

Vestry Meeting Minutes

Thurs., April 23, 2020

Highlights:

*Rev. Anthony Estes began as Christ Church's Associate Rector on April 22.

*The Buildings & Grounds Committee is working with contractors and others to get as much preparatory work done as possible, so that work on our buildings can begin as soon as the governor and bishop give the go-ahead.

*More parishioners are using PayPal for their gifts and offerings: more than 25 at this point, vs. just two a year earlier.

Present: Emily Williams Guffey, Lisa Jones, Roger Basse, Betty Warner, Desmond Jones, Denise Crenshaw, Chuck Atwater, Christine Galli, Carolyn Maher, Jim Treece, George Port, Howard Matthew. Absent/Excused: Phil Brown

Reports received from Outreach, Buildings & Grounds, Finance, Staff, Rector, Education, Green Team, Stewardship, Worship (Lay Eucharistic Visitors, Altar Guild, and Centering Prayer).

Opened at 6:05 with prayer by Rev. Emily Williams Guffey, followed by a Bible Study of Luke 24:13-35.

Minutes of the April 16, 2020 meeting were **approved**. Emily noted that a parishioner has offered to pay for smaller-size junior acolyte robes, after reading about that need in the minutes of the April 2 Vestry meeting.

Celebrations

Transitions to online worship, meetings, giving, communications, directory, pastoral care

Parish Operations

Emily Williams Guffey

The Rev. Anthony Estes officially began yesterday (4/22) as Associate Rector by attending a staff meeting. He had attended a few unofficially over the last few weeks. By our next meeting, Emily will be better placed to share his portfolio of duties with the Vestry. He couldn't be here tonight due to a previously scheduled diocesan meeting. As a deacon at Christ Church Cranbrook, he had served on the communications committee. He and Emily will officiate together this Sunday, with her preaching; generally, they will alternate weeks as the preacher.

Finance

Christine Galli, George Port

Christine reviewed the tentative figures for March. Logistically, Sarah Tribelhorn and Christine are sharing Google Docs and info. But Christine is the only one with access to the office software remotely, so she is inputting all the numbers.

The numbers haven't been fully vetted, so there are a number of reasons for some discrepancies between budget vs actuals—e.g., timing issues due to when bills arrive. Most of the numbers reflect what has actually occurred at this point—deposits or payments—not what is due. Everything for March has been done except for bills due, and gifts received need to be moved into another category; Jan Weir will do that. Christine said Finance Chair Jane Forbes was pleased to see the results, but what we owe isn't reflected in the bottom line. Expenditures we've agreed to make affect what our cash needs are going to be. George said he was more concerned about cash needs than our balance sheet. Income looks great through March, he said, but April and May will be key. The inherent lag times between when we get the money and when it's deposited, means it'll take a few weeks to see where we stand. Christine said that because she is inputting on a regular basis, she expects to be able to give a better update at our next meeting. One positive trend: many more members are giving online. A year ago, maybe two people were giving online via PayPal, now maybe 25 are.

The numbers on the endowment for Dec. 31 don't reflect the current markets. George, who is both CCD's Treasurer and chair of the diocesan Investment Committee, noted that for the quarter, the Diocese's Growth and Income Fund, which handles our endowment, fell about 13.5 percent. It has a temporary effect on the balance sheet, but due to the way the Fund works, there'll be a smoothing effect over the next 20 months in terms of the dividends we receive from the endowment.

George asked how big a burden the current procedures are for Christine. For example, is she trying to make deposits every day? Christine said no, Sarah makes the deposits on a regular basis. Sarah and Christine share several sheets online,

and “work very well together,” she said. For about three months after Dawn left, Christine was doing all the bill paying, so she is familiar with inputting the data.

Emily added that Christine has begun to lead the transition to QuickBooks, which will cost the church \$160/year. Together with Breeze (\$760/year), our contact management software, the costs will be \$920/yr., vs. \$4,344/year for ACS, the software we had been using.

