

Episcopal Church of the Epiphany

Vestry Meeting Minutes

June 20, 2021

In Attendance:

Vestry - Shelle Bryant, Sara Cushing, Lisa Carlson, Erin Braden, Paul Hinson, Richard Messner, Bert Bender, & Liefy Smith

Attendance via Zoom: Linda Ryder-Wolf & Lisa Daily

Clergy - Amy Dills-Moore & Nicole Lambelet

Ex officio - Ann Fowler, Randy Shearin, & Sherry Wallace

Absent: John Wierwille & Peter Dodge

Amy led an opening meditation and prayer.

Priest in Charge's Report:

We are preparing for indoor worship which will be two weeks from today.

VPOD duties have been revised for indoor worship, as have customaries for all those serving on Sunday mornings.

The office HVAC system will be put up for bid soon. The process is as follows: (1) contract for design work; (2) get bids from contractors, (3) choose a contractor and approve the contract, and (4) the contractor purchases and installs the equipment. We will soon hire a contractor for the office system.

Ann Williamson is heading the HVAC capital campaign.

Pam Tipton-Thierry will chair stewardship for this year.

The Kanuga committee will have a contract to present soon.

We continue to welcome many newcomers to both our outdoor worship and our zoom services.

Our midyear vestry retreat is the third Sunday of July (7/18) immediately after church. We will discuss our core values and how they guide us when determining how to distribute resources.

Associate Priest's Report:

The youth group is going well. We continue to have about 10 people each Sunday. We continue to collaborate with Holy Trinity parish. Mat Schramm is interested in starting a Bible study with the youth in the fall.

Christen Erskine is leaving her position at the end of July. Nicole has a job posting ready and will interview candidates in July for a start date in the fall.

Clergy did a survey for parents of children under age 12 regarding worship. Results varied widely, with the majority of respondents divided evenly between ready to return now and waiting until their children are vaccinated. We continue to evaluate how best to minister to our families with young children.

Children's ministry held an outdoor gathering on June 19.

We continue to evaluate how and when we will re-open the nursery.

Consent Agenda:

Approval of Vestry minutes:

Approval of the May vestry meeting was included as part of the consent agenda. There were no gifts over \$100. All voted to accept.

Financial Report:

Financial Summary for May.

May 2021	Budget	Actual
Income	\$46,317	\$53,050
Expenses	\$46,317	\$41,544
Net	0	\$11,506

Randy said we have a year-to-date surplus of over \$60,000. This is partly due to prepayment of pledges. This is not a typical pattern. The pandemic has increased online giving, which has led to more stable giving patterns.

New Business:

Indoor worship beginning July 4:

- Masks should be worn by all during worship. Fully vaccinated clergy, lay worship leaders, choir, and lectors may go without a mask while actively leading worship. Seating is at 30% capacity. Seating will be six feet apart with pews marked for spacing. Singing by the choir and the congregation is allowed. (The clergy and the choir are without masks when performing but otherwise masked.) Sign-up is required. Communion remains in one kind (bread only).
- Small groups: Groups of adults whose members are fully vaccinated may meet indoors or outdoors without masks. If status is unknown, masks should be worn inside.
- Food may be consumed outdoors on campus with appropriate safety precautions or indoors if it is a small group of adults and all in the group are vaccinated.
- Norms will be printed in the bulletin.

Shelle motioned that we accept the above. Erin seconded, and all voted in favor.

A welcome table with welcome bags will be set up for visitors.

Indoor Worship VPOD Sign-up

Shelle reviewed the new VPOD duty list.

HVAC: Design letter

We have received a design letter for the Nave/Sanctuary HVAC system, involving mechanical/electrical/plumbing design, structural engineering, and architectural design. George Smith has helped Bert and Amy review the HVAC design letter (George is also helping review design plans for the Office/Bathroom/Nursery project). Discussion of the proposal ensued, relating to matters such as the nature of the different elements of the design work (which involves not only mechanical/electrical/plumbing design but also structural engineering and architectural design), possible time frames, and funding sources. The results of the discussion were the following motions:

- 1) Bert motioned: "That the Church of the Epiphany be authorized to enter into a contract with Johnson, Spellman & Associates under their letter dated June 16, 2021, for the design of an HVAC system to replace the existing system for the Nave/Sanctuary, including, but not limited to, removal of all ductwork, furnaces and air handlers located in the undercroft room, plus correction of existing (but temporary) structural supports in the undercroft room, as well as correction of existing architectural elements in the undercroft room that are not now code-compliant. After design approval, bids for the construction components of the work will be requested, and, on approval of bids, the removal, structural repair, installation and architectural corrections would be completed by approved contractors." Shelle seconded. The vote to accept was unanimous.

