

St. Philip's Episcopal Church
Vestry Meeting
December 21, 2021
Minutes

Present: Dana Richardson, *Sr. Warden*, Dave Ham, *Jr. Warden*, Bill Bittenbender, Holly Meiners, Steve Russell, Liz Halbert, Tom Griffin, Debbie Evans, Deborah Jordan, Fr. Eric Mills. *Rector*

Absent: Rich Alt and Bob Wright

Ex Officio: Bob Fuchs, *Treasurer*, Margaret Bearden, *Clerk*

Opening Prayer. Fr. Eric Mills opened the meeting with a prayer at 4:00 pm in the Parish Hall.

Minutes. The November and December Special Vestry minutes as well as the Annual Meeting minutes had previously been approved via email.

Rector. Fr. Eric Mills announced that the Canon to the Ordinary, the Rev. Canon Mollie Roberts, will visit St. Philip's on January 30. This will be her first visit since her arrival in May of 2020. He noted that 2022 is an "off year" for the bishop's visit.

Fr. Eric will be on vacation right after Christmas, returning January 9th or 10th. He will conduct performance reviews after he returns. He thanked vestry members for their service and commitment over the past year.

Treasurer's Report. (Attached as addendum.) Bob reported that revenue in November was \$4,650 over expenses through November, and \$44,300 over YTD though November. He expects to have a surplus for the year some of which will be used to prepay \$17,000 to Insurance Deductible and Maintenance Reserve for 2022.

There was discussion of the possibility of lowering the projected new building mortgage with Cash Reserves. Fr. Eric suggested that the vestry consider and determine the goal of Cash Reserves. Bob expressed thanks to Geoff Gersen and Jim Belvin for a successful stewardship campaign, noting that more pledges have been received than were budgeted. **Tom Griffin moved to receive the Treasurer's report, the motion was seconded by Bill Bittenbender, and approved.**

Senior Warden's Report. There were several motions to consider. **Dana Richardson presented housing resolutions for Fr. Eric and for Mthr. Lisa Erdeljon.**

Bill Bittenbender moved to accept Fr. Eric's resolution with a second by Steve Russell. Bill Bittenbender moved to accept Mthr. Lisa's resolution with a second by Deborah Jordan. Both resolutions were approved. Both resolutions are on file in the church office.

A motion to approve Deborah Jordan as Parish Life Deputy Chairperson was presented by Liz Halbert, seconded by Debbie Evans, and was approved.

A motion to approve Deborah Alt as Outreach Ministry Board Chairperson was presented by Bill Bittenbender, seconded by Holly Meiners, and was approved.

A motion to approve Debbie and Ricky Evans as diocesan convention alternates was presented by Tom Griffin, seconded by Liz Halbert, and was approved.

With regard to convention registration fees, there are funds in the budget that will cover those fees. There will be a pre-convention meeting at the deanery.

Dana noted the accomplishments of this vestry as it navigated progress in our transition to a program church and offered his appreciation. Ministry Board chaplains have helped with communication. Our bylaws have been completed and are in effect, and policy reviews have been completed as well. The last action of the Endowment Policy will be to finalize the agreement form and then have it reviewed by our chancellor. Incorporating the Model Policies issued by the diocese will be addressed in the coming year. Fr. Eric is hoping to name a new chairperson for Faith Formation.

Chaplains and Committees. (Reports attached as addenda.)

Action Items and Review.

- By-Laws Revision
 - Bylaws were adopted at the annual meeting on December 5, 2021 [**Action Complete**].
- Facilities Use Policy to be sent to F&F Committee [**Action Pending**].
- New Faith Formation chairperson [**Action - Rector**].
- Request that all Ministry Board Chairs identify deputies for their MB Chaplains [**MB Chaplains – Action Pending – need Deputies for: Outreach, and Faith Formation**].
- Rules for voting are to be published in the December *Come & See*. [**Action Complete**].
- Revised date for the regular vestry meeting in December will be solicited by the Parish Office via Survey Monkey. [**Action Complete**].
- Review Model Policies and provide questions or issues to the Senior Warden [**Action – all Vestry**].
- Implementation of Model Policies [**Action Pending**].

