

Bethesda Episcopal Church Vestry Meeting
June 17, 2020
Via Zoom

Attendance: Darren Miller, Senior Warden
Kate Berheide, Junior Warden
Sarah Manny, Treasurer
Karen Finkbeiner
Pam Houde
Field Horne
John Huppuch and Boomer
Steven Rucker
John Van der Veer
David Wilder
Ann Bullock, Clerk

Absent: Marcia MacDonald

Also in attendance: Dean Vang, former priest-in-charge

Opening

The regular meeting of the Bethesda Episcopal Church Vestry was called to order at 7:03pm on June 17, 2020, by Darren Miller, Sr. Warden

Devotions:

D Wilder offered devotions.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of May 20, 2020, were unanimously approved as corrected. (D Wilder, movant; S Rucker, second)

Former Rector's perspective:

Sr Warden welcomed Dean Vang to give perspective and suggestions as we begin a new rectorship.

Dean Vang observed that the Church has found a "new normal" That is, things can't go back to the way they were: we found that in "opening" last week. Communication is crucial, both within the Vestry and with the parish. Know the facts and communicate them.

Primary mission of church is worship and the wardens need to make the opportunity to worship available until Fr. Wallace starts. This includes Mercy House: the worship of the church enriches Mercy House. Dean Vang looks forward to the start of new Rector to ease burden on Vestry leaders.

Children's ministry is also critical. How will Sunday School operate by Zoom? What about a nursery plan? Families are stressed, particularly if parents and children are all together and continue so for some time to come. The mini-services that we have taped may be potential basis for children's services/ministry.

How to manage music—what is Farrell's role? Our church is known for its music and we need to keep this in the forefront.

Bp Love: the hearing on June 12 was presented by Zoom. The Chair of the Committee asked what it would take for Bp Love to come into conformity with the rubric of the General Convention. The answer was that the Bishop will not conform. Dean Vang believes this will be the end of the Bishop's tenure—and likely will result in turmoil in the Diocese. Also within the parish. Bp has put himself in the worst of positions and seems unlikely to retire willingly. Our parish may be particularly affected as we have been outspoken in our opposition to the Bishop's position.

Dean Vang has friends within St Thomas who think very highly of Fr. Wallace. Dean Vang and Fr. Wallace are meeting to think about transitioning between them.

Sr Warden offered thanks for all of Dean Vang's service; J. Huppuch thanked Dean Vang for his service in the taped LookTV offerings. All offered thanks to Dean Vang for his efforts and commitment for the last eight years. Dean Vang departed the meeting at this time.

Weekly Vestry greetings are an interesting and varied outreach. Each has been different, yet engaging.

Churchwardens' Report:

Senior Warden: D. Miller

Mercy House/NPH: Sano Rubin is answering questions from the City architects and moving toward a permit hopefully in a short time. Looking into parking areas (staging areas) for construction now.

Donor thinks that there is an offer for the business that will be acceptable and there will be a sale.

Thanks to Jr Warden for her yeoman service in getting the Church open last week.

Junior Warden: C. Berheide

Re-opening was essentially a full-time job for her last week. There may be a few changes planned for this week's service. Need to determine a better solution for individuals with mobility difficulties so they may more easily take communion. Need to determine how readings will work as between two services. Intend to consult with Fr. Scott to determine the readings. There may be need for more microphones; consult with Farrell.

J Huppuch reported that Vern Hinkle is seeking lectors for the summer (also Jack Knowlton's horse is in the Belmont Stakes on June 20)

J VanDerVeer reported that the bulletins are already at the church to be placed in the pews for this week. Jr Warden will go to the Church with another volunteer to place the bulletins and organize lecterns. One lectern will be on the floor for 8am. 10am reading from the epistle/right-hand lectern.

Plan to use more hand sanitizer for better disinfecting and spray hands as parishioners leave the pews, not just before reaching the altar.

Doors have been installed and look great. With doors open on Sunday, passers-by were able to look in and made favorable comments. Fr Wallace wants the church to be open as much as possible. Need to keep doors open for circulation as long as possible. Enter and exit through different doors, possibly keep both doors open for accessibility.

