

St. Mark's Episcopal Church
Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Vestry
November 30, 2023; held in the Parish Library

1. Fr. Christopher declared a **quorum** and called the meeting to order at 6:35pm. Vestry members in attendance were Fr. Christopher McLaren, Rector; Dave Aley, Diane Ball, Blythe Clark, Darcie Farrow, Barry Hogge, George McJimsey, Lucy Sinkular, and Amanda Wright. Absent Vestry member was Ty Camp. Clerk Deb Bluestone was present. There were no visitors, but Ken Reese from the finance committee attended during that portion of the meeting.
2. Fr. Christopher conducted **Spiritual and Relational Formation**, with reading and discussion from "Low: An Honest Advent Devotional," by John Pavlovitz.
3. Lucy made a motion to pass the **Consent Agenda**. The agenda consisted of acceptance of the October 26, 2023, Vestry Meeting Minutes and receipt of the October 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. Finance Committee: Ken Reese
 - i. Ken began by reporting on DFMS funds from St. Mark's Investment Accounts. That report is known as "Motion 4 Report" due to the Vestry's 2021 motion that finance prepare that information annually for assistance in planning the next year's budget. The report through the third quarter of 2023 was prepared 11/07/2023 and is appended to these minutes.
 - ii. Ken reviewed the "Planning Information for 2024" table, line items for "Projected 4023 – 3024 DFMS Dividend," and "80% of Projected 4023 – 3024 DFMS Dividend." Fr. Christopher commented that the church is just a couple of payments away from paying off the \$80K 10-year loan for the Montessori school.
 - iii. In a review of the 2023 church budget and 2024 draft budget, Ken pointed out changes to items under several sections, including Personnel Expenses, Support Staff, Sabbatical, Cost of Living increases, Church Administration, and Building and Grounds (electricity). Fr. Christopher said that this is a first draft of the 2024 budget, which needs to be discussed, revised, and approved for presentation at the January Annual Meeting.
 - iv. Last was discussion of the draft Montessori School budget. Under Income for Spring, the budget assumes an enrollment of 48 and 30 for the summer. Fall assumes an enrollment of 55. These projections were "well within reason," considering the newly expanded classroom capacity. Grant income was highlighted, and highlights on the expense side included personnel expenses, a bonus to be distributed with next level of qualifications, cleaning service, and a depreciation expense. The 2024 budget closes with a small surplus. Fr. Christopher commented that this is a complex budget because there are so many "moving parts" with fluctuations in tuition. Dave noted that the COLA is 3.2 percent when the tuition increase is 5 percent, and expressed discomfort

with a COLA that may be too low to meet staff needs. Ken said that the church is “still digging itself out of a hole” caused by COVID and inflation, and it has been hard to get teachers. Next year, if there is a bigger surplus, there can be a conversation about bigger raises.

Ken noted two things that will help add to the surplus: the first is to raise the school ECEDE rating from 2 to 5, and the second is for the school to become a NM Pre-K Center. Director Caitlin McGuire is making progress on both areas. Fr. Christopher noted that this budget shows a lot of money was needed for classroom expansion, so until the school gets its improved rating, it will have to lean on tuition. Ken noted that in comparison with other schools, St. Mark’s comes in a little under the others in its tuition rates. Amanda asked about increasing enrollment, and Fr. Christopher said that the upcoming full-day Pre-K will have a huge budgetary impact. Ken suggested that Caitlin be invited to a Vestry meeting next year.

Brief discussion followed about outreach and having a “Ministry Fair,” or a way to highlight a church ministry every Sunday.

b. Clergy Report: Fr. Christopher

- i. Fr. Christopher shared that parishioner Tom Minard passed yesterday, and the funeral for parishioner Ken Eberhard will be next Tuesday, December 5, at 3:00pm. He said November has been “a beautiful month,” but challenging.
- ii. Fr. Christopher is turning to intentional planning for his sabbatical; the sabbatical budget reflects categories for sabbatical saving for future clergy sabbaticals.
- iii. A pledge update was that as of today there is about \$492K in pledges from 100 households. The last households will be a push. Lots of families with kids have not come back after COVID, but there are 3 or 4 new families every week, and it will take time for them to all be incorporated. Church regulars need to keep welcoming and connecting and talking to newcomers every week. Lucy said that we as a Vestry should pray to know how to best serve with whatever funds we actually end up with. Fr. said that the church has been solvent for seven years, but it will take hard work to keep it that way. At Dave’s request, we reviewed the grow one step chart showing the distribution of the pledges.

