

Episcopal Church of the Epiphany

Vestry Meeting Minutes

May 23, 2023

In Attendance:

Vestry - Bert Bender, Lisa Daily, Peter Dodge, Susan Ashmore, Sally Walker, & Kaylie Gibbs
Vestry via Zoom: Liefy Smith, Paige Howell, & April Maa
Clergy - Amy Dills-Moore
Ex officio - Erin Braden & Sherry Wallace
Visitor: Carmie McDonald

Absent: Judy Jarady, Andrea Strahan, Matthew May, & Randy Shearin

Meditation: Amy led with an opening prayer.

Welcome Associate Rector Carmie McDonald:

Amy introduced Carmie McDonald who will be our new Associate Rector. Her first day at Epiphany will be June 5 and her first Sunday will be June 11.

Consent Agenda:

Approval of the April 2023 vestry minutes were included as part of the consent agenda. All voted to accept.

Rector's Report:

Summer Breakfast/enhanced coffee hour starts back in June. Vestry may want to sign up for one of the slots.

Amy is hoping to host a Final Affairs Fair in August.

Amy is putting together a committee to look at our liturgical language and ways to make it as inclusive as possible.

Work on the organ is scheduled to begin May 29, pending the delivery of the tuning slides to Epiphany; should they arrive later than May 29, work will begin on June 5 in order to be able to use the parts of the organ on the following Sunday. Total time for installation and tuning is approximately 10 working days. The first half of the payment was sent at the end of last week and the total estimate has increased by \$800.00 due to the rise in cost by the manufacturer. Labor costs did not change.

Old Business:

Chapel Pendant Lighting (Bert & Liefy)

We received a proposal from a new contractor, Michelle Bray of Bray Electric, to install pendant lighting and do some additional work. Bert made the following proposal:

That the Church of the Epiphany be authorized to engage Bray Electrical Services to undertake the installation of our small pendant lights in the side Chapel area plus various lighting repair work under the terms described in the pdf document entitled "2089 Ponce De Leon Ave 5.23.23 Rev2", with funding from Account 8200 (Capital Reserve) which has a balance of approximately \$27,000.

April seconded the motion and all voted to approve.

Parish Priorities Group Contacts (Lisa)

Community engagement and parish life have already had meetings to discuss incorporating the new parish priorities into their activities. Other groups are scheduling their meetings. Parishioners want to have social groups again similar to the old Foyers.

CPR/Stop the Bleed training (April)

Captain Gary Bernard with the Decatur Fire Department is willing to provide an approximately 4.5-hour CPR training course for free. We plan to have two sessions with a maximum of 16 people per session. It makes the most sense to have these at the church. April will try to arrange for one in the summer and one in the fall in order to meet the scheduling needs of most people. Erin will work with April on dates.

The Stop the Bleed kits are for catastrophic bleeds. We probably need only one. Capt. Bernard will give us one for free.

New Business:

Solar Survey

The Earth Guild submitted a proposal to evaluate the feasibility of installing solar panels at Epiphany. GIPL is willing to do the survey and give us results. Liefy is concerned about whether the Druid Hills Historic Association will let us put panels due to historic district limitations. However, all we're committing to in this proposal is getting a feasibility report from GIPL. Bert moved we approve the GIPL MOU. Kaylie seconded. All approved.

Parish Retreat

Kanuga has changed its business model over the past few years and is less hospitable to churches. The parish retreat committee explored other options and came back with a contract from The Mountain Retreat and Learning Center in Highlands, NC. Randy has reviewed the contract. There is a \$500 deposit and there are only 35 slots available (minimum 30 and possibly a maximum of 40). There are not as many private rooms as in Kanuga, but it's cheaper for families. It doesn't have the overhead that Kanuga now has. People will register directly through them. The contract is for Friday, September 22—Sunday, September 24. Bert moved and Lisa seconded that we accept the contract. All voted in favor.

Designation of Associate Rector's compensation as salary and/or housing allowance:

Carmie McDonald had requested that her entire salary be designated as housing allowance. The vestry all voted in favor to designate the Associate Rector's entire salary in this manner.

