

The Vestry was called to order at 7:00 pm, once a quorum (2/3) was present.

Attendance

Nicholas Morris-Kliment (Rector)	X	Dusty Hecker (Warden)	X	Brian Mukherjee (Warden)	X	Vacant (Treasurer)	
Duncan Allen	X (zoom)	Jim Black	X (zoom)	Bob Begin	X	David Carnahan (Clerk)	X(zoom)
John Carr		Bob Keener	X	Ingrid Melvin	X (zoom)	Ginny Yerardi	X (zoom)
Annie Russell	X (zoom)	Alyssa Kence	X	Joe Sweeney	X (Zoom)	Christina O’Connell	X
Cecile Leroy	X (zoom)						

Opening Prayers - John Carr lead us in Evening Prayer

The Rector’s review:

1. Updates, Overall Picture:

Overall there has been a reasonably solid start to what we used to call the “program year.” Combined in-person and on-line attendance does seem light, though perhaps expected in this in-between time. A number of new households have engaged us—single, older adults, as well as a family with kids still living at home. We have followed the diocesan policy mandating masks at all times during worship, except for preaching, presiding, and lectoring, which are done from a safe distance from the congregation. Our broadcast technology is doing well, with good quality visual and audio output. Our musicians are sounding beautiful. We have had a reasonably good response for volunteers for ushering and lectoring. Coffee hour remains something of a challenge, and I am working to get another digital verger or two to help out on Sunday mornings. With the exception of our Church School (for kids pre-K through 7 grade) our formation offerings for all ages are happening or taking shape. Wednesday Bible Study has been meeting in a hybrid format in the morning, and on Zoom in the evening; Youth Group and Confirmation class are taking shape (see below). Our Racial Justice Initiative has spent much time crafting and recrafting a statement for the Vestry to consider adopting for the parish. On a financial note, as of October 1, our leased spaces are nearly fully occupied, bringing in roughly \$80k per year (once Storytime Crafts begins paying in April), very nearly on par with pre-pandemic numbers when Expressions, our biggest tenant, was paying its full rent. This is apart from donations received from a variety of community-nonprofits who use our spaces. Duncan will have a brief overview of our YTD financials at the meeting. The office staff is working well together to support the mission and ministry of the parish.

Here are a few more in-depth looks at some of the above items.

2. Ministry with Children, Youth, and Family

I am happy to report activity for the older kids in the parish. **CCN senior high schoolers** Katie Lysaght and Kathryn Mukherjee have solicited text addresses from older youth in the parish in preparation for gathering them together for acts of service. Kim Lysaght has been providing adult support. Possibilities include Cityreach at our Cathedral (a highly structured overnight experience, based at St. Paul’s in Boston, with people experiencing homelessness) as well as Build a Bed (an offering of the Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless) for children. While this is not the same as having a HS Youth group, it remains a hopeful sign of the Spirit in our midst. Brian added that the Youth Group’s first meeting will be this Thursday at the Lysaght’s house.

In addition, we have gathered a **Confirmation Class** of nine young people, almost evenly divided between boys and girls, ranging in age from 7th to 9th grade. Kevin Ruddy has graciously agreed to help me run this class; parents will also play an important role in the success of this venture. The goal, in addition to firming up a foundation for a life-long Christian journey, is preparation for a TBD Confirmation Service in the late spring of 2022.

For **Church School** aged kids (pre-K to 7th grade) we have yet to settle on concrete offerings, aside from quasi-monthly outdoor events, in part because it has been a challenge to gather together teachers who feel comfortable teaching indoors in our spaces. The promising approach of vaccines for kids under 12 will be a help in bringing families and teachers back together for this age group.

I am bringing back a more regular weekly eBlast to families with children still at home to maintain connections. Our most recent edition, timed to go out at 7am Friday morning, chalked up a 40% open rate, which is the same as our weekly all-parish eblasts. I am working with teachers to figure out ways to offer our younger kids a program of substance. At this point we do not have a regular, point-person volunteer to help organize alternative Church School offerings.

