

Vestry Meeting Minutes
Holy Comforter Episcopal Church, Spring, TX
November 15th, 2023

Members Present: Fr John Soard, Walter Foyt (Vestry and acting clerk), Gwen Aldridge, Teresa San Miguel, Rick Harris, Richard Coull, Sylvia Hulshof and Chris Legrande (Treasurer).

Members unable to attend: Don Esposito, Shawn Henners and Gwendolyn Wright

- A. **Prayers:** The meeting began with prayer requests; Fr John led prayers of intercession and thanksgiving.
- B. **Endowment Articles:** Discussion was held around articles about endowments and how they are started/why they exist.
 - a. The conversation started with Rick commenting that any endowment needs a catalyst/purpose to rally around, and Gwen commented on how that was the case at her previous church;
 - b. Teresa brought up that it would be beneficial to offer workshops around endowments to parishioners and Gwen talked about a lawyer that came to Holy Comforter several years ago to help with wills/financial planning. There was discussion of doing this in the spring as part of stewardship;
 - c. Sylvia brought up the importance of getting clarification ahead of time from the giver what the endowment is to be used for to avoid any confusion;
 - d. Fr. John's big takeaway was that in the first article the church had a plan that was intentional and thought out. He went on to discuss that you don't want your endowment too narrow, but at the same time you want it to be clear/focused to set-up the church for years to come;
 - e. Fr. John ended the discussion with mentioning that the Diocese can manage investments in endowments and the church can withdraw when they need to.
- C. **Approve Consent Agenda:** Gwen made a motion to approve the consent agenda, which was seconded by Walter and approved unanimously by the vestry.
- D. **Review Previous Matters/Action Items**
 - a. **Vestry Elections:** An update was made on the status the Vestry Elections.
 - i. Ed Ziegler and Wes Woods both applied to be on the vestry, which was approved unanimously by the current vestry members.
 - ii. We are still one member short, but Gwen thinks Richard Blumberg may be interested if his health improves.
 - iii. Gwen mentioned that she had someone else in mind, but they have less than a year at the church which Fr. John confirmed was acceptable.
 - iv. The decision was made to wait until the December meeting to either finalize the final member, leave an open seat until another member is found or elect to go from 9 to 8 vestry members for 2024;
 - b. **2024 Budget:** Thus far we have received \$305K in pledges and expect another \$25-35K based on members that pledged in 2023 but haven't yet pledged in 2024. Additional items of note related to the budget:

- i. Expenses are expected to increase slightly for a supply musician during Ashley's maternity leave, but that will be offset by the diocesan lowering the fee's for 2023 by \$7K;
 - ii. There is currently a shortfall of \$126K with no additional pledges;
 - iii. Gwen asked about our cash balance and Fr. John noted that we still have \$75K from the grant received from the Diocese and we are still waiting to receive the \$70K Covid grant;
 - iv. Fr. John mentioned that we will need to finalize the budget in December and asked the vestry to think through whether or not we want to make any major cuts;
 - v. Prior to the December meeting, the stewardship committee is going to reach out to the non-pledgers and Fr. John will reach out as well after the stewardship committee.
 - vi. Gwen also mentioned that in January they will reach out to those that are financially unable to give and talk to them about giving of their time and talent instead;
 - vii. The vestry did agree that despite the shortfall we are in better shape than we were last year and that the new people that have joined the church has made a difference in why we are seeing improvements.
- c. **Diocesan Delegates:** Linda Berry has volunteered to serve. Fr. John asked the vestry to encourage people to apply and Rick specifically suggested that Anne Worley would be a good candidate and Walter agreed he would speak with her.
- d. **Vestry Clerk:** Fr. John asked if we knew of anyone who would want to serve. One suggested name was Alice, but Gwen is first going to speak with her to see if she would be interested in serving on the vestry. Additionally, Rick suggested looking at the vestry care groups for the clerk role.

E. **New Matters for Discussion**

- a. **Discussion of Items Moved from the Consent Agenda:** There were no items moved from the consent agenda.
- b. **Job Description Change for Kim:** Fr. John told the vestry that Kim will be moving into the role of Youth Leader only and eliminating her position over children's ministry. He went on to note that we will need to vote on this change and the change for the children's minister to be a volunteer position. A few addition items discussed on this topic:
 - i. Fr. John thought of some good candidates to lead the children's ministry. He noted further that it would be better to hire someone, but we are not there yet;
 - ii. Fr. John mentioned that Kim's pay would not change and it would actually make her pay more in line with her role;
 - iii. Theresa worried about it being a volunteer position and Gwen noted that it would need several people to assist;
 - iv. Sylvia suggested there needs to be a meeting to discuss with the impacted parents, and Fr. John agreed but not until after a leader was chosen;
 - v. Ultimately the vestry thought it was a good move and Rick motioned to make this change with Richard seconding and the vestry unanimously approving.

F. **Review of Action Items List:** Fr. John read out the list of action items. They were as follows:

- a. Vestry to ask if anyone else is interested in being a vestry member, vestry clerk or diocesan council member;
- b. Vestry to start thinking about where budgetary cuts could be made if needed;
- c. Fr. John to talk to volunteers about the children's ministry.

G. **Dismissal:** the meeting was adjourned

H. **Next Meeting:** December 20th at 7:00 PM