- 2) Shelle motioned to expand the scope of the initial Nave HVAC capital campaign to include the office system in order to recover a budget allocation previously approved by the vestry. Linda seconded. All voted in favor.

The meeting ended with compline.

Respectfully submitted,
Sherry Wallace
Clerk of the Vestry

Vestry Liaison Area Reports June 2021

Adult Formation (Paul Hinson)

Evan Gibbs and Paul Hinson will be leading a book study on Christian/Muslim community relations using a book entitled "Neighbors: Christians and Muslims Building Community. The first meeting will be Tues July 27 at 7pm via Zoom. Subsequent meets will be weekly with a mix of zoom and in person meetings pursuant to group consensus. Amy's Living Contemplatively" book study group begins again Monday July 19 at 11am via zoom for a study of a collection of essays on the life and ministry of Howard Thurman. The month of August during the Sunday Adult Formation hour at 10:15 we'll be offering a series of three Adult Forums familiarizing our community with Islam led mostly by scholars from the Emory religion department and the seminary. All this is in preparation for our community building/outreach response to the Ismaili Community's invitation to us to engage in mutual hospitality and possible partnership.

Building and Grounds (Bert Bender and Sara Cushing)

Many thanks to Tom Felcher, John Yntema, Katharine Yntema, Bill Graves, George Smith, Sabra Hanson, Liefy Smith, John Wierwille and others for the things they do.

Issues on Front Burners (FB), Back Burners (BB) and On The Counter (OTC): To supplement the prior inventory of issues last month, here is a current Baker's Dozen Plus list with updates:

- 1) (unchanged) **Nave Ductwork and HVAC (FB)**: Design contract signed. Initial MEP and Architectural site inspection done; structural site inspection to follow soon. MEP (mechanical, electrical, plumbing) design is now underway.
- 2) (unchanged) **Office/Bathroom HVAC (FB)**: Plans received and appear in order. Review of potential installation contractors underway. Timing, pricing, synergy and funding considerations in process – namely, pros and cons of requesting bidding on a larger project that includes the Nave work, or request separate bids.
- 3) (unchanged) **Building an' Grounds (BANG) Structure, or Emerging Endless List of "Things to Do" (FB)**: Developing process to (hopefully) engage volunteers beyond The Usual Suspects (Yntema, Wierwille, Graves, Felcher, etc.) and connect with Parishioners who express interest in helping. Planning to reach out shortly to former Vestry or other leaders for key roles, and constitute committees or groups or gangs to address issues and do stuff.
- 4) (↑ - new) **Lighting (FB)**: A quote from for changing out 6 lights in the Nave including very high lights that need a lift to be brought in led to wondering "are there others" (that is, lighting issues that need to be fixed or prayed over). It appears there are others, and so a proposal for fixing those will be in process soon.
- 5) (↑ - new) **Irrigation Plumbing Extensions (FB)**: Concept from Tom Felcher and others (John Yntema supports) to extend plumbing from building to 4 hydrant locations around the space in order to make watering of plants less of a haul for those now dragging hose hither and yon. Concept includes identified funding source(s). Detail (including permitting issues) being vetted to develop into a proposal for action.
- 6) (↓ from 4) **Landscaping Maintenance (FB)**: Watching.

- 7) (↓ from 6) **Shade Structure and Another Tree (BB)**: Awaiting changes from Preschool since sandbox structure didn't work out.
- 8-11) Unchanged in status are the following from the January Report: **Courtyard Fence (BB)**, **Kitchen Appliances (OTC)**, **Projects Menu (OTC)**, **Maintenance Contracts (Inventory of Systems) (OTC)** because there is only so much time.
- 12) **Memorial Garden Plaques (BB)**: Waiting for report.
- 13) (↓ from 5) **Baptistry Doors (BB)**: Under consideration: bigger gutters and/or canopy over doors.
- 14) (↓ from 7) **Georgia Power Ponce Transformer Replacement (BB)**: GA Power \$6K in. Waiting for construction to start (unknown timing).
- 15) (↓ From 13) **Playground Reconstruction (BB)**: Done, pending final numbers, then picnic table plan.
- 16) (↑ - new) **Relocate Undercroft Cr*p (BB)**: To be done soon to ease work in removing old system.
- 17) (↑ - new) **Keep List to a Baker's Dozen (BB)**: I'm trying, Ringo.

