

Bethesda Episcopal Church Vestry Meeting
July 15, 2020
96 Ballston Avenue, Saratoga Springs
Via Zoom

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

Guest: Fr. Charles Wallace

Absent: none

Opening

The regular meeting of the Bethesda Episcopal Church Vestry was called to order at 7:02pm on July 15, 2020, at the offices of the Church at 96 Ballston Avenue and via Zoom, by Sr. Warden Miller.

Devotions:

F. Horne offered devotions.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of June 17, 2020, were unanimously approved. (F Horne, movant; D. Wilder, second)

Priest in Charge, Remarks:

Fr. Wallace joined Vestry and thanked the Vestry for the call—and for patience in arrangements for his arrival as we all navigated the shutdown on account of the pandemic. He reported that he had been with a parish in Germany and was able to travel a bit before the European continent shut down. While he is not in the south of Spain as he had intended, he is enjoying being in Saratoga Springs and becoming acquainted with the city. He has had a chance to meet some people and thanked Pam Houde for her introductions. He has also found that there are many parishes that lack clergy and has been requested to serve in the interim.

Fr. Wallace and Dean Vang met today to plan. There are vestments on order and he discussed with Dean Vang the condition of the lectern and its repair. Fr. Wallace has met with Barbara and Elaine

about the business of the parish and the on-boarding process—as well as with Farrell about music and the future life of the parish in music. He met with Bob Bullock about the service and ceremony of worship.

Plans for the future include further Bible study; inclusion of younger families and children. We will need to actively want to grow to widen the parish. Increase the mid-week worship. Keep the parish doors open as much as can be possible, including daily offices. Build a presence in the community of the City.

He noted that he would not be here had there not been someone here when he drove by: specifically, the church building was closed, but he met Sharon Boyd when he came to the church on a visit and she invited him in to see the church. Sharon welcomed him and spoke about our search for a Rector. This is how the parish will grow—by reaching out to welcome a visitor.

Churchwardens' Report:

Junior Warden: C. Berheide

Reports that she has been focused on opening and keeping the church open. Question about keeping the doors and windows open. Issue that the air conditioner is now on: we need to protect not only the health of the human beings in the Church (most importantly!) but the organ also requires a closed system to keep out dust and increased heat/humidity. S. Rucker reports that there is some increased risk of infection if the windows and doors are closed—how much increase he isn't sure.

How to protect the organ if all doors and windows are open. J Huppuch asked if the air conditioner can avoid re-circulating inside air. D Wilder asked if we usually ask for organ experts if needed. Farrell is the expert and is sensitive to care and repair/service of the organ and how best to protect it. Fr. Wallace reported that increased humidity will affect the tune of some of the pipes (esp reeds). In the question as between the organ and the people in the church, the priority is the health of the people.

K Finkbeiner asked about the filtration of the air in the compressor. Can we keep the doors open just on Sunday morning and run the air conditioner the rest of the week? J Huppuch suggested that he has a friend who is an HVAC expert and may be able to recommend filtration that would work for our system.

F Horne mentions that we are not having choral music presently. Can we have soloists and cover the organ for the summer? May have soloists in the fall, but our custom had been not to have choral music in the summer anyway. How to balance protecting the organ with the superior obligation to the parishioners' health and safety. S. Rucker is requested to look into what the needs of the organ might be and how to address the needs of the parishioners. M MacDonald asked why we are worrying so about three and half hours of the doors being open on Sunday: will that really affect the organ so much? C. Berheide says that people come first.

C. Berheide is in Pittsburgh for the duration and P Houde is placing the bulletins in pews in her absence. May need others to assist in this project. C. Berheide is editing the bulletins remotely and asking for messages/notes to be put in the bulletin.

Senior Warden: D. Miller

NPH: Contract on the sale of the business is imminent and the amount of the sale will certainly cover the costs and expenses of the new building.

D. Miller reports that EOC items need to be delivered. P Houde will deliver them to EOC tomorrow.

Future meetings: how to have future in-person meetings. Need to have a large space to meet safely. M MacDonald suggests that it is hard to have meetings virtually and accomplish anything; she offers her house for meetings. Could meet in the church building. C Berheide suggests that outdoors might be an option. S Manny offered her back yard. P Houde suggests that meeting in the church should be easily workable. If the “second wave” is coming, we may not be able to meet in person, but the church, as the largest space, might be a safe place. Meet there in August but keep option of meeting via Zoom as well.

