

**Vestry Minutes**

**Thursday, June 24, 2021**

Highlights:

\*Vestry discussed results of our first three Sundays back with in-person worship after the pandemic-related lockdown, and prospects for future worship.

\*Vestry reviewed the status of various buildings-related projects and our latest financial statements. Related to that, we are applying for several grants that may provide funds for needed maintenance and repair of our buildings. Plans for a capital campaign continue apace.

\*Rev. Emily and the Wardens also updated the Vestry on the Mutual Ministry Review and how the process worked. The final document – available to the entire vestry – covers what the rector, wardens, and vestry are doing well and what they could do better.

Present (via Zoom): 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, and Betty Warner.

Reports received: Rector, Staff, and Finance Committee (May statement of activities, a memo about third-quarter cash needs, and a pro forma statement showing funds we hold with the Diocese allocated according to the resolution passed at our last meeting). As shown below, we also were given links to documents about the worship survey results, the latest diocesan guidance and our draft new parish protocols related to pandemic precautions, and the results of the Mutual Ministry Review. Action items underlined.

John Leney led us in our **Opening Prayer**:

Almighty and ever living God, source of all wisdom and understanding, be present with our vestry as we continue our work for the renewal and mission of your Church.  Teach us in all things to seek first your honor and glory.  Guide us to perceive what is right, and grant us both the courage to pursue it and the grace to accomplish it, through Jesus Christ our Lord.  AMEN

Our Bible study selection was Mark 5:25-34.

The minutes of the May 20 and June 15 meetings were **approved**.

Emily updated Vestry on **Worship** plans. She reviewed the worship survey results, and urged Vestry to look at that feedback again as we think about moving forward towards more in-person worship. New diocesan guidance goes into effect July 1. It’s guidance. We can’t go beyond it, but can adapt it to our circumstances, which we try to do with the new parish protocol draft. The guidance’s key points: Masks not required outdoors, and only in specific circumstances indoors, e.g., when parishioners are in close physical proximity. That would include serving at the altar or sharing communion, gathering in the columbarium, a choir processing down the aisle and singing, or if with children, who aren’t vaccinated yet. Don’t fuss over specific distances, but don’t crowd. In July, we’ll set aside the Wellness Screener but maintain an attendance log for possible contact tracing, in case that’s needed. Our capacity is 250 in the sanctuary (This allows a late-August wedding with up to 200 guests.), and 40-50 in Ledyard Hall.

In our three Sundays back, the 8:15 service has had 16-18 people and the 9:00 service has had 20-26. That’s low for a sanctuary service, but 9:00 is a transitional time, so those numbers seem pretty reasonable, as the 10:30 online service continues to take precedence. Viewership has been declining as some folks attend in person. But all told, on a Sunday, we engage with upwards of 100 households, which is quite strong for us after the end of the school year. In the summer, we typically see 12-15 at the 8:15 service and 30-40 at the 10:30 service.

Under new guidelines, we also can have food and beverages, but no common serving plates. We’ll take a barista approach to coffee and lemonade, with one person pouring.

From July 11, the 10:30 service will be livestreamed, so it will be available at home online, but will look quite different from our previous online services because it won’t be recorded in advance.

Why are we trying to be safer than the state of Michigan in general? In part, it’s about looking out for each other and not wanting to be a stumbling block for another, while being as fully inclusive as possible. For example, kids can’t be vaccinated yet, so parents tend to be extra cautious. We know from the survey feedback that we have a number of members with serious health conditions, and we want to be as inclusive as possible. If an extra layer of safety allows us to include that individual or household, that’s the way to go. As vaccinations increase, we may be able to shed some layers.

We’ll ask the shepherds to alert their flocks about the changes.

We discussed plans for the **August Picnic**. This year’s is set for Belle Isle, after years at a Grosse Pointe-area park. We need to decide if we want to place a deposit for a spot in Belle Isle for 2022, so the question was whether to alternate between parks in Grosse Pointe and Detroit from one year to the next.

Motion: *That we hold the 2022 church picnic in Detroit at Belle Isle*. **Approved**.

Desmond reviewed active **Buildings & Grounds** projects. [Note: Not all were accomplished in the expected time frame.]

* + Sanctuary internet/electricity/AV upgrades. These were approved at our last meeting; now checking to make sure all necessary supplies are obtained. The sanctuary internet upgrade is expected to be completed by July 13, in time to fully use it on July 18.
  + Water heater installation—should be completed within a week.
  + Bell Tower: waiting on an official report about completion of Phase 1.
  + Facilities assessment – not received yet, but due any day now.
  + A new project: Sibley House air conditioning repair may be needed. It hasn’t been working for several weeks, but waiting for a report on what’s needed.

Howard highlighted noteworthy points in the latest **Finance** statements. \*Pledge receipts are still below budget, but we hope to make up most of that towards the end of the year. \*There’s a gap in the health-insurance reimbursement, apparently due to late payments from Rev. Andy Guffey’s church, which typically is behind until the end of the year. \*Reimbursements from the diocese for the Associate Rector’s fringes are also delayed. \*Major repairs are still under budget, but that’ll change soon. \*We’re still over budget on utilities expenses, and are investigating. \*Remember that most of these budget line items were budgeted for half a year of online services, and half a year of in-person services/rental income from having the buildings available. We may see some change in loose offerings in the June statements.

Motion: *Vestry receives and accepts the May 2021 statement of activities.* **Approved.**

We have several grant applications under way. One for the National Fund for Sacred Places will be submitted by July 14. We expect to apply for a Tretheway-Downs grant from the diocese for some of our Buildings & Grounds expenses. The diocese also has grants available to cover technology and social-service ministries, which we will explore. Typically, Seth applies for support of shelter week in particular. The diocese also has a small grant program for summer kids’ programs.

We reviewed a memo from Jane Forbes, finance committee chair, about our cash flow. Our summer activities and building work will require quite a bit of cash, so we’re taking steps to make sure that the money is there.

Emily reviewed our **Capital Campaign Preparations.** We received a draft consulting contract from Partners for Sacred Places. Emily is gathering feedback on it, particularly regarding the timeline and payment schedule. She is in contact with them on those details and they seem flexible. We should know more next month. They’re aware of the tight choreography and urgency about getting Phase 2 of the Bell Tower started next month. (Ram Co-nstruction won’t bill until August, meaning we wouldn’t have to pay until October.)

Emily and the Wardens then updated the Vestry on the Mutual Ministry Review and how the process worked. The final document has been made available to the entire vestry, on what the rector, wardens, and vestry are doing well, what they could do better, and so on. Next year, we’ll do it after the Easter liturgical season.

In our **Round Table /** **Other Business** segment, several members spoke of plans to see family members over the summer. We had a prayer request for journalist (and metro Detroit native) Danny Fenster in Myanmar. State Dept hasn’t had a chance to talk to him since he was taken into custody by the military there. Anthony Mitchell said that after a period of prayer and discernment, he has concluded that God is not calling him to ordained ministry. Therefore, he’s not taking a masters class this summer, but rather continues teaching middle-school English.

Emily closed us in prayer.

**Upcoming Vestry Meetings** (4th Thursdays from 6:00-8:00 p.m., on Zoom for time being)

* **August 12**
* **September 23**
* **October 28**
* **November 18** (3rd Thursday due to Thanksgiving 11/25)
* **December 16** (3rd Thursday due to Christmas)