

EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE HOLY SPIRIT FEBRUARY 21, 2023, VESTRY MINUTES

Date: February 21, 2023 **Time Started:** 5:00 p.m. **Time Ended:** 6:45 p.m.

Next Meeting: March 21, 2023, at 5:00pm.

Members Present: Gail Kase, Senior Warden; Peggy Wilson, Junior Warden; Rebecca Sharp; Carol Van Voorhis; Barbara Schauer; Mark Holland; Amanda Hilty; Mike Robinson; Kathleen Phillips.

Other Attendees: David McNair, Rector; Lorrie Cooper, Clerk; Bill Sewell, Treasurer

DISCUSSION/FINDINGS/CONCLUSIONS

AGENDA ITEM: **Call to Order, Opening Prayer** (*David McNair*)

AGENDA ITEM: **Approval of Vestry Minutes** (*Clerk, Lorrie Cooper*)

Minutes from the January, 2023, meeting were unanimously approved.

AGENDA ITEM: **Financial Report** (*Bill Sewell*)

- Reviewed the current report on the budget status.
- The propane situation will again be a challenge throughout the year.
- A budget amendment is needed due to the reclassification of payments to David McNair and the complexities of his taxable income.
- Update needed also to the list of those persons authorized to sign checks.

As was discussed in the meeting, we are still evaluating the direction from the Diocesan finance officer that certain expenses currently classified as Rector health insurance be reclassified as taxable income to the Rector. This reclassification means that we would need to budget additional salary expense to cover the additional tax burden, additional payments into the church pension plan, and additional accruals for the Rector sabbatical reserve. The total additional unbudgeted expense will be about \$3,900. We are actively researching creative ways to legally mitigate this additional expense and will keep the Vestry and Finance Committee members advised.

AGENDA ITEM: **Sr. Warden's Report** (*Gail Kase*)

I am very happy and honored to accept the position of Senior Warden! Needless to say, I am on a steep learning curve, and I welcome any advice or help from you. One of the functions of this role is to be open and available to hear congregational concerns, especially those of Vestry members.

Please feel free to contact me. I trust that the Vestry will continue to be a body which guides and supports our Holy Spirit community, helping us keep our hearts and minds open to discern what Love asks of us. **Message Board:** I will replace or reorganize the Vestry bulletin board in the area outside the sanctuary in order to add space for announcements such as "We have an extra mattress if anyone needs it," or "Does anyone know where to get mulch around here?" or "I'm looking for a pet sitter," etc. This will allow us to tighten up the after-service announcements as well as provide a helpful format for communication.

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AGENDA ITEM: Jr. Warden's Report (*Peggy Wilson*)

The new church sign is ready to be posted. A request was made for a photo of the sign to use in the March edition of Mountain Spirit. Due to our previous electrician having moved out of area, suggestions are needed for another local electrician.

AGENDA ITEM: Rector's Report (*David McNair*)

1. Pastoral issues:

Julie Johnson – continues to recover at home from heart surgery on January 13, 2023. She's gaining strength and stamina, and her doctors tell her she is on track to full recovery.

Esther Moriarty – Continues to receive regular leukemia treatment. Her test results indicate that she is doing well enough not to need return to Duke for three months – which is very good news.

Francis Knisley – Is home and slowly regaining her strength after being treated in the hospital for a serious stomach virus. She is planning to move to Mars Hill Retirement when a room becomes available (likely several months from now).

Marnie Wilson – is home after undergoing a surgical procedure to correct an issue related to her heart. She expects being able to resume her normal activities later this week.

2. New members at ECHS: John Sumner has moved his membership from Holy Cross Episcopal, Tryon to ECHS. He lives in Mars Hill in the apartments behind Mars Hill Hardware store.

3. Visitors to ECHS since our January Vestry meeting:

Chris Abellflute, 111 Grovewood Road, Asheville NC 28804. Email: chrisabellflute@gmail.com. There will be follow-up contact by both David McNair and a Vestry member.

4. The required paperwork for the humanitarian parole VISA application for Rev. Tulia Sanchez and her family (Osmani, Suzanna, Sarah) has been submitted. We are waiting to find out if they will be granted this humanitarian status. In the meantime, fundraising efforts are being planned to secure funds for Tulia to be hired as a part-time priest in the diocese.

Housing has been found, conveniently located in David McNair's neighborhood.

Paperwork for the parole status is with the lawyer and will be handled quickly.

