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St Margaret’s Episcopal Church Vestry

Subject: Minutes for 19 September 2023

Attending: Peter Mayer+ (Rector), Patti Sachs+ (Associate Rector) Z, Kristen Berthelotte (Senior Warden), Paul Shurke (Junior Warden), , Matt Chasse Z, Alden Gross Z from India, Mary Holstine, Janice John, Kathy Lang , Lana Keelty, Chris Prender , Susan Roberts, Dan Tootle, Ernie Tucker, Carol Williams, and Jim Barnett (Clerk), Elizabeth Radley (Director of Operations) Z.

Not Attending: Katherine Wiernicki (Treasurer), Dave Boyce, Austin Canuel.

This meeting was conducted in Hybrid format. Zoom attendees are noted by a “Z” after their name.

1. Opening prayer was given at 7:02 pm by Dan Tootle.

2. The meeting was called to order by the Rector. The July 2023 Vestry minutes were approved.

A Quorum was noted as present.

The Rector introduced an endorsement letter for Karin Ekholm, our seminarian for over two years, as worthy to a candidate for ordination to the priesthood. The letter was circulated for signature by present Vesterians. There is a potential that she will be ordained next summer.

3. Submitted Reports:

1. **Treasurers (submitted to the EXCOM 4 September)**

As reported, everything is looking good. Staff is doing a good job of limiting expenses. We are still running ahead of budget projections for the year.

1. **SMDS Report (Posted):**

We are off to another successful school year at SMDS. School started on Sept 5 with a full enrollment of 133 students. The Board would like to have an understanding from the Vestry of scholarship money that will be available before enrollment contracts are due in January. Specifically, this means letting the school know our scholarship commitment in late Dec/early Jan; however, we would not make the transfer until the summer. I think this makes good sense in terms of planning for both organizations. It is helpful for the school to know what scholarship money will be available to parents before they sign contracts for the school year. It will be helpful for the church to know its commitment early in the year.

1. **Rector’s Report (posted):**

We are working on the 2024 budget. There is more need than money.

One of the expenses I’d like to consider, aside from digital editing aid in the office and a contemporary music leader (see July’s report), is a web-based program for the Grants Committee, which would enable online applications, and will facilitate management of applications via messaging, etc. Currently, all applications are hard copies (paper) that have to be snail-mailed, sometimes across continents. Many of our applicants have scant staff and little time for that work. Online applications can allow more organizations to reach out to us. I believe the Grants Coordinator, Christine Feldmann will be coming to us to speak more about it soon. This is potentially an Endowment funded issue.

There was a discussion regarding how Representative Mike Rogers (AL-3) uses Google Tag app to expedite grants within his constituency for the student scholarship program. This information has been passed to the Grants Administrator.

1. **Vestry Nominating Committee Report (posted):**

In July, Rev Peter asked the four outgoing Vestry members to form a nominating committee in accordance with the by-laws. The four outgoing members are Alden Gross, Kathy Lang, Chris Prender and Susan Roberts.

Specifically, the by-laws state that the committee will consist of five voting members, not more than two of whom shall be members of the existing Vestry.  The outgoing members decided that Alden Gross and Kathy Lang will be the voting members.  Susan Roberts contacted Fran Becker, Emily DelSordo, and Anne Sessions about being on the committee.  All three have agreed.

Additionally, all of the outgoing Vestry members have agreed to actively engage in recruiting for new Vestry members.  Although the committee has been established, we have not had our first meeting.

Guidance from the Rector was requested and it will be forthcoming. We have a time advantage this year but the Committee would like to move forward with identifying potential candidates for engagement.

Coffee hour October 1st will be a good time to initiate this to the congregation.

There was a question and some discussion regarding the Annual Meeting which will be 28 January 2024. We will have a group of 4 to 8 to work on the agenda, reports, visuals and such. We need to ensure we have the hybrid capacity and we hope to have all of this put together before 1 January.

The was then a discussion regarding bulletins. The stapled pages are ungainly and often create obscuration of words. The Rector will get back to the Vestry on savings and utility.

1. **Junior Warden’s Report (posted):**

The Junior Warden introduced the subject of the Interfaith Partners of the Chesapeake training for October. All are encouraged to attend. Links provided upon request.

A neighbor has called the church to report that our bees are stinging her dogs. Seems that with the drought conditions, the bees are seeking water on her property. She has a birdbath which seems to be the attractant. We will hope that the rain this weekend alleviates this problem but will ensure our bees have access to water proximate to our campus.

1. **Senior Wardens Report (posted):**

We have now sold 112 tickets and have an additional 28 tickets attributed to sponsorships. Continue to spread the word! Our target remains as high as 250.

We will need people to help set up the tables, chairs and decorations for the morning of the event, so please let me know if you can help. We will have two shifts: furniture setup (9am) and decor setup (9:30am). I plan to wrap up all at 11am. Come for the time you can! I have shared the volunteer sign up on our Vestry group on Realm, so you can also let me know that way (I am trying out our functionality for volunteer signup through Realm).

We continue to be sensitive to parishioners who want to attend but may find the cost beyond their needs. Let the Rector know if you know of someone in this circumstance.

Refinement of the existing website continues. Content ownership of the web pages remains important and specific mechanism will be in place to maintain individual content. To the general audience, the website will not look very much different. Themed along the lines of music, families, and “get involved” it will be better organized. There will be one point of entry to the website as before but each content owner will be responsible for their individual site’s content. We will continue to push Realm and ask parishioners to update their profiles. The more connections we can make the better.

The ordination was very special. It was a full three hours of ceremony and SMC was well represented. In late April 2024 Bishop Eugene Sutton will be formally retired but he has already begun the turnover process.

The Rector has a good friend who is a Franciscan coming to visit SMC for all three services.

**4. For the Good of the Order.**

The combined services for the summer schedule went very well and seemed to be well received by congregants. The 0730 still served those who wanted church early while the 1000 service made for a better full church appearance. Several economies of scale were also realized and it all went well.

The TRRTF is an entity of the Vestry and will again begin to pick up activities into the Fall. Dan Tootle is the Vestry lead at this point while Beth Kopack remains the chair of the Task Force. Dan is also the Outreach coordinator for the Task Force. There has been no call for a report from the Vestry.

The Grant to the Annual Fathers’ Day Forum is going toward capturing oral histories of residents of the Broadneck Peninsula. The effort is underway.

There was some discussion regarding the existing “Covid policy for SMC.” It remains the same, “mask if you choose, stay home if you don’t feel well.” SMC will continue to provide masks. SMC will continue to encourage parishioners to get vaccinated and reiterate our “policy” at the pre-service announcements.

We will keep Alden and Ruth in our prayers as they work their way through her third pregnancy. We look forward to baptizing the third Gross child into our Parish.

The meeting was adjourned at 8 PM.