**Vestry Minutes**

**Tuesday, June 15, 2021**

Highlights:

\*We discussed the capital-campaign feasibility study prepared by Partners for Sacred Places. The discussion centered on two themes: We need to maintain the floors, walls, and other parts of our buildings so that we can continue to worship and serve others through mission here, and we want to enhance those aspects of our campus which will enable expanded mission. How to do – and fund – both remains a challenge.

\*Vestry agreed to hire Partners for Sacred Places to be a consultant to a capital campaign.

\*Vestry approved a proposal from the Finance Committee that allocates our endowment in such a way that each restricted fund is identified clearly within the total.

\*Vestry approved spending designed to enable the livestreaming of worship services, including new sound equipment, Wi-Fi in the sanctuary, and supporting upgrades to our electrical wiring there.

Present: Rev. Emily Williams Guffey, Ruth Boeder, Mary Brown, Denise Crenshaw, Desmond Jones, John Leney, Carolyn Maher, José Rodriguez, Howard Matthew, Anthony Mitchell, Jim Treece, and Betty Warner. Absent/excused: Claire Brown, Rev. Anthony Estes. Action items underlined.

After an **Opening Prayer** led by Emily, we discussed the **capital-campaign feasibility study** prepared by Partners for Sacred Places (PSP). Among the points raised:

* It was interesting to see our strengths and weaknesses laid out by outsiders, seemed accurate.
* Do we need to survey the congregation as to what they want to see in the usage of the building, what missions they want to support, etc.? The Vestry talks about music ministries, but is that top of mind for the overall congregation?
* The study says that in its other campaigns, PSP has seen 39% of the funds raised coming from outside the congregation. In our last capital campaign, we found foundations were unwilling to give to a religious group. And our external visibility is quite low, so our external funding may be low, too. But this process should position us well for the next campaign. A healthy congregation should have a nearly continuous wave of capital campaigns, say one every seven years. Whether or not we get external funds in this campaign or the next, we’re building relationships with our community, which is what matters.
* They target raising $1.25-1.33 million, or $1.5 - $1.7 million including gifts that have already come in. The last campaign raised $1.7 million. Our needs probably go beyond $1.25m. I’d hate to see Ledyard Hall and the kitchen get deprioritized – again. We’re going on a generation’s worth of deferred maintenance.
* Might we want to create a 501c3 that would raise funds for part of our ministry, not the religious aspect of the church?
* Have the maintenance/improvement projects been prioritized with costs attached? Desmond Jones, speaking for the Buildings & Grounds Committee, said the committee is always re-prioritizing the list of needs, as new ones arise. What might be important to the B&G committee might not be important to the parish as a whole. Keep communicating on that.
* On Sunday, Emily mentioned the flooring project during the announcements. Immediately afterwards, a member came forward and offered to give another $10K to the flooring fund.
* There will be lots of opportunities to communicate about what we’re called to do: e.g., to feed and shelter people. Our building defines our ability to supply

sustenance to people’s bodies and souls. There are mission opportunities – if we have a workable kitchen, say.

* Current awareness of prioritization: the Facilities Assessment from Quinn Evans now is expected the week after next, and the total amount will surely exceed $1.5m. We’ll want to mix structural needs and mission needs.

We next turned to the **Capital Campaign Management** (i.e., consultant) **Proposal** from Partners for Sacred Places.

It’s a little unusual to make this decision before we have the Facilities Assessment, but Phase 2 of the Bell Tower work is ready to go ahead if we sign that contract, with work to start in July and first payment due in October. That’s probably a workable timeline, but we need to feel comfortable with our funding for it. If we miss this timeline, the price will jump. The issue is whether we could ask some of the folks who have indicated how much they expect to give to the campaign, if they’d be willing to start paying in time to meet the October invoice. If we’re close to bringing PSP on board as consultant, they’d like to be on board for even those early conversations (e.g., for Bell Tower Phase 2); they’d be ready to start even next week.

The proposed contract with Partners costs $85K with the Economic Halo Study, or $80K without it. That’s a full study, not an estimate. In the discussion, Vestry members felt that the knowledge and information gained should prove extremely useful for future use. There was some concern that the economic impact numbers might look bad, since the data is largely related to building use by outside groups, which has been zero during the pandemic. Nonetheless, it would show us what data to seek, and give us a baseline. Partners will discount the cost for us if the pandemic data proves not helpful. If we chose Partners in part to help us expand our relationships beyond our walls, this halo study helps us to do that.

There also was some discussion clarifying the silent vs public phase of the campaign.

The proposal doesn’t include a timeline for the campaign. Emily said that Partners doesn’t provide that level of data pre-contract. Next week, they’d address urgent, time-sensitive matters. The Town Hall would occur in September or October, which fits with our likely ability to meet in person. The silent/congregational phase takes about 9 months, so about this time next year we’d be in public phase. If we’re still under capacity restrictions, they could do a series of town halls. They also will bring in architects to meet with parishioners/stakeholders to discuss what could be done to meet our mission needs, as part of community asset mapping.

Would we want a design charette? Might be crucial with Ledyard Hall, the design of which could go in so many directions depending on what missions we desire to pursue.