- Review, Retain, Update, Remove existing policies [**Action Ongoing**].
- Distribution of year-end excess revenue [**Action Pending F&FMB Recommendation**].
- Implementation of Safety - Security Procedures. [**Action Pending**].

Closing and Prayer. Bill Bittenbender moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:00pm. The motion was seconded by the vestry “class of 2019.” and was approved. The meeting was adjourned at after a prayer by Fr. Eric.

Respectfully submitted,

Margaret Bearden, *Clerk*

Treasurer's Report to Vestry
December 21, 2021

Operating Budget	2021 FY Budget	2021 YTD Actual	2021 YTD Budget	2021 YTD Variance	November Actual	October Ac- tual	Monthly Change
Revenues							
Pledges	581,157	507,585	527,346	-19,761	40,062	45,870	-5,808
Flower Revenue	8,025	4,875	7,356	-2,481	300	225	75
Identified Offerings	41,208	64,802	37,392	27,410	7,008	7,072	-65
Loose Plate	7,500	4,718	6,806	-2,088	725	1,016	-291
Parish Hall Rental	600	4,450	550	3,900	800	3,100	-2,300
Miscellaneous Receipts	15,000	20,545	13,750	6,795	1,045	827	218
Total Revenues	653,490	606,975	593,200	13,775	49,939	58,110	-8,170
Expenses							
Parish Staff	433,349	374,858	397,811	22,953	30,755	44,258	13,504
Administration	35,316	31,139	32,373	1,235	2,593	3,531	937
Buildings & Grounds	87,596	77,358	75,576	-1,782	5,758	10,256	4,497
Vestry	65,060	57,959	59,930	1,971	5,130	5,130	0
Faith Formation	1,700	1,399	1,625	226	15	30	16
Outreach	7,050	7,050	7,050	0	0	1,500	1,500
Parish Life	4,924	2,272	4,647	2,375	211	35	-176
Pastoral Care	1,080	850	990	140	0	104	104
Worship	16,894	9,790	14,340	4,550	827	555	-272
Total Expenses	652,969	562,675	594,342	31,667	45,289	65,398	20,109
Net Total	521	44,301	-1,141	45,442	4,650	-7,289	11,939

Comments:

November revenues were \$4,650 more than expenses and YTD revenues are \$44,301 greater than expenses.

Total Revenues were \$1,314 over budget in November and are \$13,775 ahead of budget year-to-date.

Pledge collections were \$2,987 less than budget in November and are \$19,761 behind budget year-to-date. Previous month prepaid pledges are no longer covering the \$46,800 difference between budgeted pledges and actual pledges.

Identified Offerings were \$3,955 over budget in November and are \$27,409 over budget year-to-date. A major driver is donations from many new members.

\$13,850 in donations have been received for several projects, which offset unbudgeted expenses in Buildings & Grounds.

Total Expenses were \$6,961 under budget in November and are \$31,667 under of budget year-to-date.

Medical insurance payments of \$4,339 and Property insurance payments of \$3,499 were December 2020 expenses paid in January.

The Administrative Assistant position is not filled reducing Parish Staff expenses by \$9,938 year-to-date.

Computers Network & Web is \$1,204 over budget for live stream equipment paid in February, which was not in budget; it was approved to be spent in 2020.

Budgeted monthly mortgage payments are not being made saving \$18,304 year-to-date, because Parish Hall construction is running later than planned. We continue to pay rent on the temporary office.

\$12,116 was spent on several unbudgeted Buildings & Grounds projects, which are offset by donations mentioned above.

Year-to-date revenues are exceeding expenses by \$44,301.

