

Minutes of the 71st Meeting
of
The Episcopal Church of the Nativity, Cedarcroft
February 4, 2018

- I. **Call to Order:** Rector T. Stewart Lucas convened the 71st (and what he said may be “the last official”) Annual Meeting of the Congregation as Nativity alone at 9:30 a.m. with a prayer. The first order of business was the election of a Secretary for the meeting:

MOTION: To elect Jeff Valentine as secretary. **Carried.**

- II. **Approval of Minutes:** The minutes of the 70th Annual Meeting of the Congregation, held February 5, 2017, were approved with one amendment: Change the word “Circus” to “Theatre” under community partnerships.

- III. **Federation:** Fr. Stewart said there was a desire to formalize the partnership of Nativity, Cedarcroft and The Lutheran Church of the Holy Comforter under a governance structure known as a “federation.” Under a federation structure, there would be no need for a separate Vestry and Council to govern the entity. There would be one combined budget rather than separate budgets and no need for separate liability insurance policies.

Fr. Stewart said the Lutheran Synod is underwriting the cost of a consultant – Pastor Jim Cobb, retired pastor of Ascension Lutheran Church in Towson – to develop and negotiate a covenant document outlining the terms of the federation. He noted that our proposed federation would be only the third such partnership ever attempted nationally, adding that “there is no book on how to form a federation, no experts. In fact, we are becoming the experts.”

Discussion: Maria Hardinger expressed concern that forming a federation would mean changes that we may not like. Fr. Stewart said we would continue to be Episcopalians and Lutherans and maintain our integrated worship practices. David Neff questioned how attendance and member giving would be counted as one federated congregation. Fr. Stewart explained how attendance and giving currently are tracked and said the federation will address those issues going forward. Betsy Smith questioned whether the name of the church would change. Fr. Stewart said there is no interest in changing the church’s name or logo. Diane Macklin suggested we should consider whether there is a need to expand the choices of title or denomination from which members can choose in identifying themselves. Fr. Stewart said there is room for that conversation to occur.

- IV. **Amendments to the Church Bylaws:** Fr. Stewart explained that there is a need to reduce the number of members of Nativity’s Vestry and Holy Comforter’s Council, while at the same time complying with the bylaws of both church governing bodies. He said amendments to Nativity’s Vestry bylaws would reduce the size of the Vestry from the current nine to six members.

MOTION: (*Changes in bold*) To amend:

Article II, Section 2. Number and Term of Office. The Vestry of the Church shall consist of the Rector and **six (6)** lay members chosen from among the Voting Members. The Rector shall have only a casting vote in the event of a tie. Of the **six (6)** lay members, **two (2)** shall be elected each year and serve 3-year terms. A lay member shall take office as Vestry member immediately upon election. No lay member shall be eligible for renomination and re-election to the Vestry for a period of one year after the member's term has expired, provided, however, that prior service on the Vestry in filling a vacancy shall not be considered a disqualification for re-election.

Section 8. Quorum and Presiding Officer. **Three (3)** lay Vestry members and the Rector, if present, or **four (4)** lay Vestry members if the Rector is not present, shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting of the Vestry. Officers who are not members of the Vestry shall not be counted for purposes of determining a quorum. The Rector shall preside at all meetings of the Vestry at which the Rector is present. In the absence of the Rector, the Senior Warden, or in the Senior Warden's absence, the Junior Warden, shall preside. The presiding officer may vote only in case of a tie.

Carried.

- V. **Vestry Changes:** The members present expressed appreciation to Michael Eversley, Harold Hardinger and Sarah Knowles, who are finishing three year terms on the Vestry. Fr. Stewart noted that Craig Hart also had resigned as a Vestry member, but he noted that Craig would continue as Junior Warden. He also moved for the election of two new members to the Vestry:
MOTION: To elect Justin Dowding and Lee Smith to serve as members of the Vestry. **Carried.**
- VI. **General Update:** Fr. Stewart said the parochial report to the Episcopal Diocese would register average attendance at Sunday worship just under 100. To date, 47 pledges have been made for approximately \$140,000 for 2018. Looking ahead for the year, he listed the following priorities: 1) evangelism, 2) children's ministry, 3) outreach (or social ministry), 4) publicity, 5) increasing regular church attendance, and 6) music programming. Jeff suggested adding 7) stewardship to the list of priorities. Fr. Stewart also listed the growing number of community partnerships.
- VII. **6112 York Road Building:** Fr. Stewart said State Farm had signed a 10-year lease to occupy the first floor of the office building next door. He called them good neighbors. An additional \$700 to \$1,000 is needed monthly to cover financing and operating costs and taxes. He said Karen Baroody has proposed to use much of the second floor to establish a yoga studio. Another neighbor has proposed to lease space for massage therapy. The vestry has approved expenditures to establish this 'wellness center' for the next year.
- VIII. **Future Building Projects:** Fr. Stewart said further enhancements to the Memorial Garden are envisioned, including installing a plaque with names of those whose ashes are interred in the garden. Also planned is installation of Holy Comforter's former altar rail and making the pulpit movable. Fr. Stewart noted that Holy Comforter had budgeted to bring in a "Lutheran" guest preacher monthly. He said the Diocese also gave a grant \$10,000 for the Rector and leadership to write a book reflecting on the Lutherpalian experience of our partnering congregations. He said he had secured the website www.lutherpalian.org to be used in the future to describe our partnership. The church plans to continue to install high-efficiency lighting as well as additional security cameras.
- IX. **Treasurer's Report:** Nativity Treasurer Rob Sohlberg said there were no major financial issues of concern. Although the 2018 operating budget includes a small "paper" deficit, he said there are sufficient funds available to cover any actual shortfall. Holy Comforter Treasurer Susan Bollinger praised Rob's efforts in protecting Nativity's investments and in simplifying the budget process.
- X. **Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 10:20 a.m., with those in attendance singing The Doxology.