

Episcopal Church of the Epiphany

Vestry Meeting Report

October 15, 2023

In Attendance (6 Vestry):

Vestry - Bert Bender, Peter Dodge, Susan Ashmore, April Maa, Matthew May & Andrea Strahan.
Clergy - Amy Dills-Moore

Absent (6 Vestry): Vestry - Lisa Daily, Liefy Smith, Sally Walker, Paige Howell, Kaylie Gibbs & Judy Jarady.
Ex officio - Sherry Wallace, Randy Shearin & Erin Braden

(A Quorum was not present, so the Vestry Meeting was unofficial and this is a "report".)

Meditation:

Amy led a meditation with sharing about "what was the heart of your week?"

Consent Agenda:

Approval of the September 2023 vestry retreat minutes was included as part of the consent agenda. Peter Moved to approve, April Second. 6 present in favor. Needs 1 more to pass and will be held over to November.

Rector's Report:

- Amy suggested review of the Episcopal Statement on Israel/Palestine situation (www.episcopalchurch.org/ogr/the-episcopal-church-calls-for-prayers-for-peace-in-the-holy-land/).
- Retreat at The Mountain was a great time. Facilities and hospitality very impressive and worked much better for group gatherings. We hope to get more rooms in the future. The Parish Retreat Committee is working on next year's event. John Keys has announced plans to step down as co-chair of Ushers, and discussion about how to recognize for decades of service ensued. Other updates:
- HVAC: continued communication issues with McKinney's. George Smith willing to intervene with them to keep them accountable.
- Time for some new Endowment Committee Members. Julia Dodge and Jeanette Hanson rolling off their three year terms. www.epiphany.org/endowment-fund. Names of potential new members discussed.
- Time to consider new Vestry Members. Names discussed. More to follow.
- Annual Council emissaries are Ann Fowler, Sherry Wallace, Lisa Grey and Nick Theyerl (David Draper, alternate).
- Luther Smith, founder of the Interfaith Children's Movement, which does advocacy for children in poverty (e.g. Juvenile Justice, Legislative), wants us to be a partner with that effort and needs a liaison in the Parish if we are to do this. Seems to line up with Community Engagement. www.icmgeorgia.org/ and www.icmgeorgia.org/about-us
- Revised Liturgy will roll out and be the coffee hour topic 11/12/23. Committee Members include Tom DeMocko, Jordan Moody, Emily Thompson, Loren Williams. Amy circulated the current draft and reviewed history of changes over the years to increase inclusion.

Old Business:

Solar Survey Update was presented by Matthew May – with review of the GIPL report. Parking Lot and Byrdland options are not cost effective. Roof options came in three configurations with slightly different cost options. Cost offsets are a 30% rebate (within a 10 year window). We'd file a Form 990, and get a refund. GIPL willing to fund a @\$15K interest free loan, which helps from an "upfront cost" perspective. Cost savings should accrue with a 10 year or so payback. We don't want to negatively affect the roof and accelerate the time when roof replacement is needed. Phased approaches were discussed. No motion yet.

Courtyard Re-Creation Costs. Motion to approve purchase of plants to be sent by email due to lack of Quorum. Brief Overview of Budget Process – we are still open to comments, questions, concerns.

The meeting ended with prayer led by Amy.

Respectfully submitted,
Bert Bender, Senior Warden

Report on Post-Meeting Motions by Email

Consent Agenda (September Minutes): From Bert Bender, October 15, by Email (“Two Motions for Email Vote”), motion was:

1. Consent Agenda: To approve the Minutes circulated by Sherry Wallace, attached here again.
 - Vote in person was: Peter moved to approve; April seconded.
 - 6 Present in favor (so, Amy, Bert, Peter, Susan, Matthew, April, Andrea over Zoom).
 - Need 1 in favor more to pass.

Clerk’s Tally Report on October 24: “First, we voted to approve the September minutes. Peter motioned, April seconded the motion, and it was approved by a vote of 11-0. ...”

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Courtyard Plant Purchase: From Bert Bender, October 15, by Email (“Two Motions for Email Vote”), motion was:

2. Courtyard Re-Creation Costs – I believe the Motion is (and I move it here): *That the Vestry of the Episcopal Church of the Epiphany authorize the Courtyard Re-Creation group (led by Susan Williams) to purchase the plants listed in “Epiphany Courtyard Plant Estimate”, attached, or substantially similar plans, using monies from Restricted Funds Account number 8201 (“Grounds Designated Fund”).*
 - If there is any desire to change the language, let us know.
 - If we like this, I’ll invite a “second” and then a vote (we didn’t start a vote in the meeting).

Clerk’s Tally Report on October 24: “... Matthew seconded the motion to purchase plants and we have a total of 8 votes for and none against the proposal. Therefore, the motion passes and we’re through with voting for now.”

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ECW Book Sale Fundraiser. From Bert Bender, October 22, by Email (“A Request for Email Approval of a Motion for the Benefit of our ECW Chapter”):

Laura Keys, on behalf of Robin Hairston, President of our Chapter of Episcopal Church Women (ECW), requests Vestry approval for the ECW to hold:

- 1) Their annual Bake and Craft Sale on December 3.
and
- 2) A book sale on two successive Sundays in January, preferably January 21 and 28.

Laura advises that the ECW holds fundraisers in order to have money to give away for various purposes that align with ECW priorities. Examples in the past have included the Emmaus House Seniors' Christmas luncheon, the Epiphany Ladies' Luncheon, donations to organizations or individuals in need, gift bags, and speakers' fees for ECW formation events. Plus, recently, ECW paid for ECW member Maggi Ewing's funeral reception. ECW accounts used for those purposes are filled through voluntary dues and fundraisers such as those requested in this message. The ECW does not draw funds out of the Parish Operating Budget.

