



St. David's Episcopal Church & School

May 19, 2021

Vestry Meeting Minutes (via Zoom)

Due to restrictions placed on in-person group meetings due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this Vestry meeting was held via Zoom.

Attending: Vestry members Rev. Mary Kay Brown (Rector), David Sheatsley (Sr. Warden), Jenifer Bluhm, Tabatha Bragg, Jenkins Cooper, Rohit Dean, Kondeh Greaves, and Jen Peiler; Absent: Keith Korin and Anne Shively (Jr. Warden); Register Katherine Beckett-Goodwin, Chaplin to the Vestry Carol Bonifant. Absent: Treasurer John Mellish. Also attending: Liz Whitlock, Maureen Carey, Allan Steed, Chris Smith and Marilyn Tracy.

Opening Prayer: The prayers were created and said by Carol Bonifant, Chaplain to the Vestry. Heavenly Father once again we gather together to worship You, with our work. Our heart's desire is to please You not only with our faith but, with our leadership and service as well. Brother Lawrence taught us how to "Practice the Presence of God." He was a living example of how-to bring Jesus, into every aspect of our life. Our fallen world does everything it can to distract us from You, Your ways, and Your will. Holy Spirit help us seek You first before we act. Help us learn to sit with You and share our lives. Help us to ponder Your teachings in collaboration with each other to move in the direction Your will takes us. Help us to not be in a hurry to make decisions until we are confident it is You Lord showing us the way. We understand that You are bigger than any mistake we may make but, You desire for us to grow into mature Godly leaders more than any project we set our hand to. Holy Spirit light us on fire with the burning desire to grow closer to You! In Your Holy Name we pray, Amen.

Call to Order – Rev. Mary Kay Brown called the Vestry Meeting to order at 7:05 pm.

Parishioner Comment Period – Parishioners

- Welcome back to Rev Mary Kay.
- St. David's Parishioner Theresa Luby requested an email be shared with the Vestry by Rev. Mary Kay on her behalf regarding concerns the parishioner has with various aspects of St. David's. Note this parishioner comment was discussed at length (about 40 minutes) during the Spiritual Discussion allotted time later in the meeting. Rev. Mary Kay asked the Vestry not to react but to listen with balance, compassion and grace. Some of the content may be difficult to hear. It is not a useful exercise to react and debate point by point. Remember there are two sides to every story.
 - This parishioner's comments come at a fragile time for us as we re-emerge from the pandemic and are wondering what the future holds for St. David's. We do need to pay careful attention to all voices, and we are strong enough to hear and respond to those with concerns. Yes, there is work to do. Yet there are also parishioners that are excited about St. David's, good things going on, and God is at work.
 - Rev. Mary Kay stated that the email may have some valid points to consider.
 - The parishioner expressed concerns with valued employees/parishioners leaving, especially in the area of music (named but will not be published here).
 - The parishioner expressed concerns over some families leaving the church (named but will not be published here), and subsequent follow up with those families, many of whom have been active, contributing members at St. David's, to ask why and address concerns.
 - The parishioner notes that she sent an email to the entire Vestry with concerns and no Vestry Members responded with the exception of Rev. Mary Kay. From the parishioner's perspective, the Vestry is not open to hearing parishioner concerns based on the lack of response.
 - The parishioner expressed concern from her perspective that the Vestry does not challenge the Rector and only tells her what she wants to hear. The parishioner has reviewed six months of

Vestry Meeting Minutes and did not see her concerns or email to the Vestry referenced, only that everyone was working hard and doing a great job.

- Discussion: Rev. Mary Kay expressed to the Vestry that she thinks they are the best not because they don't challenge her or tell her what she wants to hear, but because this Vestry listens, prays, asks questions and works together with the Rector to make St. David's the best it can be. Working out the direction of St. David's together.
- Rev. Mary Kay has had several conversations individually with the parishioner discussing and listening to her concerns.
- The parishioner expressed concerns with the music, that it has no joy in it.
- There is no Youth Program, which doesn't serve families with middle and high school kids.
 - It was noted in the Vestry discussion that Maureen has done, and continues to do, an amazing job with families with young children (5th grade and under) during the pandemic to keep them engaged.
- Discussion: There is a budget challenge with the youth position given pledges are down about - \$146K for 2021 verses 2020. The Assistant to the Rector position was not replaced immediately in May 2020 due to the pandemic and the uncertainty of the impact the pandemic would have on parishioners and church income to continue to support a position. It is essential to figure out how to address youth.
- Question: Are we willing to put in the resources from the budget to address the Youth? Youth includes teens and young children, but the teen piece has been missing during the pandemic and has focused on young children during the pandemic after the Assistant to the Rector (clergy in charge of youth) was called to lead his own church.
- The parishioner expressed concern that St. David's is failing her family, and perhaps some others (youth and music).
- Rev. Mary Kay asked the Vestry to take some time to digest the information expressed by the parishioner in the email and said our imperative is to take the information we have, pray, sift through what is ours to do, and then act. After everyone has had some time to process the information and emotions, Rev. Mary Kay would like to discuss further with the Vestry on Wednesday, May 26, 2021, at 6:30 pm, prior to the Special Vestry Meeting at 7pm to discuss HVAC. The Vestry agreed.
- Rev. Mary Kay asked for a Vestry volunteer to reach out to the parishioner, Theresa Luby, in an official capacity on behalf of the Vestry to let her know that she had been heard, her email was received, the Vestry is prayerfully considering her concerns for further discussion and will respond back to her at a later date. David Sheatsley, Sr. Warden, volunteered to do this.
- Comment: The Vestry should encourage parishioners to attend meetings to get more involved and informed, as well as understand the opportunities to volunteer with ministries.

