

# THE PARISH OF THE ADVENT

## MINUTES OF THE VESTRY

**Type:** Regular Meeting

**Date:** May 19, 2020

***Via Remote Communication***

A regular meeting of the Vestry of the Parish of the Advent was held on the nineteenth day of May, *anno Domini nostri Iesu Christi 2020*, via remote communication through Zoom, the Rector presiding.

The following fifteen members of the Vestry were present, twelve of whom were present at the meeting's commencement, thus constituting a quorum:

The Rev'd Douglas E. Anderson (Rector)  
Mr. C. Thomas Brown (Rector's Warden)  
Mr. Paul J. Roberts (People's Warden)  
Mr. Adam C. Rutledge (Treasurer)  
Mr. Frederick A. Ou (Clerk)  
Miss Lynda J. Blair  
Mr. John M. Boyd  
Miss Amanda W. Daley  
Mr. Thatcher L. Gearhart  
Mr. Dustin E. Henderson  
Dr. David E. Lapin  
Dr. Philip W. Le Quesne  
Mrs. Carolyn P. McDermott  
Dr. Brent D. Nelson  
Mr. Francesco M. Piscitelli

The Rector, after ensuring that all those participating could hear each other and be heard by one another at the same time, called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. and offered an opening prayer.

### **I. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

The Rector presented the minutes of the last regular meeting of the Vestry, held on April 23, 2020. After review, upon motion, duly made and seconded, it was

**RESOLVED**, that said minutes be approved with the following modification:

- (a) The first sentence of the second paragraph of Section 3.2 is amended to read “The first was unemployment benefits available under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act of 2020.”
- (b) The following is added after the third resolution in Section 3.2:

“It was noted that payments to the Parish’s staff were currently authorized through April 30, 2020, and a motion was made to authorize continued payment of the Parish’s staff until the Vestry decided otherwise. An objection was raised regarding the uncertain end date of such payments. The motion was then amended to authorize continued payment of the Parish’s staff through the end of May 2020. The Vestry discussed the need for flexibility in regard to paying staff, as well as the necessity of keeping the Vestry informed of ongoing developments in this area. The amendment was withdrawn, but upon further discussion, the Vestry considered the motion as previously amended, i.e., that the Vestry authorize continued payment of the Parish’s staff through the end of May 2020.

Upon motion, duly made and seconded, it was

**RESOLVED**, that that the Parish continue to pay its hourly employees through May 31, 2020.”<sup>1</sup>

## II. RECTOR’S REMARKS

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Rutledge was not present for, and thus did not vote on, this resolution.

The Rector discussed the plan, *A Journey By Stages: Gathering, Serving & Growing as The Episcopal Church in Massachusetts During & Beyond a Time of Pandemic*, by the Bishops of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts and the Episcopal Diocese of Western Massachusetts, which had been circulated to the members of the Vestry. In summation, the Rector explained that despite the announcement by Gov. Charles D. Baker, Jr. of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts that churches would be allowed to open subject to certain health-and-safety precautions, in accordance with said plan of the Bishops, the Parish would have to remain closed through the end of June at least. In response to a query as to whether said plan was mere guidance or mandatory, the Rector confirmed that it was mandatory. Thereafter, there was significant discussion regarding the possibilities and potential issues moving forward for reopening the Parish.

### **III. REPORT OF THE TREASURER AND FINANCE COMMITTEE**

**3.1 General.** The Treasurer reported that the Parish continues to make payments for its staff. The Parish was through roughly one-third of its fiscal year, and its financial numbers were in line with expectations. Property expenditures were high due to renovations on the Rectory, and Christian-education expenditures were low, but this was a category subject to seasonal variations. The budgeted amount for the Rector's welcome festivities was also unused, but would be utilized at some point for a proper investiture.

