

EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE HOLY SPIRIT NOVEMBER 19, 2019, VESTRY MINUTES

Action/Date Due
for Review/
Assigned To

Date: November 19, 2019 **Time Started:** 5:00 pm **Time Ended:** 7:30 pm

Next Regular Meeting: 5:00pm, Tuesday, **December 17**, 2019. Vestry reports due by **Saturday, December 14**.

Members Present: Jim Woodruff, Junior Warden; Debra Alexander; Loraine Hilty; Mary Maupin; Michael Smith; Donna Turnbaugh

Members Absent: Barbara Moloney, Senior Warden; Mary Jo Sparrow; Cristi Johnson; Adam Reda

Other Attendees: David McNair, Rector; Bill Sewell, Treasurer; Tyler Jones, Deacon; Lorrie Cooper, Clerk

DISCUSSION/FINDINGS/CONCLUSIONS

AGENDA ITEM: **Welcome, Opening Prayer** (*David McNair*)

AGENDA ITEM: **Vestry Minutes Approval: October** (*Clerk, Lorrie Cooper*)

Approved as written.

AGENDA ITEM: **Review of October Financial Reports/Stewardship Considerations** (*Bill Sewell*)

Stewardship: David asks for suggestions on how to encourage people to be more mindful of their financial pledges. Debra recounted her own experience of being informed by a recent report made at the church service, in which a percentage of the deficit was presented. She believes the financial situation ought to be verbally expressed to the parish. Question: Should someone from the Finance Committee stand up and report on the deficit until budget is reached? It would call attention to the reality that pledges are still short.

October Finances: Expenses are in line for the year to date. Office supplies are still running head of budget. Balance sheet: 50 thousand available in checking account. Still receiving information related to 2020 budget. Good response this past Sunday to the pledge campaign. Final budget numbers probably will not be available until January. Vestry will finalize budget for approval at Parish Meeting after recommendations from the Finance Committee.

October Minutes
approved.

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David reminds us that the Vestry that it makes the final decision about the budget. The Finance Committee gives input, but the Vestry has the responsibility of making the final decisions.

AGENDA ITEM: Jr. Warden's Report *(Jim Woodruff)*

1. The part needed for rinse arm of the dishwasher was replaced by Rod — with some help from others. Though the dishwasher worked without this part, it is now functioning better.
2. The front of the church was cleaned of the dead annuals and perennials.
3. It's best that the AC and heat furnaces be maintained by the Jr. Warden. In the spring we will have Mountain Air Mechanical begin their twice-yearly service of all AC and heating units.
4. Question: should carpet cleaning wait until Advent season is over and then be scheduled for January?
5. I will service the two lawn mowers so they are ready for April mowing.
6. I intend to remove dead leaves from obvious areas around the church and will ask for assistance in this task.
7. Moles are a new issue in the Memorial Garden. They also have appeared outside the door of the room with the second piano.
8. I'll get help with the path to Memorial Garden. The surface needs replenishing with more "granite fines" covering. This covering prevents ground water from running onto the path.
9. I'll check that gutters are cleared of dead leaves once the trees have finished dropping their leaves.
10. Debra Alexander has requested using the former Kindermusik room containing the second piano for use by the choir. She can elaborate on her request. Question: should the room still be locked when not in use?

Debra discussed use of the room with second piano for choir practice. Room needs to be tidied up. The filing cabinet with music can be moved into the room. Both pianos were tuned earlier in the day. (\$500 cost for the second piano) There was a question about whether the temperature of that room would affect the ability of the piano to stay properly tuned. Affecting it more than temperature fluctuation is moisture in the room, says the tuner.

After Sunday's service, the Jr. Warden was approached by someone who complained about the amount of talking in the Sanctuary before the service being a distraction from Teresa's prelude. David will do some friendly reminders to the congregation, requesting that if people need to have conversations, they ought to stay out of the sanctuary, entering only at the beginning of the service. This item will be discussed as Old Business at the next Vestry meeting to review the progress.

Jr. Warden will spot clean the sanctuary carpeting before the January professional cleaning of the entire carpet. David recommends Jim talk with Linda Tull about the carpet.

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The Jr. Warden has received no requests for other repairs inside the church and is open for suggestions.

AGENDA ITEM: Rector's Report *(David McNair)*

The following was sent to the Vestry as a basis for the meeting's discussion:

NEXT STEPS for Vestry and ECHS:

1. Present a public statement from the Vestry to the parish stating what we have learned through the discernment process related to the question of whether or not to become a Sanctuary Host Church (Sometime about the first of November)
2. Write a prayer/collect that collects our prayer as we move forward together – (Ty volunteered to spearhead this.)
3. Present a survey to the congregation eliciting reflection and feedback related to our common life and mission. (Barbara will work on this and send out prompt to Vestry. It was noted by Mary Jo that there had been a very good/effective survey used with the congregation some years ago. Barbara volunteered to seek to locate this former survey).
4. * Public gathering with The Discernment Group – David will check with Sandra Smith about the possibility of contracting with The Discernment Group about working with our congregation for a session or two and about their fee for this service.
5. Listening – congregation can tell us what we “should have done.”
6. **HOMEWORK:** The Vestry will review the “What we Have Learned” statements from our May 7, 2019 Special Vestry meeting (printed below) and consider other lessons learned/gleamed BEFORE our Vestry meeting on Oct. 15 at 5:00 p.m. We will reconsider these lessons learned together at our meeting and compile a new “What We Have Learned” list, which we will share with the congregation in the near future.

