

**CHURCH OF THE NATIVITY**  
Northborough, MA

**VESTRY BUSINESS MEETING**  
**Mar. 17, 2020 Minutes**

*Present*

Rector: Chad McCabe  
Sr. Warden: Deb Hesek  
Jr. Warden: Howie Gelles  
Treasurer: Janet Wilcox (via phone)  
Clerk: Cathy Terwedow  
At-Large: Cindee Morin, Sean Nelson, Sally Kazarian (via phone)

*Absent*

At-Large: Ted Flanagan, Aaron Ting

**Consent Agenda**

Minutes from the Annual Meeting were approved by the Executive Committee on 2/10. A copy is posted in the hallway. Cathy will send them to the vestry and find out whether they can be posted on Breeze for early access by the parish. The congregation will vote to approve them on 1/24/21. There was no February meeting.

The January minutes and financials were approved via email 2/26/20. Janet commented that pledges and loose plate are running behind budget.

**Rector**

**Coronavirus update.** Everyone is at home and we've shut down under advisement. Chad will speak to the Bishop to find out next steps. March 15 was Nativity's first online streaming service via Facebook and Zoom. Feedback was positive and has the capability to reach people who might not be able to attend services otherwise so we will continue streaming church services even after the virus is over.

Chad, Deb, and Cathy will deliver communion cups and bulletins to parishioners each week, beginning with the elderly and small-group leaders. Small groups will run at their hosts' discretion.

Parish notifications and the need for in-home communion. Currently, we are serving Gloria Reycroft and Catherine Rossetti every two weeks. We need a bigger team and more communications to reach out to people who need in-home communion.

**Easter services & Holy Week**

- The egg hunt is cancelled.
- The state says we must go eight weeks without large gatherings so the vestry agreed to cancel a scheduled ~\$1300 mass mailing to 5000 people about Nativity's Easter services. We'll also cancel Michelle for Easter Sunday.
- Holy Week will probably be cancelled. Fr. Michael could do the Good Friday 'Seven Words' service if there are volunteers. The men would still meet for Stations of the Cross on Mt. Wachusett on Good Friday.
- We discussed lots of options for Easter services. How could we honor the holiest day of the year when so little is known about Covid-19 and what it might mean for us in the coming weeks? Information and guidance change by the minute. Chad felt strongly that we should have live services, even if they would be held under different circumstances. "Completely withdrawing due to the virus, especially when Christ has victory over death on Easter Sunday is wrong. Fear should not win." Our biggest concern was how to do that safely and within CDC, governmental, and diocesan guidance.

We discussed two options for conducting live services.

- 1) Offer multiple services (4?) with 'registration' to limit attendance to small groups
  - 2) Have one service outdoors with everything spaced out
- When we're back to normal, how many people might we lose? Chad is doing everything possible to keep constant contact with everyone.

### **Preschool**

We had a lot of discussion about how and whether we could pay the preschool staff during the shutdown. Stacy wants to pay her teachers but there isn't enough money in the preschool budget. Unfortunately, church workers are not eligible for unemployment. Could Nativity help them out? The last day of school was ~3/13. Parents have paid tuition through the end of March.

We would like to pay them but where would those funds come from? Also, we don't know how long this situation will last. Chad will find out how much money we're talking about, (eg, How much per pay period? How much in the preschool budget but we don't have much money coming in now either...

Options we discussed included what Stacy might want to do with regard to the school, such as offering families rebates or extending the school year. Also, we'll need to clean the toys, etc. in the Godly Play and nursery areas. Could the preschool help with that in return for any support?

On a related note, we need to rent another dumpster. Although the work room was cleaned up, a lot of the preschool wall is still left.

The vestry voted to spread the preschool rent over 12 months, beginning next fall. The rent is the preschool's profit. The preschool still has a waitlist.

After the meeting, Henry was asked whether he knew how much the preschool had paid in the past, beyond the last two years. He noted the following:

- Nativity used to pay \$450/mo for 10 months (paid every two months).
- Every August, Marilyn would give Nativity a lump-sum donation of the preschool's excess funds (usually \$12-\$17K).
- In 2018, Nativity recommended the fee be \$18K, spread out over 12 months.
- The 2020 budget shows \$1200/mo for nine months (\$10,800/yr). Presumably, adjustments are being made as we learn more.