A Vestry member then relayed a recent conversation with a parishioner which had begun over volunteer opportunities at the Pope Francis Center. The parishioner wanted to volunteer, but favors Saturdays over Fridays, and noted that much of what we offer (Centering Prayer, Bible study, etc.) assumes people aren’t working. From there, the parishioner’s remarks turn to finances. This parishioner was taken aback by how, whether in casual conversation or at other times, there seems to be abundant wealth in the congregation. We seem to be a “high end” church. There’s a lot of money and a lot of talk about money in the congregation, and how much we spend on the building. The conversation is often about our legacy – what we’ve done – not what we’re doing in the community now. It feels very inwardly focused. Putting money into the building, and not appealing to people. “I feel like Christ Church is an expensive club that I can’t afford.”

The feasibility study shows we’re not known in the community because we’re not more engaged in the community. Making connections with developers isn’t the same as being mission focused. The campaign Feasibility Study seems to ask: Are people willing

to dig deep to keep our building beautiful? The congregation is coming together after the pandemic, and the first thing we ask is, Give us millions for our building.

In response, Emily said that she sees us embracing the campaign as an opportunity to grow in mission overall, and maybe set some deadlines for doing so. The capital campaign will be more successful if we become more aware of and energized by the potential for mission. She noted that she was interviewed for Crain’s Detroit Business’s annual Giving Guide, as one of several churches working with Partners for Sacred Places to renovate and restore historical churches with a view towards doing enhanced mission from a restored building.

One Vestry member noted that the Feasibility study mentioned the Downtown Detroit Partnership several times; and some folks are distrustful of that. There are community groups that existed before the DDP and may outlast DDP. Let’s not work only with the current politically powerful group. But the frequent mentions of the DDP was in part because Eric [last name not given] from DDP was the most responsive to Partners’ request for interviews.

Another member agreed that we can seem inward looking and we’re not as well known in the community as we’d like. But keeping the foundation sound and making sure the Bell Tower doesn’t drop stones on passing pedestrians are basic requirements of having this building and campus. Owning property means dealing with maintenance, but also is critical to being able to offer mission: if we don’t own and maintain Ledyard Hall, then GA and AA have to go elsewhere. He sees the campaign as two-fold: Help us keep the foundation and walls sound because that’s absolutely required, and then help us go beyond that by looking for additional funds to renovate the kitchen, etc., thereby enabling new ministries. That’s effectively also the approach we’re taking with our application for a matching grant from the National Fund for Sacred Place: We raise money for the sanctuary (which they won’t fund), and then they match our fund-raising for Ledyard Hall and the kitchen.

With the discussion wrapped up, we turned to two motions.

First motion: *That Vestry concurs that the requirement for multiple bids for the position of capital-campaign consultant was met during the vetting and choice of consultants for the capital-campaign feasibility study.* **Approved.**

Second motion: *That Vestry agrees to hire Partners for Sacred Places, per their proposal, including the Economic Halo Study, to be our capital campaign consultant.* **Approved, with one abstention.**

Treasurer Howard Matthew then provided background on a motion related to the **Allocation of Diocesan Growth & Investment Accounts.**

This effort started with our history of living beyond our means and tapping our endowment. In the worst examples, we’ve tapped restricted funds for general operating purposes. As currently allocated, funds are in named funds – all with different levels of restrictions. Some are restricted only in terms of how we spend the dividends. Some restrict how we handle both principal and dividends. This memo, therefore, aims to identify each fund so that we always know which fund we’re pulling money from and what its restrictions are. Jane Forbes had to pick a date for computing how much was in

each fund. She chose December 2020, and allocated the funds accordingly. The memo shows how the funds will be reorganized. Brief discussion followed.

*Motion: That Vestry approve the proposed new allocation of our endowment funds held with the Episcopal Diocese of Michigan.* **Approved***.*

The **Buildings & Grounds Committee** spent its most recent meeting prioritizing projects, Desmond Jones reported. Some projects were already funded and under way, meaning the committee either is already managing the project or looking to manage it. They didn’t include Ledyard Hall, kitchen, or the lower level in the review. There were 16 projects in total, with six funded or with funding on the way. Working with Finance Committee’s Forbes, they Identified funds for all of them, as well as identifying which ones were time sensitive/urgent. Vestry discussed three which are needed to enable live streaming, per the written B&G report. Because of the global chip shortage, lead time for getting electronic equipment is running to three months. With that in mind, B&G moves that Vestry approve the following projects at these costs:

* Sound system: $5,500
* Internet wiring: $7,700.
* Electrical improvements, for no more than $3,000.

*Motion: Vestry approves all of the recommendations, with the funding to be allocated as indicated*. **Approved**.

Emily then brought up a question of **Potential Funding Request for Choral Concert.**

  Music Director Ed Maki-Schramm would like to bring back Apollo5, which is planning a U.S. tour for early 2022. They’d be here sometime in February. To bring them costs $8K. The usual fee is $10K, but Ed is on their board, and he expects to arrange home-stays for the singers. Ed is planning on independent fund-raising. He estimates drawing $4K from the music department’s 2022 operating budget for this. Apollo5 were last here in March 2020, just before the pandemic. This could emotionally mark the re-entry to our full music program.

Motion: *Vestry endorses the idea of bringing Apollo5 to Christ Church Detroit in early 2022.* **Approved.**

We closed with prayer by Emily.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Treece, secretary