

**Episcopal Church of the Epiphany
Vestry Meeting Minutes
April 10, 2022**

In Attendance:

Vestry - Erin Braden, Richard Messner, Bert Bender, Lisa Daily, Peter Dodge, Liefy Smith, Paige Howell, Susan Ashmore, April Maa, John Wierwille, & Kaylie Gibbs

Via Zoom: Paul Hinson

Ex officio - Shelle Bryant & Sherry Wallace

Absent: Randy Shearin, Amy Dills-Moore, & Nicole Lambelet

Erin opened with prayer.

The purpose of the meeting was to provide space for vestry discernment around the calling of a Rector and to address how the process will work. There will be a two-step discernment and planning process. On May 1, the vestry and clergy will engage in a Mutual Ministry Review, facilitated by Sally Ulrey, Missioner for Congregational Vitality in the Diocese of Atlanta. Following this will be the formal decision to call Amy as Epiphany's Rector. In June, the parish will be asked to participate in the Congregation Assessment Tool (CAT) to discern where we are, where we feel God is leading us, and what we want and need to change and grow.

No votes were taken.

Respectfully submitted,
Sherry Wallace
Clerk of the Vestry

Episcopal Church of the Epiphany

Vestry Meeting Minutes

April 26, 2022, via Zoom

In Attendance:

Vestry - Erin Braden, Paul Hinson, Richard Messner, Bert Bender, Lisa Daily, Peter Dodge, Liefy Smith, Kaylie Gibbs, Susan Ashmore, April Maa, Paige Howell, & John Wierwille
Clergy - Amy Dills-Moore & Nicole Lambelet
Ex officio - Shelle Bryant, Randy Shearin, & Sherry Wallace

Prayer:

Amy began with an opening prayer.

Children/Youth Formation

The vestry discussed combining the children's and youth education positions into one 30 hour/week position. Both personnel and financial aspects were reviewed. Paige moved that we fund a position for 30 hours/week with benefits and pension. April seconded and all voted in favor.

Financial Report:

Shelle reported that for the month of March, income and expenses were almost even. Lisa thanked the Finance Committee's efforts for moving a significant amount of money to Citizens Trust Bank, a minority institution.

The Finance Committee would like to obtain an increase in the diocesan loan to cover the gap between the HVAC installation costs and the funds raised for that purpose. Although no vote was taken, the consensus was that this is a reasonable approach for dealing with the issue.

Priest in Charge Report:

Amy expressed much gratitude to all those who helped make our first Holy Week and Easter back in the nave a meaningful worship experience for everyone. It takes a tremendous number of volunteer hours to make that happen. The agape supper was well attended. We had between 40-50 children participate in the Easter egg hunt. Attendance was great and the joy in the nave was palpable on Easter.

The bishop has given us permission to return to using a common cup at communion. Amy doesn't sense there is significant interest in that at Epiphany so we will continue communion by intinction for now and revisit that possibility in the future.

One of Amy's goals for this year is to create a new committee focused on Healthy Church. While ideas about it are still forming, it will have four components: education for the parish (new face of gender, online safety for children/youth, etc), safeguarding compliance, clergy relations and accountability around shared ministry, and safe building practices. Greg Loughlin has agreed to co-chair that committee. More information will be coming in the near future.

Associate Priest Report:

The Youth Play was awesome on Sunday night. It was a wonderful community event.

Mat Schramm has been accepted into a PhD program at Emory and will be leaving their position at Epiphany. They will tell the youth on Sunday at 5pm. Their last day will be June 30.

Emily Elder and Nicole have planned Listening Circles after Mat's announcement. They want to learn what people are dreaming and hoping for. The one for parents of our youth has been set for May 22.

The youth pilgrimage will be June 12-15 in Nashville. We are doing this with Holy Trinity.

The young adult group is taking off. Some members are former members of the youth group. They came out for the feeding ministry and for the Sunday night play.

The Earth Guild has new leadership. Both co-leaders, Frances Finnigan and Sylvia Yaw, are new to the parish. They want to examine waste in each area of the church and each ministry and then make recommendations to the church for reducing the waste. They also want to increase our relationship with GIPL. Additionally, they are looking at the vacant Byrdland meadow to possibly develop an edible landscape.

Sylvia Yaw and Nicole representing Epiphany, Dr. Behnoosh Momin and Sehr Abdulla from the Ismaili Council, and Hannah Shultz from GIPL will receive an award at the Rivers Alive annual luncheon for their collaboration on the Clyde Shepherd cleanup. The Ismaili community wants additional interfaith collaboration.

