

Vestry Minutes April 2, 2020

Highlights:

*The Vestry agreed that, over the next 90 days, we will pay all staffers a monthly amount equal to the average of what they were paid monthly between Dec. 1 and Feb. 29. Further, we agreed to review the financial implications for the church every 30 days.

*In a related move, Vestry agreed to explore, and if deemed appropriate, apply for a government loan under the Paycheck Protection Program of the CARES Act.

*Vestry discussed worship plans for Holy Week, and agreed that any gifts designated for Jerusalem and the Holy Land will go there, in line with our traditional Good Friday offering for the Episcopal Church in Jerusalem, but otherwise the Holy Week offerings and pledges will go towards feeding the hungry in Detroit.

*We also agreed that repairs to the exterior of the church will begin as soon as possible, but only if the contractors can abide by such safe practices as keeping workers six feet apart.

Present: Emily Williams Guffey, Lisa Jones, Roger Basse, Betty Warner, Desmond Jones, Jim Treece, Denise Crenshaw, Chuck Atwater, Christine Galli, Carolyn Maher, George Port, Howard Matthew, Phil Brown.

Opening Prayer (Emily) 6:05

Update from Bishop/Diocese (Emily)

No additional diocesan news. We expect to receive more info coming later this week, following the governor's messages the last few days. Meanwhile, staff is working very hard and doing a great job. As we identify a completely different workflow, everyone's being creative, flexible, and patient.

Minutes/To-Do lists (Jim)

- a. The minutes of the March 26 Vestry meeting were **approved**.
- b. The two remaining motions from the Finance Committee had been **approved** via an e-mail vote.
- c. Our To-Do/Action items left:
 1. **Set a policy regarding salary payments during the Covid-19 crisis for all sorts of roles, particularly Sunday-only ones such as porter, paid choir members, and nursery staff.**

Points noted during the discussion included: We have a moral obligation to our people; we're not a business. We want to keep intact a staff we worked hard to put together. Yet with the Sunday porter and nursery staff, their hours vary, so it's not immediately apparent how much to pay them.

Motion: That over the next 90 days, we pay all staffers a monthly amount equal to the average of what they were paid monthly between Dec. 1 and Feb. 29. Further, we agree to review the financial implications for the church every 30 days. Approved.

2. **Decide where the Easter and Holy Week offerings will be directed.**

Our tradition is that the Good Friday offering goes to the Episcopal church in Jerusalem, but it will be difficult to determine which of the checks coming in the mail represent Good Friday offerings and which other Holy Week services. After considerable discussion, we agreed that we would inform the congregation that any gifts designated for Jerusalem and the Holy Land will go there, but otherwise the Holy Week offerings and pledges will go towards feeding the hungry in Detroit, through partners to be

determined in part by the Outreach Committee. We will let the parish know of this before and during Holy Week.

3. Determine what we consider essential in terms of Buildings & Grounds projects.

This was one of our “action items” left over from last week’s meeting. We needed to weigh the safety concerns of having contractors on our site during the Governor's "shelter in place" executive order, against the need to begin the bell tower tuckpointing soon to keep to our schedule for this year. Contractor Ram Construction has said it can have two men on site, staying six feet apart, to get the job done. The relevant church officers will sign and send in the contract with Quinn Evans to provide oversight of the project. After that, we agreed, Ram Construction will be authorized to begin work.

Communications and Connections (All)

*Holy Week. The weekly email that goes out tomorrow will be mostly focused on Palm Sunday, and will be followed shortly thereafter with material for Holy Week. Some of this will require mailings, but we’re trying to whittle down that postal list.

The liturgy on Palm Sunday will focus only on material specific to Palm Sunday, instead of also including the Passion Gospel material. Richard Thomas and Emily want to focus on what we have at hand and around us, asking, “What is the act of the palms in the first place? The gesture of putting palms on the path – what was that about?”

The rest of the Holy Week liturgies will be similar: trying to get to the root of the liturgy and transpose it to our homes. Denise Crenshaw has sketched out a beautiful set of materials for Holy Week which will be communicated to parishioners.

It was suggested that communications tomorrow about Holy Week include explanations of pledges and how to submit one’s pledge and offerings, as well as our commitment to paying all of our staff. Treece will write up something from the Stewardship Committee. [Later amended: Communications about Holy Week offerings will go out on Sunday, followed by a Stewardship letter about giving and ways to give.]

*Lenten Series. Calebria, Anthony and Ed will be doing a live-stream discussion tonight.

Committee/Project Updates since March 26 (All)

*Buildings and Grounds. Desmond reported that KaClarence has been visiting the church every other day. He found a leak in the atrium in front of the ladies’ restroom and patched it, replacing some tiles. The main intention of the maintenance work is to keep people from realizing the building is empty.

*Reading Camp. Denise said the Diocese gave us \$1,000. Whether the camp happens or not is up in the air, but a group will meet April 16 to plan. She’s still looking for a coordinator. She will have more for Vestry to discuss at our April meeting.

*Fishing ministry. Phil expects to postpone it this year. Lisa, in response, said we might want to have a calendaring meeting at some point.

*Stewardship/Offerings. Christine said a small group from the Finance Committee has explored Vanco as one way to give through our website, but the study is still in progress. Emily noted that PayPal fees are only 3%, and thus in line with the motion passed last week. Phil urged Treece, in the communications to go out to the congregation, to explain how to arrange for direct payment from a bank checking account — and put it on autopay.

*Finance Committee

Motion: Vestry authorizes the Treasurer and Finance Committee to research and, if deemed appropriate, apply for a Payroll Protection Loan under the CARES Act.

Approved.

*Worship Committee. Chuck reported that Cathy Berlage had trained three junior acolytes and at some point, we will need one more acolyte gown in a small size. Emily: We may be able to coordinate that purchase through the memorial fund.

Other Items (All)

Denise said she had clicked into the service on Sunday at 10:15, even though it wasn't supposed to start until 10:30. Emily replied that she had heard a number of congregations got backed up at 10:30, so she posted it on our Facebook page early. "I'll try to clear it up this week."

Roger reported that the Shepherds called members last weekend. "It's not 100% coverage, but pretty good."

Next Meeting

Because of the busy-ness of Holy Week, we decided to skip next week, unless there's an emergency. Adjourned at 7:00.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Treece, secretary