

Church of the Nativity  
Minutes of the Vestry  
May 19, 2020

**Attending:** Stephanie Allen, Michael Warrillow, Carrie Mash, Rene Garces, Cheryl Waechter, Robert Joines, Kat Belk, Stephanie Sumner, John Oldham, Josh Booth, Kim Stoke, and Gail Christensen.

The meeting convened at 7:03 pm via Zoom video-conferencing due to all church services, activities and meetings being suspended because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

**Bible study:** Stephanie led the Vestry in a discussion of Romans 3:21-31.

**Reopening Plans:** Stephanie Allen

The Bishops, based on recommendations from a team of clergy and lay members, have released detailed guidelines for reopening churches during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, called Resurrection, Resilience, and Resonance: [https://www.episdionc.org/uploads/images/a-time-of-challenge-and-change-for-distribution\\_596.pdf](https://www.episdionc.org/uploads/images/a-time-of-challenge-and-change-for-distribution_596.pdf)

In summary:

Until July 1, 2020 (at least), while virus cases and deaths are still rising, church offices will remain closed, worship services and all group activities will be online only, pastoral care may take place via telephone or online only, use of the common cup will be suspended, only 6 may be present in the building during live streaming, weddings and baptisms will not be performed, and graveside services will be limited to 10 persons. Masks must be worn by all participants in worship services, including the celebrant. Drive-in worship is not allowed but there may be exceptions. Choir singing and rehearsals and wind instruments are not allowed in the church.

In Stage 2, tentatively after July 1, while virus cases and deaths are declining, churches could reopen offices if 6 feet could be maintained between persons. Indoor services of less than 25 persons and outdoor services of less than 35 persons could restart if 6 feet could be maintained between persons. Masks are required at all gatherings, and people will still be urged to stay home. Coffee hour and physical contact will not be permitted during the passing of the peace. Online services and meetings and pastoral care should continue as earlier. Churches are asked to create a plan and set of protocols for Stage 2 by June 15.

In Stage 3, date TBD, when cases and death are near zero, restrictions will be eased on office use and larger gatherings, an increased number of people are allowed for worship services, there will be gradual easing of restrictions on celebration of Holy Eucharist, but physical distancing and masks will still be required.

In Stage 4, when a vaccine will be available, restrictions are lifted, but online services should continue for those vulnerable parishioners.

A lengthy discussion followed about what Nativity will be able to do right now. The Diocesan guidelines are very conservative, but are flexible as we see how things are going in other denominations and dioceses. The Vestry members agreed that online services were with us to stay; the feedback is very positive, but we can always consider changes. While the guidelines will eventually allow 25 persons at indoor services, the Vestry felt this was wrong for us; when we say "All Are Welcome", we cannot exclude people who want to come to our church.

Stephanie provided four options of how we will go forward at present. After discussing all the options, Robert moved, and Cheryl seconded, that Nativity will pre-record the entire Sunday service until further notice. The vote was unanimous. This will allow Stephanie to not wear a mask while celebrating and preaching; it will be easiest on Robert, the videographer; Deacon David Lynch will be able to participate; and problems will not go out on the live-stream. The members agreed that Stephanie should continue to preach and celebrate at the altar in front of the organ, because that will give the congregation a sense that they are still worshipping together in church.

Robert noted that our online services have given us a great opportunity to make an impact. There have been thousands of "impressions" per service, and hundreds of "views". A new parishioner saw the Easter service and has been coming to coffee hour. Engagement with our email newsletter and the blogs has gone up - how can we build on that?

Stephanie recommended that subgroups be formed to look at 1) how we can continue fellowshiping with each other; 2) how we can worship in later stages; and 3) what did we learn in this quarantine and what do we want to keep going forward.

The Vestry asked the Communications Team to conduct a new survey by May 30, giving respondents a week to reply. Questions to include will be provided by Stephanie and the Vestry members.

### **Staying connected with members**

Vestry members have been calling parishioners to keep in touch, but will be moving away from that except for those deemed to need contact. Stephanie asked the members to give her a list of those who need to be called.

