

Church of the Nativity  
Minutes of the Vestry  
November 17, 2020

**Attending:** Stephanie Allen, Carrie Mash, Rene Garces, Cheryl Waechter, Robert Joines, Stephanie Sumner, Josh Booth, Kim Stoke, John Oldham, Kat Belk, Michael Warrillow, and Gail Christensen.

The meeting convened at 7:03 pm via Zoom video-conferencing due to all meetings being suspended because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

The meeting began with meditation on Matthew 11:28-30.

**Stewardship Annual Campaign 2021:**

\$109,000 in pledges have been received so far, all online. That's a good start after only about a week, but there is a long way to go. Carrie is hoping that some will offer to record testimonials for insertion into the pre-recorded services. Pledge cards will be going out soon to kids for their commitment.

**Vestry Elections:**

Since the Diocesan canons do not allow virtual elections to the Vestry, last month the Vestry decided to appoint new members (as many as four, if possible) to serve until we can have in-person elections again. Stephanie Sumner reported one person is interested, and other names were suggested as well. We hope to announce these candidates at the December 13 Parish Update.

**Social Justice Proposal:** Michael Warrillow

Nativity's Social Justice Advocacy Team and participants of Nativity's Sacred Conversations requested the Vestry review and support a new parish outreach initiative: Episcopal Church of the Nativity/Raleigh-Apex NAACP Scholarship Fund.

This fund will be managed by Nativity and the Raleigh-Apex chapter of the NAACP. Currently this chapter manages three named scholarship programs for African-American young people who are active members of the area NAACP. Nativity's participation would be the fourth. The chapter normally awards seven to ten scholarships a year, usually no more than \$1000 each.

With the encouragement and excitement of the President of the Raleigh-Apex NAACP, Gerald D. Givens, Jr., the Teams want to develop a Nativity Scholarship Fund that will be coordinated by the chapter's Executive Committee. This will include advertising the scholarship, selecting the recipients, and distributing the funds to the higher education institutions to be attended by the recipients.

If this proposal is approved by Nativity's Vestry, the Social Justice Advocacy Team will begin plans for promoting a scholarship fund drive starting in February, to coincide with Black History month. Names for the Fund were discussed, but the Vestry decided that should be the Teams' call.

As this proposal relates to both social justice and outreach, the Teams would like to make this a joint proposal to the Vestry from both Teams. It does not require funds from the church's budget, but it does involve the church's blessings in seeking donations from Nativity parishioners.

After Vestry discussion of the project, Michael moved that the Vestry approves the concept, urging the Teams to move forward on putting a structure around it. Stephanie Sumner seconded. The vote was unanimous.

**Senior Warden's Report:** Carrie Mash

Carrie thanked the members of the Vestry for their efforts as Vestry Reps during the outdoor services over the past months.

**Junior Warden's Report:** Rene Garces

Rene reported:

1) B&G contacted 4 tree companies and (so far) has acquired 2 estimates to cut or prune trees along the property line in NW corner of Nativity's property (next to memorial garden) in response to a neighbor's complaint about excessive acorns and sweetgum balls littering her yard. On inspection of a drawing of Nativity's property lines, Rene explained to the neighbor only 48' of her 72' property line is shared with Nativity, and the closest large trees to the property line are 2 large sweetgum trees. One tree company estimated \$7,000 to cut both trees using a crane. Another company estimated \$4,500 to cut both trees, though they recommended spending \$1,500 to have them cut back vines going up both trees, prune some large (3" to 8") branches, and add support to a high large branch near the trunk using a cable. B&G asking if the Vestry is OK with spending \$1,500 to prune 2 trees near the property line. B&G asked Rene to get a third estimate, too.

During a long discussion, Rene said that the sweetgum trees are healthy and do not need to be cut down. Robert Joines shared a statement that gumballs, leaves, acorns, etc. "are natural occurrences and they are the responsibility of the landowner upon which they rest. The property owner has the right to cut off branches that stray over their property". The Vestry agreed that B&G should determine if this is a safety concern before spending any funds.

2) Neighbor's vinyl fence panel, damaged in a storm in mid-July when a large branch from a tree in Nativity's memorial garden fell into their yard, has been replaced with a new fence panel ordered from Home Depot.