Administrative Items

Decision: Approve May 19, 2021 Vestry Meeting Agenda – Vestry

Motion: Move to approve the May 19, 2021 Agenda as presented.
Motion seconded and approved.

Decision: Approve April 21, 2021 Vestry Meeting Minutes - Vestry

Motion: Move to approve April 21, 2021 Vestry Meeting Minutes.
Motion seconded and approved.

Discussion: April 2021 GM and Trustee Reports – Allan Steed, Sr. Trustee & Liz Whitlock, GM

- The report was referenced to review. Highlights:
 - Attended the re-opening committee meeting on April 18.
 - Rearranged the music area to be more functional, including the Piano and Drums.
 - Most of the acoustic panels are cracking, contacted contractor for repairs.
 - Bathroom plumbing backed up again, the line was scoped and snaked and a blockage about 25 feet into the line was found. The contractor said this has been a common problem with buildings sitting idle due to the pandemic and resuming regular use.
 - Met with contractor to discuss replacing Plexiglas coverings with solar shades - ~\$19K-\$21K.
 - Scout Troop 58 did a workday to help clean up the property around the School and Cemetery.
 - Continue with extensive discussions and provision of information to contractor advising on options for HVAC system replacement and potential C-PACE program for the debt instrument. New information and estimates should be provided in May.
 - The deposit for the sidewalk to the outside Columbarium and repairs to the office sidewalk was provided to schedule and begin work.
- Question: The list of things we need to do listed on page 4 is about \$200K worth of work. Is there a plan to address the items? Yes, when budget allows or total failure of the item. We also plan to integrate some of these fixes, like the door replacements, into the PACE program. For the most part, this is just a reminder list.
- Comment: Interesting to see the issues that arise when a building isn't in use. Both bathrooms have backed up with water with the clog 25 feet down the line.
- Question: Replacing the Plexiglas for \$20K? Yes, looking at shades and met with several companies.
- Question: How is the cleaning service? See that there is dust everywhere from the report, how is the service working? Dust is settling with the smoke detectors and heating system, which clogs it up. When the heat came on (April was cold), it triggered the alarm when the dust combusted in the smoke detector. No problem with the sensor since then.
- Question: For several months now, there have been notations about the toilets not being flushed, etc. Is there a way to change/address these issues? The GM has put out messages to the outside groups that use the facility. The urinals are not being flushed and in the ladies' bathroom the handle to the toilet has to be held down for it to flush. Electronic flushers have been ordered and will be installed.
- Question: The pictures of the acoustic panels where the cracks are – is it expensive to repair? No, they are under warranty.
- Sidewalk update: it will be put in on Tuesday/Wednesday (5/25 & 5/26/2021) next week. The equipment will stage where the Preschool walkway is. There will be a bobcat there. It will be dusty. And will also repair the sidewalk.
- (Remaining Action Item from January 2021 Vestry Meeting: A Cemetery overview (how it works, funded, etc.) will be provided to the Vestry. More information regarding the requested projects and associated costs will be provided for review and discussion at the February/TBD Vestry Meeting.)
- Thank you to the Trustees and GM for all the work they are doing maintaining our campus.

Discussion: April 2021 Treasurer's Report – John Mellish, Treasurer

- The Treasurer was unable to attend so the Treasurer's Report was not presented.

Decision: Approve April 2021 Treasurer's Report - Vestry

Motion: No decision without the report presentation.

