

MINUTES OF THE VESTRY
ST. MATTHEW'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH, HILLSBOROUGH, NC
April 24, 2021

Present:

In Person: The Rev. Robert Fruehwirth, Rector; The Rev. Lisa Frost-Phillips, Associate Rector; Jim Charton, Junior Warden; Maria Costello; Elizabeth Hays; Blythe Thompson; Sonja Tilley; Vera Shanley; Edward Wright; Madeline Liddicoat; Lindsay Efland; Mary Ann Plambeck, Clerk of the Vestry
Via Zoom: Jehanne Gheith, Senior Warden; Steve Hutson; Conrad Fulkerson.

Absent: None

The Rev. Fruehwirth called the meeting to order at 9:35 am. The meeting was held in person and remotely by Zoom adhering to diocesan and governmental recommendations for social distancing and wearing of face mask following Covid-19 precautions for meeting in person.

The Senior Warden, Jehanne Gheith offered a prayer to open the meeting.

The Rev. Fruehwirth led the group in an ice breaker exercise, "A funny thing happened to me on the way through the global pandemic..."

I. Approval of March Minutes – All

No corrections were made to the March minutes.

ACTION: Dr. Shanley motioned to approve the minutes from the March vestry meeting. Mr. Fulkerson seconded the motion, and the vestry voted unanimously to approve the March minutes.

II. Finances and Stained-Glass Window Repair- Jim Charton, Junior Warden

- Finance report will be deferred this month due to the parish Bookkeeper needing to recover from surgery.
- Mr. Charton, Junior Warden is seeking Vestry approval for funding to proceed with repairs and restorations to the middle window on the right side of the church. The total cost of the project is roughly \$18,770.99 of which half is available in Stained-Glass window funds (\$7300). The church has the remaining funds to cover the cost, but further discussion will take place at the next Vestry meeting to determine payment source.
- The Rev. Fruehwirth suggested a fundraiser to raise funds for the payment of the stained glass window repair and for support of the Re-Entry House. Conversation took place around the idea of a fundraiser with Dr. Shanley feeling the two projects should be separate and Ms. Tilley feeling the fundraiser could be for both. Further discussion around the fundraiser was tabled to next Vestry meeting.

Action: Dr. Shanley motioned to proceed with funding of the stained- glass window repair and restoration. Mr. Hutson seconded the motion. The Vestry voted unanimously to approve the funding.

III. Associate Rector Report – The Rev. Lisa Frost-Phillips

- Holy week and Easter were rich and full, with services offered in person and virtually.
- The Rev. Frost-Phillips is transitioning from primary focus on Pastoral Care to primary focus on Social Ministries

- JU has begun a new campaign to identify where it will focus its efforts for change in Orange County. It is currently listening to the needs and concerns of its members to help identify those and St. Matthew's will be conducting several small group listening sessions in May
- Social Ministries has just completed several disbursements of its Covid funds through RDF and budgetary funds, including support for LEAP, an Episcopal preschool ministry in Durham for Latina children, and Episcopal Farmworker Ministry- a joint ministry of the eastern and NC diocese of our church. It has decided to fund Episcopal Farmworker Ministry
- Robb Smylie is exploring with RJRC the possibility of using the Episcopal based curriculum Sacred Ground to explore issues of racial equity, justice and reconciliation using different sources materials and small group facilitation.
- Children and Youth:
 - Annual Youth Service is going to be held on Mother's Day, May 9.
 - Kim is beginning to have more in person youth gatherings
 - Kim getting married May 21, and will be off for 3 weeks.
 - There will be a regional Confirmation Service in June. Date and location yet to be determined but it is hoped at least one scheduled will be at St. Matthew's.
- The Rev. Lisa Frost-Phillips also has been participating in a monthly Continuing Education program on Bowen theory, pastoral care and family systems, which will continue through August.

IV. Rector Report with Updates – The Rev. Robert Fruehwirth

The Rector's Report is attached.

