



**Vestry Minutes**  
**January 23, 2024**

**Attending:** Stephanie Yancy, Cathy Deats, Phillip Bass, Allison Martin, George Douglas, Perry Suk, Charles Malone, David Dykes, Dave McKinnon, Hannah Harris, Roy Immelman, Sarah O'Connor, Sam Wasonga, Anne Stokes – Clerk,

The meeting began at 7:03 p.m.

Genesis 45:25-46:7

- A. Approval of November and December minutes:: Novembe–George Douglas moved, Sarah O’Connor second, unanimously approved. December–Dave McKinnon moved, Roy Immelman second, unanimously approved.
- B. \*Beloved Community in the Trees--A proposal from Phillip Bass: This new ministry is rooted in the Nativity experience, and needs a "sending community" to help through administration and prayer. Phillip also requested a minimal investment for liability insurance (\$60) and minimal assistance from staff (bookkeeping, formation). The Episcopal Church requires a fiscal agent during formation to receive incoming funds (grants, donations and other income). Approval of the proposal was moved by Charles Malonne, and seconded by Sarah O’Connor, unanimously approved.
- C. \*Stewardship and Budgets: George Douglas presented the latest numbers from the Pledge Campaign–\$386,000, 127 pledging units. They are still following up with a few who have not pledged. No budget is finalized yet, but probably next month. The closing budget of the end of the year shows a minimal short fall, mainly due to short fall in pledges--there is no cash flow problem. The outlook for the coming year is positive. We have the opportunity to grow, and the forecast is positive. The mortgage will be re-negotiated early this year and it should not show much of an increase in interest rate.
- D. Sound System--Three vendors have submitted proposals, and the AVCON quote is favored by the committee, which is in line with what we need and what we have raised. Acceptance of the AVCON proposal was moved by Sam Wasonga, , seconded by Hannah Davis, unanimously approved.
- E. Updates

- a. Committee Assignments--George Douglas went over assignments, and Hannah Davis will begin a documentation of duties and membership for all committees.
  - b. Search
    - i. The budget will be submitted.
    - ii. The February 4th meeting to explore visioning
    - iii. Transition meetings for the parish are scheduled beginning with
      - 1. Past--who we were, Feb. 11--active outline of history
      - 2. Present--where are we now,
      - 3. Future--where are we going--these dates will be set this month
  - c. IT Committee--Bradley has asked for new members: Anne Stokes, Eric Knapp were proposed
  - d. Memorial Garden--Improvements are ongoing--New sidewalks, landscaping, policies need update, Dave is setting up a team to work on that.
  - e. Building key codes will change in February--to conform with Diocesan policy
  - f. Korean Church Plans--This is in the discussion stage--nothing is committed yet. We are waiting on the permitting process to continue discussion.
- F. Renewal of mortgage--
- G. Bishop's Pastoral Letter--
- H. Regular Reports
- I. Interim Rectors
- J. WardensReports
- a. Senior Warden
    - i. Hope to work with the vestry to bring everyone together. promote organization, common goals, community, One Wake, other ministries
    - ii. Promote communication to and from the vestry.
    - iii. ASA is approaching pre-covid numbers >200 both services, which suggests that the coming year will be a productive one.
- K. Junior Warden: The report is included at the end of the minutes--submitted in writing on January 24, 2024.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
 Anne Stokes  
 Clerk of the Vestry

**Proposal for Beloved Community at the Trees**

**Request that The Church of the Nativity be a Sending Parish for  
The Beloved Community at The Trees  
[www.belovedcommunitydurham.org](http://www.belovedcommunitydurham.org)**

**What is The Beloved Community?** The Beloved Community at The Trees is envisioned as a faith community, rooted in Episcopal liturgy and practices, but without being "in a church." The hope is to create a community where those who seek healing, reconciliation, or simply a life of faith lived with intentionality among others can gather and worship together. We will meet on Sunday evenings for worship, including a lectionary discussion and the Eucharist. Immediately following the Eucharist, we will transition into a shared community meal. This community will be open to anyone, but is especially envisioned for those who have been "othered" or harmed by the Church, including queer people, racial minorities, and others. We will also strive to reach those who have "deconstructed Christianity" but are longing for reconstruction, but outside of the Church.

**The Proposal?** That the Church of the Nativity be a "Sending Parish" for The Beloved Community at The Trees. Sending parishes are understood as "parishes that are supporting the new community with people, money, resources, and prayers." As a sending parish, The Church of the Nativity would offer support in the form of a "fiscal agent" and liability insurance. A fiscal agent is understood to be "the parish or diocesan bookkeeper who will help the new community receive and account for gifts, and eventually set up their own accounting system." (*What to Expect When You're Starting A New Episcopal Community*, p. 24)

## **What is the ask?**

- 1) Most importantly, your prayers.
- 2) Agreement to be a sending parish for a period of 1-2 years.
- 3) A small portion of Nativity's Business Manager's time to assist in the role of fiscal agent for The Beloved Community.
- 4) Financial infrastructure in allowing The Beloved Community's finances to be managed through The Church of the Nativity.
- 5) A small portion of Nativity's Lay Associate for Christian Formations's time to assist with initial formation offerings for The Beloved Community. This will predominantly take the form of sharing resources already being used at Nativity.
- 6) Liability insurance coverage for the use of The Trees. This would require adding St. Philips to Nativity's current coverage with the notation "for use of The Trees at 1701 Pleasant Green Road, Durham, NC".

