

# **Episcopal Church of the Epiphany**

## **Vestry Meeting Minutes**

### **November 19, 2023**

#### **In Attendance:**

Vestry - Bert Bender, Peter Dodge, Liefy Smith, Susan Ashmore, April Maa, Sally Walker, Matthew May, Andrea Strahan, & Judy Jarady  
Attending via Zoom: Kaylie Gibbs & Lisa Daily  
Clergy - Amy Dills-Moore & Carmie McDonald  
Ex officio - Randy Shearin & Sherry Wallace

Absent: Paige Howell & Erin Braden

#### **Meditation:**

For the opening meditation, Amy showed a video by Sally Ulrey on the vitality of our diocese as we prepare for challenges in the future. This was followed by a discussion of the points made in the video.

#### **Rector's Report:**

Amy noted that December 24 is the fourth Sunday of Advent as well as Christmas Eve. We will have a morning 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday Advent service and two Christmas Eve services, afternoon and evening. We will have a Christmas Day service but may not continue it in future years if attendance is low.

She questioned whether we need a December vestry meeting. We'll keep it on the calendar for now but may change it, depending on needs.

We'll start the new wording of the liturgy on the first Sunday of Advent.

Kaylie Gibbs will be the new senior warden next year.

Paige is taking a hiatus from vestry due to her mother's illness.

Amy discussed potential new vestry members. She has gathered names and discussions with them will begin soon.

She reminded everyone to turn in their pledges.

Amy will host the staff and vestry Christmas party on Dec. 15 at 6pm.

#### **Old Business:**

Peter and Carmie discussed various aspects of the adult formation and youth Sunday School programs, including the timing. It appears to be best to have Sunday school for all after the service, as attendance seems best that way. When adult formation was moved to the hour before church, attendance was significantly lower than when we had it after church. Children's attendance was pretty much unchanged. However, having Sunday school earlier seems to be harder on some families. Attendance at Children's chapel is down, although the cause hasn't been determined.

#### **Solar survey update:**

We have been working with Georgia Interfaith Power and Light (GIPL) to look into the feasibility of installing solar panels at Epiphany. We are in Phase 2 in which we requested bids from three companies for rooftop solar panels in order to better understand the possibilities. Carmie will talk with Earth Guild about the solar panel possibilities. We will consider having a sustainability vestry position.

Roofing work update:

We need between \$3,500 and \$5,000 for roofing repairs. We have the money, but we need to have the contract in hand before authorizing the spending,

HVAC maintenance update:

George Smith is negotiating our HVAC maintenance contract for us, as he is well-versed in the area. We have received a contract from United Maintenance, Inc., a company who has worked well with other churches. Bert motioned that we approve the contract, subject to any adjustments proposed by George. Peter seconded. All voted in favor.

Budget planning and goals & Stewardship will be handled at a December zoom meeting if needed.

**New Business:**

Catherine D. Harvey Legacy Fund Grants:

ECW has requested the vestry to approve the Harvey Fund Grants for this year. Their initial request was for \$19,750, subject to final calculation of the payout. Randy Shearin's final calculation of the payout was \$19,825. Bert motioned that \$19,825 is the amount available to designate. Peter seconded, and all voted in favor.

Scouting at Epiphany:

Boy Scouts of America Troop 18 and Cub Scout Pack 6 have requested Epiphany to consider being a sponsor. The vestry had multiple questions and felt a meet-and-greet might be a next step. Bert will send out dates for a meet-and-greet with scout leaders.

The meeting ended with midday prayer.

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

### Parish Priorities — Lisa Daily

No new items to report.

### Membership + Newcomers — Liefy Smith

- Newcomer Gathering invitations were mailed or emailed to fifteen family groups for our Fall Gathering November 19<sup>th</sup> 4-5pm
- Three new member bags were delivered to three new member / member groups.
- We invite all Vestry members to attend today to meet our recent newcomers and help them learn about all the opportunities at Epiphany and ways to engage that align with their interests. There will be lots of desserts to enjoy!

### Parish Life — Judy Jarady

There is no report from Parish Life. Committee couldn't meet in November.

### Community Engagement — Susan Ashmore + Sally Walker

Art Ministry. The Art Ministry welcomes Emily Yellow with her hand made bags from recycled materials for the month of November. The Art Ministry has earned over \$2500 this year that will be used in the parish. Two lamps were already purchased for the meeting room upstairs recently.

Feeding Ministry. The Feeding Ministry will be delivering 100 Christmas gift bags on December 8<sup>th</sup> to the Evolution Center where Epiphany provides a meal each month. The bags will include socks, winter hats, playing cards, toothbrushes, snack crackers and a personalized Christmas card at an approximate cost of \$10 per bag. The socks were donated for the gift bags by DEAM thanks to the connection made by Doug Runnion. The budget for this project has been approved by Amy.

