

**St. Francis Episcopal Church
Potomac Parish
July 18, 2023 Vestry Meeting**

The Vestry convened online via Zoom on Tuesday, July 18, 2023, at 7:30 p.m., Fr. Mark presiding. Members attending: Ms. Tendall, senior warden, Ms. Bahar, junior warden, Ms. Byam, Mr. Hudson, Ms. Hurdle, Mr. Jannotta, Mr. Maroulis, Ms. Oleson, Mr. Ruf, Dr. Schneider, and Mr. Whitlock. Also attending: Mr. Smith.

Invocation.

Fr. Mark gave the invocation.

Bible Study

Dr. Schneider led the Bible Study. He read John 6, the “Big Feast” in which Jesus, after speaking to the multitudes of people gathered on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, asked that the remaining pieces of loaves and fishes be gathered up and fed to them. Dr. Schneider said that parishioners had different talents and as members of the parish “team,” they could use their talents to accomplish the work of St. Francis, both in the church and in the community, for which he was very thankful. Fr. Mark expressed his appreciation for the very encouraging spirit among the Vestry members. Dr. Schneider concluded with a prayer thanking God for these gifts.

Consent Agenda (*previously circulated electronically*)

Minutes of May Vestry Meeting

The May Minutes are part of the Consent Agenda. There were approved with no changes.

Rector’s Report (attached)

Georgetown Hill School (GHS) Space Rental Lease

Fr. Mark said an amendment to the GHS Lease Agreement is being drafted by him and Mr. Hough, expanding the rented space to include the cribbery, a closet in St. Francis Hall, and the music room. These will be shared spaces, like those included in the 2021 lease amendment. The only differences will new numbers reflecting the square footage and the overall increase in rent. We cannot finalize the amendment at this point because we don’t yet have a date for the inspection of the fire alarm upgrades. When this is known, the document can be forwarded to the vestry for digital approval.

Organ Renovation

Fr. Mark and Mr. John Widmann are debating whether to give the Whitesel Company permission to install a temporary organ this fall, which would be used until the permanent organ arrives near the end of the year. Fr. Mark said that the temporary organ would be a hybrid model similar to the new organ except for the special stops the church is requesting, and that the church organ has the potential to fail, given its condition. The Vestry asked if any of the organ’s parts were salvageable and could be sold; but the parts are in poor condition, and the organ console will be junked after it is replaced. Fr. Mark and Mr. Widmann will report back on what seems best.

Indians for Christ

Fr. Mark and Mr. Jannotta both spoke with the leadership of Silver Spring United Methodist Church, Indians for Christ's current landlord. They are in agreement that it would not be good for St. Francis to enter into a permanent space-sharing arrangement with this congregation. The vestry concurred in this assessment, noting that Indians for Christ could continue to rent space a few times a year for special services with prior arrangement, as has been done smoothly for the last several years. Fr. Mark will contact Indians for Christ with the church's decision.

St. Francis Hall Door

Fr. Mark said that some people with keys had problems with the new lock on the St. Francis Hall door, and that they should contact the church office for a new key if theirs isn't working well. The new lock is more secure than the previous door lock, *i.e.*, it always relocks when the door closes.

Appeal for Nursery Help

Ms. Sarah Harich, who is in charge of the nursery, needs help. Fr. Mark said this was a good need as the number of people in the parish with children is a sign of the parish's growth, and a great way for volunteers to have an opportunity to get to know these families and for the families to get to know other members of the parish. He encouraged all vestry members to respond generously to Kathy Herrmann's appeal for helpers.

Mutual Ministry Reviews

Fr. Mark said he had reviewed the vestry's feedback with the wardens last week and had also submitted a list of accomplishments for the last year and goals for the coming year. He found the vestry's feedback very gracious and constructive. He said that he will be conducting the church staff's performance reviews in the next several weeks.

Grant for Youth Programs

Dr. Schneider said that St. Francis has received a \$6,000 grant from the Diocese of Washington to set up fellowship events for parents of youth from our three-congregation youth group (St. Francis, Christ Church Rockville, and St. James Potomac). Dr. Schneider will meet with Pastor Allison and Ms. Herrmann on Friday, July 21st to discuss ways to use this grant for these purposes.

Church Audit

Mr. Ruf said that the Finance Committee has been unable to get the audit scheduled for this fall due to the unavailability of people to conduct the audit. Mr. Feagles is continuing to research the matter and a committee audit (of non-finance committee members) is also being considered.

