

St. Anne's Vestry Meeting Minutes
1/17/21

Historic Note: Since March 15, 2020 church services and public gatherings have been suspended at St. Anne's due to COVID-19, a global pandemic virus. This meeting of the vestry was conducted via Zoom.

PRESENT:

Rector, Reverend Ginny Wilder

Treasurer, Nancy Young (ex-officio)

Clerk, Susan Gies-Conley (ex-officio)

Members present: Senior Warden Julie Risher ('21) , Junior Warden Debbie Walker ('22), Ray Leonard ('22), Darryl Hammill ('23), Erik Ekstrand ('23), Jason Wilkinson ('22), Robert Campbell ('21), Heather Morgan ('21), Grace Phillips ('23),

Members absent: none

Ginny opened with prayer

Sharing Moment – Ginny

Ginny heard from her doctor last Thursday that the infection she has been dealing with since last February is gone! What she learned in the process is that our bodies always win, even when our spirit says we can ignore them. Her learning is to be a good steward of her body and listen to it, asking God in to help you.

Check in re: parish calls and concerns

Kathy (Murphy) Alma has received a cancer diagnosis and is preparing for surgery.

Ray's cousin's son in Ohio, Germaine Shelby has died of Covid. Ray's cousin, Larry, lost his brother last month. May(?) is in Novant Hospital to get some medications adjusted.

Susan shared that she is doing well in her period of unemployment, and is grateful for the prayers and support from the community.

Information/discussion

Formation update- Ginny

- 90 day Bible Challenge begins today! In Lent we will have a 40-day meditation on "The Way of Love," a weekly gathering on Sunday mornings before the service and on Wednesday evenings.
- Our visitation with Bishop Anne in March will be virtual only. Consequently, we will not be able to have confirmation, and that preparation class will not be held.
- The Youth wrapped up the Way of Love program this week.
- The youngest kids get a recorded Children's Chapel and Sunday School lesson with a worksheet to go with.
- Any parishioner is welcome to join in preparing these offerings. Jason says his kids love playing instruments enthusiastically during Children's Chapel.

Emphasis on calls to parishioners - Ginny

- We cross into a milestone in March, a year of virtual gatherings. It has been a bumpy year all around.
- She asks that we make a point of calling by phone, rather than sending emails.
- This connection is a lifeline for parishioners and the church.
- We need to help everyone stay connected so, when we do return, we are together.
- Julie says we can hear in people's voices that they are grateful for the call.
- Susan suggested that you keep notes on previous conversations so you can follow up on topics of concern. It helps to have more specific questions to jump start a conversation. It's the difference from "how was school today" and "how did that math test go today?"

Financial report 2020 - Nancy

- Our biggest hit in the revenue was in loose plate. The new Text to Give offering may help to offset that.
- Our biggest gains were in restricted funds, including memorial gifts. We worked hard in 2020 to avoid using those funds. We don't know how we may need to use them in 2021.
- Please refer to the financial reports for full information
- We are in far better shape than many congregations in our diocese and across the country.
- Ginny offers thanks to Nancy and the Finance Committee for their diligence. This good stewardship calms our fears.
- Nancy pointed out that we have had some decreases in expenses in areas that we have been unable to use. They aren't enough to close the gap that we have, but they help.
- Eric asked about progress on pledges after the end of the year. Nancy responded that we are about \$40,000 below budget, and there are fewer pledging units. She appreciates the Vestry accepting the budget as provisional. The Finance Committee will be keeping a close eye on our resources.
- We don't want to draw down all of our reserves going into 2022.

P.P.P. Loan - Nancy

- The \$22,000 loan from last year's paperwork needs to be filled out by April. The Bank and the NC Center for Nonprofits is saying hold off as the form keeps getting revised and made more simple.
- They will probably have new forms in place in February
- This year's PPP loans will amount to approximately \$40,000. This amount is based upon average expenses for personnel. The question is do we include what we paid with last year's PPP loan, or only what we expended out of our own funds.
- The category we are in is for loans under \$50,000, which is a simplified method.
- Our last advisor from Truist was a former Small Business Administration employee who knew all the ins and outs of the system. She made it much simpler. We hope we will get someone like that this time around.
- Nancy is not concerned about the loan forgiveness part of last year's loan.

- Julie expressed her gratitude for Nancy's leadership and guidance with the finances this year. Other members of the Finance Committee are Ron Sigrist, Marlene Druga, Stuart Winikoff, Donna Cowden, and Stan Meiburg, along with Julie.

