



## **Vestry Minutes** **Thursday, March 25, 2021**

### Highlights:

\*Vestry heard in detail of the **Parish Life** ministry's three areas: Membership Development, Events, and Pastoral Care.

\*We were briefed on **Holy Week** worship plans.

\*On financial matters, we heard about grant proposals that were submitted, discussed follow-up questions after an in-depth **Finance** training led the previous Saturday by Finance Committee Chair Jane Forbes, reviewed the latest financial statements, and approved a new payment policy regarding who authorizes payment of invoices.

Present: Rev. Emily Williams Guffey, Rev. Anthony Estes, Ruth Boeder, Claire Brown, Mary Brown, Denise Crenshaw, Desmond Jones, John Leney, Carolyn Maher, Howard Matthew, Anthony Mitchell, Jim Treece, Betty Warner. Absent/Excused: José Rodriguez (getting his Covid-19 vaccination). Action items underlined.

Reports received: Building & Grounds, Rector, Staff, Parish Life, Parochial Report for approval; February financials; Finance Committee responses to Vestry questions; Policy on Payments for approval.

After an opening prayer by Rev. Emily, our Bible study looked at Mark 11:1-11, the triumphant entry into Jerusalem that we celebrate on Palm Sunday. The **Minutes** of the March 4, 2021, meeting were **approved**.

In line with our plan of devoting extra time each meeting to one ministry area, Claire Brown looked at the **Parish Life** ministry's three areas: Membership Development, Events, and Pastoral Care. (Note that José Rodriguez, Vestry liaison with Claire to Parish Life, could not be present.)

1) Roger Basse's approach was to not ask too much of the Shepherds, and Claire fears that she may have scared off one potential Shepherd by implying the task is bigger than it really is. Our congregation is divided into about 13 flocks, and needs one additional Shepherd to replace Denise. Several Vestry members have never been contacted by a Shepherd. Emily explained that when the Shepherds program ramped up in the early days of the pandemic, she was told the choir had its own communications system, and hence they were not part of the Shepherds. That may need to be reviewed. Carolyn will talk with Claire about shepherds, as well as the possibility of hosting a movie night for families outside in the summer.

This area also includes new-member welcome, the directory (which is headed by staffers Sarah and Beth Ann), the Men's Group (headed by Roger and Chuck Atwater), and tours. Donna Gloff loves to do tours; she also mentioned that Olivia Benbow does a wonderful tour. Question: Should we move tours to Heritage, under education?

2) Events are largely on hiatus; it's unclear what we'll be able to do this year. Phil Brown took over Breakfast teams last year; Claire and José haven't spoken to him about it yet. They will be working on a hospitality committee to take over coffee hour.

3) Pastoral care is doing pretty well. Emily's Angels are doing great work. For Easter, 60-70 flower deliveries are planned, with 30 or so delivered to people's homes and the rest picked up at the Easter Services. Birthday cards are pouring out. Not sure where the Prayer list stands. Knitting ministry needs to be explored; will Sue Webb provide guidance now that Marilyn Shahly has stepped back? Ruth Boeder, who crochets, has been on the fringe of the knitting ministry and can join in doing more, though not heading that ministry.

Betty will alert the Vestry member responsible for next meeting's in-depth look at a ministry team.

Emily briefed the Vestry on **Worship** plans for Holy Week and Easter. (See dates and times below.) On Palm Sunday, there will be a 2:00-3:00 procession followed by communion and, 3:00-4:00, a drive-through in the parking lot with three tents to stop at. (e.g., one will give out packets of wildflower seeds). This is an opportunity to gather briefly and safely outside.

We also will release some videos about Syrian and Christ Church traditions, such as our Lamb Supper and the Lily Cross, between Tuesday and Saturday. The Good Friday and Easter Sunday online services will include the choir. Easter's three outdoor services -- 8:15, 9:00, and 2:00 -- will include communion. We're asking for signups to maximize capacity. Online signups cap at 25 people, but actual capacity is 35, leaving room for walk-ins. It will be very brief: communion, saying baptismal vows, sprinkling some water, and perhaps a bit of music. Our sanctuary will be open for short times of personal prayer, but we won't gather as a congregation in the sanctuary.