3. Stewardship

I am happy to share that good news the Jean McCarthy and Kim Rocco will be co-chairing our **Annual Appeal** this fall, with kick-off on October 31. We are finalizing the theme this week. We will combine US mail and on line features in the campaign as we did last year, tailoring our message to the varying patterns of giving in the parish—those who have pledged, those who have given but not pledged, those who are not “known to the Treasurer.” It is a great confidence builder to the parish to be able to announce to the congregation that there is 100% participation from the Vestry. Kim may be able to Zoom in to join us at this month’s meeting. Jean is previously engaged. I am grateful for their leadership.

4. Parochial Reports and Our Future

The National Parochial Report of the Episcopal Church was released last week. This is the data gathered from the 2020 Parochial Reports filed by the 6000+ parishes, chaplaincies, and missions in the Episcopal Church. Here is the link: <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/publicaffairs/episcopal-church-2020-parochial-report-data-now-available/> We can see the sobering trends of the wider Church reflected at Christ Church. COVID has accelerated some of these trends, particularly with regard to attendance, and engagement with families with kids still living at home. COVID has given us an opportunity to re-engage our purpose in this almost post-pandemic moment. Thus, after conversation with the Wardens, it is a good time to invite the Vestry to participate in a tool called the **Congregational Vitality Assessment**, a data-driven instrument sponsored by Faith X and the Episcopal Church Foundation. This will allow us to get a snapshot of where we are as a Christian community and to start to discern ways to grab onto the movement of the Holy Spirit to refresh us for mission in Needham and beyond. A member of the FaithX team will help us interpret the results at our November Vestry meeting and give us options for further coaching and guidance. The link to the survey will come to you after our October Vestry meeting.

5. Sabbatical

I am making plans for my sabbatical next summer (2022), delayed from the summer of 2021. At this point, it will be from mid May to mid August, and will include travel with family, some choral singing, and time in

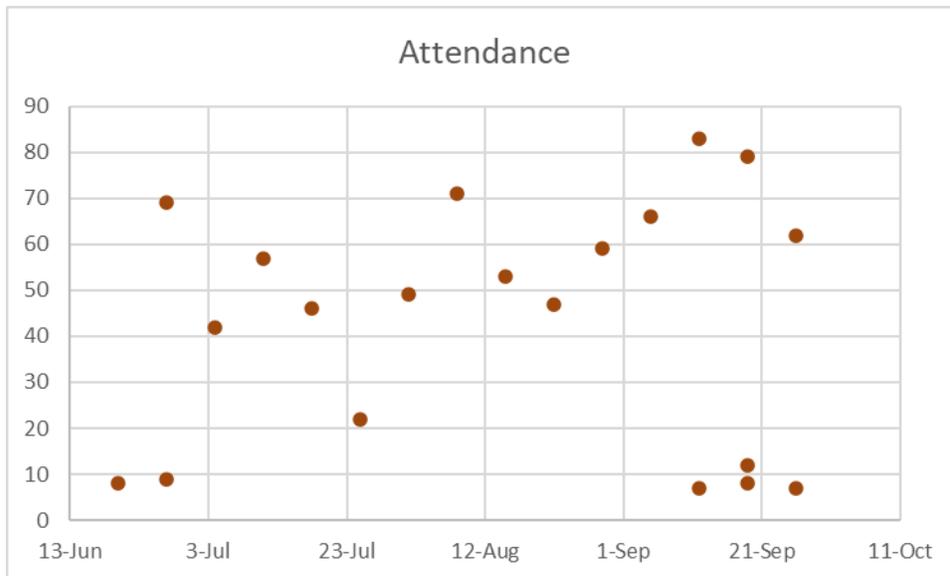
Maine. I am in conversation with a seasoned priest who will serve the parish while I am away. I will be working with a small group to advise me as I make these plans.