Georgetown Hill School (GHS) Rental Income

The finance committee recommends that additional GHS rental income from the lease amendment to the property maintenance fund through the end of 2023.

Women of St. Francis Fund

The Women of St. Francis Fund is inactive, and the Vestry is determining where to allocate the group's \$20,000 - \$30,000 remaining funds. The Vestry will rename this fund the Ministry Fund and cap funding drawdown at \$5,000 per year. (\$3,100.00 from the Funds was used in 2023.) Fr. Mark said some money from this fund could be used for the Rise Against Hunger Campaign, which Ms. Herrmann has rescheduled for this fall, and/or for other outreach programs.

The Vestry discussed using the Women of St. Francis funds in considering the final draft of the church investment policy and creation of the new Ministry Fund. The Vestry wants to avoid mixing funding sources for programs. There was also discussion of funding for evangelism vs. outreach activities. Fr. Mark said that evangelism was more focused on growing the church. The Vestry asked if Ms. Herrmann needed more money for her activities. It was noted that \$196.00 had been allocated for outreach and fellowship activities in 2023 (because funds for these purposes were being drawn from the Women of St. Francis Fund).

Motion to Approve the Consent Agenda

Dr. Schneider made a motion, seconded by Ms. Bahar to approve the consent agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

Motion to Allocate Additional GHS Rental Income to the Property Maintenance Fund

Mr. Ruf made a motion, seconded by Mr. Jannotta to allocate additional funds received after the approval of the lease amendment to the property maintenance fund, through the end of 2023. The motion carried unanimously.

Renaming the Women of St. Francis Fund to the Ministry Fund

Dr. Schneider made a motion, seconded by Mr. Ruf, to rename the Women of St. Francis Fund as the Ministry Fund and to cap the yearly funding outlays at \$5,000. The Women of St. Francis group has been inactive for several years. The motion carried unanimously.

HVAC Project

Mr. Whitlock said that the HVAC system's mechanical inspection and approval were complete on July 14th. The HVAC system is now waiting on the contractor manual, which completes this part of Phase 1. The property committee will also be soliciting bids for a new HVAC maintenance contract, and bids will be due in August 2023. Mr. Whitlock said the HVAC maintenance covers the boilers and related equipment.

Our engineer, Chris Stanton, is working on engineering work for Phase 2 of the project, which may not begin until late 2024. There are still on-going supply chain problems, which could affect the availability of new boilers campus-wide and air handlers for the church nave. The committee is also considering installing split-system units for the classrooms. Mr. Ruf, who owns an HVAC contracting business said he could assist with sourcing equipment when the time comes.

TreeBranch Communications

Fr. Mark said there have been some difficulties with TreeBranch Communications, e.g., the outside firm that has handled all of our communications work since Karen Schneider's departure. Pastor Allison and Kathy Hermann are working on a plan to take drafting of "Sounds of St.

Francis” newsletter and posters for parish events back in house. Ms. Schneider has agreed to help with training. Mr. Sean Smith, our Audio-Visual tech and parishioner Madison Herrmann both have skills in this areas, and are glad to help. Fr. Mark will work on arrangements to pay them fairly. The vestry noted that if other staff were performing some of the work they had previously done, TreeBranch should be paid less.

Financial Report

Mr. Maroulis, Treasurer, reported on the June monthly Financial Report (attachments) using the new layout that Ms. Krajcik, church bookkeeper, had designed for the report. Mr. Maroulis called attention to several items, including \$136,000 in restricted funds not included in the operations category, a lower operating surplus, and pledges being at 58% of the budget so far this year. Fr. Mark said that Ms. Krajcik plans to include a six-month “rolling forecast” with next month’s report based on the six months prior to help vestry members plan more carefully for the future.

Motion to Approve the June Financial Report

Ms. Bahar made a motion, seconded by Dr. Schneider, to approve the June Financial Report. The motion carried unanimously

Indians for Christ Space Rental Request

Mr. Jannotta made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hunter, to adjourn the approve the Vestry’s decision not to lease space to the Indians for Christ but to allow them to rent space in the church 3-4 times/year, with a six-month advanced notice decision. The motion carried unanimously.

Motion to Adjourn

Dr. Schneider made a motion, seconded by Ms. Bahar, to adjourn the Vestry Meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

Adjournment

Fr. Mark led the Vestry in the closing prayer:

Keep watch, dear Lord, with those who work, or watch, or weep this night, and give thine angels charge over those who sleep. Tend the sick, Lord Christ; give rest to the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering, pity the afflicted, shield the joyous; and all for thy love's sake. Amen.

Les Smith
Clerk