

EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER

Zoom Vestry Retreat, January 9, 2021

ATTENDANCE:

Rev. Bill Combs, Linda Chesbro, Christine Young, Mimi Vickers, Ed Coleman, Everett Price, Sharon Bryan, Les Reed, John Fox, Nancy Beckemeyer, Heather Kennerson, and Susan Fox.

OPENING PRAYER:

Rev. Bill opened the meeting at 9:05 AM and led the group in Morning Prayer and Bible Study.

REVIEW OF THE FINANCIAL REPORT FOR END-OF-YEAR AND BUDGET 2021 (both incomplete)

Heather began with discussion of her preliminary Balance Sheet. (Copy of the Preliminary Financial Report, Notes, and Preliminary Budget are attached.) She explained that everything is completed with the exception of the values of the investment funds. She has not yet received that information. Our pledge income is below budget, while the non-pledge income is above budget by \$5,000. Most expenses were in line with our budget. Our operating income for the month is \$5,144, a difference of only \$173 from our budget. Pages 3 and 4 show Year to Date operating income and expenses through December. Pledge income is down from budget by about \$12,000, but this is only a timing difference. One family paid their 2020 pledge in 2019 and one family will pay their 2020 pledge in January 2021. These two pledges total \$11,700, so the church will have received all of its pledged income by the end of January. Non-pledge income is above budget by about \$11,000. Most all of our expenses are below budget (see notes for details). Overall there is a loss for the year of \$4700, but we had budgeted for a loss of \$18,000, so we've done really well considering what a challenging year we've had. On pages 5 and 6 we see other income and expenses for December. Heather said that there is no change in Capital Campaign funds/expenses in December. So far, our total expense for the Sanctuary has been \$150,951, and this includes the cost of the Audio Video equipment. Our outreach donations are fully spent through the year, including the Jean Reed Memorial Funds of \$4514 which were given to the Circle of Love to improve their outdoor area, \$1405 from the Cooking for a Cause which was split between Greene and Putnam County Food Pantries, and all of the Heartfelt Harmonies funds have been distributed. The stock market has been strong, so Heather expects more recuperation of our losses from earlier in the year. On pages seven and eight we see that we are in a very good

financial position with \$116,000 in cash assets, and investment values of around \$179,000 while our liabilities total \$60,000. The PPP funds are still shown as a liability, but this will be forgiven. Heather is glad that she has not yet applied for the loan forgiveness, as there is a possibility that the church will now also qualify for some payroll tax credits on its 2020 payroll. Les began discussion as to whether we should use our money market account to pay down the line of credit, since it's interest is so low and the interest on the line of credit is about 4%. He suggested that we could pay it down, but keep the line of credit open so that we could use it if needed for extra liquidity. Ed felt that it makes sense to do so, as long as we have an open line of credit. Heather will look into it and give vestry a recommendation. Next Heather discussed her preliminary budget. She said it was hard to estimate because of the unusual year we've had. Last year she based the 2020 budget on the previous year. This year, being atypical, and also 2021 being hard to foretell, both because of COVID-19, meant that the budget involves a lot of conjecture. Our pledges for 2021, to date, total \$157,000. Heather set a pledge amount of \$195,000 (last year it was \$206,000) as a conservative estimate. Our non-pledge donations are difficult to anticipate, so she took a middle of the road approach and set it at \$25,000. The cash plate income is harder to anticipate, not knowing when we will be able to begin regular services again, but she included a small amount, beginning with the month of July. She has not included any consulting expenses. The depreciation expense for 2021 will be higher

because of the new sanctuary renovations. She said that the diocesan pledge amount was an estimate, and Rev. Bill told Heather that he emailed her that we did approve a pledge of \$21,355 in June, which is very close to what she has on her budget sheet. She said, overall, from a cash standpoint, we are looking at a break even budget this year. Les asked about the \$5000 for rental expense for the Saturday service. Rev. Bill said that we agreed earlier in the year to maintain this rental expense, as well as to paying our organists the same as it would be if we were still having two services per weekend. Maybe we need to revisit these decisions. Vestry decided that it is best to continue the organists' pay as it is, but that it is worth exploring whether or not we need to continue the rental payments to the Lutheran Church. Ed asked if we have a formal rental agreement so we could know the terms and Rev. Bill and Heather said they do not know that we do. Rev. Bill will speak with the Lutheran church about a rental agreement and also discuss the payments, recognizing that we want to keep the space available for when we are ready for in-person services again. John asked if Heather expects we will be eligible for funds from the new PPP bill. She said that we will not be eligible. There has to have been a 25% decrease in income for the second quarter of 2020 versus that of 2019.

VESTRY LIAISON POSITIONS

Rev. Bill asked Vestry via email last week to send him their first and second preferences for liaison positions. As it turned out, everyone was able to have their first choice. Nancy conveyed to Rev. Bill that because of her heavy commitments, she would like to be a co-liasion with someone on the Communications position. Rev. Bill said that he talked with Ed and the Worship position can be fulfilled by Rev. Bill and Ed, especially since we already have a worship steering committee in place. The positions are as follows:

Ed Coleman, Senior Warden – Administration and Finance

John Fox, Junior Warden – Building and Grounds

Les Reed – Congregational Growth and Development

Christine Young – Parish Life

Linda Chesbro – Christian Education

Mimi Vickers and Nancy Beckemeyer– Communications

Sharon Bryan – Outreach

Everett Price – Stewardship

Rev. Bill and Ed Coleman – Worship

After some discussion, it was agreed that there is no need to appoint secondary positions. Although John Fox said that he would like to have someone available to fill in at times when he may not be available, if problems arise. Les said that he will volunteer to back John up. Sharon also said that she would like some help, especially with the emergency needs that need immediate attention. After some discussion, it was suggested that she appoint a head of the outreach committee, who could also help out with these situations. And, even though Lucy Ogletree has resigned her position, she is still available to help out. Mimi said that she will also help out as needed.