Under Emily Elder's guidance, the Evolution gift bags are currently being packed and Christmas cards signed as service project by the youth and children. Emily's service projects will be on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month and they will continue doing these service projects through December.

Holy Comforter. On October 18, Epiphany volunteers hosted the first Holy Comforter dinner since Covid and it went very well.

Racial Justice. Suzanne Yoder reported that the Epiphany Racial Justice Group had its first brainstorming meeting in November to start discerning what God is calling us to do in 2024. We had eight in attendance and next meeting is scheduled for December 4<sup>th</sup>. She added that Kay Lee agreed to be our liaison with a new partner organization, Interfaith Children's Movement, and we look forward to working with them to advocate for children's needs throughout Georgia.

No new reports from the Refugee Ministry or DEAM ministries.

Respectfully,

Sally Walker and Susan Ashmore

## **Children + Youth Formation — Paige Howell**

In Epiphany's Children's Ministry, we continue to offer Sunday Morning Children's Formation. Our Godly Play class continues to average **3-4 children** each week, and our Surveyors of Scripture class has averaged **3-5 children** per Sunday. Our Godly Players explore & wonder about a new story each week, and our Surveyors of Scripture are following the lectionary and learning more about how we use scripture in the Episcopal liturgy. Children's Chapel continues to draw around **3-5 children** each Sunday. We have continued the Parent Connections group on Sunday mornings, led by Amy. This group hasn't drawn large numbers, but has initiated deep and good conversation. We've also had several special events since the last vestry meeting: We had **7 new acolytes** attend our Acolyte Training on October 22; Our Family Eucharist on October 24 drew **9 families and 29 people**; and we hosted a Parents Night Out event on November 17, that **7 families**

registered for (though 3 families couldn't make it due to sickness/last minute scheduling conflicts).

Epiphany's Youth Ministry continues to facilitate Youth Formation on Sunday mornings, which averages **2-3 youth** each week. Youth Group on Sunday evenings usually draws **3-5 youth**. This semester, we've been discussing relevant issues from a theological & biblical perspective. We've had rich discussions around mental health, bullying, and social media. Several youth also helped out at the October Acolyte Training, and a group of youth and parents attended a November Youth Work Day to help build a Gaga Ball court on our campus. With significant help from Matthew May, the initial structure was built; the youth will continue to work on the interior of the court and the surrounding area over the next few months. I hope to host a Gaga Ball youth group early next semester (and maybe invite nearby youth groups as well).

There are several upcoming events to look forward to over the next couple of weeks and months: our final Family Eucharist service of the semester on Tuesday, November 28; Advent Cookie Baking on Saturday, December 9; and the DYC Winter Camp on January 12-14. If you are interested in being involved with any of these events, please reach out to Emily Elder / [eelder@epiphany.org](mailto:eelder@epiphany.org).

### **Adult Formation — Peter Dodge**

The September and October Adult Formation liaison reports 'covered the waterfront,' to coin a phrase. Content has been rich, engaging and uniquely informative.

I do believe that we might reflect on whether the 8:45 AM start time has facilitated or limited attendance, particularly with reference to adults with younger children.

### **Pastoral Care — Lisa Daily**

**The Pastoral Care Committee** is sending Christmas cards to parishioners 75 and older and continues to send cards to parishioners on the prayer list.

- Members of the Pastoral Care Committee are Cecelia Democko, David Draper (Chair), Susan Moody, Nancy Thompson and Sherry Wallace.

**The Community of Hope** continues to visit parishioners who have requested visits, take Communion to home-bound parishioners and meet monthly.

- At its October meeting, the Reverend Raymond Walker, a chaplain at Winship Cancer Center and priest at St. Bede's, led the group in a discussion about the verbatim reflection format as a way to debrief pastoral care visits.
- The Community of Hope sponsored a reception after the All Soul's service on November 5.
- There will be an online Community of Hope training beginning in January 2024 for people who want to join the program. Several Epiphany parishioners at the Ministry Fair expressed an interest in the training. Information about the January program will be publicized soon. People at the Ministry Fair were also interested in joining the Pastoral Care Committee.
- Community of Hope's Leadership Team is comprised of Jessica Burns, Lisa Daily, David Draper and Ann Fowler. Additional members are: Barbara Belcore, Laura Gary, Lisa Gray, Paul Hinson, Chris Miller, and Annie Strahan.

## **Worship — April Maa**

Continuing dialogue with congregation about changing the language in the liturgy. Training for acolytes were held recently with several new youth joining.

