

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE VESTRY OF ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH,
YOUNGSTOWN
March 9, 2023

Present: The Reverend Gayle Catinella, Brenda Barry, Jon Caguiat, Elizabeth Cianciola, Joe DeNiro, Lance Grahn, Jonathan Huff, Tony Manhollan, and Martie Witt

Absent: Liz Johnson

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 with a prayer led by Tony Manhollan.

Cindy from Universal Church Directories presented a proposal for a photo membership directory.

Brenda Barry will send a thank-you card to Eleanor Congdon on behalf of the Vestry, thanking her for her Boar's Head photographs.

The minutes of the February 25, 2023, special meeting of the Vestry were provided by email for information and review. 50/50 raffles were added to the fundraising ideas, and a typo was corrected.

Motion to approve: Tony Manhollan Second: Jon Caguiat All in favor.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Jon Caguiat reported that for February 2023 the

- Operating Fund Balance is \$22,891.69.
- Total Expenses were \$42,804.03.
- Total Income was \$89,949.85.
- Current Pledges are at 139.65% of budget.
- Contributions Non-pledged are at 103.95% of budget.

Jon then explained his resignation as Treasurer.

Motion to approve: Tony Manhollan Second: Joe DeNiro All in favor.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

- Junior Warden – No report.
- Finance – Via Tony Manhollan. Pat Rogers reported to Vestry through Tony that the Finance Commission approved changing the endowment draw to a 3-year rolling average, retroactive to January 2023. Pat also reported that Finance rejected the proposal to tap special funds to supplement the operating budget and that Liz Testa has volunteered to offer art classes for children, with the proceeds being split between the Memorials Fund and operating budget revenue. Additions to budget revenue for 2023 are \$14,600 in new or increased pledges and \$15,000 for hosting weddings, significantly reducing the anticipated budget deficit. Vestry continues to envision the Boar's Head and Yule Log Festival as a major church fundraiser. Vestry

unanimously voted to adopt the 3-year rolling average to determine annual revenue drawn from the endowment, following a motion by Tony Manhollan, seconded by Brenda Barry. Vestry also unanimously voted for a formal resolution of gratitude to Jon Caguiat for his service as Treasurer and to the Finance Commission for its work on the 2023 budget, following a motion by Martie Witt, seconded by Jonathan Huff. A new Treasurer will be named at a later date.

- Endowment Board/Heritage Society – Via Jonathan Huff. Jonathan reminded Vestry of the current stock market volatility.
- Personnel – Jonathan Huff volunteered to serve as the Vestry liaison to the Personnel Commission.
- Properties – Via Martie Witt. Early spring flowers are now in bloom. The leak in a boiler pipe has been fixed.
- Senior Warden — Tony Manhollan’s report is attached.
- Christian Education — No report.
- Christian Social Relations — No report.
- Parish Life and Growth – No report.
- Red Door Café and Pantry — No report.
- Worship and Arts — No report.
- Memorials and Gifts — via Rev. Gayle. The Memorials Commission and the Altar Guild will each pay one-half the cost of new orphreys for the front altar.
- Mission Area — No report.
- DEIA – Liz Johnson was named as the Vestry liaison for this new committee. Committee members will be solicited.

RECTOR'S REPORT

Rev. Gayle’s report for March 2023 was sent by email prior to the meeting. It and an addendum distributed at the meeting are appended below.

OLD BUSINESS

Current Covid safety protocols remain in place.

NEW BUSINESS

The photo directory proposal was approved by consensus.

The parish history project proposed by Drs. Eleanor Congdon and Dave Simonelli was approved by consensus.

The DEIA Committee is still being formed.

Martie Witt will remain the sole Junior Warden for the time being, serving as the Vestry liaison to the Properties Commission.

Commission and Committee liaisons for 2023 are:

- Elizabeth Cianciola / Memorials

- Joe DeNiro / Finance
- Jonathan Huff / Personnel
- Martie Witt / Properties
- Liz Johnson / DEIA

Vestry will next meet on April 20, 2023, at 5:30 p.m.

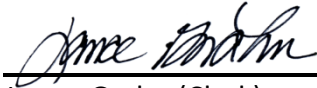
The meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m. with a closing prayer led by Rev. Gayle

Minutes approved 20 April 2023

Motion to approve: Jonathan Huff

Second: Martie Witt

All in favor.



Lance Grahn (Clerk)

St. John's Episcopal Church, Youngstown
Senior Warden's Report — March 9, 2023

Remarks on conflicts that led to the resignation of Treasurer Jonathan Caguiat

The future of this church *that we all love* is in danger, not because of our financial situation, but because of division, resentment, and personal conflict. We *must* work out conflicts in a civil and constructive way that strengthens the church.

The passive-aggressive attitudes towards the Rector and the coordinated effort to undermine the operation of the church are destructive. They are destroying the church. What individuals choose to give or not give to the church is a personal decision. One that, ideally, should be influenced by God's blessings in their lives and motivated by a desire to build up the church and to "... give for the spread of the kingdom of God" (as it says in the Catechism in BCP, p 856).

I am not criticizing anyone for giving less in tough financial times. But when those who have been richly blessed use their wealth to exploit those financial conditions to undermine the Rector or to undo the decisions duly made by this Vestry, they cause irreparable damage to this church. It does not build up the church. It tears it down.