6. A Brief, Autumn 2021 Summary

The picture of our life together in Christ is a both/and picture. For example: attendance at Sunday worship seems down; *and* we have a healthy confirmation class teed up *and* the building is humming during the week with activity of community groups. The results of our Annual Appeal will not be known for months *and* the Vestry has taken strong steps to ensure the sturdiness of our newly replenished investments and directed them to mission connected purposes; our congregation is aging *and* we continue to have families interested in baptism. We haven't used our big kitchen in over a year and a half; *and* we have fed our hungry neighbors at MANNA without skipping a beat. We continue to rely appreciatively on a small number of long-time volunteers to make worship happen *and* three quarters (9 of 12) of you, our Vestry, have never served on our Vestry before; of these nine, six have never served on a Vestry *anywhere*. New leadership is coming to the fore. I am grateful.

All of this means that we have what need to move into the future. In this moment in history, when the ground is shifting under our feet, we are being invited by the Spirit to think outside the box, to reimagine and reengage who we are and what we are called to do and be as Jesus followers at Christ Church, in Needham and beyond. The parish and I are deeply indebted to you for your time, wisdom, and action.

Attendance



Early September attendance was good, slightly up from the summer.

Stewardship:

Notes: In our call this year, each pledge will be called an "estimate of giving".

Parochial Reports/Congregational Vitality Assessment

Nick reports that the congregational vitality assessment is a good tool. The consultant who will review its findings with us comes to us with good recommendations. We will get a link to this survey shortly. Another 10 key lay leaders will also be asked to take this survey.

Nick read his letter and Pam Goody's letter to the congregation announcing that Pam will retire on Jan 9, 2022. Her departure is partly a result of our restructuring of the budget for music, and also in part her interest in retirement. Charles Raines will take on the music director role for the remainder of the program year. We will have a festive goodbye with a purse to offer on that date. We will also explore building a youth choir in the fall.

Finances

Duncan reports that we are healthier than expected, as a result of sales of stocks that were 'discovered' this year. Rentals have been strong, as we made conservative estimates for this income last year.

John Carr reminded us that we were considering a Church University- fundraiser program, and will look into that again.

Third Quarter 2021 for Vestry 10/19/2021	Q3 Budget	Q3 Actual	2021 Annual Budget	2021 EOY Projection
Offerings				
Pledge Income	\$ 229,705	\$ 234,514	\$ 331,565	\$ 325,000
Regular Operating Support	\$ 19,393	\$ 19,865	\$ 31,625	\$ 32,395
Loose Plate	\$ 660	\$ 789	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,391
Christmas & Easter Offerings	\$ 1,200	\$ 2,715	\$ 4,000	\$ 5,500
Donations/Gifts	\$ 3,156	\$ 1,080	\$ 15,000	\$ 5,133
Music Leader Donations	\$ -	\$ 2,000	\$ -	\$ 2,000
Flowers	\$ -	\$ 2,874	\$ -	\$ 3,640
Summer Music	\$ -	\$ 1,060	\$ -	\$ 1,060
Other (misc & reimbursed processing costs)	\$ -	\$ 240	\$ -	\$ 240
Investment Income				
Facility Rental Income	\$ 44,881	\$ 48,281	\$ 53,000	\$ 63,000
Endowment Income	\$ 31,806	\$ 34,075	\$ 42,409	\$ 42,409
SUBTOTAL REVENUES	\$ 330,801	\$ 347,493	\$ 479,599	\$ 482,768