Vestry then reviewed the **Parochial Report**, which has been loaded in the Vestry folder in the Google drive. This year's report has additional questions to find out how congregations have coped with the pandemic, and asks for more specifics on attendance and finance.

Amid the discussion, Vestry voted on question No. 12 on page 3, and decided we "Strongly agree" with the statement, "The Vestry is committed to working toward racial justice and reconciliation." After a few other suggestions and comments, Vestry was asked to send any more to Emily in the next 24 hours, so that Vestry can vote on approving the revised Parochial Report by email on Monday.

Turning to our **Fundraising** efforts, we have filed a Letter of Intent, drafted by Ruth and Jim, with the National Fund for Sacred Places, the first stage of the grant-application process. It focused on projects that would help Christ Church to become a community center for music and music education. It specified projects for which we have cost estimates, i.e., the lower-level classrooms, kitchen, and Ledyard Hall. We did not ask for money for any work in the sanctuary or at the columbarium door. If we pass this hurdle, a full grant application will be due in July.

Emily recently heard that Partners for Sacred Places is on pace to deliver a Feasibility Study -- a step towards a capital campaign -- shortly after Easter. At this point, with only a few interviews remaining, they believe we have all the pieces in place for an energizing and transformative

campaign, and so they will strongly recommend we move ahead with a capital campaign as soon as possible. This is something to celebrate: Data-based feedback that says we're ready to grow!

To summarize, they will recommend we go ahead with the projects we were hoping to do this summer and fall (at least phase 2 of the Bell Tower, so we keep the quote we were given in 2018); proceed with the floor and the stormwater projects; and make plans for our next highest-priority projects. They'll advise us in late April to start working with a consultant to develop the campaign in detail.

Emily has been asking committee chairs and others, particularly those who researched candidates to do the feasibility study, how we might choose a capital-campaign consultant. There is widespread support for continuing with Partners for Sacred Places for the capital campaign, too. The sense of the Vestry was that we vetted them thoroughly before choosing them to do the feasibility study, but we might want to see the full report and our bylaws may require that we get more than one proposal/bid for the consultant contract. If we receive both the PSP feasibility-study report and the Quinn Evans facilities-study report the week after Easter, we could ask PSP for a capital-campaign consultant proposal for us to see before our next Vestry meeting.

**Motion:** That Vestry ask Partners for Sacred Places for a proposal to be our consultant on a capital campaign, including a bid. **Approved.** Emily will ask them for the proposal after the feasibility study is received. Howard, John, and Jim will check our bylaws to see if we need a second bid on this.

Vestry agreed that our **Finance** training session the previous Sunday was very helpful, but there was concern that only a few members are the depositories of knowledge and institutional history for most of our financial accounts, and for who made what decisions and what the feelings of a given donor were. It might be good to have a paper trail on all this. In a discussion of other lingering questions from the training session, there was agreement that although we don't need to know who the donors are, we should know the size of the original gifts (e.g., for the one now valued at \$92K), and identify the various \$10K gifts and their status.

Treasurer Howard Matthew showed a table summarizing the major numbers and sources, which he has placed in the Vestry folder in Google docs. In response to another question, he also noted that a table showing restricted net assets, i.e., restricted and unrestricted gifts, is also in the Vestry folder, and will be updated quarterly, along with the balance sheet. Diocesan guidance says if a gift was given for a use that is no longer viable (e.g., for polio victims), Vestry can vote to repurpose the funds. (Other conditions may have to be met, too.)

Howard will check with the Finance Committee on a question about funds showing a negative amount, and other questions.

In reviewing the January and February 2021 financial statements, Vestry noted the following. \*We are still behind on pledge income. A reminder is going into the weekly e-newsletter. \*We are getting \$20-40/month from the parking lot. Pre-pandemic, just general use (excluding the \$60K/year lease of space to UDM Law School) was about \$300/mo. \*We are still receiving some facilities-fee income, notably from the Jewish Congregation, which is maintaining their payment even though they cannot use the building. \*Finance Committee has debated whether we need the level of cleaning we've been paying for: three times a week. Emily, Sarah, and Howard will look into that after Easter, and whether the contract terms can be renegotiated. \*The Parish Development expenditures includes our Consortium of Endowed Episcopal Parishes annual membership and some CEEP Conference registration fees. \*Under Diocesan apportionment, the YTD figure given in February's statement covers 3 months.