Project Costs		Project Funds	Total	Current	at 03/31/2022
Construction Cost		Pledges	1,492,994		
Parish Hall/Admin	2,029,850	Collected		1,254,987	1,254,987
Architectural Services		Outstanding		238,006	
Construction Supervision	20,500	Other Funds	366,766	366,766	366,766
Other Costs		Mortgage	835,000	0	733,519
Furniture & Fixtures	37,500	Total Funds	2,694,760	1,621,753	2,355,273
Contingency 5%	101,500	Total Spent	2,355,273	1,141,698	2,355,273
Misc.	6,173	Available Funds	339,487	480,055	
Total Construction Cost	2,195,523				

Actual Construction Spending	972,712
Actual Construction Supervision	9,237
Actual Furniture & Fixtures	0
Actual Contingency	0
Actual Misc	0
Actual Construction Spending	981,949
Remaining Construction Spending	1,213,574
Pre-Construction Spending	159,750
Total Project Costs	2,355,273
Total Spent to Date	1,141,698

Comments:

The planned construction completion date is February 2022.

\$1,254,987 in Capital pledges has been collected, which is 84% of the total pledged amount.

153 out of 214 pledgers are fully paid. 7 other pledgers are on schedule.

Overall, \$238,006 of total pledges remain unpaid. Pledges for 2018 through November 2021 are under paid by \$128,446.

Twelve pledgers have moved, left the Church, or passed away, leaving a shortfall of \$44,988.

43 parishioners responded to the capital request letter. \$69,935 in new and additional pledges were received in addition to some who are accelerating their pledge payments. Thank you all.

Respectfully submitted,

Bob Fuchs

Treasurer

Chaplains and Committee Reports for 12-21-2021

Chaplains Reports:

Worship Ministry Board: Rich Alt, Chaplain

- Board Chairman reported that Dennis Courtnage has volunteered to be the vice chair of the Worship ministry Board
- Flower Guild reported that all the Christmas decorations have arrived and will be set up at the appropriate days and times.
- Usher Captain reported that a new customary is in the draft stage that incorporates those safety and security policies agreed to by the Vestry Executive Group. There is still a need for additional usher volunteers for the 8AM services.
- Choir reported that there is a need for more male vocalists. The choir received numerous complements from the other ministry leads regarding the number of volunteers the choir currently has considering the pandemic issues.
- Beach Ministry reported that over the winter a number of signs need refreshing before the beach service starts up again in late May.
- Fr. Eric complemented the Worship Ministry Board for being the backbone of the logistics to get the church prepared, and the execution of those plans, every Sunday in such a way that the average parishioner sees the end result as a seamless process.

Parish Life Ministry Board: Deborah Jordan, Chaplain

The Parish Life Ministry met on December 2, 2021. Present were: Steve Moore, Delores Tipton, Tink Shelton, and Deborah Jordan

Hospitality:

Coffee hour after both services on December 19th and January 9th.

Will ask Lorraine to set up sign up genius for volunteers to host coffee hour when we begin to use the new parish hall.

There was discussion of purchasing dishes and tablecloths. This will be continued at the next meeting.

ECW:

Annual meeting and Christmas luncheon will be December 4th at Falcone's.

Meeting on Monday December 6th will decide new positions.

There is discussion of having a day of spirituality with a guest speaker in January. Brunch included. There will be no lunch bunch in January.

Gather round the table:

Each group is doing their own thing - 8 people per group.

Odd Jobbers:

No report

Prayer Group:

This is a new group of men headed up by Fr. Jeff Krantz, Dave Gruber, and Mike Beardon.

Parish Life will reach out to them for more information.

Welcome Ministry:

Lorraine is still working with Joanne Valente and Rose Dahill on a list of new visitors.

There will be a Newcomer reception 3x/year.

Faith Formation Ministry Board: Tom Griffin, Chaplain

As you know the Faith Ministry Board Chairman Nan Bush was hospitalized a few weeks ago and still remains in a local Rehab Facility; therefore, her Wednesday Bible Class is on hold. Reverend Lowe Davis is still planning after the first of the year to start a new Bible 101 class but not by Zoom.

The Faith Board has met by Zoom during the Pandemic and the last meeting four members attended. Deborah Miller has moved and so the Board will have to find someone to be the Faith Communicator. It goes without saying but Nan has been the catalyst for a weekday Bible study even before we became a Program Church with more than 7 years to her credit. She, before her illness, had announced her desire to retire from the Faith Ministry Board Chairmanship but had planned to still conduct her Wednesday Bible class by Zoom.

