



Vestry Minutes
Thursday, December 16, 2021, via Zoom

Highlights:

*Vestry approved a budget for 2022. That budget will likely be revised in January, but this effectively authorizes payment of regular bills such as utilities in January before the final budget approval.

*As part of the budget discussion, Vestry discussed options for ministry support next year, including calling a curate with the help of funds from the diocese, or adding other non-clergy staff. We noted that Fa. Anthony's presence at Christ Church has been a gift in many ways, including financially, because the diocese paid all costs associated with his ministry. If we want to continue to have an associate priest, we will have to find a way to fund that position.

*Vestry discussed the possibility of having Facilities Manager KaClarence Haynes and his daughter move into the Sibley House apartment. There are a number of logistical and perhaps legal hurdles, but Vestry agreed to explore this in depth.

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

Reports received: Staff; Stewardship; Buildings & Grounds; November financial report; draft 2022 budget. Action items underlined.

Denise opened the meeting with prayer, then we turned to our Bible Study, reading Luke 1:46-55, the Magnificat.

The November 18, 2021, meeting **minutes** were **approved** with a few changes.

Howard led the **Buildings & Grounds** discussion, working off the written report.

*Barry Dickson is soliciting bids to address Ledyard Hall's Lower-Level water problems. There's a substantial amount of work to be done in the near future – if feasible, before the

spring and summer rains begin. In fact, it could be two years before waterproofing makes the basement/Lower Level usable again.

*North Wall Organ pipes. Our insurance claim has been denied; the insurance company decided the evidence that it was caused by the work on the street was inconclusive. We're looking into the process for reconsideration. We don't yet know the cost for replacement or repair. To get an estimate, we'd have to send the pipes to outside companies, including one which is out-of-state. It probably will take six months to get a cost estimate, then maybe another year and a half, at least, to do the repairs. Not all of the pipes are damaged. Q. Are we planning to put money in the 2022 budget for these water and organ issues? A. No. But they might be part of the capital campaign, depending on what the Prioritization Task Force concludes.

*We received a \$10K grant from the diocese's Tretheway-Downs Fund for Phase 2 of the Bell Tower repairs, pending their receipt of our 2020 audit.

*There was interest, following a B&G Committee discussion, in removing the two front pews on each side of the main aisle to open up opportunities for musical performances. That also would make it easier to maneuver around the piano.

*Q. Has there been any consideration to tearing down Ledyard Hall and constructing a new building, rather than retrofitting the existing structure? A. It was not discussed, but it has been mentioned once or twice, in the context of the recurring water damage – i.e., is it too much to ask the Lower Level to deal with that? Considering that Ledyard was originally planned as a gym, maybe we should consider rebuilding, rather than pushing a structure beyond its original design intent. For example, we might build a multistory building, with no basement, given that basements near rivers are inherently problematic.

Howard, as Treasurer, said there was not a great deal that was noteworthy in the November 2021 **Financials**. November pledge receipts were not that far below budget. Some stock transfers that traditionally happen in December are starting to happen. We need to make sure they're sold in a timely manner, to bring us closer to our budget's target.

*Q. Are Outreach grants being paid with the funds with the diocese? Denise is checking with Seth.

*We're once again late in receiving funds for Fa. Anthony from the diocese.

*An error was noted in the line item "Religious ed associate health & dental," which was zero the month before.

Motion: Vestry accepts the November financial statements as presented, with a few questions to be resolved. **Approved.**

Jim, as Stewardship chair, reminded Vestry members to write thank-you notes to congregants who pledged to the church for 2022. He thanked the Vestry for doing this. He will send around a list to each Vestry member of folks to thank, and invited Vestry members to let him know whether they could do this yet in December or would have to do it in January.

He also noted that results so far from the Pledge Campaign indicate that pledges may be down between \$10,000 and \$15,000 in 2022 from 2021 levels. Q. Typically, what percentage of pledges are actually received? Knowing that would help us to understand how “real” the budget is. A. We will look into that. But Emily said the alignment between pledge and follow-through, anecdotally, is pretty high. The vast majority of pledgers fulfill their pledges. There are some households where things change dramatically and we wouldn’t expect them to fulfill their pledges, but in general, it’s pretty high.