## **How are others supporting The Beloved Community?**

- 1) Many are already praying for this new ministry.
- 2) Bishop Sam has offered his blessing on the formation of a new community and is meeting with Rev. Phillip to discern God's call in its formation.
- 3) A discernment team including Rev. Nathan Kirkpatrick, Rev. Dan Laird, Rev. Dr. Helen Svoboda-Barber, Rev. Stephanie Yancy, and Rev. Maryann Younger has begun meeting to discern God's call and to shape this new ministry.
- 4) St. Philip's (Durham) has offered the use of The Trees at no charge.
- 5) Rev. Phillip is working with the national church office of "Church Planting and Redevelopment".

6) Rev. Phillip is meeting and learning from others within our diocese who are engaging in the work of establishing faith communities.

7) A small, but growing list of financial donors are awaiting the financial infrastructure to begin donating to this new ministry.

**Why Nativity?** The Church of the Nativity was born through the stirrings of the Holy Spirit and the willingness of a group to listen, discern, and dream with God. The Beloved Community is emerging in the same way and it seems fitting that Nativity would be a sending parish. In addition, the mission of The Beloved Community is aligned with the ministries and mission of The Church of the Nativity.

**The Offer?** In partnering with The Beloved Community as a sending parish, Rev. Phillip would like to offer to remain on the preaching and/or supply rota and forgo any fees for his time. Rev. Phillip would gladly preach and/or celebrate 6 times a year to remain connected to The Church of the Nativity, to share with the Church of the Nativity what is happening at the Beloved Community, and to show appreciation for the Church of the Nativity's support for The Beloved Community.\*

**Important Dates?**

February 18, 2024 (First Sunday of Lent) ~ First meeting of The Beloved Community at the Trees. May 31, 2024 ~ The last day of Rev. Phillip's contract with the Church of the Nativity.

**Where can I Learn more?** [www.belovedcommunitydurham.org](http://www.belovedcommunitydurham.org)

*\*These would not include Holy Week or Christmas*

## **Junior Warden's Report**

**January 2024**

- **B & G team met Tuesday Jan. 9**
  - o **Buildings team lead- John Fernez**
  - o **Grounds team Lead-Ed Mussman**
  - o **Spring work dates set-**
  - o **Grounds priorities – Memorial Garden**
  - o **Buildings priorities-Nave lighting, Curry Hall window sills**
- **Sound System Installation- John Fernez to provide coverage**
- **Korean Baptist Expansion- May timeframe to start**
- **Safe Church- confirming who is still certified in CPR/AED**
  - o **Red Cross quote of \$1,200 to train up to 8 members**
- **Memorial Garden- setting up a team to coordinate all aspects**
  - o **New plantings, pergola, Eagle Scout project, ...**
  - o **Update policy, pricing, communications, name plaques,...**
- **Power outages and HVAC- will add instructions for reset to Vestry Rep duties**

## **Interim Rector Report–The Rev. Stephanie Yancy**

Report to the COTN Vestry, January 23, 2024

From: The Rev. Stephanie Yancy, Interim Co-rector

• I'll begin by saying **thank you** for such a warm welcome. It is a privilege and pure joy to be back at Nativity and to walk alongside you during this time of transition. •

**Division of labor:** As a reminder, Cathy works 1/4 time and I work 3/4 time. Cathy will take the lead in activities specifically related to the transition - coming to terms with history, identifying new leadership, etc. I will lead in the ongoing work of the parish - planning services, pastoral care, etc. At this point I am working with the staff to plan our activities during Lent. While we have divided duties as far as who leads in what area, Cathy and I will continue to work together on all things Nativity. • **Vestry**

**Meetings:** During an interim period, vestry meetings are often run by the wardens since they are canonically "in charge." George has graciously invited me to share meeting leadership with him.

- Why Bible study? Bible study was added to the agenda at my request. Serving on a vestry is a ministry. As vestry members you each share in the leadership of the Nativity congregation. In addition to your responsibility to look out for the finances of the church, in your leadership role you are called to discern God's will and vision for this congregation. In particular, this year you will be called upon to discern who God is preparing to be your next rector. Time spent in Bible study will help us, vestry and clergy, to bond as a community that listens for the voice of the Holy Spirit in everything we do. Communal Bible study will also help us learn to listen more closely to each other and to value each other's opinions. I think of Bible study as time well spent.
- Since adding Bible study increases the meeting length, I will take responsibility for moving the meetings along and ending by 8:30 or shortly thereafter. To that end I've adjusted the format for the agenda, giving approximate times to each presentation. I will also be pushing to have written rather than verbal reports when possible, and to have work done outside of the meeting where that makes sense, so that only a written update is needed during the actual meeting. My hope is that these changes will allow us to use vestry meeting time effectively and to focus on the big picture.
- A brief comment on the **bishops' pastoral letter**: I was surprised and pleased that people came up to me after the letter was read on January 14 to say they'd like to be involved in the response to the letter. I thought Chuck's post giving the context for the bishops' letter was very helpful. I plan to talk with Lindsey Audrey, Canon for Reparations, and with Nativity members who have expressed interest in this topic. Together we can brainstorm next steps. At that point I expect to have something to present to the vestry for consideration. If this topic is of particular interest to you please let me know so that you can be a part of the initial conversations.

As always, I invite your questions and comments about anything that I've said in this report.

Stephanie