The Treasurer also announced that a PayPal account had been set up and tested for the Parish for the "Virtual Walk for Hunger," and this account may be repurposed for general donations. In response to a question regarding PayPal's fees, the Rector replied that they were generally low—while alternatives would be looked into at a later point in time, this PayPal account would at least allow the Parish to receive online donations for now.

**3.2 PPP Loan.** The Rector's Warden reported that the Parish had received the Paycheck Protection Plan (PPP) loan for which it had applied. The Wardens and Finance Committee had thoroughly scrutinized the PPP loan's terms to ensure that the Parish could make the necessary certifications in good faith prior to accepting it. This loan will allow the Parish to continue paying staff salaries through at least July 4, 2020, without change.

**3.3 Requests for Committee.** The Rector's Warden relayed two requests for the Finance Committee. The first was that the Committee take a fresh look at the Parish's budget as a mid-year review in order to ascertain whether anything needed to be adjusted for the remainder of the year. The

second was that it had been determined that the Parish was paying a higher percentage to its diocesan assessment than similar parishes, and thus that the Committee take a look at how our finances are structured to ensure that the Parish is not unduly overpaying its assessment.

#### **IV. REPORT OF THE STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE**

Mr. Piscitelli, Co-Chairman of the Stewardship Committee, reported that the Committee continued to focus on the thirty-eight stopped pledges from 2019 as discussed at the Vestry's April 2020 meeting. The Committee had discussed the matter with the Rector, and very targeted communications would go out to a narrowed list of thirty-four to thirty-five to encourage pledging for 2020, especially towards the Parish's outreach programs and programs under the Rector's discretionary fund. These communications also were designed as a reminder that the Parish still needed continued pledges despite the current circumstances, and that there are specific needs that are particularly pertinent at this time.

#### **V. REPORT OF THE PROPERTY COMMITTEE**

Mrs. McDermott, Co-Chairperson of the Property Committee, reported that the Committee would be meeting tomorrow evening, May 20, 2020. A list of projects would be put together for review at said meeting, together with estimated costs, which would be sent to the Chairmen of the Finance Committee and Administration Committee. Mrs. McDermott further reported that the Parish had been able to rent out its condominium at 140 Mt. Vernon Street, Boston, Massachusetts, beginning June 1, 2020, and that additional work adding closet rods to the Rectory had been completed. Finally, Mrs. McDermott announced that she and her husband, Mr. Thomas J. McDermott, would be willing to take over administration of the Parish's Memorial Garden if no one else had already done so.

#### **VI. REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE**

Dr. Lapin, Chairman of the Administration Committee, reported that most initiatives were currently on hold given the pandemic situation. He stated that he might schedule a telephone conversation with Mr. Mark F. Dwyer, Organist and Choirmaster, to get a sense of the current situation with the Parish's choir members, and in regard to the review of Mr. James D. Singletary, the Parish Administrator, he suggested to the Rector that it be put on hold unless Mr. Singletary really wanted one. Generally, Dr. Lapin stated that the Committee was willing to participate in any arrangements for reopening the Parish in the future.

#### **VII. REPORT FROM THE WARDENS**

Regarding the matter related to the estate of Mrs. Nancy E. Macmillan, a late member of the Parish, the Rector's Warden reported that paperwork was still being dealt with related to the settlement, but that otherwise, everything had been completed for the settlement. He also gave the Parish's clergy plaudits in regard to the quality of the webcasts being put out.

The People's Warden thanked Messrs. Brown, Gearhart, Rutledge, and Ou for completing the necessary paperwork for the Parish's PPP loan on very short notice. The Rector's Warden added that upon further research, he had discovered that the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts had encouraged parishes to apply for PPP loans and that many other parishes had gotten them as well, which provides some assurances that we are not acting out of the ordinary.

### **VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no other business to consider, upon motion, duly made and seconded, the Vestry voted to adjourn the meeting at 6:56 p.m.

I attest that the above is a true record of the Vestry meeting held on Thursday, May 19, 2020.

Respectfully submitted,

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Frederick A. Ou,  
Clerk