

Vestry Meeting Minutes

Virtual Meeting via Zoom

November 17, 2020

Vestry Member Attendees: Linda Lund, Don Greer, Jim Whitcomb, Janet Guillen, Bruce Howard, Carol Lenker, Tori Smith, and Adrian Quintanilla.

Vestry Members Absent: None

Vestry Members-Elect: Ann Amoroso, Alice Jewel, David Drichta

Other Attendees: Reverend Ripp Hardaway, Reverend Lucy Strandlund, Pam Johnson, and Shelley Howard.

Guests: John and Cherie Kittle

The Vestry meeting opened at 6:15pm with fellowship among the Vestry members. Upon conclusion, Reverend Lucy Strandlund led the Vestry members in the Order for Evening from the Book of Common Prayer. Don Greer, Junior Warden, provided the devotional from a sermon by Mike Marsh, entitled, "12 Bridesmaids – Interrupting Silence."

The meeting was called to order at 6:51 p.m. by Linda Lund, Senior Warden.

MINUTES

The October 13, 2020, minutes were presented. Motion was made by Janet Guillen and seconded by David Drichta to accept and approve the minutes as written/presented. Motion passed.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Stewardship/2021 Budget

2021 Budget

Jim Whitcomb, Treasurer, reported that the Budget Committee had their first meeting on October 29, 2021, which was basically an informational meeting to bring the new members of the committee up to date on the budget process. A timeline for future meetings was established with the hope of finishing the budget by the end of December; the budget being presented to the Vestry members for approval at the January Vestry meeting. Currently, we are on budget and the budget is working. The next meeting is scheduled for this Thursday, November 19th and will be an online meeting.

Stewardship

Jim Whitcomb, Treasurer, reported that 96 pledges had been submitted out of the 160 expected. With 60% of congregational pledges submitted, we are currently looking at a budget shortfall for 2021 of \$164,000.

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However, from the outstanding pledges remaining, we are hoping to overcome this deficit. There is concern for these numbers and the Budget Committee will be taking a closer look at the budget items laid out in their upcoming meeting; a detailed scrub is planned. Feedback will be given to the Ministry Leaders as to the monies available in 2021 for their ministries. There is much work to be done, but no dark shadow is cast as that is the reason for the Budget Committee. Operating with a deficit is not always a bad thing, somehow, with God's help, we always manage to make things happen.

Diocesan Council – 2021

Reverend Ripp Hardaway informed the Vestry members that at the January 2021 Parish meeting an election will be held to elect delegates/alternates to the Diocesan Council. Five delegates and five alternates will be elected. The Diocesan Council meeting will be a virtual event for 2021 being held February 19-20, 2021. The term of service for the delegates is one weekend. The elected delegates can vote on issues, if necessary, at the Council meeting. The alternates only fill in for delegates who are unable to attend the meeting. If interested in becoming a delegate or alternate, please email Reverend Hardaway as soon as possible or email no later than the end of December.

Reopening Updates

Linda Lund, Senior Warden, stated that she is working on a letter to the Diocese of West Texas addressing our expanded plans for in-person meetings, etc.

Linda Lund, Senior Warden, also noted that further clarification needed to be published concerning the wearing of masks in the church. For clarification and according to the Covenant signed with the DWTX, the Episcopal Diocese of West Texas Guidelines for Phased Reopening of Churches in West Texas, page 6, was accessed and details:

“Everyone should wear masks in the church sanctuary, facilities, and office buildings.

Clergy and lay members who are leading or assisting in worship services should wear masks, except when leading parts of the liturgy, as preacher, celebrant, lector, etc. Maintain at least six feet, and more when possible, between the speaker and members of the congregation.

Gospel processions are discouraged.

Worshippers should be instructed to bring their own masks, and churches should have a supply to offer anyone who doesn't bring one.”

It is important, for the safety of all and to honor our Covenant with DWTX, that this mandate be always adhered to.

A discussion then ensued regarding the possibility of having to shut down the church since COVID-19 numbers are rising. It was noted that our intent is to always provide a “spiritual home” for our parishioners. Our capacity is far below what other churches are doing. It was the consensus of the Vestry members that we should proceed with caution as outlined in guidelines provided by the Episcopal Diocese of West Texas and the CDC,

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etc. We will continue to follow the lead of DWTX and federal, state, and local governments. The Vestry is ready to meet and discuss shutting down the church as the situation warrants.

