



## Vestry Check-In Minutes Dec. 3, 2020

Present: Rev. Emily Williams Guffey, Rev. Anthony Estes, Sr. Warden Lisa Jones, Jr. Warden Roger Basse, Treasurer George Port, Howard Matthew, Secretary Jim Treece, Christine Galli, Betty Warner, Carolyn Maher, Denise Crenshaw, Desmond Jones. Absent/Excused: Chuck Atwater, Phil Brown. FYI, Chuck is in Texas tending to a brother who is seriously sick and may be bringing him back to Detroit to put him in hospice.

### Highlights:

- \*We are planning a number of events and services during Advent and Christmas, which prompted Vestry to request that the staff, clergy especially, find ways to ease their burdens during this hectic time.
- \*Financially, November was a good month and pledges for 2021 are encouraging. But there are reasons to be concerned about 2021; we will be taking up a preliminary draft of the 2021 budget at our next meeting.
- \*Vestry approved a proposal from Quinn Evans to conduct a facilities assessment, which will review the status of our buildings and provide a timetable for major repairs or replacement, so as to guide future work and the coming Capital Campaign.

**Reports Submitted:** Stewardship; proposed resolutions from Finance Committee; an unofficial financial overview of the year so far; and a schematic of the courtyard plans from Buildings & Grounds

**Opened** with a nighttime prayer from the New Zealand BCP.

The November 19, 2020 meeting minutes were **approved**.

Turning to **Worship and Education**, Emily noted that we had two successful drive-through or drive-up events: Christ the King & J2A Greens Market. We tried something new and it went well! It was great seeing church people, even distanced, outside, and briefly.

This year's Advent by Candlelight event for the women of the parish will be Thursday, Dec. 10. No special speaker, but opportunities to mingle and socialize.

Emily and staff have finalized plans for part of Christmas Eve. There will be a classic service that will look and feel like the traditional late service, but at 5:30 – 6:40 or so, meaning you can watch it early or watch it late. There will be a musical rendition of Silent Night and light decorations inside, but all the usual outside decorations. Richard Thomas has floral icons prepared for every Sunday in Advent and Christmas. And the younger kids are filming a pageant by Zoom, which will premiere at 5:00. There's no CCD tradition of Christmas day service: we may encourage parishioners to attend a service online from a major cathedral. Emily also is looking forward to developing a Blue Christmas / Longest Night service. This is a recognition that, for some people, the holidays are difficult emotionally and otherwise. It could be during the Christmas season or early January. At this point, we're not sure if or how frequently we'll be able to do virtual weekday prayer.

Under Education, we are encouraging attendance at the diocesan study of James Baldwin's *The Fire Next Time* or the Advent Saints program through Christ Church Cranbrook with Lauren Winner. Both started Dec. 2. Also, the *Facilitating Racial Justice* pilot group has launched! It meets Sunday afternoons.

Looking at the ambitious schedule of virtual events during Advent and Christmas, Vestry requested that the clergy and staff find ways to ease their burdens during this time. For example, the Sunday between Christmas

and New Year's is typically an easy one with reduced expectations for the service's music and homily – and we should follow that tradition this year, too. Emily conceded the point. For example, she noted that Katrina van Maanen<sup>[JAKT1]</sup> puts in 12 hours of editing and production work to create the video for a Sunday choir performance, vs. “only a few hours” if the service includes only a Cantor. We will be streamlining things post-Christmas. Emily is asking the staff to take some time off, but to stagger it so that a few staffers are always available for pastoral support. Lisa suggested proscribed office hours that the Vestry would know, so that, for example, we would know if Emily is taking a given Monday off so that we would avoid texting or emailing her then.

As noted in the **Stewardship** report: “The most recent tally, as of Dec. 2, shows pledges for 2021 received total \$354,233, or 95.3 percent of the \$371,858 in pledges received for 2020. We have received pledges from 88 out of 127 possible households (69%), including 6 new pledging units. ... Looking only at the households that pledged both last year and this year, we have a net increase of \$39,915 pledged.” Emily added that about 50 of the pledges were an increase, vs. about 10 that were decreases.

November was a “really good month,” with pledge monies received of \$34,700, vs. a budget target of \$35,076, Christine Galli said as part of the **Finance** Report. George Port added that if December delivers 29% of budgeted pledge income, as in 2019, we'll exceed our budget for the year. December revenues are often high because people give from their IRAs or sell stock at the end of the year. We're also about to get a large gift, which is wonderful, with no restrictions.

