

**St. Alban's Episcopal Church**  
**Minutes of Vestry Meeting, As Approved**  
**Wednesday, October 21, 2020**

**Officers Present:** Geoffrey Hoare (Rector), Ken Patterson (Senior Warden), Trevor (Ted) Swett (Junior Warden), Hollis McLoughlin (Treasurer) and Carol A. Aschenbrener (Secretary).

**Members Present:** Carol A. Aschenbrener, Paul Brewster, Walker Carter, Leo Coco, Rachel Colson, Glenn Davis, Lisa Garnett, Megan King, Barbara Manard, Josepha Musabyemariya Nelson, Dudley Winthrop. **Youth representatives:** Annie McLean, Ruthie Rhodes.

**Members not Present:** Karina Rodriguez.

**Staff Members Present:** Jim Quigley, Emily Griffin and Yoimel González Hernández (Associate Rectors), Doug Dykstra (Director of Finance).

**Others Present:** Robin Rudd (WSA ).

**Call to Order:** Rector Geoffrey Hoare called the meeting to order via Zoom conference call at approximately 6:37 PM and led the vestry in prayer.

**Opening Meditation:** Vestry member Barbara Manard opened with a moving and thought-provoking reflection on “pandemic transformation.” As pandemic-related restrictions prompted changes for gathering at St. Alban’s and put a pause on many activities, Barbara turned her attention to organizing the multi-generational family archive entrusted to her. Sorting through memorabilia of her southern heritage, she found letters of ancestors who fought in the Confederate Army and a large painted portrait of one who was a Confederate officer. As she reconciled these aspects of her family history with her feelings about the murder of George Floyd and the statements of support for Black Lives Matter by our church leaders, Barbara kept letters and photos and decided that the portrait, a family “Confederate monument,” should never be hung again. She voiced hope that her family would “keep loving the people but not our sins.”

Barbara also reported that 2020 will be a transition year for redesigning the Parochial Reports required by the Episcopal Church. Narrative questions will be added to allow churches to report “opportunities, innovations and challenges” and describe the less qualitative ways they are serving God and community. She noted that there has been a steady decline in Sunday attendance nationally over the past decade. St. Alban’s hit a nadir in 2016, then turned things around with a 15% increase in Sunday attendance by 2019. For the first two months of 2020, we averaged 348 people for Sunday services, counting English and Spanish services. This is an 8% increase over the same period in 2019.

**Approval of Minutes of Regular Meeting:** Upon motion seconded, the Vestry approved the minutes of its regularly scheduled meeting held on September 16, 2020.

**[Vestry Action 2020.9-1]**

**Treasurer's Report:** Treasurer Hollis McLoughlin announced that St. Alban's is on track for both pledge payments and expenses to bring the calendar year to a close at, or very close to, budget. He cautioned that while St. Alban's continues to enjoy financial stability, we are facing some major issues for the future. First, the church normally maintains a reserve fund of around \$600,000 to assure liquidity during unexpected events and to meet expenses during the usual cash flow fluctuations of the year. Pandemic-related disruptions of some sources of cash, coupled with pandemic-related expenses, has resulted in a decrease in the reserve fund to around \$376,000 as of this date. While this does not constitute an emergency, the vestry will need to consider how to replenish the reserve fund. The second major issue will be dealing with the significant expenditures related to re-opening safely. While we still await final estimates, these expenses will definitely be in the seven-figure range. On the positive side, the endowment fund continues to do well in the market upswings.

Upon motion seconded, the Treasurer's Report was adopted.

**[Vestry Action 2020.9-2]**

**Discussion: How are we doing on the vital signs of parish health?** Geoffrey facilitated a vestry discussion on the seven Vital Signs of Parish Health that are markers for the diocesan's parish revitalization strategy. The seven markers are: Compelling mission and vision, Clear discipleship path, Uplifting and inviting worship, Welcoming and connecting ministries, Blessing our community, Faithful financial practices, Inspiring and capable leadership. The vestry identified worship, faithful financial practices and parish leadership as particular strengths, complimenting the rector and clergy on the latter. St. Alban's is strong on all worship metrics and, thanks to music director Matthew Steynor, our online services continue to include fine music. The pandemic has highlighted the challenges in achieving our vision of "one congregation in two languages." In general, our Spanish-speaking members have been more affected by the economic consequences of pandemic and the inability to gather in groups and their attendance at online worship has been low. On the positive side, Geoffrey noted that there are "tons of people looking for an outlet to give help." We do have a clear path for discipleship (Inquirer's Class -Bible Study -Reflection) that is continuing online. The pandemic restrictions have had greatest impact on connecting within our church community and partnering for the welfare of our neighborhood. Rev. Quigley encouraged all to explore the "vital signs" document at <https://www.edow.org/congregational-vitality/revitalization/vital-signs-of-parish-health>.

