



**Meeting of the Vestry
January 18, 2021, 4 – 6 p.m.**

Vestry members present: Jed Dennard, Martha Evans, Grant Ford, Jodie Guest, Helen Ingebritsen, Tim Kelly, Annemarie Madden, Carol Roberts, Jon-Paul Roy, Becky Short

Vestry members absent: Jamie Clark, Michael Tarantino

Clergy present: The Rev. Monica Mainwaring, The Rev. Colin Brown

The vestry met via Zoom video conference because of social distancing mandated by the coronavirus pandemic. Senior Warden Tim Kelly called the meeting to order at 4 p.m. and the clerk certified that a quorum was present.

Opening prayer and meditation

In observance of Martin Luther King Day, the rector showed a documentary clip on King and the civil rights movement. The Associate Rector opened the meeting in prayer. The senior warden gave the meditation on the first of the 12 principles set forth in *Agreeing and Disagreeing in Love*, a 12-point communication framework developed by the Mennonite Church USA. The vestry has covenanted to adhere to, and to model, these principles. The first is: ***Accept conflict. Acknowledge together that conflict is a normal part of our life in the church.*** Kelly pointed out that although conflict can present challenges, it implies energy, as opposed to apathy. He called on the vestry to learn ways to keep the healthy energy, while minimizing the impact of the challenges.

Clerk's Report (Martha Evans)

- The vestry approved the minutes for the regular Dec. 13 vestry meeting.
- Next vestry meeting: Monday, Feb. 15, 4-6 p.m. via Zoom. Another vestry member will be assigned to give the meditation on the second principle: ***Affirm hope. Accept that as God walks with us in conflict, we can work through to growth.***
- The church's annual meeting will be held Sunday, Jan. 24, at 9 a.m., in a livestream format on YouTube and Facebook. A Zoom meeting for discussion and Q&A will follow at 1 p.m.

Welcome to new vestry members (Monica Mainwaring)

- The rector welcomed new vestry members Jamie Clark (absent), Jed Dennard, Grant Ford and Martha Evans, who was elected to a full three-year term after serving one year as an appointed member.
- All vestry members must complete mandatory training on Safeguarding God's People and Children, as well as a workshop on Dismantling Racism.

Monthly Reports:

Executive Commission and Senior Warden's Report (Tim Kelly)

- The rector appointed Kelly to serve as senior warden for a second year in order to provide continuity in leadership during this challenging time.
- At Kelly's request, the vestry in turn reelected Annemarie Madden as junior warden, Becky Short as treasurer and Martha Evans as clerk.

Administrative Commission and Junior Warden's Report (Annemarie Madden)

- The junior warden presented a facilities task list for January and February that includes: upgrades to the bridal suite, replacement of ceiling tiles in the lobby and men's bathroom, assessing the cause of a window leak in Pierce Hall, getting quotes on landscaping for the lower Gable Hall courtyard, basic maintenance of exterior drainage, electrical repair and replacement in Nicholson Hall, installation of 11 smart thermostats (four more needed), boiler repair, changing locks on all exterior doors, emptying all church items from school storage, redesign of the counting room for storage, repair of the ice machine, door repair for Rite 13 Room and office suite, and following up on recommendations from the fire marshall's inspection.
- The new thermostats are part of a Go Green initiative in the works.
- Madden is working to compile background documentation (warranties, etc.) for the boiler and other major infrastructure components.

Outreach Commission Report (Carol Roberts)

- The [outreach section](#) of the church website has been revamped and now includes the new [application form](#) that will be used to screen agencies and nonprofit organizations applying to the Outreach Commission for financial support from the church. The commission will recommend grant funding to the vestry for its approval. The Commission will oversee two grant cycles each year, with application deadlines on March 1 and Sept. 1.
- The commission met earlier this month with the church's longtime outreach partners, such as Emmaus House, Holy Comforter and the Interfaith Outreach Home, as well as with the mentoring program Path to Shine, to review the new guidelines. The guidelines encourage greater parish engagement in funded programs.
- Roberts said the Suthers Center continues to be a major focus. However, the center has temporarily relocated because of rising rents at the Broad Street location, and its thrift shop has been closed by the pandemic. The food pantry currently operates out of the church. The Suthers board and visioning committee continues its work to define the Suthers Center vision for the future.