We are working with 10 partners from other faith and educational organizations on a series of events related to climate change.

Leadership Edge – The group discussed Chapters 2-6.

New Business:

A draft of The Racial Justice Vestry Letter was submitted for signature. The vestry expressed support for the work of the Racial Justice Group and voted to approve signing the letter. We will investigate forming a subgroup of the vestry who will be involved in incorporating racial justice into the work of the vestry in the future.

Consent Agenda:

Approval of the March 2022 vestry minutes was included as part of the consent agenda. There were no contributions over \$100 to consider. All voted to accept.

Meditation:

Amy led a short discussion on John 20:19-31, and the meeting then ended with Compline.

Respectfully submitted,
Sherry Wallace
Clerk of the Vestry

April Vestry Liaison Reports

Adult Formation (Paul Hinson)

Our adult formation series Returning to our Roots returns in our Easter semester for three more sessions beginning Sunday April 24. Then as we head into summer, Amy will be starting up her contemplative book study group once more with a book title TBA. We'll also be looking at the possibility of one or more additional book study groups over the summer or Fall. We have several NEW members who have agreed to serve on the adult formation committee, and that committee will be having zoom meeting in the near future to discuss planning for the summer and fall offerings. In the Fall, we have Epiphany parishioner and New Testament scholar Carol Newsome who will be teaching a class — we're very excited about that. New ideas are in development and your suggestions are welcome. We were honored and blessed to have the Dr. Catherine Meeks for our last Returning to our Roots session — what a profound gift that was. The "owl" finally seems hooting for us successfully in our hybrid meetings and we were happy with the bird's performance of late. Stay tuned!

Building and Grounds (Bert Bender)

Issues on Front Burners (FB), Back Burners (BB) and On The Counter (OTC): This month's updates of a baker's dozen list of projects showing ups ↑ and downs ↓ since January.

- 1) (unchanged) **Nave Ductwork and HVAC and Office/Bathroom HVAC Combined Construction Work (FB):** Dumpsters. Workers. Ductwork. More to come.
- 2) (↑ from 3) **Lighting (FB):** Work Day One is done – all Nave Lights lit. Side Chapel plan passed just before *sine die*, awaiting pendant order, then work Day Two will be scheduled.
- 3) (↑ from 4) **Georgia Power Ponce Transformer Replacement (FB):** Revised easement documents signed, awaiting \$\$ and work to be completed.
- 4) (↑ from not on the list) **Asphalt Patching (BB):** 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 let's get the big HVAC units/trucks done first, and develop a plan of (a) where? (b) anywhere else? (c) who should do it? and (d) ensure good price. All comments invited.

- 5) (↑ from not on the list) **Front Door Physics (BB)**: Team of Yntema and Graves evaluating replacing front doors affected by physics: too far apart when cold (wind blows in) + too close when warm (doors stick).
- 6) (unchanged) **Building an' Grounds (BANG) Structure, or Emerging Endless List of "Things to Do" (BB)**: Circulated last month. Leadership search on hold after pollinator process. More later.
- 7) (unchanged) **Baptistry Doors Punch List (BB)**: From March: Under consideration: bigger gutters and/or canopy over doors – plus canopy over undercroft – we'll ask the undercroft contractor as they do nearby work.
- 8) (unchanged) **Courtyard Fence (BB)** Need to consider solution of various types.
- 9) (unchanged) **Maintenance Contracts (Inventory of Systems) (BB)** updating HVAC list for McKenney's.
- 10) (unchanged) **Playground Reconstruction (OTC)**: Invoices submitted to insurance – awaiting final payout or update about status (maybe it's in). Maybe picnic table plan, but no pressure on that right now.
- 11) (unchanged) **Memorial Garden Plaques (OTC)**: Looks like all is going well, pending the walls getting stoned.
- 12) (↓ from 2) **Preschool Pollinator Project (FB)**: Volunteer stepped up to communicate with Preschool while your liaison was away. Thank you Nicole.
- 13) (unchanged) **Landscaping Company (OTC)**: When more urgent stuff addressed, will seek input and review.

Off the list: Irrigation Plumbing Extensions and Kitchen Appliances.

