

Christ Church Vestry Meeting Minutes
May 19, 2020, 5:00 PM
Via Zoom

Attending: Harrison McLeod (Rector), Ben Horne (Senior Warden), Ashley Reynolds (Junior Warden), Anne Arrington, Nelson Arrington, Milton Bates, Emily Davis, Jordan Earle, Elizabeth Fletcher, Mac Gentile, Norma Givens, Nancy Kennedy, Chris Klasing (Co-Treasurer), George E. McCall, Cecil Nelson (Chancellor), Dan Seaman (Co-Treasurer), Laura Whitney (Secretary of the Vestry), Penn Williams, Helen Wynkoop, Sherri Allred (Clerk of the Vestry)

Guest: Christine Skelton, CCEP Director

Executive Summary of Actions:

- **Vestry approved the April meeting minutes with two corrections.**
- **Vestry approved the slate of Sterling Hope Center board members.**
- **Vestry approved the slate of Nominations Committee members.**

The Rev. Dr. Harrison McLeod opened the meeting with prayer at 5:00 PM.

Rector's Report:

Harrison provided an in-depth report prior to the meeting. That report is provided at the end of these minutes. He also provided a memo from the diocese that outlines the Bishop's guidelines about moving forward. The current projection is that churches can have 10 people gather by mid-June 25, maybe 100 by late July. Physical distancing and masks will apply. The Governor has been reluctant to tell for-profit preschools what they can do because they are considered essential. He is also reluctant to get involved in telling churches what they can do. Harrison said Christ Church is looking at July 6 to reopen the preschool and would like discussion and consensus from the Vestry.

CCEP Reopening:

Harrison introduced Christine Skelton, CCEP Director, who shared information about the preschool reopening. A summary follows:

- Preschool staff has been overwhelmed by the support of the church and the vestry
- Reopening will not be easy
- Continuing remote learning and wrapping up the regular school year
- There will be a lot of cleaning, organizing, and sanitizing as well as intensive training of the staff about reopening.
- Christine has submitted reopening plans to Harrison and the Bishop. The plan is in the construction phase and based on CDC guidelines for childcare centers.
- The major changes include the following:
 1. Checking children in before they enter
 2. Taking temperatures and asking families questions about exposures
 3. Discouraging parents from entering the building
 4. Lessening the amount of traffic in and out of the preschool.
 5. Increasing cleaning and sanitizing—Bio Clean services will begin coming once a week.

- CCEP has notified summer-only families (about 20 of them) that it cannot accommodate them because of the restrictions this pandemic has put on CCEP.
- Keeping children apart will be nearly impossible.
- Board members are encouraging reopening and they are trusting Vestry and Harrison to make good decisions.
- Student numbers are much smaller. Some families are taking themselves out because of the pandemic. We have 5-6 staff members out of 20 who are not comfortable coming back.
- CCEP can accommodate six infants in a classroom; K5-rising first grade is 12 maximum in a classroom. Estimating 90 kids per day.
- Hours will be 8:30 am-4:30 pm from July 6-August 11
- CDC guidelines recommend masks for staff when feasible and for children older than two when feasible. CCEP cannot absorb the cost of masks.
- May need children to bring multiple masks to school. There are still a lot of questions. CCEP will need to give guidelines about where to get masks and how many to send

Harrison commended Christine for her work on such a high-pressure and highly emotional issue. He said she has done a magnificent job being as understanding as possible and yet being firm when necessary. He encouraged Vestry members to read the Bishop's guidelines for reopening. He fears that services will not be as satisfying to parishioners because they must look so radically different. He said those who are most at risk in the congregation will be advised to stay home. That means virtual services will continue indefinitely. Christian education and worship will still be offered virtually. Clergy meets with the Bishop weekly to discuss regathering plans.

Bicentennial Plans:

Harrison said that the September 26 Bicentennial Celebration has not been cancelled but that it is too early to know what it will look like. The Joyful Garden Tour has been rescheduled for October 9-10. Other Bicentennial events, such as the Speaker Series, Choral Academy, and 20-for-20, have been postponed indefinitely.

