St. Christopher’s Episcopal Church

Vestry Meeting

October 19, 2023

The meeting was called to order by the Rector, George Arceneaux IV, at 7:33 p.m.

In attendance were: Paul Clark, Kelly Clissold, Peter Curtin, Julie Dulski, Thomas Gary, Deb Maue, Mark Schneider, and Chloe White. Treasurer Johnathan White and Rector George Arceneaux IV were also in attendance.

1. Opening Prayer and Reflection – Thomas Gary

Thomas reflected on a three-layered plexiglass chart he keeps in his office, which shows line-graphs of household income based on education, for blacks, Hispanics and whites. Household incomes become more disparate across race with increasing levels of education. Thomas noted that he tries every day to enhance the knowledge of the groups he serves, which he termed “working on the edges”. Although progress seems hard to achieve, he feels that he has helped to gradually reduce the disparity.

George thought this an apt reflection as it relates to St. C’s relationship with San Miguel, which is considered a low-income parish.

1. Administration
   * Changes to the Agenda: no changes proposed.
   * Minutes from the last meeting – September 19, 2023
     + 1. Peter Curtin, seconded by Chloe White, moved that the minutes be amended, removing a typo in the header and revising 3.d.ii. 2. to read “To respect the time commitment given by Vestry members”. This motion passed unanimously.
       2. Paul Clark, seconded by Deb Maue, moved acceptance of the revised minutes. This motion passed unanimously.
   * Treasurer’s Report
     1. Johnathan White reported that the September financials were in decent shape, with a surplus of about $2,000. The checking account balance, once outstanding checks have cleared, is about $33,000. No funds were transferred from the endowment this month. The Treasurer’s report and the Finance Committee summary were accepted without further discussion.
     2. George Arceneaux proposed disbursement of the funds collected for the benefit of St. Martin, San Miguel and the Diocese of Renk, currently totaling slightly more than $10,000 in total. Kelly Clissold, seconded by Chloe White, moved disbursement of these funds to their intended recipients. This motion passed unanimously.
     3. Mark Schneider announced that Judy Marth has agreed to relieve Priscilla Nied as Associate Treasurer. The Vestry heartily thanked Priscilla for her decades of service in this role, and welcomed Judy to this ministry.
     4. Thomas Gary, seconded by Chloe White, moved that Judy Marth be authorized to act as signatory on all financial accounts that currently have Priscilla Nied as an authorized signatory. This motion passed unanimously.
   * Stewardship Committee Update
     1. Chloe White, as chair of this committee, reported that the committee met on October 17, comprised of Chloe, Gabriela Denton, John Hillman and Mark Schneider, assisted by Johnathan White as Treasurer.
     2. The immediate plan is to create a flyer for parish members which describes the process of making pledges and which announces the target date for submitting pledges, December 17.
   * Building and Grounds Committee Update
     1. Peter Curtin reported that the committee had its second meeting last week. There are no immediate requests to be made to the Vestry.
     2. The committee will establish written standard operating procedures for the many functions needed to keep the physical plant in operation. It will also identify contracts or formal agreements for the contracted services. The committee will provide oversight for these services , with the expectation that some routine services will eventually be overseen by the Parish Administrator.
     3. As a long term goal the committee will determine the capital improvement needs for the building and grounds.
     4. The committee will also propose a dollar and/or service-specific threshold for projects requiring Vestry approval.
     5. Because of a delay in identifying utility lines, the removal of the dead tree will take place on October 23.
   * Outreach Activity
     1. In connection with planned monthly service activities for youth, Paul Clark plans to provide bins to collect the necessary supplies for projects to benefit Housing Forward or Beyond Hunger. The projects will include preparing packages of toiletries or snacks.
     2. Paul noted that Jenn Urso plans to begin a blanket-making project for youth and adults
     3. Paul indicated that a needy family will be identified, for a Christmas Giving Tree.
     4. There is a community-wide effort to assist St. Catherine/St. Lucy in converting its rectory into a social service hub, much like Housing Forward’s center in Maywood. There will be a presentation about this at St. C on November 9 at 7 pm.
   * Interim Rector’s Report
     1. George Arceneaux summarized his goals as rector. Over the next five years, he wants to develop robust services for the three current groups, with members of different services able to connect. He plans to arrange the liturgy so that children will feel welcome at any of the services. He wants to achieve clarity in communication and with regard to the activities of the parish. One focus will be to have a group of parishioners assist newcomers in connecting to St. C activities. He wants to be able to actively engage many members in the ongoing work of the parish. George stated an important one-year goal is to connect parishioners with each other, to build a strong community. He will be working closely with the Liturgy Committee. Julie Dulski, committee chair, hopes that Trish Joy, Peter Walters and Mary Kay Tobin will serve on this committee.
     2. Staffing: George plans to offer the position of Parish Administrator to a well-qualified person who has performed a similar job for a different church in the Diocese. George did not receive any suitable applications for the Director of Youth Formation position. He has withdrawn the job posting; this position will not be filled during the current program year. Instead, George plans to work with the youth following the 9:30 am service twice a month, and Christ Creps will oversee a service activity once per month. For the other Sunday, George will arrange for parent-led activities. George will use this time to explore what this parish needs for youth formation, to better fashion a position description for next year.
     3. George will propose an increase in Christa’s salary for the additional duties.
     4. George would like to continue to develop the relationship of St. C with St. Martin and with San Miguel, but he also recognizes there are other more immediate parish concerns. He suggested the Stewardship Committee discuss how to approach support for these two parishes.
     5. George has been asked to consider committing St. C to providing some level of assistance to the arriving migrants from Venezuela. He is mindful of both the pride and the tension surrounding St. C’s asylum ministry in the past. He wants to explore what the parish can support, looking at the continuum from providing monetary support to volunteering to providing a warming shelter at St. C periodically for young families.
2. No executive session was required. The meeting was adjourned at 9:31 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Schneider