Jonathan did a fine job as treasurer and he's a good, caring, and dedicated person who was willing to take on a difficult job during a difficult time. I am grateful for that. I am grateful for every member of this Vestry who accepted a call to serve during difficult times. And I'm grateful for Reverend Gayle, who has been maligned, blamed for things outside her control, and attacked — even physically threatened in the past — for her efforts to broaden the membership of this church and in many cases for perceptions that simply aren't true. She deserves better, and nothing less than respect and cooperation. To be clear: cooperation doesn't mean everyone must agree or unconditionally support her; it means working together.

But this resentment is driving us apart. We have to stop driving away the people who want to be here and do the work that's needed to advance this church.

In many ways, we are not the church that we were 40 years ago when I was growing up here. Youngstown is a different place. But we must be the church that our community needs today, in this moment. A church that continues to make Youngstown a better place, as it always has. A church that welcomes *everyone* in need of God's love and compassion. As it always has.

From Pat Rogers regarding the 3/5 meeting of the Finance Commission

The Finance Committee voted to adopt the policy of changing to a 3-year-rolling average for the 5% annual draw on the Endowment. This would be a permanent change. It will be retroactive to the beginning of this year. I spoke with Jim Messenger and he said that it would be approved by the Endowment Committee. We recommend Vestry approval. Please let me know if it is approved and I will notify Morgan Stanley.

The Canons of the Episcopal Church state that all monies donated to the church must be use in accordance with the intentions of the donor. We cannot take from any other funds to use for the budget.

Judy Graziano told us that Liz Testa has offered to do an Art Class for kids in the summer as a fund raiser for the church, with 20% profit going to Memorials and 80% to the Operating Fund. It's wonderful to have the church members actively involved with the financial support of the church. Maybe it will inspire others to do the same.

There was an increase in Pledges of \$14,600 as a result of the appeal to the congregation.

On the recommendation of the Vestry Retreat we added \$15,000 to the projected budgeted income for weddings.

Rector Report 3.23

See you for our first full meeting at 5:30 Thursday in the parlor.

1. We have several positions to fill on vestry. We need a JW for finance, a liaison for Personnel, a liaison for DEIA, and one for Memorials. Please pray about how your gifts would best serve these needs.

2. There will be an informational presentation by the directory company that Eva is working with about a new photo directory. We will have her start the meeting so please be on time.

3. Eleanor Congdon, along with Dave Simonelli, both History faculty at YSU, would like to start working on a updated history of the church, mostly derived from interviews. I will include her proposal in an email for discussion.

4. I am finished writing the wedding customary. I am waiting for Dick's feedback, and I am also road testing it on Katie and Taylir, who will be planning a wedding here soon. As soon as we have a budget, I can begin to advertise. I sent the financial planning document to the Finance Committee for their review.

5. Liz and Jonathon completed the onboarding information sharing last Sunday. Joe was sick unfortunately but we will reschedule.

6. Lent is proceeding well. The Thursday service is growing, and people who aren't coming to the more crowded services for health reasons are starting to come Thursday.

7. We are training 3 new acolytes in the coming month. Thank you if you participate in any way in the service.

8. I have asked some people in the community to help me find information about rentals. Stay tuned.

Any questions you have?

Addendum to the Rector's Report 3.23

Concerns have been raised about why the attendance is down at the 10:30 service (attendance at the 8 and 9:30 service is tracking at pre-pandemic levels). These discussions are devolving into blame, which is not helpful.

In my experience people come to church when they feel welcome, when there is a strong and purposeful community to join, and when the worship is relevant. They do not come to church when there is apathy, fighting about money, and crankiness. These observations come from being a priest for 20 years.

However, in case those observations appear to be too vague, I will provide you with some research. About 18 years ago this diocese invested a great deal of time and money in a church growth program called Natural Church Development. Churches were given trained coaches to help them assess their assets, maximize their strengths and build up their weaknesses.

Churches completed a survey and gauged the following areas, which a stunning amount of scientific research has shown are the key factors in why people come to church:

Empowering Leadership (Leadership that equips people to serve)

Gift Oriented Ministry (tasks of the church done by qualified people)

Passionate Spirituality (spiritual lives filled with prayer, enthusiasm and boldness)

Functional Structures (are the procedures and practices actually useful)

Inspiring Worship Services (are visitors inspired by our worship)

Holistic Small Groups (are there small groups that meet the needs of members)

Need Oriented Evangelism (does our outreach meet the needs of our neighbors)

Loving Relationships (are the relationships of members characterized by a high degree of love and affection)

(*Natural Church Development*, Christian Schwartz and Christoph Schalk, 1998)

While this research could not have anticipated a pandemic, because it is international and wide reaching, it is worth paying attention. We are, in a sense, starting over, so going back to basics is a logical course. We examine the traits of

a healthy church and make sure we are working to be that. Healthy churches are where people want to be. And all the factors have to be strong and in balance.

There is one more key piece to this research. Schwartz asks a series of questions to guide the discussion of maximizing strengths and addressing weaknesses. Is the strategy discussed helpful for the church in the long term? Is the strategy about just adding numbers or is it about something bigger (ex for a tree, an apple is about not just growing one more tree but a forest). Are we using our resources and gifts or are we fighting against them? Are there multiple benefits to every strategy? Does the strategy open up various forms of ministry or is it supporting just one thing?

Hard questions. You won't be surprised that Episcopal churches score high on functional structures and low in passionate spirituality. There are other church growth programs. Right now the focus is mostly on engaging your neighbors and being vital in your community. But I think this approach potentially takes away blame and negativity and points us in a direction of fact based healing and potential good things.