

THE CHURCH OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

VESTRY ZOOM MEETING

Monday, May 18, 2020

Vestry Members Present: Jack Boyne, Jan Harris, Christie Barbee, Jamey Bass, Maggie Fyfe, Anna Howard, Kevin LeCount, Caryn Meade, Chas Sharp, Michael Springston, Sheldon Smith, Rob Zucker, Cle Newsom-Registrar and Kirk Royal-Parish Administrator.

Absent: Caryl Fuller, Treasurer

Clergy Present: The Rt. Rev. Sam Rodman, Bishop of Diocese of NC
The Rev. Imogen Rhodenhiser
The Rev. Joyce C. Cunningham

The meeting was called to order by Rev. Imogen Rhodenhiser at 6:09pm.

I. Opening Prayer:

Rev. Joyce read from Jan Richardson's "Blessing in the Chaos" as our opening prayer.

II. Approval of the April Minutes

A motion was made by Anna Howard to approve the April minutes. Seconded by Jan Harris. Motion carried. The following corrections were made to this meeting's agenda: the date was changed to May 18th, and the location of the meeting was listed as Zoom.

III. Introduction and Comments

Bishop Sam Rodman stated it was a joy to be a part of Sunday's worship service. He complimented the creativity of the team; adapting to the times with inspiring worship services at a time when we cannot worship together. He and Rev. Imogen have talked about an upcoming confirmation service, which is expected to be in late summer or early fall. Bishop Sam apologized for not being able to attend the Red Carpet ceremony as expected. He hopes to join us for an in-person ceremony honoring our graduating seniors.

IV. Rector's Report

The Vestry congratulated Rev. Imogen on her pregnancy and the purchase of a new home. Rev. Imogen complimented the church staff, including Rev. Joyce and Rev. Nancy, of their good humor and commitment to running the Church office.

V. Interim Associate Rector Report

Rev. Joyce stated she is thankful for the blessings she has including her health, family, friends, and the nurturing she has received. She encourages us to find joy in the present moment.

Rev. Joyce mentioned the book study of Joy of Being Yourself is continuing. It is a small group but they have lively discussions.

She also stated the Adult Confirmation class is a joy with great discussions.

Last week, Rev. Joyce attended the Congregations for Social Justice meeting, and plans to join the group individually next week. They are considering working with One Wake on joint efforts.

VI. Senior Warden's Report (Written report attached and made a part of these minutes)

Jack Boyne noted that all in-person activities have been cancelled since March 12, 2020, which has affected our incoming pledges. The Endowment Trust Fund was negatively affected by the financial market volatility. The Endowment Trust Committee decided to give a small allocation to the operating expenses; however, the amount is within the budgeted amount.

Two Open House tours have occurred with the leaders from the Mennonite Church (7 people each time). They were very excited and impressed with our facilities.

Even though in-person contributions have decreased due to virus, our pledges for April 2020 exceeded our pledges for April 2019. Jack gave credit to the Kirk Royal and the newsletters for encouraging our parishioners to give online. Our parishioners have been generous and it is most appreciated.

VII. Junior Warden's Report (Written report attached and made a part of these minutes)

Jan Harris gave an update that the air conditioning is back on in the Parish Life Center. She also noted that the pipe repair required by the fire systems/equipment inspection by Pye-Barker, has now been completed. The elevator inspection has been completed with no issues. She thanked the Building and Grounds Committee for their work.

VIII. Update on Raleigh Mennonite Church

Rev. Imogen stated that she, Ed Sharp and Jack Boyne met with the two groups of leaders from the Mennonite Church and gave them a tour of our facilities. The tours were divided into two groups so that social distancing could be observed; all participants wore masks. Their reactions to Shepherd's Hall were that it was beyond their expectations. They considered our church to be a "community", not just a venue that wanted to partner with them.

Jack stated he had received only 8 reactions from our parishioners and those were positive and encouraging. Rev. Imogen had received 6 follow up questions from the Mennonite Church leaders. They would like to make a few upgrades, such as installing motorized blinds, which they would pay for at their expense if approved.

Rev. Imogen would like to organize a small team to review the proposed agreement with the Mennonite Church.

Anna Howard asked if we were their only option, or were they considering other venues as well. Rev. Imogen does not believe they are looking at other options.

IX. Update: Online Worship

The online worship services will continue at least until July 1. Starting next Sunday, the participants will be wearing masks if they are in the presence of others. We are adapting to a new way of worship that includes pre-recorded singing. There will be additional pre-recorded segments that will be edited into the final online experience. Rev. Imogen is assembling a small team to focus on the Reopening of CGS for in-person worship services and formation and fellowship gatherings. Rev. Imogen suggested Meredith Swindell and Tristin Carpenter as potential members of this group, and invited Vestry members to contact her with the names of others who might be well-suited to the task.

For online services, the preacher may remove her/his mask during the sermon as long as the cameraperson is at least 20 feet away and there are no other people in the filming room. Rev. Imogen asked the Vestry which they preferred; a pre-recorded segment with the preacher with no mask, or a recorded segment with the preacher masked and other clergy and participants close by. The Vestry preferred the no mask option.

