

Approved 11/9/2024 (by [email](#))
St. Mark's Episcopal Church
Vestry Meeting Minutes
October 22, 2024
Via Zoom & In Person, 7:00-8:50PM

Attendance

- *Vestry Members Present:* Michele Morgan (Rector), Jim Brooks (Senior Warden), Martha Huizenga (Junior Warden), Jan Lipscomb, Nick Rogers, Todd Thorpe, Meg Platt, Kristina Keenan, Travis Beaty, Hank Donnelly, Doug Padget
- *Vestry Member Absent:* Elizabeth Becker
- *Officers Present:* Randy Marks (Clerk), Doug Ammon (Treasurer), Frank Nickerson (Assistant Treasurer for Bequests and Special Gifts), Rosemary Harold (Counsel)
- *Clergy:* Caitlin Frasier (Assistant Rector), Lydia Arnts (Seminararian)
- *Guests:* Holly Kreutter & Edna Boone (Service & Social Justice Board Co-Chairs), JR Randall (Diocesan Delegate)

Meeting Minutes Approvals

- September 22, 2024, [w](#) Vestry Minutes.9-24-2024 : Approved unanimously.
- October 12, 2024, [w](#) Choir Fundraising.Email Action.10-12-2024 Approved unanimously.

Alcohol Policy Modification

- Remove Section 10 (“Sacramental use of alcohol”) from the [w](#) Alcohol Policy v.3 : Approved unanimously.
- This action does not preclude serving of non-alcoholic beverages at communion.

Reports

Rector:

- Rector Michele Morgan noted the updated [Credit Card Policy V2](#) ; a key change is requiring staff to reconcile the charges against the budget.
- She noted that the Junior Warden had to leave the meeting and referred to her [Junior Warden Report-10.22.2024](#) .
- Election/Aftermath Building Strategy: Michele presented her tentative suggestions and Vestry consensus was, subject to change based on circumstances (including election results) and consultation with law enforcement:
 - Election Day (11/5): Have the building open 8AM-1PM, with 8:45AM Morning Prayer and a noon Eucharist; recruit volunteers to stay in the nave from 9:15AM-noon; for those who want to pray later, we will suggest they go the Cathedral.
 - Certification Day (1/6/2024): We will close the building; Michele & Michael will be here in case someone needs shelter.
 - Inauguration Day (1/20/2025): We want to open the building. We will need volunteers to man it.
- Staff compensation Issues:
 - Health Insurance:
 - Letters of agreement state we cover health care costs.
 - In recent years health insurance costs have increased dramatically (this year our current plan is up 12%).
 - Personnel Committee has discussed having staff choose cheaper plans with higher co-pays/deductibles. We would save money but ensure that the staff are no worse off by giving them a higher Cost of Living Allowance (COLA).
 - After getting input from the Personnel Committee, Michele will negotiate with each staffer to ensure we are treating each fairly.
 - The changes would be budget-neutral.

- Overall staff compensation: Michele pointed out that, given high recent inflation, our past COLAs have not kept pace and thus real staff compensation has gone down. She wants to communicate that to the Parish by showing inflation vs. COLAs over the past four years.
- Canvas: Off to a good start: 25 pledges (most with increases) from virtually all of leadership and others have brought in over \$147,000 in pledges or 13%
- Cherry Trees: Four cherry trees near the HVAC unit in the courtyard have a 40 year life span and are dying and need to be replaced. Because they were originally a gift from Lady Bird Johnson, Michele wrote to family institutions. Her daughters have offered to cover the cost of replacement. Michele's inclination is to put them across the courtyard, away from the HVAC. She will work with the Junior Warden.

Senior Warden:

- Senior Warden Jim Brooks noted that the Budget Tutorial had been a success.
- On 11/3, he and Doug Ammon will host a Budget Forum aimed mostly at Parish leaders to learn about our financial situation and provide input.
- Jim stressed the role of liaisons to get input from their Pillars and committees.

Treasurer:


- Treasurer Doug Ammon submitted his [report](#) in advance of the meeting.
- The Report recommended a motion to facilitate the acceptance of the Raiford Gaffney Bequest (see bellow).

Service & Social Justice Board:

- Board Co-Chairs Edna Boone and Holly Kreutter submitted a written [Report](#) & [Presentation](#). Highlights:
 - Board is grateful for the increase in 2024 funds, which mostly went to youth.

- Three priorities:
 - Expand visibility and participation (especially youth).
 - Track participation: 500+ volunteers so far this year) and prioritize parish engagement in funding.
 - Expand S&SJ:by funding grant requests.
- Charity to Justice continuum: charity, service, advocacy, justice. Trying for a balance among the four areas.
- Board will have a Retreat on 10/27.
- Several Vestry members praised the report and the Board's activities.
- Jim praised 2024 budget request in terms of goals based budgeting. Kristina praised effort to track numbers.

Parish Life Liaison

- Travis, as Liaison, noted that he had compiled a document showing the  Parish Life Leadership Fall 2024 .
- The document is editable so people can correct as necessary.

Raiford Gaffney Bequest

- Vestry Counsel Rosemary Harold provided an update on the process concerning Raiford Gaffney's bequest to the Parish.
- Her house is sold for a price close to the asking price of \$1,050,000; closing is 10/28/2024. The estate has some liabilities. In addition St. Mark's is the beneficiary of some or all for IRA and annuity accounts.
- Michele will be meeting the trustees this week.
- The Vestry will have to accept the gift and decide what to do with it. Michele noted that the proceeds will not be used to fund the operating budget.
- The Vestry needs to authorize its Parish leaders to accept the bequest and thus the Vestry acted on this motion:

The Vestry authorizes Franklin Nickerson, Assistant Treasurer for Special Gifts & Bequests; Douglas Ammon, Treasurer; or James Brooks, Senior Warden to accept and sign to claim on behalf of St. Mark's Episcopal Church of Capitol Hill (Saint Mark's Parish in the District of Columbia), as beneficiary of the B. Raiford Gaffney estate held by the B. Raiford Gaffney Trust: (1) proceeds from the sale of

Ms. Gaffney's principal residence at 737 10th St. SE; (2) insurance, annuity, held at Vanguard, RiverSource Life Insurance Companies, and other entities; and (3) any other assets.

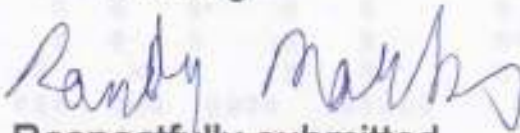
Motion: Jan Lipscomb; Second: Meg Platt. Approved unanimously.

Reparations

- Jan Lipscomb presented a brief report on reparations, which the Diocesan Convention will consider.
- She noted that VTS is already paying reparations to descendants of slaves who worked there.
- Less hopeful is the response of dioceses out west who are holding land that they received from indigenous tribes. Indeed, Joe and Ashley Hubbard lost their jobs because of Joe's truth telling about the situation.
- Jan, Michele, and Caitlin will meet and bring the issue back at a future meeting.

Diocesan Delegates Role

- Jim and Michele presented a proposed [Diocesan Delegate Role Description](#).
- Michele noted that it should also state that delegates that have written a resolution should present it to the Vestry in advance. There was a consensus to add that.
- There was a consensus not to require Delegates to follow Vestry instructions, but rather the document should ask Delegates to consider the Vestry's views.
- Jim, Michele, and Randy will update the document to reflect the Vestry consensus and present it for action at the November meeting.


Respectfully submitted

Randy Marks
Vestry Clerk