Poll:

The next vestry meeting is scheduled for June 18, Father's Day. A poll was taken to determine if anyone had a problem with this. The vote was to keep it on the schedule.

Community Engagement banner:

The Community Engagement Committee wants to sew a quilted banner. Marion Curry would oversee it. It would be used on special occasions, not all the time. The Vestry suggested that a good size would be that of the Three Kings banner. They would like the committee to consult with Liefy as they proceed in this endeavor.

Compline

The meeting ended with Compline.

Key Upcoming Dates:

- Sunday, June 11 – Welcome new Associate Rector Carmie McDonald during Extended Coffee Hour
- Saturday, July 15 – Amy's wedding
- July – No Vestry Meeting

Online Resolutions:

On May 7, Kaylie made the following motion via email: That the Vestry approve the revised recommendation of The Endowment Fund Board, as Custodian of The Endowment Fund of The Church of the Epiphany, Inc. for disbursement of Endowment Funds. April seconded the motion. There were ten votes in favor and none against, and the motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,
Sherry Wallace
Clerk of the Vestry

MISSION STATEMENT

The Episcopal Church of the Epiphany is an inclusive community called to seek and follow Jesus Christ. We welcome all people in the Eucharistic fellowship of Christ's Body. We receive strength and encouragement at the common table to carry out Christ's work of reconciliation in our broken world. Nourished by worship and witness, learning and teaching, fellowship and service, we strive to live out the Gospel's radical values with gladness of heart.

PARISH CORE VALUES

Faith in God. Our belief in a loving God is foundational to our faith. Faith brings us together for worship and sends us out in the world. We recognize everyone's faith journey as unique – wherever you are on your journey, there is a place for you here.

Love in Action. We are called to engage with the wider community through the life and teachings of Jesus. Together, we work toward environmental, racial, gender, LGBTQ+ and economic justice and equity.

Transformative Relationships. Through God's grace, we seek to embody God's love in our care for each other.

Intentional Welcome. We are an inclusive community that strives to seek and serve Christ in all people. We believe God loves you - no exceptions.

PARISH PRIORITIES

- 1) Make necessary changes to attract families with children and youth to our church
- 2) Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to reach new people and incorporate them into the life of the church.
- 3) Work toward environmental, racial, gender, LGBTQ+ and economic justice and equity.
- 4) Develop ministries that work toward healing those broken by life circumstances and those living on the margins of society.
- 5) Create more opportunities for people to form meaningful relationships (for example, small groups, nurtured friendships, shared meals, etc.).

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Vestry Reports for May 23, 2023

Parish Priorities — Lisa Daily

An article about Parish Priorities and the process we are using to solicit input from committees was published in [the May 12 Parish Newsletter](#). Vestry liaisons will be meeting with their committees in May and June to discuss the priorities and how they can be incorporated into committee work. The Community Engagement Committee held discussions on May 11. Shea will publish Parish Priorities and Core Values on the Epiphany website and will post them in visible places at Church.

Community Engagement — Susan Ashmore + Sally Walker

Notes from Community Engagement Meeting, May 11, 2023, Epiphany Parish Hall

Check in/Introductions. Sally and Susan as Vestry liaisons means we're here for you and you can let us know what you need. We report what y'all are doing back to the Vestry.

Check In from the various ministries:

Ellyn Bryan—Refugees. Had been working with New American Pathways (NAP) that worked with family, helped with doctors, furniture, tutoring. Recently NAP told Ellyn and Erin Braden "Y'all are done," meaning Epiphany no longer connected with NAP, even though Ellyn and Erin still working with the family from Afghanistan. The father has a job as a security guard at a small factory; his salary is not enough to pay the rent on the apartment. Ellyn and Erin are helping the family with a budget. Epiphany has supplemented their rent, will reduce this supplement as the months go by. Nick Ferrell took the father and the boys to an Atlanta United soccer game. Other family outings have included visits to Fernbank, and to the park. Other issues the family has faced include being dropped by Medicaid abruptly, but they have gotten it back after three months. Ellyn and Erin could use some assistance from a social worker who could answer questions Ellyn has about these bureaucratic issues). The father had been a colonel in the Afghan army and also has martial arts skills. The mother is a good seamstress. Both have limited English skills. They have three children: the oldest girls is 13 in eighth grade; the middle child is a second grade girl who is 7, and the youngest is a girl in first grade. There is also a niece in her mid-20s. Language is a challenge. The children have learned English, while the adults are still learning.

