

Christ Church Vestry Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, December 15, 2020, 5:00 PM

Online Zoom Meeting

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), Wade Kolb (Asst. Chancellor), 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).

New Vestry members: Senior Warden Dena Benedict, Betsy Elliott, Bill Hardaway, Cindy Poe, Reid Sherard, and Secretary Russ Miller.

Note: This is a regular meeting of the Vestry that took place online via Zoom because of the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent orders for social distancing.

The Rev. Dr. Harrison McLeod opened the meeting with prayer at 5:02 PM.

Executive Summary of Actions:

- The Vestry welcomed new Vestry members.
- The Vestry approved the November meeting minutes.

Harrison welcomed new Vestry members and thanked those members who were rotating off. He pointed out that it is somewhat historic that the new Senior Warden is a woman—only the second time that has happened in 200 years at Christ Church.

Nelson made a motion to offer voice to the new Vestry members who join the meeting. Elizabeth seconded the motion. All were in favor. None were opposed. The motion carried.

Rector's Report:

- Harrison received word from the Bishop that, given the direction of infection rates, all churches in upper South Carolina are required to reduce service attendance by 1/3 immediately. It will not affect Christ Church on Sunday because those services are not currently at capacity. It will affect the Christmas Eve service.
- The only way to fairly comply was to ask everyone to re-register. Communications sent an Email today notifying parishioners who had already registered that they needed to re-register for one of the Christmas Eve services offered at 10 am; 12, 2, 4, 6, and 10 pm. An email will go out to the rest of the parish on Thursday that invites them to register if they have not yet done so. It could be that those will already be full by then.
- Harrison shared that capacity numbers are determined at eight people per pew. That allows room for 12 choir members, clergy, and acolytes without inhibiting the number of parishioners allowed in the church. Parishioners are not allowed to sing, so without the choir, the service would truly be silent.

- Last week, Harrison and Charles both came in contact with someone who was COVID positive. As a result, after Christmas Eve, there will only be one clergy at each service.
- The bishop has not addressed basketball or preschool attendance. There was a meeting last Wednesday of all clergy in the diocese. Harrison made the point that most parishioners report that church is the safest public event they are involved in. To date, there have not been any transmission of the virus in preschool, church, or basketball. Part of the bishop's logic is to care for the clergy—if you come to church, you will be in contact with 100 people.
- Since the bishop was unable to meet with the Vestry in November, he may attend the February meeting. Further information will follow.
- The Vestry will continue to meet virtually for the foreseeable future.

Budget Discussion:

At the last meeting, Dan made a budget presentation, identifying potential strategies to reduce the deficit and thereby reducing the need for reserves.

Harrison shared the list of priorities that were a result of the parish-wide survey with Holy Cow, the parish survey, Third Century Committee work, and interviews leading up to a potential capital campaign. As a result of all of that, this was the list of priorities defined:

1. Increase ***Inreach*** and engagement.
2. Develop and implement strategies to reach **new** people and incorporate them into the life of the church.
3. Empower staff to do ministry more effectively and efficiently.
4. Develop ministries for healing for those broken by life circumstances or transitions (even positive change)
5. Resume outreach funding to 10% as per the Vestry resolution(s) of 1997, 2016 & 2018.
6. Cultivate partnership with the Diocese.

The deficit at the end of the November meeting was \$223,000. Harrison has worked with the treasurers, current wardens, and future wardens on strategies to make up that deficit. He said the group has made some good but challenging decisions and have changed some understanding of accounting as follows:

- Faith in Action Resources: The retail rent for the two buildings leased to Sterling and Canterbury is about \$93,000. The group suggests considering those amounts as an in-kind grant. Harrison said it doesn't change our relationship with them at all, recognizing that if renting those in the marketplace would be adding \$93,000 to the church's bottom line. He said we need to take that into consideration as ministry grants. That will reduce the amount over which the Faith in Action Ministry area have jurisdiction. This would reduce that amount to about \$100,000 for grants.
- Program Spending: The Leadership Team has reduced program spending by \$50,000. Harrison said those cuts will not be felt too harshly because some activities and events at the church cannot take place during the first half of the year. It will not be immediately felt by the parish.

- Staffing/Benefits: changes have been identified that will trim \$108,000 from salaries and benefits.
 - The Director of Digital Media position has been eliminated.
 - Purchasing equipment to offer live streaming services is put on hold.
 - Harrison is interviewing a person who could take a role that would combine the Director of Adult Ministries (Amy Malik's position) with the part-time Priest position which would offer significant savings.
 - The receptionist position will be combined with the preschool receptionist.
 - The Welcoming Ministry position has been increased to 30 hours per week.

