

Vestry Minutes

Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, Oxford, Ohio

Nov. 10, 2020



Present: Terri Thornton, Interim Rector; Dave Guilfoyle, Deacon; Pete Lindsay, Sr. Warden; John Harper, Jr. Warden; Jim Michael, Treasurer; Stacey Peterson, Clerk; Vestry members: Rosalyn Benson, Martin Ganev, Ken Grabach, Lisa Hermann, Glenn Julian, Bonnie Mason, Ellen Reister and Margaret Smith Guests: Elaine Brandner and Bill Ubbes

Spiritual reflections led by John

Agenda for 11-10-2020 meeting was approved by a majority.

Approval of minutes for 10-13-2020 meeting: Unanimously approved -- Rosalyn moved and Ellen seconded.

Upcoming activities:

November 15 – Bishop Nedi Rivera visitation

November 22 – Stewardship pledges due

December 8 – Vestry Meeting

December 12 – Recording Lessons and Carols

December 31 – Stewardship campaign ends

Solarize Project Report and Questions – Elaine Brandner and Bill Ubbes

Elaine and Bill discussed key issues with the Solarize Ohio proposal:

- They're not happy with the proposal received from Fellowship Energy Finance (FEF). It was poorly prepared and raised several red flags.
- The organizations involved include FEF, which helps non-profits take advantage of tax credits; Black and Veatch, which puts together the proposals to the parishes; and Third Sun Solar, which does the installation.
- FEF's proposals were aimed more at attracting investors and were less focused on the concerns of what parishes want.
- In the future, the Solarize Ohio committee will review all proposals before they go to the parishes.
- Holy Trinity's FEF report has a photo showing solar panels on the old building's slate roof. However, panels can't go on slate. Instead of having a 78 KW system, it's more likely to be 35 KW, Bill said, and this will change the savings.
- Questions were raised about DemandEx, a company that provides a smart building management system that uses AI software to control thermostats and spread out demand to save energy and money. Some people associated with the church would have an app to override DemandEx. Bill will look into getting a customer reference from DemandEx.
- Elaine is looking into issues around having to change out bulbs in the church to LEDs.

- The utility savings FEF quotes are for both gas and electric. FEF has been asked to be more specific about how they are coming up with the savings amounts.
- FEF's goal was to show a 7% reduction in the parish's electric bill, and to provide investors with a 6%-7% rate of return. This is tough to do in Ohio, Bill said.
- Questions were raised about the accuracy of the \$500-per-year savings quoted in the Estimated Lifetime Cash Flows chart. Bill noted that \$500 per year is a small margin, but there are other reasons to go with the program: It serves as an example for the community and, at the end of the 25 years, the panels can be purchased at residual cost.
- Insurance questions: As long as parish is under the Power Purchase Agreement, FEF owns the system and is responsible for insuring the panels and system. If the parish takes the buyout, it will own the system and have to insure it. The panels are built to withstand hail.
- FEF will be providing a revised proposal, correcting the issues raised in the original proposal. It wants an answer whether Holy Trinity will join the program by December 4, so it can calculate the final contract amounts based on the parishes participating. After that, we'd get the final offer.
- Bill recommended waiting to see FEF's revised proposal before taking action.

October 2020 Financial Report – Jim

Jim noted the following:

- We're still under budget on income, but even more under budget on expenses.
- Pledge income is on budget, but it's flattening and likely will be a below budget by year end.
- Page 2, line 5165 – we're \$2,243 over budget on repairs and probably should have budgeted more for repairs.

A motion to accept the October Financial Report was unanimously approved – Bonnie moved and John seconded.

Draft 2021 Budget

- The draft 2021 budget has been updated to include more actual 2020 expenses. Pledge income has been adjusted down to reflect people moving away people and a death.
- The \$32K Payroll Protection Program loan, once forgiven, will help the bottom line, but it's a one-time grant.
- This is still a very austere budget. From long-term point of view, there are reasons to be concerned. We need to budget more for maintenance and clergy salary, among other things.
- It's been difficult to make assumptions around COVID. Choral Scholars are budgeted based on pre-COVID costs; clergy compensation is based on having an interim minister through 2021. The rest of budget lines are guesses made based on the last few years numbers.

Solarize Project Vestry Discussion – Pete and John

The following concerns were raised:

- If the companies involved aren't paying attention to us now, how are they going to pay attention to us later.

- Stewardship of creation care is important, but we also must pay attention to the stewardship of blessings to the parish and not end up in the red on this.
- We could easily lose the entire year's savings if the system were down for a couple weeks.
- Lack of control over building temperature is a concern given our parishioners and the musical instruments.
- References on the companies and their work would be helpful.

A motion to table consideration of the FEF proposal pending more background info and a corrected proposal passed unanimously – Terri moved and Rosalyn seconded.

Ministry Reports

Advent and Christmas planning – Rosalyn

Rosalyn and Elaine are working with Terri on planning the following:

- **Greening the church starting in Advent.** This is not tradition at Holy Trinity; we usually wait until the Christmas Eve to decorate.
- **Christmas tree.** May put peoples' name on ornaments, and they can take them home.
- **Third Sunday of Advent.** This would be a new take on Lessons and Carols with no singing. December 13, Rejoice Sunday, people would be invited to sign up to tour the church, have refreshments, listen to music.
- **Christmas Eve.** The Worship Committee has decided to open church on Christmas Eve. May have a small family service at 5 p.m. and a later service in the evening.
- **Altar Guild.** The Altar Guild needs to be included in Worship Committee's plans.

Outreach Commission -- Margaret

Margaret reported the following:

- The Outreach Commission wants to restart the monthly community meal effort. Food and pantry items could be picked up outside Holy Trinity. A \$1,500 Diocesan grant will fund this.
- The group is considering asking for donations to provide mittens, gloves and socks.

Other Vestry members suggested getting lists from families in need to volunteers who would provide those items and starting a knitting ministry

Rector's Report – Terri

Annual Diocesan Convention update. The convention was virtual this year; Terri, Dave and Margaret attended. An incentive plan is being launched to encourage churches to stay up to date on monthly mission share payments. This was Bishop Briedenthal's last convention.

Bishop Rivera's visit update. She plans to preside over the service and join in taping it at Holy Trinity. The loose offertory would normally go to Bishop's Fund. We will ask people to give to the Bishop's Visitation Fund.

Budget Planning and Stewardship: How to develop a budget. Membership and pledging never covers the budget. The left pocket – what people are passionate about – fills in what the budget doesn't cover. Those left pocket big events that people get excited about have stopped happening. Workgroups must look at what budget they need, and how they will fund that. The

next parochial report will show a steady decline in attendance. With COVID, attrition is happening. We need to discuss how to finance the church's mission going forward.

Comments for the Good of the Parish

Closing prayer was led by John.

Respectfully submitted,

Stacey Peterson

Stacey Peterson, Clerk

Attachments:

October Financial Report
2021 Draft Budget
Solarize Ohio cover letter
FEF proposal