

St. Mark's Episcopal Church
Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Vestry
October 26, 2023; held in the Parish Library

1. Fr. Christopher declared a **quorum** and called the meeting to order at 6:22pm. Vestry members in attendance were Fr. Christopher McLaren, Rector; Diane Ball, Blythe Clark, Darcie Farrow, Barry Hogge, George McJimsey, Lucy Sinkular, and Amanda Wright. Absent Vestry members: Dave Aley and Ty Camp. Clerk Deb Bluestone was present. There were no visitors.
2. Fr. Christopher conducted **Spiritual and Relational Formation**, consisting of a brief check in and review of “highs and lows” of the previous week by each Vestry member.
3. George made a motion to pass the **Consent Agenda**. The agenda consisted of acceptance of the September 28, 2023 Vestry Meeting Minutes and receipt of the September 2023 Financial Reports for St. Mark's Church and St. Mark's Montessori School. ***The motion was duly seconded and passed unanimously.***
4. **Reports of Officers, Boards & Standing Committees:**
 - a. Clergy Report: Fr. Christopher
 - i. Pledge cards were mailed to parishioners this week and one has already come back. Sunday October 29 is the Stewardship Drive kick off, with Oktoberfest on Saturday, October 28 and the Bishop's visit on Sunday, November 5.
 - ii. There are many pieces to the Bishop's visit: he's meeting with the Clergy from five different parishes in eight days. There will also be a Vestry meeting with the Bishop, which is intended as a “gathering of the Vestry,” and not an official meeting.
 - b. Senior Warden Report: Lucy
 - i. Coming up is prep for the 2023 Annual Meeting, which includes working on an official compilation of all Minutes from the past year.
 - ii. Lucy hopes to revitalize the Stewardship Committee this next year, and will be looking for people who have a gift in that way to step up and help.
 - c. Junior Warden Report: Fr. Christopher
 - i. A TV screen has been installed in the chapel, and the AV technician has improved the sound in the Parish Hall.
 - d. Finance Committee Report: Lucy
 - i. There are no recommendations from the Finance Committee this month.
 - ii. Fr. Christopher said a few words about pledging, noting that there is a pledge deficit, but nothing that the Finance Committee seems concerned about. George mentioned the \$17K budget deficit year-to-date (Item 2E under the Church I/E Statement section of the September 2023 Financial Reports Comments document). Fr. Christopher said the committee budgeted for a \$15K deficit, so

the deficit is a little larger than expected, but the budget is still in the black, based on expenses.

- iii. The Finance Committee is preparing to begin the budget process for 2024.

5. **Unfinished Business:**

- a. There was no unfinished business.

6. **New Business:**

- a. Action Items for Vestry Approval/Discussion

- i. Lucy noted that a general discussion of 2023 budget priorities, including COLAs, was completed during the presentation of the Finance Committee Report (*see 4.d. above*).

- b. Stewardship Effort Feedback

- i. Lucy said that she and the church music director, Jeremy Wirths, recently facilitated a Sunday conversation about stewardship observed that people wrestle with giving to the church alongside their family loyalties and obligations. George offered a few comments about the pledging process at the school where he teaches (Sandia Prep), saying that the Vestry needs to give the message that pledging is important because it helps the church plan and budget, and asking whether that message is given clearly enough. Diane agreed that it helps to know how many households have given; this is information that parishioners need to know and it encourages them to consider giving. Blythe appreciates the fliers that illustrate the steps of graduated giving and finds it to be a helpful tool. Fr. Christopher noted that Christian stewardship is worship, and not just an obligation; it is different than fundraising. Even so, there is absolutely a practical part of it, and small pledges matter, so that all people feel their own important place in the community.

- c. December Vestry Meeting

- i. The November Vestry Meeting is scheduled for the 30th, and December's Vestry meeting is scheduled for the 28th. Fr. Christopher said that there is usually a very short business meeting right before the office party, and the Vestry joins at the end, which could be done by Zoom. The Vestry does not have to approve the budget; that can be done in January, but housing allowances must be approved in December. The January Vestry meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 18 and the Annual Meeting for Sunday, January 28. Lucy suggested that the Vestry consider scheduling a brief meeting in December by Zoom, and noted that the Vestry is only required to meet 10 months of the year. November's meeting can include a preliminary look at the budget, and housing allowances can be approved in the November meeting, too. Fr. Christopher said that the Vestry will be invited to the office party, date TBD.

7. **Announcements & Upcoming Events:**

- a. Important dates:

- i. **Saturday, October 28, 5:00-8:00pm**

Oktoberfest

- ii. **Sunday, October 29**
Celebration Sunday "Pancakes and Pledge"
- iii. **Tuesday, November 1, 7:00pm**
Rosary for Remembrance
- iv. **Sunday, November 5**
All Saints Liturgy with the Bishop and Ofrenda
- v. **Friday-Sunday, November 10, 11, 12**
Diocesan Convention
- vi. **Thursday, November 24, 11:00am**
Thanksgiving Eucharist
- vii. **Saturday, November 25, 10:00am-1:00pm**
Greens Gathering Event @ Heather Gaume's home
- viii. **Sunday, November 26**
Wreath and ornament-making. Advent is only three weeks this year, so parishioners can have their wreaths finished before Advent begins.

- b. Vestry terms conclude for Barry, George, and Lucy. The Vestry needs to start recruiting now for next year's new Vestry members. Three new members are needed.
- c. Blythe suggested that the Vestry consider starting up again with the annual Vestry "retreat," perhaps a Saturday in late January. In times past, the retreat was just one day, or a Friday dinner with a half-day on Saturday, held locally. It was noted that St. Michael's Episcopal Church held a fall parish retreat last year.
- d. The next regular meeting of the Vestry is **Thursday, November 30, 2023 6:00pm** at St. Mark's.
- e. The 2023 Parish Annual Meeting is **Sunday, January 29, 2024 at St. Mark's** during the service.


8. **Closing Prayer:** Fr. Christopher

Meeting adjourned at 7:55pm.

These minutes are respectfully submitted by Deb Bluestone, Clerk to the Vestry.

MINUTES APPROVED:


Fr. Christopher McLaren, Rector


Lucy Sinkular, Senior Warden