

**Bethesda Episcopal Church Vestry Meeting**  
**March 16, 2022**  
**3 Beacon Hill Drive, Saratoga Springs and via Zoom**

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

**Absent:** Robyn Colonell  
Steven Rucker  
David MacVane

**Opening Prayer**

The regular meeting of the Bethesda Episcopal Church Vestry was called to order at 7:14pm on March 16, 2022, by Fr. Wallace

**Devotions:**

Fr. Wallace offered devotions.

**Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of February 16, 2022, were approved as corrected. (D Miller, movant; M MacDonald, second)

**Priest-in-Charge Remarks:**

Roof work began March 15 as planned and is under way presently. While this will impact our lives, it's a good kind of disruption. midweek services are suspended, except for Wednesday Eucharist. Saturday service is suspended likewise for the duration.

Lenten classes are in progress. The Sunday morning class on Genesis has been well attended. ( May have a Sunday lesson as a more permanent slot for adult classes.

Lenten concert programming has gone well; the last concert is this Sunday, Encourage attendance.

Walking group will resume in May. Fr. Wallace suggests an outing at Hildene on Sat April 30, including garden, home and picnic availability.

Holy Week planning completed: the Assisting Bishop, Michael Smith, will be with us on Palm Sunday. Bishop Smith is the interim Bishop while we seek a Bishop for the Diocese. There will be a free-standing altar at the Crossing as the altar in the Narthex is inaccessible during the roof work.

As we emerge from pandemic, we will add another hymn to the service. There will be a post-Easter carol service with several hymns. Chalice will be available following Easter: taking Eucharist with the chalice is optional, but intinction is discouraged. Discussion of passing the collection plate at 8am service; if there is no objection, we may resume this practice.

Fr. Wallace will be away for a couple of weeks in May; he has identified two priests who will cover the weeks he is away.

D. Stannard and K Slezak get on well and his musicianship has been excellent. Likewise the musicians that he has located to cover for his absences have been excellent.

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

**Final 2022 budget:** Expenses are up Year to Year approx \$10k primarily driven by Salaries and other inflation. Building expense is down YtY as it is assumed that less of our repair and project cost will flow to Operational (vs capital) in 2022. Expenses are higher than the budget shown in Annual meeting primarily due to the higher Diocese assessment and cost increases associated with benefits and utilities not assumed in Annual meeting budget. Pledge and plate income is assumed to be the same Year to Year, as it was in the budget for the Annual meeting. Other Unrestricted income (mainly from Weddings and Funerals) has been reduced Year to year and vs the Annual Meeting budget due to the low number of weddings that have been requested to date. The resulting projected Deficit is \$17,600, which is higher than the deficit of \$7,050 showing in the annual meeting; also higher deficit than the projected (budgeted) 2021 deficit. We will require additional giving of \$45,000 to \$50,000 to close the deficit and have sufficient cash for the early (typically deficit) months of 2023. We have sufficient cash to cover the deficits in the early months of 2022 thanks to the Special Challenge giving and higher than expected P&P giving at the end of 2021.

L Kszan suggested that we consider fundraising sooner than the end of the year to avoid the pressure of end of year giving. Discussion of the giving mid-year versus later; attendance tended to increase in the summer pre-pandemic. Envelopes are available, but there we also encourage automatic giving through automatic bank deductions. Credit card giving is available, but the charges to the donee are greater. Encourage giving based on the projected deficit—which we need to close—although donations on account of claimed poverty cannot be repeated.

March special giving toward the needs of the community has resulted in more giving. D Wilder suggests that some might choose to limit their P&P giving in favor of increasing their church contribution toward the needs of the community. Fundamental question: what does the church do? Issue is that we have little to no mission and outreach to the community and need to be committed to our community, fulfilling our covenant to give to those less fortunate. The fact that there has been a good response indicates that there is an appetite within the parish to support charitable giving. If people see that the church is responding to a need, people will give to the church. Respond to the needs of the community; we also have the opportunity to give to support humanitarian efforts in Ukraine.

D Miller suggests a Mission and Benevolence committee to consider outreach opportunities. Encourage both financial support and outreach efforts or projects.

Discussion of resumption of the summer party. Involves the entire parish and community and may be needed if giving continues to run below budget (as it currently is.)