## **Stewardship — Kaylie Gibbs**

The Stewardship campaign officially closed on Sunday, October 29<sup>th</sup> with our Ingathering celebration. The Stewardship committee, with Parish Life's assistance, prepared a well attended reception to bless the pledges and celebrate our parish. At that time, after only a four week campaign, we had achieved 75% of our financial pledge goals. As of this week, we are at 91% of our \$640k goal, with only \$60,328 to go. The Stewardship committee will start making phone calls this week to parishioners that have pledged in the past, but have not yet done so for this year. Once they have completed their calls, we will pass the list over to vestry to make the remaining calls. Thank you in advance for your assistance on this critical work.

If you haven't done so already, please submit your 2024 pledge for your time, talent and treasure via Realm (see the link at [www.epiphany.org/stewardship](http://www.epiphany.org/stewardship)) or by filling out the pledge card and dropping it in the offering plate. Let's lead by example. Thank you all!

**Endowment — Kaylie Gibbs**

No Report this Month.

**Finance — Andrea Strahan**

**October 2023 Finance Report**

<b>October 2023</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Income	\$57,256.42	\$78,835.06
Expenses	\$57,749.00	\$64,125.39
Net	(\$492.58)	\$14,709.67

October 2023 had MTD revenue of \$78,835.06 and MTD expenses of \$64,125.39, resulting in a MTD surplus = \$14,709 and bringing the YTD surplus to \$55,482.34. Though expenses were higher than budgeted, contributions (pledge and non-pledge) were also above the budgeted amount for October 2023, resulting in the second highest monthly cash balance in 2023.

Office and administration expenses for October were higher than usual because of the \$5,000 payment for the audit. Staff pension costs were not included in October financial reports and will be corrected. The Finance Committee discussed how expenses in account 6860 (property insurance) have exceeded the 2023 budget and should be adjusted in the 2024 budget.



Finally, the Finance Committee celebrated retiring member Richard Messner at their November 13<sup>th</sup> meeting and expressed their deep appreciation for his 16 plus years of valuable service on the committee. Many thanks, Richard!

## **Building and Grounds — Matthew May**

### **These are actively in progress:**

- 1) **Courtyard** Huge progress again this month; shrub and tree planting will continue into late winter/early spring – filling in with perennials and other herbaceous plants I didn't include pictures since you all hopefully noticed every time you walk in.
- 2) **Flower Guild Room Improvements** Huge progress on the room painting complete and cabinets installed. Next: floor and countertop and final Bill Graves touches – kudos to Polly and team.



- 3) **Gaga Ball Court** Huge progress structure in place after Nov 4 work day – kids will level and trim out but ready for use.



- 4) **Chronic AC Issues** – New maintenance contract being proposed – new vendor United Maintenance.
  - 5) **Erosion Control** 3 tons of stone were ordered and are being placed to attempt to remedy the erosion issues in the 4 locations identified previously.
  - 6) **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](mailto:thetechcpa@gmail.com) In our roofing estimates there were several gutter issues we can address with volunteers.
  - 7) **Solar Assessment** All 3 of 3 proposals are in. See Solar Project Summary.
  - 8) **Outside Youth Room** The brick vestibule outside the lower level classroom got a rather bad first coat of paint a few years ago. It could totally do with a better job this time around and a second coat. The installed coat racks down there for little kids in the brick vestibule could also come down I think. Inquiring about this being the next B&G youth work project with a painting/mural by one of the youth. Sketch requested for review.
  - 9) **Q4 Work Day** TBD. Not sure we need it since so many people have been out many weekends for Flower Guild Room, Courtyard, and Gaga Ball court.
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**These are not actively in progress or are waiting on a volunteer or prioritization:**

**Water Water Everywhere** The storm cellar continues to have gallons of water get into it from under the wooden stairs when it rains hard. But there was also some water at the other end of the storm cellar.

The exposed ductwork in the choir suite is dripping water again. Presumably condensation. Julie has to make sure that the piano is in the right place to avoid the dripping. The water allows mold to grow on the pipes.

Stream of water coming down the bricks by the name tag towers in the gallery. This is, of course, where it usually leaks whenever there is a driving rain and is where the 2004 renovation meets a wall that used to be outside.

**Playground** – We will probably transplant some Tulip Poplar from the upper Byrd area to the playground for more shade cover.

**Kitchen Sink Issue** There appears to be an occasional leak when draining multiple sinks likely associated with a drain clogged somewhere. Need to redesign the drainage – potential plumber issue.

**Nursery Water Fountain** Not working

**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)?

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

**Nurse** Repaint window sill.

Vents check for mold inside (for vents cleaned by the preschool)

**AC Off** 1 of 4 HVAC systems for the Parish Hall is currently not running.

**Asphalt Patching** Comment: shouldn't we patch cracked asphalt parts at entrance and exit drives, maybe starting with temporary volunteer fix?

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

**Landscaping Company** Doing work but not sending invoices to anyone.

**Various Inside Projects**

There were also a lot of little paint drips on the floor – including the bathroom that could be cleaned up.

