

St. James' Episcopal Church Vestry Meeting

November 28, 2023 (ZOOM meeting)

Present: The Rev. Joe T. Mitchell, Amy Allyn, Margie Amberge, Michael Brown, Barbara Burton, Nancy Corl, Marie Hughes, Susanne Rynkiewicz, Bill Spalding, Diane Steckel

Absent: Judy Holmes.

On ZOOM: Nicole Bova with September Financials

Prayer and Psalm: Marie Hughes read Psalm 122, and then discussed how the psalm impacted her life in view of present-day happenings in Israel and her recent trip to the Holy Land.

October Minutes: Barbara Burton made a motion to amend the minutes by not including the response Michael Brown made during the October meeting; seconded by Amy Allyn; approved by the Vestry. Warden Susanne Rynkiewicz made a motion to accept the minutes as amended; seconded by Nancy Corl; approved by the Vestry,

December Prayer: Marie Hughes

January Prayer: Amy Allyn

December Psalm: Psalm 65

Recent Donation: St. James' received \$10,000 from the Sam and Mary Lou Mason Fund which led to a discussion about how to best use the fund and whether the Vestry should create a policy for unexpected donations and windfalls. As a result of the discussion, although the issue will be revisited again, Warden Susanne Rynkiewicz made a motion to put the \$10,000 into the operating budget of 2024 with 10% of it being designated for Pastoral Care. The Motion was seconded by Barbara Burton; approved unanimously by the Vestry.

Discernment Question from Father Joe: "What is my greatest desire right at this minute?" The Vestry took time to discuss their responses.

Pending Liturgical Changes: Father Joe explained the upcoming changes in liturgy which will begin in Advent. There will be full explanation in *The Spirit* and *The Weekly* so everyone in the parish will be able to understand and know what the changes are and the reasoning behind them as well. The changes in general will help in making the three services on Sunday distinct from each other.

Pledges: St. James' has received 95 pledges to date for a total of \$292,486, but the total is still behind last year's.

RJRC Budget Request: The Commission requested \$4170 for the year, but the Vestry would like a breakdown of how the money will be spent.

Financial Report: Nicole Bova presented the financial report. As part of the report, she told the Vestry that Jamie Bova is the new Treasurer, and Peter Lewis has been contracted for snow removal this winter. Significantly noted is giving is down \$44,000 from last year. Barbara Burton made a motion to accept the Financial Report; seconded by Amy Allyn; approved by the Vestry.

COLA BREAKDOWNS: The Vestry held a discussion on which of the COLA percentages would be used for clergy and staff salaries. The COLA's considered were 5.6%; 4%, and 3%. After a

thoughtful discussion Warden Bill Spalding made a motion to give the full 5.6% wage increase to the clergy and the staff; seconded by Marie Hughes; approved unanimously by the Vestry. Next Warden Susanne Rynkiewicz made a motion to apply the 5.6% to the Rector's expense account as well; seconded by Margie Amberge; approved by the Vestry.

Search Committee for the New Rector: The Diocese has guidelines for new clergy hires dependent on the various levels. St. James' has been a Tier 4 Church, and if , we stay a Tier 4 church we will use those parameters for salary, health insurance, pension and the like in hiring a new rector. After discussing the issue, Michael Brown made a motion to recommend to the Search Committee that we observe the Tier 4 guidelines; seconded by Nancy Corl; approved unanimously by the Vestry.

Marie Hughes made a second motion that St. James' offers health insurance for a plus one or family in addition to the compensation already approved; seconded by Amy Allyn; approved by the Vestry.

Vestry Retreat: After a discussion, the Vestry decided to hold a retreat at an off-site location during the weekend of February 16-17. Father Joe will make the arrangements.

The next Vestry meeting will take place on December 26, Tuesday, at 6 PM.

The meeting adjourned with a prayer at 8:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted.

Marie P. Hughes