

ST. THOMAS VESTRY MEETING

April 21, 2020

6:30 p.m.

This meeting was held on Zoom due to the Corona 19 virus and Diocesan guidelines.

Present: The Reverend Canon Lisa Fry, Rector; Carlos Mello, Senior Warden; Edmund Hartt, Junior Warden; Brother Donovan Bowley, Fred Bucklin, Bill Freeman, Sarah Groman, Dean Jackson, Jen Johanson, Barbara Kent Lawrence, Elizabeth Moran, Eileen Morelli, Terry Mello, Treasurer; Shirley Fierro, Clerk.

The meeting opened in prayer led by the Canon at 6:39 pm.

The minutes of the March 27, 2020 meeting were presented. A motion to accept the minutes as presented was made by Edmund Hartt and seconded by Elizabeth Moran. The Vestry unanimously accepted the Minutes of the March 2020 Vestry meeting.

Treasurer's Report

- Considering all that has occurred we are in good shape financially.
- Diocese has been approved for the SBA. Money will be dedicated to supporting Diocesan churches for payroll and utilities.
- Question: Will we have the capability of online donations? Answer: Yes. Currently it is preferred to send donations through the bank. Online is now available for pledge payments, donation to the food bank, the building fund and/or memorials. An article will appear in the Tidings this week with further information.
- The Website, G Suite for Nonprofits, is now available. Also, we have an official YouTube site and additionally a Master Calendar is being researched. The Canon shared her calendar with Susie.
- Bishop Curry sends out a 4-minute meditation every Monday. If anyone has questions, please contact Terry for the website information.

The Rector asked the vestry to please inform folks of the services being offered on Facebook.

Reports

Rector

- Concern about Average Sunday Attendance (ASA) and the Diocese utilizing the attendance numbers from the Facebook statistic. Currently the ASA numbers are high and could possibly be inflated. For instance, Paul and O'Leary Johnson on the Isle of Wight in Great Britain are watching.
- The children will meet once a week with the Rector on Zoom. Going forward the Rector plans to offer religious instruction with all student's once a week.
- Suzie is working on a new parish directory. Suggested that all private information must be protected. If it is online it must be encrypted, and password protected so it remains private.

Senior Warden

Has been extremely busy working on his financial responsibilities with his coworkers and therefore not concentrating on being Senior Warden. Thank you for what you do.

Jr. Warden

- Covid 19 has interrupted the scheduled contractors and we are being asked to be flexible.
- The faucet is leaking in the tenant's apartment. Plumber has been called.
- Question: Did the tower wrap remain secure after the last two storms? Answer: No apparent change was noted.

New Business:

Rector shared the following information on the Covid virus and church operations:

Experts have been looking at the following concerning the pandemic and what we might do in the future.

- a) **A best case scenario:** We have slowed the spread. Less strict social distancing, some kinds of limits on gathering size, widespread testing. Many things will be able to reopen with physical distancing, testing, and limits on numbers of people gathering.
- b) **Less than best case:** Occasional flareups as virus spreads again as restrictions are loosened. Possibility of several more 4-6 week shutdowns. This is called the "wave" scenario.
- c) **Worst Case Scenario:** Virus comes roaring back after we come out of this, we have to return to strict distancing measures, and are essentially on some kind of shutdown through the rest of 2020. Everyone is hoping this does NOT happen, obviously.

What does this mean for churches? .

It is important to point out that churches have been hotspots. This is why we have to take this seriously and address what changes we may need to make. In South Korea, France, California, New York, and other places we have epidemiological evidence through tracing of contacts from infected people that churches were significant spreaders of the virus. In South Korea, a single infected person attending her church infected 37 other people. Congregations often have larger numbers of persons in high risk categories and thus the potential for more complications.

Decisions we make should place on emphasis on how those decisions are loving actions towards our neighbors.

Decisions should be based on an abundance of caution as a guiding principle, with the care and safety of people as paramount, especially the most vulnerable, without assuming or judging who is vulnerable or not.

Things that COULD happen regarding our church: These are not givens—just things that are being discussed.

Worship:

- Worship in groups of 50 or less.
- Implement distancing within the church based on our overall capacity. Like that tape on the floor in the supermarket.
- No physical passing of the peace.
- No kneeling at the altar rail: single file, socially distanced, coming up for communion.
- No more intinction.
- Continue to record/livestream worship since there still may be members who may not feel comfortable attending in-person worship for some time.
- No physical passing of collection plates.
- No more—or modified-- social hour/coffee hours after services.

The Diocese and all priests, including the Rector, are working on how services will work going forward. Some suggestions were made, and the Rector agreed to consider them.

From Bishop Brown and Governor Mills: Current proposed date of May 15th, 2020 for the beginning of some form of normalcy.

Question: We seem to be getting many people coming to a Sunday Service. People seem to be taking advantage of our online services. Any possibility of continuing with this? Rector: This is being considered.

Suggestion: We set up donation availability at the services we offer online. Rector: we certainly can do something like that. Also, the Rector is looking at a way for visitors to donate at the back of the Church to help support the facility for future generations.

Concerns of the congregation:

- Phone tree and individuals are trying hard to remain in contact with people. Talking to folks and they seem ok.
- AA came and took books to distribute to their members. There was concern about this group not being able to meet. Rector assured vestry that they are meeting-- AA has been starting online meetings for their participants.
- Only Deacon Abby Pettee can visit people in hospital at this time. *(Corrected information)*

The Rector ended the meeting with prayer.

A motion was made by Edmund to adjourn and seconded by Sarah. Unanimously carried. The vestry meeting ended at approximately 7:20 pm.

Next Meeting on the 19th of May 2020

Upcoming Activities for the Congregation:

- Every Sunday: Morning Prayer/sermon/music 10:00 a.m.
- Monday-Friday Noonday Prayer
- Wednesday and Saturday – Compline 8:00 p.m.
- Bible Study – Wednesday 10: 30 a.m.
- Rector’s Weekly Class Beginning Friday, May 1 4:00 p.m.
- Regular check in with Children and Families
- Food Pantry Open
- Loaves and Fishes continuing
- Phone tree is calling parishioners
- Pastoral Care continuing as needed.
- Tidings prepared and available weekly
- Regular video updates with the Rector