These fundraisers allow the ECW to supplement – in a more flexible and available manner – the many benefits of the disbursements from the Harvey Fund, which has a much more formal and regimented process.

(FYI, Epiphany has a Financial Policy that requires Vestry Approval of Fundraisers.)

Therefore, I present this Motion:

That the Vestry of the Episcopal Church of the Epiphany authorize Epiphany ECW to Their annual Bake and Craft Sale on December 3, and a book sale on two successive Sundays in January, namely, January 21 and 28.

Are there comments, questions, or concerns? If so, let's discuss.

If not, I move, and then we'll need an email "second" and votes.

Clerk's Tally Report on October 24: "... Bert motioned to approve and April seconded. There were 9 votes in favor and none against, and the motion passed."

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Courtyard Cedar Fence. From Bert Bender, November 2, by Email ("Courtyard Re-Creation Proposal for Replacement Cedar Fence"):

This is a follow-up on the Courtyard Re-Creation process. Anyone dropping by the church during a weekday recently has probably seen Susan and Loren Williams and John Yntema and folks like Bill Graves and Sabra Hanson and others toiling away on what was described in [this September Announcement as the Season of Courtyard Re-Creation](#).

Consistent with the plans for the Courtyard, we have already authorized the purchase of (mostly) native plants.

Two other elements for the Courtyard Re-Creation have been investigated.

- One is an irrigation system to support the various new plants.
 - This was priced out at \$5,600 and considered by the Courtyard Re-Creation group and routed to Amy and me.
 - We have decided that this is not a good use of our funds, especially because there is the new irrigation hydrant and hose just around the corner in the Memorial Garden that can be used for watering when needed.
 - So, we do not recommend we purchase that.
- The other is a replacement for the fence that had deteriorated over the last nearly 20 years and has been a subject for replacement for some time – discussions that predate anyone currently serving on this Vestry. Considered over time were:
 - Plastic fence that sort of looks like wood? No thanks.
 - Split Rail? That look clashed with our Building and while it would be right *home on the range*, that doesn't seem right for us.
 - No fence? For safety and protection of the plantings on the exterior from people (especially rambunctious kids), and to guide people into the Courtyard through the lychgate, there was a strong desire to replace the fence.
 - Chain Link? Nah.
 - Susan Williams finally found someone (Tried and True Home Services) willing to custom build a fence from cedar that is similar to our previous fence for a cost of \$6,850.

Amy and I believe that this Cedar Fence proposal is worthy of Vestry consideration and approval.

Some other background: cedar is more expensive, but also lasts longer and requires less maintenance than, say, pressure treated pine. And cedar looks better. After all, the Courtyard is the most important and prominent portion of our grounds, central to welcoming, so the Courtyard is worthy of the investment, we believe. The total cost (with the earlier plant purchase) comes to \$9,786.47, which is in line with original targeted budget discussions when planning started by the Courtyard Re-Creation group; that target was

based on the amounts in Restricted Funds Account number 8201 (“Grounds Designated Fund”), which is around \$25,880 at last report.

Susan and the Courtyard Re-Creation group would like to know sooner rather than later whether Vestry will approve this or not because she wants to start planting next week while the weather is conducive, and because Vestry does not approve the fence, she and her team will need to make some changes to their design and plant selection.

Given that, I would like to share this Motion for Courtyard Re-Creation Costs, Part Two: *That the Vestry of the Episcopal Church of the Epiphany, having authorized the Courtyard Re-Creation group (led by Susan Williams) to purchase the plants listed in “Epiphany Courtyard Plant Estimate” or substantially similar plants, using monies from Restricted Funds Account number 8201 (“Grounds Designated Fund”), authorizes the second (and integrated) part of the Courtyard Re-Creation project. That part is the replacement of the Courtyard Fence with a custom built cedar fence from Tried and True Home Services, invoice cost of \$6,850, to be paid by check from the same fund upon completion and approval by the Courtyard Re-Creation group.*

- If we would like a Zoom meeting to discuss further, let me or us know.
- If there is any desire to change the language, let me or us know.
- If we like this, I’ll invite a “second” and then a vote.

There is some very good consideration and idea exchange about the potential for direct donations and some form of recognition for those who might donate to an important grounds project like this, but we would like to consider that later and not build it into the Motion to Approve. We don’t want to delay the work of the Courtyard Re-Creation group, and more time would be needed to consider what would be appropriate and not detract from the current Annual Pledge Drive of Stewardship.

Email Updates in response to questions:

- “On a breakdown of the bid, I am told that the allocation between materials and labor involved in the installation is \$4300 for the cedar and \$2550 for the labor.”
- **“Schedule and Completion Date.** I am told that the Contractor (Tried and True) has advised that (1) it will take 3 days to build the fence and (2) they are currently available November 15-17th.
- **Length/Design of Fence.** The fence is proposed to be identical to the previously existing fence with 2 improvements:
 - 1) Timber locks will be used to improve the connections of rails to posts.
 - 2) A post will be added on each side of the lychgate to create a stronger joint.
- **Protection of Fence.** The Courtyard Re-Creation group has also discussed how to deal with the damage caused by carpenter bees and birds. Susan is suggesting using a stain to match the lychgate (\$54.) In addition, they understand that peppermint oil can be applied to discourage the bees, so we expect that this will be done as well.”

Clerk’s Tally Report on November 4: “Bert motioned that we accept the proposal (see wording in previous email) and April seconded. For the first time this year, all 12 vestry members voted on the proposal. There were 12 votes for and none against, and the motion passed.”