

Christ Church, Dearborn
VESTRY MEETING Minutes
Sunday, December 15, 2019

Attendance: Jean Angel, Lynn Becker, Nick Bell, Barbara Hall, Michael Mroczyk, Stephanie Mulkern, James Thornton, Chris Ventura (via phone)

Presiding: Rev. Terri Pilarski

Absent: Holly Schanz (unwell), Rev. Halim Shukair

Treasurer: Kevin Green

Vestry gathered in room 213 at 1:45. Meeting was called to order at 2:04pm. Lynn asked if there were any changes to the agenda. Nick added one item under other business pertaining to the Vestry member call list. Nick discussed the November meeting minutes, with some minor edits, then a motion was made by Michael and seconded by Lynn to accept the November minutes as edited. Nick then discussed the minutes from the January 2019, 152nd Annual Meeting. Following a brief discussion a motion was made by Jean and seconded by Barb to approve the Annual Meeting minutes. Both motions passed unanimously.

Terri led the Vestry in an opening meditation on Gaudete Sunday, considering the idea of joy and rejoice as an interior state of being that is God-inspired and occurs because one is following God's desire and living as God intends. This state of joy is challenged by the "evil one" in a number of ways including "Acedia". Acedia is a state of being that is sluggish, depressed, foggy, slothful. It is a state of being that the early church desert mothers and fathers knew well. These early church people reflected on ways to move through acedia, not denying it, but gleaming what one could learn from it (about one's self) and always trust that despite how one feels, that God is present and working toward wholeness and good. The Vestry discussed this meditation and what each person will take away from it. Terri summarized by saying that while we are going to be navigating through several years of challenging financial times, the Vestry needs to not get discouraged but keep focused on our mission, our purpose, as God is calling us. This does not mean being naïve, but it does mean not letting fear and worry determine our course of action, especially because as we embark on the Partnership in Faith we are entering into something that God hopes for us, and as a result the outcome is hopeful.

Mission discussion

Terri provided the Vestry with an update on the Partnership in Faith (PiF): The Covenant Team has been commissioned (Nick Bell, Lynn Becker, Matt Sallman, Terri Pilarski – CECD; and Edgar Haddad, Widad Saba, Wael Khoury, and Halim Shukair – MotS). The Covenant Team will meet on Tuesday to begin its relationship. Upcoming meetings for the team are planned to determine the finances, considering grant money that has been awarded, church plant work that Halim needs to do, and the importance of finance and stewardship formation for MotS, who have not been provided with this opportunity in their history. To this end, a finance discussion meeting will take place in early January with CECD treasurer Kevin Green, MotS treasurer and book-keeper Valinda and Widad, and the Covenant team members. A second finance meeting will take place with diocesan staff Jim Gettel and Mark Millioto. Additional Covenant Team meetings will focus on the nuts and bolts of the Partnership in Faith. The Baptized for Life project will be one way that relationship building will be developed in the Partnership in Faith, particularly with the dinner conversations. Michael asked for clarification of the role of the PiF Covenant team in relation to CECD governance and the role of Vestry. Terri clarified that the PiF Covenant team will make recommendations and act as a forum between MotS and CECD and any decisions affecting the congregations will be made by CECD Vestry and MotS Council respectively.

Terri informed the Vestry that she wrote a grant request for the Episcopal Church's Becoming Beloved Community initiative to support congregations working on racial reconciliation and truth and justice. The grant was awarded \$12,000.00 to support the Partnership in Faith. Jim Gettel wrote a grant that was also accepted: \$5,000 discernment award to consider MotS as a church plant in the Episcopal Church. Regarding the discernment award: Terri, Halim, diocesan staff members, Bishop Gibbs and Bishop-elect Perry were on a Zoom call with Katie Nakamura Rengers who is chair of the task force on church plant grants for the Episcopal Church. In that call Katie reflected on the challenges of church plants and the hopes of the task force. She also asked a number of questions of Halim. Bishop Perry asked that Terri respond as well to several of the questions, which she did. In particular Terri talked about the dynamics of a dominant culture and less dominant culture congregation sharing a building and building a ministry –

of the work CECD is doing to be truly welcoming and create the environment for a partnership of equality to be formed (instead of an “us” and “them” dynamic, for example). At the end of the call Katie was satisfied that we had met the criteria for discernment and she encouraged Jim to apply for additional grant monies to support MotS as a church plant, and thus support the Partnership in Faith. This Partnership is the first and only European-English speaking-Arabic partnership in the Episcopal Church. It is a landmark initiative with the potential for creating a model and setting a precedent for other churches.

