

Meeting of the Vestry of St. Philip's Church in the Highlands
December 19, 2021
Noon

Agenda

Opening Prayer

Denise Larsen's Report

Spiritual Exercise

Minutes for Approval - November 20, 2021 Vestry Meeting

Rector's Report

- Parish house custodian
- Christmas worship
- Coffee Hour
- Epiphany Open House at Rectory Saturday, January 8, 5:00-9:00 PM

Warden's Report

Ministry Reports/Questions

Other Business

- Church open for prayer and meditation
- Report on Follow-Up from Task Force Meetings
- Carolyn and Jamie Copeland

Treasurer's Report

Budget discussion

Closing Prayer

Adjourn

Next Meeting:

Sunday, January 23, 2022, at noon

Spiritual Exercise for December 19

**from Sacred Ordinary Days 2021-22*

In the season of Advent, we remember the many years - centuries really - in which the people of God waited for the long-prophesied Messiah, who eventually arrives through the birth of Jesus. The word Advent, in fact, means “coming” or “arrival”. It marks the beginning of the liturgical year because it is where the story begins.

During this season we assume a posture of waiting. We choose to enter the story as it happened for those who came before us with anticipation, groaning, longing, and hope.

Themes: Wait hope long anticipate prepare watch expect hunger

Questions to ponder

- Where do you notice the spirit stirring in the midst of silence and stillness?
 - How are you being invited to watch and wait with patience and faith for new life to emerge?
 - What might God be conceiving in you now, allowing you to be a vessel of the divine or a host of the incarnation?
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The season of Christmas celebrates the birth of Jesus. It is a twelve day season in which we herald the fulfillment of God’s promise of a Savior. After the long period of waiting through Advent, Christmas is for us a time of joy - traditionally a time of “feasting” - where we celebrate the incarnate God in Jesus.

The tradition of celebrating Christmas over a period of twelve days goes back as far as the Middle Ages. The season culminates on January 5, the day before Epiphany, which is also known as the Twelfth Night.

In this season, we gather around the light - the external light of tree and fire , the internal light of faith, and the communal light of gathering together - as we celebrate the coming of Jesus, the one true Light, into the world.

Themes: Birth Emmanuel peace arrival fulfillment generosity incarnation celebration

Questions to ponder

- How has Christ been born in you?
- How is your life a celebration of the life God brings?
- Where do you see evidence of God’s light in your life and in the world around you?

Consider the themes and questions. You are invited to share your reflections about the themes and questions at our meeting on the 19th.

MINUTES OF THE VESTRY OF ST. PHILIP'S CHURCH IN THE HIGHLANDS
Saturday, November 20, 2021
9:00 am Parish House

ATTENDANCE

PRESENT: Rev. Amanda Eiman, Rector; Terri Akbas, Senior Warden; Sarah Bayne, Junior Warden; Will Felder, Treasurer; Preston Pittman, Clerk; Margy Gerber; Chris Nowak; Fred Osborn; Gabe Salas (phone); Jennifer Sandlund
ABSENT: Paul Kantor; Joe Plummer

APPROVAL OF OCTOBER MINUTES

Terri Akbas made a motion to accept the minutes of the October meeting with the correction of some minor typos. Chris Nowak seconded the motion, which was passed, with one objection.

POLICY ON VISITORS TO VESTRY MEETINGS

There was considerable discussion regarding policy for members of the congregation attending Vestry meetings, acknowledging that Vestry meetings are open meetings for members of the church. There was a consensus that "pre-announced" congregants may attend meetings as non-speaking "witnesses" only. We ask that a congregant's request to attend the vestry meeting be made known to the vestry a week prior to the meeting. Should they wish to speak or make a presentation of some kind, that also must be approved a week prior to the meeting. The Vestry also maintains the right to call "Executive Session" in order to discuss sensitive issues in private.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Will said that he was encouraged to have seen more activity in stewardship, noting that four members of the church have pledged \$10,000 or more for the next year. Clearly, more will be needed, but this is a beginning. Will also noted that a close review has been made in several areas and it does seem that there are ways in which we can be better stewards of our resources. It was noted that in stewardship appeals, there are some "fence sitters". Terri said she would write personal notes to them. Preston volunteered to help her.

Will reported that we have some "surplus" from government grants but nothing significant. He said that we should be ready to vote on our 2022 Budget at the December meeting.

RECTOR'S REPORT

Rev. Amanda reported that Bishop Dietsche has announced his intention to retire in two and a half years. There will be a Nominating Committee for a Coadjutor to work with Bishop Dietsche until his retirement.

Next, Rev. Amanda reported that St. Philip's application to the Episcopal Future's Program has been accepted and we will be paired with another church in the diocese.

At the recent convention, it was announced that "supply priests" will no longer be a long-term option. Clergy will be divided as part time priests between multiple congregations if necessary and the diocese may pay half the salary.

It was reported at the convention that there have been many retirements of priests in the past year, many due to COVID. The situation is acknowledged to be serious.

Rev. Amanda distributed a list of the Advent Programs, noting that there still may be some changes for Christmas Eve programs.

Rev. Amanda announced that there have been 11 baptisms since the summer, with 3 coming up, and there have been three weddings. A confirmation class will be offered following Advent.

Rev. Amanda added that at the Diocesan Convention, she was elected to serve on the Diocesan Council.

WARDEN'S REPORT

Sarah Bayne reported that the Nursery School Board has a new Treasurer. The big issue for the Nursery School right now is how to meet the demand for extended hours of care.

