



Vestry Minutes Thursday, April 29, 2021

Highlights:

- * The Outreach Committee has decided to give \$5,000 towards “Mother’s Day Bailout” and \$5,000 to the Bail Relief Fund of Michigan Liberation. Cash bail is often a major hurdle for people in poverty. The Mother’s Day Bailout has gone on for several years, gathering funds towards bailing mothers out of prison around Mother’s Day.
- * Christ Church Detroit has received an unrestricted bequest of \$77,065.35 from a trust established by Nancy Vom Steeg during her lifetime. The Vestry approved a resolution from the Finance Committee on how to use that, including designating \$8,000 for the Outreach account.
- * It’s time for Emily’s Mutual Ministry Review. The review itself will have five people present from Christ Church: The Rector, the two Wardens, and two other Vestry members representing the entire Vestry. They will be joined by an outside facilitator. The two Vestry reps will solicit responses from all other Vestry members, while the two Wardens are to coordinate their response.

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, José Rodriguez, Jim Treece, Betty Warner. Action items underlined.

Reports received: Rector, Staff, Buildings & Grounds, Mutual Ministry Review materials.

Mary Brown led our **Opening Prayer:**

Dear Lord,

Thank you for bringing together this dedicated group of faithful people who share their diverse gifts to do the important work of the Vestry. We continue to call upon your guidance and support as we grapple with many issues which affect our church family, our community, and our world. May wisdom, compassion, and humility govern our minds and hearts, and may we listen for your voice in these noisy (but quiet) times. In your love for us we see the template for our engagement with the world. Thank you for this example and help us to work toward the furtherance of your kingdom, keeping your priorities in mind as well as our own. We're grateful that you are always with us. Amen.

Our **Bible Study** centered on John 15:1-5.

The **Minutes** of the April 15, 2021, were **approved** with one correction.

For this month’s **Ministry Update**, Ruth Boeder summarized the most recent **Outreach** meeting.

*Over the last couple of months, Outreach has met with many of our current and potential future partners; those meetings were recorded and are available on Christ Church’s YouTube site. At its latest meeting, and anticipating additional funds from the Nancy Vom Steeg bequest, the Outreach Committee decided to give

\$5,000 towards “Mother’s Day Bailout” and \$5,000 to the Bail Relief Fund of Michigan Liberation. Cash bail is often a major hurdle for people in poverty. The Mother’s Day Bailout has gone on for several years, gathering funds towards bailing mothers out of prison around Mother’s Day.

*Seth intends to contact Beth Ann for another newsletter call for volunteers for the Pope Francis Center and Meals on Wheels. As more folks get vaccinated, we hope to see more members taking advantage of volunteer opportunities.

*Crossroads needs food and clothing donations, as well as whatever the ask of the month is.

Howard Matthew opened the **Finance** report with a review of the March 2021 Financials. We’ve seen a significant improvement in pledges and hope to catch up before the summer lull – though whether that lull happens when we’re not meeting in person, remains to be seen. A Motion to accept the March financials as presented was **approved**.

The bookkeeper contract has been signed; she will start effectively May 3 or 4. (Mon or Tuesday)

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Our utilities bills seem quite high for this time of year. At the last meeting, it was suggested that we might have an issue with meters and indeed, DTE has installed new meters. Sarah will follow up with them to see if there’s a calibration issue.

The cleaning service contract is \$2,017/month, which gives us three cleanings/week. The Finance Committee reviewed this, and decided not to reduce frequency of cleaning, since we’ll be starting construction work soon, and may need additional cleanings in order to continue recording videos in the church.

Our statement of restricted accounts shows multiple lines of the Mildred Stennis Trust. We need to clarify if all are restricted to music before the committee can make a recommendation to Vestry. We hope the new bookkeeper will be able to investigate this in depth.

We have a parking-lot bid offering us 60% of revenues plus (unlike our former contract) guaranteed income of \$1,500/month; they would supply a person to watch it and would handle snow removal and general upkeep. Pre-pandemic, monthly earnings on the lot were roughly \$3,000; during pandemic, that fell to generally \$40/month. This company also manages parking lot for Old Saint Mary’s, so they’re acquainted with churches’ needs for occasional parking for choir rehearsals, etc. A few details need to be confirmed before the committee is ready to make a recommendation to Vestry.

