

Church of the Nativity
Minutes of the Vestry
December 21, 2021

Attending: Stephanie Allen, Bishop Sam Rodman, Stephanie Sumner, Rene Garces, Cheryl Waechter, John Oldham, Bill Sena, Robert Joines, Carrie Mash, Kim Stoke, and Gail Christensen

The meeting was convened at 7:08 pm, in person.

The meeting began with discussion of John 14:1-7.

New Business - Bishop Sam came before the Vestry to have a “pastoral conversation” about how the members feel Nativity is doing after nearly two years of a pandemic. Stephanie Sumner pointed out the challenges to our Youth because of missing the spiritual nurturing by not being in church. John Oldham felt overwhelmed by the generosity of the congregation as evidenced by their response to the Stewardship Campaign and the Week of Giving. All agreed that the uncertainty, the yo-yo of news, has worn us all down. While many have come to the realization that we have to think of others as never before, a few have withdrawn from church, or they have developed new habits that don't include church, allowing the few to keep it going. This brings many challenges (burnout, how to get people back into the pews, reaching out to those who feel unsafe, developing ways to include people safely, etc.). Nevertheless, we will continue to “make church” and aim to return to full participation where possible. And we need to congratulate ourselves that we are still here.

Approval of the November 2021 Minutes

The minutes of the November Vestry meeting were submitted for approval. Robert moved to accept the minutes as written; Cheryl seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Finance Report

John reported that we are almost caught up with pledge income vs expenses and he expects us to have a balanced budget by year end. We have already received 98% of the money pledged for 2021.

The PPP loan has been forgiven! The \$47,000 that we received is now an asset not a liability. The Finance Team believes that we need to put the majority of this money into the reserve fund to help us meet the next crisis, and to long-term building and grounds improvements. John moved, and Bill seconded, that the first allocation from the PPP loan would be to pay off the \$3200 spent to convert our alarm systems to cell phone from landlines. The vote was unanimous.

Stewardship Report

Stephanie reported that 130 of our approximately 259 households have pledged to the campaign for 2022, for a total of \$411,848. 91% of those who pledged last year have pledged again this year. There were also 16 new pledgers. The average amount has increased, and pledges came in earlier, allowing the Finance Team to start building the 2022 budget now instead of in January.

More people pledged online this year than ever before, and the QR code on the bulletins may have made that even easier. It was recommended that the QR code be switched from pledging

to donating, which would help the regular givers especially. The QR code might also be helpful in people signing up for the services instead of going to the website. Alfred Christensen will be asked about the feasibility of this.

Rector's Report

Stephanie reported that demand is so high for attendance at our Christmas Eve services that she has increased the capacity to 150 in all three services - at 2 pm and 4 pm outdoors under a tent, and at 8 pm in the Nave - and the signups are already pushing those limits.

Organist/Choirmaster Jason Pace's last service at Nativity is January 2. A farewell ceremony is planned. He has agreed to leave all his sound equipment with us until we no longer need it, but a project will begin soon to find and install our own sound equipment in the Nave. There is already a designated fund for sound improvements.

Stephanie will also be looking to hire a soundboard technician who can monitor not only the sound but the video on our live streaming of services. Volunteers have been doing this since March 2020 when we first started streaming/recording of Sunday services (and funerals), and they will still be needed as backups.

Stephanie brought up the need for a part-time associate rector to help with Sunday services, pastoral care, adult education, and youth activities. There is a Diocesan grant that will help with salary if we hire a newly ordained person from this Diocese. Bishop Sam said that Nativity is ahead of the curve in this regard, since much of the Episcopal Church is now moving towards "co-vocation" of priests who continue to maintain outside careers while serving as parish clergy. Robert moved that the Vestry authorize Stephanie to proceed with fulfilling the position of associate rector on a part-time basis. Cheryl seconded. The vote was unanimous.

Senior Warden's Report

No report.

Jr. Warden's Report

No report.

Executive Session:

The Vestry went into executive session and voted to allocate \$650 to give holiday gift cards to the members of the staff on December 31.

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

Respectfully submitted,
Gail Christensen
Clerk of the Vestry

The next Vestry meeting is scheduled for January 18 at 7 pm.