated when she hears back from the Town.

### **Treasurer's and Assistant Treasurer's Offerings**

- Bank Account Security Update: Bob reported that "our account was hacked". Money was removed without authorization, withdrawn electronically. Checking account was closed out, and a new one opened, creditors notified. Investigation underway, not sure if the unauthorized withdrawal was a fraudulent action or a mistake. Bank reimbursed St. James for the loss.
- February Financials: Bob reported. Bottom line, "we're still in good shape". Bob opened a savings account with Key Bank as a safe guard against fraud, keeping money in the checking account to a minimum. From a cash standpoint, we're in good shape. Getting caught up on bookkeeping postings. Motion made by Valerie and seconded by Don to make official approval of new bank account opening. Motion carried. Ralph and Debbie O'Donnell joined the "Counters Team". Motion made, seconded, all were in agreement.

**Old Business:** None presented.

### **Liaison Reports**

- Building and Grounds: After careful analysis and consideration Don determined that we are not ready to move on utility upgrade. Rates are all over the board, we have not

gotten any additional quotes. Don will do more follow up with first vendor and other options will be explored. Project tabled pending further research.

- Communications: Joyce reported that she met with Gail Lebert on March 21<sup>st</sup> and plans to attend the Committee meeting scheduled for April 10<sup>th</sup>. Active group, Gail enthusiastic about accomplishments such as updated website, Happenings Newsletter. Valerie handles press releases. Gail assists with ads. A redesigned St. James logo, replacing the "Sea Shell" is in progress and will be presented to the congregation for voting. The Committee needs from the Vestry an open line of communication providing information on what is happening within the parish ministries/committees and support from the congregation on social media. The Vestry may need help from the Communications Committee with getting the word out about financial situation and possible additional funding to meet certain operational expenses.
- Stewardship-Planned Giving: Valerie reported that she met with the Committee and acknowledged stewardship as a year-round ministry. Obtained a brochure from the Episcopal Church Foundation and will read to gain ideas on funding many years down the road.
- Carol's Closet: Marie suggested that St. James partner with St. Lukes for this outreach program. "Carol's Closet is doing great"!
- Lay Preaching: Erin reported. Opinion is that the congregation likes the idea of lay speakers, very positive response.
- Newcomers: Susan reported that she connected with Gail Lebert and wants to advertise, get more involved, try to identify new people, interview newcomers to see what drew them to St. James.
- Faith-in-Action: Cheryl reported involvement with global donations to Haiti. Deb Hamer will look into Glastonbury Food Bank receiving most of the donations; a sub group of Outreach will be devoted solely to the collection of food. Don mentioned that grant money is available through the town's "Neighborhood Assistance Act" program. The purpose of the program is aimed at strengthening communities by supporting various programs and services. Cheryl will look into the details; types of programs offered, eligibility and how to apply.

### **Compline**

Not offered due to network issues.

**Closing Prayer ~ Adjournment:** Ralph prayed us out. Meeting adjourned at 8:40 PM.

*Respectfully Submitted by: Joyce A. Reynolds, Clerk*