

St. Mark's Episcopal Church  
Vestry Meeting Minutes  
February 28, 2023

Present – Marks, Hughes, Helms, Barzilla, McCulley, D'Antuono, Powell, Abbott, Hamon

Meeting was called to order by Alysoun Marks. Melissa moved to accept the agenda. Kathy seconded the motion. The agenda was approved. Chris suggested a plan that would relieve Alysoun from having to take minutes. It was decided that the responsibility to take minutes would be rotated among all members. Chris started with these minutes and others will volunteer for future months.

Alysoun added a couple of changes from the previous minutes. She added that she had read a thank you note from Tom Thompson for his Christmas gift. The 2023 budget total income should have read \$326,195, and total expenses of \$330,163 with a deficit of (\$3,968). Melissa moved to accept the minutes with the above changes. Kathy seconded the motion. The corrected minutes were approved.

Alysoun reported on the Lunches of Love wrapping of water bottles. Melissa praised the 15 teenagers who took the old labels off the 2,000+ bottles and replaced the old labels with the new labels. Kathy and John Barzilla helped with delivering the bottles to Lunches of Love. Bill Abbott had designed the new labels. Michelle raised the thought that those teenagers might be an opportunity to evangelize. Kim has a record of those who helped and perhaps appreciation notes should be sent. The students need the volunteer hours and may be looking for additional opportunities this year.

No Easter Egg Hunt this year. Perhaps candy bunnies might be given to attending children on Easter. A discussion followed about doing water bottles on Dec. 2 for Miracle on Morton Street. The ECW Christmas brunch would need to be moved to December 9 if it was later decided to participate in the Miracle on Morton Street.

Alysoun reported on Diocesan Council that had been held last weekend. The overall message was one of growth from Bishop Doyle. It was reported that the DOT budget is not balanced, but it was noted that the expansion of the DOT was a wonderful, but very costly event.

A question was raised about the possibility of starting some sort of a college age youth group.

Kim Hart has arranged for supply clergy through August.

Tom Thompson's office has been moved to the card room downstairs. Choir practice will take place there. A friend of Debbie Burns has donated a piano. Tom has gotten rid of the little organ. He was glad to have another piano to have for future piano concerts.

Alysoun reported that Conformation classes will start soon. There will be four classes before the bishop's visit.

Discussion followed concerning the establishing of a grief group. Calvary has such a group and it was decided for the present time to try and connect with Calvary for that purpose. Amber Zentis at Calvary will be helpful to establish that connection.

Alysoun and Michelle reported on the school. The school board has made the difficult decision to close the school. Letters were given to the staff today and the families will be notified on March 1. The grant money needed to be considered and therefore the school will close on May 31. Enrollment has been down. If it wasn't for the grant funds, the average monthly loss for the school in 2022/23 school year would be \$7,000-\$8,000 a month. The school board will be making decisions regarding severance pay. Jerri Carington will stay through mid June. Closing the school will impact the need for a full time Sexton, this will become a part time position. Discussion then centered on pay for Reuben. Alysoun moved to establish Reuben's base pay at \$20 an hour with a 10 hour work week. Kathy seconded the motion and the motion passed. Committees will be organized to deal with the school items. Some items will be kept, stored and other items donated.

Michelle continued her report. Michelle moved to take \$311,494 from the Amegy account and move it financial institution that offers Treasury Notes. Melissa seconded the motion and the motion passed. Michelle also reported on the 17% decline in the St. Mark's investment in the DOT Participating Fund. She has talked to the financial people at the DOT and has told them that St. Mark's will be watching that investment during this year.

Discussion followed regarding the salary that would be offered to a new rector. The previous vestry had approved a salary of \$109,000. Alysoun moved to have the new salary be a range from \$109,000 to \$150,000. The supplemental funds from our available cash resources of up to \$50,000/year for three years will be used if necessary. Kathy seconded the motion and it was passed.

Kellaura Johnson and Kai Ryan had requested asked St. Mark's to show a plan to demonstrate how St. Mark's will pay for a new Rector, and grow and prosper the church. Michelle worked very hard to draft that document and it is attached to these minutes.

Michelle reported that a new Schindler elevator contract will be signed. Alysoun moved to accept the new contract for a total of \$2,460 a year. This includes inspections. The contract will run February 1, 2023 through January 31, 2030 for a total of seven years. Elisa seconded the motion and the motion was passed.

Gexa Energy will continue to be the Retail Electric Provider for the Church's electric usage at 6.95 kwh for 3 years.

Elisa reported that an electrician will be needed to evaluate and possibly replace the circuit breakers in the kitchen. This would not be the whole system, but splitting the breakers. An electrician will be called for a bid.

Lee and Dwayne will provide guidance on the Fish Fry. Alysoun moved and Melissa seconded the motion to have the proceeds from the Fish Fry go to the necessary kitchen upgrades including a new oven and repair to the electrical system. The motion passed.

Chris Abbott reported that she had sent a conclusion to the Souper Bowl of Caring organization with a total of 200 canned goods collected along with various dried noodles, etc. Thanks go to Elisa for two trips to deliver those items to Helping Hands.

It was decided that the high school graduation collection from church members this year will go to Adriana Krajnovic. Chris will write up the announcement and funds will start to be collected.

The Lamar CISD has not yet adopted their 2023-2024 calendar so Chris was unable to report on a new Christian Formation calendar for next year.

End of the year student certificates will be given on May 21. This year in order to thank the Safeguarding God's Children Assistants, Chris purchased a goat from Episcopal Relief and Development. Bill will help her with certificates of thanks to those who have helped with Christian Formation all year.

Michelle gave an update on real estate activities. We received \$180,342 on February 1, 2023, for the condemnation of property for the Reading Road expansion from Fort Bend County. She also reported that we will begin negotiations with the County for loss of parking spaces we will need to relocate, and necessary improvements that will be required with the completion of the road expansion. A portion of those funds received from the county will be going to the attorneys who have helped St. Mark's with the whole process. Michelle also reported looking into a full property appraisal of the Church's property; however, it was decided to hold off on that for now. Discussions with Logo's have also been put on hold until negotiations with the County have been completed.

Chris reported that Bill has completed the profile and it has been sent to the DOT. The DOT during this rector search will provide at no charge graphic assistance with the posting of the St. Mark's Rector Profile on the web. This is different than what had been required five years ago. Graphic designers will be doing the actual posting of the document in order to make sure it presents in the best possible manner. Bill will now need to rewrite/edit portions of the profile in order to remove the school. He will contact the DOT to make those necessary changes.

Chris passed out a report on the activities of the previous search committee. She wanted the vestry to understand all that was required of a search committee and that anyone desiring to be on the search committee needs to accept and understand all the hours and hours of work that will be required. Former search committee members including Kathy, Ruthie, Bettye, Chris, Charlie,

Dorothy and Barbara have discussed the importance of the search committee fully understanding their commitment to the whole process.

Kathy Barzilla will attend the Fort Bend County Multi Faith Council breakfast on March 6.

A question was raised about approaching individuals to lead Morning Prayer on Sundays when we don't have supply priests. Additional acolytes are being trained.

Mary Anne reported on the water bottles for Lunches of Love. She also reported that the Sewing Guild has postponed the dog bed project until next Oct. Currently the Sewing Guild is working on pillow cases for the Fort Bend Women's' Shelter.

Alysoun led the group in a closing prayers for the health of many of our church members and for guidance in the decisions ahead.

Respectfully submitted.

Chris Abbott

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Chris Abbott".