* Discernment Group costs are being shared with the Diocese. David views it as "Church Therapy." He believes that sometimes it's necessary to have help from the outside. "We can't afford NOT to do this," says David, who wants to communicate with the parish what the Vestry has learned about discernment and Holy Listening. A statement is needed for sharing with the congregation at the January meeting.

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Updates:

1. Bob Johnson is home, doing better, and expects to recover fully from his stroke. He appears to have no impairments.
2. Jack Poisson will be coming to next Sunday's service.
3. White blood cell meds are producing improvement in Esther M., who is dealing with leukemia. She believes her immune system will be strong enough to allow her to attend church service eventually.
4. Cal Wilson is not doing well.
5. There's no word on Lucas. Morgan appreciates hearing from us and asks that greeting cards for Lucas go through her.
6. Thanks to Lorraine (and Amanda) for attending the annual convention. Lorraine said the workshop they attended was outstanding, and she will report more fully about it at a later time.
7. A Thanksgiving Meal will happen here at the church.
8. There will be only one Christmas Eve service. Possibly there will be an Advent Pageant.
9. The Annual Meeting is scheduled for January 26.

AGENDA ITEM: Old Business *(David McNair)*

Barbara has been working on a survey, which may have been finalized.

What We Have Learned: (a rewrite from May 7, 2019 Vestry meeting, still a draft):

- * Some believe the Vestry can't be trusted. In the future Vestry members must identify themselves to those whom they represent and attend congregational meetings in order to hear feedback from the congregation.
- * *Expectations needed to be clear and agreed upon by both Vestry and congregation.* **
- * The congregation needed regular updates of progress on sanctuary discernment.
- * The discernment committees should have consulted ECHS members who actually volunteered at the UU Sanctuary.
- * Communication, transparency, and openness should have characterized the discernment process.
- * There should have been open participation in the discernment process. Any discernment process should be open to all. In the future, members need to be aware of how to access Vestry and how to be part of working groups.
- * Vestry needs to advertise that anyone is welcome to attend and participate (though not vote) in Vestry meetings, through after-service announcements as well as through the Mountain Spirit.
- * We need ground rules for communication: e-mail communication in conflictual situations is NOT constructive.

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- * Those with opposing viewpoints should have been treated with respect.
- * *We should have clarified the purpose of the meetings, presented the plan, and received feedback. ***
- * Feasibility studies should have involved more members of the congregation throughout the process.
- * Feasibility studies should have been open to anyone who wanted to participate.
- * A feasibility study should have been based on verifiable facts.
- * There may be unhealed wounds left over from a past division experienced by ECHS.
- * Initial evaluation of safety concerns should have begun by having a qualified law enforcement official inspect the building and report areas of concern.
- * We should have considered thoroughly the safety and well being of hosted persons, taking into account their mental and physical health.
- * We should have considered the consequences of hosting on other outreach ministries.

Sanctuary Issue

When discussing whether or not ECHS would become a Sanctuary Host Church, it was unfortunate that we failed in significant ways to provide sanctuary to one another by being intentional and mindful to maintain an atmosphere of safety and respect. The following are some steps that we hope will allow us to provide sanctuary to one another in the future.

1. Communicate to members of ECHS that all are welcome to attend committee meetings and to join any committee. The intent of establishing an all-inclusive welcome is to avoid the perception that a committee is “stacked” or biased with only like-minded persons.
2. **Communicate** regularly with the congregation through regular progress reports/updates in our ECHS publications and verbally during Sunday announcements.
3. Provide feedback opportunities for the church leadership and members of ECHS when important decisions are being considered. In retrospect, it would have been helpful/wise to gather key ECHS leaders to review the Sanctuary Report recommendations to glean feedback prior to having a congregation meeting.
4. Establish guidelines for listening and respect at the outset of meetings/gathering where people may have conflicting opinions. Communicate that each person will have an opportunity to share their honest feedback and opinions and that these will be respectfully heard and received.
5. If at any time during a congregational meeting the agreed upon guidelines are NOT being honored then this needs to be named and addressed as highest priority.

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6. Encourage ministry/committee leaders to share reports regarding their particular ministry at our Annual meeting and/or at Vestry meetings. For example, it would have been helpful to ensure that someone involved in Sanctuary efforts at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation, Asheville (UUCA) was tasked to give regular update reports to our congregation.

AGENDA ITEM: New Business *(David McNair)*

Vestry nominations and the procedure for selecting nominees and presenting them to the Parish resulted in a long discussion. David will study carefully the details of the canon on Vestry in the Canons of our diocese, and the matter will be dealt with at the December meeting. There is some urgency, since nominees must be presented at the annual meeting in January.

Next regular Vestry Meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, December 17, 2019, beginning at 5:00pm.**
Reports are due by midnight **Saturday, December 14, 2019.**

Respectfully submitted,
Lorrie Cooper, Clerk