Jim said most of the changes the figures show could be anticipated, e.g., lower utilities and flower costs, and a decline in loose offering. He asked if there was anything Christine had not anticipated. She replied that previously, when people were not at church, they didn’t send in their money. It’s nice to see that people are focused on getting the money in, even if they’re not at church, and people are using PayPal. That’s a plus: once we get people used to paying online and making that a recurring, automatic gift, that will be beneficial to us.

Chuck asked if we were still paying maintenance and cleaning contracts. Emily: I looked at that today, when a cleaning service invoice for April came in—about \$2K a month. I think we’re still under contract. That may be one we need to put on pause. Chuck: If we don’t have a real need, put them in abeyance and use them when we reopen. We will need a deep cleaning then. Christine: Every bill presented to us, even if we have a contract, it just takes a phone call to work it out. Emily will work with Sarah on the cleaning contract.

We have applied for a \$56,690 Payroll Protection Plan loan, and have turned in all paperwork to the bank. When the application gets to the Small Business Administration, the SBA will decide then and there if they have funds or not. George: we owe Jane a huge thank you for tracking down a lot of material for the application.

Review & Motion: two resolutions from Jane Forbes, Finance Chair

RESOLVED, that the Vestry hereby ratifies and confirms (1) its action on April 12, 2020, authorizing the submission of an application for a forgivable loan under the Payroll Protection Program established in the federal CARES Act (the "Act"); and (2) all actions previously taken by the officers, members of the Finance Committee and members of the staff pursuing such loan; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Senior Warden, (or, if the Senior Warden is not immediately available, either the Junior Warden or the Treasurer) is hereby authorized to execute such promissory notes, applications, agreements, certifications, documents or instruments as she or he determines to be necessary or desirable to pursue an application, to receive the proceeds of a loan and to obtain forgiveness of all or a portion of a loan under the Act.

Approved.

George said Jane asked the Vestry for clarifications or reconfirmations: 1) How large an invoice Finance can pay without Vestry approval; 2) How many signatures are required on larger checks; and 3) who is authorized to sign checks. Emily: This came up in an email thread between Emily, Jane, and Sarah. While working remotely, we are not doing any signatures. Our current authorized signers are people who aren’t on Vestry anymore. George noted that there’s a difference as to who can sign – that name has to be on record with the bank – and who approves it at what amount. Emily said when the office packed up to work remotely, Sarah gave Emily 30 checks, so she can be a signer. And Vestry authorized Sarah to make mobile payments, once approved. Those aren’t physical checks. George will draft resolutions on these matters for next Thursday’s meeting.

Stewardship

Jim Treece

Jim said we need to be sure that online giving is easy to do. He will test doing so on an iPhone, and Howard agreed to do likewise on an Android device. Jim also was asked to continue sending out general reminders re members’ giving pledges.

Buildings & Grounds

Desmond Jones

Every month, there’s something new. The latest is the boiler, currently shut down because we need to access the left boiler to see where a leak is. Vestry previously approved funds for that test. All plumbers said they’d have to come in and look before getting a quote. One will look at it tomorrow with KaClarence; trying for at least 3 quotes. Boiler was last serviced in August; the heater is 15 years old, in an old system. Every repair vendor has said it’s difficult to get parts for it. Somewhere down the line, we’ll have to add replacing it to the to-do list, but for now, a repair should do.

Bell Tower Repair, Phase 1: Contract with RAM Construction was signed, notarized, and submitted, per Vestry’s approval in February. The contract with Quinn Evans for construction administration was signed and submitted on April 20. Desmond is trying to set up a conference with QE’s Angela for next week, and then one with her and Ram. But QE

and Ram are subject to the governor's stay-home orders, so they can't do actual work at this point. But they can still do all the prep work, including getting documents ready to submit for the required permits.

For several other projects, the recurring theme was that vendors/contractors either need to do a pre-bid walk-through, which is dependent on the building being open, or need to get into the building to do the actual work. That was true for the foundations below the east and west walls, the other part of the flooring between the pews, the roof and buttresses, upgrading the security cameras, and replacing the emergency exit signs/lights.