Children's Formation (Linda Ryder Wolf)

Christen Erksine is leaving Epiphany at the end of July. Nicole is asking various parishioners to serve on the hiring committee to find a replacement for Christen. But first we have to figure out what Children's Ministry is actually going to look like this fall as there is not a vaccine for our children under 12.

Endowment (Peter Dodge)

At Amy's initiative, she and I met on June 28, 2021 to discuss the Endowment Fund and related investment funds owned and managed by the parish. The present balance on deposit in the Fund is reported to be \$210,828. The parish has recently received two restricted gifts which will be presented for Vestry review. Amy and I both shared our correspondence with Bonnie Kissler, Chair of the Endowment Fund. Amy also directed my attention to the Catherine Harvey Fun which the ECW manages for charitable purposes apart from the specific operational mission and needs of the parish and staff.

Finance (Shelle Bryant)

Financial Summary for June.

June 2021	Budget	Actual
Income	\$46,000	\$62,000
Expenses	\$46,000	\$51,000
Net	0	\$11,000

Membership (Liefy Smith)

- Committee Members set up a welcome table in the gallery to include welcome bags and pew cards.
- Committee Members have started serving as greeters at the indoor 11:30 service as of July 4th.
- Several members met and did a physical walkthrough of our building and campus to assess how well Epiphany complies with the physical items of the Welcome program and created a list of priorities.

Consistent signage style, font, color and Epiphany’s standard font recommended for all exterior signs if feasible.

- We are working on temporary visitor parking signs to be installed in the gravel lot.
- Replacement of Entry sign at driveway to one that is more visible and cleanable is a top item.
- Find a solution for dumpster position to stay in the single parking space in lieu of it taking up 2-3 parking spaces.
- Adding signage on Ponce De Leon to direct visitors to our driveway on Eastlake most likely will be challenging due to DeKalb County/ Druid Hills Historic Preservation Group’s Requirements. We are looking at other options that are more likely to be supported.
- Tidying up Ponce De Leon side of our campus grounds and weed control especially in the courtyard. After sharing items with Bert, Building and Grounds is looking at amending the grounds care contract to include some additional items. A fall Parish wide workday is under discussion and Membership will help.
- An article for the Star will be published in the next few weeks to educate the parish on the Invite, Welcome, and Connect program.

Outreach (Erin Braden)

Please see Nicole’s report for updates on our discernment process, as we evolve into a community engagement model of relationship-building and partnership. This work feels timely and deeply important, and we are so blessed to have Nicole’s vision and leadership. The ongoing work of the committee continues – the feeding ministry, Hagar’s House, refugee family support, and the food drive for DEAM. As our discernment process continues, we are continuing to fund partner organizations at the same levels for the remainder of the year from the outreach budget, as follows:

July-December:

DEAM	\$200/month	\$ 1,200
DCM	\$200/month	\$ 1,200
Emmaus House	\$200/month	\$ 1,200
Holy Comforter	\$150/month	\$ 900

Harvey Fund: The Harvey Fund grant cycle for 2021 is open, with applications due by August 1. Information is available [here](#). The Catherine D. Harvey Legacy Fund was created to assist with meeting the basic needs of individuals and families and to expand their opportunities to reach their full potential for self- sufficiency. Please forward to any organizations that would be a good fit for this mission.

Parish Life (Linda Ryder Wolf)

There was a successful coffee hour in the courtyard on July 4th prior to the 11:30am AND FIRST INDOOR service since March 8, 2020. I’m sure none of us expected a 16-month absence in the Nave.

The next Parish Life event will be next Sunday, July 25. This will also take place in the courtyard prior to the 11:30am service. This event will be a reception for Christen Erksine, to thank her for her service this past year or so and to wish her well in her pursuit of more education. There will be coffee, cold juices, and a cake.

