

THE PARISH OF THE ADVENT

MINUTES OF THE VESTRY

Type: Regular Meeting

Date: September 17, 2020

Via Remote Communication

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

The following fifteen members of the Vestry were present, fourteen 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 6:00 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 July 16, 2020. After review, upon motion, duly made and seconded, it was

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the Vestry's July 16, 2020 meeting be approved as submitted.¹

II. REPORT OF THE STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

Mr. Piscitelli, Co-Chairman of the Stewardship Committee, reported that there was nothing noteworthy to report. The Rector and Mr. Piscitelli will converse on a later date regarding plans for the Parish's upcoming 2021 canvass.

III. REPORT OF THE PROPERTY COMMITTEE

Mrs. McDermott, Co-Chairperson of the Property Committee, reported that the small deck behind the Rectory had been completed, and that the honeybees that had been infiltrating the Parish had been extracted and the opening by which they had been entering the Parish had been sealed. The Committee was currently focused on a few minor projects, including looking into obtaining a plexiglass or similar barrier for use at the Tuesday Night Supper, looking into some simple renovations for the Parish's office, and moving the Rector's office from its current location to the location of the Parish nursery, which is not being utilized at the moment. In addition, Mrs. McDermott reported that a new handyman had been hired to provide any necessary assistance to the Rev'd Moses N. Buyondo, Deacon and Sexton, around the Parish.

IV. REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

Dr. Lapin, Chairman of the Administration Committee, reported that the Committee had received comments and proposed edits to the draft employee handbook from the employment lawyer retained by the Parish. The Committee will convene together with the Rector hereafter to go over these comments and proposed edits.

V. REPORT OF THE TREASURER AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

The Treasurer reported that, as expected, the Parish's revenues to date were slightly below what had been anticipated, with the largest deficit being in the area of plate collections. While he and the Finance Committee will continue monitoring the flow of incoming pledge payments for any concerning signs, the Parish's overall revenues and finances currently remain in good shape. He

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

also noted that the proceeds from the Parish's Paycheck Protection Plan (PPP) loan had been of great help in sustaining employment at the Parish in the preceding months and ensuring that the Parish's finances remained sustainable throughout.

Regarding expenses, certain categories thereof, such as Christian education, were understandably under their allocated budgets to date due to the ongoing situation created by COVID-19. In addition, while the current numbers show overall expenses to be in excess of what had been budgeted, the Treasurer explained that these numbers currently include expenses related to the Rectory's renovation, which will be capitalized at the end of the year.

The Treasurer also reported that some final paperwork was being completed necessary for the Parish to receive the funds due to it from the estate of Mrs. Nancy E. Macmillan, a late member of the Parish, which he expected to be done shortly. In addition, the Treasurer relayed that Mr. Joseph Brown, the Parish's Comptroller, had implemented certain new procedures that will allow the Parish to do signings and approvals of checks online instead of in person henceforth—an ability likely to be especially useful given the current circumstances.

VI. RECTOR'S REMARKS

6.1 Parish Updates. The Rector updated the Vestry on a number of matters related to the Parish's staff. First, he reported that Mr. Moses Sekkaja, previously the Parish's Senior Sexton, had been let go. Related thereto, the Parish had provided Mr. Sekkaja with severance and paid for his coverage under the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985, as amended (COBRA), and Mr. Sekkaja had signed a waiver of claims against the Parish. The Rector also noted that Mr. Sekkaja had expressed his appreciation for everything the Parish had done for him, and appeared to bear no ill will towards the Parish.

Second, the Rector reported that Ms. Kelly Walsh, previously the Parish's Bookkeeper, had left that position at the beginning of this summer, so her bookkeeping responsibilities had been divided between Mr. Brown, the Parish's Comptroller, and Mr. James D. Singletary, the Parish Administrator, thereafter. Upon evaluating their respective workloads after taking into account the efficiency gains provided by new accounting software that had been purchased for the Parish, it was concluded that the current arrangement is sufficient such that it will not be necessary to hire a replacement Bookkeeper.