**Rector's Report:** Geoffrey commented that the recently initiated open air services are going well, with 3 services in English and one in Spanish held in the columbarium, with the church (English) and Nourse (Spanish) as back-up site for inclement weather. Services are currently limited to twenty people at each. A second outdoor service for up to 100 people will be held at 9 AM on Sunday, November 8. He announced that around 10 people from the Senior Youth and adult inquirers' classes will be presented to the Bishop at an outdoor Confirmation service in the

amphitheater on October 31 at 11AM, weather permitting. The biweekly Zoom coffee hours continue to attract about twenty parishioners for lively conversation.

Geoffrey shared the sad news that, as a consequence of pandemic-related suspension of city support for community lunch programs, Iona Senior Services has officially suspended the Senior Lunch Program until further notice. He will so notify the parish in a letter this week. The history of St. Alban's senior lunch and education program antedates the valued collaboration with Iona Senior Services and vestry will explore options for continuing the program once we can safely re-open our buildings.

**Junior Warden's Report:** Junior Warden Ted Swett reminded the vestry that the range hood in Satterlee kitchen does not meet current standards and cannot be certified under current codes. Replacement of the range hood is a complex job requiring customized design and engineering, in addition to the demolition of the existing system and installation of a new one. St. Alban's has received a proposal from Harvey W. Hottel, Inc. with price guarantee for 30 days; once initiated, the work is expected to take six weeks.

Pursuant to a resolution passed by the vestry on November 15, 2017, St. Alban's generally requires at least two competing bids for projects costing more than \$10,000 "unless the nature of the project (e.g. highly specialized or emergency) makes doing so impracticable, in which case the decision should be memorialized and reported to the vestry." [Vestry Action 2017-11.03]

The Executive Committee recommends that the kitchen hood replacement project be exempted from this requirement and that St. Alban's move ahead with the Hottel proposal of October 13, 2020 on a sole-source basis. This is a highly specialized and complex project that requires engineering, design and installation skills rarely found together in a single contractor. Hottel appears uniquely qualified. The Executive Committee has ascertained that Hottel is highly reputable and considers the price quoted to be reasonable.

The Executive Committee presented a resolution that the Hottel proposal be exempted from the usual requirement for the parish to obtain two bids for any project involving expense of more than \$10,000. The proposal will not be formally accepted and no contractual obligation will be incurred until the Executive Committee presents the vestry with a specific plan for funding the project and the vestry approves such plan. The resolution was approved unanimously.

**[Vestry Action 2020.9-3]**

Ted also reported that we have received two very different bids for bringing the HVAC system up to standards for air flow and air exchanges, an essential upgrade for re-opening the buildings safely. Once a contract is let, the work is estimated to take 22-23 weeks.

**Senior Warden's Report:** Senior Warden Ken Patterson provided a detailed written report on START team activities and highlighted updates since the September vestry meeting. He thanked the subgroup chairs, volunteers, clergy and staff for their many contributions to developing a plan for re-opening our buildings safely.

**Report on the Annual Appeal:** Vestry members Rachel Colson and Lisa Garnett reported that the pledge campaign is going well after being launched in late September with an initial round of calls by vestry members, officers, clergy and volunteers to those who pledged in 2020. Stewardship testimonials will be included in all virtual worship services during October. Pledges are on track with where the campaign stood at this time in 2019. Additional outreach by email and phone is planned for the coming weeks. Vestry members commended Lisa for the unexpected courtesy of her handwritten acknowledgments of their pledges.

**Other Reports:** A number of other reports were received by the vestry. The Reverends Emily Griffin and Yoimel González Hernández provided an update on children's formation and youth ministry, respectively. They partnered with Barbara Manard to offer youth and families with young children the opportunity to make based meals for Grate Patrol and 140 bags were distributed on October 9. Together, Yoimel and Emily have created record opportunities for Spanish-speaking parishioners to worship at home.

After closing prayers, the vestry went into executive session at 8:02 PM.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:09 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol A. Aschenbrener  
Secretary