

St. George's Church Vestry Meeting Minutes

March 16, 2023

Present: Jon Ewbank (JE), Carol Gaige (CG), Sandee Hughes (SH), David Kennison (DK), Gloria Kishton (GK), Lynn Paska (LP), Rich Unger (RU), Jeff Wengrovius (JW).

Absent: Meg Hughes (excused); Sean Alpert (excused ill), Paul - absent.

Senior Warden David Kennison convened the meeting at 6:30 p.m. in the Shaw Lounge with a prayer.

Feb. Minutes approved- RU, CG 2nd. Approved as revised - unanimously

Guest: Jon Pearson. Jon Pearson, former treasurer, distributed a report on the church's endowment funds. Once a year spread sheet, mo. by mo. analysis. Met with accountant after audit. Wants easier way to track endowment. General fund lost 16% last year due to market downturn. Ten different funds are restricted. Jon explained how the % of each fund is applied to value (market). Two funds were reinvested: Columbarium (sold 2 boxes), & Organ. No principal was removed. We've had \$ in bonds & because the interest rate went up, the bond prices went down. Ours went down approx. 16%. Jon reviewed the 2 last funds. RU asked if we have mapped the trends for 20 years. Jon said it's been very good until this year when the market went down. Jon will create a graph of the last 10 years & will give to JW.

Senior Warden's Report - David Kennison

Rectory Repairs

Kitchen done. Breakfast room done.

Dining Room floor sanded, awaiting poly coats. Room needs cleaning/painting.

Living room plaster is water-damaged - front & fireplace walls. Fred removed damaged areas, re-plastered & is painting.

Windows & some moldings are being repainted due to occupant damage.

Living room air conditioner (big; 30,000BTU) is dead & was removed at no charge by friend of Jerome (the floor guy).

Boiler and Plumbing Repairs

Boiler electrical contractor(?) failed during power outage. Boiler ran out of water and tripped off line. Jack Guarneri cobbled together a temporary repair with a part on his truck. Still working. No news on delivery of the one remaining part for new church boiler. All other parts waiting in Albany warehouse. Installation probably in late April, as weather improves to allow a 2-week shutdown.

News from Diocese

Per the Diocesan Profile and Search Committee, Bishop Search elections are planned for September, with hopes that a new Bishop will be consecrated Q1 2024. Questions were raised about same sex marriage & conflicts within our diocese & national church. These issues will need to be resolved, with hope that our new bishop will resolve the differences. Mtr. Elizabeth has been away; not sure why. Mtr. Schoonmaker has been approved by the Oxford background search, moving her closer toward her license in NY State.

The Standing Committee recently sent out the following statement, to the effect that resolutions proposing changes to the Diocesan Canons will not be entertained at Diocesan Convention this June:

Determined not to entertain resolutions involving amendment or alteration of the canons of the diocese at the upcoming Convention.

In 2021, the Standing Committee, as Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese, sought, obtained, and accepted the legal opinion of the Chancellor on the question of whether an Ecclesiastical Authority other than a Bishop may decide whether or not to allow canonical amendment or alteration resolutions to the Diocesan Convention.

On that basis, at the past two Conventions, virtual in 2021 and in person in 2022, the Standing Committee did permit such resolutions, on the supposition that Convention debate would move the diocese toward consensus, and that actions of Convention would be graciously received.

We recognize the significance attached by some to the alteration of diocesan canons, and by others to their retention. We have also listened to forecasts that failure to repeal the canons jeopardizes the election or consecration of the next Bishop. Still, we are encouraged by positive developments: the Profile & Search Committee has worked for the common good of the Diocese despite opposing views on a range of questions. The Task

Force on Communion Across Difference has begun to build a community of mutual respect and trust.

The decision to limit Convention resolutions to those needed for the conduct of regular business is based on a conviction that more widespread informal efforts akin to these — person-to-person listening and prayer that will enable us to move toward generous mutual understanding and reconciliation — seem to us a critical prerequisite if debate and legislative action at a convention are to build unity and a renewed sense of common purpose.

This decision will also allow us to use this time to focus resources, efforts, and prayer on the far more demanding and resource-intensive special convention to Elect a bishop who, with God's help, will shepherd us toward reconciliation and healing.