Pastoral Care (Lisa Carlson & Lisa Daily)

The Pastoral Care Committee met on July 12. The Committee decided to reach out directly to a parishioner when he or she requests to be put on the prayer list. This would apply to the parishioner requesting prayers for her/himself or a member of that individual's immediate family or immediate household. The contact will be made via a direct call, in-person visit, or card, depending on the circumstance. Pastoral Care Committee members will rotate contact responsibilities monthly.

The Committee will continue to reach out to Epiphanyites who haven't had a recent connection to the parish. We felt it is important to continue this effort given the positive results of our last outreach to those we had not seen over the past year or so. Individuals to contact will be identified by clergy and staff, resulting in 5 or 6 contacts per month per committee member. The first list of names will come in early August.

The Community of Hope lay pastoral care training program will begin in October with 7 weekly sessions running through mid November. The remaining 7 sessions are scheduled for January-February 2022.

Racial Justice (Erin Braden)

Co-Chairs, Erin Braden & Kay Lee

The RJ group is discussing how Epiphany can engage with the results of the Racial Justice Audit of Episcopal Leadership work. The group is exploring the diocesan Sacred Ground curriculum for our fall series, and continuing discussions with Holy Trinity on possible collaboration. Two main areas of focus for advocacy efforts are voting rights and environmental justice. The racial justice book group led by Lisa and Kay will read You are Your Best Thing: Vulnerability, Shame Resilience, and the Black Experience by Tarana Burke and Brene Brown in July.

Stewardship (Richard Messner)

No updates.

Technology (Sara Cushing and Bert Bender)

Indoor worship resumed and has gone smoothly with the two new wireless microphones added to the existing PA system. Video and audio for streaming remain week-to-week while we figure out our needs.

Youth Formation (John Wierwille)

In the month of June we had youth group every week (avg attendance 6), and a ping pong tournament (attendance: 10). In the month of July we have had two youth group nights, each with about 10 kids.

Associate Priest Report (Nicole Lambelet)

Youth

Youth group continues to meet weekly with attendance still hovering around 10 students each week. Mat hosted a ping-pong tournament just after last month's vestry meeting and gave students and families the opportunity to do a service project together with Emmaus House on July 17th. Mat is planning a combined Adult and Youth formation offering for the fall semester. It will launch September 12th. Youth will continue to meet weekly on Sundays with at least one special activity each month.

Families and Children

Christen spent quite a bit of time this month organizing and sorting through all the upstairs classroom spaces and the nursery. We are working on reviewing protocols and resetting the space so that it will be ready when the time comes to reinstate inside programming. This month Christen led children and families through a study of the parables via our interactive newsletter. She has also partnered with Epiphany Families and Emmaus House to collect items for "snack packs" EH will distribute to their students. Christen's interim concludes at the end of the month. We continue the search for a new Children's Director.

Amy and I have scheduled another gathering for young families at Amy's house. Going forward, we continue to discern what a Sunday morning outside formation offering might look like for our families with unvaccinated children.

Christian Formation Update

The four Epiphany small groups launched during the month of May finished at the end of June. I received several enthusiastic emails about the groups and multiple requests to continue the small group model of learning and community building going forward. Just over 40 people participated in the first round and two of the groups have decided to continue meeting. Facilitators Paul Hinson and Evan Gibbs have taken a two week break and will begin their group again starting 7/27 studying Deanna Womack's *Neighbors: Muslims and Christians building Community*. The "bookless small group," facilitated by Barbara Ryder and Anna Sherril will also continue.

On Sunday August 8th we will begin a three week formation series on Islam for youth and adults led by Jim Hoestery (Epiphany parishioner and Professor of Religion at Emory) and Deanna Womack (Candler professor of History and Interfaith Relations). This series will help to prepare us for an upcoming visit with the Ismaili Community in Decatur, and an upcoming collaborative service project. Epiphany will participate in the "Season of Creation" this year from 9/12-10/3. During these weeks Adult formation will offer a four week series on Ecopocalypse by Kyle Lambelet. This will segway into another round of small groups starting 10/8. The year will conclude with an Advent series.

Young Adults

We had our first "Second Sunday" gathering last week, 7/11. In addition to Mat and myself we had 12 attendees. We ate dinner together, played ping pong, and participated in a short Taize service Mat designed. Mat and I look forward to seeing how this new ministry develops through the fall. *We would like to request \$50 a month from the budget to help fund the cost of food for future gatherings.* The event will run potluck style, but we'd like to provide a substantial main dish to supplement the other offerings.

