



Vestry Meeting Minutes Thursday, November 19, 2020

Highlights:

- *Vestry reviewed plans for both Christ the King Sunday and a number of Advent and Christmas events, all to take place while complying with a new directive from the bishop designed to keep everyone safe during a rise in Covid-19 cases in Michigan.
- *The annual pledge drive shows good preliminary results for giving during 2021, but we should know more after the in-gathering of pledges on Christ the King Sunday. Meanwhile, revenues for 2020 are lagging, and will depend greatly on parishioners fulfilling their pledges in November and December – which is not unusual.
- *The Buildings and Grounds Committee has received a bid from Quinn Evans to prepare a Buildings Assessment report, which would tell us what maintenance and other work needs to be done to keep our facilities in good shape for the coming years. We have questions about the scope of that work, and held off on voting to accept the proposal until those questions were answered.

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

Reports Submitted: Associate Rector; B&G, including the Quinn Evans proposal for a Facilities Assessment; Rector; Staff; Stewardship; Finance documents

After our **Opening Prayer**, our **Bible Study** was devoted to Matthew 25:31-46. The November 5, 2020, meeting's minutes were **approved** with some changes.

Emily updated the Vestry on the **Property Use in Pandemic (PUP)** committee's work. We received an updated directive from the Bishop, effective 11/22, in response to a rise in Covid-19 cases statewide, following the guidance from the governor. <https://www.edomi.org/update-to-covid-19-reentry-directive/> The update includes minor changes to operations, in that it specifies no in-person worship, meetings, or gatherings of any kind, whether on our campus or not. Any weekday prayer or Advent events will have to be virtual. No GA in our building, either. And the directive reduces the maximum number of those who can be present for essential services such as funerals: back to 10 people max, including clergy and staff. The Bishop has indicated she believes this status will continue for several months, and won't get more restrictive.

Worship and Education

For Christ the King Sunday (Nov. 22), we will need to strongly minimize the number of people present at one time. No going into the sanctuary, no communion. But we can have a drive-through event, with a couple of people helping at any time. We plan to have a pledge station where people can turn in their pledges if they

haven't already done so, a J2A Greens ordering station, and a station where Emily and Chip will be available for pastoral needs.

Advent plans include the following:

- J2A Greens Sale: Order Nov. 22, and receive them Nov. 29, either by pick-up at the church or by drop-off by the J2As.
- *The Fire Next Time* (James Baldwin) diocesan-level book study. Starts Dec. 2.
- Weekday prayer in some virtual form(s)
- Advent by Candlelight, in some virtual format, will be Thurs., Dec. 10. An ad hoc committee meets soon to plan it. Zoom breakout rooms will be used for socializing, plus music and some liturgy.
- Blue Christmas / Liturgy of the Longest Night. To talk about the grief that we carry into the holiday season.
- *Facilitating Racial Justice* pilot group also launches first Sunday of Advent, Nov. 29, with a group of 8, all by invitation, chosen for their willingness to participate and then to take the discussion out into the congregation.
- Christmas itself will have two pageants: a new script more geared to younger kids, and well suited for Zoom, while the second pageant will allow older J2As and J2A alumni – wherever they are now – to read or recite from memory the former pageant script.
- There will be a Virtual Choir on Sundays 11/22, 12/6, and 12/24

Outreach and Parish Life

The Outreach Committee is reviewing how to revise the Advent Diaper Drive to make it easy to contribute yet contact-less, so that we won't have to be opening diaper boxes and repackaging them the way we did last year. The committee also is aware of volunteer opportunities with Pope Francis Center and Gleaners, but the church is avoiding encouraging people to volunteer in person.

The design for Christmas Cards, courtesy of the Drawing with a Tea group, will be finalized this evening and go to the printer tomorrow.

The Emily's Angels planning committee gathered Wed., Nov 18, outside, to put together additional bags of items (candle, prayers, tea, honey, a Psalm, and a note from Emily) to go out, and to be available for future use. It has devised a preliminary flow-chart to show what happens from when a recipient's name is suggested to when one of the Helping Hands delivers the gift bag to their front door. We need more helping hands, especially in the North and the western/Dearborn areas. Names were offered. We still need to encourage people to be willing to admit that they have a need, so that the people who want to help, can. Emily also reminded Vestry that she and Anthony have discretionary funds available to meet needs.

