

Vestry Meeting Minutes  
Holy Comforter Episcopal Church, Spring, TX  
December 20<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Members Present: Fr John Soard, Walter Foyt (Vestry and acting clerk), Don Esposito, Gwen Aldridge, Shawn Henners, Rick Harris, Richard Coull, Sylvia Hulshof, Gwendolyn Wright and Chris Legrande (Treasurer).

Members unable to attend: Teresa San Miguel

- A. **Prayers:** The meeting began with prayer requests; Fr John led prayers of intercession and thanksgiving.
  
- B. **Endowment Articles:** Discussion was held around the two endowment articles.
  - a. The first article was about the basic principles of endowments.
    - i. Gwen A said this article provided a better understanding of how it works and that it can be general;
    - ii. Fr. John appreciated that you need to communicate clear vision of what the endowment is for;
    - iii. Gwen A. asked if you have to accept the gift that is received and Fr. John said no that you have the ability to turn it down;
    - iv. Fr. John said that you would want to set-up a policy and if someone wants to give outside of the policy, then the vestry must approve.
  - b. The second article was about the Five Truths around Endowments.
    - i. Don asked if an endowment can be used for operating expenses and Fr. John said that only earnings from the endowment can be used and you don't want to rely on an endowment to fund church activities;
    - ii. Gwen A. asked if the Diocese could oversee our investments and Fr. John said yes and he recommended that we go that route;
    - iii. Rick said that it is important we think through the right balance of not too detailed and not too open ended.
  
- C. **Consent Agenda:** Walter motioned to approve the consent agenda, which was seconded by Shawn and approved unanimously by the vestry.
  
- D. Review Previous Matters / Actions Items
  - a. Approve 2024 Budget:
    - i. Don asked if our estimate for plate offerings was too low, and Fr. John said he went with a conservative approach. The vestry agreed to up the plate budget though from \$100K to \$110K;
    - ii. Rick asked about why the youth budget was so high.
      - 1. It was explained to him that a lot of the costs were either paid for out of pocket by Kim or by the parents of youth.
      - 2. The concern specifically was the budget for the Mission Trip. Fr. John suggested to leave it as is for 2024 but discuss 2025 and beyond early in 2024 to determine what the church will fund in the future and to make sure Kim is fully aware;

- iii. Don asked about the Tackle Life Ministry budget and the fact that he thought we had agreed with them that their budget would be zero if they became a Holy Comforter Ministry.
  - 1. The vestry looked at the details of their budget and it was determined that a lot of their requests were church needs and not just TLM needs;
  - 2. It was agreed by the vestry that certain parts of the TLM budget could be eliminated and the rest reallocated elsewhere;
  - 3. Richard asked if he could play the piano while Ashley was on maternity leave to save on the budget.
    - a. Fr. John said he would prefer to pay someone in case they didn't work out and he needed to find someone else.
- iv. After a few changes, the budget had a deficit of \$95K prior to any curate discussion (see D.b. below for further details on the curate).
- v. Walter asked how much we have left in grant monies and Fr. John said we received \$133K from the grants from the Diocese and have run \$40,000 deficit for 2023 so far. We will receive approximately \$60K in covid monies that is expected to come in during 2024 sometime.
- vi. Gwen A. suggested to stay at a deficit for now and see what else comes in, to which Shawn added that we have more pledges expected to come in that will help with the deficit.
- vii. Gwen A. said the finance committee would monitor on a quarterly basis.
- b. **Curate:** Fr. John discussed the possibility of adding a curate to help bring energy and grow the church.
  - i. He mentioned that it would start July 1, 2024 and is a two year commitment, with the Diocese paying half the salary;
  - ii. Richard asked about timing to apply and Fr. John said mid-January;
  - iii. The vestry thought this was a great way to add a much needed resource and get new ideas;
  - iv. Fr. John said we are not guaranteed someone and that the Diocese will review the churches and then have parishes interview people. He added that there are typically more parishes than curates so it comes down to where the curate wants to go oftentimes;
  - v. This would result in the deficit increasing to \$116K for 2024 if a curate was added to the budget.
  - vi. Gwen A. motioned to pursue a curate and accept the budget with a curate included and Gwen W. seconded. The vestry unanimously approved.
- c. **Diocesan Delegates:** Fr. John mentioned that Linda B. was the only one who had registered as of the date of the vestry meeting.
  - i. Gwen A. volunteered to go as did Shawn.
  - ii. The vestry agreed to send Linda, Gwen A. and Shawn plus Fr. John with Don motioning and Richard seconding.

E. New Matters for Discussion and Decision

- a. **Discussion of Items Moved from the Consent Agenda:** There were no items moved from the consent agenda.
- b. **Form Committee for Endowment:** Fr. John proposed forming a committee to put together an endowment for the vestry to approve.

- i. Fr. John proposed Walter to head up the committee and suggested making it for property and outreach;
    - ii. Don asked if this would include legacy giving, which Fr. John confirmed would be the case;
    - iii. Don and Richard both volunteered to assist and Walter suggested getting a fourth member being someone with a legal background;
    - iv. Fr. John said he would get resources from the Diocese for us to get started;
    - v. Shawn motioned to proceed and Don seconded.
  - c. **Vestry retreat:** Fr. John suggested holding the vestry retreat on February 3 and the vestry approved.
- F. **Review of Action Items List:** Fr. John read out the list of action items. They were as follows:
  - a. Fr. John to get approved budget to Mike;
  - b. Fr. John to register members for council;
  - c. Walter/Don/Richard to start working on endowment once resources are provided and timing of a kick-off meeting can be determined.
- G. **Dismissal:** the meeting was adjourned
- H. **Next Meeting:** January 24<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM