

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

1. Fr. Christopher declared a **quorum** and called the meeting to order at 6:21 pm. Vestry members in attendance were: Fr. Christopher McLaren, Rector; Dave Aley, Diane Ball, Ty Camp, Darcie Farrow, Barry Hogge, and Lucy Sinkular. Absent Vestry members: Blythe Clark, George McJimsey, and Amanda Wright. Clerk Deb Bluestone was present. There were no visitors.
2. Fr. Christopher conducted **Spiritual and Relational Formation**. He presented one of the videos featured in the upcoming inquirers' classes on Presiding Bishop Michael Curry's "The Way of Love: Practices for Jesus-Centered Life." (The practices include Turn, Learn, Pray, Worship, Bless, Go, and Rest.) Discussion followed. The inquirers' classes will be facilitated by Fr. Christopher, Ty Camp, and Harrison Higgins.
3. Lucy made a motion to pass the Consent Agenda. The agenda consisted of acceptance of the May 25, 2023, Vestry Meeting Minutes, the June 20, 2023, Special Vestry Meeting Minutes (*no regular meeting was held in June 2023*), the July 20, 2023, Vestry Meeting Minutes, and receipt of the May 2023 and July 2023 Financial Reports for St. Mark's Church and St. Mark's Montessori School (the June Financials were unreviewed by the Parish Finance Committee, as the committee did not meet in July). ***The motion was duly seconded and passed unanimously.***
4. **Reports of Officers, Boards, and Standing Committees:**
  - a. Clergy Report: Fr. Christopher
    - i. Fall formation classes begin September 10, with offerings for all ages. Adult classes include "The Way of Love" for inquirers; "Caring for Our Gifts," conversations on stewardship; and "Breathing Under Water: Spirituality and the 12 Steps." Father Christopher encouraged members of the Vestry to attend some of these classes in order to be part of these vital conversations.
    - ii. Fr. Christopher offered more details about architect Paul Barribeau's upcoming presentation and community discussion on Visioning Sunday, September 24, 2023. He encouraged the Vestry to attend and participate in the conversations, which promise to be deep, lively, faithful, and interesting, with opportunities to reflect about St. Mark's as a church for future generations of children, and how St. Mark's can be a place that newcomers will want to return to. The range of concerns also includes accessibility issues, the failing organ, the deteriorating carpet, etc.
  - b. Senior Warden Report: Lucy
    - i. Next month Lucy will report to the Vestry the results of her review of church by-laws and canons and whether it is allowable for her to stay on as Senior Warden for a fourth year.
    - ii. Lucy said Vestry should be ready in that with the Building Renewal Committee bringing in the architect for Visioning Sunday, there will likely be many comments and reactions from parishioners shared with Vestry members.

- c. Junior Warden Report: Ty
  - i. The Parish Hall is nearing completion of upgrades to its AV and video. Fr. Christopher added that the first phase is finished, and it was complicated. The church hired the firm that did the AV for the Sanctuary. By next week there will be a Hearing Loop System in the Parish Hall. Eventually, most of the visual and sound functionality will be activated by single button. The whole environment for presentations and classes will be much improved.
  - ii. Internet in the Chapel is in progress so that there can be Wi-Fi for streaming funerals. Fr. Christopher added that there will probably be a TV monitor installed in the Chapel as well. There is a TV screen in the Narthex now for morning announcements.
  - iii. There was discussion about Ty's project document ("St. Mark's Facility Tracking") on Google Drive, which can be viewed, but without editing permissions, to preserve the integrity of the document.
  