- What does the future hold for this family?

- Should Epiphany step back and take on another family...? Other issues include SNAP (food stamps), Medicare, and after one year housing is on them.
- Amy asked: is New American Pathways the right program for these people? International Rescue Comm (IRC) may be an option? What is the sense of what happens if family dependent on rental assistance? They are making it with Epiphany offering \$300 a month.
- Susan Ashmore noted that Jonathan Coulis, an oral historian with Emory's Rose Library, has an oral history project in Clarkston. His contact information is: j.e.coulis@emory.edu He might know some local Clarkston folks who are bilingual in English and the language Afghanistan people speak.
- Carol Bartlett knows the local Iman and his wife. The father attends services at the mosque by himself. Carol said she knows the Iman's wife who is "dynamite." Perhaps she could meet with the mother of this family.

Frances Finnegan and Carol Bartlett—Green Guild. They want to collaborate with other ministries, any healing act is earth care. The collaboration with Building and Grounds (Matthew is vestry liaison) is working well. Matthew suggested volunteer hours for community service—heard that DeKalb gave hours for Emmaus House volunteering. The Green Guild seeks sustainable practices where ever they can be done across the parish ministries. E.g.: meadow erosion issues addressed with planting blueberries. Organize church hikes included 20-25 people. Sunday School sessions on earth care, and Carol is leading a book group.

- Frances talked about Fresh Harvest and how it works with refugees in Clarkston in collaboration with farmers in GA and NC. Curious if feeding ministry interested in this. Under investigation. They deliver once a week; support workers in Clarkston; use less plastic; engagement with community at large; artisans also involved; even have flowers that perhaps the flower guild could use. The Green Guild is working through these issues and priorities.
- A parishioner, Phillip Ranglin has his own compost business.
- The meadow project: want to work with Afghanistan refugees—next week Thursday/Friday to move dirt to stop erosion.
- Plan to post monthly activities: e.g.: Earth Day, MLK Day, etc. Quarterly trying to do bigger projects that involve the parish as a whole. Thinking about ways people who are not physically able to get involved. E.g.: advocacy...write letters, etc. This can also be an education piece.
- Amy: consider how do we keep these ministries in front of parishioners, could include an article in the weekly parish newsletters.

Doug Runion--Decatur Emergency Assistance Ministry (DEAM). Epiphany involved for a long time, over the years had more parishioners involved. Eric Olsen was the treasurer of DEAM for a long time. Seventeen churches support DEAM. It now has a community engagement volunteer position. Outside groups can do their volunteer work at DEAM or at Epiphany. DEAM is open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday from 9:00-11:30.

- Doug would like to get more parishioners involved. DEAM assists with food, utilities, and emergency assistance. It has new leadership that has created a more efficient system. The

pandemic was hard on DEAM and changes have been put in place since the pandemic ended. The refrigeration capacity has increased, clients are served once a week, is a walk through pantry now not just picking up a box.

- DEAM needs greeters, office volunteers, and pantry workers who guide clients through.
- In June, Epiphany will have a DEAM pantry drive. It was suggested that Community Engagement groups (e.g.: Refugees, DEAM, Green Guild, Feeding Ministry) could sign up to sponsor a summer breakfast that Parish Life is starting back up. This is a good way to engage parishioners about these opportunities to get involved.

Ann Kerner and Sally Walker—Feeding Ministry at the Gateway Center. They have been leading this since 2019 and feel like they are in a good spot—they have a core group of people that can be relied upon.