REVIEW RESPONSES TO SURVEY QUESTIONS

*Capital Campaign

Rev. Bill said that only one of the survey responders addressed the capital campaign, but he thinks it would be helpful to put something out to the parish. John said that he would like to cut the architect (Ben Carter)loose for concepts. There is nothing in the

budget for that cost, but he feels it's like the chicken and the egg – without a design or weekly gatherings, it is a challenge to conduct a capital

campaign. Les suggested that we ask members of our parish where they are willing for the bathroom to be. After some discussion, it was agreed that John will contact Ben Carter next week.

*Worship

Rev. Bill said that the survey conveyed mixed reviews, which is typical. Mimi said that she hoped he has taken all the positive comments to heart – no one has tried harder to keep us connected. Rev. Bill noted that Bishop Wright's approach has worked well in that we don't have to make changes to our protocols in light of this recent strong surge in COVID cases. Nancy agreed that Rev. Bill has done an amazing job. She said that she has been watching the video services of St. Paul's in Albany, GA on Sundays, and she encouraged other members to check it out. They have great audio, numerous microphones, and show the organist, etc. Rev. Bill and John Cawthon have already looked into the cost of another microphone, but because it would also require adjustments to the audio equipment, the cost ran up to about \$1400, which seems too high a price. He can just hand his microphone to the singer, just as he does with the reader. Nancy also asked about the possibility of hiring a professional to film the services. Rev. Bill then asked vestry for new creative ideas for worship, for example, Ash Wednesday – how might we get the ashes out to congregants? Mimi suggested that she saw a sign while in Savannah recently, advertising “drive through ashes”. The group felt that we could have an outdoor Ash Wednesday service with a back-up plan, plus an additional offering of drive-through ashes that would be available to the community. Rev. Bill thought these were all great ideas. He also asked about ideas to invite viewers of our videos to visit our church. Ash Wednesday/drive-through ashes was cited as a good time to start. Mimi mentioned how much she enjoys the pilgrimage church visits on Tuesdays – maybe we could say more about that – what is the capacity? Rev. Bill said around 24 people, if there are pods of families. Christine mentioned that downtown Greensboro has self-guided tour packets for visitors – this could be combined with a Sunday service, making it a destination event. Next the vestry discussed how we can reach out to those whose needs are not adequately met. Christine had several ideas, including the Ash Wednesday service and destination Sundays. If she had a good list of church members who are here full-time and active, she could get some folks together and deliver the ashes to them at home – as long as the ashes have been blessed, anyone can apply them. Also, for Valentine's Day, she was thinking of delivering wooden spoons dipped in chocolate, with a message like, “love from Redeemer”; could we have the pancake supper virtually, or use the Lutheran Church's parking lot for gathering? Nancy suggested that we can always meet at Georgia Power Parks, and what about

Rock Hawk? Christine feels we could do something like this 6 times a year. Rev. Bill said that he has been thinking of expanding participation in the daily office so that others can be involved. Mimi asked about the Caring Committee, which is headed by Ann Goff, another venue to reach people. John suggested that vestry members could divide up a list of parishioners to call and get in touch. Everett said that it's important to have some information to share, such as what we've been discussing in this retreat - the capital campaign and get-togethers. Nancy suggested that we make the vestry meetings more open for viewing and Linda suggested that we might do this with a 30-minute open session of questions and answers. Les felt that the minutes should be sent out via email as well as having the meetings available to parishioners on Zoom. Rev. Bill said that these are all great ideas. He will put a calling list together and members can call quarterly, rotating the list so that it is a different person each time. He will have this list available by Monday.

GOALS FOR 2021 – BASED ON ABOVE DISCUSSIONS

1) Everyone agreed that improving our connectivity should be the overlying theme for this year. We should develop the initial plan for better connectivity and implement by a certain date. Christine mentioned another of her ideas which is a workshop for Advent wreaths that could be both in person and remote. Nancy suggested that Georgia Power employees are getting

together virtually for a monthly after work Cocktail Hour. It has been very well received, and people are doing things like introducing the rest of their family, including pets.

2) Preparing for the launch of the Capital Campaign – try to get the architect on board.

3) Get more people trained for recordings – parish volunteers, hire a professional, hire someone like Dere'on, or even consider students who would like community service experience for their resumes. Rev. Bill said that the time commitment would be 1-1 ½ hour per service. John will follow up on this.

4) Mimi suggested that we take another look at Outreach so that we are doing more than just hand-outs. We could look into partnering with another group, such as The Boys and Girls Club, or another church. We might also consider establishing relationships with our Christmas families.

HOUSEKEEPING

Rev. Bill said that we've reached our time, is there anything else to bring up? Nancy mentioned the nail-crosses. After some discussion it was agreed that Everett will re-

send the page with the designs and ask those who have not yet voted on their preferred designs to do so by Wednesday of next week. After that we will finalize the decision and he can produce them within 14 days of the decision. Vestry then began a discussion of pricing and distribution. Everett said that there will be somewhere between 40-50 crosses in total. A letter needs to be composed regarding the fundraiser. Details can be determined later.

ADJOURN

Rev. Bill closed the meeting at 12:15 and the group joined in The Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Fox, Vestry Secretary