

St. Matthew's Annual Meeting Minutes

February 21, 2021

12:00 PM

Our mission is to continue the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ by serving the greater community through loving its children, caring for the unfortunate, and witnessing to the healing power of God's love.

Directed by: Becky Olbon, John Byron, Father Tommy

12:08 Meeting Called to Order

Father Tommy opens the meeting with prayer.

Need to appoint a Meeting Secretary - Cheryl Wheeler has agreed to be Meeting Secretary.

Becky Olbon asked someone to motion to adopt the agenda for the meeting. John Bryon so moved and it was 2nd by Wilhelmina. Approved

Becky Olbon asked for motion to approve 2020 Annual Meeting minutes. Motion to approve meeting minutes by Jay Jones; 2nd by Susan Carson.

Becky Olbon Any changes for the Annual Meeting Minutes. Response was no. Minutes approved.

Becky introduces the 4 candidates for Vestry who are Mindy Barringer, Jack Denton, Morgan Fletcher DeVoss, and Trisha Voiles. Is there anyone else who would like to run for vestry? No nominations from the floor for additional candidates. All candidates are elected.

Chuck Marsh- Treasurer He presented the annual report. Financially it was a good year for us. Started year with a lot of cash \$180,000 and received \$32,000 PPP loan which will be forgiven if we mt the qualifications which we did. With loan and what we had gave us a start of \$180,000. Expenses were higher than our income. We had a deficit of \$45,000. If we were in full operation we would have had \$50,000 more in expenses. In 2021 we will have one less priest salary which will save us \$118,000. We ended year with \$135,000. Concern is January 21 got off to a bad start.

Mark DiGiovanni – Finance Chair reflects on the shortage on cash and pledges. He shared the 80/20 rule; 20% percent are owners and 80% are renters. He also shared the immediate expenses we have with the needed repairs and replacement of HVAC before we resume in person services. If our January giving trend continues we will exhaust all our cash.

Becky Olbon Floor open for questions.

Question from Katie and Joe What's wrong with AC?

Fr Tommy - One broken and one unrepairable HVAC; cost will be \$50,000. We are hoping to get a loan from diocese.

Question from Steve Where are we in the HVAC loan?

Fr Tommy/Becky We have put together the finalized numbers and will give to Diocese in Mar.

Question from Nancy What other expenses can we cut or decrease? Can any of our staff be part time? These are hard decisions to make but may be necessary.

Becky We have cut all expenses we can cut at this time. Cutting staff is a discussion the vestry will have to have if giving doesn't go up.

Question from Victoria Can we rent our facility to groups to help reduce expenses?

Becky – Not really, diocese rules would apply. We could ask for permission but we would have to charge a lot then there would be cost associated with it.

Question from Cheryl Johnson Do I understand that at the rate we are going St Matthew's may have to close in the fall?

Becky – No we wouldn't close in the fall. The Diocese would take over the church and there would be lots of changes. Hope and pray people will step up and we won't have to worry about it. Right now there are 29 pledges so far. At this time last year there were 123.

Fr Tommy and Becky have had discussions about programs like pilgrimages into the sanctuary; we will have Stations of the Cross outside.

Question from Ashley Taylor If the HVAC being replaced is one of the things that need to happen before we resume in person, could we do a special giving campaign asking parishioners to give extra to help cover that expense? It could be an incentive for those to give who maybe haven't because they haven't been able to come to the building.

Becky – Yes we can but it doesn't help pay for the staff we need for services and the equipment we need. We still need to pay bills.

Question from Vicki What kind of process is used to contact people who have pledge in the past and not pledge this year?

Becky – Pledging is a private thing. We might be able to work with Chuck and Mark to approach it but it is definitely a personal thing.

Question from Steve Do we have enough space to use the Sanctuary social distance?

Becky – Right now we can only 50 outdoors and only 10 indoors so yes there is enough space. We are starting outdoor services next week.

Comment from Mark DiGiovanni It's not the pledging; it's the giving that matters. If pledges aren't kept, they're irrelevant.

Question from Ashley Taylor Were there more giving in the fall when we had outdoor services?

Becky - There were not.

Question Jim and Trisha I have heard from many Realm keeps them from giving.