Among other projects:

*The security camera upgrade contract with Computer Guy was signed and submitted April 20. The vendor has received the contract and is procuring the materials. The outside part of the work has issues about where to put the wires. He'll have to get in and out of ceilings.

*There were some complaints about dirty pew cushions. We asked Modernistic to get a quote, now waiting on another bid. When we reopen, we will certainly need some cleaning.

*Stormwater Drainage. Desmond has been trying to contact Michael. They sent us a design that included a property that we don't own. The ensuing redesign reduced our footprint, which might reduce the compensation we're due from the city.

Desmond summed up the current state of affairs, saying, "We want to get the meetings next week, so that everything we can do now, we do, so that we're ready to move once we can get into the building."

Fundraising / Partners for Sacred Places

PSP's Joshua has offered to meet with us virtually at 2:00 tomorrow, to talk about what can be done at this point. Emily said that the work we did in those workshops has really helped us, though some of the work we did was how to activate the building more fully for the community, which is on hold for now.

175th Anniversary Planning

May 31, 2020, is the Day of Pentecost and Christ Church's actual 175th Birthday. An in-person celebration is probably not possible. What could this look like digitally? Emily: While not being able to gather as a large group would be a bummer in major ways, it might open other doors, say in connecting with members and former members who could chime in. The technology is available to bring together music in creative ways, and to bring together many voices. We'll have to think out of the box and out of the building for it. Just as the door is closed for in-person offering plates, maybe the doors for virtual giving are all the more open. At our check-in next week, we will focus on that.

Betty: When we reopen the doors, let's have some sort of celebration to celebrate our return as well as our 175th at the same time. Roger said that the Heritage group, part of our Partners for Sacred Places work, is moving forward with an eye to an autumn celebration of the 175th by interviewing current and former parishioners, and working on a timeline graphic. Even so, plans for a Festival Evensong, with a reception and/or dinner, in September or October are probably on hold for an in-person event, and the scheduled Nov. 1 evening performance of Verdi's Requiem is possibly on hold.

Community Outreach

Given the condition of Detroit as a Covid hotspot, are there additional and evolving ways we can help? Emily: I always want this to be on the table as we talk about our own fundraising.

Denise said that when Emily learned that donations to the Bishop's fund were being matched, it made sense to give to that rather than directly to Crossroads. So, as the Outreach report said, the Holy Week offering of \$2,100 was given to the Bishop's Fund, and the Outreach Committee voted to give an amount equal to half of that, or \$1,050, from its own budget to the Pope Francis Center. PFC is providing on average 500 meals a day now, at a cost of about \$1 each. Both contributions were made yesterday.

Connecting Creatively Throughout Crisis

Lisa: I feel we've been very creative in our creations every week. Sermons, Tuesday and Wednesday night doings, and more communications via email. Roger: We made a Shepherds call last weekend, and asked members for a one-word description of how they were doing. We got some funny, some interesting, and some concerning responses. They were then passed along to Emily via Sarah. Emily: That approach of asking for just a word or phrase was great. It helps me to know to make a phone call here or here, and helps me to focus my efforts. Roger: Josephine Mashour was Shepherd of the month several times, but now Mary Herring and Tim Bledsoe are hosting flocktail parties. Denise: These have been great because everyone doesn't know each other. Roger: I plan to have shepherds reach out in another week or 10 days, hopefully after we've heard any news from the Bishop. Each time they call, I want them to have a piece of information about the church to give to their flocks. Denise: They asked me at the flocktail party for a mini Vestry report. They were very happy to that we were meeting weekly. She suggested the shepherds could talk about some of the vestry stuff.

Lisa: We have to think about what people have been enjoying about this time. Worshipping at home, all this information. We'll have to consider how to incorporate some of both old and new when we resume meeting in person.

Adjourned at 7:46 p.m.