

**Bethesda Episcopal Church Vestry Meeting**  
**February 16, 2022 at 7pm**  
**178 Elm Street and via Zoom, Saratoga Springs**

**Attendance:** Fr. Charles Wallace, Priest in Charge  
Darren Miller, Senior Warden  
Sara Manny, Junior Warden  
Karen Finkbeiner, Treasurer  
Mark Claverie  
Laura Kszan (via Zoom)  
David MacVane  
Steven Rucker (via Zoom)  
David Wilder  
Ann Bullock, Clerk (via Zoom)

**Absent:** Robyn Colonell  
Marcia MacDonald  
Holly Sofarelli

**Opening Prayer**

The regular meeting of the Bethesda Episcopal Church Vestry was called to order at 7:02pm on February 16, 2022, at the Church, by Fr. Wallace

**Devotions:**

Fr. Wallace offered devotions.

**Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of January 19, 2022, were unanimously approved. (S Manny, movant; K Finkbeiner, second)

**Priest-in-Charge Remarks:**

Need to balance Lenten observances with roof work. Expressed gratitude to Mark and Steve for their work. Mid-week services will suspend at the end of February to allow for roof work and will take it week by week—with expectation that Holy Week services will be limited to Mandy Thursday and Good Friday services.

Christian Ed courses will include: in person discussion at the home of J & G Aronstamm (Paradise Lost, Milton); virtual course offering (baptismal covenant); and a class in the church sanctuary (bible study on Sunday mornings) to allow for roof work and still provide Christian Ed opportunities during Lent.

Bethesda Book club will meet on Thursday 19 May 2022 (location to be announced). M Shurtle will offer a series on Verlyn Klinkenborg's novel "Timothy, or, Notes on an Abject Reptile" Further offerings include a retreat at Hildene in the spring/May.

Derek Stannard, organist, has settled in well and works smoothly with Kathleen. Connections with the organ and greater music community to cover when needed. He had a couple of gigs already scheduled when he took our position and will locate coverage for those weeks.

In re COVID: the Diocese has relaxed masking requirements and is now allowing each parish to determine itself how to best to address the issue. We will now "recommend" that parishioners wear masks in service. Our parish is one of the very few churches in Saratoga Springs that have not had to close owing to virus. If we continue to be cautious, we hope to keep the church open and maintain what is familiar to parishioners within the service (eg, a hymn, partial sung Mass, etc)

**Treasurer's Financial Report:** K Finkbeiner, Treasurer

K Finkbeiner reported that the 2022 **budget** figures will be revised to reflect an increase in the deficit at year-end on account of the Diocesan assessment which has increased significantly, and a few other items which have increased to a lesser extent (eg HOA fees on the Rectory). Elaine and Karen will continue to adjust for another few weeks, at which point all on-going fees and bills will be final and the budget for the remainder of the year will be final. It is intended that we will not be cash-short at the start of 2023.

The petty cash allowance (RDF) may need to be addressed as a separate item. Likewise, we need to allow for continuing education support for Fr. Wallace as a separate item to secure funding for this expense. Fr Wallace asked if this could be funded through the Wiedeman endowment fund. K Finkbeiner agreed that this might be a suitable use for this fund. D Miller noted that this fund has been accruing interest without being drawn down during the pandemic. Could also use this fund to support supply preachers who offer catechesis (sermons) which was the purpose of this endowment. Suggestion that there be an annual gift request (separate envelope) for the Rector's Discretionary Fund (RDF) for budget in future. Continue to support which FEASST allows for capital region churches to support needs presented (eg., individual need for housing, heat, etc.) by contacting Fr. Wallace who will put individual in connection with FEASST for support.

D Miller asked about the Diocesan assessment. Elaine was conservative in the diocesan report, notes K Finkbeiner—but our P&P was considerably better last year and, additionally, the assessment calculation included the PPP loan. All of this affected the assessment. Fr Wallace noted that deductions from the operating account that cover capital repairs (defined as having a three-year lifetime for the investment) should not be included in the assessment calculations. (Labor for this project is not included, noted K Finkbeiner.)