Parish meeting Feb. 21 – Julie

- The document the Vestry received emerged from a series of long meetings of the Exec Committee. The concept coming out of those discussions is that it would be prudent to hold such a meeting so the parishioners will understand what the provisional budget means.
- The meeting will take place on Feb 21. The Vestry meeting will be moved to the 28th.
- Susan put together a document to guide the meeting. It was the basis of the document you see today.
- The entire meeting is the responsibility of the Vestry. We decided to organize it around our mission statement.
- We need the Vestry to assist today with setting a theme, and making sure we note all of our accomplishments. The goal is to promote ownership among the parishioners.
- Julie opened the floor to comments and suggestions.
- Darryl reported that the Stewardship committee had a lengthy discussion about their involvement in this parish meeting. They are ready to prepare a video and provide any other support needed.
- Grace asked for a better explanation of the meeting document. Julie replied that the meeting is to make clear the church's financial situation, and to celebrate all that we accomplished this year. Debbie shared that. Ginny said that transparency is important in times like these, as are as many points of engagement as possible. Susan said that we want people to leave with a feeling of ownership and enthusiasm for the work of the parish.
- Julie asked everyone to look at the suggestions for the theme and title of the meeting.
- Bob had comments via email. He asked why the Diocesan Asking seems to have increased significantly in the past year, at a time when we are cutting every possible expense. Ginny replied that the assessment for 2021 was done in 2019, when our membership and giving was up. Because we have money in the bank, we would not be eligible for a reduction in our Diocesan Ask. Ginny serves on that committee for the diocese.
- Nancy said that the #1 rule of PR is "don't give them more than they ask for." We can provide an overview of the budget in a more digestible way. Any parishioner who wants the budget detail may request it.
- Bob asked about the loose plate that was budgeted last year. It seems to be a very high amount compared to the previous year. Ginny replied that the budget was passed before the pandemic was even in our line of sight.
- Eric clarified that the Vestry needs to help with a theme, and who will prepare and present which pieces of the meeting.
- Eric also asked for confirmation that, in the end, we gathered in slightly more than last year's pledged amount. This is true, though it is a result of great variation from pledging households on the actual amount given. He suggested that we take a look at individual circumstances. Ginny said that Vestry phone calls are a great way to connect with where people are in that regard.

- Nancy also emphasized managing expectations. What will happen if we have to cut expenses? We won't be able to contribute as much with Outreach, have as much in the music program, and other areas. We don't want the congregation to feel surprised if this happens.
- There's a delicate balance between expressing a dire situation and being Pollyanna.
- Ginny reminded us that it's not just financial resources but also personal engagement that we want to inspire.
- Ginny reminded us that it's God's money, not our money. We can overcome the Southern reticence to talk about money and face our situation honestly.
- Decisions: Stewardship is going to see about preparing a video or power point presentation to highlight accomplishments.
- Theme: Strong, Sweet Spirit emerged as the clear theme. Darryl votes for using "When the Saints go Marching In" because we're close to Mardi Gras. It's in the service the Sunday before so easy to access.
- Debbie will read aloud the accomplishments submitted in the chat.
- Julie and Nancy will put together the statement for item C. They will run it by Susan and Heather for tone check.
- On the financial information and statement provided: we can call it "just the facts." We can have each Vestry member read a portion of the financial message.
- Eric suggested using breakout rooms to brainstorm. We can make that automatic and easy for those who are concerned about tech use. He and Susan will make that happen on the back end. Vestry members can "anchor" those rooms as a source of information and to encourage conversation.
- Heather likes the poll idea for pre-learning, since this is a bit of a teaching exercise. What do you think has caused the decrease in giving? Then reveal the causes that we have established. Heather can come up with poll questions.
- Vestry members pick what they want to do. 6 is taken. Julie will put together the timeline. Bob takes 5, Jason takes 2 and 3, Grace 1, 4 will be Darryl, Eric and Susan have 6. Statements to start and edit will be provided.
- To send out beforehand: Summary Budget and cover statement from Julie to set the tone. This will be written last after we have a clearer idea of the agenda and points to be made.
- The service will go straight into the meeting. No announcements, hold blessing and dismissal until the end of the meeting.
- Ginny will be working on our parochial report for 2020. She can use stats from Zoom to see how many joined the services and provide this information in the meeting materials.
-

Rector's Report

- Ginny was at the church on Friday to play with our streaming technology. She heard noise in the meditation garden and noted a couple of people under a blanket. There was evidence that this was not their first time there, with cigarette butts and cans around them. Ginny opened the side door and asked if she could help them. They said their tent flooded and they needed to take shelter there. She offered that City With Dwellings is organizing housing for those who need it, and that she'd be glad to help them get in touch. They said no to this offer, and Ginny told them that they had to leave. The woman approached

Ginny with threatening words and body language, so Ginny closed the door and called the police. The police were able to find them. In discussion with them with police present, Ginny offered again to help them find housing. They continued to be confrontational and are now banned from our property. We will be adjusting the cameras to be able to see people going into that area. The debris has been cleared from the garden.

- This morning during worship, we used Sling Studio! Darryl observed that the switching between cameras seemed to be smoother and added a level of professionalism to the experience. There were some glitches with sound that we're learning to manage. Jason feels that any fuzziness in sound has more to do with masks than the microphones. We can pre-record without masks in some cases. Ginny has purchased a third set of microphones that may be able to capture sound better when the speaker is masked. Ginny appreciated being able to play the video instead of sharing a screen directly in Zoom.

Committee reports - Debbie

The committee reports stand as submitted, and are attached as an addendum to these minutes.

Decision items

- Approval of December 2020 minutes- Jason moved to approve, Darryl seconded. The motion was passed by consensus.
- Vestry member sharing moment 2/28 will be from Grace

Calendar Items

- Vestry check-in via Zoom 2/7
- Parish financial vision meeting 2/21
- FEBRUARY VESTRY MEETING MOVED TO 2/28
- Please check the website and the St. Anne's announcements and participate in as many activities as you can

On the horizon for future meetings

- February/: Job description for Mark
- February / March : Contract and vendor review
- March 21: Bishop Anne's visit and meeting with vestry
- March/ April/ May : Regathering plan