Tony is retiring as of December 22, 2021. Marcelo has been filling in and also performing a lot of volunteer work. Sarah recommended hiring Marcelo. She advised that Amanda and Betsy together draft a list of chores he might perform for the church and nursery school and how the hours be divided for budgetary purposes and then Vestry approval.

Chris Nowak reported on the humidifier and drain situation in the basement of the church. He recommended the purchase of a sump pump and drain that would direct water away from the church at about a cost of \$200. The consensus was that he should proceed.

There was discussion about the timing for the next Vestry meeting and it was tentatively scheduled for December 19 at noon, following the 10:00 church service.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:25.

Respectfully submitted by:
Preston Pittman, Clerk of the Vestry

Buildings and Grounds Committee Liaison Report to Vestry

Date: December 19, 2021

Author: Paul Kantor

Action Items Completed:

Church humidification system installed, leak problems resolved, humidification monitor installed in basement storage.

Donation and delivery of snowblower.

Agreement on hiring part time custodian.

Tree removal and pruning completed by Kingsley, broken trees from storm removed by volunteers.

Reallocation of church monitoring responsibilities within committee.

Action Items In Progress/Pending:

Septic tanks scheduled for cleaning in late December.

Items Requiring Vestry Vote:

NA

Worship Liaison Report to Vestry

Date: 13th December 2021

Author: Fred Osborn

Ministry/Action Items Completed this Month: I have been attending the 8am services on Sundays. Attendance there varies from 2 to sometimes 5.

I have been watching the 10am service on the YouTube broadcast. There are often 6 enthusiastic and energetic people in the choir. I have not heard the bell choir. A good group of lay readers delivers the scriptures and prayers. Sometimes the camera at the back of the church is used, so one can tell how many people are attending. Often it is not.

The creche was installed yesterday at 3:30pm with hymns and carols accompanied on guitar outdoors.

Ecumenical Services for Advent are held at various religious facilities around Philipstown, and yesterday, it was held at St Philip's. at 4pm.

Schedules for various St Philip's events seem to change – the latest plans were announced at yesterday's 10am service: Lessons and Carols at the 10am service next Sunday 19th December. A Christmas Eve service at 3pm for Holy Eucharist and another one at 5pm for the Christmas Pageant.

The free standing altar will apparently be used during the Christmas season.

As there is no worship committee, I believe the Rector has made these decisions in consultation with the wardens.

Ministry/Action Items in Progress/Pending: The Highlands Chapel will be holding their lessons and carols service at 10:30am on Sunday 19th December. They will repeat the performance at 4pm that afternoon. People who continue to attend services at St Philip's are cordially invited to attend.

Items for Vestry Action. None.

History/Archives Liaison Report to Vestry

Date: 12/15/21

Author: Margaret Leahey Gerber

Ministry/Action Items Completed this Month: Nothing to report

Ministry/Action Items in Progress/Pending: Nothing to report

Items Requiring Vestry Vote: None

Fellowship Liaison Report to Vestry

Date: 12/13/21

Author: Catherine Illian summary of phone meeting – via email formatted by Micki Bless

Ministry/Action Items Completed this Month:

Below is a summary of our call. Our main discuss points were about the Pageant with some time for the Creche and Coffee Hour.

Ministry/Action Items in Progress/Pending:

Coffee Hour-- At the request of the vestry, the person helping to make coffee is stopping their job at the end of December. There is a need for more people to help with coffee hour but a dearth of signups. We agreed that we do like having coffee hour as a way to welcome newcomers and a way to fellowship and we agreed that we need a sustainable way to continue having it.

Pageant: One pageant on Dec 24th at 5 pm. Amanda and Owen will work together on coordinating hymns in with the pageant and the rest of the service. After discussion, we agreed not to have the Eucharist at the Pageant. We'd like to end w/ Silent Night and lighted candles.

Items Requiring Vestry Vote: N/A

Communications Committee Liaison Report to Vestry

Date: December 14, 2021

Author: Terri Akbas

Ministry/Action Items Completed this Month: Nothing to report

Ministry/Action Items in Progress/Pending: The 2nd edition of The Messenger will be published/distributed in before Christmas.

Items Requiring Vestry Vote: None

Outreach Report

Date: 12/15/21

Author: Joe Plummer

The main action has been the collection of Christmas gifts for Hedgewood led by Sue MacLean.

Amanda has sent a letter to Rev Daniel in Lelan, Kenya about next steps in our effort to help them build two student dorms for girls now that we have the grant from the diocese in our bank.

Finally, there will be a broad informational meeting for all who wish to help outreach in a personal way in early January after a service. More details will follow soon.

There is nothing calling for vestry action.

Youth Ministry Liaison Report to Vestry

Date: 12/15/2021

Author: Jennifer Sandlund

Ministry/Action Items Completed this Month:

Cross Trainers:

On Sunday, November 21, the Cross Trainers planned to visit Second Chance Foods in Brewster to learn about this non-profit that has a mission to break the cycle of wasted food and food insecurity in our region. Unfortunately, all of the kids declined our invitation and we decided to postpone our visit until after the new year.

On Sunday, December 12, the Cross Trainers had a Christmas party and decorated cookies and exchanged gifts.

Ministry/Action Items in Progress/Pending:

On Saturday, December 18, the Cross Trainers will be delivering 10 dozen cookies made at home to be included in the lunch bags being distributed that evening by Midnight Run.