The right hand recessed light in Amy's office seems to come on and off, but mostly stays off.

In the kitchen by the little sink, the plastic screen guard installed to keep the walls dry have trapped bugs which Can the whole thing be removed, meaning the walls would probably need to be repaired and then painted.

Soap dispenser in upstairs bathroom

Semi-gloss touch up needed on baseboard leading to playground.

Wall in parish hall needs repainting

General touch up/painting plan needed.

### **Recurring Indoor Needs**

Cleaning the interior windows and window sills on both floors and the lower level classroom.

The seams in the church floor always collect debris and dead bugs. Screwdrivers are used to loosen the debris up then vacuumed up.

The floors and cushions and sometimes even the pews often get candle wax on them – someone could scan for that and try to get it up.

Replenishing the Epiphany pens in the pews – pens live in the usher closet.

HVAC filter replacements on a regular schedule

### **Recurring Outdoor Needs**

Fertilize blueberries

Freshen up mulched areas

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### **Off the list/projects completed:**

**AV Room Lock** – Locksmith repaired

### **Technology — April Maa**

All is well and things finally seem to working well and running smoothly.

### **Catherine D. Harvey Legacy Fund Grants**

The Catherine D. Harvey Legacy Fund is created to provide direct support to assist with meeting the basic needs of individuals and families and to expand their opportunities to reach their full potential for self-sufficiency. Basic needs are defined as food, water, clothing, and shelter. Self-sufficiency is defined as the ability to provide for one's own basic needs.

Details on the Fund and Grants are found at [www.epiphany.org/files/ugd/71f50c\\_7a0ed8dbcddd4e2f8a1c8493b8d31c28.pdf](http://www.epiphany.org/files/ugd/71f50c_7a0ed8dbcddd4e2f8a1c8493b8d31c28.pdf) and include:

- “Criteria for Grants: 1. Requests should help fulfill the above stated mission of the Harvey Fund. 2. Grant requests should not exceed \$5,000.”
- “The Fund Advisory Board will make recommendations to the Episcopal Church Women of Epiphany (ECW), which will make the final recommendation on funding to the Vestry. Funding decisions will be announced no later than December 10”

From Laura Keys, past president of the ECW on behalf of President Robin Hairston:

“Dear Senior Warden and Vestry Members,

The ECW is applying to you for approval of the Harvey Fund Grants for this year. The Advisory Board met on October 22 to review the ten grant applications we received and to make recommendations to the ECW. Present at the meeting were Susan Ashmore, Ellyn Bryan, Laura Keys, and Evelyn Stewart. Robin Hairston was not able to attend, but I reviewed the applications and recommendations with her and she concurred with the rest of the board. I then presented those to the entire ECW at the meeting this past Tuesday, November 14. They approved the findings of the board, which are as follows: Automotive Training Center--\$5,000; Emmaus House--\$4,000; Global Village Project--\$2,000; Project Transformation North Georgia--\$2,000; Refugee Women's Network--\$3,000; and Renaissance Scout Troop--\$4,000. Those awards total \$20,000. The payout for this year (\$19,750) is actually a little bit short of that, but the churchwomen have agreed to make up the shortfall out of their own money.

The next steps are for the Vestry to sign off on the ECW decision and to set Bookkeeper Susie Boyko and Treasurer Randy Shearin in motion to actually get the money from the Fund. We need a timely decision from the Vestry about this to meet the timeline of informing the applicants and making the approved grants by the end of the year.

Thank you for your action on this matter.”

Comments on the proposed recipients: Emmaus House, Global Village Project, Refugee Women's Network, and Renaissance Scout Troop in Haiti (Kesner Ajax, Scout Leader) are fairly well known to Epiphany members and the Community Engagement team; Automotive Training Center is: [www.automotivetrainingcenter.org/](http://www.automotivetrainingcenter.org/); Project Transformation North Georgia is: [projecttransformation.org/](http://projecttransformation.org/).

Subject to confirmation from Treasurer Randy Shearin that \$19,750 is the correct amount to be disbursed from The Harvey Fund, the Senior Warden moves:

That \$19,750 be disbursed from The Catherine D. Harvey Legacy Fund as December, 2023 Grants pursuant to [the Grant Process found on the Epiphany Website](#) to the following recipients in the following amounts:

- Automotive Training Center--\$5,000;
- Emmaus House--\$4,000;
- Global Village Project--\$2,000;
- Project Transformation North Georgia--\$2,000;
- Refugee Women's Network--\$3,000;
- Renaissance Scout Troop--\$3,750.

In addition, if prior to disbursement of the above Grants members of the ECW provide the Parish with an additional \$250 from ECW or other members, then that amount will be added to the Grant to Renaissance Scout Troop and total a disbursement of \$4,000.