Discussion: Finance Committee Report – David Sheatsley, Sr. Warden

- The Finance Committee met virtually on May 17, 2021.
- The new PowerPoint presentation format of the Finance Committee Report to the Vestry was reviewed. The goal is to visually represent the financial numbers to the Vestry, providing a snapshot of the financials. Is this helpful? Yes.
- Note the source is listed for the financials by each of the numbers quoted.
- The visual report format was initiated by Rohit in February/March 2021. David built on that concept with suggestions/feedback from Katherine.
- Question: Thoughts on slides 5, 6 and 7 (Church, School & Cemetery financial overviews)? When add them up, they don't balance due to the unclassified items. Add a footnote to these slides noting the unclassified items are not included on these slides.
- On Slide 4 (Take-Aways for April 2021), Natural gas increased 47% of budget in January to 137% in April, why is that? Not sure why it's so high. It was cold in April and May, running heat instead of AC. There was also a price hike on natural gas. Is it a usage issue? Will investigate further.
 - The take-aways page is month by month, not in the aggregate.
- Request: Please spell out acronyms such as YTD to Year to Date.
- On the "snapshot" pages (5, 6, and 7), re-arrange the boxes so one can subtract Assets from Liabilities to obtain the Net Income total.
- Thank you for all the hard work on the Finance Committee Report.

April 2021 Rector's Report – Rev. Mary Kay Brown, Rector

- There are new Bishop guidelines: As of May 30, 2021, churches can worship with no masks and/or no social distancing at the discretion of each Rector. Reopening Committee will meet again next week to discuss.
 - Can meet outside, people can sing.
 - Communion will continue with bread only, not wine.
 - The Rector can say we encourage masks inside, and will model behavior we want to see.
 - Question is what we can do and what we should do, and figuring that out.
 - People will have different ideas of what feels safe for regathering.
 - As of May 30th service, people no longer need to sign up for worship and no check-in table.
 - The Bishop will wear a mask indoors during visitations except when preaching or actively leading worship.
 - Comment: CDC messaging has been conflicting from the beginning of the pandemic. From the healthcare worker's perspective, will continue wearing a mask vaccinated or not.
 - We can make a recommendation to wear masks but may not want to mandate it.
 - Rev. Mary Kay will meet with a small group about re-opening and discuss how we will be clear from the beginning about the expectations regarding masks and social distancing at St. David's.
 - Music and singing by fully vaccinated people are allowed as comfortable by Rector.
 - It is the Rector's authority to decide for singers to be required to be vaccinated or not to sing at services.
 - Will see how it goes!
 - Rev. Mary Kay will send the Bishop's letter to the Register to distribute to the Vestry/Trustee/Staff list.
- Question: How has attendance at service been going? Not well, only 19 people signed up last Sunday. Is it too much of a chore to sign up? Maybe. So few people may not feel like church. The more people we have, the more it will seem like church.

- **Preschool:** Ann-Marie and Margie are leaving at the end of December 2021. We are so grateful to Ann-Marie and Margie for all their great work for the school. The Preschool Board met and the Preschool has asked to be careful about the announcement, would like it to be at the same time as the Preschool families find out. Ann-Marie and Margie leaving is a great loss to us. But we are all focused on what's best for the Preschool and confident in a smooth transition. We will also be flexible and fluid to do what works well for Ann-Marie and Margie as well. For the fall, the school has 98 children signed up and 19 children on a waiting list, so the Preschool as far as registration is all set up for a successful fall.
- **Question:** What does St. David's do to retain personnel, and as a church, are we making an effort to retain good people? Rev. Mary Kay talks with people to see what's going on. We don't have a lot of flexibility for financial incentives. We ask people to stay and tell them how valuable they are. We will talk more about that with the second parishioner comment during the Spiritual Discussion time.
- VBS is on for June. Thank you to Karen and Maureen for leading this.
- Confirmation with the Bishop's visit is set for June 20th. We have 13 youth and 5 adults being confirmed.
- The Pentecost picnic is this Sunday, bring your own chairs and food, no masks required since it is outside. Read social queues in regard to people's comfort with social distancing.
- We will honor graduating seniors on June 6, 2021.
- Rev. Mary Kay next shared a parishioner's comment and asked to please all listen. Parishioner Theresa Luby asked Rev. Mary Kay to share her email with the Vestry. Rev. Mary Kay stated that it is important to share hard things that are important, listen and discuss and respond after prayer and business. The email was read in its entirety. (See Parishioner Comment section on page one for details.)

Prayer: The prayer was created and read by Carol Bonifant, Chaplain to the Vestry.

Lord every morning we wake up is a gift from You. Don't let us forget it! You lavish gifts upon us that we think we are intitled to. For example, walking, talking, breathing, thinking, eating, on and on the list goes. If we are honest, we are not intitled, these are gifts with so many more mixed in. The things we think we have earned; our money, the promotion, our reputation, the success of family life, our skills, are all gifts from Christ our Savior. Out of Your Love Jesus, both the blessings and disappointments flow. We are Yours Father, so everything we are a part of, so are You! As we spend time with You Father, we discover whatever You call us to we have all the resources we need. When we are confident, we are following You, no matter how many twists or turns there are in the path, You will provide. Help us Holy Spirit to walk by faith, not by sight. In Your Name we pray, Amen.

Carol added a second freeform prayer.