Correction to the report, the in-person Eucharist was for residents or Carol Woods, not Brookshire.

Kate Wisz is planning a parish wide women's spiritual group.

Rick Brewer is starting a men's group.

John Oxaal will begin a program looking at economic issues facing us as a society; begins online April 29.

VI. Senior Warden Report – Dr. Jehanne Gheith

Reminded Vestry if they have not completed their Vestry or Rector Review forms to please do so and send it to Bill Kodros by Mar 1, 2021.

VII. Junior Warden Report – James Charton

The Junior Warden's Report is attached

A few highlights:

- Directional signs have been changed from Ruffin to Parrish House
- The hydrant is a private hydrant and will need to be inspected and tested at a cost of \$900. Trying to get clarification from Fire Marshall on the frequency and process. Maybe every 3 years. Recommends adding this cost to the budget.
- Gutter Guards installation to occur this month.
- Engineering Study for the Rectory foundation was completed.
 - May 10th — Asbestos and some of the existing HVAC ductwork will be removed and replaced with a smaller properly size ductwork. This will free up space in the crawl space for other work. This will be paid for out of the custodial account for Rectory maintenance and improvement, which has a current balance over \$38000.
- May 8th Parish workday with May 15 as back up day.
- Mr. Charton had hoped stickers with revised building names would be installed last week. It has not been completed yet, but it will hopefully happen soon.

VIII. Outgoing Class Resigns/Appointment of 3 New Members- The Rev. Robert Fruehwirth

The following Vestry members have resigned from the Vestry: Jehanne Gheith, Jim Charton and Conrad Fulkerson.

Rev. Fruehwirth thanked Mr. Charton for his outstanding work as Junior Warden. Rev Fruehwirth thanked Ms. Gheith for her discernment of a new rector and leading through a pandemic. She led with sensitivity and grace. Rev Fruehwirth thanked Mr. Fulkerson for his levity, wisdom, and love. Due to Covid restrictions there was no Annual Parish Meeting, and our by-laws do not allow? remote Annual Meeting. Following Diocesan recommendations, we held a straw poll in lieu of an election, and will use the by-law on vestry appointment of new vestry members in vacated positions to appoint 3 new vestry members. A straw poll was completed in March, and the following members were selected to serve Edward Wright, Madeline Liddicoat, and Lindsay Efland.

Action: Dr. Shanley moved to approve the straw poll winners as new members of the Vestry for a 3-year term. Mr. Hudson seconded the motion. The Vestry voted unanimously to approve the Vestry members.

- **Outgoing class blessing for the group.**

- Mr. Charton: Reflected on the numerous challenges and decisions his class faced. During difficult times you can find outcomes that are agreeable and satisfying for all if you practice honesty and civility.
- Ms. Gheith: Proud to see the church through this time of transition. It was a time of growth and working together (Ruffin House to Parrish House, New Rector, Education building). She wishes smooth sailing to the Vestry.
- Mr. Fulkerson: Do not be surprised by the amount change yet to come. Your journey will be a time of transformation.

IX. Appointment of Senior and Junior Wardens - The Rev. Robert Fruehwirth

Following the traditional practice of the parish Vestry, The Rev. Fruehwirth as rector put forth a slate nominating Elizabeth Hays as Senior Warden and Blythe Thompson as Junior Warden. In the coming year, The Rector will work with the Senior Warden to have the Vestry actively involved in the nomination of the Junior Warden, thus adhering more closely to our parish by-laws.

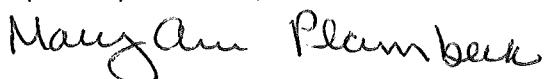
Action: Dr. Shanley moved the appointment of Elizabeth Hays as Senior Warden and Blythe Thompson and Junior Warden. Mr. Wright second the motion. The Vestry voted unanimously to approve the nomination.

