

Vestry Meeting Minutes
Grace and Holy Trinity Church
Richmond, Virginia
May 12, 2020

VIA ZOOM CONFERENCE CALL

Members Present: Thomas Ewers, Barbara Derry, Lisa Dawson, David Hetherington, Bill Perkins, Rosalie West, Lara Wulff, Glenn Moore, Todd Pawson, Nancy Trego, Carl Blackwell, Bev Eggleston, Martin Erb, Jodie Pully, Bill Queen (Interim Rector), and David Lewis (non-voting Register)

Members Absent: Kathleen Thomas and Elaine Quinn

Staff Present: Kim Reinholz and Barb Dodd

Guests: none

Opening Prayer

Bill Queen called the meeting to order at 5:04PM, and a quorum was declared. The vestry prayed the Lord's Prayer in unison.

Amend & Adopt Agenda

No amendments to the agenda were proposed. A motion was made and seconded to adopt the agenda, and the motion was unanimously approved.

Adoption of 4/14/2020 Vestry Minutes

The minutes from the April vestry meeting were amended to correct a grammatical error. A motion to adopt the amended minutes was seconded and carried unanimously.

Discussion & Adoption of Financial Reports

Discussion of the financial reports included:

1. observations that April was a good month,
2. notes that 54% of budgeted Red Door funds have been spent on account of bag lunches costing more,
3. questions about variation in operating expenses, with some declining because of building closure and others holding steady,
4. questions about how we might help other organizations in need if changes in our operations make money available,
5. comparison of the timing of last year's endowment payment with this year's,
6. a question about money in the checking account, and

7. how pledged income this year compares to the budget and pledged income as of this time last year.

The vestry is encouraged that so many pledges are current and hopes to avoid pledges falling behind as the COVID-19 situation changes and the year continues.

A motion made to adopt the report was seconded and unanimously approved.

Barb Dodd's report

Barb reported that pledges are holding steady, 25 pledges have been prepaid, and three substantial donations were made in April. Vestry members have made good connections with parishioners with calls and cards. Folks making the calls reported compliments regarding Sunday online worship.

An idea about recording five-minute videos depicting parishioners coping with life under lockdown was discussed. The generosity committee's plan for a legacy gathering for people who have remembered the parish in their estate plans will now move online. On 27 May and 3 June, catered meals will be delivered, and the gatherings will then proceed via a Zoom call.

Barb thanked the vestry for help making corrections to the parish database. She also reported on a recent stewardship webinar with the diocese about giving strategies. In past crises, churches have experienced a surge in initial giving but a slump as the crisis eases. Maintaining engagement is crucial, and the prayer project organized by Nancy Trego is one piece of that.

Children and Youth Report

See the printed report from Aaron Davis. The vestry also discussed very positive feedback on Aaron's online children's homilies and plans for children/youth/teen engagement as part of worship on Trinity Sunday. Paul Evans has been invited to preach. Kim will do the children's homily.

Interim Rector's Report

See the printed report. The vestry also discussed:

1. the mission working group. It has not started because potential members need to have a clear idea of what the group should accomplish before committing to it,
2. vestry participation in the service for our parish feast day/patronal festival on Trinity Sunday,
3. video contributions—in a variety of languages—for the Acts reading on Pentecost, and
4. the number of participants in the online Bible study of Matthew. The Bible study may continue with another book in the summer.

Associate Rector's Report

See the printed report. The following items were additionally discussed:

1. the hiring of a campus ministry employee who will take over tech support from Peter Womack. Peter will work until 10 June. The student will take over on 1 June, so there will be some overlap.
2. the resumption of in-person worship, which will follow guidelines from the bishop. More formal directions will be issued tomorrow, but live-streaming from church buildings is expected to be allowed on 22 May—with significant restrictions—well before we can return to in-person worship on Sundays. The vestry expressed concern for whatever restrictions would remain for in-person worship, particularly restrictions on music.
3. how we count attendance at online worship. Barb has a formula for translating views into attendance. It is an estimate, but one that can be filed in the parish register and used in the parochial report when the time comes. The numbers are robust, encouraging, and reflect the good work of the worship team.

Sr Warden's Report--Parish Portfolio Approval

As liaison with the discernment committee, the Sr. Warden presented the portfolio for discussion and approval. The portfolio was distributed before the meeting so the vestry could familiarize themselves with it and submit questions.

Discussion and questions concerned the meaning of a particular acronym, how the diocese would put the portfolio online, how long it would remain up, how candidates would apply, how many applicants the parish might expect, how the diocese would do an initial screening of applicants, whether COVID-19 would affect applications, and how candidates might be encouraged, however gently, to apply.

The vestry is satisfied that a great deal of work went into this document. It is a well-thought-out portfolio, and the discernment committee has done “a beautiful job.”

Thomas Ewers moved to approve the portfolio. Barbara Derry seconded the motion. The motion carried, 15-0, with every vestry member present voting in favor.

Upcoming Date

9 June, 5pm – Vestry Meeting via Zoom.

Vestry member's video summary

Martin Erb will provide a video synopsis of the meeting to be shared with the congregation through the online worship service on Sunday.

Adjournment with Prayer

Bill Queen concluded the meeting by leading the vestry in prayer, the text of which follows:

A prayer in times of distress when our only hope is in the Lord

Eternal God, shepherd of your people,
we feel the fleeting passage of life,
and know how fragile our existence is
on this tiny planet.

We confess with the prophet Isaiah:

‘All flesh is grass, and all its glory is like the flowers of the field.

The grass withers and the flowers fall . . .’

Yet we also confess: ‘The word of our God stands forever’.

Teach us to number our days,
that we may gain a heart of wisdom.

In our human frailty,
we look to you as frightened children look to their mother,
for you alone can comfort and sustain us.

Have mercy on us, O God.

Hear our cries to you our loving Father

and lead us all, as pilgrims,

through the darkest valley

into the light of the resurrection

of Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord. Amen.¹

The meeting was adjourned at 6:05 PM.

¹ Archbishop of Sydney’s Liturgical Panel. *Common Prayer: Resources for Gospel-Shaped Gatherings* (Sydney: Anglican Press Australia, 2012), 56.