

**St. Francis Episcopal Church
Vestry Meeting
March 21, 2024**

Vestry Present:

√ Rev Ayden Petrone, Rector	√Gerrienne Breck, Clerk	√Grace McDougall
√ Pam Maiolo, Sr Warden	√Olivia DiAgostino	√ Paul Sinckler
√Amy Myzie, Jr. Warden	√ Michelle Klastava	√ Christy McGuire
√ Gerry Welch, Deacon	√Marie Petit-Homme	√ Elaine Patania
	√Cynthia Pelliccia	

Absent:

Also Present: Ilia Scriven, Treasurer,

Meeting called to order by Rev Ayden at 7:38 pm and facilitated online using Zoom.

Opening Prayer: Deacon Gerry

*Almighty God, you have built your church upon the foundation of apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. Grant that the people of this Vestry and congregation may be joined together as a holy temple, a place where you dwell. Send your Holy Spirit upon that, guided by your word and strengthened by your sacraments, we may plan and do things that will be for the good of your church and the glory of your name; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **AMEN.***

Minutes:

The minutes for the February Vestry meeting were emailed by Gerrienne 3/16/24

Motion by Grace to accept the Minutes as is. Second by Christy
Motion carried unanimously.

Treasury Report: The February report was emailed by Ilia on 3/17/24 as follows.

Treasurer's Report for February for your review and comments.

*The Church is **\$(1,628.11)** under budget Year to Date through the month of February(col D, line 114). Income was \$(1,771..79)(col D, line 33) under budget(**primarily because of Pledge(col D, line 5), Prior Year Catchup(col D, line 6) and Non Pledge(col D, line 7) are all running under budget offset somewhat by Funerals Etc.(col D, line 27) already exceeding the annual budget**), offset a little by expenses being under budget by **\$143.68**(col D, line 112) It is too early to draw any conclusions from the Pledge and Non Pledge shortfalls as they could recover by year end, but that is not the same for the Prior Year Catchup as that is usually received by the first two months of the year. **PLEASE SEE ADDITIONAL COMMENTS ON THE REPORT.***

The balances of the church's bank and investment accounts, as of February 29, 2024, are listed at bottom of page 3 of the report.

Year to date through the month of February the church has collected 16.6% (col E, line 113) of its 2024 income budget and spent 11.3% (col E, line 112) of its expense budget. For comparison purposes, year to date through January is 16.6% of the year.

As I mentioned above it is still too early to make any conclusions on the results for the first two months of the year, but we should have a better idea of how the results are trending by the end of the first quarter.

As you might have noticed, this year I am not sending my old spreadsheet with the three additional tabs as I felt it made the file too large. If you would like me to do so, please let me know and I will.

Additional Discussion:

- Multi-month pledges are posted for the month so as not to throw off the balances.
- Ilia will be changing his day of stopping in the office to Wed instead of Friday

Motion by Christy to accept Treasurer Report as is. Second by Cynthia.
Motion carried unanimously.

Sr. Warden's/Fellowship Report – Pam emailed report

- *On March 1, as the expression goes, there is a new sheriff in town. And I am delighted by Ayden's' arrival. We have been meeting a few times a week, with me in a supportive role in hoping to make Ayden's transition to new ministry at St. Francis an easy one. We are both learning in the process.*
- *I have received some very positive comments about our new PIC. But we will see if that will change after today's revealing sermon about Black, White & Gray hangers. LOL*
- *Signatory on the discretionary account has been changed to Ayden as the sole signatory. Deacon Gerry & I have been removed. As Sr. Warden, I will continue to monitor expenditures on a quarterly basis.*
- *Ayden & I visited the rectory and I introduced Ayden to Paul Domenick.*
- *No reply to date from Bishop's office about Oct. visit for confirmation. I will contact again after Easter.*
- *Still waiting to hear from Ellen Rutherford about mandatory Anti-Racism training. I wrote again late last week.*
- *AA is now meeting on Tuesday & Wednesday evenings in Milbank Hall. So far all is going well.*
- *Sports Card Show hall rental this Saturday. I am meeting Dave Catalano on Friday as he will be having tables delivered. I will give him keys to be used on Saturday as he wants to be there very early. Cynthia does not have to open but, if possible, stop by during the morning. I will be there on the way to Iftar so I can get the keys if that would be easier.*
- *Vin & I will pick up Easter Flowers on 3/29. Help needed for setup & polishing on Holy Saturday at 9 am for about 1.5 hours.*
- *Thanks to Amy & her crew for running another successful St. Pat's dinner.*