Children and Youth Ministries (Paige Howell)

Emily Elder has been hired as a consultant as a PT Children's Ministry staff. Emily will work 5 hours a week until she graduates from seminary in June 2022. Sadly for the parish, Mat Schramm will be leaving their position in youth ministry at the end of June 2022 and is planning to pursue a Ph.D., but they also plan to return in a volunteer capacity, which will lend continuity to the program.

- Our Children and Youth Ministries program has suffered setbacks over the last 3 years with departure of clergy, then COVID

- Nicole has been working to rebuild the program, which now has educational offerings for all ages and a nursery with two paid staff
- We had an interim part-time Children's Ministries staff person after Lorraine's departure, but the position has been unfilled for some time
- Nicole is trying to do both her job and children's ministries and this situation is untenable over the long term
- The Youth Committee has re-formed and is now meeting monthly on the first Sunday, currently reviewing guiding documents created by the most recent iteration of that committee. Youth Committee members currently include Mat (lead), Doug Kertscher, Lisa Dailey, Keith Poole, and Paige
- We are asking the Vestry to consider hiring a 30 hr/week staff person for Children and Youth Ministries
 - Rationale:
 - We had an opening for about a year for the PT position and had very little interest from potential candidates
 - The Children's Ministry staff position is still not filled on a permanent basis
 - If we can get at least 30 hours for a combined children's/youth position, we can offer benefits
 - There would be more interest in this as a position, we believe
 - The staff person would be able to insure we continue to have coverage and programming for kids of all ages - providing continuity for the programs
 - The staff person would be able to devote their attention and time on Epiphany's young people and families, especially given the erratic hours for a youth or children's program staff person

Community Engagement/Outward Facing Ministries (Susan Youngblood Ashmore)

On March 27th, Rev. Nicole Lambelet hosted a meeting with all the stakeholders involved in Epiphany's Outward Facing Ministries. The intent of the gathering was to seek a deeper connection with each other and to have an awareness of what everyone is doing in their various ministries. Introductions were made and the scope of the activities of so many parishioners was clear. Those who came included: **Leify Smith** representing the **Art Ministry**. Leify explained how the Art Ministry started and the many ways artists' works have been featured. She has done this work for 18 years. **Brenda Lloyd** representing the **Earth Guild** that was started in 2005 to raise awareness of conservation and creation. This committee has hosted river clean up events, neighborhood clean ups, electric recycling, and more. **Mary Ann Schneider** volunteers at the **Lokey Center** that is part of Emmaus House focusing on poverty rights. Since Covid, she has done this work by phone. There is also a real need for affordable housing. What used to cost \$400 for a room now costs \$800 and Social Security offers \$850 a month. **Doug Runnion** volunteers with **DEAM** (housed at Holy Trinity Parish) that offers food and utilities to those in need. He has done this work for 13 years. **Laura Keys** president of **Episcopal Church Women (ECW)** shared their current project is collecting non-food stamp items for Emmaus House. These collections

take place in March and October for non-food items. ECW also oversees the Harvey fund. What ECW would like to do is to establish partnership(s) with some of the groups they sponsor to offer scholarships for licensed or technical training. **Jeanette Hanson** has been involved in the feeding ministries. **Ann Curner and Sally Walker** are co-leading the **feeding ministry** that is now feeding about 80 people at Gateway done on the second Friday of every month bringing a meal. A separate group serves at the Evolution Center. It has been challenging trying to get enough people to help on a consistent basis. **Erin Braden** has been working with the **Refugee Ministry** through New American Pathways walking with the family in their new life who have come from Afghanistan about five weeks ago. She is also involved in the **Racial Justice ministry** since June 2020 focusing on education and looking for ways to engage. **Kay Lee Bender** has taken the lead in this ministry when Erin became Sr. Warden. The group also completed a 10-module Sacred Ground with Holy Trinity Parish, and is now seeking an area of focus, perhaps on voting rights.

After these introductions Rev. Lambelet led a discussion on what we mean when we say “community” and noted “a place of belonging” and at the same time “where formation for action” can occur. “Engagement” reminds us that we are not just “acting on” but also “receiving” when we work in community with others. She also noted “the most effective outcome in a neighboring relationship is the work the person does for themselves, not the work that you do for them.” We are seeking a holistic approach. For example, our work with the Ismaili community has overlapped with Earth Guild (the river cleanup), shoe drive, interfaith young adult group, and climate change conference. Nicole then gave some insight on the value of **the hub and spoke model** of organizing outward facing ministries that enables some intersectionality as seen in the overlapping of the Ismaili outreach and Earth Guild, or Art Guild/Holy Comforter. We could also think about ways adult formation and youth formation could be involved in this formation for action and belonging.