- They have divided up the chores in a staggered fashion:
 - People shop and deliver by Thursday morning.
 - People on Thursday afternoon chop and get everything ready.
 - Friday the food is cooked and salad is made.
 - 5:00 p.m. the group goes to the Gateway shelter to serve.
 - Some people are on call if needed.
 - They have started shopping in bulk at Restaurant Depot.
- They have been feeding 100 people.
- Gateway is a low barrier shelter that allows clients to stay for forty days. The focus is on transitioning out of homelessness. Some have jobs, some come later. Offer showers, meals, jobs.
- Sally and Ann feel they could expand beyond feeding and asked Gateway “what is needed?” The response they got was they need towels, shower shoes, Christmas gift bags.
- Sally and Ann are getting the parish youth involved to serve in June and July.

Jeanette—Emmaus House. Epiphany has long ties to Emmaus House that is in the People’s Town/Mechanicsville/Summerhill area of Atlanta.

- In June, Emmaus House sponsors a Freedom School for neighborhood young people to address summer reading gap. On June 22nd, Epiphany has agreed to serve dinner for 50 people. Assistance will be needed to get this meal prepared and served.

Lisa Daily—Haiti. There is a 501C3 Making Your Business that Epiphany has been involved with to support Rev. Kessner’s work in Haiti.

Other community engagement groups that were not present at the meeting include:

- Epiphany Racial Justice Group—that needs leadership
- The Art Ministry—led by Liefy Smith
- Episcopal Church Women (ECW)

- Ismaili/Epiphany Group—that needs leadership

Going Forward: Community Engagement plans to meet once a quarter so the meeting schedule will be: August, late Nov/Dec, March, and June. **Thank you for all the work each one of you are doing! It means so much for so many reasons!**

Children + Youth Formation — Paige Howell (Emily Elder)

This month, on Sunday, May 7, we wrapped up Children's Formation for the 2022-2023 school year. This means that our Godly Play and "Surveyors of Scripture" classes came to an end, and won't start back up again until September. Since mid-September of 2022, we have offered **over 25 weeks** of children's formation this school year (excluding holiday Sundays and special one-time formation events like St. Nick's, Easter, etc.). We averaged **3-4 children** in Godly Play and **4-6 children** in "Surveyors of Scripture." Overall, this year helped re-establish a children's formation routine for both our students and our adult volunteers. The children are more familiar with each other and with the adult leaders, which makes me excited for next year.

In late April and early May we continued to host Children's Chapel and Youth Group, both of which will continue throughout the summer. Children's Chapel continues to provide a great space for children to worship during the service in age-appropriate ways (averaging **5-7 children** each week), and youth group continues to draw **6-9 youth** on a weekly basis (this number includes joint youth groups with Holy Trinity).

We also had several special events in the past month. On Tuesday, April 25, Julie and I hosted a Children & Youth Volunteer and Choir Appreciation Dinner. We thanked **17 adult volunteers** for serving with children and youth this year, in addition to **11 children** who participated in Beginning Choristers & Junior Choir. On Sunday, April 30, Holle Tubbs came and facilitated a Suicide Prevention Training for **12 Epiphanyites**, and we plan to follow up on the information she gave us, starting by creating a flyer with information and resources on it that we can post around Epiphany. On May 7 we had Youth Sunday which elicited wonderful feedback from the congregation and involved **15 youth and children** in the liturgy. Finally, our Youth Car Wash Fundraiser on May 7 raised **over \$850 in 2 hours** for this summer's Youth Pilgrimage.

See below for a list of upcoming events, and please reach out to Emily Elder (eelder@epiphany.org) if you are interested in helping out with any of them:

- **Youth Lake Day** (date TBD; June, July, or August)
We were awarded \$700 by the endowment fund for this, to hire vans for transportation and to cut down on other costs!

- **Youth Interfaith Ping Pong Tournament** on Saturday, June 17 (with Ismaili CIVIC, St. Luke's, Holy Trinity Parish, and potentially Ebenezer Baptist and the Temple)
- **Vacation Bible School** from Tuesday, June 20 to Friday, June 23 (9 AM to 1 PM every day)
- **Youth Pilgrimage** to Little Tallapoosa River from June 27 to July 2 (registration now open)

Membership + Newcomers — Liefy Smith

Eleven newcomers (including two children) attended the first Newcomer Gathering of the year in April.