Third Quarter 2021 for Vestry 10/19/2021	Q3 Budget	Q3 Actual	2021 Annual Budget	2021 EOY Projection
Operations & Education	\$ -			
Child Care	\$ 100	\$ -	\$ 400	\$ -
Family Ministries	\$ 655	\$ 147	\$ 1,050	\$ 236
Adult Education	\$ 110	\$ 24	\$ 150	\$ 33
Holy Grounds	\$ 160	\$ -	\$ 400	\$ 240
Music	\$ 650	\$ 635	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000
Music Section Leaders	\$ 8,699	\$ 8,880	\$ 12,300	\$ 12,300
Office Supplies & Expense	\$ 7,067	\$ 3,639	\$ 5,550	\$ 2,858
Vestry	\$ 800	\$ 100	\$ 800	\$ 100
Postage	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,105	\$ 1,300	\$ 1,437
Stewardship & Planned Giving	\$ -	\$ 33	\$ -	\$ 250
Telephone	\$ 2,250	\$ 2,715	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,500
Travel	\$ 900	\$ 1,504	\$ 1,200	\$ 2,700
Treasurer	\$ 11,473	\$ 8,114	\$ 15,500	\$ 11,714
Worship	\$ 2,050	\$ 2,101	\$ 2,500	\$ 2,562
Altar Guild	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Flowers	\$ -	\$ 3,164	\$ -	\$ 4,000
Sundry - Clergy	\$ 350	\$ 73	\$ 500	\$ 104
Technology	\$ 2,190	\$ 2,044	\$ 3,000	\$ 2,800
Communications	\$ 930	\$ 913	\$ 1,550	\$ 1,522
Fellowship	\$ 1,050	\$ 388	\$ 2,000	\$ 739
Outreach	\$ -			
Community Concerns	\$ 6,000	\$ 11,900	\$ 12,000	\$ 12,000
Parish Partnership (Haiti)	\$ 2,000	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,000
Payroll/ Taxes/ Insurance/ Pension				
Payroll Expense	\$ 105,487	\$ 108,481	\$ 142,352	\$ 146,392
Housing Allowance	\$ 26,220	\$ 22,860	\$ 34,962	\$ 30,482
Taxes - Payroll	\$ 4,687	\$ 4,798	\$ 6,308	\$ 6,457
Insurance - Health	\$ 11,025	\$ 10,081	\$ 14,700	\$ 14,700
Church Pension Premiums	\$ 13,168	\$ 16,707	\$ 17,560	\$ 22,279
Continuing Education (Clergy)	\$ 700	\$ 1,250	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,500
Property Improvements & Maintenance				
Building Repairs	\$ 4,754	\$ 3,144	\$ 6,700	\$ 5,090
Property Improvements	\$ 7,768	\$ -	\$ 10,360	\$ -
19 Homestead	\$ -	\$ 8,768		\$ 8,768
Building Maintenance	\$ 21,821	\$ 6,811	\$ 26,000	\$ 10,991
Grounds	\$ 11,243	\$ 18,655	\$ 14,000	\$ 21,750
Building Supplies	\$ 3,026	\$ 1,004	\$ 4,100	\$ 1,360
Cleaning Service	\$ 8,848	\$ 3,782	\$ 11,800	\$ 5,044
Electricity	\$ 3,100	\$ 4,152	\$ 4,200	\$ 5,625
Heat (fuel - oil & gas)	\$ 9,076	\$ 12,874	\$ 13,500	\$ 19,149
Insurance - General	\$ 22,313	\$ 20,047	\$ 29,750	\$ 26,729
Copier	\$ 3,264	\$ 3,584	\$ 4,400	\$ 4,831
Sewer & Water	\$ 2,365	\$ 2,348	\$ 3,200	\$ 3,177
Diocesan Assessment				
Diocesan Assessment	\$ 50,339	\$ 10,602	\$ 67,119	\$ 67,119
Contingency	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Repay Green Loan	\$ 4,148	\$ 4,289	\$ 5,531	\$ 5,710
SUBTOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 361,786	\$ 314,716	\$ 484,742	\$ 470,249
Surplus (Deficit)			\$ (5,143)	\$ 12,519

Racial Justice Initiative statement

Bob Keener reported on the group's activities, and has returned with a revised position statement.

Our Position on Racial Justice

In August of 2020, the Vestry of Christ Church Needham approved a resolution acknowledging the inequity of racism and charging our parish to respond, "beyond our convenience to love our neighbors as ourselves." The resolution included commitments to learn about racism and engage in anti-racist actions and practices. (See the full text of the resolution below.)