- d. Stewardship Committee: Fr. Christopher/Lucy
  - i. Planning is underway for the Fall Campaign. Lucy stressed the importance of each person doing what they can to financially contribute, and thinking of it as blessing, and not a burden. Fr. Christopher added that, per the financial reports, income from pledges is \$35K behind, but he is not alarmed. Some people are waiting on distributions and pay their pledge in one annual sum. We cannot know what is going on for people that is interrupting their pledging, and, as a Vestry, we need to pray for everyone. It is important for all parishioners now that the year is 3/4 of the way through, to check their pledges. Sometimes people do not realize an auto transfer has been interrupted. Fr. Christopher is checking in with families for pastoral conversations in case there is a need or crisis. Lucy explained that the stewardship program at St. Mark's recognizes the importance of confidentiality and wanted Vestry to know that only the rector, treasurer and business manager are aware of pledges and the amount of gifts by any particular parish member. As Vestry we should keep an eye on the big picture.
  
- e. Report of the Building Renewal Committee (BRC): Fr. Christopher
  - i. The program for Visioning Sunday will include an architect's presentation, a catered meal and beverages, and a community discussion. The meal is planned family style at each table with service at the table. Ty raised the question about activities for children, suggesting that more people will be inclined to stay for the meal and discussion if children are occupied. Fr. Christopher said that the time needed for the entire event will require another hour or hour and 15 minutes beyond the usual Sunday morning finishing time of 12:15. Lucy suggested that we begin notifying the congregation right away that this is a special and important event designed to encourage engagement and that all are welcome.
  
- f. Finance Committee Report: Fr. Christopher
  - i. St. Mark's Montessori School (SMMS) started the year with 36 children. Although the school budgeted for 48 total, there are now 42, and six children

were registered in the last two weeks. He is not worried at all; the school is running smoothly, and all is quiet and calm.

- ii. The state came to inspect the SMMS next week and it passed the inspection. While inspectors were on site, they remeasured all the classrooms and said that the school could increase its capacity from 58 to 67.

5. **Unfinished Business:**

- a. There was no unfinished business.

6. **New Business:**

- a. Action Items for Vestry Approval/Discussion
  - i. Fr. Christopher reported that the AV project in the Parish Hall is going to require additional financial support, and requested that the Vestry approve about \$8K in additional funding. Diane moved to approve \$10K for the laser/Bluetooth AV upgrade. Motion was seconded. In discussion it was noted that there is a 4% distribution every quarter from the General Fund that goes straight into the Capital Fund, which is currently at \$29,385. Diane withdrew her first motion and moved that the Vestry allocate up to - but not over - \$15K from the Line 1 Section of the General Fund for AV upgrades in the Parish Hall, Chapel, and Narthex, with the monies to come out of the Capital Funds. ***The motion was duly seconded and passed unanimously.***

7. **Announcements & Upcoming Events:**

- a. Important dates include
  - i. **Sunday, September 3, 11:15am**  
Discussion of Richard Rohr's "Breathing Underwater" and the 12-step process as spiritual practice, in the library with Thomas Russell and Cole McLaren.
  - ii. **Sunday, September 10, 11:15am**  
Inquirers' classes begin with a Catechesis (baptism & confirmation) introductory gathering, in the library with Fr. Christopher, Ty Camp, and Harrison Higgins.
  - iii. **Sunday, September 10, 11:15am**  
Vital Conversations Series: "Caring for Our Gifts: Toward a Larger View of Stewardship," in the Chapel.
  - iv. **Sunday, September 17, following the service**  
Celebration of Karen McDaniel, Altar Guild Directress for 30+ years, in the Parish Hall.
  - v. **Sunday, September 24, 9:30am-1:45pm**  
Meet our architect – a community visioning workshop
  - vi. **Saturday, September 30, 9:00am-12 noon**  
All Parish Work Day with Cub Scout Troop 990 and St. Mark's Montessori School families.
  
- b. Next Year's Vestry: terms conclude for Lucy, Barry, and George. The Vestry previously voted to support a fourth year for Lucy as Senior Warden for

continuity during Fr. Christopher's 2024 summer Sabbatical. The Vestry needs to consider the particulars.

- c. The next regular meeting of the Vestry is **Thursday, September 28, 2023, 6:00pm** at St. Mark's.

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:10pm.

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

**MINUTES APPROVED:**



**Fr. Christopher McLaren, Rector**



**Lucy Sinkular, Senior Warden**