**St. James’ Episcopal Church Vestry**

Minutes of the Meeting on

August 25, 2021

Attending: Alison Banker, the Rev. Denise Cabana, Mitch Chester, Rich Connell, Bob Dugger, Sam Hoyt, Becky Lee, Debbie O’Donnell, and Joyce Reynolds

*Absent: Lisa Gleason, Erin Perrelli, Cheryl Turner*

Finance Committee Members attending: Don Gardner, Pat Goodrich

**7:00 p.m.**

The Rev. Denise Cabana recommended that the “Dwelling in the Word” scripture and discussion be skipped this month due to the high amount of items to cover in the agenda. All were in agreement.

Checking In

Becky Lee noted that the Becoming a Beloved Community team met on August 10. A proposal will be made to the Vestry later in tonight’s meeting.

Discussion

* Becky Lee made a motion to accept the minutes from the July 21 and August 4th Vestry meetings with the corrections previously sent to Cheryl. The vote by the Vestry to approve the minutes was unanimous.
* Rich Connell made a motion to accept the “Independent Accountants’ Report on Applying Agreed-Upon Procedures” completed by Mark Makuch, CPA, Pomfret Center for the year 2020 which had previously been e-mailed to Vestry members. The vote by the Vestry to approve the independent audit report was unanimous.
* Treasurer’s Report. Bob Dugger explained the Balance Sheet, ending July 31. We had a drop of $8,500 in the cash account in July which was used to fund reductions of $6,600 in the General Fund, $1,500 in the Diocesan Loan and $300 in the Joining Jesus Fund. He explained that he plans on $14,600 a month for pledges. Pledges were short by $5,100 in July. July is usually the month that we take funds from the Endowment Fund and we moved $10,100. Alison Banker made a motion to accept the Treasurer’s Report that was seconded by Mitch Chester. The vote by the Vestry to approve the Treasurer’s Report was unanimous.
* The Rev. Denise explained the Change from In-Person Service to Zoom would begin on **August 29** due to the CT Covid infection report of August 19 that places Glastonbury in the “red” zone. At the Re-Opening Committee meeting of August 8, the group decided that Glastonbury falling into the red zone would be the criteria used to rescind in-person worship. The August 22 service was cancelled due to the impending weather from the Hurricane/Tropical Storm. When we are able to return to in-person worship, we will seat the congregation 2 pews apart and keep the windows open as long as we can.

The Rev. Denise explained that on October 3, we will begin two services, with an added 10:15 service being on Zoom. The 10:15 service will be Morning Prayer. The last Sunday of the month Family Service will resume in October, 9:00 (live).

**The church is now CLOSED** while we are in the “red zone.”

* Denise has met with Director of Christian Education, Clair Gadson, to inform her that her position has been eliminated from the budget after August 31. Denise explained that Clair was very gracious with the news and Denise suggested that members of the Vestry may want to personally thank Clair for her work. The congregation will be informed at the upcoming meeting.
* Becky Lee and Debbie O’Donnell gave a brief description of the *Sacred Ground Dialogue Series*, as recommended by the St. James’ “Becoming a Beloved Community” team.
* It is program of the Episcopal Church, part of Becoming Beloved Community and part of the Episcopal Church’s long-term commitment to racial healing, reconciliation, and justice.
* A film- and readings-based dialogue series for small groups (Dialogue Circles)
* Focus: Indigenous, Black, Latino, and Asian/Pacific American histories as they intersect with European American histories
* Ten sessions: mostly 90 minutes-2 hours
* …designed to help “white people talk with other white people” and invites participants to “peel away the layers that have contributed to the challenges and divides of the present day- -all while grounded in our call to faith, hope, and love.”
* Suggested time frame: Epiphany to Lent, begin January 9, 2022
* We may want to invite St. Mark’s Lutheran and St. Luke’s.

A motion was made by Rich Connell and seconded by Alison Banker for St. James’ to register (the dialogue circles) with Sacred Ground Dialogue Series in order to access the specific curriculum and process materials. The vote by the Vestry was unanimous. Becky and Debbie will follow up.

