

**St. Mark's Vestry Meeting  
February 20, 2023**

**Present:**

Fr. William Bergmann  
James Normington, Senior Warden  
Stuart Paul, Junior Warden  
Frank Ruggiero, Treasurer  
Rebecca Ethier, Clerk  
Cathy Chipolone-Collins  
Laurie Voedisch  
Dayna Hume  
Brenda Matthews  
John Mentzer  
Stephanie Powers  
Jean Robertson  
Brenda Cole-Milner  
Libby Moore

**Absent:**

None

**Lesson**

Father Will asked the Vestry to reflect on the following:

- 1) Recall a time when you felt most involved, spiritually involved or most excited to be part of the Parish? What came out of that?
- 2) What do you value most about this Parish?
- 3) What do you think the core value of this Parish is?
- 4) What do you think would be lost if this Parish closed?
- 5) What do you think is the most important thing that you have to offer the new Rector when she comes?

Father Will's ministry is to prepare us for the next Rector. These areas will be around which we engage with the new Rector.

Discussion ensued.

Fr. Will asked the Vestry to think to yourself for next month's Vestry meeting. What do you think as a Vestry member and member of the Parish, that you have to offer Rev. Aileen as we head into a new chapter of St. Mark's?

Fr. Will thanked the Vestry and parish for the reception yesterday.

**Review of Minutes**

Frank suggested some changes to the minutes which were accepted. Jean made a motion to accept the minutes as amended, Cathy seconded. All voted in favor.

**Senior Warden's Report**

James reported that Fr. Will's reception yesterday went well and a good time was had by all. James thanked everyone for making it a success. Fr. Will was presented with a monetary gift but more contributions are still coming in.

There is a video on You Tube to watch the Big Buildings, Big Questions that Frank and James have watched that the Vestry is encouraged to watch. Link: [BIG Buildings, BIG Questions: Part 1 - YouTube](#)

James spoke to Anne at the Episcopal Church Building Fund about helping churches go green and put in solar panels. They offer lower interest rate loans for parishes with smaller budgets to make such improvements. Fr. Will wondered how long a church building needed to be in existence to be considered historical. James indicated that is a State determination not an Episcopal church one. A discussion ensued about our stained glass windows and church bell.

Historical tour update: Dayna spoke to the mayor who is very supportive. Mark Bodanza would also like to be involved. Mark Bodanza is a Leominster historian. Mark offered to lead the tour when we are ready. We would need to firm up a time when we are ready. James suggested June 10 (our 130<sup>th</sup> anniversary) or June 24 (right after World Heritage Day). Should we make it a fundraiser? We could sell bracelets or a map for the tour. There was an idea to have 10% of proceeds go to a charity like Ginny's. Brenda Cole-Milner indicated she knows someone at the Sentinel so she can have an article put in about it.

James met with Rev. Aileen to prepare for her start date.

The St. Mark's House barn roof will need to be done at some point.

James did a walk through St. Mark's House for the EV project.

### **Buildings and Grounds Report**

An alarm was tripped when changing a light up in the eaves and the Fire Dept came. Frank and Stu have been talking about what to do with the Rectory and how to get it into shape for rental. We have a Property Committee to discuss it. Frank said Stu suggested that we could approach the Catholic Church to see if any retired clergy that need housing that could rent the rectory. This solution might avoid the real estate tax issue. They are still in the information gathering phase. If we do rent, the first step will be a lead paint certificate so it will have to be proven there are no lead paint issues. City Hall should be checked to see if there is a certificate on file. We have enough interested people for the Property Committee. It will be a while before we can get a paying tenant. Brenda Cole-Milner agreed to be part of the Property Committee.

The city is coming back for a kitchen inspection on March 1. Food prepared in the St. Mark's kitchen under Safe Serve can be transported to the Thrift Shop to be sold there as long as a person at the Thrift Shop has a food handler license.

Fr. Will mentioned that the exterminator has not called him back. Brenda Cole-Milner volunteered to call an exterminator that she knows.

There was a leak in St. Mark's House and a plumber was called to fix the problem. We are still looking for an electrician to help fix some things. Brenda Cole-Milner knows an electrician and will provide the contact info to Stu.

### **Discussion**

#### ***Minutes Policy***

All Committees should take minutes that can be documented and shared. Discussion ensued. The policy will be voted on in the March meeting.

#### ***Lenten Video Study***

Laurie asked if the dates for the Lenten Video Study of The Chosen will have to be changed based on discussion with Rev. Aileen. Fr. Will indicated it should not be a problem as Aileen can do her Lenten study on Sundays between the services. The plan is to start on this Thursday, Feb 23. The first 6 episodes of Season 1 will be shown during the video study. There is a study guide that will be used to lead discussion at the end of each episode for about 10-15 minutes.

Laurie looked into the Jesus Revolution movie that is out on Friday, Feb 24 in theaters. The same lead actor is in this movie as in the Chosen.

### ***Egging Fundraiser***

Laurie passed out information on the Egging Fundraiser that Stu found. You can sell baskets to put in eggs to be filled and dropped off at people's homes or to be distributed in their yards. They would be plastic eggs that you can put in candy, prizes or other treats. We can ask parishioners to buy plastic eggs to donate which should be purchased this week. Also donations of nut-free candy, etc. to fill the eggs. Also a team of people will be needed to fill the eggs and deliver them. They are usually delivered the week before Easter. We could include a slip of paper in to invite people to come to church and leave one egg empty to represent the empty tomb. Laurie will ask Terry to send out an email asking for donations. There are some baskets in the St. Mark's House barn that we may be able to use. We should put together the baskets and eggs March 26 after Sunday services and then distribution will be Saturday, April 1. A flyer can be created to be posted to Facebook and Instagram and shared to the Leominster pages. James will have it put in the magazine which is going out next week. Various Vestry members and family volunteered to take part in delivery.