Finance — Andrea Strahan

April 2023 Financial Report

April 2023	Budget	Actual
Income	\$57,256.42	\$62,267.94
Expenses	\$57,749.00	\$68,252.27
Net	(\$ 492.58)	(\$ 5,984.33)

April had MTD revenue of \$62,268 and MTD expenses of \$68,252. Total expenses in April 2023 YTD were \$199,618, versus the budgeted amount of \$230,996. Last year, April 2022 YTD expenses were \$204,061. April 2023 YTD expenses are below the budgeted amount due to not having an Associate Rector January through April. We still have not made monthly Community Engagement support payments, when those start Community Engagement will be in line with the YTD budget.

Expenses in April included \$20,963 for January through April Diocesan pledge payments, \$3,484 for the property insurance premium, and \$1,096 for parish life (expenses related to Amy's installation dinner, Easter, and Epiphany Feast).

Revenues are strong, especially in pledge giving. April YTD total pledge donations were \$234,137 (versus budgeted amount of \$201,493). Last year, April 2022 YTD pledge donations were \$188,258.

Pastoral Care — Lisa Daily

Nothing New.

Endowment — Kaylie Gibbs

The Endowment Committee has communicated the endowment fund disbursements. Thank you all for your prompt response via email to my motion following the last meeting - much appreciated! The Committee is working on planning a Final Affairs Fair for later this year, and will review and discern if they have recommendations to the Plan of Operation language for clarity.

Stewardship — Kaylie Gibbs

Pam Tipton (Stewardship Committee Chair) and Amy determined a theme for the 2024 Stewardship campaign: **Many Voices | One Story**. Amy revealed this theme on May 21st by weaving this message into the sermon.

Parish Life — Judy Jarady

Parish Life Committee met on 05/08/23. The committee discussed plans for the church anniversary celebration. The celebration went very well - over 120 people were served. The committee sends thanks to all who volunteered to help with grilling, set up, and especially with clean up.

I discussed Parish Priorities with the group and a copy of the list was sent to them by email. The members agreed to review the priorities and bring ideas to the next meeting to address the areas where Parish Life can help.

The committee discussed and agreed the Parish would benefit from Foyers. Consensus from the group was that the Parish Life Committee lacks the manpower and time to set that program up.

Technology — April Maa

Shea and Julie working on changing the placers and updating the placers for online services broadcasts. Then will perform training refresher with the group.

Worship — April Maa

See Technology above.

Building and Grounds — Matthew May

These are actively in progress: (The list of projects and issues showing ups ↑ and downs □ since last time.)

- 1) (new) **Plumbing in basement.** The sump pump in the basement started overflowing again. After hours of triage on Mothers' Day, it recurred on Monday. Plumber has been scheduled to come repair it and replace the failing part.
- 2) (↓ from 1) **Roof Repair.** Getting Quotes were wide ranging from \$1,000 - \$7,500. we are going back to the vendors because scopes of work were very different. John Yntema is coordinating. Attempting to do maintenance only and get scope under \$2,500 and fix rest with volunteers. Good news existing roof will last 8 more years. If you have comments on this, email thetechcpa@gmail.com
- 3) (unchanged) **Flower Guild Room Improvements.** Received endowment grant, waiting on timing and plan post 125th.
- 4) (new) **Solar Assessment.** We plan to begin a solar assessment the initial cost request is \$100. We also are keeping in mind that the current roof has 8 useful years left and the neighborhood has restriction to consider. See Memo attached at the end of these reports from the Earth Guild. If you have questions or would like to be involved on this, email ffinegan@hotmail.com

These are not actively in progress or are waiting on a volunteer or prioritization:

Gutter Work. In our roofing estimates there were several gutter issues we can address with volunteers.

Lighting. New Contractor Michelle Bray (Bray Electrical Services) very responsive, comes with strong recommendation. Proposal to Vestry imminent.

Front Door Physics. Something happening here. Various parties looking at conundrum of the front doors: sometimes doors gap, sometimes doors stick. Next? Better door code security system (video)?

