

Episcopal Church of the Epiphany

Vestry Mid-Year Retreat Minutes

July 18, 2021

In Attendance:

Vestry - Shelle Bryant, Sara Cushing, Linda Ryder-Wolf, Lisa Carlson, Paul Hinson, Richard Messner, Bert Bender, Lisa Daily, Peter Dodge, Liefy Smith, & John Wierwille
Clergy - Amy Dills-Moore & Nicole Lambelet
Ex officio - Ann Fowler & Sherry Wallace

Absent: Erin Braden

Meditation:

Amy opened with a meditation.

Priest in Charge's Report:

Indoor worship continues to go well. We had a wait list the first week but since then we have been able to get everyone in. We continue to evaluate as we go.

We are working on technology so that we can livestream the service once we move to two in-person services.

We have created space on the back rows for families with unvaccinated children and have received positive feedback from them about that.

Planning for fall continues as we consider how to offer programming in multiple formats for those who are not comfortable with in-person events.

Parish life is planning some events for fall to give us opportunities to be together outside of worship and formation.

Associate Priest's Report:

The 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 Erskine 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 the “snack packs” which 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.

Housekeeping Items: For the VPOD signup through January, put in your not available dates and Shea will run a schedule.

Lisa D will provide the Vestry lunch for August.

Consent Agenda:

Approval of Vestry minutes was included as part of the consent agenda. All voted to accept. There were no gifts over \$100 to be included.

Financial Report:

Shelle presented the financial report. June income over expenses was \$11,397.

New Business:

Memorial Garden plaques:

Bill Graves, Sabra Hanson, and Liefy Smith looked at spots for additional plaques. The current one has only 8 spaces left. Two options were presented, Option 1 building onto the east wall of the sacristy and Option 2 building a new wall separate from the building. Richard motioned that we do Option 1 with payment from the designated bequest. Linda seconded. All voted in favor. One abstained.

Harvey Fund Board Member-at-large Approval:

Ellyn Bryan was nominated as a member-at-large to the Harvey Fund Board. Shelle motioned to approve and John seconded. All voted in favor.

Discussion:

The vestry discussed the best way to utilize financial resources in excess of budget resulting from faithful giving by parishioners and limited expenses due to COVID-related restrictions. To date, there is \$72K in cash available for operations. The vestry noted several spending priorities that are in line with Epiphany values. These are:

- Associate Priest Position
- Parish Life
- Families
- Young Adults
- Newcomers
- B&G

After a lengthy discussion, it was decided that rather than allocating resources to B&G when we don't have a specific, identified need other than the HVAC for which a fundraising campaign is anticipated, we should utilize the resources to bring the Associate Priest to full-time status with benefits and augment the budgets of the other committees noted above. The suggestion was that any resources in excess of the budget at the end of the year could be moved to a B&G maintenance account to begin building a reserve for inevitable building repairs and maintenance. The vestry was unanimous in agreeing that moving the Associate Priest to full-time with benefits was the right action and in line with the goals and values of Epiphany.

Lisa Carlson moved that the vestry authorize expenses in excess of budget to be made as follows:

- \$16,280 to bring the Associate Priest to full-time status with benefits through the end of the calendar year.
- \$1500 to Parish Life Ministry
- \$250 to Family Ministry
- \$250 to Young Adult Ministry
- \$100 to Newcomers Ministry

Linda Ryder seconded and the motion passed with no dissent.

The next vestry meeting was scheduled for Sunday, August 15, at 1:00. (Note: This was subsequently changed to August 22.)

The meeting ended with prayer.

Online Resolution:

On July 1, the Kanuga committee presented a contract with the conference center to the vestry via email for approval. Erin motioned to approve, Bert seconded, and eight people voted in favor. There were no opposing votes.

Respectfully submitted,
Sherry Wallace
Clerk of the Vestry

Vestry Liaison Area Reports July 2021

Adult Formation (Paul Hinson)

See Associate Priest Report.

Building and Grounds (Bert Bender)

Continued thanks to George Smith, John Yntema, Tom Felcher, Bill Graves and others for the things they do. Sending this report on Saturday, August 21 after the Rob Ashmore service in the Sanctuary (my first since early 2020), and it strikes me that somebody oughta do something about the AC in that room!