### ***Children's Ministry***

Joy, a new member, has offered to lead some children's lessons. She will begin by observing. Laurie still has concerns about older children and would like to have a different group to split older and younger children. Laurie indicated Diddy Disciples is targeted toward younger children so she would like to look for a different program for older children (Children's Ministry, Sermon Suite, etc.) Also where would the separate groups meet? James indicated that Rev. Aileen has used other programs in the past and it is an advocate of hybrid church school where there would be some online and done at home. Laurie stressed that we need more volunteers to be involved on a monthly basis.

### ***EV Charging Station***

Materials were sent out in advance. Project costs are free in that National Grid and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts provide rebates and incentives. Total project is \$46,725.57 which are paid by the rebates and incentives. In order to receive the grants and incentives, the site host (us) must be responsible for any ongoing maintenance, station network and service fees for minimum of 5 years. Those costs are unknown. The 2 charging stations would be on the other side of St. Mark's House behind where the Thrift Shop is and take up current parking spaces. Per James, there are no zoning issues or property tax concerns under state law. The user would assume liability for damages when they swipe in. The parking garage at train station has a regular charger (mall has Tesla only). This is not intended to be a money maker but intended to be stewardship regarding environmental concerns. Discussion ensued about making this a priority with our other current building and grounds concerns. James said the lifespan is 20 years on this type of charger. The funding opens March 1. Discussion ensued.

James will get the estimate of the 5 year lock-in fees (maintenance, network and service fees) and report back to the Vestry.

### ***Investment of Trust Income***

Frank presented two motions on hold to handle quarterly income distributions from the Trust funds.

- 1) To stop taking income distributions from the below funds and reinvest income back into the funds from which we paid the Tower bills:
  - Eleanor P. Cook Fund
  - Minerva C. Crocker Fund
  - Richardson Legacy Fund
  - Thomas L. Fisher Fund
  - Fred Johnson Fund
  - All Saints Fund

This will decrease investment income by about \$4,100 in 2023 but will go towards paying back the above trust funds.

- 2) To start taking income distributions from the below trust funds from the former Chapel of All Saints as income to the parish.
  - Endowment Fund
  - Charlotte T. Hatch Bequest
  - Vickery Fund
  - Marston Page Fund
  - Rectory Fund
  - Mackey Fund

This will increase investment income by about \$4,200 and will offset the reinvestment from motion #1 so impact to budget is virtually a wash.

James moved to make the above motions; Laurie Voedisch seconded. The motions passed unanimously.

### ***Parochial Report***

Frank distributed the Treasurer's section of the parochial report. It includes the final numbers from 2022. James and Father Will ran through the other questions in the report that need to be completed. Frank will send last year's report to Fr. Will so it can be completed. The completed report will be filled out and distributed via email to the Vestry for approval.

*Follow-up: Frank submitted final Parochial Report for approval on February 27, 2023 and it was approved by online vote of the Vestry. Approved Parochial Report will be attached to these meeting minutes.*

### **Decision**

#### ***Records Retention***

The records retention policy was redistributed. There were suggestions at previous meetings to include non-financial items. Frank suggested that we accept as currently written and then amend later to add other items. The current schedule only includes items for which the Treasurer is responsible.

A motion was made by John to accept the St. Mark's Leominster Records Retention Schedule as presented; Jean seconded. Motion was discussed further. The motion was passed unanimously.

#### ***Treasurer's Report***

Frank thanked Rebecca for presenting at both January Vestry meeting and the Annual Meeting. The final 2022 numbers were presented by Frank. The annual meeting report does not include the trustee income so that has been updated in final numbers, including income and balance sheet. For EIDL loan the current balance was inputted into the final 2022 numbers as Frank got access to the online system.

We will hold a vote on final 2022 report in the March meeting.

January 2023 report: Our bookkeepers can no longer service us so they ended our agreement but were helpful in transitioning to Frank. Frank will do bookkeeping in addition to Treasurer duties. We are off to a strong start for pledges in January. This was probably due to there being 5 Sundays in addition to likely spillover from the holidays. The Thrift Shop did well in January. One big difference is the roof repair for St. Mark's in January 2022. Snow removal was billed towards end of January and there are some additional storms to be billed for February. Heat and utilities are way up year over year. Income and expenses are running close to budget for January. Other income and expenses were added into the report to show everything. The special project envelopes are included the special Offerings line. We can discuss in a future meeting as how to use the special project money. The bookkeeper had been putting that towards deficit reduction.

Balance Sheet: We are still waiting for final bills for the tower repair. Frank will expand line 15000 for funds held by trustees so we can see where those funds are.

Frank is up for suggestions regarding the report format to make it more helpful and informative.

No tower fund summary for January was provided as it was unchanged since last month.

A motion to accept the Treasurer's report was made by Stephanie and seconded by Dayna. All voted in favor.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Stephanie and seconded by Dayna. All voted in favor.

**Closing Prayer**

Fr. Will offered a closing prayer.

**Meeting Adjourned**

The meeting adjourned at 9:27 pm.

**Next Meeting**

The next Vestry meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 20, 2023.