Bishop Sam is hopeful of transitioning to in-person worship services in early July. Attendees must wear masks. There are no clear plans for communion. Some other churches are considering outdoor services. The Bishop's office is in contact with other churches to work out a sensible and safe plan for future worship services.

Anna asked about the language currently on the Diocese website about wearing masks. Anna has seasonal allergies. Bishop Sam said they needed to look at the language because it was not meant to restrict people who knew their symptoms were not related to COVID-19.

Christie Barbee asked if CGS would be allowed to hold an outdoor event or worship service in a park, or other like setting. Bishop Sam said yes.

Caryn Meade asked for confirmation that only 25 people, including clergy and other leaders, would be allowed to attend in-person services. Jack asked if the size of the church is a consideration for the 25-person limit. Bishop Sam stated the size of the church was not a consideration, and that 25-person limit is not an attempt to have a one-size-fits-all solution. Many factors were considered. It is harder to maintain social distancing in larger areas because of the movement of people. Jan asked if we could hold simultaneous services in the church sanctuary and in Shepherd's Hall, with 25 people in both areas. Bishop Sam replied that medical experts say no. He also noted that all services do not have to be on Sundays. Or, we could also have additional services in the same place, but at different times. Another suggestion was to have parishioners sign up for the times they wished to attend in-person services. Rev. Imogen thinks that Sundays work well. Her inclination is to continue the recordings and offer a daily Eucharist during the week, perhaps with reservations.

Anna asked what is the best way to welcome a newcomer, given the 25-person limit and social distancing. Bishop Sam said his office would be providing more information later on this issue.

Maggie Fyfe heard on the radio that people with mobility and/or health issues feel welcomed and included in the online services offered by their church. She further suggested we think about a "Picnic with Preacher" in a park with social distancing. Bishop Sam endorsed the idea as long as there was adequate planning. Jan suggested we could rent park facilities with ample open space so that we might enjoy a church picnic. Christie mentioned Fletcher Park might be a good option for us.

X. Learning More: One Wake

Rev. Joyce led the discussion on One Wake with Sheldon Smith and Maggie Fyfe also joining in. Rev. Joyce has been involved with One Wake for about 3 years, and has talked to an organizer who could come to a Vestry meeting to familiarize our members on its purpose and focus.

Last week, Rev. Joyce sent the Vestry members a proposal that the CGS join this organization. Rev. Imogen would like a small group formed to continue discussions on whether we should proceed or not. Information about this group can be found in the material that Rev. Joyce sent to the Vestry members, and on their website of www.onewake.org.

Sheldon stated that he, Maggie and Rev. Joyce recently attended a first meeting with about 160 other participants. There were many different faiths and ethnicities represented. There are 4 local Episcopal churches that are members of One Wake. Maggie felt the One Wake priorities are in line with what our Vestry would like to accomplish. Bishop Sam also noted that the NC Diocese contributed \$5,000 dollars to One Wake for work in our community.

Rev. Joyce said One Wake had a press conference this morning to spur support for rental assistance in Wake County with a goal of \$5 million dollars. She will send a video to the Vestry that includes an introduction to One Wake.

All questions should be directed to Maggie Fyfe. Should we decide to join One Wake, we would need to contribute .5% of our operating budget for 2020, and then 1.0% of our operating budget for 2021. Our 2020 operating budget is \$799,720; therefore our contribution for 2020 would be

\$3,998.60 and for 2021 would be approximately \$8,000 assuming minor changes to our budget. Our 2020 Outreach budget was increased to \$6,000 designated for “Church Mission/Beyond Our Doors”.

Rev. Imogen noted that some newcomers recently have asked about our involvement in One Wake. She further noted the Rector’s Discretionary fund helps individuals with immediate needs. Due to the COVID-19 and sharp reduction in incoming funds, many churches are not able to help on a larger scale. Rev. Imogen stated we should learn about the community and find new ways to serve alone and in partnership with others.

XI. Treasurer’s Report (Written report attached and made a part of these minutes)

Jamey Bass reported that we received a gift of approximately \$35,000 from Eric Ennis’ estate that is classified as unrestricted funds. The Finance Committee recommended that we use the funds toward the Parish Life Center (PLC) building loan. A motion was made by Anna and seconded by Jan to use the funds toward the PLC loan. Motion passed.

XII. Closing Remarks

Bishop Sam noted that he was grateful for the partnership with CGS. He is appreciative that CGS will host the upcoming ordination on June 6 of four transitional deacons. The service will be limited to 20 people.

Kevin LeCount wanted to thank St. Paul’s Episcopal Church of Winston-Salem for taking care of him during his hospital stay at the Wake Forest Baptist Hospital. They were very supportive and took care of his pastoral needs. Rev. Joyce mentioned that she has contacted St. Paul’s to thank them for Kevin’s care.

XIII. Closing Prayer

Bishop Sam led us in a closing prayer. A motion to adjourn was voiced by Jan and seconded by Jamey. The motion passed and the meeting was adjourned at 7:58pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Cle E. Newsom