New Business

Discussion: Virginia Covenantal Giving Plan and 2021 Pledge Analysis – David Sheatsley, Sr. Warden

- A presentation was included in the Vestry package generated by the Sr. Warden based on data provided by the Diocese. Also included was a PowerPoint presentation shared by Ken Royston, representing the Diocese, at the May 11th meeting of the Northern Piedmont Region.
- The analysis showed St. David's ranks 83rd among 179 churches for annual Diocesan pledge amount.
- The average St. David's Diocesan annual pledge is below average of Virginia churches.
- At the regional meeting, discussed the fact of how fragile giving to the Diocese is. The top 20 churches equal half of the Diocesan pledged revenue. The top 10 Episcopal churches account for one-third of the total pledge revenue for the Diocese.
- The Diocese is planning the implementation of a plan for Virginia Episcopal churches to give a 10% tithe to the Diocese of Virginia annually, based on the average of three years of the church's revenue from pledges, loose change and other support (line 13 from the annual Parochial Report.) If this plan were

implemented today, St. David's required pledge would be \$88K based on this new structure. St. David's 2021 pledge was \$12K.

- The Diocese will have teams to help churches get to this goal and there is no penalty if a church does not meet this requirement. Churches will be encouraged to meet this plan.
- The plan will be discussed further at the annual Diocesan Convention in November 2021, and the convention delegates will vote on its implementation.
- Question: Did the Finance Committee know about this upcoming change at the Diocese? Yes, but it was not discussed at the meeting.

Discussion: HVAC/PACE Update – Liz Whitlock, GM/Rohit Dean, Vestry

- The GM received the updated information on the HVAC and PACE programs this afternoon and has forwarded it to the Trustees for review.
- The GM will send it out to the Vestry tomorrow (Thursday) to digest the information prior to next Wednesday's Special Vestry Meeting on May 26, 2021 at 7pm.
- Please email the GM if you have questions about the information in the report ahead of time.
- All of the questions posed at the April 21, 2021 Vestry Meeting will be answered in the information to be provided tomorrow. In addition to PACE payments:
 1. What are the upfront costs including a) removing the old system (via crane through the roof) and b) the additional energy efficient improvements required? Any other upfront costs?
 2. What are the estimated repair costs when there is an issue with the system?
 3. What are the estimated maintenance costs and frequency required?
 4. What are supplies costs?
 5. What is the time commitment internally to manage everything over at least the time span of the payments?
 6. What is the consequence of doing nothing?
- The HVAC and PACE program information should also be shared with the parish prior to a Vestry vote being done, especially given the size of the debt instrument and longevity of the payments commitment.

Spiritual Discussion – Rev. Mary Kay Brown, Rector

See discussion of second parishioner comment under the Parishioner Comments section on page 1.

Old Business

Tabled.

- Business Cards Update – Anne Shively, Jr. Warden
- Welcome – Tabatha Bragg/Kondeh Greaves
- Marketing & Communications – Jen Peiler/Jenkins Cooper/David Sheatsley

Report Submitted: Stewardship & Planned Giving – Cooper/Bluhm/Shively/Whitlock

Although no verbal report was discussed, a written-up report was submitted.

Based on discussions held at the last Vestry team meeting, Jenkins Cooper was tasked with reaching out to Nancy W., Sharon E., Ricky B. and Jeff G., to get their insight and interest in serving on the 2021 Stewardship Team along with the Vestry liaisons: Bluhm, Cooper, Sheatsley and Shively.

Jenkins reached out to all four candidates, and while we have not received a firm commitment from any yet, they are all certainly interested but want more time to think about it and consult family. They would also like to know more about our vision and strategy and perhaps meet with the Vestry liaisons. It is planned to organize a meeting next week with all parties to discuss this matter further.

Ricky and Sharon also suggested that we sign up for the annual Diocesan Stewardship Workshop normally held in July. They noted that there is a lot to learn and take away from the workshop, including suggested stewardship themes, logos, resource materials, etc.

The next Special Vestry Meeting is Wednesday, May 26, 2021 at 7pm via Zoom.

Closing Prayer: The closing prayer was created and read by Carol Bonifant, Chaplain to the Vestry. The way You lavish us with gifts Jesus, empower us to lavish gifts on each other. Help us to pour out encouragement, confidence, support, listening, blessing, forgiving, upholding and more. The more we sit with You Jesus the more people will see You through our actions. In that we want to lavish on You! Holy Spirit, make it happen! Amen.

Adjournment – Rev. Mary Kay Brown adjourned the Vestry Meeting at 9:20 pm.

Respectfully Submitted:



Katherine Beckett-Goodwin, Register

May 24, 2021

Approved Motions:

- Approved the May 19, 2021 Vestry Meeting Agenda.
- Approved April 21, 2021 Vestry Meeting Minutes.