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)**: Structural site inspection completed, so all design underway, with several suggestions for improving supply and return air in the Choir Loft and structural support.
2. (unchanged) **Office/Bathroom HVAC (FB)**: This project will be bid together with the Nave work, in order to attract better bidders (for one large job, not two smaller ones) and increase efficiency of the overall work (avoiding separate projects, staging, demolition, etc.).
3. (↑ from 5) **Irrigation Plumbing Extensions (FB)**: Invitation to participate in planning and implementation going out this weekend. 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).
4. (unchanged) **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. (↓ from 3) **Building an' Grounds (BANG) Structure, or Emerging Endless List of "Things to Do" (FB)**: My bad due to swamp of other obligations over last month, but going to move this 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.
6. (unchanged) **Landscaping Maintenance (FB)**: Watching. Soon to put out invites to develop specs.
7. (↑ from 16) **Relocate Undercroft Cr*p (FB)**: To be done soon to ease work in removing old system.
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. (↑ from 15) **Playground Reconstruction (BB)**: Awaiting invoices for submittal to insurance – needed for final insurance payout. Maybe picnic table plan.
13. (unchanged) **Baptistry Doors (BB)**: Under consideration: bigger gutters and/or canopy over doors.
14. (unchanged) **Georgia Power Ponce Transformer Replacement (BB)**: GA Power \$6K in. Waiting for construction to start (unknown timing).
15. (↑ from 17) **Keep List to a Baker's Dozen (BB)**: Progress! Soon 1 & 2 above will be combined, and those Playground Receipts really should be wrapped up in a few days, so that gets us to the Baker's Dozen again.

Off the list:

Shade Structure and Another Tree: Authorized shade sails over "sitting stumps" in lieu of sandbox structure that didn't work out, in same color as approved by Liefy Smith earlier.

Memorial Garden Plaques: Contract signed; awaiting hole in wall and construction and such.
Motions for Vestry Approval: Not just yet.

Children's Formation (Linda Ryder Wolf)

See Associate Priest Report.

Endowment (Peter Dodge)

No updates provided.

Finance (Shelle Bryant)

Financial Summary for July.

July 2021	Budget	Actual
Income	\$46,317	\$47,634
Expenses	\$46,317	\$43,494
Net	0	\$ 4,140

Membership (Liefy Smith)

- Committee Members continue serving as greeters at the indoor 11:30 service. Scheduling will soon be added to the Ministry Scheduler Pro.
- Liefy and Annie communicated with the head ushers on the **Welcome** portion of **Invite Welcome Connect** and they passed the **Welcome** link on to all of the ushers.
- Ann Fowler printed mock-ups for the Visitor signs and we are close to fabrication.
- Ann is also working on a sign for Ponce de Leon Avenue indicating our driveway on Eastlake Drive (that can be easily moved if necessary).
- An article for the Star will be published in **the August 27th** to introduce the parish to the **Invite Welcome Connect** program.
- We continue to welcome a few new visitors every week and hand out welcome bags. Amy brought up a great idea to create an Epiphany coffee mug to deliver when visitors join and include a pledge card, a note from Membership and a letter from Stewardship with a some sort of goodies in the mug all wrapped up in cellophane. This would be a follow-up to the Welcome Bag which visitors receive.
- Amy is working on a brochure to add to the Newcomers table that explains Episcopal traditions to those who may be visiting from the Protestant traditions. (Some visitors may not know what to do with our pew aerobics, communion, or wonder about that person in black carrying a big stick). Photos and/or illustrations may be used as well. It will eventually be added to the website as well on the newcomer's page.
- **A Newcomers event for the fall has been scheduled for Sunday, November 14th**

Outreach (Erin Braden)

Please see separate update & planned discussion on community engagement work in Associate Priest Report.

The ongoing work of the outreach committee continues. Jeanette Hanson organized group to serve dinner at Gateway Shelter in July, but she is ready to step down from leading the feeding ministry and is looking for a replacement. We hosted catered meals at Hagar's House in July, out of funds given at the beginning of the year for that purpose. Kathleen Rinehart continues her help with that ministry but does not want to lead it. The next HH dates will be in October, when parishioners will sign up to cook and drop off meals. We will not stay to eat

with residents, due to the pandemic. Nicole, Bev Lorenzo, and I are working on plans to support a refugee family this fall in partnership with St. Catherine's. 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.

Harvey Fund (Erin Braden)

The Harvey Fund advisory committee has a new at-large member, Ellyn Bryant, who joins Chair Laura Keys, Sabra Hanson, Evelyn Stewart, and Erin. Thank you to Lynda Ryder Wolf for her past service on the committee. The committee met to review seven applications for the 2021 grant cycle, prioritizing grant amounts. Once the definite amount of interest available to be dispersed this year is confirmed, we will finalize the grant recommendations and submit to ECW. ECW will then make the final determination and send to Vestry to request approval.

Parish Life (Linda Ryder Wolf)

Updates from the most recent Parish Life meeting.

