



## Vestry Minutes Dec. 17, 2020

Present: Emily Williams Guffey, Anthony Estes, Lisa Jones, Roger Basse, Chuck Atwood, Desmond Jones, Christine Galli, Carolyn Maher, Betty Warner, Howard Matthew, Denise Crenshaw, Jim Treece.

Absent/excused: Phil Brown

**Reports Submitted:** Staff; Rector; Associate Rector; Buildings & Grounds Summation and Open Issues spreadsheet; Financial results for November and YTD; draft 2021 budget; Stewardship; Heritage documents.

Action items underlined.

### Highlights:

\*Vestry approved a preliminary budget, thereby authorizing payment of all appropriate invoices and bills in line with this budget beginning Jan. 1, 2021, pending approval of a final budget.

\*Emily has spoken with Partners for Sacred Places about the **Capital Campaign Feasibility Study**. They're blocking off times for interviews the second and third weeks of January. First reports on what they learned will be shared with Vestry and staff in early February.

\*Vestry set the date for the annual meeting: Sunday, Jan. 31, 2021.

**Opening Prayer** by Emily, followed by reflections and a moment of silence for George Port. Our Bible Study was on Isaiah 9:2-7

**Minutes** of the December 3, 2020, meeting were **approved**.

In line with one of last meeting's action items, the returning Vestry members met on Dec. 16 to discuss candidates. They divided up who will contact whom from our short list of candidates (We also have a list of alternates.), and will contact each other by email afterwards.

Vestry received two sets of statements related to **Finance**: the regular November/year-to-date spreadsheet; and a draft version of the 2021 budget. The final column of the latter assumes six months of online-only worship and six months of in-person worship. Some numbers on that draft budget will be revised – there were some changes that couldn't be made to that document before the Vestry meeting – but we still needed to approve this preliminary budget. The final budget is expected to be approved in late January. Vestry was urged to examine this version closely, to become familiar with it, and to submit any questions in advance of the next meeting, so they can be fully addressed. Among the points discussed:

- We're looking at rethinking how we place and use "Parish development," which was added two years ago to fund the Partners for Sacred Places "New Partners/New Places" workshops. If we keep that line item, it might be marked for extra equipment allowing us to continue online classes and ministries, as well as outside ministries, even after we're back in person.
- The draft budget shows a deficit about as large as what we budgeted for 2020 – when we were anticipating rental income which never materialized. This assumes a 10% draw from our endowment, when our goal

should be a 4% draw. We want to narrow that gap, but if there's a year when we need to have such a large draw, it might be in the midst of a pandemic. Still, at the end of next year, we will need to review whether this level of spending served its purpose. It's not sustainable, but it makes sense now.

- The proposed budget doesn't include a cost-of-living increase; the diocesan recommendations on that score were just released (Dec. 16), and the Finance Committee needs to discuss them.

**Motion:** Vestry approves this preliminary budget and authorizes payment of all appropriate invoices and bills in line with this budget beginning Jan. 1, 2021, pending approval of a final budget. **Approved.**

On other financial matters, the new accounting software is up and running. Numbers are kept in the Cloud. Christine Galli and Sarah Tribelhorn are each going to reconcile the numbers – using the desktop version and the cloud version of software – and then compare to make sure both produce the same results. This is Realm—a product from the same company we're currently using, but the price is much lower than what we're paying now. The original quote (already quite low) included the payroll module, which we won't be using, so that will result in even more savings.

**Motion:** Vestry expresses its gratitude to Christine Galli, and Sarah Tribelhorn, for all of their extraordinary work on our accounting conversion. **Approved.**

**Motion:** To approve 2021 housing allowances for Rev. Emily and Rev. Anthony, in the amount of \$33,000 and \$10,448, respectively. **Approved.**

Discussion: This is a tax-related matter and doesn't altar parish spending in any way.

**Motion:** Vestry appoints Jan Weir to continue as Signatory for Christ Church Detroit's securities account, effective immediately and until a new Treasurer takes office. **Approved.**

Discussion: This position is required to allow the church to accept and process donations of stocks, mutual funds, and other financial instruments. It is usually held by the Treasurer, so this is expected to be a temporary appointment until the next Vestry is in place.

As a follow-up to the **Stewardship** campaign, Vestry members will be given names in early January of pledging households to whom they should send thank-you notes on their own stationery.