125 Anniversary Improvements. Waiting on a plan or communication

Courtyard Fence. Needs a leader to plan. There is budget available. If you have comments on this or know someone who is the best to lead a project, email thetechcpa@gmail.com

Choir Room Wall Repair. need to repair and repaint choir room wall from water damage

Maintenance Contracts (Inventory of Systems). Will be updating HVAC list after McKenney's Punch List labeling is confirmed.

Asphalt Patching. Comment: shouldn't we patch cracked asphalt parts at entrance and exit drives, maybe starting with temporary volunteer fix? Answer: maybe, but if we need professional help, let's focus on that part and develop a plan of (a) where? (b) anywhere else? (c) who should do it?

and (d) ensure good price. All comments invited. If you have comments or a special paving contractor you like, email thetechcpa@gmail.com

Sexton Services. Is informal volunteer sexton approach for identifying maintenance issues, handling minor repairs, coordinating minor contractors sustainable?

Landscaping Company. When more urgent stuff addressed, can seek input and review.

Off the list/projects completed:

Parish Work Day. Parish Work Day on Sunday between when I submitted this report and vestry meeting so hopefully weather held and it went well.

FFA Byrdland. Approved endowment project completed.

E911. The emergency 911 system has been updated to reflect that the church's main entrance is on E. Lake not Ponce and first responders will be notified as such in the future.

Adult Formation — Peter Dodge

[No Report]

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Solar Survey Memo

May 8, 2023

FOR: The Reverend Amy Dills-Moore

SUBJECT: A recommendation for exploring the installation of solar panels on Epiphany's roofs.

RECOMMENDATION: Given the potential loss of God's creation due to climate change from the burning of fossil fuels, I recommend you and the Vestry sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Georgia Interfaith Power & Light (GIPL) to learn if harnessing solar energy is feasible at Epiphany.

BACKGROUND: As a renewable source of power, solar energy has a vital role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions to mitigate climate change and to thereby protect humans, wildlife, and ecosystems. Major hurdles for churches to harness solar energy have been the considerable upfront capital costs of the solar panels and inverters and the costs of their installation and maintenance. The passage of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) in August 2022, however, now provides that for the first time ever, at least 30% of the cost of a solar project and installation can be covered by "direct pay" tax credits from the federal government for faith-based, tax-exempt entities.

<https://gipl.org/solar-wise>. In addition to the “direct pay” tax credits, GIPL has expertise and extensive experience assisting congregations assess all options for harnessing and financing solar energy.

RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS:

1. Review and discuss with the Vestry the two attached documents for GIPL’s Solar Wise Program: the *GIPL Solar Wise MOU* and the *GIPL Solar Wise Assessment: Congregational Background Information*.
2. Agree to implement the Solar Wise Program to assess the options, if any, of harnessing solar energy at Epiphany.
3. Appoint me, Frances Finegan, as the Epiphany primary and Matthew May as the secondary contact persons for GIPL as required by the *GIPL Solar Wise MOU* and the *GIPL Solar Assessment*.
4. Sign the GIPL Solar Wise MOU, donate \$100 to GIPL as suggested and have the Solar Wise Assessment completed within 30 days of signing the MOU; forward documents to Ms. Hannah Shultz, GIPL Project Coordinator.
5. During the assessment, inform the Parish of Epiphany’s participation in the GIPL Solar Wise Program.
6. After the completion of the assessment, coordinate with GIPL for a discussion of the options, if any, for harnessing and financing solar energy.

I look forward to working on this project. Please call me at (678) 358-6639 if I can be of assistance in moving this solar assessment forward.

Respectfully,

/s/

Frances Finegan
Co-Chair, Earth Guild

3 Attachments:

- GIPL Solar Wise MOU
- GIPL Solar Wise Congregational Background Assessment
- DeKalb County Guidance for Installing Rooftop Solar Energy Systems in Historic Districts.

CF: Ms. Carol Bartlett, Co-Chair, Earth Guild
Mr. Matthew May, Chair, Buildings & Grounds Committee