

**MINUTES OF A VIDEO-CONFERENCE MEETING OF THE VESTRY  
GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH, GAINESVILLE, GEORGIA**

**CALL TO ORDER:** The Vestry meeting convened on April 27 2020, at 6:00 PM via ZOOM Conference. Stuart Higginbotham opened with a prayer.

**VESTRY MEMBERS/OFFICERS PRESENT:**

Dan Scott, Senior Warden  
Patrick O'Rourke, Junior Warden  
Newsom Cummings  
Chaudron Gille  
Charles Kelley  
JoAnn Manring  
Scarlet Pendarvis  
Tom Rossi  
Gail Sargent  
Doug Smith  
Christy Wagner  
Mike Whitmire  
Jason Voyles, Chancellor  
Callie Flack, Treasurer

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Rev. Dr. Stuart Higginbotham  
Rev. Dr. Cynthia Park  
Seminarian Edgar Otero  
Reba Page

Stuart opened with prayer, a poem by John O'Donohue at 6:05 pm

**TREASURER'S REPORT AND ACTION ITEMS:**

Discussed the March financial/treasurer's report. March revenue and expenses roughly matched March 2019, so it was not terribly severe—although we do note that there was a decrease in revenue and many unknowns looking at future weeks and months. April looks relatively healthy, so we can look toward May and Summer, with unknowns there. There was discussion of PPP funds. We have completed the forms and the bank indicated that the funds are available, so the forms will be sent. There was also discussion of Outreach funding as well, mindful of unknowns here with quarterly dispersals, etc.

Motion for the consent agenda, of minutes and treasurer's report. Whitmire/Manring

**OTHER:**

We had a rich discussion of where we are now, in terms of worship and parish life, looking at updates from the Governor around opening up with social distancing guidelines. Other parishes are choosing to live stream, etc., from their naves. Stuart has asked Will to zoom-call from the loft, to integrate music

from the organ into Sunday mornings. For now, Stuart and Cynthia will continue to log in from their homes, since we are not sure what numbers look like, with Hall County being a hot spot at the moment. Each person on the call shared their own feelings, around disappointment at being physically distanced, struggles with technology, grief over this shifted way of worshipping, etc. And they also shared their concern for everyone's well-being. We paid particular attention to how we are aware that whatever the clergy do publicly, in this sense, this gives permission for others in their actions (i.e. going out, gathering in small groups, etc.) So, we are paying particular attention to these pressures.

We also all noted that this current framework with zoom calls feels very authentic to where we are. We are being called to a time of honesty in our vulnerability, and we can reflect more deeply on the dynamics of a spiritual community.

The Compassion Cluster is working on spaces for conversations around grief and frustration, etc.

The Formation Cluster continues doing a phenomenal job with offering opportunities for spiritual growth and conversation.

The Participation Cluster is working on ideas for other possibilities for parish connection, paying close attention to those who are new to the parish.

The Liturgy & Creative Expression Cluster is working with a Medical Advisory group who will help us navigate next steps very carefully.

The Administration Cluster continues its diligent work around finances and management, paying close attention to revenue and the way revenue connects to pastoral care during these days.

#### **CONCLUDING REMARKS:**

Stuart commended the staff, with special thanks to Cheryl Kelley and the church staff for holding all the pieces together. He made special note of Vestry members who are juggling careers, families and Vestry responsibilities. Both Stuart and Cynthia tied together the observations made by the group tonight, explaining their positions on how the church should function during this time, emphasizing that the *people* take precedent over the *form*.

Dan Scott proposed a 2-or 3-part session on "Meaning," addressing three specific topics: 1) Fruit of the Spirit 2) RZIM Ministries and 3) Worship. "What is my origin?" "My meaning?" "My morality?" "My destiny?"

The virtual meeting was adjourned at 7:41 PM with a closing prayer by Senior Warden Dan Scott.

The next meeting was not scheduled.

Minutes recorded by Rev. Dr. Stuart Higginbotham and Susan Lahey