D Wilder asked if Fr. Scott will be able to cover us in July. He will be here in July, with the exception of July 5. Jr Warden has identified a substitute for that date. We will continue to offer the video services for those who cannot return to church in person. Important that we emphasize that we support individual decisions not to come to church in person.

S Rucker observed that what we are doing is safe for those who choose to attend.

May consider how to livestream on FaceBook Live or YouTube Live or other platform as we return to church, later this summer/fall. K Finkbeiner reminded all that there is no internet in the church now. S Manny suggested that Lucas Manny may be able to assist us in streaming and finding a platform. A hotspot is a possibility. S Manny will consult Lucas. A good cell phone may cover it without the need of other equipment.

Commission Reports:

Communications: F. Horne:

Newsletter went to Barbara on June 9. Being held for a photo of Fr. Wallace. There is a mention of the new doors and the flags installed.

Electronic Communications: K Finkbeiner

Website has been updated indicating that Dean Vang is retired. Also revised to announce that the Church is open. The Home of the Good Shepherd meetings by Zoom continue with K Finkbeiner and D Wilder. The communication is ongoing with this community.

Restarting Zoom coffee hour at 12:30pm after church in recognition of the fact that not all will want to attend service.

Sr. Warden suggested that we have a more social meeting. Friday evening or some mid-week gathering by Zoom to allow for a more informal event among parishioners.

Continuing Business:

West Doors Project: F. Horne:

The doors are not quite right: the side panels are not fitting properly. They look great and work fine but need to be corrected. F Horne has reached out to the contractor to have this corrected. Keep doors open if the church is occupied whenever possible. Left door still needs lock to be fixed.

Sr Warden reports that some parishes have a greeter to meet people who visit the church and offer information about the church, especially if doors are open. This year may not be a busy summer for visitors—but we may want to work toward having mid-week volunteer greeters. If doors are to be open, the door to the tower needs to be locked. That is, everything has to lock if the front doors are open. All items in the Narthex need to be moved or locked if doors are open (risk of theft).

Future plan to have video surveillance when new building is built will cover the open doors.

Treasurer's Report: S. Manny:

Plan to have the financial report available earlier to allow for more consideration before meeting. Barbara and Elaine are both busy, but plan to get report the week before Vestry meeting in future.

S Manny sent report with profit and loss.

D Wilder asked about "miscellaneous expenses" which sent us over budget for Jan to May.

Need definition of those expenses. Likewise, how are we under budget on payroll? Need some explanation.

We will submit our questions to Sarah by email and get answers. Jr Warden has asked questions, answers to which will be circulated. Going forward there will be the ability to ask questions in advance of Vestry meeting to allow Treasurer to prepare.

Motion to accept the Treasurer's report with further explanation to come (F. Horne, moved; K Finkbeiner, second. Passed unanimously)

Discussion: There are no choir expenses now—so Griffith Fund is not being tapped now.

Cannot have congregational singing, but still want to have music. May have soloist(s)

Issue of location of a soloist. May be able to hire a singer. Farrell is playing hymns with alternate harmonies/variations now.

Could we pay a soloist from the Griffith fund? Could the soloist also sing at 8am? Would that be something that parish would come to expect after the present emergency?

Eg. lector is reading both lessons and doing the Prayers of the People—which will continue with Fr. Wallace. Will we continue to have parish attend communion beginning with the rear of the church?

New Business:

Using NYS hand sanitizer and we have enough for the summer.

P Houde reported that Farrell asked about having not yet met Fr. Wallace. Sr Warden has

reassured Farrell and many suggest that Fr. Wallace is not likely to want to make a change. Fr.

Wallace to meet with the staff and hopefully Farrell and Kathleen as he begins his rectorship.

Fr. Wallace has been involved in the re-opening plans to date. He met some of the parishioners representing various elements of the parish as the church reopening plans came together.

Suggest a series of small backyard events to meet the parish, open to anyone who wants to host or attend. Ask Fr. Wallace how he would prefer to be introduced to parish.

Next meeting: July 15, 2020

Blessing and Adjournment

Blessing by Sr Warden.

Meeting was adjourned by acclamation at 8:33pm

Respectfully submitted by:

Ann C. Bullock, Clerk