3) Newcomb & Company visited the Nativity campus 4 times and fixed the Daikin HVAC issues in the Worship building in September; total bill paid was \$1287, above and beyond the yearly \$2604 yearly cost of them doing preventive maintenance; they had to be called again to reset a thermostat in the Nave, and we are expecting the bill to run about \$400.

4) B&G team received bids from 3 companies to clean-up animal debris above the dropped ceilings in Estill House, and cleanup estimated to cost \$4.3K; however, before clean-up, B&G is seeking bids from roofers to fix leaks near the walls, and fix/replace flashing along eaves in an effort to deter squirrel/wildlife intrusion into/through the roof.

The Vestry agreed with Rene that the leaks in the roof and flashing, which allow the squirrels to get into the attic, should be addressed before any cleanup is attempted.

5) B&G held its Fall Work Day on Saturday October 31 with social distancing and masks worn by about 40 participants, and deemed a success whose accomplishments include 2 green dumpsters of yard waste were removed.

6) Rene hopes to install 2 flood lamps to light up the sidewalk north of the worship building.

**Rector's Report:** Stephanie Allen

Outdoor services, held between late August and late November, were very well-received, offered us good practice on how to conduct services during the pandemic, and supply priests noted how seamless our routine had become.

The Diocese, in accordance with the Governor's orders, has returned to Stage 1B, suspending indoor, in-person worship (but allowing the recordings to continue, but no audience). Outdoor worship may still take place, but not the large outdoor gatherings we had hoped to hold around Advent and Christmas.

The Day of Giving this year will be online (called the Week of Giving). There will be a separate page on the Nativity website for the Week of Giving. Beth Crow and Alfred Christensen are putting it together, with input from the 14 charities that usually participate.

For the Youth's annual fundraiser this year, they will not take pre-orders but will have Christmas greens and trees for sale over the weekend after Thanksgiving (November 27-29).

Cheryl is organizing a Reverse Advent Calendar to provide food for families at Christmas. She has 8 families signed up, but needs 6 more. Stephanie will announce this on Sunday and there will be a reminder in Glad Tidings this week.

**Advent 1 - November 29**

Pre-recorded service at 10:30 am, using the first part of the Eucharist service.

**Advent 2 - December 6**

Prerecorded service at 10:30 am with Bishop Anne Hodges-Copple; Renewal of Baptismal vows

Noon: Time with Bishop Anne via Zoom

Prerecorded St. Nicholas Evening Prayer Service at 5pm

**Advent 3 - December 13**

Pre-recorded service at 10:30am

Noon: Parish Update (Annual meeting) via Zoom; reports from Finance, Outreach, other Teams

**Advent 4 - December 20**

Pre-recorded service at 10:30am

Pre-recorded or live-streamed Service of Grief and Lament on Winter Solstice at 5pm

**Christmas Eve - December 24**

Pre-recorded service at 8:00pm; Special music by NCCMI; pre-recorded pageant

**Christmas Day - December 25**

Pre-recorded service at 10:30am

**Christmas 1 - December 27**

Christmas Lessons & Carols

Pre-recorded service at 10:30am

**Christmas 2 - January 3**

Pre-recorded service at 10:30am

Stephanie hopes to live-stream services beginning in January, depending on what the Diocese allows. We may be able to have in-person gatherings again in late Spring or Summer with the wide availability of a vaccine.

The Boy Scouts of America has declared bankruptcy due to the claims of sexual abuse over many years. Nativity never sponsored a Boy Scout troop, but we did have Eagle Scouts projects on our property and occasionally hosted meetings. The Diocese has instructed churches to file indemnity forms in case they are ever named in a suit, since the liability insurance may not fully protect the church. Stephanie has filed these forms.

**Financial Report:** John Oldham

October pledge income dipped a bit, but the drop in expenses balanced it out to about \$5,000 behind budget. We hope for better pledge payments in November and December.

Rental income is not nil; the Kinder Garden still pays, although at a reduced amount, and the Raleigh Rings also rented Corlett Hall for a weekend of rehearsals/recording.

The Finance Team hopes that Teams will provide their requested budgets by mid-December.

The Team has not heard from the bank yet about forgiveness of our PPP loan.

**Approval of the October 2020 minutes:**

The minutes of the October Vestry meeting were submitted for approval. Robert moved to accept the minutes as corrected; Stephanie Sumner seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Gail Christensen  
Clerk of the Vestry

**The Next Scheduled Vestry Meeting is Tuesday, December 15, 2020 at 7 pm**