

Vestry Check-In April 30, 2020 Minutes

Highlights:

*Vestry welcomed Rev. Anthony Estes to his first Christ Church vestry meeting, and heard from him briefly about the path that brought him here. We also discussed how best to welcome parishioners from Trinity Church to Christ Church Detroit. While Anthony has encouraged his flock to follow him here, there is still a need for a personal invitation.

*The Finance Committee learned today that it was approved for a \$56,690 Payroll Protection Plan loan, which can be forgiven and turned into a grant if certain criteria are met.

*Vestry agreed to waive rent for our tenants, including the Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation, for the months when they can't get into the building.

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

Reports received: Stewardship, draft minutes from 4/29 Finance Committee meeting. Action items underlined.

Opening Prayer led by Emily at 6:05.

Welcome to Anthony! He gave a brief self-introduction, including his time as a diaconate candidate at Christ Church Cranbrook, where he initially worked as part of the communications staff, getting out the Sunday bulletins, and later became director of digital communications and took on other duties. When he was ordained as a deacon, the bishop told him to stay there at first, until Feb. 1, 2019, when he went to Trinity as their missioner.

Update from the Bishop/Diocese (Emily)

Bishop Bonnie is working in concert with the other Episcopal bishops in Michigan. Whatever the next update is, it will be released together. Emily asked the Bishop if we should plan on worshipping online for the foreseeable future, and she said yes. She expects it to be months, not weeks, though at some point there should be some limited access to the building, say one staffer in the building at a time. In some discussions, churches should be among the last to reopen, due to their being social hubs where large numbers of people gather. Emily noted that once the reopening starts, the fact that our campus and sanctuary are so large – e.g., everyone has a separate office in Sibley House – works in our favor. The staff will likely need of masks. Emily and Lisa will pass around some relevant articles they've seen on reopening churches.

After a review of the action items, draft minutes of the April 23 meeting were **approved** with a few changes.

Beth Ann conducted trainings for Lectors and Vestry Representatives this week, on how to perfect “readings” while remote. Both sessions were well attended.

Jim summarized key points in the Stewardship report, focusing on the need for continued and refreshed communications. Howard reported that in his test of giving via PayPal, it worked fine technically, but fell short on conveying gratitude for the gift.

We then turned to ideas about building our sense of community while in stay-at-home. This led to a discussion of the shepherds, and how to include members who have not received a call from a shepherd. Roger and Chuck asked Anthony what we could do to invite and make members of his congregation at Trinity feel welcome at Christ Church. Anthony said he is still transitioning. For example, he is leading a Tuesday night Bible study for those members. He has invited them to come with him to Christ Church, but said, “It might be worth considering having some conversation around how Christ Church can make some overtures of welcome to Trinity folk,” he said, adding, “I’ve been saying, ‘Christ Church is our sister. I want you to come and contribute your voice.’” Vestry discussed the need for personal phone calls inviting them, as well as the value of sending informational brochures and such, most of which are in the office.

The Finance Committee learned today that its application for a \$56,690 Payroll Protection Program loan has been approved. The funds are earmarked for keeping staffers employed, in keeping with Vestry’s prior decision to pay all personnel full wages during this period.

The preliminary April numbers show that year-to-date, revenue is behind almost \$13K. A good chunk of that is due to non-offering revenue, for example, lost parking and facilities fees. But there are bright spots, also: an analysis by Christine appeared to show that many people had paid a third of their annual pledge already. Moreover, we’re now up to about 35 members paying via PayPal, vs. only 2 a year earlier – a good sign when we cannot pass the plate down the pew.

Our diocesan apportionment was waived for April. But we’ll be paying in May and onward. If we can afford to pay them back – which George indicated is quite likely – we will.

The following motion was slightly reworded from the version received from the Finance Committee:

Resolved: That Christ Church will offer a one-year extension of the parking lease at current terms to UDM Law School, and offer rent forgiveness to our tenants – the Reconstructionist Congregation and Dr. Pauline Everett – for the months when they cannot get into the building.

Approved

As requested by Vestry previously, George offered several motions regarding authorizing and signing for expenditures. He will fine-tune them for our next meeting.

Desmond reported that the Building and Grounds Committee held a “pretty good” kickoff meeting for the bell tower repairs. Repairs will be on the northern end, by Jefferson, and west side. Assuming it takes 20 weeks, if work begins May 15, it will finish by the end of September. Work area will involve the sidewalk and bike lane, and the first five parking spots from the tower, but access through the front (Jefferson) door will be made available. They’re working to get permits from the city. They’re trying to match the stones in the tower, but some may not match exactly. Some stones, windows, and storm windows will be repaired and others replaced.

We’re still trying to source more quotes for work on the water heater/boiler. One walk-through was cancelled at the last minute, but trying to get two done this week. KaClarence is trying to do some of the repairs himself. When we get bids, we may need an extra meeting immediately to get the contract approved. The repair needs to be made. Desmond is very pleased with the work KaClarence has been doing.

Adjourned at 7:10.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Treece, secretary