The Finance Committee proposed the following motion:

PROPOSED RESOLUTION ALLOCATING NANCY VOM STEEG BEQUEST

WHEREAS, the Vestry of Christ Church Detroit has received an unrestricted bequest of \$77,065.35 from a trust established by Nancy Vom Steeg during her lifetime; and

WHEREAS, the Vestry wishes to allocate those funds in accordance with existing Church policies and in a way that recognizes the lifelong commitment of Nancy Vom Steeg to peace and social justice; it is hereby

RESOLVED, that the \$77,065.35 received from the Nancy Vom Steeg Trust is hereby allocated as follows:

A. Eight thousand dollars (\$8,000) will be added to the existing Outreach Account that is part of the Growth & Income Fund invested on behalf of the Church by the Trustees of the Episcopal Diocese of Michigan; and

B. Ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) will be held as a gift to the Church's current capital campaign to be used to pay or to reimburse the cost of the updated study of the Church's building needs prepared by the architectural firm of Quinn Evans or, to the extent not needed for that purpose, to pay other campaign project costs; and

C. Five thousand dollars (\$5,000) will be held to establish a short-term special purpose fund to be disbursed on the recommendations of the Outreach Committee to fund parish projects and to make gifts to outside organizations for the purposes of promoting racial reconciliation, equality and justice; and

D. Fifty-four thousand sixty-five dollars and thirty-five cents (\$54,065.35) (plus any subsequent distributions from the trust received by the Church) will be added to the existing Unrestricted Account that is part of the Growth & Income Fund invested on behalf of the Church by the Trustees of the Episcopal Diocese of Michigan.

The motion was **approved**.

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Desmond Jones led us through the **Buildings & Grounds** updates.

*East/west wall. We have agreed on the contracts in principle with W-3, but have been resolving details on the part about the water repairs in subfloor between the pews. One issue is supervision. The big concern with subfloor work is to have eyes on it, because once it's covered again, you don't know what's been done. We've used Quinn Evans to do project supervision in the past.

Quinn Evans has submitted a proposal to be the sanctuary floor Construction Administration (CA). Vestry will vote by email, after the B&G Committee has a chance to review the just-received bid, and to discuss any issues with QE and W-3.

*Water heater. Today, we believe we've found a way forward. KaClarence has now agreed to go tankless. If it doesn't work, you can always add more parts to meet needs. KaClarence arranged a Flame Furnace visit; we should get a quote within the next five days. They're willing to do a presentation on tankless systems to whomever wants to learn. We have two preliminary quotes already for a tankless system, and should get updated quotes from those contractors soon after Flame's. We'll have to redo some piping. By Vestry's next meeting, we should have more concrete information about costs and timeline.

*The roof work should finish this week. The periphery is finished, what remains is the roofing around the courtyard.

*The next step in the stormwater project is to get city's approvals and then to get contractor bids. The city will inspect before the work is done and after, to make sure it's consistent with the project description, since they're providing some grants.

*On May 5, have a meeting to address problems with the sound system's microphones, which were purchased just before Covid. Sound Planning will come in and train us on it on May 5, as well as offer other ideas to improve the audio systems.

*On the Bell Tower, Ram's Phase 1 work is finished, except for parts for which they're awaiting additional stone. They'll bring in a larger crane for the top parts and windows, and hope to finish by the 2nd or 3rd week of May. Next: Decide whether to put stages 2 and 3 together, but that depends on funding. We want to discuss that with Partners for Sacred Places and to identify some form of short-term funding.

Emily then reviewed our **Capital Campaign Preparation**.

Earlier this week, we received the 16-page Feasibility Study report. Rather than ask everyone to review it now, the Vestry officers decided to send it out after this meeting so everyone could review it in detail. Emily, in line with Vestry's prior decision, also asked Partners to provide a campaign proposal; it should land next week.

