

St. Andrew's Episcopal Church
Minutes to Special CARES Act Vestry Meeting
April 8, 2020, via Zoom

The Vestry meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm by Rev. Reed Loy.

Participants: Rev. Reed Loy, Senior Warden Anne McCausland, Junior Warden Clarke Kidder, Treasurer Kerrie Diers, Clerk Pam Manus, Tom Burack, Lucy Crichton, Peter Daley, Steve Largy, Diane Les Becquets, Brian Tucker, Betty Whinn, and Audrey Knight

Absent: Betsy Wilder

Rev. Loy began with a short prayer.

Overview: Rev. Loy and Kerrie Diers presented the purpose of the meeting, which was to present information, discuss, and possibly vote on an opportunity for St. Andrew's to apply for funding from the Paycheck Protection Program component of the CARES Act to support staff payroll and utility expenses. The focus of this component of the CARES Act is to quickly get funds out to small businesses to cover payroll and support the economy by providing two and a half months of payroll to keep staff employed. The draft application which had been sent to Vestry prior to the meeting, was shared on screen during the meeting. Information/questions that they shared/raised included:

- Do we actually have an expected decrease in finances? Is this something we feel is good for us to take advantage of? Lots of parishioners are self employed and/or have been impacted by the Covid19 crisis, have they been educated about the CARES Act? How can we at St. Andrew's support our parishioners in learning about it?
- To qualify, the organization must have an existing relationship with a bank through which the organization could quickly apply. St. Andrew's has one with Td Bank.
- The application process is a quick one; first come, first serve, but one may reapply in round two if not awarded. Only small businesses (fewer than 500 employees), including non-profits, may apply.
- The funds are to cover two and a half months of monthly payroll and utilities. For St. Andrew's with its five staff, the total amount we would request would be \$48,673. Pledge income figures to date (and the figures supporting the \$48,673 proposed amount to be requested) were sent by email to the Vestry prior to the meeting and reviewed/shared on screen. Loose plate offerings typically are approximately \$50-\$60 per week.
- Rev. Loy has heard from two parishioners that they may not be able to meet their pledge due to unemployment from the crisis. It is difficult to predict at this time if we expect a decrease in revenue.
- If awarded, and the loan is used for payroll/utilities, the church can apply 60 days after to have it "forgiven", and the loan becomes a grant that doesn't need to be paid back. If

the funds are not used for that purpose, there is a two year payback period at 0.5% interest.

Questions/Issues Raised/Discussed by Vestry and Rev. Loy included the following:

- Why are we taking money if we don't really need it? We shouldn't do it out of fear. The opportunity was shared by the Diocese; Rev. Loy participated in an Episcopal Church Foundation webcast promoting this opportunity. It was his impression that it was to protect our Rainy Day fund.
- What about our Endowment funds? All but the Rachel Johnson funds are not restricted and usable.
- The Diocese has offered Fair Share Reduction, i.e. the church can take a two month break from the \$3,044 it pays monthly to the Diocese.
- There is currently enough in the checking account balance to cover six weeks of payroll and utility expenses.
- Should it be saved for the neediest? We need to use our wisdom in this decision. We shouldn't look at it as competition. We need to look out for our parish. Having a cushion is valued. Are there strings attached? Wouldn't it be good to have the funds as back up in case we need it? Could it be returned if we didn't? Seems like if the Diocese shared this information, they are supporting its use.
- What are our fiduciary duties? What do we need to continue to function? What are the implications of accepting these funds? What's the right trigger for us to apply for government funding? We need to define and respect the doctrine between church and state. It's vital that churches not be funded by government and become dependent on the government and those who pay taxes. We're stronger if we weather the storm and keep it separate. We should be seen as an institution that's self-reliant. Should the Finance Committee meet to discuss this?
- How are the staff doing? Rev. Loy shared that they're a little stressed, but are busy adapting to the changes needed in doing their jobs and are pleased to be doing their roles.

Vote: The possibility of voting to apply was raised, but several commented that they had mixed feelings and needed time to think it over. It was pointed out that per recent policy, we should not be voting on a newly presented issue. Once a vote is made, the application could be quickly submitted thanks to all the work that Kerrie Diers has done on it.

Other suggestions/questions raised included:

- Should we only do the Fair Share Reduction Abatement, giving us \$6,000 more in our budget?
- Should we be looking at what budget reductions can be made? It was pointed out that the largest portion of staff budget supports Rev. Loy.
- Should we get a sense from our parishioners if they will be able to fulfill their pledges?

- Is there a way to get “loose plate” offerings electronically? Should we be educating our parishioners on how to pay? Could a “loose plate” donation button be added to the website?

Next steps

- Vestry will reconvene next Wednesday, April 15, 7 pm, via Zoom to further discuss and vote.
- Vestry and Stewardship Committee volunteers (Tom Burack, Ted Diers, Audrey Knight, Anne McCausland and Betty Whinn) will be calling a few of the parishioners (names to be assigned by Rev. Loy) to check in on how they’re doing during this time of crisis, and do they think they’ll be able to honor their pledge, and if so, at what percent?)
- Tom Burack will check to see if the church can pay the funds back if not used.

The meeting was adjourned after a prayer at 8:29 pm.

Respectfully submitted

Audrey Knight, in substitution for Clerk Pam Manus