### **Other**

- An SOP for Financial Policies and Procedures (including a list of people who can sign checks) is under development. Cathy & Henry are working off a template and will send portions of the draft document to the appropriate folks for correction and updates. Once final, the document will be submitted to the vestry for review and approval.
- We've updated the wording of Nativity's mission statement from 'Shaped, Secure, Safe' to 'Embraced, Equipped, & Empowered.' It's really the same meaning, just different words.
- The decision was made to rebrand 'Church of the Nativity' as 'Nativity Church' in common usage, such as church signage and our website. Nativity's legal name would remain the same and all documents would retain the legal name.
- Since Chad can't visit folks now, he will use the time to paint the hall an 'agreeable gray.' The woodwork will be white. Volunteers are needed, probably beginning on Thursday.
- The vestry was given a choice of which book we want to study for the year, either "Canoeing the Mountains" by Tod Bolsinger or "Gravitas" by Jerome Daley.

## Sr. Warden

- Vestry covenant – we'll vote "I agree" by email and then sign it in front of the church at Pentecost
- Howie volunteered to be the Vestry delegate at this year's diocesan convention, November 7, 8:00am-3:00pm, Tower Square Hotel Springfield, 2 Boland Way, Springfield
- CORI checks last 2-3 years. The SORI list of sex offenders is available online. Sabina should have a list of all CORI'd parishioners. Because our classrooms have glass windows and we have attendance counters coming down during the lessons, it's okay to have only one adult only in a Sunday School class. LEMs & LEVs need to be CORI'd as does anyone working with children at church and seniors in the community.
- Deb drafted an SOP for individual events (eg, PR with other churches for Blue Christmas) but Sabina already has a general document. We should post it in a common place for people to share from year to year.
- We need to select a cloud platform (eg, Dropbox, Google Drive, pCloud, Box) for storing church documents that shouldn't belong to a particular individual, such as vestry minutes, News & Notes, budgets, financial data, SOPs, (protected) password list, deeds, signage, artwork, photos, etc. Larry recommends Google's G Suite for Nonprofits.
  - Go to [drive.google.com](https://drive.google.com). Sign into your [churchofthenativity.org](https://churchofthenativity.org) account. Shared drives > Nativity. We can create folders for categorizing documents and set permissions on folders and files for people with accounts or anybody on the web.
  - Currently, Chad, Deb, Cathy, and Sabina are set up as content managers. Who would have access? This project is a work in progress.
- Deb bought the Easter bunny costume!

## Jr. Warden

- Aaron itemized and prioritized 48 items in the "Church-repair working document." Easy ones can be done first, even if they're not the highest priority items
- The urinal replacements are complete! Two waterless urinals were purchased. One was installed but, due to height issues, the other was returned.
- The solar project is up and running and both are inverters reporting data now. We saved \$700 in one month. We need to keep the budgeted money in reserve for other purposes.
- Dumpsters –
  - As of early February, Harvey said they couldn't take the Republic dumpsters because they're private property.
  - Republic sent us another bill and emptied the trash this week but they refused to take the dumpster.
  - Our previous, certified letter to Republic was ignored. We should write them again using a lawyer.
- The furnace and other large-ticket items have a few years of life left so it's critical that we save money for them in the future. The possibility of a capital campaign for the nave AC, furnace, and roof were discussed as were small-church grants. We need to connect with Jeannie Hebert & Kim Gentry-Meyer.
- We should organize projects that could be done with volunteer labor and a little money. Follow the Boy Scouts' slogan to give back to the church community. For non-doers, we could consider a "GoFundMe" campaign. A question was raised as to how we could ask for GoFundMe funds when people are already behind on their pledges. Chad asked for a list to be compiled of projects that could be completed for a total sum of \$2K.
- Tentative new date for spring cleanup: April 25
- Howie will fix the Nativity mailbox!

## **Women's Ministry**

The leaders of the women's ministry met with Laura Colbach, our speaker for the fall retreat. The theme might be "Listening to God, Ourselves, & Others."

The meeting opened and closed with prayer. We adjourned at 9PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Cathy Terwedow, Clerk

### *Upcoming Dates:*

- **Mar. 22: Facebook online service, 10:00AM, <https://www.facebook.com/NativityNorthboro/videos/> – BE SURE SABINA HAS YOUR CURRENT EMAIL ADDRESS!**
- Mar 29: Facebook online service, 10:00AM
- Apr. 5: Facebook online service, 10:00AM; stay tuned for Holy Week updates
- Apr. 7: Executive meeting
- Apr. 21: Vestry business meeting
- April 25: Spring cleanup (tentative)