Harrison said there was a tacit approval from the Vestry of using about 33% of reserves in 2021, declining to 16% in 2022 and to \$0 in 2023. Combining all of those together, there is a balanced budget for 2021 and the numbers are close on 2022 and 2023. He said the Vestry should be able to look at the budget and see that it reflects the stated priorities. The goal is to be faithful to ministry areas.

Dan provided a "what if" scenario considering the adjustments to the 2021 budget and a view continuing to the 2022 budget. Discussion included the following points:

- The original budget was a \$539,031 deficit.
- Final revenue numbers for 2020 are still unknown.
- Endowment totals are unknown until the 2020 year-end close.
- Currently, using \$177,000 will get us to a balanced budget in 2021.
- Raising the endowment percentage can only be done at the request of the Vestry and it is still within the Endowment's rights to approve or deny the request. That piece is uncertain. No conversation has taken place within the Vestry or Endowment.
- More information will be provided at the January meeting to make decisions about balancing the budget.
- Outreach is typically viewed as an expense, but it can be a driver of revenue as well.
- People get excited about a parish that is active in the community.
- Giving Tuesday is not currently reflected in the budget at all but could be considered in the future.

Harrison said that each Vestry member will receive a draft of the budget, priorities, and potential scenarios. With all of that together, he hopes Vestry can take a prayerful look at it at the Vestry Retreat at the end of January. Part of the desire in looking out beyond 2021 is a hope to recapture time in Vestry meetings to talk about ministries and outreach and focus less on numbers.

Warden's Report:

Ben thanked Vestry member rolling off and coming on the committee. He said he is excited about the strong leadership coming in. He reminded members that they are all called to have faith and offer guidance. He thanked Harrison for his leadership.

Jr. Warden's Report:

Ashley thanked everyone for the honor to serve as Jr. Warden. While it has been a challenge, she has learned a lot and enjoyed being a part of the group. She looks forward to finding new ways to get involved.

New Warden's Report:

Dena reported that new Vestry assignments have been made and staff members will be contacting representatives. She encouraged current Vestry members to talk with the person taking over their area. Assignments are as follows:

Emily Davis—CCES, engagement and hospitality

Jordan—property

Norma—worship and liturgy

Penn—communications and resource development

Milton—finance

Elizabeth—Faith Development adults (Young Adults through age 60)

Nancy— Faith Development children and youth

Reid Sherard—CCEP

Betsy Elliott—Pastoral Care and seniors

Sam—Faith in Action

Bill Hardaway—Human Resources (will work with Suzanne and Kellie); exit interviews

Nelson—compliance

Cindy—grounds

Russ Miller—secretary of the Vestry

Dena and Nelson both have general responsibilities.

New Jr. Warden's Report:

Nelson thanked Ben and Ashley for their leadership and thanked the Vestry members rolling off. He looks forward to working with the new members.

Treasurer's report:

Chris reported that finances continue to go amazingly well. Pledge receipts are dropping off a little. A lot of folks who are behind traditionally catch up at the end of the year. He estimates the year will end with a surplus of approximately \$143,000. Chris will be handing over the treasurer role to Dan for 2021. He reiterated that it has been a very tough year.

Harrison thanked Chris and Dan for all they do—about 90% of which is unseen. He said that he shudders to imagine what would happen with the finances of the parish without their help.

Harrison also thanked the chancellors which are a silent ministry. They do a tremendous amount of work behind the scenes that care for the parish.

Minutes:

Anne Arrington made a motion to approve the November minutes as presented. Penn seconded the motion. All were in favor. None were opposed. The motion carried.

Committee Reports:

Resource Development: Penn reported that Annual Giving was at 90% of the pledge goal with current pledges at \$2.34 million of the \$2.6 million goal. There are some parishioners who would feel more comfortable waiting until the end of the year to make their pledge. There are still 146 outstanding pledges at \$323,000. Harrison said that he and Lauren are following up with those who have outstanding pledge balances and those who have not yet pledged.

Faith in Action: Anne shared that Faith in Action has contributed over 70,000 meals to Project Host. With all contributions from parishioners, those 70,000 meals have only cost the church \$5.

Staffing: Harrison announced that Joyce has been promoted to Assistant Director of the kitchen. He said she is a tremendous success story and a bright face in the kitchen. Harrison also offered thanks to the Vestry for allowing him to serve as the rector. It is his 13th year. He looks forward to many more years and is honored that Vestry members serve the ministry in this capacity.

Vestry Members Rotating Off:

Harrison and other Vestry members thanked those rolling off of the Vestry: Senior Warden Ben Horne, Jr. Warden Ashley Reynolds, Mac Gentile, George E. McCall, Helen Wynkoop, Anne Arrington, and Laura Whitney.

Harrison said there are challenges ahead, but he thinks they are all opportunities for growth and revitalization. He said he is hopeful about the future and the strategies in place. It's great to be with you guys.

Ben closed the meeting with prayer at 6:15 pm.