Finance Commission and Treasurer's Report (Becky Short)

- Extreme delays in mail delivery, as well as misdirected mail, have hampered the closeout of the 2020 budget, as well as planning for the 2021 budget, the treasurer said. We opened a new post office box to try to help alleviate the problems: PO Box 190109, Brookhaven, GA 31119.
- Even though we haven't officially closed out the 2020 budget, we know that we will end the year in the black by at least \$55,000, thanks to a strong revenue flow in December and tightly controlled expenses throughout the year, she said.

- To date, 178 pledges for 2021 totaling \$770,468 have been received. Short hopes that we will get at least an additional \$186,000 in pledged revenue from parishioners who pledged last year as the mail issue resolves and we receive their pledges.
- Total projected revenue for 2021, including non-pledged offerings and rental income, is \$1,046,804. Total budgeted expenditures for 2021 are \$1,208,222, a revenue shortfall of \$161,418. However, given that the pandemic continues to curtail church activities, expenditures likely will drop by at least \$56,000 or more from the budgeted amount, for a net shortfall of \$104,754. If necessary, we can easily cover that amount with reserve funds, Short said. She also noted that the Endowment Fund will have approximately \$160,000 available for allocation this year.
- In concluding the financial discussion, the rector said we collectively should look to increase education about the importance of pledging and tithing. She suggested we may want to add a Stewardship Commission to address this.

SMES BOT Liaison Report and Public Health Task Force (PHTF) Update (Jodie Guest)

- The St. Martin Episcopal School Board of Trustees meets quarterly—no report this month.
- With a Covid test positivity rate near 15 percent in DeKalb and Fulton Counties, the church needs to pause in-person activity, Guest said. As a show of support, the vestry approved a resolution to stand behind the recommendations of the Public Health Task Force and the rector on whether or not to schedule in-person worship, week by week.
- Guest also called on congregants not to jump line or misrepresent their status to get one of the scarce Covid vaccines when more vulnerable populations still have not been vaccinated.

Associate Rector's Report (Colin Brown)

- Keith Nash will serve as interim organist and choir director following Ingrid Siegert's recent retirement. The goal is to have new music from the choir for the Ash Wednesday service. The technical work that Siegert was able to do integrating the individual voices recorded separately into one performance piece has been outsourced to professionals in Texas.
- Formation classes are going well with core groups of regular participants at all levels. Upcoming for adults: Fr. Matthew Linn, SJ, will lead a series on prayer titled *Lenten Learning with Yoda*.
- Pastoral care has been a challenge without the ability to visit parishioners in person, Brown said. At the suggestion of Martha Sue Blythe, he is working on a simple liturgy that pastoral visitors could use during their telephone "visits" with parishioners.

Rector's Report (Monica Mainwaring)

- The Children/Youth Revisioning team meets every other week via Zoom, with a goal of sharing in spring their plans for in-person children and youth worship and formation beginning in August. A vestry liaison is needed.
- The Suthers Center board will meet this week as it continues to support this ministry in its temporary relocation and plan for the future. The rector acknowledged there is creative tension between a desire to recreate the old model and the possibility that a new model may be needed going forward. A vestry liaison to the board is needed.

Strategic Priorities for 2021

- The rector set aside the last 30 minutes of the meeting for a brainstorming session on our strategic priorities for the year, starting with two key ones:
 - We need to hire a new music minister, which means that we need to determine what kind of music program we want. We must also ask, how do we want to worship?
 - We need to grow. That means asking challenging questions about what we need to do differently or better. For example, we baptize lots of babies, but we are not drawing the young families into the church on an ongoing basis.
- Before we create a list of priorities, vestry member Jon-Paul Roy said, we should first ask ourselves what kind of church we want to be.
- Other ideas presented:
 - Find a way to utilize the resources of the school to support children, for example, through the Path to Shine mentoring program.
 - Identify and strengthen the path for youth after J2A.
 - Consider what our corporate relationship is with the school. Is there a healthier way to partner by clarifying the corporate relationship?
 - Leverage the school universe to get folks in the 30- to 40-year-old age group actively engaged.
 - Find new ways to generate revenue. Two ideas:
 - Market the bridal room as an ideal wedding option.
 - Renovate our kitchen. A good kitchen can be a good ministry (e.g. skills training), the rector said, and it also can become a source of revenue.
- Do we want to be brave about addressing race and racism? The rector posed the question. Members of the vestry responded that they welcome her leadership. The mandated workshop on Dismantling Racism is a first step.
- “What does it mean to be Christian? What does it mean to be Church?” the rector asked in conclusion. The vestry will hold an extended meeting next month to begin to seek answers.

Prayer and adjournment:

- The rector closed with a prayer for social justice from the Book of Common Prayer and the vestry adjourned at 6 p.m.