Goals 2021

Reverend Hardaway asked the Vestry members to look at each of their submitted goals and answer the following questions:

Are they measurable? How will you know if you reached them?

Who is involved in this goal? What ministry leaders, staff and volunteers are needed to accomplish them?

What is the timeline for the goal? Spring, summer, or fall?

Is this sustainable for the long term? What does that look like?

The 2021 Goals will be placed in an Excel spreadsheet and will be discussed at the December Vestry meeting; the goals will be prioritized at the January Vestry meeting. Reverend Hardaway reminded the Vestry members that our goal is to make St. John's a better place at the end of 2021.

Curate's Report

Reverend Strandlund shared the following:

- Planning is going well for the church's Advent Journey. The paintings that will be erected outside for viewing are phenomenal and were a leap of faith. A gathering is planned prior to the Advent Journey. Reverend Strandlund is grateful for all the work done on this project.
- Reverend Strandlund's Bible study is going well. Still paying attention to a better time for the Bible study as the scheduled time was only provisional.
- Reverend Strandlund paid special compliments to our new Director of Communications, Grace Symmons. She has hit the ground running since coming and is making a huge impact on the communications of our church.

Rector's Report

- Reverend Hardaway noted that his brother had done a painting for the Advent Journey that is quite phenomenal.
- Staffing – is normal now, nothing to add or subtract. Reverend Hardaway mused that he is working on branding and if something needs changing or made to look better, he has asked the new Director of Communications to 'Gracify it.' They are working on the Christmas theme this week.
- Advent Event – please encourage others to attend.
- Pastorally – Several members have been hospitalized or endured surgery recently needing pastoral care. Also, Reverend Hardaway was touched to be involved in the pastoral care of the family of the teacher who recently took his life, "bringing light to darkness."

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- Repairs on Property – Reverend Hardaway asked Don Greer, Junior Warden, to provide an update. Mr. Greer noted that the plumbing leak under the sidewalk outside the Parish Hall had been taken care of. An audit of the electrical grid is being done as some things had not been addressed such as the grounding of the grid. Sarah Reeves is working extremely hard on this. The dishwasher in the kitchen has been installed, thanks to Sarah Reeves. We are currently looking for a sink to be installed downstairs in the Children’s Gathering Room. The flooring that was just replaced has begun to buckle due to the shifting of the building. The cost of the water leak was \$6,000. The outstanding water bill is being negotiated with NBU in the amount of \$3,000. The audit of the electrical grid is coming in about \$2,000. All these costs can come out of our “rainy day” fund.
- Columbarium – Reverend Hardaway informed the Vestry members that Sarah Reeves is looking into making changes to the area to make it look like a more sacred place. The use of shade trees, water fountains, stone to soften the look are being considered. The cost is coming in at around \$30,000. There is much more money in the Columbarium fund and could be used, with approval, to complete this project.
- Parish Hall – 2021, need to look at what we can do to rectify the building deteriorating.
- Healing Service – The December Healing Service will have a theme, “Blue Christmas.” This service will address those who have lost loved ones, are experiencing depression, etc.
- Time Away – Reverend Hardaway informed the Vestry members that he will be taking leave on Wednesday before Thanksgiving and will not return until extremely late the Saturday evening after Thanksgiving. Reverend Hardaway will also be out of town New Year’s weekend and Reverend Strandlund will be off December 27th.
- New Interim Assistant Bishop Rayford High will be visiting our church on February 7, 2021, to participate in confirmations.

ACTION ITEMS**Financials**

Mr. Whitcomb presented the financials. Mr. Whitcomb noted that the NBU bill and church repair expenses could be deducted from the \$140,000 remaining in the Unrestricted Operating Funds Available.

Mr. Whitcomb informed the Vestry members that Frost Bank still has not closed out the PPP Grant to date. The church used the PPP Grant funds to pay salaries and the balance for other things. The bank had indicated that we may have to pay back some of the monies used for other things.

Outreach fund continues to have a healthy balance. Some funds may be allocated to the disaster in Honduras. But all funds should be used by the end of the year.

Motion was made by Don Greer and seconded by Janet Guillen to accept the financials as presented. Motion passed.

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Reverend Strandlund closed the meeting with Compline.

Meeting adjourned at 8:16 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Shelley Howard
Clerk of the Vestry

PLEASE NOTE: Next Vestry Meeting – Tuesday, December 15, 6:30 p.m.