Before turning to the draft 2022 budget, we took up the annual **Clergy Housing Resolution**: *Whereas, Section 107 of the Internal Revenue Code permits a minister of the gospel to exclude from gross income a church-designated allowance paid to him/her as part of his/her compensation to the extent used by him/her for actual expenses in owning or renting a home; and*

Whereas, the Rev. Williams Guffey is compensated by Christ Church Detroit exclusively for services as a minister of the gospel; and

Whereas, Christ Church Detroit does not provide the Rev. Williams Guffey with a rectory, therefore, it is hereby

Resolved, that the total compensation paid to the Rev. Williams Guffey for calendar year 2022 shall be \$96,600 of which \$32,000 is hereby designated to be a housing allowance; and it is further

Resolved that the designation of \$32,000 as a housing allowance shall apply to calendar year 2022 and all future years unless otherwise provided.

The Resolution was moved and **approved**.

Although **the draft 2022 budget** is certain to be revised in January, Vestry needed to vote to approve it at the December meeting, so as to authorize payments of bills in early January. Here are key points from the discussion:

*Our forecast deficit for 2021 is \$100K, after December offerings (estimated at \$30-40K) and another \$50K in dividends from our investments. This is still well above our “prudent draw” target. We’re expecting similar numbers in 2022.

*Revenues. The draft 2022 budget shows pledge revenues about the same as last year, but we expect it actually to be down, depending on pledges that are yet to come in. The Finance Committee chair on principle wants to wait until end of December to adjust, and align it more with 2021 actuals. On the other hand, we expect some revenues to increase, notably facilities use, which was very low in 2021.

*Associate rector. This budget assumes “Ministry support” expenditures of \$25K.

History: The diocesan McElroy Fund, which is designed for new priests in their first three years of ministry, supported Fa. Anthony at Trinity Church and then here – so his expenses have been fully supported by the diocese. His presence among us has been a pure gift – in many ways, including financially. But his term with us will end on Jan. 16.

The McElroy Fund is designed not only to support a new priest, but to help a congregation to support that person and to grow into supporting them. In the past, the Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Michigan assigned new priests to congregations which received money from the McElroy Fund. Beginning next year, that changes. Congregations will apply for a McElroy Fund grant, and then call a priest. The fund will pay half of the new priest’s compensation the first year, with the amount paid declining each of the following two years – effectively prompting the parish to pay an increasing percentage of that priest’s compensation.

We hope to call a newly ordained priest to be our curate. Emily has drafted a position description, which explains what the curate’s portfolio would be and how she and Christ Church, including its budget, are positioned to support that new priest. The grant application will be submitted in December. If approved, Emily would begin talking to seminarians who will graduate next year, with the goal of having someone join us mid-year.

We estimate a newly ordained priest’s annual compensation package at around \$90K. If we’re asked to cover half of that, it comes to almost \$50K/year, but we’d be getting this person about mid-year, hence the “Ministry Support” figure of \$25K. The Finance Committee is confident we can pay that amount in 2022, but less confident about paying the required compensation in 2023 and 2024. Both the Finance Committee and the Vestry Officers discussed whether it was fair to call someone when we weren’t sure of paying for them in the second (and third) year, concluding that we should step out in faith – and put it to the congregation at the annual meeting in January that we need to increase our giving if we want an associate priest to help Emily and serve our expanded ministries.

We have a number of needs for staff support and clergy support. The \$25K is a placeholder. In the discussion, Vestry considered whether we should go in another direction, e.g., not get a McElroy grant, or choose to support an education position, or something else. So far, Fa. Anthony has led the audiovisual support and Emily has overseen education, but how the tasks are divvied up will depend in part on the skills that an associate would bring. Q. Would we list the position of education/outreach/community development, or is it dependent on what happens with the grant? A. We've left that spot vacant for those reasons, and with revenues not skyrocketing, we waited. Education, outreach, and community development are traditional areas for a newly ordained priest.

Motion: Vestry accepts the preliminary budget as presented. **Approved.**

Emily led a discussion of a **staff housing situation.**

Our facilities manager, KaClarence, has asked if the Sibley House apartment might be available as a residence for him and his daughter. He's willing to do substantial work to fix up the apartment.