In the absence of clear and obvious certainties, let alone agreement, faith in God's love and in the power of the Holy Spirit must guide us all. We trust that the Lord loves our Diocese better than any of us can. We pray, and urge prayer: for peace; for healing; for God's blessing on one another; for humility; and, especially in this season of Lent, for the gift of our own repentance."

Upcoming Activities

- Our Lenten series of Sunday evening potluck suppers and Stations of the Cross will continue through Palm Sunday.
- Mass for Feast of the Annunciation—7 p.m., Friday March 24, (transferred from Saturday, March 25)
- Choral Evensong—3 p.m., May 21, (benefit to City Mission, 50% of plate offering)

Clergy Update

We are pleased to note that Fr. Vang is recovering well from recent surgery. He is scheduled to serve at St. George's throughout Holy Week.

Parochial Report

This report, due March 1, has been drafted but needs review. Membership data needs to be updated.

Congregational Departures

Vestry notes with great sadness the impending departure of Alice and Ralph Polumbo, who are relocating to Pennsylvania. Their contributions over the past 16 years have been tremendous. Davis has created a prayer for this, their last Sunday.

Sunday, March 19 is their last day of regular attendance here. David has crafted the following sendoff benediction: “**Alice**, you have served this parish with distinction and with unbridled energy and enthusiasm in leading our Outreach programs, in designing Stewardship campaigns, on Vestry and as Lector, Acolyte, Sacristan, and Altar Guild and so many other ministries, not to mention our Annual Meeting raffle! “**Ralph**, you have also given generously of your Time, Talent, and Treasure on Vestry, Finance Committee, Audit Committee, Altar Guild, Greeter, and assisting Alice in all her efforts!”

Jr. Warden - JE - Several repairs are needed. Brian’s windows & door; dangling tree limb. A report from our Insurance company made recommendations for repairs/upgrades. Clean up outside area on west side of great hall. GK mentioned SeeClickFix, a city app for reporting code violations (like garbage piled up). Access the app at the city website. DK will send a land survey to vestry members. GK mentions roof problems at St. George house. RU - suggests contacting Mid-State contractors who patched slate roof last year, to fix slate & inspect same roof. RU - inspect roof & walls of sanctuary to figure out what needs to be done & cost.

Treasurer’s Report

According to JW, the church has already taken in 38% of anticipated pledge income for the year. No new pledge commitments have been received since February meeting. As anticipated, cleaner Fred Ledge’s hours are now being allocated between cleaning and capital repairs. Boiler/heating expenses continue unabated and gas expenses are over budget. Fiscal year usually starts well, people donate up front for the year. Still planning to moving from Trustco to 1st Nat. Scotia. Fred Ledger expenses are more than anticipated. (Cleaning & capital repairs). Discussion of how these expenses are categorized in budget. RU suggests Fred should give us an estimate beforehand. This is problematic

due to unexpected nature of cleaning/repairs. He is being paid by an hourly rate. We are accumulating some interest on our accounts. JW is a bit concerned about gas expenses. Seems to go up consistently. JW & GK will work on getting energy audit from Nat. Grid. The new boiler should reduce gas consumption. Asset management committee - purpose is to examine current & future /needs/uses of buildings. JW will work with comm. to see which buildings cost what. This will help us make decisions about our properties.

Community Liaison Report

RU updated Vestry on a paper shredding, electronics/hazardous waste recycling/disposal event to be hosted on Earth Day (April 22) by the Historic Stockade Association. The collection point will be the parking lot of the Stockade Inn, across Union Street from the Inn.

There will also be a general neighborhood clean-up that morning. Residents and property owners are encouraged to do a general spring cleaning of their property. Those participating in these Earth Day events are also encouraged to join in a brief Earth Day march at Schenectady City Hall at noon.

The annual Stockade Sidewalk Sale is scheduled for June 10.

The 2023 Stockade Garden Tour (with selected home gardens open for viewing) will be on July 22, 10am - 5pm.

DK mentions that old ACs can be picked up for free by fellow (name needed) who took one from the rectory.

Garden Ministry/Book Club

Meg Hughes reports that the garden group will soon be focusing on spring cleanup, including the Rectory garden, which may require extra muscle/equipment. She will call an all-hands workday if need be.