- Kick Off Sunday September 12: We will coordinate another BYOL picnic. We will provide desserts. Desserts should be ready to serve, individual servings would be best. Trying to avoid too much finger handling.
- Oktoberfest Oct. 2: We will plan on this event but are aware restrictions may change. Event will be outside.
- Ministry Fair Oct. 10: Pam is helping to coordinate this event and reported that each ministry will be encouraged to provide a food or drink offering. Parishioners will be asked to take items outside to consume. Parish Life may be needed to help with set up and other aspects of this event. Polly will check with Pan about this.
- Kanuga Oct. 22-24: Committee hopes to receive the required number of attendees by the deadline of September 20. Activities will be handled differently this year as most spaces and other needs have an added charge.
- Nativities: We are on board to host this event this year. Some set up restrictions and visitors restrictions will be in effect. Sally and Patricia are the coordinators. It was noted the numbers of attendees is usually small enough to provide the necessary social distancing. The Reception after the Lessons and Carols may need a different serving arrangement.

Pastoral Care (Lisa Carlson & Lisa Daily)

The Pastoral Care Committee continues to reach out directly to a parishioner when he or she requests that they or someone they care for be put on the prayer list. Pastoral Care Committee members are rotating contact responsibilities monthly.

The Committee will continue to reach out to Epiphanyites who haven't had a recent connection to the parish. 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 likely be ready by early September.

Racial Justice (Erin Braden)

Co-Chairs, Erin Braden & Kay Lee

Please see memo requesting 2021 Vestry statement supporting Epiphany's racial justice work, and proposed draft (attached below).

The RJ group is taking a break from regular meetings to allow time to participate in the Sacred Ground series. We encourage all Vestry members to prayerfully consider participating in Sacred Ground. The program was created

by the Episcopal Church as part of Becoming Beloved Community, the church's long-term commitment to racial healing, justice, and reconciliation in our personal lives, our ministries, and our society. In collaboration with Holy Trinity, we will kick off the 10-part series with a gathering on September 25. More details can be found in this past Friday's newsletter, and information about the Sacred Ground program of the Episcopal Church can be found [here](#). The racial justice book group led by Lisa and Kay is reading *Walking with The Wind: A Memoir of the Movement*, by John Lewis, in August and September. They are pausing meetings after that to participate in Sacred Ground.

Stewardship (Richard Messner)

Stewardship will have its first gathering on Wednesday, August 25. Pam Tipton is chairing the 2022 Stewardship Campaign, with Laura Gary, Paige Howell, Tom Democko, and Edie Brush on the team.

Technology (Sara Cushing)

- Video streaming and audio recording have largely been unsuccessful to date due to issues with the old and overly complicated indoor PA system. The Technology chair has identified a possible solution and hopes to have it working by this Sunday.
- The Narthex speakers have not been working, but the Technology chair fixed that on Tuesday while investigating the recording/streaming problems.
- We need to document the power-up/power-down sequences for the indoor PA system and then train vestry and other interested parties on that process and on trouble-shooting procedures. The Technology chair will get on that when he has some time.

Youth Formation (John Wierwille)

Youth group paused July 25 and resumed August 8. We had 9 youth in attendance, August 8, and 8 youth in attendance, August 15. Youth have also resumed acolyting. The full Fall schedule, including morning formation, is scheduled to begin Sept 12. I would add that I touched base with Matt, and they are doing well, though having a less than stellar week with Door Dash. I would also add that the Fall schedule is full and should be very good and we are all hoping to get back to meeting together.

Associate Priest Report (Nicole Lambelet)

Youth

Youth group continues to meet weekly with attendance still hovering just below 10 students. We will confirm 7 of our youth at HTP on 8/29. Mat is planning a combined Adult and Youth formation offering for the fall semester that will launch September 12th. Youth will continue to meet weekly on Sundays with at least one special activity each month. For September youth will join Holy Trinity's youth for pizza the first Sunday of the month and participate in the Service Project with the Ismaili on 9/26.

Families and Children

Events Update: On 8/1, we offered the "blessing of the backpacks" in the courtyard at 10am and during the 11:30am service. We had approximately 12 children participate and several adults. Amy and I hosted another gathering for young families at Amy's house on 7/31 and had representation from six families. Seven other families indicated they would have liked to attend if they were not already scheduled to be out of town on the date of the event. This continues to be a good way for us to stay connected with parents who have small children during the pandemic. In addition to the gatherings at Amy's house, a monthly "Meet and Greet" and a seasonally appropriate devotion for families and children will be offered outside on the playground between services for the next several months. Currently, we have 6 families interested in pursuing baptism for their child on 11/7.

Nursery: Nicole worked with Shea, Paul Hendricks, Richard M, Doug R., and Marjorie T. this month to clean, launder, and sort children's items, and make necessary repairs in the nursery (there were quite a few and they are not all completed). We continue to discern an appropriate date to reopen the nursery.

Children's Director: The search for a new Children's Director has been postponed until late fall for two reasons: 1) In spite of all the job announcements we posted, we received only one applicant, and 2) We do not feel like we have the demand for children's programming during these COVID times to justify hiring someone for the position right now.