Desmond reviewed the **Buildings & Grounds** open issues. \*Installation of the security cameras has been completed. Sarah will be the coordinator, so if you need access, ask her. \*The Roofing contractor has submitted pictures but not a quote yet. \*Initially, we thought work on the Bell Tower would stop at the end of November, but they did some work beyond that, while it was still warm enough. Work will resume in the spring. \*There are still some issues with the stormwater project, e.g., need some cleanouts in the courtyard area. We might be able to do the two parts of the project separately. Whether to do that awaits a recommendation from the entire B&G committee, but Desmond is dubious because breaking up a project often means it goes on different schedules. For example, if you need to rent equipment and/or vehicles, you don't want to have to do so two separate times. \*The water heater should have been installed this week, but he hasn't received confirmation from KaClarence.

Emily reported that we talked with our team from Partners for Sacred Places about the **Capital Campaign Feasibility Study** last week. We're still working on what composition of inside and outside voices are desired. They're blocking off times for interviews the second and third weeks of January. First reports on what they learned will be shared with Vestry and staff in early February.

Emily touched base with Stuart Grigg and Donna Gloff, who have been working on the history aspects of our **Heritage** project. Over the summer, two streams emerged. One is on the mechanics of capturing stories and hearing people's personal stories, led by Clarke Mason, Seth Lloyd, and Sally LePla. The second is on historical research, led by Stuart and Donna. Stuart has been involved with designing exhibits for museums. They envision an online presence to hold the words and pictures of our history and stories, i.e., a digital archive for the first team's work. (Stuart did something similar for Christ Church Grosse Pointe; you can find it online.) They also envision a physical timeline – say displayed along Ledyard Hall's wall, similar to a museum display.

It might also, using QR codes, provide a way to point your phone at a memorial plaque and learn more about that person. Their way of telling our stories aligns well with the new cookbook – as individuals submit their recipes, those also include a story. It also aligns with the facilitating racial justice group, which has brought up a lot of energy around Christ Church’s working in our neighborhoods, both in the past and now. They are looking for an archivist and have suggested a few names. We may invite someone to join them in that role – yet another position we’re looking to fill in this season of new ministries!

Our canons call for our **Annual Meeting** to occur at the end of January, but the diocese has said we might consider early February to allow time to prepare for a Zoom meeting. If we want to wait until February, we can begin a meeting on Jan. 31, adjourn it, and then hold the rest of the meeting it on Feb. 7. We’re fortunate that the last Sunday of January is the 31<sup>st</sup>, which gives us a full month to work with diocesan colleagues to find out how to do this. We need to pay attention to having a quorum (between 60-70 people, with the exact number to be calculated), which requires advance communications to members about how important their presence is. We might also want the choir to sing on the 31<sup>st</sup>.

**Motion:** Vestry sets the date for the annual meeting in 2021 for Sunday, Jan. 31, 2021. **Approved.**

If you have a ministry report to be submitted, start planning it. You may be contacted by Beth Ann Tesluk about what’s needed. We need to come up with a tight agenda for Zoom, which also allows for some portions/reports to be recorded in advance and to be accompanied by photos or videos.

Turning to **Outreach and Parish Life**, Betty and Denise had a quick meeting regarding Emily’s Angels, and may want a brief one with Emily to get back on track after so many instances of obvious need in our parish. Also, we may need to keep an eye on the weather, and if it’s sunny and not bad, there’s a need for porch visits with those who are isolated and in need of some personal interactions.

Roger said there may be a shepherd’s call over the weekend to wish everyone a Merry Christmas.

Emily, responding to a call at the last meeting to make sure everyone is aware of staff holiday schedules, said that nobody on staff is travelling, and office staff email and the church phone line will always be answered and responded to. Beth Ann and Emily both plan to be off for vacation the week between Christmas and New Year’s. Anthony and Sarah (and Calebria part of the time) will be present.

The Bishop is having a service on Dec. 27, the Sunday after Christmas, which will include Gov. Whitmer, who has Episcopal ties. It will be at 11:00, the same time as our usual service, and is designed to give parishes a chance at a holiday from worship production. Vestry agreed that we will not have our own service that day, but suggested having a social hour starting at 10:30 specifically for our congregation.

The meeting **adjourned**. The next check-in meeting will be Jan. 7, followed by a regular monthly meeting on Jan. 21 and a check-in meeting on Feb. 4.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jim Treece, secretary