Terri then provided the Vestry with an update on Baptized for Life: the grant proposal has been approved with the first disbursement of \$16,500 arriving via electronic deposit by end of 2019 and the second disbursement of \$8,000 arriving in December 2020. The Baptized for Life dinner conversations will begin in January.

The Vestry results of the IDI are in and Terri will arrange to meet with each Vestry member to review their profiles and plans. Terri will organize the parish IDI and send out email requests by the end of the week. She is still working on getting emails for MotS so she can arrange for IDI's for MotS. This data will help us know where we are as a group and as individuals regarding our experience with and capacity for adapting to other cultures. This will be useful for the BfL project.

Nick led the vestry in a conversation regarding Safe Church: still a number of vestry members who need to take the safe church training and turn in their completed background check form

The Vestry took a short break at 2:55

The Vestry reconvened at 3:05

Kevin Green, Treasurer, provided an update on finances: larger than budgeted income for November and a good start for December. Nonetheless, due to deaths and three people who left the parish, a larger than budgeted deficit is expected. We budgeted a deficit of \$32,366 and anticipate that the full year deficit will be even higher. The great majority of expenses are being held at or below budget, but income is below budget in both offering plate and administrative categories.

Kevin reviewed the dedicated and restricted funds. He advised the Vestry to anticipate a budget deficit of the order of \$70,000 for 2020, due to anticipated pledge reductions (\$52,000 from personal/life changes) and \$10,000 from people who moved, left the parish or died, partially offset by increased pledges (\$5,200). We estimate that there are around 30 pledges that can be expected, but have not yet been received.

Kevin and Nick discussed that the deficit will be managed through draws on the endowment fund, but at the projected 2020 rate we have only two years before the endowment is depleted. We have a second fund, but accessing it is complicated. Using it would provide the parish an additional two years of deficit funding. Thus we have about 4 years to turn around our income.

We discussed some of the ways to do this, including Bishop Perry's comment that for every minute of a sermon preached on a Sunday, clergy and members of the congregation need to have an hour's worth of meetings with people outside the church. These meetings should be with groups and individuals and share with them the good work that CECD and MotS are doing. Terri also discussed the idea of making an impact with local businesses (Holy Currencies idea) of encouraging parishioners to support particular local businesses in order to let them know that the church is supportive of that local business = building community awareness and relationships. For example, she said, when she and Halim buy gift cards from Common Grace for Christmas gifts to people in parish people need to mention CECD and MotS when they use their gift card, so Common Grace becomes aware of that support.

Terri also mentioned the work that she and CECD is doing with DAIN (Dearborn Area Interfaith Network) and their community dinners and MLK service. And she mentioned that Michael's work with Healthy Dearborn is another opportunity for the story of CECD to be shared with a wider community.

Overall, the message that Kevin and Nick shared with the Vestry was – don't be surprised at the deficit, be wise, and be encouraged that there is hope and direction available to the Church through the Partnership in Faith.

Michael offered a report on Property – he anticipates being on budget for the remaining projects of the year. The Property Commission is planning to resurface the parking lot in 2020, which will require the same budget for Buildings and Grounds in 2020 as in 2019.

Kevin, Lynn, and Terri discussed Stewardship: we have received 38 pledges to date, down from 71 last year. Some of this is because people are moving from a pledge to an unpledged giving through an investment plan. Some of the decrease is from deaths and people who left. The remaining people have been contacted with personal letters and pledge cards. Terri thinks that an additional 6 pledges have come in since Kevin got the figure of 38. Stewardship will need to make phone calls in January to follow up on those who have still not made a pledge.

Holy Currency book study – Terri said that the book study will resume on January 12, 2020.

Our slate for the 2020 Vestry now includes Holly Schanz who will be on vestry now, completing the term of Shirley Damps, and will stand for her own three year term. Jill Poske will stand for a three year term. And one additional person has been asked and is considering it. We hope to have the full slate ready for the January newsletter.

Nick encouraged the Vestry to contact the parishioners on their call lists to check in and to invite them to Christmas Eve services and the pot-luck meal at 8pm.

Terri reminded the Vestry of the Bishop consecration scheduled for February 8, 2020 at the Dearborn Performing Arts Center. She thinks the time is 11am, but will confirm.