On Sunday, March 19, the book club will discuss the Hawthorne mystery series by Andrew Horowitz. These books were recommended by Alice Polumbo, who will be leading the meeting on her last day of regular attendance at St. George's before relocating to Pennsylvania with her husband Ralph.

The club's next meeting will be on May 21. Lea Crow has suggested the novel "The Dictionary of Lost Words" by Pip Williams. It is lyrical exploration of the power of words.

Hospitality Committee

Sandee Hughes - During coffee hour on Sunday, March 5 Brian Taylor hosted a Cornish Cream Tea. This was in observance of the feast day of St. Piran (the patron Saint of Cornwall). During his sermon Brian connected his family history to Cornwall as well as explaining the rituals involved in a Cream Tea. There was tea, scones, clotted cream (from Great Britain) and strawberry jam. For some of us it was our first taste of clotted cream! It was all delicious! Thank you to Brian for making this happen. I think we should make this an annual event.

A sign up sheet for coffee hour treats and munchies continues to be available in the Great Hall. Easter sign up sheet will be out soon.

SH says great hall will be set up for Easter. An event will be held day before St. George's Day, April 23. It will be coordinated so she anticipates no problems.

SH added: Fr. Tom answered her thank you note for visiting his parish in Warrensburg. JW & JE will go to OH for visit this Sunday, for the rector search.

Communications

Lynn Paska remarked that photos are now on the website for Ash Wednesday and the Cornish Tea hosted March 5 by Dr. Taylor. She has been unable to finalize the March edition of *The Georgian Report* as some submissions are still pending. Newsletter will be out in a week or two.

Archives

Sean Albert - no report

Outreach

Paul Smigelski-absent. Pillows etc. collected. Upcoming collections for YWCA & SICM. CG will take over this ministry from Alice P.

Pastoral Care

Jim Wingate and Ann Duff have recently made visits to homebound parishioners Charlie Stamm and Helen Parker, administering Communion to each. Several parishioners have left. Jamie Taft is at a rehab nursing facility in Gloversville.

New Business

Annual Endowment Report

Jon Pearson - See above.

Diocesan Convention

The Diocesan Convention will take place June 10, via Zoom. Parishioners are needed to act as delegates; DK seeks 2 others. June 10, Sat. DK moves DK, Bob Paska, Ann Kennison for delegates. CG - 2nd. Passed unanimously.

Daily Gazette Advertising for Easter

Details/discussion. DK - ad was in Gazette for Xmas, more people showed up as result of ad. DK moves we run ad for Easter & a flyer to post around. Letters, with flyer inserted, will be written to those who have fallen away. GK & SH will help with flyer & ad for Gazette. We will meet on Tuesday, March 21 at noon in the church office.

David noted that he is also working on a flyer to be mailed out to past members, encouraging attendance at Holy Week services.

April 15 Schenectady County Historical Society Tour - Stockade Sacred Places

A tour is scheduled for 10 a.m. Wednesday, April 15. 20 min. tour. DK asked for volunteers to assist. JW volunteered to do some organ music. DK will be there.

Replacement of Great Hall Downspout

DK has located some spare gutter downspouts in the Cranmer Hall basement which might be adapted for use on the Green Street side of the Great Hall.

Old Business

Asset Management Report

See above.

Upgrade of Web Security

Vestry revisited the issue of upgrading our website security at a cost of \$255 annually. David has done an informal web survey of more than 20 churches, finding only two that lack a secure (https) website. DK -move to upgrade website; LP 2nd. Passed unanimously.

Work Needed at Choirmaster's Residence

Brian Taylor's windows and door need to be done. Need contractor. This work has been approved & is in the Asset Management report. No action taken.

Adjournment

The Vestry adjourned at 8:15 p.m., ending the evening with a prayer.

Without objection, meeting adjourned.

Upcoming meeting dates:

Rector Search—6:30 p.m., Thursday, April 13(?)

Regular Vestry—6:30 p.m., Thursday, April 20

Respectfully,

Gloria Kishton, Vestry Member (sitting in for Clerk Meg Hughes) A correction in the hospitality committee report is underlined.