Motion: Vestry moves to accept the January and February financial reports. **Approved.**

Vestry next took up the proposed payment policy, a checks-and-balances procedure that was first proposed last meeting, and then revised to set a more realistic window from when an invoice is sent to the church officers until it needs to be approved. In the discussion, it was noted that a phrase or two explaining what the expense is would make it easier for an authorized person to approve it. Likewise, anyone asking for reimbursement should give Sarah Tribelhorn the context for why it should be paid. Motion: Vestry approves the Proposed Vestry Policy on Payment Review and Authorization, as revised 3/24/2021. **Approved.**

We've contracted with an accounting firm to contract a bookkeeper from their firm on an hourly basis. Start date is likely to be by mid-April.

Next, Comerica account signatories.

RESOLVED, that the Vestry hereby authorizes the Senior Warden or the Junior Warden to designate two or more officers, members of the clergy or lay staff, or members of the parish as new or additional signatories on Christ Church's Comerica Money Market Account (No. 1-100250 on the books of the Church) and hereby adopts by reference any and all banking resolutions necessary to do so.

Finance Chair Jane Forbes offered the following as background: *"The plan is to pay for the remaining Phase I bell tower work and part of the work on the sanctuary floor from the large anonymous gift which is held in a money market account at Comerica. Since it appears that both projects will be starting within the next few weeks, we will want to access that account to pay the bills as they come due. The account has been inactive and there seems to be some uncertainty about who is authorized to access it and whether any of these individuals are available. The shortest solution for that is probably to have the Church authorize new signers on the account, something that should be approved by the Vestry...Once this is done Sarah should pick up the forms from the Bank and collect the signatures necessary to complete them. If the Vestry prefers to identify the signers at the meeting, they can do so."*

With the understanding of Vestry that Senior Warden Denise Crenshaw, Junior Warden Betty Warner, Treasurer Howard Matthew, Secretary Jim Treece, and Rev. Emily Williams Guffey are to be signatories, the motion was **Approved.**

In a brief **Buildings & Grounds Update**, Desmond said the water heater is currently our biggest concern. It's a massive system, looks like resolving the problem will entail costs in the \$20K range—one bid was \$23K. It appears that the water-heater system was significantly modified for additional connections for pumps and circulation to meet all our needs; we can't replace it with an off-the-shelf system.

On other matters: \*Desmond and KaClarence will to meet tomorrow to discuss how to have the fiber-optic internet connection enter the building; We don't want to drill through stone.

\*Desmond also will meet with Emily tomorrow regarding the new security cameras. We've started hooking it up so individuals can view the property remotely on their iPhones; for now, Sarah, Emily, Jim, and Desmond can do so. \*We should sign the sanctuary-floor contract sometime next week, with the work to start about two weeks after that. \*The committee is exploring whether the stormwater project can be rolled into a single phase.

In **Other Business**, it was requested that we talk next meeting about payment or lack thereof for Richard Thomas, who creates our floral iconography. He is reimbursed for expenses from Altar funds currently, but isn't paid for his own work.

Emily closed the meeting with prayer.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jim Treece, secretary

**Upcoming Vestry Meetings**

- **Thursday, April 15, 6:00-7:30pm**
- **Thursday, April 29, 6:00-7:30pm**
- Thursday, May 13, 6:30-8:00pm Mutual Ministry Review (subcommittee)
- **Thursday, May 20, 6:00-7:30pm**
- **June date(s) TBD**

**Additional upcoming events & committee meetings (Zoom unless otherwise noted):**

- **Palm Sunday procession & drive-through:** Sunday, March 28, 2:00-4:00pm, outside
- **Holy Week:**
  - **Maundy Thursday:** 6:00pm Worship at Home
  - **Good Friday:** 12:00pm Worship at Home
  - **Holy Saturday:** 9:00am Worship at Home
- **Easter Sunday:**
  - 10:30am Worship at Home
  - 8:15 and 9:00 a.m. & 2:00 p.m. -- Outdoor Services
- **Outreach Committee:** Tuesday, April 13 (tentative), 7:30-8:30pm