

Sunday, September 11, 2022

Episcopal Church of the Atonement Vestry Meeting Minutes

Time: Sunday, September 11, 2022, 1:03 p.m. to 2:55 p.m.
Location: In-Person at Church of the Atonement and via Zoom
Present: Father Dan Puchalla (Interim Rector), Liz Sarnik (Warden), Dave Beil (Warden, via Zoom), Natalie Archie (via Zoom), Jennifer Ash, Richard Benson, Steve Britt, Rufus Gonzales, Amanda Kim. Barbara Newman, Rick Velon, Mike Trumbold (Treasurer), Michael Waltz (Clerk)
Absent: No one
Guest: Charles Bonilla (parishioner)

Next Meeting: Saturday, October 8, 2022, 2:30 p.m. – in-person and via Zoom at EncounterPoint, 6138 N. Kenmore Ave., Chicago.

Liz Sarnik (Warden) called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m. Father Dan led the Vestry in prayer. Because of the torrential rain storms this morning the check-in was a request for members to share their experiences with other natural disasters.

Review of August Meeting Minutes: **A motion was made** (Barbara Newman) **and seconded** (Rick Velon) to approve the minutes. With no discussion or questions **the motion passed** unanimously.

Treasurer’s Report:

Statement of Financial Position: Mike Trumbold explained that money was taken from the Money Market account to pay for the organ assessment; these funds were from a special \$30,000 donation made last year. There was a \$47,000 decrease in the Endowment Fund and \$626 decrease in the Reserve Account due to market adjustments.

August Statement of Activity: \$1,800 in Miscellaneous Income is a donation for music that will be used for a small orchestra for Christ the King. The \$1,045 balance under Outreach income is from donations for backpacks, which will be used when invoices for the backpacks are paid in October. For August total weekly offerings were below budget by \$6,676 but total revenue was below budget by only \$2,891.

Due to problems with the transition from Midwest Bank to Old National Bank the autopay for gas, water, and landline phone bills weren’t processed so they will be double paid in September. \$3,759 under organ repairs was for the organ assessment study and came from money donated last year. Total expenditures for August were under budget by \$3,680 and net revenue was under budget by \$789.

After a few questions were answered a **motion was made** (Richard Benson) **and seconded** (Amanda Kim) to receive the financials. Without further discussion or questions **the motion passed** unanimously.

Prior to the meeting the Vestry received a copy of the report from the internal Audit Committee and Mike’s written response to it. The committee found that our financial procedures are in good shape. Although some had to be relaxed during Covid the original procedures are being reinstated, and some recommendations made by the committee this year echo those made last year and will be addressed once the financial guidelines prepared by the Finance Guild are approved by the Vestry and implemented. In his response Mike stressed the

need to act on the recommended financial guidelines and also pointed out that a few recommendations are more difficult to implement in a small operation like ours.

Mike also reported that Tim Coe, a member of the Finance Guild, is assisting with some of the Treasurer's duties, which will not only lessen Mike's workload but address a few recommendations from the committee.

After a brief discussion a **motion was made** (Barbara Newman) **and seconded** (Steve Britt) to receive the audit report and response. **The motion passed** unanimously.

Reports:

Rector's Report: Father Dan reported that the Stewardship Guild recently had its first meeting. The theme this year will be "You Matter." Father distributed a chart of timeline and tasks for the campaign, which will launch October 30 and focus on stories of transformation at Atonement. The Guild requested that during the week before November 20th the members of the Vestry hold a phone bank to contact parishioners who haven't yet returned pledge cards. He suggested that this could be done individually at home or as a group at the church.

Father reported on efforts at community building, including a parents' meeting held today, a brunch he'll host for those at the parish in their 20s and 30s, and Fireside Chats beginning September 13th.

A refreshed version of Atonement's website will launch this week. This is not a major change in appearance.

