

**St. Mark's Episcopal Church**  
**Vestry Meeting Minutes**  
**December 20, 2020**

**Opening Devotion:** The Rev. Elizabeth Gardner called the meeting to order at 11:38 a.m. via Zoom video conference and led the Vestry in prayer.

**Present:** Belinda Appiah, Jim Bailes, Rob Bluey, Eric Bryda, Charlotte Brown, Francisco Escobar, the Rev. Elizabeth Gardner, Nihal Masih, Mary Jane Stockstill, David Walton. **Guest:** Ashley Bryda.

**Meeting Minutes:** The Vestry voted by email on the minutes from the November 15 meeting. Rob Bluey made a motion to accept the minutes, Charlotte Brown seconded, and the Vestry approved.

**Rector's Report:** Rev. Elizabeth provided an update on the following items.

- The Diocese of Virginia met with all churches and asked them not to do any in-person gatherings due to the rise of COVID-19 cases.
- St. Mark's will do a Spiritual Communion service on Christmas Eve (December 24 at 5 p.m.) and Epiphany (January 6 at 6:30 p.m.). The Christmas Day service will be on December 25 at 10 a.m. December 27 will be Morning Prayer with carols throughout.
- She sent an additional 165 Advent and Christmas Eve postcards to a list of homeowners in the 22306 zip code. We can consider expanding to 22310 in the future.
- Ashley Bryda and Therese Chaplin have done a remarkable job of putting together two videos: the pageant (which is awesome) and the candle pass to Silent Night.
- We have 28 pledges for \$91,000. More are coming in and most have increased or remained the same. Last year, St. Mark's had 51 pledges at \$160,000. We are striving to increase the number of pledging households. That means people are invested. Even though we've lost some folks, many have given without pledging and more than expected. We are truly blessed!
- All Saints Sharon Chapel has offered its organ to St. Mark's. Rev. Elizabeth said this would have implications for our current organ. No decision was made.
- The Bible Study continues to grow with about 15 people. Catechesis of the Good Shepherd now has 30 people registered with about 15-20 each Sunday.
- More than 500 gift cards were collected for United Community. We handed out Advent wreaths, Advent kits, and homeless gifts to begin the season.
- Charlotte Brown met with our HVAC contractor to update/replace the ignition in three units.
- We paid our pledges to the Diocese, region, and nonprofit/mission commitments.
- Several groups are using the building, including the Girl Scouts (every other Thursday), the Boy Scouts (Mondays), an Alexandria moms group (once a month), our high school youth group (once a month), and River Farm Cooperative School (weekdays). We've told Pan de Vida they could no longer worship inside; they decided to cancel in-person

services due to the cold weather outdoors. However, that means no income for December from them. Francisco Robles' firm, R&P Cleaning, is cleaning for us Monday, Wednesday, Friday.

**Senior Warden's Report:** Jim Bailes and Rev. Elizabeth met December 15 with other churches from Potomac Episcopal. Mr. Bailes told the group our Vestry isn't ready to merge at this time. He encouraged continued collaboration and discussion. Rev. Elizabeth suggested the creation of a Vision Team to help guide Potomac Episcopal in the future.

The Vestry set a date of January 24 for the Annual Meeting and brainstormed a new class of potential Vestry members. Rob Bluey announced he would be resigning with one year left on his term. The three-year terms of Belinda Appiah, Nihal Masih, David Walton are also coming to an end. The Vestry will be seeking four new members to stand for election.

**Treasurer's Report:** Eric Bryda reported that for the month of November, St. Mark's had revenue of \$17,450.72 and expenses of \$17,495.26. St. Mark's has an operating surplus of \$22,259.41 through November compared to a projected budget deficit of \$27,454.24. *Rob Bluey made a motion to accept the report, Francisco Escobar seconded, and the Vestry voted to approve.*

The Vestry voted to make a payment of one paycheck each to non-clergy furloughed staff. *Jim Bailes made a motion, Mary Jane Stockstill seconded, and the Vestry voted to approve.*

The Vestry voted to transfer the Thanksgiving offering to the Rector's Discretionary Fund and donate the Christmas offering to United Community. *Mary Jane Stockstill made a motion, Jim Bailes seconded, and the Vestry voted to approve.*

**Good of the Order:** Francisco Escobar is working on a feasibility study about starting a religious-based school that is aligned with St. Mark's mission. He wants to learn as much as possible and put together a schedule that includes presenting the study to the Vestry in March and begin to execute a plan for starting a school.

**Adjournment:** The Rev. Elizabeth Gardner offered a closing prayer. Jim Bailes made a motion to end the meeting at 12:39 p.m., David Walton seconded, and the Vestry voted to adjourn.