X. Review Vestry Meeting Date and Time- Ms. Tilley

Ms. Tilley mentioned it is customary to evaluate the best day and time for the Vestry to meet for the next year. Currently the Vestry meets on the Third Tuesday of the month at 6 pm.

Action: Ms. Hays will survey the group a propose a day and time for the next year Vestry.

Respectfully submitted,



Mary Ann Plambeck
Clerk of the Vestry

Attachments: Rector's Report to Vestry, Junior Warden's Report to the Vestry

RECTOR'S REPORT TO VESTRY

APRIL 24, 2021

Reflecting on the Month Past

Since we last met, we have celebrated Holy Week and Easter, and begun having services in the church. To be able, for the first time, to celebrate Holy Week and Easter with you was a blessing for me, and our combination of in-person outside and Zoom services was rich and rewarding. I am super grateful to the vestry volunteers and our amazing staff and interns for putting Holy Week together. Everybody pitched in and made something beautiful. Also, beginning to have small services in the church again has proven profoundly meaningful. Vera and Jim Shanley helped us to offer a service for parishioners at Brookshire inside Saint Matthews, and we have started to offer weekly in person services on Wednesdays at noon.

In March, we also held our straw poll to guide the vestry at this meeting in the appointment of new vestry members for full 3 year terms, as Jim and Jehanne and Conrad conclude their time with us. The three people chosen by the parish, in the first ballot were Edward Wright, Madeline Liddicoat, and Lindsay Efland. I have had conversations with those not chosen about their continuing leadership in the parish.

Also of central importance for our discernment later on in this retreat, we held a parish conversation over Zoom on April 24. The basic conclusion of this conversation was that the top priority for the parish as we come out of the pandemic is to prioritize events that allow us to be together again in person and celebrate our fellowship. I have appended to the end of this report the summary email I sent earlier.

Looking to the Month Ahead

Given the above reflections, the next month seems to me to be about creating opportunities for in-person worship and, as diocesan guidelines allow, other meetings for fellowship, especially outside. We are still waiting on the permission to have shared meals, or even picnics, and I believe this should be issued fairly soon. For worship services, because our church can seat roughly 30 people, distanced and masked, I am planning to follow the model of the Brookshire service and to target two groups of parishioners who have been most absent in the pandemic: 1) those who normally come to physical worship but who have not joined us on Zoom 2) families with children. Further, I plan to continue the Wednesday noon Eucharists in the church.

Church personnel matters

- Kate Wisz has begun her internship with us. She is starting by assisting with worship, being involved with Justice United and organizing the leadership for a parish-wide women's spirituality group.
- The Rev. Para Drake has also begun her ministry: joyfully planning a support group for those caring for loved ones with dementia. David McDuffie is assisting her.
- Duke has assigned us two summer interns: Austin Stapella and Anita Salazar. I have yet to meet them. Their assignment with us is from May 30th through August 8th.


Items to note

- **Means and Ends**, a program looking at economic issues facing us as a society, and organized by John Oxaal, begins online April 29. The speakers are organized from a more conservative

point of view, but the aim is to have rational conversation about complex issues such as the role of government in the market, education, and healthcare.

- **Diocesan Service, Sunday May 2, 10am** I am following the Bishops' suggestion and will be sending the parish to a diocesan-wide worship service rather than offering our usual Zoom morning prayer. The bishops offered this as a gift to clergy and lay leaders to give them a break during Easter.

Faithfully,



The Rev. Robert Fruehwirth

Email summation of Parish Conversation, March 24

Dear Vestry and Staff,

Last night I called the parish together for a discussion about our common life. This was following up the Parish Meeting on February 21 and in response to the Vestry's desire to host a conversation with the parish about what is most meaningful in the parish's life and how we can support that.

The conversation took place in the special context in which we now find ourselves of emerging out of the pandemic. This shaped the entire conversation.

I said at the start that the main aim of the conversation was to catch the mood, the drift of the parish, and to pick up perhaps some particulars about what was most missed and what we'd most like to do.