Christian Formation Update

Paul Hinson and Evan Gibbs continue to facilitate a small group reading Deanna Womack's *Neighbors: Muslims and Christians building Community*. The "bookless small group," facilitated by Barbara Ryder and Anna Sherril also continues. On Sunday August 8th, we began a three week formation series on Islam for youth and adults led by Jim Hoestery and Deanna Womack. This series will help to prepare us for an upcoming visit with the Ismaili Community in Decatur, and an upcoming collaborative service project. We've had 60 people participate in the first session, and about 40 participants in the second. 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. Parishioners can participate in a Sacred Ground Dialogue Circle, the Community of Hope offerings, or a small group bible study led by Nicole and one of our new seminarians. The year will conclude with an Advent series. Carol Newsom has agreed to lead a study on Job for Epiphanyites in the Spring of 2022. Young Adults also continue to gather once per month.

Outreach/Community Engagement

General Update: Jeanette Hanson retired from coordinating the Feeding Ministry at Gateway Anne Kerner and Sally Walker have agreed to co-coordinate the ministry going forward. We are exploring the possibility of hosting another Refugee family through New American Pathways and in collaboration with St. Catherines. Epiphany continues to supply meals to Hagar's House. The Fall Schedule with the Ismaili community has been set: 1) 9/26 is the combined day of service, 2) 10/3 Epiphany will visit the Ismaili jamatkhana and 3) 10/30 the Ismaili will visit and tour Epiphany.

New Developments: As mentioned last month, Outreach is discerning a shift from a "person based" model of Outreach to a "community engagement" model. Please see the "Community Engagement Report" for more details.

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 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
August	Technology Committee	Sarat
September	Children's Committee & teachers	Linda
October	Youth committee & teachers	John
November	Racial Justice	Erin
December	Alter Guild	Amy

Community Engagement Update (the Rev. Nicole Lambelet & Erin Braden)

For Discussion at Vestry Meeting

Recap: During the Lenten Series, “Stories of God’s Calling” and in most of the small groups, the Outreach and Adult Formation Committees were 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. 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 have discerned a shift from a “person based” model of Outreach to a “community engagement” model. We believe a model of community engagement can better encompass the work we want to pursue in this next season. (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.)

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. In regards to the outreach committee and our partnerships, the community engagement model pivots away from asking what can be done *for* a person/community/institution, to what can be done *with* a 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.” 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.

Updates:

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 a new model of engagement may impact our current ministries and/or open up the possibility of some new collaborations. This may be a big shift in thinking for some in our parish, especially those involved previously in our Outreach ministries. We are keeping the former committee updated periodically, but most have either retired from their previous roles or do not wish to continue leading those ministries.

Members of the former Outreach Committee were involved in the planning and execution of the Lenten series and discernment, and we will invite a few to participate in the Community Engagement Advisory Council.

As we undertake this process, there may be some previous Outreach ministries that are phased out because of lack of participation, leadership, or fit with the community engagement model. At the same time, we are excited about ongoing ministries which will be strengthened and new ministries that may emerge as the process unfolds. We recognize that this will take time, and we will need Vestry support!

As part of the ongoing discernment process, we are planning to:

1. Form a Community Engagement Advisory Council to meet three times before October.
 - a. We will invite a range of parishioners to help us think through questions of community engagement values, program structure, processes at Epiphany.
 - b. These discussions will help determine where we focus our energy and resources in the coming year, and also help determine our requests for the 2022 community engagement budget.
2. Create ongoing process and communication plans for discernment and engagement around changes for our parish ministries. This will include:
 - a. Sermons, newsletter articles, possibly coffee hour chats
 - b. Epiphany website updates

Requests of Vestry regarding Community Engagement:

1. We welcome your questions, suggestions, and any concerns about the community engagement process. Please feel free to send those in advance to Nicole and Erin; we look forward to discussing further during the Vestry meeting.
2. After our discussion and if it feels appropriate, we will request that Vestry make a statement of support for the Community Engagement Advisory Council and discernment process.
3. Should any questions arise in your conversations with parishioners, please help explain the discernment towards a community engagement model of ministry, and let us know of any questions or concerns that you hear among parish members. We would welcome the chance to talk with anyone who would like to discuss further.
4. With Nicole's move to full-time and in recognition of her ministries at Epiphany, we propose that her title be changed from Assoc. Priest for Family Ministry and Outreach to Assoc. Priest for Formation and Community Engagement. "Formation" seems to be a more accurate umbrella term for her work with Adult Education, Christian Formation, and Children & Youth Ministries. We request Vestry approval for this change.
5. We propose that the title of Outreach position on Vestry be changed to Community Engagement. We request Vestry approval for this change.