Brenda Lloyd noted that it would be great if there was a way for all of these ministries to be in touch with each other. So, there is a need to figure out a way for that communication to happen. Erin Braden offered the idea of having a community ministry spotlight with sponsoring coffee to let people know about what is going on. Leify also let us know about the model membership is using: Invite-Welcome-Connect.

On April 8, 2022, I met Rev. Nicole Lambelet, to discuss how we thought the meeting with the Outward Facing Ministries went. She also talked about a way to engage people who are not free in the day to this type of volunteering. For example, she knows some attorneys who are working on immigration issues that can be quite taxing emotionally. The church could provide space for these volunteers to renew and support each other through contemplative practice.

The next meeting with the outward facing ministries will take place at the end of May. We plan to host these meetings every other month on a Sunday afternoon.

Finance (Richard Messner)

March 2022	Budget	Actual
Income	\$ 51,954	\$ 51,125
Expenses	\$ 51,989	\$ 51,125
Net	\$ (35)	\$ -

The third month in the calendar starts to tell the story of how we are doing financially. Expenses are amazingly close for the 1st quarter (\$376 over). We enjoyed some early contributions in January, helping the first quarter in revenue – which left us with a plus \$15,807 year to date.

Our Available Operating Cash remains at \$165,000. This is the cash that is available on hand to pay bills and salaries for staff every month.

The Finance Committee will open an account at Citizens Trust Bank in the coming weeks, per Vestry's approval. The funds come from the Money Market account currently held at Truist Bank (formerly BB&T). These funds are from the prior capital campaign and are used to pay the diocesan loan each month per Vestry's annual approval. We have calculated the amount available to open the account at Citizen's Trust at \$100,000. This leaves sufficient funds in the current Money Market account at Truist to cover prior capital campaign pledges that are re-allocated to the HVAC campaign with donor approval. For now, that account will remain open at Truist but reduced by \$100,000.

Lastly, we studied the flow of revenue over the last 3 years by month. We saw that on a quarterly basis the Quarters 1, 2, and 4 were very close at 26.0%, 25.9%, and 26.6%. Only Quarter 3 was the dip at 21.5%, which is historically low as families are "out of school." We are also seeing more people paying their pledges on a steady week or month set-up via REALM – which has been helpful for more consistency.

Membership (Liefy Smith)

- To further develop the **Connect** portion of Invite, Welcome, Connect, our committee worked with Shea to create a NEW MEMBER bulletin board in the Crossing Hall. It includes new member photos and short bios. We will leave them up for 1- 2 months so parishioners will have a good opportunity to view them. The same photos and longer bios have started being published in our weekly Star as Shea receives them.
- With another part of **Connect**, we are developing a shepherding-like program for new members and consistently attending newcomers. The committee has identified several parishioners who are excited about a deeper welcoming of new members and newcomers. We will call the existing Parishioner group “Connectors” and to get started, the Membership Committee will survey the new member and newcomer group about their interest in participating in this exciting new program. Our plan is to introduce the connector and the interested new member/newcomer by late May. Our Membership gathering in May will be a great event for the initial connections to occur. The Connectors will then meet with their new members and newcomers periodically from 3-6 months. Activities could include meeting with them at church or coffee, over lunch etc., help them navigate meeting people and assist them exploring opportunities at Epiphany. They would then make introductions to the various groups where their interest lies. Each pairing would discuss together the pace of meetings and activities that would work best for both connector and new Member/ newcomer.
- We have set the Spring **Newcomer Gathering for May 22, 2022** at 4:00.

Technology (April Maa)

1. Email went out to solicit for new IT consultant for Epiphany in late March
2. 4 vendors have already visited - on both extremes of spectrum; 2 small, single individuals and 2 large companies.
3. A few more are coming the week after Holy Week
4. The deadline to submit bids was tentatively Friday, April 15th (but may accept late if they could not come visit with us until after Holy Week).
5. We will gather the bids and evaluate them together probably in the next 2-3 weeks, involve Vestry and appropriate parties as we go through the process.
6. Target to have a new technology person by early to mid May as Jim (current IT support) will stop his support for us at end of April
7. We had training for the AV guild - targeting the youth group
8. I'm working to build a screen shot based step by step guide and troubleshooting guide
9. Special shout out to Paul and the Epiphany Staff who were instrumental in helping with the process of the IT consultant search.