* Revisions were made to the Guidelines for Covid-19 Safe Use of St. James’ Episcopal Church, last approved by the Vestry on May 26, 2021. The guidelines were revised to reflect the realities of August, 2021 and will be posted and provided to outside groups that use our facility.
* Debbie O’Donnell provided a summary of the August 18 Faith In Action Committee meeting. Twelve masked-parish members attended in the Parish Hall. An update of each current, on-going FIA projects was made: Carol’s Closet, the Knitting Ministry, the Bread Ministry, Lunch in the Park, the Church (vegetable) Garden, noting which projects needed funds from the FIA budget and which were self-funded (e.g., Carol’s Closet). An extended discussion was held to suggest various methods of fund-raising throughout the year. Soup Sundays and fall Mum sales were noted as methods to support food purchases for Lunch in the Park. Ideas for a big event were brainstormed for Spring, 2022. The group agreed to contribute $500 or up to $1,000 to the Glastonbury Links Together project to fund grocery gift cards that supplement the town food insecurity efforts. (Gift cards are provided to eligible citizens who qualify while the town food bank is closed due to Covid.)

Alison Banker reported on her inquiry to the Glastonbury Apple Festival. She found that an application fee for the smallest booth was $650.

* Mitch Chester and Don Gardner reported that there is no firm quote yet for replacement of the pneumatics of our heating system.
* Rich Connell presented his research into portable air purifiers for the (smaller) rooms in our church to capture droplets with HEPA filters. He researched units based on the size of our rooms (i.e., 1.meeting room, 2. “art” room, 3. nursery, 4. end room (Temple), 5. office, 6. parish hall (3)). The Oransi mod jr HEPA Air Purifier was highly recommended by *Consumer Reports.* Room-sized air purifiers are well thought of by the CDC. They are easy to move; we need one for each room rather than move them around. Rich was thanked for his thorough investigation to find a solution to use our building spaces. Bob Dugger made a motion to purchase 9 units (@ $1700.00 each) and 5 filters ($650) for annual replacements with Joining Jesus funds. The motion was seconded by Alison Banker. The vote by the Vestry was unanimous. Rich Connell will follow through.
* Don Gardner provided the Vestry with an update on solutions to the church’s air filtration challenge in our worship space in the Nave and Sanctuary. Don recommended air filtration units to bring in fresh air and filter it. This solution necessitates a lot of ductwork but it addresses our need for a better ventilation system. He explained how our existing vents, with filters, currently pull air from the basement or from other vents inside the church (e.g., the north side vent pulls air from the back of the church, the south unit pulls air from the basement). It is more expensive ($50-70,000). We need to further dilute/filter the air. It is a long-term solution. CES has charged $6,000 for the (engineering) drawings. Don will obtain 3 quotes for the construction work before the Vestry considers the project.

**9:00 pm** *At this point in the meeting, the Rev. Denise asked the Vestry for agreement to meet beyond the 2 hour meeting ending time; all agreed.*

* Bob Dugger provided a lengthy explanation of his 5-year budget forecasts sent to the Vestry on August 21, 2021. The budget planner assumed 1) level pledges in the more optimistic forecast and he also provided a second set of assumptions by the ECCT in the more pessimistic forecast; 2) $10,000 in fundraising per year, and that the 3) church would remain open for calculating the 5 year profit and loss projections. That is, the net annual cash flow under each scenario would be:

*Pessimistic Optimistic*

* December, 2022 ($28,000) ($22,000)
* December, 2023 ($42,000) ($30,000)
* December, 2024 ($52,000) ($34,000)
* December, 2025 ($62,000) ($38,000)
* December, 2026 ($72,000) ($43,000)

The Vestry discussed the projections and solutions to keep a full-time rector, which included ideas to reverse the forecast such as: 1) requesting 10% increases in pledges and 2) use of endowment funds. Rosanna at ECCT will be contacted to answer the question about how much of the endowment can be used, annually.

The Vestry thanked Bob Dugger for his thorough budget projections.

* The Rev. Denise recommended a conversation with the larger congregation over these concerns, noting Lisa Gleason’s suggestion that a letter go out before fund-raising and the pledge campaign.

September 12 was determined as the date for the all-Parish Meeting.

*Including:*

* *We’ve been able to make it through Covid, but now we’re feeling the effects of Covid on the church budget.*
* *A shift in the use of the Joining Jesus funds – to make the church safe.*
* *Note what we were able to accomplish before the shift (roof, painting, etc)*
* *September, 2021 -Reduction of 1 staff member (Joining Jesus funds)*
* *A change to a P/T Rector for 2022 if we can not realistically close the gap*
* *If the decision is to prioritize a full-time rector, the plans must be for 5 years of a full-time rector.*

Submitted by

Debbie O’Donnell

August 29, 2021/ *Revised on September 26, 2021*