5. The second meeting of Sacred Ground will be [was] Saturday, February 4 at 9:30 at Mars Hill Methodist Church. Newcomers are [were] welcome, but please contact me for reading/viewing assignment before the meeting..

6. A Community Ash Wednesday service will be held at 12:00 p.m. on Wednesday, February 22, at Broyhill Chapel on the campus of Mars Hill University.

7. Our ECHS Ash Wednesday service will be Wednesday, Feb. 22 at 5:30 p.m.

8. FYI, I will be attending the diocesan Spring Clergy Retreat on Feb. 26-28 at Valle Crucis Conference Center.

9. We will be taking a few photos of the new Vestry this Tuesday at our meeting for the ECHS website.

Photos of the Vestry were taken outside early in the meeting, courtesy of Jay Schauer.

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10. Input is needed from Vestry on whether or not to offer the Easter Morning Vigil service.
**Much discussion about the Vigil, as well as a possible breakfast meal at the church.
Both the Vigil and possibly a breakfast meal will be held again, as in previous years.**

AGENDA ITEM: Safety Report *(David McNair)*

The Vestry discussed the Safety Report [see page 5] first presented by the Vestry subcommittee to the Vestry before the onset of the pandemic in January, 2020. The only safety consideration in the report that the Vestry decided to implement was to change the locks on the exterior doors at the back of the church building and the sanctuary door. The new exterior door locks remain locked from the inside of the building but will automatically unlock if someone on the inside turns the knob to open the door. These are deemed safer in the situation of an emergency exit while at the same time remaining locked from the outside. After significant discussion, the Vestry unanimously voted to not implement any of the other suggestions listed in the 2020 Safety report. As part of this discussion, a letter from Nancy Larkin [see page 6] emailed prior to the Vestry meeting was read and considered prior to the Vestry vote to not pursue any of the other Safety report consideration.

AGENDA ITEM: Vestry Call List *(Gail Kase)*

The call list information is as follows:

<i>Names from Directory</i>	<i>Skip/Remove</i>	<i>Vestry Rep</i>
Atchley – Byrd	Butler	Barbara Schauer
Carlson – Dixon (Kitty)	Cate, Cumbie, Dannals	Kathleen Phillips
Edens – Harrison		Amanda Hilty
Hartman – Kase	Hawkins, Hilty, Hobson, Holland, Huber, Kase	Rebecca Sharp
King – Matthews (Teresa & John)	Keefe, Link	Carol Van Voorhis
Maupin – Rabb	McNair, McQueen, Ogburn	Gail Kase
Reda – Sparrow	Reid, Rice, Robinson, Roos, Sale, Schauer, Schneider (Darrell), Sewell (Alex), Sharp, Shealy	Mark Holland
Spindler - West	Van Voorhis, Von Dreele, Wilson (Peggy)	Peggy Wilson
Whitaker – Woodruff (Both)		Mike Robinson

[Above list compiled by Kathleen Phillips]

AGENDA ITEM: La Esperanza *(Rebecca Sharp)*

- On Feb 11 we held another successful youth event attended by sixteen young people. They mixed and baked over 150 Valentine cookies and prepared more than sixty Valentine cards. I later delivered those items to residents at the Mars Hill Retirement Community. The next youth gathering will be Saturday, March 25, with a bilingual service.

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- A fundraiser for La Esperanza/ECHS will be held Thursday, March 16, 11:30am to 1:00pm, at Mars Hill Baptist Church. One thousand dollars of the fundraiser monies will be donated to ECHS to help the budget. Whatever we make over that thousand will go to La Esperanza's operating funds. More details coming soon!
- On another note: The EarthCare Team's organizational meeting is scheduled for Sunday, March 5, following the service.

AGENDA ITEM: Outreach *(Carol Van Voorhis)*

Funding Available From Outreach is as follows:

- Outreach-\$2,882
- Villager Initiative-\$2,075

The first Sunday offerings:

- January \$1,792-Madison Group Home
- February-Neighbors in Need
- March Empowering Youth of Madison County

Welcome to Shannon Dowler (new member of committee)

Mary Jo Sparrow will collect during Feb. 20-28 for the Homeward Bound Breakfast on March 1.

Deb Carlson has agreed to once again work with DSS to provide shoe gift cards for foster kids.

Carol, Deidre, Nancy, and Pam will work on Joyful Jars for the 2023 Heritage Festival, which was a great fundraiser in 2022.

AGENDA ITEM: New Attendees Contact *(Barbara Schauer)*

The "Invite-Welcome-Connect" system was explained, which involves personal contact along with prepared literature. The system originated with the Episcopal Church.