B&G discussed this, and raised a number of considerations: insurance and liability concerns; getting it functional/livable; and whether the previous certificate of residency is still valid. Emily and KaClarence will walk through the apartment, which currently is being used for storage, to assess its condition. The insurance company's comments – now in the Google drive – covers some practical- issues.

Discussion: None of this sounds insurmountable. As one Vestry member said, "We're charged with housing people. I'd like to see us make our employees safe and secure." Q. What are the red flags? A. With a child living on the second floor, there are safety considerations. There also may be plumbing code issues, because the Sibley House restoration a few years ago didn't aim to make it viable for occupancy. The big issue likely is whether a) we need to bring the place up to code to meet our certificate of occupancy, or b) if we need a new certificate.

The consensus was to pursue an investigation into this. We put together a small Vestry group to work with B&G on this, and if needed, put it to a vote before our next meeting. Anthony Mitchell agreed to help; Howard and Desmond already are on B&G. Ruth and John indicated some interest or history that would help, but aren't available through January. We might bring in someone with some legal expertise as well.

Next steps: Explore the physical condition of the space; have conversations with staff and Opera MODO, whose stuff is in that space; talk to Seth to see if there's a lawyer with real estate expertise available to us; retrieve our relevant documents; and check with Canon Hardy, who

may have more experience with this sort of thing. Denise also will get in touch with Margo Norris, who with Mary Herring is looking for housing for the Afghan refugee family.

Also, KaClarence's position may need to be redefined: are we charging rent, or providing housing in the position? And what do we expect from a person who's living on-site?

After she reviewed the **Nomination Process for Vestry Class of 2025**, Denise offered the following resolution:

The Nominating Committee consisted of the following members:

Denise Crenshaw, Senior Warden;

Jim Treece, Secretary and retiring Vestry Member;

Betty Warner, Junior Warden and retiring Vestry Member;

Seth Lloyd, Chairman of the Outreach Committee, present Co-Chair of Capital Campaign;

Lisa Jones, Past Senior Warden, present Co-Chair of the Capital Campaign; and

Christine Galli, past Senior Warden and member of Finance Committee.

The Nominating Committee recommends the following parishioners to serve on the Vestry for the next three years: Claire Brown; David Jackson; Caroline Widak; and Stephanie Wren.

These parishioners will be presented at the Annual Meeting at the recommendation of the 2021 Vestry at which time, the parish will vote. Officers will be elected after the Annual Meeting on January 30, 2022 by the ongoing Vestry members and newly elected members.

Resolution: **Approved.**

Under **New Business**, we discussed a proposal to seek a handicapped parking spot on the south/eastbound side of Woodbridge Avenue. Anthony Mitchell has sounded out the Department of Public Works Sign Shop, which asked for a request on church letterhead. They'll look at the request and make a decision, with no cost involved. Anthony will draft a letter for Emily's signature, seeking up to three spots.

In **Other Business**, Denise noted that there will be a quite a few poinsettias in the church after the 9:30 p.m. Christmas Eve service. We will ask people to take a small poinsettia for themselves plus one to give to someone else. Denise also will check with some of Emily's Angels to take a poinsettia to folks.

After a few other comments about the planned Christmas Eve services, Emily closed the meeting with prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Jim Treece, secretary

Upcoming Vestry Meetings (4th Thursdays 6:30-8:30 p.m.; when in-person, 6:00 p.m. dinner)

- **January 27, 2022** - celebration before Annual Meeting, January 30th!
- **February 24, 2022** - with continuing vestry + new class
- **March 24, 2022**
- **April 28, 2022**

Additional upcoming events & committee meetings:

- **Christmas Eve**, Friday, December 24th
 - 5:00 p.m. Family Eucharist with Pageant
 - 7:00 p.m. video service
 - 9:00 p.m. Prelude, 9:30 p.m. Choral Eucharist
- **Annual Meeting**, Sunday, January 30th, following 10:30am service
- **Feast of Absalom Jones**, Sunday, February 20th, 4:00 p.m.
- **Apollo5 in concert**, Monday, February 21st, 7:00 p.m.
- **Ash Wednesday**, March 2nd
- **Easter Sunday**, April 17th