

Sunday, November 14, 2021

Episcopal Church of the Atonement Vestry Meeting Minutes

Time: Sunday, November 14, 2021, 1:00 to 2:11 p.m.
Location: In-Person at Church of the Atonement and via Zoom
Present: Mother Erika Takacs (Rector), Greg Bradley (Warden, via Zoom), Liz Sarnik (Warden), Natalie Archie, Richard Benson, Steve Britt, Will Cronenwett (via Zoom), Bill Hancox, Barbara Newman, Daniel Polley, Mike Trumbold (Treasurer, via Zoom), Michael Waltz (Clerk)
Absent: Dave Beil, Amanda Kim

Next Meeting: Sunday, December 12, 2021, 1:00 p.m. – in-person.

Liz Sarnik (Warden) called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. Mother Erika gave an opening prayer.

Check In: In the Rector’s Report Mother asked the vestry to reflect on how they could show grace, as in blessings, favor, or goodwill, to others in the congregation. Liz asked attendees to share their thoughts on how this could be done.

Review of October Vestry Meeting Minutes: A **motion was made** (Steve Britt) **and seconded** (Natalie Archie) to approve the minutes. With two corrections the **motion passed unanimously**.

Treasurer’s Report:

Statement of Financial Position: Mike Trumbold reported that activity in the bank accounts in October was normal. The Endowment Fund saw a significant increase because of market adjustments.

October Financials: Pledges from the plate were over budget for the month but this is primarily because there were five Sundays in October. Building Services/Repairs are over budget because of repairs to the tabernacle lamp and plaster repairs to the ceilings in Montgomery Hall and the rectory. The past-due water bills have been paid in full. Total building expenses were over budget by \$12,945.04. The Catechesis/Children’s Formation expense was for the purchase of Bibles for Sunday School. Music was over budget because of the expenses for Father Harris’ funeral but that will be back in line next month since the music costs are being covered by a donation. Total expenses for the month were over budget by \$17,498.46 and we ended the month with a deficit of \$10,283.46; however, year-to-date numbers are good. **A motion was made** (Bill Hancox) **and seconded** (Barbara Newman) to receive the financials. With no further questions or discussion the **motion passed unanimously**.

Gala: The Treasurer said that the Gala revenue was below budget by about \$2,500 but expenses were also below budget. Revenue after expenses was \$18,885.02, but there will still be a small amount of revenue because of continuing sales of auction items.

Rectory: As explained last month the rectory was held in a land trust with lifetime rights of use for Fathers Rice, Johnson, and Harris. Mike said that, following the death of Father Harris, all the paperwork has been filed with Chicago Title Land Trust Company to cancel the land trust and have the rectory property deed prepared in the name of the church. He hopes this can be completed before the end of the year to avoid another fee for the land trust.

Budget: Mike reported that as of today 87 pledges in the amount of \$231,202.92 have been received. Fourteen of those are from people who didn't pledge last year. We're below where we were last year in the process but we started the Stewardship campaign earlier and, if we follow prior trends, we will continue to get pledges for some time.

Outreach: Deacon Charles Farrell, who is acting as convener of the Guild, provided a report to the vestry prior to the meeting; Mother led the discussion. The group is looking both at short-term and long-term projects. After funding two months of food and a small party for the Chiapas project there is still some money left in this year's budget and the Guild's December meeting will focus on how best to use that. They will be speaking with Sarah's Circle to be certain we're addressing their current needs and they'll be working on a project to deliver personal care items to Care for Real. Going forward the Guild is evaluating numerous projects including working with a local school, possible volunteer opportunities with Ravenswood Community Services, which provides meals, a food pantry and basic health services to residents of Ravenswood and Uptown, and participating in Rainbow Railroad, an organization that gets LGBTQ+ people out of countries where their lives are in danger because they are LGBTQ+.

Endowment: The Guild provided a report for the vestry prior to the meeting discussing their review of investments, the changes in value of the fund, and possible influences on returns in the future. Mother recognized those who worked on the first Atonement Legacy Society reception held following the mass on All Souls' Day. Prior to the reception the Guild knew of seven parish members who have included Atonement in their estate planning. In all 28 members responded to the invitation for the reception, identifying themselves as having made plans for bequests to Atonement.

Rector's Report: The architectural assessment was conducted on October 20th. Mother Erika talked with BauerLatoza and expects the preliminary report to be received by the first week of December. After a meeting to discuss that report there will be a final report prepared by the end of the year. There will also be a report on possible additional uses for our facilities.

We are still waiting to hear if we will be selected to participate in Partners for Sacred Places' Sustainable Solutions for Sacred Sites project.

As reported before, there is work to be done on the furnace. Service Express said it would need to be replaced at a cost of approximately \$5,000. A second opinion from Ralph's Heating and Plumbing stated that it could be repaired for \$800. Because the amount is so small the vestry doesn't need to approve it and it was decided to move forward with the repair rather than replacing the furnace.

Discussions with Park Mobile about helping handle the parking lot are continuing. It appears that Park Mobile can deduct and remit any taxes that apply to us; there is continuing research on this issue. She asked the vestry to give her any additional questions we need to clear up before we sign a contract. She is still looking for a parking attendant for Sundays and special services.

Mother reported that the group established to determine the condition of the organ has received a proposal for \$3,800 for an exploratory evaluation of its condition. This will have no budget impact because the cost is being covered by a donation. **A motion was made** (Daniel Polley) **and seconded** (Steve Britt) to approve the organ assessment. With no further discussion or questions the **motion passed unanimously**.

Action/Decision/Discussion Items:

Nominations Committee: Marian DeBerry, Will Harpest, and Jonathan Schlack have agreed to serve on the committee recommending new vestry members and next year's Diocesan Convention representatives. The committee will send the names of those recommended to the vestry for approval.

Open Positions: We need two people for the Endowment Guild and the Finance Guild also needs new members. Mother asked the vestry to think of people who could serve in these important positions.

December 4th Retreat: The vestry will hold a retreat from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Among the topics will be a discussion of the survey results. The location of the retreat is still being worked out.

Counters: It takes eight people with two working together one Sunday each month to count the collections. Mike Trumbold needs help finding three or four more people for this function. Several vestry members volunteered to fill these roles.

Church Survey: Bill Hancox gave some top-level results for the recently completed survey. We had 186 responses; two-thirds of responders currently pledge and 73% identified as current members. The three most important things identified were 1) a welcoming church, 2) preaching, and 3) liturgical/worship styles offered. The top three areas in terms of satisfaction were 1) preaching, 2) music, and 3) worship/liturgy. Much more detail will be provided at the vestry retreat.

Dates for Calendar: Vestry Retreat December 4, 2021, 9:00 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Vestry meeting December 12, 2021, 1:00 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 2:11 p.m. following a blessing by Mother Erika.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Waltz
Clerk of the Vestry