

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

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

Survey Results: Robert Joines

Robert reported the findings of the recent survey by the Communications Team of the congregation about online services and a return to in-person services. 84% of the 137 respondents have attended an online worship service on Facebook, and 84% are satisfied with the online services (the remaining don't like online services at all but prefer in-person services). 66% would be interested in attending an in-person outdoor service, and 61% would be interested in receiving communion. (Stephanie has begun both outdoor services and communion in recent weeks.) The survey would indicate that not a large percentage (only 17%) are eager to get back to indoor services; they are more comfortable with outdoor services for the time being.

The question is how we can encourage more involvement in the services (music and readings) and in person, considering the strictures imposed by the Diocese. The Communications Team is tasked with making an action plan to address these concerns. Cheryl offered to organize some kind of outdoor gathering to enhance the sense of community in these difficult times.

Stewardship Campaign 2021: Carrie Mash

The Stewardship campaign will start October 18 and the pledges celebrated on November 22. Carrie has posted a "padlet" that allows the Vestry members to post their input about ideas on how to conduct the campaign, such as the strengths from past campaigns, the strategies that won't work, and how to address the different climate we are in now. Among the suggestions: testimonials during the online services; blogs on the website; phone calls and personal connections; handwritten notes from the Vestry to parishioners; a fundraising family event with music; and even swag.

PPP Loan acceptance and forgiveness: John Oldham

Nativity applied for the federal government's Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan a few months back and we were accepted to the program. We received \$47,200, which we have not had to dip into so far. It is an unsecured loan with no penalty, no interest, and no fees.

Within a few weeks, we can apply for forgiveness of the loan (i.e., we will not have to repay it to the government). We qualify for forgiveness because we have retained all the staff at their full salaries, the requirement for forgiveness. The Diocese is encouraging all churches to apply for forgiveness. Stephanie Sumner made a motion that we apply for forgiveness of the PPP loan, and Kim seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

John Oldham will work with our bank, as required, to apply for forgiveness. If we are successful in retaining the \$47,500, next year the Vestry will discuss if we use the funds to increase our reserve fund, or put towards programs, or expand some areas.

Junior Warden's Report: Rene Garces

Rene reported:

- Five automatic hand sanitizer stations have been installed in each of the 3 buildings.
- Newcomb & Company visited Nativity campus 4 times in an effort to fix Daikin HVAC issues in the worship building.
- A Rise Against Hunger event was held Sunday 8/30/2020, in Rise Against Hunger's warehouse, during which 15 persons representing 7 Nativity families packaged 2,000 meals.
- Our fire extinguishers got a yearly inspection on 9/1/2020.
- Thanks go to Matt and Chase Dutton, who weeded the grounds ahead of outdoor services.
- The Buildings and Grounds Team is looking for a new chair; Mark Marrotta has stepped down.
- Pest control will perform quarterly spray around outside of each building except along the southern wall of Curry Hall, where the garden is located.
- There will be a Fall Workday to spruce up the grounds and buildings in October/November
- Beth Crow is looking into a "Virtual Day of Giving" this year.

Rector's Report: Stephanie Allen

We will soon have the services of an intern, Philip Bass, through December. He is in the discernment process and is sponsored by St. Luke's Durham. He has a Masters of Divinity from Duke University.

We will offer three outdoor in-person services each Sunday - at 8 am, 9:30 am, and 4:30 pm, with Holy Eucharist at each - until the beginning of Advent, when the weather will probably make it difficult to gather outdoors. Stephanie hopes we will be allowed to meet indoors in January, depending on how Wake County does in decreasing the number of cases.

Ideas for how to celebrate Christmas under these circumstances are much appreciated. Stephanie recognizes the anger, frustration, and grief that we are all experiencing in different ways; we need to be flexible and understanding.

Financial Report: John Oldham

We are doing awesome! In normal summers, income goes down, but not this year. We are very strong YTD. People are continuing to fulfill their pledges and even regular givers are maintaining their giving. Rentals are down, of course, and we are down on expected income, but we are also down on expenses, which balance out each other. We have paid down our mortgage to \$312K and contributions to the mortgage campaign continue to come in. The "mini-audit" we had recently determined we are "all clean and clear".

Approval of the August 2020 minutes:

The minutes of the August Vestry meeting were submitted for approval. Robert moved to accept the minutes as corrected; Rene seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

There being no further business, the meeting closed with prayer at 8:54 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Gail Christensen
Clerk of the Vestry

The Next Scheduled Vestry Meeting is Tuesday, October 20, 2020 at 7 pm