Jr. Warden's Report – Amy

- *This month saw several pieces of aluminum flashing detach from part of our structure around the day care center. That has been repaired.*
- *We also saw the return of 'varmints' inside the attic area over the rector's and main office. We had pest control respond and do more closure of entry areas to keep these pesky squirrels out.*
- *I installed a new blind in the office window.*

- *Paul and I plan to perform some freshening up of the exterior and ask for help from our parishioners once we get some more warm, spring days. These include:*
 - *Repair the rear fence*
 - *Realign the shed onto its base*
 - *Repair the drain area in the front of the church by the sidewalk*
- *I also will be contacting our “tree guy” to remove the two trees along the sidewalk and I will be contacting Reagan Landscaping to have them regrade our parking lot.*

Ministry assignments & discussion

Pam Maiolo- Sr. Warden, Finance, Buildings & grounds, Rectory liaison, Outreach

Outreach:

- *15 \$20 Shop Rite gifts cards delivered to FISH Inc. (\$200 budget, \$100 member donation)*
- *Worked the food distribution line at First Presbyterian Church, Dunellen. Event is once a month. Lots of food insecure people in need. My connection was with Frank from Beginning World Changers.*
- *Women Aware Lenten donation total as of this report is \$888.*
- *Continued donations to St. Paul’s Food pantry, Fresh Start & Plainfield Humane Society*
- *Looking into organizations in the area that might need volunteers to assist. I would like to see more hands-on participation in ?? If you have any suggestions, please let me know.*

Amy Myzie – Jr. Warden, Buildings & grounds, Finance, Financial Secretary

Gerriane Breck – Vestry Clerk, MailChimp, Sign

Olivia DiAgostino – Communication (FB)

Michelle Klastava – Youth, COME

Grace McDougall – COME, Fellowship, Finance

Christy McGuire- Stewardship, Communications (media releases & Website)

Marie Petit-Holmes – Youth

Elaine Patania – Stewardship, Finance, (Office Overseer)

Stewardship *Elaine & Christy met via zoom at the beginning of March. We looked at the successes of the 2023 Stewardship Campaign. It was noted that although we reached our monetary goal as suggested by the finance team, our pledges are significantly lower than in the past. This was due to our dwindling congregation and the monetary struggles of the times. It was noted that almost all of the “regular attending” (including on line) parishioners did pledge in a timely manner. One highlight of the program was that some past parishioners who have moved continue to pledge to St. Francis.*

- *Shared the message via Communiques and in service bulletins*
- *Sent out packets of flower seeds to every household*
- *Collected and presented pictures of people's gardens (Green Thumb Club)*
- *Adopted an Asian Money Tree we named "Frannie"*
- *Handed out mums to everyone present on Commitment Sunday*

Our Commitment Sunday was November 19th, 2023. The guest celebrant/sermon was given by Mo. Megan Thomas, a member of the Diocesan Stewardship Committee (Project Resource).

A concern is that we need to have all Vestry and leadership members pledge in a timely manner. Last year we included a line so that those who were not able/unsure of a pledge could respond. We had 4 people choose that response.

This year we are hoping to follow the TENS program. You probably notice one of their notices in our Communique'. The theme is WALK IN LOVE. Christy who is working with Project Resource at the diocese is looking into their continue participation in this program. Our timeline is to meet in July to outline dates and discuss the program. The introduction of the program will take place in September. We welcome others to join us on the Stewardship committee.

2025 Giving envelopes have been ordered to meet the deadline for a discount.

Christy M. (chair), Elaine P.

Finance

Finance Team: Pam Maiolo, Amy Myzie, Ilia Scriven, Paul Snickler, Cynthia Pelliccia, Larry Quirk, Grace McDougall, Elaine Patania.