The Feasibility Study estimates a campaign goal of \$1.25 million - \$1.35 million, which they called "conservative." They believe it's possible we'll raise more than that. We want to compare that figure to the costs in the Facilities Assessment, which we have not yet received. Once we have all of that – Feasibility Study, Facilities Assessment, and Partners for Sacred Places' campaign proposal – we'll want to take our time discussing the implications and how we move forward. One concern raised by a recent webinar on planning in advance of a capital campaign: how much energy the Rector will have to spend on the campaign. We need to address that honestly.

But we'll also want to make some decisions quickly, for example, as to whether we want to go ahead with the Bell Tower work. In conversation with Jane Forbes (Finance) and Terry Lloyd (B&G), the opinion was to do Phase 2, and put off Phase 3 until next year for cash-flow reasons. (Each phase costs \$180K.) As long as we continue with at least Phase 2 this summer, we believe Ram will hold to its bid price for Phase 3 – but we want to confirm that.

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The **Worship** commission met recently to discuss the following three main topics.

*Pentecost & 176th Anniversary (Sunday, May 23). Our video service will include a lot of choir music. Richard Thomas already has installed the flowers. To embrace our heritage, and get some interviews taped regarding people's perspectives on the church, the commission decided to gather as if it were a house blessing. We will start outside at the 1860 cornerstone, and then move to the front-door cornerstone, continuing outside Sibley House and Ledyard Hall, all while offering blessings for the care and renovations happening.

*End-of-School-Year Service/Celebration. The Education Committee wants to recognize all teachers and students – including those taking online courses this year. This will probably be the second weekend in June.

*Future outdoor in-person gatherings. We hope to send out a survey soon to gather current info on such topics as vaccination status, and to point us towards dates, times, and frequency. The Property Use in Pandemic committee also will meet to discuss options. We are exploring ideas to gather outside in other places: e.g., Jon Miller's farm or the Riverfront.

*We also are working with B&G to build capacity for hybrid indoor services, say by September. This would entail limited attendance in person, plus a video/livestreamed component. The challenge is to make a livestreamed service have the same intimacy and directness as an in-person one, so you don't feel like you're sitting in the last pew.

Finally, several Episcopal dioceses will hold a George Floyd memorial service on Tuesday, May 25, on Zoom.

It's time for Emily's **Mutual Ministry Review**. The review itself will have five people present from Christ Church: The Rector, the two Wardens, and two other Vestry members representing the entire Vestry. They will be joined by an outside facilitator. The two Vestry reps will solicit responses from all other Vestry members, while the two Wardens are to coordinate their response. The Vestry officers will meet to prepare; any Vestry member who is interested in being one of the two at-large representatives should notify Denise in the next 24 hours.

In **Other Business**, it was noted that we need to redistribute Denise's flock because she can't continue as a Shepherd, given all her other duties.

The Sanctuary will be open during the gardening workshop on May 1, so people can see Richard's Flornado (towering flower arrangement).

In addition to the summer-schedule dates given below, Vestry members should expect another meeting to discuss the capital campaign feasibility study and proposal plus the facilities assessment. That will involve some folks outside of Vestry as well, and (recognizing that some folks' schedules may not permit this) not all Vestry will be expected to show.

Emily closed us in prayer at 7:38pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Jim Treece, secretary

Upcoming Vestry Meetings

- Thursday, May 13, 6:30-8:00pm Mutual Ministry Review (subcommittee)
- **Thursday, May 20, 6:00-7:30pm** (Opening Prayer: Ruth)

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- **Thursday, June 24, 6:00-7:30pm**
- **Thursday, August 12 or 19 TBD, 6:00-7:30pm**

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

- **Gardening Workshop:** Saturday, May 1, 9:00am-12:00pm, outside at church
- **Faith, Legacy, and Dignity, Session 5: End-of-Life Decision-Making with Hospice of Michigan:** Sunday, May 2, 9:15-10:30am [Later postponed]
- **Diocesan Book Study, *Caste* by Isabel Wilkerson:** Wednesdays, May 12, 19, and 26, 7:00pm on Zoom (link in CCD eNews and diocesan Weekly Connection e-newsletter)
- **Pentecost & 176th Anniversary:** Sunday, May 23, 10:30am Worship at Home video service, outdoor/in-person options TBD
- **End-of-School-Year Event, June TBD**
- **Parish Picnic, August 22, Belle Isle**