Land Swap Close-out:

Bill Bittenbender e-mail: 12-17-2021 @1:17pm

Received word today that the Southport Planning Board will recommend not proceeding with the land swap proposal. The reasons are two-fold:

1. Uncertainty about plans for the old City Hall and whether or not they might need the land to build an exterior structure for an elevator to meet ADA requirements for access.
2. There is a waterline from Dry St. to the old City Hall that crosses the property, and it would be limit our use of the property.

We do have a plan B and can use the rear path behind our Parish Hall and could also look at the small area at the rear of the Chapel Annex.

I think it was a good idea, but it just didn't work out.

Additional Information from Rich Alt 12-19-2021:

Regarding the Land Swap: as noted the planning board basically is asking the Aldermen to postpone any decision on this issue until the city decides who is going to own the building going forward. That should be in June when Up Your Arts is supposed to have a firm financial plan in place. I do not think that will happen because cookie sales do not generate the amount of money needed to fix the building. In any case it will come before the Aldermen in January and the votes are there to take no action.

It should be noted that both orally and in writing the Planning Board has left open the possibility of reviewing this request once the Up Your Arts issue is resolved.

Community Awareness Committee - Findings & Recommendations - 12/11/2021

Community Awareness Team: Dave Ham and Bob Wright

Team Goals:

Improve internal communications

Grow member involvement

Enhance community awareness

Opportunities were offered to the congregation to provide input to improve community awareness for activities, opportunities, and events at St. Philip's both for the congregation and the local community. During the month of November, two focus group sessions were conducted and attended by members of the congregation. The sessions were held on November 14th and 21st following Sunday services and total attendance included 15 – 20 parishioners.

The emphasis of the discussion at both sessions revolved around how to communicate better, both internally and externally. The groups focused on what we are doing well and how we can maximize our current efforts. The conversations at both sessions were spirited, candid, and helpful. The following is a summary of a consolidation of comments and suggestions made at both sessions as well as recommendations.

In summary, those who participated believed there was room for improvement in the way we engage and communicate with our congregation and to the community in general. Internally, they indicated that, although not intentional, the activities of the church are not being disseminated well. Externally, they believed that there are ways to dramatically improve what is known about St. Philip's within the community.

During the sessions four areas were addressed that seemed most impactful to our purpose. They were Printed Internal Communications, Website, External Communications, and Parish Hall usage. A consolidation of the comments made during the sessions is included at the end of this document.

The following recommendations have been formulated from the comments and suggestions of the groups.

Printed Internal Communications

Come and See (C&S) is viewed by the participants in a very positive light as a tool for general communication for upcoming as well as current events. Unfortunately, virtually none of the attendees recall any notice that the tool would be distributed, and its purpose. The following are suggestions for improving the publication:

- Include a verbiage section at the top of the document for important newsworthy items/stories.
- A print utility that allows readers to easily print the included items consecutively would be appreciated.
- Newcomers may not be familiar with terms that might be specific to the Episcopal Church, so more common language might be helpful. Example: vestry member v. deacon (Baptist Church).
- Provide a brief instruction. Some attendees didn't know that the clip art associated with various categories was really access to the link. Retain the practice but explain.
- C&S represents a great opportunity to make parishioners aware of the need for volunteers from various parish groups. Add a "Help Wanted" section that would include postings from groups needing volunteers.
- Include stories of interest on members of the congregation or current events. Many times, these are spread via the rumor mill, and this leads to inaccuracy.
- Provide information from *all* ministry boards so that readers can be up to date on current happenings within these boards.

What's Happening at St. Philip's! (WH) and the bulletin on the order of worship are both viewed in a positive light. Information is considered timely and appropriate.

St. Philip's Website

The most frequent comment to describe the website was unfriendly. It is viewed as too busy, and participants found content difficult to find. Some got frustrated and abandoned efforts to use the site. Few participants visit the website at all, and some only if they must. The following recommendations are taken from comments.

- Create a website support team of 4-5 people that would allow the workload to be distributed and minimize the effect of turnover.
- In creating a new website, select a popular format tool that will not become outdated and cause the site to need to be rebuilt in the future.
- "One Stop Shop" should be the theme of the site, and only important and immediately pertinent information should occupy the home page.
- Outside visitors should be able to easily learn about St. Philip's; vision, ministries, service times, location and contact information etc.
- Consider including timely videos and news of current events within the church.