Other:

Harrison commend the staff to Vestry members. He said he initially had a lot of anxiety about working remotely, wondering if staff would be productive and if separation would affect morale. He said he has been so pleased with the productivity of the staff—they feel a whole lot of stress, but they are committed and eager to serve.

Harrison shared plans to produce a mid-year report to inform the parish about how events have unfolded, what work Christ Church is doing in the community, how the church is doing financially, and what steps are being taken to move the church forward through the pandemic. Lauren Sigmon is taking the lead in putting that together.

Harrison will be out of the office May 21-26. He will be available via email. Kellie and Charles are available for pastoral care and Ben and Ashley are also available.

Senior Wardens Report:

Ben thanked Harrison for the written format of the Rector's Report provided prior to the meeting. He said it is a good guide for what the church would like to hear.

Junior Wardens Report:

Ashley like that CC is moving slowly about regathering. She said it allows us to see how it goes with the other churches that are opening. She said the quality of worship services has been very impressive and this past Sunday's service gave her a new appreciation of the beauty of the church.

Treasurer's Report:

Chris Klasing reported that April was a better month than expected. Highlights follow:

1. Pledge income was a little above budget.
2. Overall ministry activity reductions resulted in reduced expenses (about 12% below budget year to date).
3. CC received the Payroll Protection Plan funding in late April.
4. With contributions from several parents, the preschool was able to self-sustain for the month of April. They will likely be able to do the same thing in May which is somewhat better than expected. We will probably have to start subsidizing them in June.
5. The life insurance proceeds of just under \$500,000 were received.
6. The cash forecast looks better than expected because of good news from the preschool and good news about pledges.
7. Pledge income is steady when compared to the past three years. A number of parishioners have paid off their pledge early.
8. June-August are typically slow months, but so far it looks better than we thought.

Dan Seaman reported that \$450,000 will be immediately paid on the TD Bank loan and the remainder will be held in a reserve fund to cover loan payments.

Cecil Nelson reported that the buyer finished the bank inspection and the roof had several areas with leaks that would require replacement or resealing of the roof. It appears that the leaks are the result of hail damage. This has been reported to the insurance company and they are waiting for the report. If the report is favorable, that will cover the replacement of the entire roof and the church will be responsible for the \$5,000 deductible. If the roof is replaced, the church will pay \$5,000. If not, then the buyer is offering to split the cost. This puts the closing towards the end of July.

Approval of April Minutes:

Harrison presented the minutes from the April meeting.

Motion: Ashley Reynolds made the motion to approve the minutes with two corrections—on Page 2 under the Rector's Report, the second bullet should read "continues." On Page 3 the endowment draws should read \$120,000 instead of \$120,00. George McCall seconded the motion. **Vote:** Approval was unanimous. The motion carried.

New Business:

1. Anne Arrington presented the nominees for the Sterling Hope Center Board. The nominees are as follows:

Russell Tate – Christ Church slot	1-year term
Alex Garvey – Christ Church slot	3-year term
Anne Arrington – Christ Church slot	1-year term

Jordan Earle – Christ Church slot	1-year term
Sharon Landis – Christ Church slot	2-year term
Elliot Bischoff – at large	3-year term
Mamie Watkins – at large	2-year term
Anna Toates – at large	2-year term

Anne Arrington made the motion that the Vestry approve the proposed slate of board members for the Sterling Hope Center Board. Milton Bates seconded the motion. **Vote:** Approval was unanimous. The motion carried.

2. Nominations committee members: Each year the wardens and the rector nominate one person each to serve on the Nominations Committee. There is also one continuing Vestry member and one Vestry member ending his/her term who serves on the committee. Harrison presented the following nominees for the Nominations Committee: Tom Croft; Beth Traxler, Josh Segars, Elizabeth Fletcher, and Anne Arrington.

Nelson Arrington made the motion that the Vestry approve the proposed members for the Nominations Committee. Nancy Kennedy seconded the motion. **Vote:** Approval was unanimous. The motion carried.