c. Senior Warden Report: Lucy

- i. Lucy thanked the Vestry for its contributions toward creation of the “Vestry Basket” for the Montessori School fundraiser. \$500 has been raised so far to help fund school field trips.
- ii. Lucy said that the Stewardship Committee needs Vestry members or parishioners to assist with the 2024 Stewardship campaign.
- iii. Sabbatical planning – (*see 4.b.ii above*).
- iv. Budget matters – (*see 4.a.i-iv above*).
- v. Lucy reminded Vestry members to prayerfully consider supporting an area of ministry on the Commissions list:

Commissions for Each Vestry Member	
<i>Building the Future at St. Mark's</i>	
Area of Ministry or Responsibility	Person
Acolytes	
Adult Formation	Diane
Altar Guild	George
AV	
Chalice Bearers & Eucharistic Ministers	Lucy/Katey Breen
Finance	Barry
Hospitality/Fellowship	
Jr. Warden – Facilities	Ty
Lectors for Worship	
Senior Warden	Lucy
Servants of Worship	
Stewardship	Lucy
Youth and Family Ministry	

d. Junior Warden Report: Fr. Christopher

- i. There are no major issues at this point. AV issues are being worked on, and as of today, the monitor in the chapel is “dynamic,” which makes the chapel a usable “overflow” room.

e. Building Renewal Committee Report: Lucy

Saturday, January 14 will be the second visit by architect Paul Barribeau. He is focusing on efficiency and maximizing resources. Fr. Christopher said = possible locations for elevators are in consideration as the building was built with two basements that do not connect. Architect is also looking closely at the kitchen. The latest meeting of the Building Renewal Committee was about a general site plan for the entire campus, and it included detailed reviews of spread sheets and square footages. An acoustician will visit in mid-January. There are ongoing concerns about the poor carpet condition, and a front pew recently cracked.

5. **Unfinished Business:**

- a. There was no unfinished business.

6. **New Business:**

a. Action Items for Vestry Approval/Discussion

- i. Discussion and identification of 2024 Budget priorities (*see 4.a.i-iv above*).
- ii. Fr. Christopher said that the holiday staff party is scheduled for Thursday, December 14, and the potluck dinner begins at 6:30, to which Vestry, the School Board, and office volunteers are invited to attend. If needed, the Vestry can meet after the party for a brief meeting to pass next year’s housing allowances. Nothing more needs doing on the budget until the January Vestry meeting. That is a key meeting – the budget must be passed so that there is time to add it to the Annual Report before the report is printed for the Annual Meeting.

7. **Announcements & Upcoming Events:**
 - a. Important dates:
 - i. **Thursday, November 24, 11:00am**
Thanksgiving Eucharist
 - ii. **Saturday, November 26, 10:00am – 1:00pm, weather permitting.**
Advent Greens Gathering at Heather Gaume’s home Advent event: wreath and ornament making (have an ornament idea/sponsor a table)
 - iii. **Advent 1 Sunday, November 27**
 - iv. There is no Vestry meeting in December
 - b. Next Year’s Vestry: three-year terms conclude for Barry Hogge, George McJimsey, and Lucy Sinkular.
 - c. The next regular meeting of the Vestry is **Thursday, January 18, 2024, 6:30pm** at St. Mark’s. (**Note that Vestry members gather at 6:00pm instead of 5:30pm, and the meeting begins at 6:30pm.**)
 - d. The 2023 Parish Annual Meeting is **Sunday, January 28, 2024**, at St. Mark’s during the service.

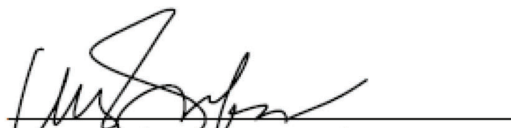
8. **Closing Prayer:** Fr. Christopher

Meeting adjourned at 8:48pm.

MINUTES APPROVED:



Fr. Christopher McLaren, Rector



Lucy Sinkular, Senior Warden

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