Outreach

General Update: The Feeding Ministry will start back up with Gateway at the end of the month. We are exploring the possibility of hosting another Refugee family through New American Pathways and in collaboration with St. Catherines. In June we completed a drive for DEAM, and continue our ongoing partnership in various capacities with Emmaus House and DCM.

New Developments: During the Lenten Series, "Stories of God's Calling" and in most of the small groups, the Outreach and Adult Formation Committee's have been intentional about making room for parishioners to reflect on how we discern God's call together as a church and in our own individual lives. In the midst of that reflection we also worked to introduce the parish to some new language and models for collaboration and mission. We thought together about the importance of story, place, power, intersectionality, race, and the environment. We talked about the connection between the work of spiritual formation and social change. These conversations have been influential and have encouraged us to think about how we might integrate our learning into our current models of ministry.

While each model of engagement has its limitations and capacities, the Outreach Committee leadership is interested in adopting a more holistic model of engagement to pursue the work of social justice and

reconciliation. We are discerning a shift from a “person based” model of Outreach to a “community engagement” model.¹ Not only does the Diocese of Atlanta use this language, other churches with many of our shared values are making this shift in their own communities.² We believe a model of community engagement can better encompass the work we want to pursue in this next season-- as it takes into account a broader orientation to justice work and considers *what it might mean* to invest in the lives of people, their communities, *and* in the physical space(s) neighbors perceive as vital to well-being.

The invitation to rethink the model of engagement at Epiphany means a cultural, if not a theological shift in how we perceive who we are and our work for justice and well-being. While a community engagement model does not deny that material realities are a part of overall human health and wellness (which is the focus of person-based models of engagement), it also honors the socio-environmental components of what it means for communities to flourish. Thus, a community engagement model takes into account how power is relationally structured in a community, and how it works to shape shared values, agency, and place. Attending to the systemic realities of oppression, necessitates a change in the relations of power that comprise any given community. In regards to the outreach committee and our partnerships, it's pivots away from asking what can be done *for* _____ (this person, community, institution), to what can be done *with* (this person, community, institution) to influence the greater flourishing of the multifaceted relationships within the community. Emmanuel Lartey emphasizes that the most effective outcome of any neighboring relationship is the work the other person, community, or institution does for themselves, “not the work you do for them.”³ A community engagement model seeks to engage and emphasize the work God is already doing in and among a people and tries to amplify and support the gifts and capacities any given person or community already has.

We're still working on what the invitation to shift to a model of community engagement will mean for Epiphany. We have some inclinations, but we also know the work of change, when we do it in community, can be slow. While the invitation to shift our orientation came out of our earlier discernment, we also know it will be an ongoing process to discern how our clarity around a new model of engagement may impact our current ministries and/or open up the possibility of some new collaborations.

During our August vestry meeting, there will be some time to talk more about the shifts we feel invited to pursue. In the meantime, please feel free to reach out to me or Erin Braden if you want to learn more about this development or have any preliminary questions. We'd be happy to talk with you about where we feel the Spirit leading!

Committee Thank You Schedule

Each month we will highlight a ministry at Epiphany and thank the parishioners who have been involved. The vestry or staff person connected with the ministry will take the lead for that month. Please plan to request that

¹ It should also be noted that the Diocese of Atlanta uses this language as well, so our adoption of it falls in line with the broader mission and philosophy of our governing body.

² For example see St. Paul's Richmond: <https://www.stpaulsrva.org/community> and St. Bedes: <https://www.stbedes.org/serving/pages/community-engagement--30>

³ Lartey, Class Lecture, November 29, 2018.

the group members be mentioned in weekly prayers, send a thank you note to all members, write a Star thank you article, and potentially include a Star spotlight on long-serving member(s). The schedule for the remainder of the year is below. Please make note of the month for your ministry, and let Amy or Erin know if you have any suggestions or changes.

Month	Committee	Lead
July	Safely Together Task Force	Amy
August	Technology Committee	Sara/Bert
September	Children's Committee & teachers	Linda
October	Youth committee & teachers	John
November	Racial Justice	Erin
December	Alter Guild	Amy