- *We are now nearing the end of the first quarter. Amy will be sending out first quarter statements. (Amy is working on them to be sent electronically) Once the numbers are calculated on the report the finance team will meet (zoom) at the end of April to see how we are doing this first quarter and what suggestions/adjustments might be needed.*
- *Audit: We are preparing for the 2023 Audit. It will take place after a service during coffee hour in May. It seems we have the best attendance at that time and we all get the work done in a timely manner. I will ask Ilia and Amy what dates are best for them and ask them to*

prepare their documents that are needed for that date. Grace will be working with me on this project as she is proficient and familiar with finance and numbers.

- *The Finance Team and the Vestry need to take a moment to look at the recommendations of the (2022 Audit) to continue and complete these suggestions. (Copies of Audits are located in the top right file cabinet in the office.)*
- *Thank you Counters for your dedicated work in this ministry. March – May schedules have been published. Please confirm your dates.*

Additional Discussion:

- Audit on May 19 at Coffee Hour

Cynthia Pelliccia – Fellowship, Finance

- *Nothing to report for fellowship at the moment.. and I am on board for in person meeting for April, I'll provide a light dinner 🍽️*

Paul Sinckler – Finance, Buildings & grounds

Rector's Report - Ayden

Onboarding: *Thank you all for your warm welcome! It has truly been a phenomenal three weeks. In my short time here at St. Francis, I have been working with Pam, Ilia, Trina, and Gerry to learn how St. Francis runs currently. I am so very appreciative of everyone's time and attention in helping me. Onboarding at a secular position is a task in and of itself, onboarding as a Priest-in-Charge is a different ballgame! Thank you **ALL** for your kindness, patience, and grace as I get my footing.*

Discretionary Fund: *The Parish of St. Matthew's in Pennington provided me a "purse" for my new discretionary fund here at St. Francis. The purse was in the amount of \$1415.00 which was deposited in the account on March 8, 2024. Thereafter, on March 8th, I received a call from a person whom St. Francis has provided funding for in the past. They were demanding a \$50.00 Vanilla Visa Gift Card. I gracefully set firm boundaries with the individual letting them know that I was happy to help them with a bill, which I would pay directly, or something specific. However, the practice of giving \$50.00 gift cards upon demand was not a practice that would be continued. I paid the individual's gas bill which was in the amount of \$168.20. While I believe in, and feel it important to, giving and loving one's neighbor, I also feel that it is important to manage the discretionary fund with appropriate boundaries. Moving forward, I plan to manage the discretionary fund with more of a focused attention to our immediate communities and emergent situations rather than long term provisions. Additionally, it is my practice to provide community resources that can be accessed, and sustained, on a more long-term basis.*

Deacon's Report - Gerry

No report

Old Business

- *Steve Minzer Quartet, April 21, 2024, 2pm @ St. Francis*
 - Wine in Milbank and Free will offering for food
- *Spring Cleanup date - Amy will work on a list, Target Date: Sat 4/27*
 - Amy working with Rick on a purchase of new stove and oven. The main issue is the Fire Suppression system. Rick is going to get a second quote to the one Amy got from the company in So Plainfield. Rick has a saw that will cut through the old stove and reduce expense to discard it.
 - Amy put a list of chores together and plans to ask people to come for an hour or two
- *Good Friday Participation at Holy Cross from: Complete*
 - Ayden shared that there are lots of volunteers for Holy Cross in North Plainfield in addition to Ayden and Deacon Gerry. It runs from 12-3. Service will be streamed from Holy Cross on their Facebook page.
 - Mother Stephanie invited All Saints in Scotch Plains as well as St Francis, primarily because both churches did not have a Priest-in-Charge at the time.
- *Gooseneck Microphones installed at pulpit & lectern.*
 - Learning curve to remember to turn it on – a sign has been added to Lectern to alert speaker, and will be included in the duties of the video role in addition to turning on TVs. Neck can be moved to accommodate height of speaker.
- *St. Pat's Dinner (Comments/Concerns)*
 - Made \$300 day of and an additional \$100 for a total profit of \$400