I asked the people present (36) over zoom to reflect on what was most meaningful for them in the life of the parish, and in the parish's extension to the community around itself. I also asked them to make a suggestion to the Vestry/Rector about what to be mindful of. They broke up into small groups and reported back in plenary.

The conversation was good. I made notes on *Padlet*, and I have attached the resulting image. Green items are things we love/miss about the parish. Reds are outreach specifics, Yellows are more general outreach-y items. Purple are general or misc reflections on going forward.

Here is the message that came out of the meeting:

What we want most of all, more than anything else at this point, is to gather back together, enjoy fellowship, eat together, pray together, have Eucharist and eventually sing together. We want to celebrate our parish life with a lightness of spirit and strategically identify ways to celebrate the preciousness of people, of life, of the community. We could, for instance, as we come back from pandemic, find ways to tell, hear, celebrate and enjoy individuals' stories. This links further with the emerging desire to tell our parish history as a story of love that grounds our engagement in the community. This also begins to lay the groundwork for our bicentennial of refounding in 2025.

The mood of the parish, as we come out of the pandemic, is thus to find ways to reconnect, worship and pray and celebrate and have fun together. While our ongoing ministries in Social Justice (e.g. JU) and invitations to spiritual formation events won't cease – they would not in this picture have top priority, say, over the summer.

All of this is a delicate dance – and let's remember that as a growing parish with a lot of talented lay leaders, we are able to do more than one thing at a time. People who want now to push deeper into reflection on racism, people who want to do more work on the spirituality of listening or contemplative prayer, people who want to engage more with Jesus in the Scriptures – our team of leaders and volunteers can continue to make space for these things to happen. Of course; it would be silly to stop these! And a lot of outreach ministries also provide time to have fun together. But what came out of last night was a call, and a delight, to give energy specifically to making plans to celebrate our re-gathering and provide for fellowship, recognizing that coming out the pandemic will nonetheless be gradual and touch and go for a period.

After re-gathering, and being nourished again, we will then have more strength to turn and reach out more to the community, and we will be ready to move as a parish more deeply into spiritual formation as well.

For now, I wanted to share these results with you. I imagine the next step is to create a vestry sub-committee to work on these plans for the summer. Let's get through Holy Week first, and come back to this in April.

With thanks,

Robert

Junior Warden's Report

April 24, 2021

Currently Completed or in Progress:

- Campus directional signs have been amended with Parish stickers replacing Ruffin.
- St Matthew's phone system is totally converted to OOMA VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) with the exception of the two Sanctuary phones (one alarm the other voice) which will remain with Spectrum.
- Charles McCamy joined the Churchyard Committee and will initially focus on cleaning and maintaining the grave stones. The Committee has been meeting regularly on Tuesdays to remove ivy from the trees.
- In discussions with the Hillsborough Fire Marshall to determine permit process and requires testing of our "private" fire hydrant. The hydrant was tested recently at a cost of \$900.
- Engineering evaluation of the structural elements in the Rectory Crawl space has been completed and recommendations made. Scope and estimate for repairs will be determined once the asbestos taped ductwork is removed and new ductwork installed.
- The Fine Arts and Furnishings Committee ordered fabric to reupholster 8 side chairs in the Graebner Room.

Scheduled to be done:

- Gutter Guards installation for the Education Building is scheduled for w/o May 3rd.
- Proposals for asbestos removal, air clearance report and installation of new ductwork have been approved (\$6775 funded by Rectory account) and tentatively scheduled to be completed by mid-May.
- April 24th Vestry approval for funding of Stained-Glass window repair is needed to maintain June-September repair and reinstall. Total cost is \$18,770.99 of which roughly half is available in Stained-Glass window fund. Terms are 5% down, 25% at time of order (both covered by fund), 50% progress payment and 20% final payment (September).
- Parish workday May 8th with May 15th rain date.
- Schedule the next Junior Warden's Society quarterly meeting focusing on repairs to structural elements in the Rectory crawl space.