Third, the Rector announced that a part-time building manager for the Parish had been hired who is experienced in HVAC, electric, plumbing, and other similar systems, and who will be able to handle basic repairs around the Parish. A regular cleaning schedule will be arranged together with the Rev'd Buyondo, and it is expected that this new arrangement will end up saving the Parish a significant amount overall compared to the previous one. The Rector also added that he had been very pleased by the building manager's performance so far.

Finally, in terms of the Parish's clergy, the Rector reported that the Rev'd David J. Thompson, the Parish's new Parochial Vicar, had arrived and was settling in. The Rev'd Jay C. James, previously Associate Rector and now retired, and the Rev'd Thomas E. Adams, Jr., Honorary Assistant, are currently providing occasional help to the Parish, while the Rector, Fr. Thompson, and the Rev'd Dr. Jeffrey A. Hanson, Priest Associate, will handle the remainder of the clerical responsibilities. The Rev'd Clarence E. Butler, Honorary Assistant, remains homebound.

As for matters unrelated to staff, the Rector reported that plans for the Parish's Christian education programs were underway and should be put into action by the end of the month, and that the Parish had returned to offering both Rite I and Rite II Masses each Sunday, both of which had been well-attended thus far.

6.2 Communications to the Rector. The Rector explained that a lengthy pastoral update provided by him to the Parish on September 11, 2020, was partially in response to a large volume of e-mails and telephone calls directed towards him over the past month from various parishioners concerning, among other things, the possible celebration of the Mass by women at the Parish in the future. Although the Rector had already taken significant time to respond to each such communication individually, the Rector sought, through said pastoral update, to also address the Parish as a whole. Therein, the Rector asked that he be allowed sufficient time and space to get to know the Parish and its members since the normal process of the mutual acquainting of the Rector and Parish had been almost immediately interrupted by COVID-19 and its subsequent ramifications, so that the collective discernment process on how to move forward on such issues may occur properly.

6.3 Parish Security. Lastly, the Rector noted that there is some concern regarding securing the Parish and its property (including, in particular, the windows facing Mt. Vernon Street) from possible damage resulting from

protests, acts of civil disobedience, or other violent disturbances around Election Day. The Parish will need to be cognizant of any such possible risks that may arise and act accordingly with prudence as Election Day draws nearer.

VII. REPORT FROM THE WARDENS

7.1 Parish Music. The Rector's Warden reported that Mr. Mark F. Dwyer, Organist and Choirmaster, had developed a plan to create as much new musical content at the Parish as possible, including for Masses and sung Evensongs, the goal being for the Parish to do whatever it can to maintain an active music program while remaining in compliance with the COVID-19-related guidelines provided by the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts. This will serve to both keep the Parish's choristers active and available, and provide said choristers with additional needed financial security.

7.2 Bequest of Nancy Nickolds. The Rector's Warden announced that Dr. Nancy S. Nickolds, a late member of the Parish, had bequeathed to the Parish the amount of \$50,000. It was necessary, however, for the Vestry to vote to accept this bequest subject to its terms, which are that such amount be used broadly for the benefit of the All Souls' Chapel and Columbarium. Upon motion, duly made and seconded, it was

RESOLVED, that the Parish accept the bequest of \$50,000 from the estate of Dr. Nancy S. Nickolds subject to the conditions thereof.

7.3 Communications to the Rector. Concerning the mass of communications that had been directed towards the Rector described in Section 6.2 above, the Rector's Warden voiced his full concurrence with the Rector's sentiments addressing calls for the initiation of controversial or divisive changes at the Parish as set forth in the Rector's September 11, 2020 pastoral update. The Rector's Warden expressed his view that it was only because of the Rector's steadfast leadership throughout the ongoing COVID-19 crisis that life at and through the Parish had been maintained to the extent possible during this time, in stark contrast to the total cessation of parish life that had occurred at the vast majority of other parishes in the Diocese and elsewhere. The People's Warden also reiterated the extraordinary amount of time the Rector had expended in first reading or listening to, and then specifically responding to each communication to him individually.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT AND BENEDICTION

There being no other business to consider, upon motion, duly made and seconded, the Vestry voted to adjourn the meeting.

The Rector offered a benediction, whereupon the meeting adjourned at 6:51 p.m.

I attest that the above is a true record of the Vestry meeting held on Thursday, September 17, 2020.

Respectfully submitted,

Frederick A. Ou,
Clerk