Budget will be finalized for each month of 2022, at next meeting. Vote to approve budget as amended in March.

K Finkbeiner suggests that we will move excess funds to an investment account to avoid having it sitting in less-productive operating account. Similarly funds now held in a letter of credit for

Mercy House shall be moved. D Miller; K Finkbeiner, second to move approximately \$170,000 to investment account. Unanimously approved.

**January report:** Although the numbers look worse Year to Year, there are several timing items in the 2022 January numbers. Overall, there was nothing surprising or significantly different than anticipated for this year, except for the higher Diocesan assessment. As we ended 2021 with a cash surplus, the January deficit is not impacting our ability to pay our bills. Operational expenses traditionally exceed our income in January, but we finished last year with sufficient cash to cover expenses. Expect lower giving during the first quarter; giving generally increases during Holy Week and following.

D Wilder asked if defunding the MH letter of credit needs to be cleared with the City and/or any lender. Do we need to tell the city that, consistent with withdrawal if the building permit application, we are also withdrawing funding for the letter or credit? To check this with our attorney.

**Churchwardens' Report:**

**Senior Warden:** D. Miller

Welcomed new members of Vestry and encouraged all to ask questions. K Finkbeiner noted that she will happily go over financials with anyone to discuss our books.

Need new signers on Adirondack Trust Company accounts owing to changes in Vestry membership. Motion needed to allow new signatories. Motion to remove F Horne, P Houde and K Berheide as signatories and to add L Kszan, D Miller, M Claverie and S Manny; D Miller moved, S Rucker second. Unanimously approved.

**Junior Warden:** S Manny

No report:

**Commission Reports:**

**Property Management:** S Rucker:

The grinder pump is the current issue. The estimated cost is \$29,000 which needs to be value-engineered. Change in plan: prior plan was to replace the pump, electrical connection and base. A second contractor looked at the project and suggested that we replace the current pump with a commercial grade pump, but not as high grade as we presently have; if possible, repurpose the current base; and, rather than a new electrical connection, simply use an electrical plug. The cost will be under \$4000 for this solution. S Rucker recommends that we simply replace the current grinder pump and do not replace the electrical service or the basin in which the pump sits, assuming this is not necessary. This resolution will allow for expansion of use if needed. Motion to accept a revised proposal with Sano-Rubin and move forward, S Rucker; D Wilder, second, unanimously approved.

Fire escape and sacristy vestibule door: still await estimate for this. D Wilder asked if there is a chance that the church fire alarm can be connected directly with the city fire department. S Rucker will investigate this.

M Claverie: RE: Roof Scaffolding to start being placed on March 15. March 4 meeting will establish firm date. Project will last 120 days (end June) with clean-up work to follow, Project will begin on the west and move around the building. Remove shingles and underlayment. Necessary repairs of old decking and replacement of underlayment; shingles to be replaced.

M Anspach and M Claverie are reconstituting the Holy Rollers to cover the pews with plastic and clean the church as required owing to plaster dust, etc. The organ will be covered (at a cost of under \$2500, depending on the time required to do this.) Also will need to be mindful of the reredos, altar, piano, and so on; debris not expected to affect the altar and reredos, but the piano will need to be covered. M Claverie has placed a note in the bulletin to seek volunteers to assist with the Holy Rollers.

Will need Sano Rubin to seek extension of work permit which currently expires end of May.

L Kszan noted that there are three concerts now scheduled for March, Sunday afternoons. The organ will not be used for these concerts.

A Bullock reported that she filed the application with the Town of Wilton to continue the property tax exemption for the Rectory.

**New Business:** none

**Next meeting: March 16, 2022**

**Blessing and Adjournment**

Meeting was adjourned by motion of M Claverie; second, by K Finkbeiner

Passed unanimously at 8:06pm.

Blessing by Fr. Wallace

Respectfully submitted by:

Ann C. Bullock, Clerk