

St. James Vestry Meeting
Thursday, January 18, 2024
5:45 pm

Participating: Rev. De Freeman, Rev. Forbes Sirmon, Rev. Amanda Doshier, Senior Warden Jeanie Smith, Treasurer Bruce Stone, Parish Administrator Meghan Kasuba, Finance Director Jim Ketchum, Margaret Cadden, Dan Campbell, Ben Coddling, Jim Daniell, Bill Dowdle, Peter Gaillard, Dee Gambill, Laura Jones, Jennifer Lambert, Matthew Myrick, Misty Whitehead and Clerk Mary Mullins Redditt

Absent: Tracey Corte

Opening Prayer & Recitation of the Mission Statement

We are a community anchored in Christ, seeking God, sharing His love, and serving others.

Fr. De opened the meeting at 5:45 pm and Rev. Amanda Doshier offered a blessing. Then Fr. De invited all to recite the mission statement (above).

Meditation – Jeanie Smith

Jeanie shared a spiritual poem written by local resident Sarah Davis, who recently passed away.

De described the importance of the vestry as a faith-based group and invited us all to participate in meditation, in addition to taking a role in offering a meditation or spiritual journey offering at a coming vestry meeting. A schedule was provided.

De then asked all to introduce themselves, since we have new vestry members in the room tonight.

Nominations & Welcome New Vestry Members

Approve and Certify Clerk

De asked Mary Mullins Redditt to return as Clerk of the Vestry and asked for vestry approval. Dee Gambill made a motion to approve Mary as the Clerk, Margaret Cadden seconded and all approved.

Nominate and Approve Junior Warden

This role is now open with the retirement of Lauren Arington and De asked all who might volunteer for the position. The role includes meeting with people to discuss concerns, and meeting with buildings and grounds, supported by the staff. The Junior Warden works with Meghan and Mike Costigan quite a bit. If there were any problems with the vestry, then members would go to the Junior Warden. The Senior Warden is the liaison with the priests. Both the Sr. and Jr. Wardens, Treasurer, and Clerk meet with De from time-to-time to discuss issues.

Jim Daniell nominated Margaret Cadden as the Junior Warden and all voted in favor to approve Margaret as Jr. Warden.

Financial Update Discussion & Decisions – Bruce Stone & Jim Ketchum

Jim Ketchum explained how to read the financial sheets presented.

Financial Review

Jim made some corrections on the financial review and will send it out to vestry members.

December Financial Report

At vestry meetings, Jim explained that we typically look at the performance of last month. In December receipts are typically double the income we get in other months of the year. The report includes month actual to month budget. Jim explained the line items and what they represent. The biggest single expense is \$100 k/annually for property insurance. “Outreach” includes the Outreach Committee, our diocesan pledge, discretionary donations, and seminarian expenses.

Balance Sheet

This report shows restricted and unrestricted cash. A donor can restrict cash or vestry can choose to restrict cash. Most of our cash is with Merrill Lynch in 3- or 6- month CDs, earning 5%.

Stewardship Update

The stewardship campaign has been nothing short of extraordinary. Jim reviewed the data outlined in the summary. The whole approach has been very well received and the outcome has increased our pledges.

Budget

Jim has slightly updated numbers from the annual meeting but the total is the same. Is based on our pledge numbers. Have done a consistent job of estimating our plate each year. “Misc.” funds can be estimated off interest income and income for weddings and events. Another line item is income estimated from the school. Have estimated income and expenses in this report. We have a deficit on paper of around \$30 K, but we have historically underspent our budget, and we have large cash reserves. Feel like this year’s budget is well within the margin of error.

We put \$5 K/month in the building fund to cover large maintenance expenses. Have over \$100 K in that fund now. Cashflow from the school is large in August and in January when tuition is paid. Jim showed a comparison of the expense budget performance over the last three years, which shows we have come in under-budget on expenses between \$53 K and \$113 K each year.

Jeanie notes that Pathways to Generosity was very successful and we need to thank our leaders Matt Myrick, Margaret Cadden, and Laura Jones, as well as all the staff who put in many hours to make this a successful campaign.

Pathways to Generosity – thank you notes

There are additional thank you notes to write and Meghan brought additional supplies and signups for vestry members.

2024 Budget Talks and Approval

Although our budget is not final, we do need to approve the expense part of the budget which is \$2,481,550 between the church and the school. Jim Daniell moved to accept the expense budget, Ben Coddington seconded and all approved.

Vestry Expectations, Roles and Responsibilities – De Freeman

New members have received an orientation handbook. Vestry members are the liaisons to the parish and are charged with listening and offering responses, as well as bringing concerns back to the vestry. When we sit down at the table and discuss a concern in Executive Session, the expectation is that this is confidential. This is necessary so we can be open and honest in such discussion. This is not necessary very often.

The primary function for the vestry is to 1) raise funding for the church and 2) bring in a rector when the rector leaves, which involves putting together a Search Committee.

Vestry members need to attend church regularly and to reach out and meet new people – especially those with “visitor” nametags on -- and ensure the parishioners know you are on the vestry and can be contacted.

St. James is mostly staff-driven and the staff has taken on a lot of duties that were once performed by the vestry members. The vestry needs to be vision-driven and be looking forward. It is important to attend the vestry meetings. If you think you will need to miss more than a couple of meetings due to conflicts, maybe this is not the right ministry for you right now. We also offer a virtual option to join, understanding people may be out of town.

The vestry is also considered a small group and oftentimes, the small groups are called on to serve at parish functions. Ensure that at any parish function you attend, you are offering assistance, such as putting up tables, chairs, etc. ***The first Lenten Super is February 21, and the Vestry has volunteered to cook, serve and cleanup. The dinner will begin at 5:30 pm and be over by 7:00 pm***

We will likely begin a Capital Campaign this year, though it has not yet begun. Our buildings and parking, entryways, desperately need expansion. The vestry reviewed an overall conceptual plan, but this is not yet available on the website because it is just a first rough draft that needs more thorough vetting. We will likely need to move ahead on entrance alternatives in light of City construction of the traffic circle soon and ahead of the Capital Campaign. The latest conceptual plan is about half the price of the original plan.

Decision

Vote to Approve December Vestry Minutes

A couple of corrections were noted to the meeting minutes. Meghan Kasuba will make them and redistribute to the Vestry. Ben Coddington made a motion to accept the meeting minutes with the corrections, Margaret Cadden seconded, and all approved.

February Vestry Meeting – Thursday, February 15

Closing Prayer

Rev. Amanda Doshier closed us in prayer at 7:00 pm and the group adjourned.

Submitted respectfully by Clerk of the Vestry Mary Mullins Redditt