New Business

- *Deacon Gerry*
 - Visiting shut ins with Ayden
 - Working with Ayden to coordinate Holy Week
 - As of April 7, she has resigned as St Francis Deacon, per the Cannons.
- *Music at Easter Vigil*
 - Rachel will not be available for Easter Vigil and is trying to find a replacement.
 - Pam expressed concern with the short notice and Easter Vigil is a stated item in her Letter of Agreement
 - As last-ditch option may be pre-recorded music which would be coordinated by Rachel for play at Easter Vigil. The choir knows how to make it play at the appropriate time.
 - Grace will find out at tomorrows rehearsal what the plan is – the priority is to get a replacement.
 - Later in the meeting, Gerry let us know Rachel found a replacement.
- *The Squirrels returned!*
 - Trina called Amy to report the Squirrels are now in the Sanctuary.
 - Pest Control was called, they found another hole and small holes for audio equipment along rafters in Sanctuary and sealed it up and set traps. Someone is supposed to crawl up into attic located at top of Narthex stairs, daily to see if trap was successful – Amy will install a camera to monitor more easily. (on a lighter note, be mindful our situation not as bad as Allison LeGreca, where they have a Racoon in the attic and it gave birth, which will be expensive.)
- *Lenten Clergy Day with Bishop*
 - Ayden and Gerry attended and got new (blessed) oil. Bishop had them look through ministry through Barnabas, Mary Magdalene (even though it was scary, she was still at the tomb), and Jesus's brother James, which was helpful to Ayden and Gerry.

- Gerry added that Bishop believes liturgies used should be from the approved resources.
- Dioceses has hired a temp person to come in to look at Diocese finances.
- Steve ?? Cannon will be focusing on property. Cannon Joan will focus on transition
- Diocesan-wide confirmation will on May 19
- *Administrative Assistant Wages*
 - Trina has been with us for 1 year, works 12 hours, and some days extra as needed. She capable, competent, flexible when we need her onsite to meet a vendor. She does the office work and errands, and works with Ayden and is a great resource for town wide opportunities (e.g. she invited Mayor Cilento in to meet Ayden)
 - Pam proposes a 5% increase from \$20 to \$21.
 - Her capacity – she continues to get the bulletins under control. Elaine has spoken with her regarding additional tasks once we are past Holy Week.
 - The budget has scheduled her out for 52 weeks, however, she is off for the month of July, so our budget will be able to absorb the expense
 - **Motion:** Elaine proposes a 5% increase from \$20 to \$21. Second: Olivia Motion carried.
- *Diocesan Convention (Comments/Concerns)*
 - Gerrienne, Laura, and Chris Colwell all attended via zoom. Some highlights include:
 - Bishop Sally spoke of the financial challenges resulting in the reality of working with less people and less money, while increasing building costs, less capability on ministries.
 - 2 congregations in the last 10 days voted to close due to lack of people, not so much lack of funding.
 - Seeing an impact of building property challenges and will form a new task force to understand the issues, develop a plan and budget.
 - Finance challenges - \$10m spent in the last 10 years on congregation support.
 - Treasurers Report: Goal is to reduce the draw on Trustee Funds, therefore reduce expenses significantly. 2024 plan is to reduce drawn to \$755k, down \$1.3m and capital fundraising. Other expense reductions include: lower support to Mission Congregations; Reduce staff costs including elimination of the CFO and Congregation Development Canon
 - We remain faithful to ministry, first putting our house to establish firm foundations.
 - Gerrienne & Laura are unable to attend the Nov 16 Budget Convention
 - Ayden will review the Annual Meeting list of alternates to attend Nov 16.
- *Rite Planning Subscription (\$300-\$365 per year/*
<https://www.augsburgfortress.org/store/product/RP/RitePlanning>)
 - This is a tool Ayden was referred to by a fellow clergy member, Grant, as a resource that will be helpful.
 - Ayden showed Pam and Trina this web-based resource for liturgy planning. Rachel can insert her music, Trina and insert the readings, and it builds the bulletins, and eliminates the formatting challenges Trina currently encounters. This may help create capacity for Trina and be a more efficient method to get the bulletin finalized.
 - Ayden has used their 14-day trial period and feels it is clergy-altering in terms of ease and efficiency.
 - Gerry shared that the School of Ministry also recommends this tool.
 - **Motion:** Christy: Purchase a subscription. Second: Amy
 - Discussion:
 - Who would use the tool? Ayden, Rachel, Trina. Ayden/Trina would be going into site, select the readings, and Rachel would download the hymns
 - **Amended Motion:** Christy: Purchase a subscription for \$365 to the Rite Planning software. Second: Amy
- *One License Streaming (\$210.00 per year)*

