

**Bethesda Episcopal Church Vestry Meeting
August 19, 2020
In the Sanctuary, Bethesda Episcopal Church**

Attendance: Fr. Charles Wallace, Priest-in-Charge
Kate Berheide, Junior Warden
Sarah Manny, Treasurer
Karen Finkbeiner (via telephone)
Pam Houde
Field Horne
John Huppuch and Boomer
Marcia MacDonald
Steven Rucker
John Van der Veer
David Wilder
Ann Bullock, Clerk

Guest: Elaine Leach

Absent: Darren Miller, Senior Warden

Opening

The regular meeting of the Bethesda Episcopal Church Vestry was called to order at 7:09pm on August 19, 2020, at the Church by Fr. Wallace

Opening Prayer

Fr. Wallace offered the opening prayer.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of July 15, 2020, were unanimously approved as corrected. (D Wilder, movant; J Van Der Veer, second)

Priest-in-Charge Remarks:

Rather than slowly introducing programs, his approach is to jump in. Never fewer than 3 for mid-day weekly services and have had as many as 8 in attendance. This seems to fill a need for some local residents and Fr. Wallace will continue

Pastoral visits: Barbara has set up three each week for those who wish to have visits at home. Visiting those who do not attend services, including Fr, Evans.

Prayer list: Fr. Wallace is establishing a list of those who request prayers within the parish.

Plans: Bible Study; Book Club (Oct 22); walking group (led by parishioners and to be called The Paths of Righteousness) Advent Study and Quiet Day with the nuns in Greenwich) Saturday service is Rite 2 and attendance is growing. Met with Altar Guild members to find out what needs to be done and how he can assist. Planning with Farrell for Advent and Christmas services.

Treasurer's Financial Report: S. Manny and J Van der Veer:

S Manny introduced Elaine Leach, our accountant. J Van Der Veer reported that P&L (adjusted) per budget called for considerably less income than was actually realized; although expenses were higher. Jan to July 2020 report: \$128000 income was \$20000 over budget; expenses were slightly higher than budget. P&L: pledge and plate this year is lower than last year—but there is an explanation for this. Our 2020 expenses were lower than 2019. Elaine has arranged for us to delay payment of Diocesan assessments and pays expenses carefully –allows for aging of expenses as allowed.

E. Leach reports that our reported Biannual Reports are complicated. Temporarily restricted funds (Griffith Funds for choir) are currently in deficit—but there is no choir, so that should not matter. There are other trusts; their income funds operation. There is no Proctor Fund now—but there was PPP Loan of \$28500 expected to be forgiven. Presently shows as a liability but is in the coffers and will be booked as an asset once forgiven.

Overall, we are in really good shape—all bills are paid and will be paid going forward. K. Finkbeiner observed that we are actually short a small amount were it not for the one-time PPP. Our giving is not quite covering expenses presently—much of which can be attributed to COVID closure. E. Leach observed that we do have other sources of one-time income, including one parishioner who has increased giving precisely because of the COVID crisis.

Motion to accept the financial report; J Huppuch, movant; M MacDonald. Second. Unanimously approved.

Churchwardens' Reports:

Junior Warden: C. Berheide

D. Miller, Sr Warden, was unable to attend. C. Berheide welcomed Fr. Wallace who is being “onboarded” in an unusual time. Hope to have some small outdoor gatherings; Zoom coffee and cocktails hours have been held and more scheduled.

Meet and Greet Dinners planned: five families have offered to host 8-10 people on porches or back yards.

How do we invite people without excluding anyone—while also not creating danger of contagion. Intend to have intimate dinners to allow connection. Fr. Wallace suggests that such dinners are personal invitations to homes and the host should choose the guest list. P Houde and Fr. Wallace will discuss logistics

Commission Reports:**Property Management:** S Rucker:

There are certain items that are being removed (eg book rack) which no one misses. Looking into whether the platform beneath the side altar can be removed. Fr Wallace has recommendation concerning restoration of the side chapel in the long-term, including a smaller altar and moving the altar away from the wall (as he has done now) to make it a smaller, more accessible area.

Small display case in the narthex should be moved to a less accessible area since the outside doors are open. Our books and other valuable documents are stored off-site in a climate-controlled storage unit; this display case may be moved there. Contact Diane Robinson.

Missing tiles in several places throughout the church. C. Berheide reports that Mark Claverie says we have red tiles, but not black ones.

Christian Education: S Manny:

Fr. Wallace and S Manny have met and plan to have meetings with parents. Church school will begin October 4 (St Francis Day) Biggest change will be that the children leave service before the first lesson to meet in the back of the church for class; return to take communion. They will have about 25 minutes of church school. J Huppuch asked about virtual church school classes. Meetings with parents will allow us to gauge the interest in in-person vs. virtual class.

There are about 10 children if all children came—ranging from first-graders through the older youth group children.

Communications/Outreach: K Finkbeiner:

Winding up the committee. We emailed parishioners initially and now want to make sure that everyone hears from the church at least every two weeks by email. Using resources from other parishes on our website. Still doing Zoom Coffee hour with the HGS residents and having Zoom Coffee hour/Cocktail hour.

Plan to have the website redesigned and will need to stand up a new committee to work on this. Need to be thinking of giving--both continuing through the fall and stewardship for 2021.

Continuing Business:**Stewardship for 2021**

Fr. Wallace asked about a stewardship committee: need to constitute this committee now particularly in this time. We budgeted expenses less than they have turned out to be; we expected to be behind by \$35000 annually based on expenses of full-time priest—COVID would have seemed to be a time when our costs were lower. This was not the case.

S. Manny is putting a message together to request continued giving this fall. Fr. Wallace will thank those who are giving on Sunday mornings.

West Doors/Narthex Project: F. Horne:

Doors are done; need to adjust the lock on the tower door. FR Wallace and Farrell need to determine when the glass doors are to be locked for their security.

Fr. Vang Service and Reception Sunday, Sept 27:

Reading Room and Embassy Suites options: require gathering and risk of contagion. Recommendation that we limit the celebration now to the service only. M. MacDonald and P Houde recommend that we give sand dollars to those who attend service. M MacDonald read the story of the sand dollar which has religious themes.

Champagne toast outside. A Bullock suggested that the champagne, water and juice toast is too complicated and creates risk.

Gift: Print of the church with a plaque and the dates of his tenure at Bethesda.

New Business: none

Masks: Bishop has allowed removal of masks. S Rucker recommends that we keep masks on, especially as speaking (praying) will result in spread. It is the Christian thing to do to keep our neighbors safe. Fr. Wallace would like to include some singing in the service beginning in September with masks. Consensus that masks will be required during worship.

No report yet on the result of the Bishop hearing in June.

Parishioners should take their name tags to wear each week. We must avoid having parishioners digging through the hanging display. Place the tags for regular attendees at 8 and at 10 on the coffee hour table. Wearing name tags will help Fr. Wallace.

Next meeting: September 16, 2020

Blessing and Adjournment

Blessing by Fr. Wallace

Meeting was adjourned by motion of S Ricker ; second by M MacDonald

Passed unanimously at 9:02pm

Respectfully submitted by:

Ann C. Bullock, Clerk