External Communications

External communications was a very diverse subject for attendees. Most agreed that they read the State Port Pilot and look forward to the weekly paper. However, all agreed that the paper is something used by a largely older population. Facebook, website, and social media would be the most likely news source for middle-aged and younger visitors. The following recommendations are taken from comments:

- Consider establishing a coordinator for communications. This person could coordinate internal and external communications and determine which publications/media we want to employ. They could also interface with the ministry boards and other groups in the church and serve as a nexus for communications both internal and external. It is not the intention to replace the current internal/external communicators but provide a more comprehensive approach.
- Articles of historical nature about St. Philip's could be placed in publications like Cat Tales, Carolina Living, St. James Living and Our State. It might be best to determine if we have talents for writing these articles in our congregation.
- Communicate our intentions to the congregation in case they may have ideas and contributions.
- Consider advertisements as appropriate and evaluate the benefits of joining Downtown Southport Incorporated (DCI) for exposure.

Parish Hall

It was agreed that the new Parish Hall will be a great asset for St. Philip's and even the community. There was considerable interest on usage and exploring opportunities. All agreed that we should explore usage possibilities for both St. Philip's and local organizations as allowable.

- Consider making the open house an event not only for the congregation but announce to the community as well.
- Consider developing a series of seminars that would be of interest to all and subjects such as aging, Alzheimer's, foreign languages, cooking, art, and handcrafts.

Session Notes from Community Awareness Focus Groups – 11/14 and 11/21/21:

Printed Internal Communications:

1. Use "attention getting" titles whenever possible
2. Investigate print utility that would allow reader to easily print articles from C&S, other emails
3. Use common terms in communications and use opportunity to educate re liturgical and ecclesiastical terms. An example was that those who came from other denominations won't necessarily know what the "Vestry" is. Other examples would be to use the opportunity to define "Advent", "Epiphany", "Lent", and "Pentecost" when the liturgical seasons change.

4. A listing of volunteer opportunities, committee openings, etc.
5. Clearly and prominently state the church's "vision statement" on all appropriate communications
6. Consider stating clearly the short and long-term goals and objectives set by the Vestry
7. Develop logos for each of the MBs and include updates from the various ministries
8. Include "good news" stories of interest and importance to the congregation
9. C&S: Use top of page for items that attention is desired...in text only.

Website:

1. Website was universally regarded as not user friendly and difficult to navigate
2. Home page is too busy, unimportant and/or dated info adds to complicated appearance.
3. Home page should reflect only important and immediately relevant information, otherwise a means to navigate to other pages with additional information.
4. Make format "One Stop Shop" so congregation and visitors can find all they want to know about SPEC
5. Create a website administrative team of 4-5
6. Include within the website videos of special events, SPEC grounds, buildings, religious and other services, etc.
7. Provide archives of historical events, minutes of important meetings, photos of Parish Hall construction, etc.
8. Include postings for committee assignments/ministry needs
9. As website is changed, provide introduction, maybe kiosks(?)

External Communication:

1. Facebook is a key tool for reaching the greater community
2. State Port Pilot is read, but by the older generations who tend to read newspapers
3. Need to funnel features, plans, successes, and articles to the external communicator.
4. Need to inform congregation of our efforts to communicate externally.
5. Consider historical articles, topics of interest, and planned activities for publication in Cat-Tales, Carolina Living, St. James Living, and Our State.
6. Consider ads as appropriate.
7. Join "Downtown Southport (DCI)" to gain exposure to readership.
8. Identify writer for "Our State" for historical article regarding SPEC in Southport compilation article.

Parish Hall:

1. Should be used both for in-reach and out-reach.
2. Should announce availability for community usage.
3. Question how the congregation will interface with community on the use of the facility.
4. "Open House" and details of event should be announced to congregation and the greater community well in advance.
5. Consider developing seminars attractive to the community: aging; Alzheimer's; conversational foreign language classes for travel; demonstrations like cooking, art, handicrafts, etc.