

Church of the Nativity  
Minutes of the Vestry  
December 15, 2020

**Attending:** Stephanie Allen, Bishop Anne Hodges-Copple, Carrie Mash, Rene Garces, Cheryl Waechter, Robert Joines, Stephanie Sumner, Josh Booth, Kim Stoke, John Oldham, Kat Belk, Michael Warrillow, Mike Rhaney, Beth Crow, Anne Krouse, Viola Baldwin, Phillip Bass, and Gail Christensen.

The meeting convened at 7:05 pm via Zoom video-conferencing due to all meetings being suspended because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

**Welcome to Bishop Anne:**

The meeting began with prayer by Bishop Anne Hodges-Copple, who joined the Vestry via Zoom. While she worried that our churches were going to be exhausted, empty of spiritual energy, she hoped we would have “post traumatic resilience”, strengthening our souls to rejuvenate after the pandemic is over, staying connected to others via outreach, and cultivating our inner life.

**New Vestry Members:**

Since the canons do not allow for virtual annual meetings or elections, four new members have been appointed to take the place of retiring members: Beth Crow, Anne Krouse, Viola Baldwin, and Bill Sena. Stephanie thanked the retiring members: Betty Sammitt, Lori Special, Kat Belk, and Michael Warrillow.

**Wardens' Reports:**

Stephanie thanked Carrie Mash for her service this past, very unusual year. Carrie will retire as Senior Warden but will continue on the Vestry for another year. Rene Garces has offered to continue as Junior Warden for another year. Their reports were included in the Parish Update that was conducted via Zoom on Sunday, December 13. It is available on the Nativity website.

**Stewardship Annual Campaign 2021:**

To date, about \$260,000 have been pledged to the 2021 campaign, but there remain many individuals and families who pledged in 2020 but have not yet pledged for 2021. This has been a year of anxiety for so many, so we must be gentle in asking folks to fulfill their pledges. It has been decided not to ask the Youth for pledge/commitments during this campaign.

**Social Justice Proposal:** Stephanie Sumner

Nativity's Social Justice Advocacy Team and Outreach Team have proposed that Church of the Nativity initiate a scholarship fund for young adults of color in partnership with the Raleigh-Apex NAACP. In this partnership, Church of the Nativity would raise scholarship funds and the Raleigh-Apex NAACP would administer them as part of their established scholarship program.

This year, it has become clearer than ever that racial inequities are still pervasive in the United States, and many Nativity parishioners want to make a tangible, positive difference. Helping motivated and talented students of color to continue their education after high school is a gift that will keep on giving, passing forward generation after generation, moving our nation closer to economic and social equity. The Raleigh-Apex NAACP is a respected, local organization that has developed a thorough system for evaluating applicants and distributing scholarship funds for young adults of color living in our area. They are well positioned to handle administrative

aspects of the program that would be difficult and time consuming for us.

We decided on the name Episcopal Church of the Nativity/ Raleigh-Apex NAACP Scholarship as it says exactly what the scholarship is, and we appreciated the clear message of partnership with the Raleigh-Apex NAACP. We also liked including "Episcopal" in front of Church of the Nativity with the hope that it might inspire other Episcopal churches in our convocation to participate. If we did enlist other churches to join us, the name could be easily changed to "Episcopal/Raleigh-Apex NAACP Scholarship."

The first year, the goal would be to get the partnership established by raising at least \$1000 to fund one scholarship. The plan would be to give participants in Sacred Ground, the Social Justice Book Club, and Sacred Conversations this opportunity as a concrete response to the inequities they are discussing or have discussed. In upcoming years, our hope is that the scholarship would continue, with funding and interest to be assessed as we go.

This proposal does not require funds from the church's budget, but it does involve the church's blessings in seeking donations from Nativity parishioners. Carrie moved that the Vestry accept the proposal for Nativity to initiate a scholarship fund. Michael seconded. The vote was unanimous. The Social Justice Advocacy Team will now begin plans for promoting a scholarship fund drive starting in February, to coincide with Black History month.

**Financial Report:** Mike Rhaney and John Oldham

Pledge income and regular givers' income remained steady throughout the summer, but these began to fall behind in October, and November wasn't a good month either. Rental income is down but expenses are also down. We are now \$55K+ below budgeted income, but we hope that folks will catch up enough in December (as in previous years) that we may finish the year with a balanced budget.

The Finance Team will not be able to build a budget for 2021 until we have more certainty about our income from pledges and regular givers. The Youth trip scheduled for 2021 is very uncertain at this time; indeed, the Diocese is not encouraging such trips be held in 2021.

We have received \$45,000 from the federal government's Payment Protection Program (PPP) to keep our staff employed, and because we met that requirement, the Finance team is now putting together documentation to apply for forgiveness of that loan. That money should help us if pledges do not come in at the hoped-for level.

This year the Day of Giving, normally held on a Sunday in December, became the Week of Giving, which raised over \$15,000 for various charities associated with Nativity and its parishioners. Next year, we may consider having both a Day and a Week of Giving.

**Approval of the November 2020 minutes:**

The minutes of the November Vestry meeting were submitted for approval. John moved to accept the minutes as corrected; Cheryl seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Gail Christensen  
Clerk of the Vestry

**Addendum:**

An email vote was sent out on December 18 asking for a motion to approve \$750 for staff gifts. John arranged for VISA gift card purchases. Stephanie Sumner moved that the Vestry approve the purchase of gift cards for the staff. Rene seconded. The motion was approved via email.

**The Next Scheduled Vestry Meeting is Tuesday, January 19, 2021 at 7 pm**