

**VESTRY MINUTES**  
**SUNDAY, March 19, 2023**

PRESENT: Linda Bourque, Katie Chipman-Bergsma, Sandy DePlonty, Ruth Neveu, Cal Woodard; ABSENT: Nikki Clark, Steve Stiling; GUEST: Susan Harries, Gin Mannisto

1. Opening: Linda Bourque opened the meeting at 11:36 a.m. with a prayer.

2. Review Agenda

3. Public Comment: None

4. Ministry Support Team: Gin discussed the Morning Prayer service and the feelings of the people at the meeting that was held after the last morning prayer service where the morning prayer service was discussed. Gin also discussed having a Commission on Ministry discernment for the St. James church community. It is important that we develop the gifts of those who can continue the work of the church. Therefore, we need to try and discern the gifts that are needed and those who can fulfill the needs.

Sue Harries reported on Soul Shop program. Soul Shop is a faith-based program meant to inspire congregations to create From their website - "SoulSafe communities where contributing factors to suicide such as stigma, societal inequities, shame, sickness, life-change challenges, and loneliness are met with actions of hope and connection." Soul Shop also has a suicide prevention program to help people feel comfortable meeting with people who are dealing with may lead to feeling that suicide is the only way out. Susan Harries, Katie Chipman-Bergsma, Margaret Stiling and David Cook have agreed to work with Marna Franson. Marna Franson has had training which allows her to train people on how to create a soul safe culture in congregations. They had hoped to have a program here sometime this spring before summertime. Initially they hoped to invite all of St. James and other community leaders who are involved in this process in other organizations, such as communities that care, Sault Tribe, the hospital, etc. There is an all-day workshop, but there is also a 90-minute program. Now after talking with Marna August 31<sup>st</sup> is a proposed time for Soul Shop for communities' program. AFSP (American Foundation for Suicide Prevention) is making a swing through the hopelessness and despair that Upper Peninsula, August 29<sup>th</sup> through 31<sup>st</sup>. So AFSP and Soul Shop could meet for a 90-minute program perhaps, which would entail a space and maybe some food, etc. Discussion about the timing of when this program would be best held. Gin requested that we all look at our calendars to see when most of us would be available for a program and send that information to Susan Harries. Stephanie at Communities that Care is also being contacted to see when their organization would be available for a meeting. Cal asked if Susan knew what services are available for Suicide Prevention in our area. Susan indicated that there is not a coordinated system in our area. When Susan talked to Pam about the program Pam reminded her that the church is not handicapped accessible, and we may need to reach out to other venues. Susan will be going to x to see what the possibilities are for a program such as this.

Katie reported that MST has had discussions about morning prayer and has indicated we are sometimes very thin on availability of leaders, etc. Cal brought up the idea of not having church services every Sunday. The discussion that followed thought that would be an in-depth discussion for the future, but that is not a desirable option. The support team can talk about all the different possibilities regarding people reading, etc. Katie asked if there is a phone tree that we can call if there is an emergency and Susan pointed out the phone numbers at the bottom of the schedule.

5. Review/Approval of Vestry Minutes February 19, 2023: **Motion to approve the minutes made by Sandy DePlonty with a second by Cal Woodard. No opposition or abstentions, motion carried.**

6. Treasurer's / Endowment / Budget Approval: Sandy discussed the treasurers report. The report is available on file in the office. Discussion of the Killan account and the endowment account.

7. Committee Reports

- a. Christian Education – Susan Harries reported that there is interest in having a Sunday School again. Discussion about having a children's sermon/question as part of the service. Discussion about having the liturgical year information in the bulletin. Discussion of how the Lenten services have been going. People like the video program. The evening program has been attended well. Katie mentioned that this Tuesday is the formation program for the Diocese.
- b. ECW Report – None
- c. Outreach – A reminder that the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the month is when loose offerings go to the discretionary fund. Gin mentioned that on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday it might be good to have a general announcement that x number of people were helped with discretionary fund monies, or we were able to provide funds for an overnight stay or gas or whatever without giving specifics that would violate privacy.

8. Senior Warden's Report: None

9. Junior Warden's Report: Cal Woodard has researched how to make the church building more energy efficient and provided a detailed plan as to what is needed and how much it will cost to make it happen. Our energy usage would be reduced potentially by 30 to 40 percent. Also, he is looking at our lighting and how we could possibly go to LED lighting. We may also qualify for rebates from DTE and Cloverland. He is also researching how to apply for grants and possibly loans for this project. He is hoping to find low interest loans that may be available. Sandra also advised that perhaps we can do a special fund raiser from our members. Katie commented how much she appreciates all that Cal has been able to do in researching and going forward with all the contacts, etc. that Cal has initiated and followed through with. Susan indicated that when we get this done this will be a good item to promote as part of the St. James story. Katie asked if there are any limitations regarding fundraising for our church, i.e., could we do chicken dinners, etc. There are no limitations as far as we are aware. Discussion of Interfaith Power and Faith and the timeline for applying for and receiving grants. Cal indicated Pam will be sending out the details of the system he has researched to the vestry. The detailed plan will also be available in the office.

12. Old Business: None

13. New Business: Next Meeting – Sunday, April 16, 2023 – 11 a.m.

14. Adjournment and Closing Prayers: **Motion to adjourn made by Sandy DePlonty with a second by Katie Chipman-Bergsma. No opposition or abstentions, motion Carried.** Meeting adjourned at 1:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,



Ruth Neveu  
Clerk of the Vestry