AGENDA ITEM: Christian Adult Education Formation *(Mark Holland)*

The Christian Formation Education Committee is scheduling for one week from this coming Sunday the second class on The Grail Quest. For each of the coming Lenten Wednesday meetings/dinners, we will present on the four of the seven deadly sins. These presentations will come from Mark Holland, Ty Jones, Carol Jablonski and David McNair.

AGENDA ITEM: Parochial Report *(David McNair)*

A vote was held to accept the new Parochial Report and passed unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM: Next Vestry Meeting *(David McNair)*

Tuesday, March 21, 2023, at 5:00pm.

AGENDA ITEM: Closing Prayer *(David McNair)*

Respectfully submitted, Lorrie Cooper, Clerk

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Following are Safety Committee considerations and a letter from Nancy Larkin.

Safety Committee Meeting Notes

The Safety Committee met with John Clark (Mars Hill Police Department and Madison County Sheriff's Department) and Adam Hunter of the Madison County Sheriff's Department on Thursday, October 3, 2019.

The officers offered the following options for CHS to consider:

- Change locks on exterior doors (not main hallway entry doors) to locks that are locked from the outside but immediately unlock when the knob is turned on the inside of the building. Such locks would meet fire code regulations. This intervention was completed in October 2019.
- Install and use a night owl type camera system such as BLINK on all sides of the building and in the parking lot. CHS would need to purchase and install multiple cameras. There is an app for the BLINK system that allows all cameras to be monitored on a cell phone. WiFi is required. Someone would need to be appointed to monitor the cameras on their cell phone during the Sunday service.
- All entry doors to the church could be locked after the service starts to restrict entry. We discussed locking the three entry doors fifteen minutes after the service starts and leaving them locked for the duration of the service. Someone, perhaps an usher, would be responsible for checking that the doors remain locked during the service.
- Ushers could be stationed at the doors to the church sanctuary during the service.
- A parishioner or a hired security guard could be stationed in the entry hallway during the service.
- A person or two could be hired to monitor the parking lot during the service. Two-way radios and someone monitoring inside the building would be needed to make this work.
- Arming people is a last resort.

The officers shared the following guidelines for developing protocols for lockdowns and active shooter situations. A Lockdown Protocol should include:

- Code word for shooter/lockdown
- Evacuation Plan/Rendezvous point for reuniting families
- Designate someone to make phone call to 911
- Suggest intercom to alert all people in building

In the case of an active shooter:

- RUN – get out of the church
- Block interior doors – people will exit through windows or exterior doors
- Prepare for a 5-minute event
- Training and practice are needed for the people who are in charge (Vestry and Ushers)
- If we practice a drill, make it a fire drill so we don't cause unnecessary panic or fear

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Letter From Nancy Larkin

February 20, 2023

Dear Vestry Members,

I am writing to beseech you to consider prayerfully what ways Holy Spirit might address the issue of preparing for an active shooter incident. I know what the statistics indicate but that does nothing to alleviate my concern for a “what if.” I feel that the church needs to put into motion some of the items the previous Vestry determined would be ways to address this.

My own thoughts are that we cannot ignore the possibility of this occurring. I know we feel safe in our location since it is “off the beaten path.” However, I think we are a church that could be a prime target for some of the right-wing radicals that live in Madison County. I feel we are very vulnerable in our church setting and it would be so easy for someone to come in and make us a “statistic.”

I believe there are some easy ways we can address this. They would take a bit of adjusting but, in my opinion, would be well worth investigating further. I would like to suggest the following:

1. Locking of doors once service has begun. Perhaps the Vestry person could stay in the hall for about 10 minutes after the service to accommodate late comers.
2. A congregational meeting to discuss how to proceed if there is an active shooter. What steps could be taken to minimize the impact of an event such as this.
3. Explore the option of having an additional door put in the Sanctuary. I feel this would give us an “escape route.” At this time there are only two ways to leave the Sanctuary and they are both located at the back or side of the church where it is most likely for a shooter to come in.

I know there are many other things on the list. I think they should also be considered. My concern is that if I did not speak up and something were to happen, I would shoulder the responsibility of not letting my feelings be known. As evangelical churches say, “The Lord has laid this on my heart.”

I wish that this had been resolved during the Vestry meetings while I was a member. I also think it is good to have “new blood.” Please take this concern seriously. I feel like a sitting duck in our Sanctuary. The statistics indicate that an active shooter incident is not likely to occur, but “what if!” Thank you for your time and your ear.

Prayerfully, Nancy Larkin