3. Faith in Action Grants: Anne Arrington shared that Faith in Action distributed grants to community partners because of the positive outcomes of both the Endowment funding and Giving Tuesday donations. The FIA committee approved the following:

- United Ministries \$17,500
- Project Host \$12,500 (\$10,000 direct, \$2,500 to the food assistance ministry)
- Free Medical Clinic \$10,000
- Haiti PIA \$18,434
- Sterling Hope \$1,000

4. Ashley shared that two Jasmine Road residents are graduating at the end of this month and a third resident will be graduating within 6 months.

Warden Ben Horne closed the meeting with prayer.

The meeting adjourned at 6:45 pm.

Rector’s Report to Vestry (emailed prior to meeting):

In anticipation of our vestry meeting tomorrow night, I thought I would provide you with a little information and updates in advance.

Worship

You may have seen the Bishop’s latest communication, but if not, he is continuing to prohibit public, in-person worship services until May 15. Assuming we are able to regather after that, the first services we

could hold would be Sunday, May 17. May is always a busy month and this year is no exception. Among the considerations are:

May 10 - Bishop Waldo's virtual visitation & Mother's Day

May 17 - "Normal" Sunday

May 24 - "Normal" Sunday: I had been scheduled to take a vacation the week of May 20-26. Those plans are on "hold" until we have a lot more information regarding COVID-19, physical distancing and public worship.

Our online shrives continue to be a means of providing worship for our parishioners. By the numbers (see attachment) we seem to be reaching people effectively. We will continue to provide these opportunities as long as our services are suspended and would certainly like to continue to provide effective online content even after this crisis.

As we anticipate reopening the church for public worship, careful consideration will be given to how we proceed and how we acknowledge the journey from suspension to reopening taking into account delayed funerals and weddings, easing of physical distancing, necessary precautions, and other pastoral concerns.

Our **Communications staff** has risen to the task of preparing these virtual offerings and deserves special mention and out thanks.

Faith Development

Our online Christian Education offerings have grown in number and in quality. We now have in place certain specific goals for increased participation across these offerings and can track progress toward meeting these goals weekly. The Stress Resilience class had 58 attendees which was a high for us. This class is specifically advertised to the 35-60-year-old age group, but the invitation is sent to about 1,200 emails. Because the 35-50 year old group told us they had children underfoot at the 9:30 scheduled time for the Stress Resilience class we have now begin to offer a 2nd class titled "Current Events and our Christian Response" which begins at 11:00 - 11:45. This class had 29 in attendance yesterday. Like the Stress Resilience class, we are targeting a specific age group (20-25) but the invitation is sent to 1,200 emails.

I have given some thought to offering a prerecorded "Rector's Forum" which would consist of a brief bible study, or perhaps some themed class. I do not believe its previous format consisting of a 45-minute lecture accompanied by PowerPoint would be effective. So, I am trying to figure out what will be effective with the demographic that has been without this particular style of Sunday School since we suspended services.

Our youth ministers and children's ministries continue to offer meaningful content to their respective age groups and their efforts have made a real impact on the youth and children in the parish.

Resource Development

Our Quarterly Statements were mailed last week with a letter outlining some information and news about our parish in the 1st few months of the year. We hope this will be an encouragement to parishioners to maintain (if they are able) their pledges and celebrate some of the good ministry that is continuing.

We will have a presentation from Rob Townes and Gina Snider about the feasibility report and capital campaign recommendations going forward. After their presentation, we will have a chance to ask

questions and seek clarification before considering next steps. Overall, I am very encouraged by their findings, but recognize the study was conducted prior to the COVID-19 outbreak changes we are facing.

Pastoral Care

We continue to reach out to everyone in the parish by phone to maintain connections and determine ways to help those facing particular challenges. Thanks to you who were able to participate in making calls to parishioners who pledge. I found myself on the phone a lot longer than I had planned, but the responses I received were positive across the board. We will divide up the remaining parishioners and begin those phone calls (With your assistance and the entire staff, as appropriate) before the end of this week.

We have had a number of parishioners test positive for COVID-19. Some have recovered, others are still in the midst of the illness. So far, we have had no deaths at Christ Church as a result of the virus.