Father informed the Vestry that an offer has been made to, and a verbal acceptance received from, Jeni Eklund to fill the part-time position of Outreach Coordinator. The appointment would be for one year and, assuming a signed agreement is received in a few days, Ms. Eklund will begin work on September 15th.

Outreach: In a written report received before the meeting the Guild described Father Dan's efforts to help the members focus on the core ministries so they can work on those before expanding into new ministries. The discussion focused on those ministries that involve action rather than just financial support including Sarah's Circle, Care For Friends, Care for Real, Chiapas, Swift Backpacks, Souper Bowl of Caring, Refugee One, Aids Day, Advent Giving Tree, and the organization that was running Epworth Shelter.

The Guild reported that as of August 30th the parish raised \$1,045 for backpacks for Swift School and \$1,973 for the Chiapas Scholarship Program.

Discussion/Action Items:

Building Maintenance Needs: The Buildings and Property Guild and S-4 (Sustainable Solutions for Sacred Sites) group have been exploring what we can do with our spaces but we first need to make sure the spaces are useable. Repairs that need immediate attention include replacing the sump pump and rodding lines to eliminate basement flooding, repairing the roof around the south altar gables and the flat roof over the sacristy and adjoining hallway, replacing the alley door and framing with a code compliant steel door with a higher sill to prevent water infiltration and improve security, and repairing the exterior lighting system and installing LED fixture and bulbs. **A motion was made** (Steve Britt) **and seconded** (Rick Velon) to approve up to \$30,000 for the identified building repairs. **The motion passed** unanimously.

Search Committee CAT Interpretation: The Diocese recommends that the Vestry, the search committee, and the Interim Rector meet with representatives of the Diocese to talk about the interpretation of the CAT responses.

They have requested a meeting on either October 20th or 22nd. Liz Sarnik will email the Vestry requesting them to identify which date works for them.

Communion Cup: Father met with our Dean, Rev'd Kara Wagner Sherer, to discuss resuming use of the common communion cup. Her advice was to go ahead if we feel it's safe. Other congregations are already using it. **A motion was made** (Richard Benson) **and seconded** (Barbara Newman) to resume using a common communion cup with use being optional for individual parishioners. **The motion passed** unanimously. Father said it will take a short time to prepare the congregations for the change so he is aiming for October 2nd.

Vestry Vacancy: After the guest left the meeting the Vestry discussed the three nominations submitted for the current vacancy. It was agreed that names of the two not selected would be submitted to the nominating committee for consideration for service starting after the next annual meeting. After discussion it was agreed to ask Ann Cassidy to fill the current vacancy.

Life Cycle of Organizations Model: In preparation for the October Vestry retreat Father led the members in a discussion of the life cycle of an organization like Atonement starting with formation (birth) and progressing through healthy growth to stability. Without renewal and revitalization the organization can become stagnant and stale, leading to decline, disintegration (coming apart), and eventually death (ending). What keeps an organization vital is revisiting the questions that were raised at formation: Who are we? What are we here for? Who is our neighbor? The further along an organization is from birth to death the more difficult it is to revitalize it. Father asked those attending the meeting to identify where they think Atonement is in this process. Most felt we're currently somewhere between stable and stagnant or stale, although several felt that some revitalization has already started. Father asked the members to think about the model and today's discussion in preparation for the retreat when we will expand on it.

Dates for Calendar:

- Next Vestry Meeting – October 8 following the retreat
- Bishop Consecration Watch Potluck – September 17
- Bishop Julio at 11:00 – September 18
- Memorial Mass for Betty Muir-Weinshel – September 24
- St. Francis Pet Blessings – October 1
- Homecoming Sunday/Schola Returns – October 2
- Vestry Retreat – October 7 and 8
- Episcopal Charities Gala – October 14
- Anglo-Catholicism Study Day – October 15
- Open House Chicago – October 15 and 16

Following a prayer by Father Dan the meeting adjourned at 2:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Waltz
Clerk of the Vestry