Need to consider how to celebrate Dean Vang’s ministry with us. Since the pandemic looks like a long-term issue, we need to have a celebration with physical distance and in some manner that allows for community. Fr. Wallace had thought it could be a Sunday—Fr Vang could come back to preach and the parish host a reception following. K Finkbeiner asked about a reception at Embassy Suites outdoor patio (tented?) Looking at September—based on availability of both the venue and Dean Vang. F. Horne suggested that the Reading Room might be a possibility since they will not be open on a regular basis; Siro’s is another possibility as these locations are only going to open for private events. Need to find a location and date that allows safety, affordability and some elegance in keeping with Fr Vang’s preferences.

Commission Reports:

West Doors Project: F. Horne: The side door panels need to be redone. The curved area above the doors is not correctly designed. There are skeleton keys for the inner doors of the narthex. Must be able to lock the side doors and the tower door.

F Horne has written a description of the interior of the church to give to visitors who come to view the narthex through the glass doors. G Boyd is editing and the piece will be copied for distribution.

Communications: F. Horne will give up doing the newsletter. He has been doing it for two years.

P Houde asked about the width of the doors and the ability to pass a casket through them. It is believed that the doors are wide enough for a casket.

F. Horne reports that there is an engraving ca. 1850 of the Rev. Philip Milledoler, rector 1847-50 (e), in a damaged frame presently propped on a pew to left of outer doors. The engraving relates to the window at rear of east side aisle. While the engraving really needs paper conservation, that may be an expense we should avoid now. F. Horne will find an appropriate frame; re-matting and re-framing it will be inexpensive. May wish to hang it in the offices in the NPH in future.

Electronic communications: K Finkbeiner

Sent postcards to the parish. Intend to call members of the parish next. If we can all do ten or twenty calls, this will be good outreach. There will be a script for the calls and this allows contact with the parish. All Vestry members are encouraged to volunteer. Other active parishioners are encouraged to call as well.

D. Wilder and K Finkbeiner have continued to have Zoom meetings with the Saratoga Springs Home of the Good Shepherd: variation in the numbers of participants from week to week. The residents gather in one room and they can see and hear David and Karen.

Introduction of Fr. Wallace to parishioners: Suggest that there be a meeting with Fr. Wallace and the residents of the Home of the Good Shepherd. Also there is a picnic pavilion at the Eagles Club which may be attractive to families, but we will need to be careful of gathering. May be able to have a small group there to physically distance.

Fr. Wallace would prefer small group gatherings, including relatively new parishioners in each to introduce them to the parish and himself

Buildings and Properties: S Rucker

Bar across the front door needs to be moved higher. J Van Der Veer suggests we continue to use the existing bar. Clean it up a bit, including filling the holes. The bar is necessary for security, but the handles don't allow it in its present location.

Need to remove the tract holder. No objection to removal generally. S Manny will remove the refreshment supplies from the drawers.

Question regarding the location of the key to the display case in the narthex: if the key exists, Barbara may have it in the office.

If Farrell can open the exterior doors and lock himself into the church to leave the doors open, we can increase our presence in the community. Plan for this in August.

The case with the crucifix needs to have the key removed. P Houde will put it in the key bag within the money bag.

Treasurer's Report: S. Manny:

S Manny sent reports with synopsis and requests that Vestry members submit questions in advance, based on the reports. The reports will not be quite up to date since they are being generated a bit earlier than the meeting. Nothing stood out particularly, except that the income continues to be exceeded by expenses

There is good news to report: J Van der Veer observed that a bad income week is often followed by a better week. Deposit today was \$8800 as opposed to the prior week which was about \$2000. Parishioners are still sending checks and giving.

New Business: none

Next meeting: August 19, 2020 at Church

Blessing and Adjournment

Blessing by Fr. Wallace

Meeting was adjourned by motion of M. Mac Donald ; second, S. Manny. Passed unanimously at 8:22pm

Respectfully submitted by:

Ann C. Bullock, Clerk