The Racial Justice Initiative (RJI) was subsequently formed to consider the resolution and identify ways that members of the parish might deal with issues of racial justice as Christians and as concerned members of Christ Church. The RJI has worked to craft a message that reflects our church's commitment to matters of racial justice. With approval by the Vestry, this statement is an important starting point for our church and is intended to help us develop strategies that provide direction and accountability for who we are, what we believe and what we do as followers of Jesus to combat racism in our community.

As followers of Jesus and members of the parish of Christ Church:

- We acknowledge that even after the abolition of slavery, racial minorities have suffered from patterns of racism, both intentional and systemic, throughout the history of our country. These patterns of racism are self-perpetuating, contributing to inequities in opportunities, wealth and power, generation after generation.
- We recognize that these widespread patterns of racist behavior continue, both intentionally and unintentionally, in many aspects of our society including policing, housing, education, employment and the environment. We believe this is wrong.
- We strive to be anti-racist in our collective, personal and spiritual lives. This includes identifying and working to change implicit and unconscious biases within ourselves and others. We will also work with others in our community to encourage action toward racial justice.
- We believe that truly loving our neighbor requires fully recognizing the humanity in all people. We believe this calls for the recognition and redress of past harms, the steady effort to make change, and the commitment to ongoing, respectful, honest dialogue to confront unpleasant truths and help promote racial equity.

RJI acknowledges this statement is long overdue and will be most impactful and meaningful when we are able to integrate it into our life as a Church community. Since we know that there may be differences of opinion about such a statement, we commit to the hard work of understanding our differences while also staying committed to the practice of loving our neighbor as ourselves as Jesus teaches.

The Vestry had a discussion about these issues, coming from a variety of viewpoints. Everyone spoke, though it is hard to capture what everyone said. Christina noted that Carter Methodist's website has a page that directs viewers to resources for further reflection and action. Joe and Jim objected to the more political statements within. Bob heard these varied opinions, and noted that the group focused on this issue among the many issues facing us today, and strived to find language that would reflect how Jesus would teach us if he

could speak to the issue today. Nick noted that we are trying to be a-political, and that Jesus was killed by the Romans-essentially a political event. Ingrid noted that she had seen succinct, less divisive language elsewhere that focuses on how we guide ourselves forward. Alyssa suggested that the first line of the fourth bullet is a noncontroversial position, and is part of our Christian belief, and that the Parish could adopt that, and that the committee could have additional positions. Ginny agreed with Alyssa, and recognized that each of us will be on different pages, and are evolving, so a more noncontroversial statement is likely to be widely accepted. Annie also discussed that each of us have a different view of what a 'systemic' problem may be. She added that accepting that racism exists is worthwhile, but the most important thing is to meet others in love. Cecile noted that the language has buzzwords that are highly charged. Brian responded that the group used 'systemic' because the historical patterns showed more than simple personal interactions, but instead showed practices that were discriminatory. He continued to say that we must acknowledge the historical patterns that have brought us to where we are today. Dusty then reviewed that as many warts as we have as a country, we are wildly better than we were 25, 50 or 100 years ago, so we have not recognized the progress that has been made on the issue. Dusty reads the term 'anti-racism' may be read as preferential. Nick closed with the question, "What would you sacrifice to follow Jesus in the realm of race relations?" and that we should reflect on that until the next meeting. Bob will return it to the committee and consider these inputs.

Parking Lot/Other Business

none

Prayer and Adjourn (9:00)

Dates

Sunday, October 24th, **1 service @ 10am**—Memorial Organ Dedication
Sunday, October 31st, All Saints' Sunday, Annual Appeal Kick-Off
Sunday, November 7th, First Sunday in Advent Baptism at 10am;
Lighting of the Advent Tree @ 4pm
Tuesday, November 16th, Vestry, 7pm
Sunday, December 5th, Annual Appeal Ingathering
Sunday, December 12th, Advent Evensong 4pm
Tuesday, December 21st, Vestry, 7pm

Minutes taken by David L. Carnahan, Clerk of the Vestry



October 19, 2021