

HOLY FAMILY EPISCOPAL CHURCH
VESTRY MEETING MINUTES—January 19, 2021

Attending: Chris Brown, Bob Murray, Ruth Everett, Carol Bruns, Stephen Beard, Cathy French, Marcus Dial, Hannah Tannas, Jolene Johnston, Betty Bogeman, Lorri Batesky, Fr. Bruce Gray

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m., via remote connection, with prayer led by Fr. Bruce. Fr. Bruce asked for any additions to the agenda, and there were none.

Check-Ins: Fr. Bruce asked the Vestry how they and other parishioners were doing. Betty noted the general feeling of “hanging in there,” as well as the joy of her new dog. Fr. Bruce advised that he had spoken with Teresa Conroy-Roth, concerning the passing of her parents and her need for additional time and her request to step down from the Vestry. Accordingly, the Vestry will need a one-year replacement for Theresa.

Nominating Committee: Ruth reported that there are currently two nominees, Tina Vawter and Katie Hamon. Bob reported that Dan Chillemi was interested in a position, and there may be one or two others interested. Jolene mentioned that she had checked for applications, and had not seen any others yet. Bob also reminded that nominations for Diocesan convention were needed, that he had volunteered, and wondered if there were others. It was noted that convention nominees could be selected later if they were not identified at or before the annual meeting.

Regathering update: The regathering team met last week and is ready to roll as soon as the public health numbers fall to the levels mandated by the Diocese. Fr. Bruce mentioned steps being taken to reconnect and to stay connected with parishioners. He noted that Ash Wednesday is just a month away, and discussions are under way about having ashes available for pick-up at the church (for home use). We would provide them in a non-contact way, as a hand-out rather than a porch-drop, so as to give parishioners the experience of coming to church. It may be possible to have the church open for private prayers and/or at various times during Lent. Those plans are still coming together, and Fr. Bruce promised a close eye on the pandemic data.

Regarding Lenten planning, Bob discussed ideas in the works for Saturdays in Lent. A “virtual pilgrimage” is being worked on, with an opening prayer and a masked, socially-distanced walk along a local trail, as a spiritual boost. Those walks would be on the six Saturdays following Ash Wednesday, and might focus on the New Testament book of James. Stephen, Fr. Bruce and Marcus noted their support, and the similarity to the “holy hikes” that Deacon Cathy Scott had planned and conducted before the pandemic. Fr. Bruce planned to provide information for the Saturday activity (including prayers and/or readings) as ashes are picked up.

Ruth noted that the parish had done Wednesday activities during past Lents, and we may plan a non-contact option by video meeting. Ideas for such virtual events included discussing of Anglican prayer beads (with a kit for making); preparing pretzels; exchanging recipes for

meatless meals; conducting the stations of the cross; working on art and/or meditation; and creating palm-leaf crosses.

Fr. Bruce also mentioned a pre-Lenten task he is taking on: calling every parishioner. He has been kept quite busy with pastoral care for the parish, and is looking forward to reaching out to everyone.

Annual Meeting and 2021 Planning: Fr. Bruce discussed his eagerness to set goals and make plans for the year—to work on what we should “hit the ground running” with when the signal to re-open is given. He noted that Bob has a number of good thoughts, and Bob suggested that more on such plans should be discussed at the annual meeting. He also proposed that ministry teams should be prepared, perhaps as the parish used to do: with the teams going out and doing their work, then reporting back to the Vestry, and each Vestry member would be involved in two of the teams. He would also like to see an orientation program for new Vestry members. Discussion on these ideas ensued.

The annual meeting is scheduled for 10 a.m. on January 31, and Fr. Bruce emphasized the need for Vestry members to attend, to ensure a proper number for the meeting. Bob suggested that the meeting be a topic for the next contacts with parishioners. Fr. Bruce responded that information on the meeting has been prepared and is going out shortly, with the invitation to the virtual meeting.

Treasurer’s Report and Finance Committee update: Fr. Bruce reported that David Emerson has asked to step back from his role as Finance Committee chair. He noted the immense effect David’s wisdom and skill have had on the parish, and he and the Vestry gave heartfelt thanks to David for his service. Fr. Bruce also reported that Dan Chillemi has accepted the chair’s role.

Betty reported that for 2020, the parish is \$7000 ahead (principally due to the PPP loan), and the investment account’s fourth-quarter performance was an increase of about \$5000 to total about \$50,000. She noted that Old National Bank had opened the portal for new PPP loans, and that we should qualify for another \$32,000 loan. Pledges amount to about \$157,000 so far, and she distributed a “bare-bones” budget listing staff and base-line utility costs, with a for-now assumption that we may be gathering back in the church in April. Bob asked what the “Vestry Costs” item entailed, and Betty responded that it was for the Vestry retreat, including food. She also noted that expenses for Diocesan Convention had been zeroed due to the fact that it would be held in Plainfield this year. Bob also asked about the difference between “Landscaping” and “Lawn” items in the budget. Betty responded that “Lawn” included fertilizer and mowing for the grass areas, and “Landscaping” included mulch and weeding for those areas. She noted that the hope was for Nickel Plate Gardens LLC to participate in those efforts.

Regarding apportionment, Fr. Bruce reported that a part of 2021 apportionment would be forgiven by the Diocese for all parishes. Further discussion concerning the documents and information needed for that forgiveness ensued. Bob moved to request from the Diocese a

waiver of six months of 2021 apportionment, and Marcus seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Bob asked whether the “Fund raising” item was for proceeds from the annual flower and mulch sale, and Betty responded affirmatively. He then asked what the “Hospitality” item covered, and Betty responded that it included coffee, donuts, paper products—all that goes to making the building presentable and providing refreshments for people.

Ruth noted that Ben Paden continues to organize and prepare the weekly on-line worship presentation, and she asked what we could do to recognize his efforts. Fr. Bruce considered that we might look into “re-hiring” him, to provide recompense for his work. It was concluded that the Vestry should further consider what would be appropriate. With that, Bob moved to approve the proposed budget, and Ruth seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of minutes: Fr. Bruce noted that the minutes of the December Vestry meeting had been distributed, and asked for any comments, additions or corrections. None were offered, and Chris moved to approve the minutes as presented, and Cathy seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Rector’s and Staff Reports: Fr. Bruce asked that we please continue efforts to invite people to our on-line worship and our other events. He continues to hear of people “trying” us out on YouTube. He reported that the first Adult Forum of the year went very well, with seven or eight attendees making for a good discussion. The Christmas cards he and Cathy Gray sent were very well received. He also reported a moving pastoral experience in administering Last Rites to Marsha Fleming last week, and noted that the family of Tanya Beck had sent their thanks for his care. He also mentioned that we are still waiting on our application for the evangelism grant, and thinks it may be February before we hear further on it.

Jolene reported on the updating of the parish’s website, including the creation of the Vestry page, and she noted that Lenten materials would be added shortly. Stephen asked about the Vestry/staff page, and Jolene pointed out the “Who We Are” page. Regarding Children’s Ministry, Jolene spoke of the five-week program just begun on “Saints Among Us.” Ruth reported working with the youth with the book “This Book Is Anti-Racist,” and looking around for an outside event—perhaps tubing or sledding. She has also been thinking about possibilities for a local mission outing, bearing in mind that the pandemic limits activities for the foreseeable future.

Fr. Bruce asked if there were any further topics for discussion, and none was offered. Fr. Bruce offered an ending prayer, and the meeting adjourned at 8:16 p.m.