Last Sunday we held two “virtual funerals”: Frank Dana and Nina Lucas. In both cases, we abided by the Bishop’s prohibition regarding weddings and funerals with social distancing in place and no more than 3 people in attendance at any one time. Both families are interested in having a memorial service for their loved ones after we are able to gather as a church community once again.

We have had several weddings rescheduled for later in the summer.

CCEP

The preschool was on spring break last week. Prior to their break, as remote learning continues, will be to really evaluate our first month of remote learning. Christine has worked with the teachers to develop learning plans and also a means of evaluating the teacher’s efforts.

We will have a budget to consider tomorrow night. Please see the attached PDF for your review and note that it reflects pre-COVID-19 numbers. I expect us to either pass this budget and then have the Preschool business office work with the church business office to reflect our current circumstances (income & expense), or NOT pass this budget and present a revised budget at the May meeting.

This has been a very interesting time to witness the relationship between CC & CCEP as a significant ministry of the church which will not support itself during this budget year. This fiscal situation gives rise to more conversation about how we understand and fund ministries. I don’t expect us to arrive at any conclusions tomorrow evening but would welcome further exploration.

Faith in Action

We will have 2 quarters (1st & 2nd) of outreach distributions to consider at the meeting. The endowment seems willing to fund our ministries at the full 4.5% distribution level at this time. That level of funding could change for the next calendar year, but there is much to consider as the board moves forward. I expect that there is sufficient room in our cash position to pay out the first quarter endowment portion to our partner ministries which will be good news.

We have done a fantastic job of deepening our relationship with Project Host. To date we have prepared 5,747 lunches for Project Host, received \$2,605 in donations, and paid \$2,573 for food. These dollars do not count the considerable amount of in-kind food donations we have collected in our effort.

Bicentennial Work

For obvious reasons, our Empower “outreach” efforts for the bicentennial have been put “on hold.” The Choral academy as well as our 20 for 20 efforts are untenable either because of lack of access or physical distancing constraints.

The Joyful Garden Tour hopes to be rescheduled for the Fall and is awaiting a “Green light” from the Bicentennial Committee as well as the vestry. There are many valid and good reasons for offering the JGT this fall. The main concern for delaying further has to do with public perceptions as the community gets back to “life as normal.” **I expect the vestry to have significant input into this decision.**

It is also important to consider the “Service and Celebration Day” at Flour Field scheduled for September 26 and how that event may be offered with sensitivity acknowledgment of what the community will have experienced as a result of COVID-19.

Our Marketing/history magazine is still in the works though may be scaled back and reflect our most recent history and how we have experienced these past several challenging months.

Our Embrace (phone calls to parishioners) and Empower (Online learning and Daily Meditation) efforts are thriving and will continue through 2020 and beyond.

All in all, our Bicentennial year has not been one that any of us would have envisioned, however, we have learned significant lessons that will position the church for greater flexibility and effectiveness as we begin our third hundred years. As someone related in a webinar I have attended, we “should not waste a crisis” as an opportunity to learn and retool.

Support

It would be difficult to praise our business office adequately for the tremendous amount of work they have accomplished during these challenging times. **Our CARE Loan/Grant has been approved in the amount of \$568,000.** I signed the final paperwork today and the funds will be deposited to our TD account soon. As a result of a tremendous amount of help and support from our treasurers, we are now forecasting a deficit of \$59,000 at year end.

Dan will present a strategy to pay off our debt and establish a fund as a result of the Bank sale we have previously approved. Please be attentive to the attached document relating to his recommendations.

Dan and Chris are a blessing in ways that defy description.

In Conclusion

The church has made tremendous strides in addressing the pastoral as well as physical challenges posed by the Pandemic. I could not be more proud of our staff and our lay leadership during the time. My goal in such a long communication is two-fold: 1. Share pertinent information so you can better participate in leadership and 2. Make the best use of time tomorrow evening by sharing this information with you in written form as opposed to reporting verbally at the vestry meeting.

I welcome any questions, comments, or clarifications you have. Please feel free to email me directly or bring them up during our meeting tomorrow night.