- Action items from 10/1:

- The group (Care team) will ask Megan to check with the J2As (about helping). Jim will call.
- The (Care team's) three leaders will meet next week; Jim will help create an announcement for the newsletter.

Turning to **Finance**, Treasurer George Port reviewed the October financials: Operating revenue through October shows a shortfall of \$51K, and non-operating shortfall of another \$20K. There is very little time between now and year-end to make up the difference. We're behind on pledge collections. Finance Committee will be reviewing the numbers to see if there is anything untold in the lateness of the shortfall. On the other hand, given the pandemic, we've done remarkably well.

So far, the pledges we've received for 2021 are quite high, but then, early givers tend to be the most enthusiastic givers. At the same pace, we'd be in good shape for next year, but he's not counting those chickens

yet. In sum, George said, “I’m reservedly positive or reservedly negative, depending on my mood.” There was praise for Emily’s homily on pledging this year. It also would be very helpful if more people used automatic payments, rather than our current setup where some people pay it all at the beginning, others all at the end of the year, and variations depending on whether people are present at a worship service or not.

The Finance Committee is preparing alternative budgets, including one where we begin holding in-person services mid-year and another where we remain on a virtual worship platform throughout 2021. Note that all of this, including Covid, puts a huge burden on office staff, especially since we don’t have a bookkeeper.

The shift to a new accounting system, which allows more remote work, will happen. The capital campaign also will require a more accessible, manageable accounting system with more-current figures. When we get that, it will be easier to tell a new bookkeeper what is being asked of him/her.

Vestry received the following note of thanks from (newly promoted) Canon for Finance, Mark Miliotto, regarding our commitment to pay our full diocesan apportionment: *“This is great news! Thank you all and the vestry of Christ Church for your continuing support of the diocese at the full apportionment level (\$53,705 for 2021). This is a particularly noteworthy pledge considering that it comes in the middle of a horrific pandemic and considering that the apportionment calculation for CCD jumped up almost \$2,500 for 2021. Much appreciated! Thank you. Gratefully, Mark”*

Vestry received, but did not vote on, revised Resolutions on the Management of the Diocesan Investment Account.

Finance Committee will offer suggestion on how to allocate a bequest from Nancy vom Steeg.

There were a number of **Stewardship** action items:

- Action Item from 10/1: Jim to make an appeal in our weekly emails to make sure people make their pledges for the year, and to give more money. [Not yet]
- Action Item from 10/15: George to draft letter to congregation about our finances, with details and projections, following up on the article from Finance Committee Chair Jane Forbes [Not yet]
- Action Item from 11/5: Vestry members agreed to let the office know by Friday, November 13, their pledge plans. [Done]
- New action item: After the in-gathering, we will be sending out letters of thanks.

In addition, Stewardship is looking to have a series of sessions on end-of-life planning, which will include one on planned giving.

The **Buildings & Grounds** report reviewed the latest Open Issues spreadsheet. In particular, it noted:

- Bell tower: Planned completion spring 2021, some of the stonework actions will carry over to 2021, but wooden windows were always planned for 2021.
- We have a Buildings Assessment quote of \$10,500. This covers Ledyard Hall and kitchen, but Desmond thought it also would include Cary Lounge. Having the assessment is a fundamental part of the capital campaign’s feasibility study. Cost is much less than the \$30K we initially were quoted, because this version relies more on prior documents, less actual work. Addressing Ledyard Hall also would include impact of noise in the basement and the structure itself, but the assessment does not look specifically at the basement. Awaiting clarification of what would be looked at in the kitchen, and the floor/foundation of the building. Emily sent the quote/proposal to PSP, and at a glance, they also thought the price was reasonable, but wanted to look at it in more detail. Consensus: wait for some clarification, but we anticipate voting on it by email next Monday or so.

The **Capital Campaign’s** Feasibility Study is to start December 1. It will include the following sets of interviews: 6-8 faith and lay leaders of CCD (6-8); 12-14 members and former members; 14-16 community members, business owners, and other local stakeholders; and 6-8 local philanthropists, foundation officers, and

civic leaders. Emily thanked everyone who emailed names to her. Need to provide a list of names to PSP on Dec. 1, so if there are additional names, email them to her directly.

Other groups we're recruiting and nominating names for: the mission/vision task force, **Vestry**, and some other smaller ministry task forces that will be launching. Those who will be continuing on Vestry should consider themselves to be a nominating committee. Emily will schedule a meeting to do that.

Adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Jim Treece, secretary