Becky - they can pay by check. If you want to give you will find a way to give.

Amanda-If you are having issues with Realm let us know so we can fix them.

Question from Ashley Taylor Could we put something in the messenger that outlines all the ways you can give?

Susan There is already something in the newsletter with links.

Fr Tommy Associate Rector Report – Heard Mark said. Some is true and some is not. I am looking but I am here right now. Please don't use that as an excuse; I am here right now. How can we engage you? How do we get members/owners to participate? Imagine what St Matthew's can do focusing on how we can be engaged.

My purpose is to help us to imagine what we can do to stay intact within the guidelines.

There will be transitions.

Maybe let go of the old way and maybe we can become something amazing. What do you imagine now? In five years?

Start doing it and become an owner and not a renter.

My purpose while I am here is to get us engaged, energized, open and alive.

Do you have any questions? None at this time.

John Byron Junior Warden and Youth Liaison presented his report.

Pandemic caused personal and religious problems to say the least. And our youth have tried to remain connected. Started year strong with some good outings then pandemic hit. Then we found creative ways to do things and stay connected.

Pandemic caused need.

Youth still accomplished things during pandemic; video for Mother's Day. Met via Zoom; met in person once allowed.

Kids need the program. They are hungry for that connection. I'm passionate about youth program and ask you to consider how you can support it whether you have kids in it or not. Need to help the future of the church via the youth because the average age is 60 for Episcopalians.

Questions? None

Becky presented Sr Warden Report. Did you know 3/8 was our last in person service for 2020? On 3/14 Fr Tommy, Amanda, Steve McFarland and Karen Anderson did the service in the Coil Chapel. Fr Tommy said for

the next few weeks we will be online; 49 weeks later we are still online. Trying to make opportunities and find other ways to stay connected.

People have been calling parishioners.

It's very hard not seeing people. I'm blessed to be up here every day. It's hard seeing equipment in the Sanctuary vs people.

We have funding for Fr Tommy until all of May and most of June (98%). 12 churches need rectors. We need to focus on what we can do vs what we can't do. Learned things about parishioners she didn't know about.

During March 7th Coffee Hour Canon Alisha will be talking to us about what's next and the process and answering your questions.

Mark and Chuck said things changed last year financially. We reduced budget from 425,000 to 370,000 for this year. We can't count on loose plate offerings until we are back meeting.

No pledge envelopes this year.

Difference in budget is due to not having a rector \$117,251.

Can't afford a fulltime interim rector but could have a part-time interim rector.

Giving continues going down we will have to go to part-time staff.

No seminarian didn't fund Stephen Ministry or acolytes but it includes AV, fill in clergy and Rector search.

Won't start search committee right away. Canon Alisha said to wait until Jun or July. If you want to be considered for the committee send an email to Becky.

Positive thinking will let you do everything better than negative thinking.

Questions?

Comment from Steve As spring weather approaches let's see more attend outdoor services.

Question from Elliot Can you explain who Canon Alisha is and what her role is for those that are not aware?

Becky- She works with Bishop Rob and her goal is to work with any parishes with problems.

Comment from Katie I think we should reduce printing and go back to the prayer book and use digital. How can parishioners help reduce expenses?

Becky – agree with going back to prayer book.

Vicki commented. Waste time with the bulletin

Becky – Need some bulletins for someone unfamiliar with the service.

Question from Katie What can Parish members do to help reduce costs. What jobs can we take on?

Question from Susan Can the Diocese contribution be reduced?

Becky - No it can't.

Question from Steve How is the preschool doing financially?

Becky-it's doing wonderfully. It has reduced number of students on purpose. Juanita has done an amazing job; we are blessed. Susan – Juanita is awesome and a real blessing!

Question from Nancy How is Mother Liz's Library coming along? How many users?

Becky - Don't know how many users but there are new books in there. When you are on the grounds check it out to see if you find a book you want to read.

Question from Ashley If the diocesan contribution is based on the last 3 years does that mean that in 3 years our contribution will be reduced because of this year?

Becky - Yes it's an average of last three years. Next year it will be reduced.