- Ayden brings this to ensure we are One License Streaming is Authorization to stream music and writings legally.
 - Today, if Rachel plays music and it is streamed, that composer is not getting royalty for their work. Rite Planning takes care of some of it (Hymnal and Levas), but not all of it.
 - Pam has previously discussed with Larry who thought it was a low risk. Steve Welch has also recommended it. Christy shared that some of our services were flagged by FB due to music. Rachel has shared with Ayden a desire play additional music in the prelude and postlude.
 - Oliva recommended another resource calls CCLI.
 - Michelle suggested we alter the streaming of our services to go live after the prelude and cut off before the postlude.
 - **Motion:** Ayden Table this discussion until April. Second: Paul
 - **Action Item:** Conclusion is that this is a good topic and Olivia will investigate CCLI and what the One License Streaming license covers and bring a recommendation for April Vestry consideration.
 - *ACS Church Management/Realm* (<https://www.acstechnologies.com/realm/>) –
 - Ayden moved this topic to next month
 - *Dunellen Town-wide Garage Sale (6/8) and Piscataway Street Fair (6/8)*
 - Both are on the same date. Which do we want to do?
 - Garage sale is work, but we make money.
 - Street Fair gets our name out there. Typically handled by the COME committee.
 - Cynthia – pointed out the Mass on the Grass opportunity for June is the 9th, and Grace is her wingman. Discussed other potential dates in May and June. All agreed to keep it on June 9th.
 - Therefore, Garage Sale makes more sense, since there would be activity at the church in preparation for
 - Discussion on the value of keeping our name visible in both Dunellen and Piscataway. Dunellen Harvest Fest is in the fall and Piscataway Street Fair is in the Spring.
 - Heather and Carline should be consulted regarding the Piscataway Street Fair. Paul offered to man the table at the Piscataway fair.
 - Michelle – last time we did garage sale was Michelle, Pam, and Deborah. The problem they had was in the discarding of leftovers – it has to be piled up at the curb or bring it to Green Dot. Cynthia can get a box truck from her company and get Yuennadi load what needs to be discarded.
 - All agreed to do the Garage Sale at St Francis June 8
 - **Action Item:** Pam will speak with Heather regarding the Piscataway Street Fair June 8.
 - *Clericus to be held at St. Francis on 4/9 12:30-2pm*
 - Ayden shared that Clericus is meeting of all Clergy in the Watchung Convocation. Phillip Carr Jones takes clergy concerns to the Bishop.
 - Ayden will check in with Cedar Grove
 - Pam shared the floor in Milbank will be washed prior to, so it will look good.
 - Christy requested that as we talk to Newcomers, please learn how they came to find St Francis. This information is helpful to Christy as she considers where we advertising.
- Pam shared that the Bishop notified Ayden today that St B is ready to sign an agreement with a PIC, triggering our need to dissolve the Affiliation, and Canon Joan Mason advised Pam that our vestry needs to vote on the action.
 - **Motion:** Pam presented below. Second Amy. Motion carried unanimously.
“Be it resolved that the vestry of St. Francis Church, Dunellen agrees to the dissolution of the affiliation with St. Barnabas, Monmouth Junction. This affiliation

will end at the time St. Barnabas signs their letter of agreement their new clergy person.

Pam Maiolo, Sr. Warden

Amy Myzie, Jr. Warden”

Closing remarks: None

Next Meeting: April 18th, 7:30 pm, **in-person**, at St. Francis. Cynthia will provide a Salad Bar, setting up at 5:30.

Closing Prayer - Ayden

Adjournment at 9:23pm

Motion to Adjourn by Cynthia second by Paul. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Gerrienne Breck, Vestry Clerk

Distribution of minutes:

- 1) Email Vestry minutes for review.*
- 2) Place signed hard copy in binder in St Francis office along with Treasurers Report*
- 3) Post a copy on bulletin board in Narthex.*