Motion to accept the 2022 budget as presented (D Miller, motion; L Kszan, second) Passed unanimously.

**Operational performance:** K Finkbeiner sent reports showing, as is generally the case this early in the year, the timing of expenses can cause the financials to be significantly off budget. (Eg. insurance was paid earlier and makes the report appear to be unbalanced. Further the CPA hasn't billed yet, so that looks like an expense that is not applicable. It will come later this spring.)

Overall we did not have concerning expenses or amounts, but there were several items that did not come in on the timing assumed in the budget, including some 2021 carry-over. Revenue is presently of concern, as our Pledge and Plate income is lower than budget and is also down Year to Year. Nevertheless, overall, our Deficit is less than budgeted as our Expenses are also lower (mainly driven by timing on CPA invoice) and our Income with Dividend is higher than budget as the budget did not assume any dividend income in February.

P&P is below budget and behind last year at this point. Fr Wallace noted that we lost one week of giving owing to weather. Not a great worry yet—but we will need to watch it.

D Wilder asked: 1. The age report seems to show two bills that are over ninety days—most unusually: both are being investigated. 2. There are funds that come in for funerals: of that, the church collects a set fee, while the family also pays for flowers, organist; etc;

3. Diocesan assessment increased significantly this year. Question how capital repairs are calculated into the assessment: the cost of a capital repair is deducted from the diocesan assessment. Funds that are redirected to capital accounts should not be reported as an income for purposes of the assessment. That is, operational funds should be the only funds assessed; Elaine has been very careful in reporting. Our improved financial position results in higher

assessments. Further, for 2022, the diocese also assessed us on the PPP loan (did not assess church on the 2021 PPP loan.)

Motion to increase Fr Wallace salary retroactively to Jan 1 2022 (Movant, L Kszan; Second, H Soffarelli) passed unanimously.

K Finkbeiner submitted a Proposal to reinstitute a Financial standing committee, including two wardens, treasurer, rector and one other individual from the parish, the head of the endowment committee. Would invite Elaine as ex officio member. This allows a better handle on the budget, the long-term plan and the overall financial health of the parish. Consensus is that this is a necessary plan.

### **Churchwardens' Report:**

**Senior Warden:** D. Miller

2021 draft audit report was sent to Vestry; Vestry is requested to look at the report and submit questions to D. Miller for the auditors.

We have done well on internal controls for the church. Reminder to all that we need to be aware of any fraud, as we have a fiduciary duty to the parish and its financial health.

Check signers to execute the resolution which will be delivered to Adirondack Trust with personal info for all signers.

D Miller contacted Jim Cox concerning the closing of the credit. At his direction, D Miller notified the City that we are closing the credit line as of April 15, 2022. Thanks to D Wilder for noting this requirement.

**Junior Warden:** S Manny

Working on projects for the children to do—including messages to homebound parishioners, collection of toothbrushes, etc.

Reports on parishioners in need of care and our thoughts and prayers. Pastoral care committee is aware of these needs and arranges for visits.

### **Commission Reports:**

**Building Capital Projects:** M Claverie

The downstairs bathroom is functional now. New pump in place.

Roof work: Scaffolding is going up now. Scaffolding on east and west in place; issue with putting scaffolding on the south side of the church as the electrical service is there and cannot be disturbed. Sano Rubin is working on a resolution of this issues with National Grid. Holy Rollers group met on Saturday (in the snow); we are grateful for the planning by M Anspach and T Remington who devised the installation of plastic sheeting and the methods for covering the church. The organ will be covered this week. Waiting for the roofers to actually arrive so that this project can get under way. Need to be careful that the fencing is also in place to discourage any access to the scaffold by anyone except roofers.

Waiting on an estimate for the replacement of the side door (fire escape) from Sano Rubin. Mandy will be working just one day as the church will be inaccessible during the week.

What is the next project after the roof? There are drainage issues; the undercroft; the tower, etc., all of which will need to be addressed as time passes.

**New Business:** none

**Next meeting: April 20, 2022**

**Blessing and Adjournment**

Blessing by Fr. Wallace

Meeting was adjourned at 8:45pm

Respectfully submitted by:

Ann C. Bullock, Clerk