

Church of the Nativity
Minutes of the Vestry
March 16, 2021

Attending: Stephanie Allen, Carrie Mash, Rene Garces, Cheryl Waechter, Robert Joines, Josh Booth, Stephanie Sumner, John Oldham, Kim Stoke, Beth Crow, Anne Krouse, Bill Sena, Mike Rhaney, and Gail Christensen.

The meeting convened with prayer at 7:02 pm via Zoom video-conferencing due to all in-person meetings being suspended because of the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic.

Approval of the February 2021 minutes:

The minutes of the February Vestry meeting were submitted for approval. Anne moved to accept the minutes as written; Beth seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

Rector's Report: Stephanie Allen

Stephanie reported that the Diocese will now allow gatherings of up to 50 outdoors and up to 25 indoors. Up to 100 persons, or 33% of a nave's occupancy (in Nativity's case that is about 96), may attend funerals indoors, but there cannot be receptions as yet. Weddings are not yet allowed the same number as funerals. Meetings of up to 12 may be held indoors, with masks. The Bishops hinted that congregational singing might be allowed outdoors soon.

Our services on Easter will include one pre-recorded online service at 10:30 am and two in-person services outdoors at 9 am and 11 am, with the possibility of adding a third service if interest indicates. Regular services will be held in person in the Easter season at 8:30 and 10:30 am, perhaps one indoors and one outdoors. A larger altar for outdoor services has been donated and Rene added wheels for ease of transport. There will be no coffee or food after services. Stephanie is confident that our HVAC system will provide the recommended ventilation indoors. The congregation is eager and ready to get together for fellowship gatherings, but we cannot eat together just yet.

Carrie will draw up new Vestry duties for the services, and John will distribute the new roster with Carrie's help.

Vestry liaison requests all included Outreach and Social Justice, which Stephanie believes is indicative of where our hearts are at Nativity. Several non-Vestry members have asked to join an action-oriented racial justice group under Stephanie Sumner's and Anne Krouse's leadership.

Junior Warden's Report: Rene Garces

Rene reported that a B&G Spring cleanup day will be held March 20 to prepare for the start of outdoor services for Easter. A larger Spring workday will be held on April 24 for parish participation.

A new security/safety lead is needed to replace Matt Chytka. Our Red Cross certification is expiring. Training to renew certifications of 10 individuals will cost about \$1600. Stephanie said this cost should be built into future budgets every few years.

The street light located in the southeast corner of the parking lot was repaired. Rene has requested a proposal from Duke Power to convert 5 high pressure sodium lights to LED, which will be cheaper to operate. We also want to add a second LED light to the existing light pole

where the light was just repaired to light up parking spots next to the stairs going down to the Kinder Garden school in the woods to discourage cars going through our parking lots in the late evening.

The Bridgewater neighborhood HOA (located north of our campus) has been given the City of Raleigh Police department dispatcher's direct line at (919) 829-1911 to report suspicious activity (or intruding vehicles and individuals) in our parking lots late in the evening disturbing the peace.

The new thermostat (installed in January and still under warranty) was replaced in the rector's office after the office was still overheating past its set-point; the thermostat/zone-controller (still under warranty) located in the conference room was also a problem and a work-around was found to keep temperatures comfortable in each zone.

Lawn service was stopped after November/2020, and will resume in April 2021.

The Vestry went into Executive Session (without the rector and the clerk of the Vestry).

Finance Report: John Oldham and Mike Rhaney

After approving the 2021 budget at the last Vestry meeting, more pledges arrived, amounting to about \$10,000. There are now 140 pledging units and anticipated income of \$397,911. John and Mike recommended that no new spending be allotted until after we see the trending in the income, perhaps by early summer. John moved that the Vestry approve the revised budget with the additional pledges. Beth seconded and the vote was unanimous.

After the first US stimulus package in 2020, several parishioners contributed all or part of what they received to Stephanie's Discretionary Fund. With the 2021 stimulus checks, perhaps we could guide any contributions to needs other than the Discretionary Fund - for example, to Outreach, to the Memorial Garden Fund, the Scholarship Fund, or the Inter-Faith Food Shuttle.

The application process for forgiveness of our PPP loan keeps changing, so we do not have approval yet, but John is confident that we will be approved because other churches have been.

Phil Kraemer, our business manager since January 2013, has decided to step down from his bookkeeping business because of health issues - his own and a family member's. Megan and Alfred will be temporarily picking up Phil's work until a replacement can be hired. The job requires about 5-6 hours per week. Randy Smith is creating a gift for him, and Cheryl asked how much the Vestry would want to give Phil as a thank you gift. John moved that the Vestry give Phil a gift card in the amount of \$150, which Cheryl will purchase. Stephanie Sumner seconded. The vote was unanimous.

The canons require a full audit if the rector or treasurer leaves the church, but Stephanie is unsure if this canon would apply to the business manager. She will check with the Diocese.

Vestry Retreat

The Vestry did not go on retreat, as per usual, in 2020 because of the lockdown in March. Stephanie asked when the Vestry would like to meet this year. Meeting on Zoom was out of the question; we can meet inside with masks. Stephanie suggested we invite the regional canon, The Rev. Sally French, to act as facilitator.

The Vestry agreed that meeting in April or May for planning purposes would be too early, because we could be months more in the present situation and not be able to plan for the year, much less 3-5 years in the future. So it was agreed that the Vestry could meet in May just for visiting together for a few hours, and then for longer in the Fall, if we can see a light at the end of the pandemic tunnel, to re-examine our core values, what we learned this past year, what we want to keep and what we can let go.

Stephanie Sumner suggested we ask the congregation to provide what they feel are their special gifts and strengths in order to develop a skills assessment.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned with prayer at 9 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Gail Christensen
Clerk of the Vestry