Becky Tell us what you would like to see happening? Send emails. Reach out and ask questions. Only way we can knock down rumors is to have you ask about it. There are parishioners coming up on regular basis checking on everything. People are using the meditation path.

Question from Steve So if there is only 10 allowed, who set that rule...no 6ft distance? How are other churches doing it?

Becky – We belong to the Episcopal Church and are part of the Diocese and they have set our rules. Other churches are doing what we are doing although some have been doing more services.

Question from Ashley Could we come up with a list of ways parishioners can help the church and see what volunteers we get?

Becky - Yes will bring up at next Vestry meeting. Joe/Katie – Like signup genius. Becky – yes or Google.

Any other questions?

Becky- We will need meals for some parishioners that are having some medical issues and treatments.

Fr Tommy and Becky are trying to figure out things that we can do.

Question from Cheryl Any idea about why there are so many vacancies in the Diocese?

Becky/Fr Tommy Retirement- Lot have retired, hard to handle pandemic. Not many going through seminary. Across the board in the Episcopal Church the clergy by in large is older and many have been close to retirement age and pandemic sped that along.

Questions from Nancy Can we have a fundraiser this year (such as the Car Show) and use the proceeds mostly for SMEC expenses as opposed to outreach?

Becky-Jack reached out to the Bishop about car show. Bishop said to plan on it and he will be putting a car in the show. Vestry will have to vote on changing where the proceeds go.

Question from Vicki Our church is competing with the “mega” churches. What do they have that we do not?

Becky – They have volunteers and finances. We have to have things that appeal to all generations and we are working on it. Joe/Katie I took our kids to Grace Snellville this morning. Meeting in person is one big thing they have going for them right now. Other comments – younger generation, don’t have restrictions we do from the diocese, different guidelines from their leadership, younger folks because of more modern approach to reach people

Becky - We need to rethink what church is. Is church a building?

Question from Peggy In weekly email is there a place we can ask questions or make suggestions?

Amanda- You can put questions on the attendance link or asked to be called. Becky – will put my email and phone number in the weekly email.

Joe - Need outdoor service weekly. Becky/Fr Tommy - We will be starting next week, 2/28 @ 4pm.

Is there a way to do a drive in service?

Fr Tommy - It is easier to do an outdoor service. Amanda – We have experimented with that but haven’t figured it out yet. Jim is looking into it how to have a drive-in service.

Comments from Wilhelmina There is a way to do a drive-in service. Rector in St Stevens is doing drive in service at Myrtle Beach. She can link someone up with him. They are having service every week and having communion. Also for giving not everyone is Realm /computer savvy; maybe other ways for giving?

Becky – We would love to do drive-in service. We only have a 5 person team who are doing the best they can. Wilhelmina please send info to either me or Amanda. Also Ted mentioned reaching out to Ralph and what they are doing in Athens.

Becky- What we need to understand that a lot of churches were already setup for live streaming and we weren’t. We’ve come a long way; live service vs taped.

Question from Ashley What is our current census? Nancy How many active members?

Becky – We really don’t have a tally. If you mean how many are signing on to services or giving we really don’t have that exact info. On Sundays at the beginning we had about 90 people listening. Now during week we have 17-30 and on Sun 25-50 but if listening on phone it doesn’t show up. Fr Tommy – establishing active members is something I am currently working on. I would say somewhere between 250-300 people.

Comment from Joe Found FM transmitter on Amazon for drive-in service.

Becky- Attendance was 90 at the beginning now maybe 25-50. We are trying to establish actively involved members. It’s about 250-300 members active.

Comment from Vicki Would love to volunteer when everyone has vaccine.

Becky – you are already volunteering doing Café Theology with Cheryl and doing Centering Prayer.

Comment from Gini Procedural point of order. When we elected our vestry people I did not hear a motion which I would be glad to make.

Becky – Gini Please make a motion.

Gini - I move that we elect the 4 people nominated by acclimation. Motion 2nd by Marsha Elixson.

All in favor? Numerous yes votes. Anyone dissenting? No Motion Approved

Becky closing the meeting at 1:27PM

Becky/Fr Tommy Thank you to Jim, Jay Jones, Mindy, Amanda, Steve and all that have made everything possible.

Closing prayer by Fr Tommy; Sir Francis Drake Prayer