Vestry retreat for 2020 will be Friday, January 31 and Saturday, February 1. Vestry Day with diocese will be at St. Paul's Cathedral on Feb 22.

Terri updated the Vestry on her sabbatical plans: she had 14 weeks, three of which she used in 2018/2019 for education – training for the IDI and with Eric Law on intercultural relationships and learning. She will take the remaining 11 weeks this summer. Planned is an 8 day trip to Ireland, a trip to the UP and Wisconsin to kayak and rest, and a trip to learn Icon writing (painting) in NYC.

Nick and Lynn updated the Vestry on John Jones' request for a review of his job responsibilities. We will begin that review this week with a meeting between Michael (chair of Property), the wardens, Terri, and John. The intent is to listen to John's concerns and make note of them so we can figure out how to proceed.

Terri asked how the meeting went, acknowledging that we went 12 minutes over the schedule. All said it went well and that the longer meeting was needed to discuss the financial picture and other issues. Vestry will re-assess the meeting time, in hopes of making it possible for Halim to participate.

Terri closed the meeting with prayer. The meeting adjourned at 4:15pm.

NEXT VESTRY MEETING: January 18, 2020 9am (to agree and approve the 202 budget)

Courier (vestry) article: December Stephanie; January Chris; February Lynn

VPOD schedule (count): Dec. 22 Holly (Barb) (no VPOD on Christmas Eve or Day) Dec. 29 Barb (James)

Role VPOD and counter:

8am service: arrive by 7:50, greet people and hand out bulletins, get to know 8am'ers, take the count, at the peace introduce self as VPOD and welcome folks, do the collection and bring to altar, close the gate, help people to come up for communion, reopen the gate, greet people after the service, take the collection with Terri or Halim, count the money, send fax of count to Kevin, and put money in the safe.

10am service - change context - introduce self, welcome others, be a host of hospitality, stand at door during exit, offer to go with newcomers for coffee, a second vestry person needs to take the collection to the office and do the count so the VPOD can take newcomers to coffee.

Counter (10am only)- scheduled to be the counter one week at 10am, the following week the VPOD at 8 and 10am, enable you to be connected to worship. Get the collection off of the altar, go with Terri, Halim, or Kevin (Treasurer) to count the money, send a fax of paper work to Kevin, and lock money in safe.

Carry Forward items

- Safe Church training Universal Track 1 for entire congregation including Mother of the Savior
- Kick-off communication team – ask for interested parishioners?
- Adult forum plans
- Vestry liaison roles

CECD's Vestry (revised) Vision for the Partnership in Faith

Recognizing the “Partnership In Faith” affords both Christ Church and Mother of the Savior with a rich range of opportunities, we envision the following: that we will come to a deeper understanding of what it means to live as Christians and as a people of God. We will gain increased cultural understanding through mutual participation in sharing meals, bilingual services, and social activities. We will increase our capacity for gracious leadership by listening and learning from one another. We will also take responsibility to share this building, its maintenance, operations, and grounds. We will strive for an energetic, positive outlook. Each individual will try to manage his or her anxiety/confusion/uncertainty/etc. as we work through challenges, by not making assumptions or gossiping, seeking to learn instead of blame, wondering and being curious about the other, with the intent to understand one another, and share concerns in constructive ways. We envision modeling sustainable ministries for young and old alike, through sharing of all our resources. We hope to lead by example, being bridge builders, while valuing both the individual identity of each as well as the diversity of the whole. Our vision is that this Partnership in Faith will be church home for all.

This vision was created by leaning into the following ideas from our July and August meetings, which were included in the minutes and in the October agenda.

Added on January 2020 for the record:

Annual meeting - Jan. 26 11:30am, with the required organizational meeting that follows (about 20 minutes)

The Vestry retreat - Jan. 31-Feb. 1, 6pm-9pm Friday night, 8am-4pm Saturday.

Consecration of the new Bishop Feb. 8 10:30am at the Performing Arts Center (seating begins at 9:30)

Vestry Day with the Diocese: Feb. 22, St. Paul Cathedral, 9-4

Need to set our schedule for meetings for the year beginning in March, here is an idea of what our schedule could be:

March 22 - 2pm

April 26 - 2pm

May 31 - 2pm

June 14 - meeting with Bishop (time to be determined, but could be at 8:45am)

July/August no meetings (Terri on Sabbatical)

Sept. 13 time to be determined

Oct. 18

Nov. 15

December 13

January 16, 2021