

Approved Minutes
St. Andrew's Vestry Meetings
June 17 and 20, 2023

June 17, Meeting at Lili and Alex Pugh's home in Friendship during the Vestry Retreat:

Rector, Wardens and Vestry present: Marilyn Cheney, Martha Elliott, Laurie Gray, Kirk Holbrook, Kelley Kash, Ruth Piper, Suzannah Rohman, Lili Pugh, Jim Swan, John Ward

Excused: Terry Marsh, Sara Sandberg

The meeting was called to order at 2:03.

John Ward updated us on the disbursement of the funds for Haiti outreach. There will no longer be a separate account for the Haiti funds. Mark Freese has consulted our CPA about this change. We moved, seconded and voted to approve closing the separate Haiti account and going forward using the general fund account for Haiti donations.

Signage - John Ward explained an updated policy regarding signs on our railings facing the street. The vestry will now approve all signs before they are displayed. A new policy will simplify an up/down time limit and help coordinate dates.

The Rector reported that no one has volunteered to be considered to become the assistant treasurer.

The Rector will form a system for instituting background checks for the pertinent staff and volunteers.

The First Sundays Collection for Outreach has been coordinated by John Ward, and going forward will be coordinated by Kelley Kash. Currently there are seven recurring beneficiaries. "Out Maine" will be the recipient next month.

June 20, Meeting in the Undercroft:

Rector, Wardens and Vestry present: Marilyn Cheney, Martha Elliott, Laurie Gray, Kirk Holbrook, Kelley Kash, Terry Marsh, Ruth Piper, Lili Pugh, Suzannah Rohman, Sara Sandberg, Jim Swan, John Ward

Treasurer present: Mark Freese

Visitor present: Bishop Brown

Suzannah opened the meeting at 4:30

Opening Prayer/Reflection- Ruth Piper gave the opening prayer/reflection. Lili Pugh will give the opening prayer/reflection at our next meeting.

We moved, seconded and voted to approve the May 16, 2023 minutes. The motion was passed by all.

Property Committee – Jim Swan said that Bill Judd is getting clarification on the two heat pump proposals. The proposal from Midcoast Energy Systems will likely best meets our needs. We will need a new contract. The \$30,000 price is firm if we sign a contract by July 1st. Because the vestry has already given approval, Suzannah can sign the contract after the property committee gives the go ahead. We are trying to find a cleaning service for August and September. Margaret Coit may have a suggestion. It was noted that to save on energy we should not overcool our building in the summer months after the heat pumps are installed. Thank you, Jim.

Treasurer's Report- Mark Freese

The current funds in the Haiti account at the 1st, \$8,665.00, will be placed into the #1000 account, which is our regular account at the 1st. We moved, seconded and voted to approve the treasurers report. The motion was passed by all. Thank you, Mark.

Climate Justice Council - Lili reported that the The Earthkeepers had a very productive meeting. By the next Vestry meeting they may have a covenant to present. They are looking forward to implementing new ideas during the September and October Season of Creation that involve the parish and wider community. Suzannah will come to the next meeting. Thank you Lili for getting this initiative organized.

Vestry Retreat- We reflected that the retreat exercises brought out conversations brimming with excitement and creativity. We hope to share this enthusiasm with the parish. Suzannah asked us to bring our ideas for concrete steps to the July vestry meeting.

Foyer Dinners- Laurie shared that there are 6 groups. About 50 people in total have signed up. Possibly we should come up with a new name. The gatherings will happen over the next four months.

The plate offering for the first Sunday in July will go to "Out Maine". We hope to have this organization be the recipient once a year around this time to coordinate with Pride month. We will ask the Outreach Committee to consider this plan. Kelley will talk to Steve Ward. Ruth is organizing a food table for the Newcastle/Damariscotta Pride walk on Saturday June 24th.

We received a beautiful grand piano as a donation. The other piano, that needs more work to tune will be sold.

Alcohol Policy- We had a wide ranging discussion. We reviewed the October 24, 2015 Alcohol Policy of the Diocese of Maine, affirmed and adopted from 78th General Convention of the Episcopal Church. It was noted that the Foyer group gatherings are St Andrew's sponsored events and therefore the parish insurance policy is the provider and we are liable. Bishop Brown explained that the policy reflects input from church leaders that understand the underlying issues related to alcohol use disorder. We see this as an opportunity to create our own social norms, and we need to be deliberate about how we approach this issue.

John Ward talked about the response to the changes in the music program. People are supportive and understanding. This change will entail a gradual process of adjustment.

Bishop Brown led a conversation about how the diocese supports individual churches. Some churches receive money from the 12 1/2 % diocesan assessment on our income. On the subject of fundraising, He noted that the Episcopal Church Foundation is a good resource. The ECF is a separate incorporated organization whose charge is to help congregations. Bishop Brown asked us about our past fundraising work, and noted that ECF has consultants who we could interview. Bishop Brown then talked about the work of the Trustees of the Diocesan Fund. We do not pay management fees for our savings that are invested through the Diocesan Fund.

Bishop Brown talked about the shrinking number of parishioners. Records show that deaths outpace baptisms. In reference to why we are experiencing smaller congregations, Bishop Brown said that sometimes affiliation and engagement will not equal physical presence. He suggested going ‘

“wherever ‘there’ is”. One example was a church group regularly bringing the refreshments for Sunday soccer games in their community. We talked about how the Episcopal Church has so much to offer. We see that people are searching and to share one’s story. Bishop Brown thanked us and presented a beautiful Episcopal church flag to St Andrew’s.

Adjournment- 6:41 PM

Respectfully submitted, Ruth Piper and Terry Marsh