### **Mortgage prepayment**

John said that the Finance Team will recommend to the Vestry at the next meeting that the church use the \$44,000 that has accumulated in our bank account to pre-pay a part of the mortgage.

**Senior Warden's Report:** Carrie Mash

The Finance Team will now be able to apply for the PPP loan in this second phase of the stimulus packages. John recommends that we go through the process, which the Vestry already approved at an earlier meeting, and if offered a loan, we can decide if we want to take it. We were in a good position financially last month, but that could worsen in the coming months.

**Junior Warden's Report:** Rene Garces

- 1) Lawn service started 5/8/2020, at \$225/cut and \$450/month, and first check mailed.
- 2) Habitat House build has completed build using Habitat personnel, and certificate of occupancy was expected 5/14.
- 3) Rise Against Hunger event has been paid and is scheduled for Sunday 8/30/2020 though details surrounding COVID-19 risk-mitigation to be determined.
- 4) Rene will get quotes for yearly HVAC maintenance contract formerly performed and contracted to All-American.

Upcoming:

- Yearly fire alarm inspection by Johnson Controls scheduled for 6/1/2020.
- Next lawn service scheduled 5/22, though may be pushed out due to rain.
- Yearly emergency light inspection by Johnson Controls scheduled for 6/1/2020.

**Youth and Children's ministry update:**

Youth Minister Kathryn Buckley submitted the following report:

- The ASP trip has been cancelled due to 1) trip not being able to be taken on its original date according to ASP and 2) rescheduling for a later date did not work for a majority of the youth. Refund checks have been processed and mailed to families. Note: ASP kept a \$50 non-refundable deposit per registrant.
- As of now, the Diocese has stated they are planning to still host HUGS July 11-18 and have moved application due dates for helper campers to May 30. Youth have received an email with details as well as the link. The Diocese will make a final decision on June 14, but Stephanie Sumner says the camp will probably be canceled.
- Pilgrimage is coming for our current 9th and 10th graders, tentatively leaving the first Saturday that ALL youth are out of school in June 2021. We will be using a company called Wonder Voyage for our trip. The cost will be our first focus for location keeping each family responsible for no more than \$750 as the church will pay 1/3 and 1/3 will come from our fundraising budget. However, this year's commitment will look different to ensure attendance regularly by all pilgrims. There will be attendance criteria the youth must meet in order to attend at this cost. Youth who do not participate in accordance with the criteria will be subject to paying a higher percentage. This will be a covenant that youth and parents will sign before they can apply to go on the trip. This stems from many years of the same youth attending regularly while others do not. It's a wonderful privilege to be able to support our youth trips in the way we do. With that,

we expect respect from the youth and families to this commitment.

- Urban Immersion has moved to 2022. It will now only happen every 3 years and will be our middle school trip following 7th and 8th grade summers or 8th and 9th grade summers. As we approach the 2022 year, we will address the criteria for ages then. This will help alleviate the financial stress of both trips.
- Summer plans will be determined as the Bishop releases statements with the support of a new parent committee. Initial gatherings will more than likely be outside with safe distances in parks, our parking lot or hosted in family driveways. Hoping for mid-June.
- We had at least one youth apply for the Chartered Committee on Youth, the governing youth and adult body that organizes and leads Diocesan events throughout the year (Bishops' Ball, Happening, Genesis).
- No planning for the fall has been done due to waiting to see what the Bishops instruct churches to do about gatherings.
- Graduation plans are in the works. Hoping to do a driveway blessing for each of the graduates along with presentation of their gift on Sunday, May 31. We have tentatively planned a group gathering for a liturgy and brunch at the end of July in hopes we are able to gather in smaller groups.

**Approval of the April Vestry meeting:**

The minutes of the April 2020 Vestry meeting were submitted for approval. Stephanie Sumner moved to accept the minutes as written; John seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

There being no further business, the meeting closed with a prayer at 9:08 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Gail Christensen  
Clerk of the Vestry

**The Next Scheduled Vestry Meeting is Tuesday, June 16 at 7 pm via Zoom.**