On the other hand, it's quite probable that the so-called budget's revenue forecast for “loose offering” won't be met this year. And in 2021, without \$63K from parking lot, or facilities fees, or holiday/loose offerings, we likely will see at least an \$85K deficit going into the year. In sum, we're grateful for how 2020 is turning out, financially, but we expect 2021 will be harder.

Treece shared, via email, his overview of our financial picture through October via email and data showing the importance of December to the full-year totals.

The Vestry took up the Finance Committee's proposed Revised Resolutions on the Management of the Diocesan Investment Account. Summary: These changes get rid of the term “prudent draw.” **Approved.**

Desmond offered a motion from the **Buildings & Grounds** Committee: “That Vestry approve the proposal from Quinn Evans to provide a Facilities Assessment, as outlined in their proposal.”

Responding to questions raised at the previous Vestry meeting, he relayed confirmation from Quinn Evans that the portion of the assessment dealing with Ledyard Hall also will include the kitchen and Sunday School rooms below, with suggestions and schematics, but not a full project plan. Those suggestions also could seek to minimize noise and water in the classrooms below, if a desire to have that included is clarified in a kickoff meeting. On the other hand, he said Quinn Evans' proposal does not cover what would be required to prepare our property for use as a multipurpose facility for the community. That could be added to the scope of the project, but it would entail an increase in costs. The motion was **Approved.**

The Stormwater project ran into an issue concerning sewage and drainage around the system in the courtyard. The plumber found a blockage immediately to the left of where you exit the atrium to the courtyard. The plumber suggests that we dig up that area, as part of the construction, to eliminate the blockage. We had spent some money trying to clear it, and that didn't work.

With the facilities assessment approved, it should be ready in time for Partners for Sacred Places to review at the end of February, as part of the **Capital Campaign's** Feasibility Study. Emily issued a last call for suggestions for Feasibility Study interviewees. At the end of next week, or within the next couple of weeks at the latest, Emily will email invitations to participants to be interviewed in late January. There will be about 40 interviews in the four categories that were listed at the previous Vestry meeting.

**Vestry Recruitment** is under way for the next class of Vestry members. Following up on an action item from 11/19: Emily will schedule a meeting for returning vestry members to discuss candidates. Be aware of other leadership opportunities as well: Mission/Vision team, Capital Campaign Committee; one or two other task forces; and as Anthony enters his full year with us, we want to form a committee of support for him, to provide feedback.

On a related matter, Vestry needs to start thinking about the annual meeting: What shape should that meeting take; how to make it happen; when to start compiling reports. FYI, Finance's Jane Forbes would prefer the first Sunday of February, rather than last Sunday of January. We also need to prepare the parochial report. The national church has changed the form this year.

Up next: **Outreach and Parish Life.** The Advent Diaper Drive already has 5K diapers, towards our 21K target. Crossroads' ask of the month is toys, but Beth Ann and Calebria wonder if we'd like to keep our focus on diapers this month. Emily's Angels have delivered about 35 packages so far. We're prepared for more. We have a flow-chart to make things happen. Rev. David Dieter, who can't get out to help due to medical constraints, is available for phone counseling – requests for which should go through the office/Emily. Reviewing Action items from 10/1: \*The group (Care team) will ask Megan to check with the J2As (about helping). [done] \*The (Care team's) three leaders will meet next week; Jim will help create an announcement for the newsletter. [done]

In **Other Business**, Roger said the newly formed Men's Group met last week purely for fellowship with a discussion about how the Detroit Lions have affected our lives. There were five men attending, two more who couldn't make it -- and a new person who wants to join. The group closed by saying a prayer which was answered when the head coach and general manager were fired the next day.

Anthony asked for prayers due to a number of surprising deaths in his broader church family, which is hitting people hard, because we can't go and hug and be together. He's fielding calls every day from people trying to deal with this. Not Covid-related but, for example, an unexpected heart problem. In addition, he's now a member of the chaplaincy of the Detroit Police, and was called upon in relation to a recent incident when shots were fired at police officers inside a precinct station by an individual who then fled the scene; police gave chase and later shot the suspect. He relayed how traumatic such an incident can be – for the police who were shot at, those who returned fire, and the families of both the officers and the suspect. He asked the Vestry to keep the police department, and those officers and first responders, in our prayers.

On that note, the meeting **adjourned.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Jim Treece, secretary