Rector's Reflections

This isn’t quite the fall we all expected. Or summer. Or spring. But here we are, the page for September open in the calendar, and like me you might be wondering where exactly the last six months have gone. Even though our parish buildings have been mostly closed during this time, it has been a busy season at St. Mary’s. By the time we are able to gather together in person again (though we don’t yet know when that will be), the parish hall will have newly renovated bathrooms, our organ will have been returned to its original glory after an extensive restoration of pipework and mechanical aspects, and we will all be able to appreciate the beauty of our community even more because of our long absence from each other.

Absence makes the heart grow fonder, it is said, and I find this to be particularly true on my regular visits to the church building– the smell of prayer books, hymnals, and sun-warmed wooden pews in the sanctuary, the whiff of stored incense that greets me in the sacristy, the patches of colored light reflected through the windows– all of this takes on a dearer significance these days. I even find myself missing our sweaty summer masses!

I’ve always reveled in the privilege of having keys to this beautiful place, being able to sit in the sanctuary by myself and pray and wonder any time, day or night, and whenever I do find myself alone in that beautiful, holy space I can’t help but give thanks for all the generations who have worshiped there before us, and pray for all of the members of our community right now dispersed. Now that I have a few years in my tenure as your rector, I have my own memories of celebrations and feast days with all of you in this space (as well as the boring old everyday moments– like sitting in the back pew late on the first Thursday we offered Candlelight Compline, wondering if anyone would show up, or moving chairs in the All Saints Chapel to prepare for a bible study.)

(Continued next page.)
A crusty old canon in a former diocese was wont to say, when some priest colleague bemoaned the expensive masonry or roof repair they’d just found out their parish needed, or tower bells that needed stabilizing, or some other of the regular catastrophic projects required by centuries old buildings, “If Saint Paul taught us anything it is that the walls of our churches could crumble around us, and the Church would still be standing!” It usually was sufficient to remind us all of the beautiful and sacred duty that had been entrusted to us to shepherd God’s beloved people (and it shut down our whining!), and refocused us on what the work of the Church truly is—yes, we are charged with being stewards of our holy spaces, and we cannot neglect the day to day responsibilities of maintenance— but the first work we are called to as a Christian community is praise our Lord without ceasing, and reflect the love of Christ to one another and into our community. This is why I know we will not just survive, but thrive, after this time of separation: because God is in our hearts and on our side as we continue to do the holy work of serving Christ in the world. Gorgeous, clean bathrooms and a working organ are simply a bonus!

In Christ,

Mariclair+

The Rev. Mariclair Partee Carlsen  |  rector@stmarysatpenn.org

Stewardship

In just a few weeks it will be time again to prayerfully consider your pledges for 2021, and this will be a stewardship season unlike any other. The Vestry and Clergy of the parish are mindful that some in our number have lost jobs or seen their employment reduced during this time, and many more might be uncertain about what is to come economically. At the same time, our annual parish budget relies in part on revenue streams we know will simply not exist for the duration of this pandemic, such as space use fees for classes, clubs, and gatherings in our parish hall and concerts and events in our sanctuary. We have been fortunate in receiving grants through the diocese as well as government programs to close the gap for 2020, and will explore every avenue for reapplication as needed. I can say, though, that although the coronavirus pandemic has tested our resources, it has not tested our faith. We remain strong and resilient as a Church and as a community of neighbors. Thank you!

Our stewardship and our mission this coming year will be more focused on new ways of doing service in the name of Christ than ever. As we have experienced these months of not being able to gather in person, our weekly worship was spread throughout the week as we have found ways to gather virtually, taking more time to pray for each other’s needs and serve our communities.
Where other churches have had to close their doors entirely, we have had the opportunity to host an extra night every week as a meal distribution site for the University City Hospitality Coalition, ensuring that our neighbors don’t go hungry during an already uncertain time. Many of you are using this time to discover, hone, and put to use the gifts you have received from our Creator God and to serve one another.

I have witnessed the countless ways that you have used your resources so far for the mission of the Church and to help each other. I have found it inspiring and hopeful as we plan our work together in 2021. This coming year, we will explore the way that our generosity is inspired by our faith, how we are formed and led into relationship with each other as we share our gifts with the world. How will you discover and use the gifts you have been given to help our church this year? How will you hear the Gospel call to seek and serve Christ in all people, and respond with generosity? As I look at every member of our community, I am reminded that we are the stewards of God’s manifold grace because we give to the world from what we have received.

This year, your stewardship committee will be sending you a letter with your pledge form, and members of our community will share their own St. Mary’s stories of stewardship, as usual. What will be different is that we will celebrate the faithful generosity of our congregation virtually, looking forward to when we are able to safely gather again. The basis of Christian stewardship is that we give back from the bounty that has been given us, as an act of thanksgiving and praise to God. Some strive to tithe 10%, all give what we are able to, and in that all give generously. As you consider your pledge for 2021, join your clergy and vestry members in offering to God the first fruits of our labor, each as we are able. Thank you to all who have kept up with your pledges and other offerings to St. Mary’s over the last six months!

Mariclair+

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**Fall Parish Survey**

You will be receiving a parish survey via email the first week of September. Please take the time to respond, as we are using the data gathered through it to supplement the offerings of virtual worship and Christian formation from the parish clergy, as well as to guide the work of the Reopening Planning Committee. If you would prefer a paper copy of the survey, please contact our Parish administrator, Brittany Holdahl, at (215) 386-3916 or administrator@stmarysatpenn.org and she will send one to you via mail, and include a stamped envelope for its return to the parish. Hearty thanks to Cassandra Royall, Janet Deatrick, Jonathan Ashton, and the parish clergy for the work they continue to do to plan reopening of our sanctuary and parish for safe in-person worship.

Additional info can be found on the next page!
PARISH SURVEY

TAKE SURVEY

PLEASE SUBMIT BY THURS, SEPT 10TH

OVER THE PAST MONTHS A GROUP OF LAY LEADERS AND YOUR CLERGY HAVE BEEN MEETING TO STUDY DIOCESAN, LOCAL, AND STATE REGULATIONS AND CDC RECOMMENDATIONS, MONITOR LOCAL COVID-19 DATA, AND PLAN A PATH FOR REOPENING OUR PARISH FOR IN-PERSON GATHERINGS.

The survey below will help us navigate worship, advocacy, and activism offerings moving forward. Your responses will help us shape the worship and formation opportunities that best suit the needs of our congregation in this unique time. Please contact Brittany at administrator@stmarysatpenn.org with any questions or if you experience any difficulty submitting your responses.

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS SURVEY!

BIT.LY/FALL2020STMARYSSURVEY
Sacred Ground
A Film-Based Dialogue Series on Race & Faith

Sacred Ground is a film- and readings-based dialogue series on race, grounded in faith. Small groups are invited to walk through chapters of America’s history of race and racism, while weaving in threads of family story, economic class, and political and regional identity. The 10-part series is built around a powerful online curriculum of documentary films and readings that focus on Indigenous, Black, Latino, and Asian/Pacific American histories as they intersect with European American histories. Sacred Ground is part of Becoming Beloved Community, The Episcopal Church’s long-term commitment to racial healing, reconciliation, and justice in our personal lives, our ministries, and our society. This series is open to all, and especially designed to help white people talk with other white people. Participants are invited to peel away the layers that have contributed to the challenges and divides of the present day— all while grounded in our call to faith, hope and love.

This Fall, we will be starting our first Sacred Ground dialogue group at St. Mary’s, using the curriculum developed by our Presiding Bishop’s office.

Small groups are invited to walk through chapters of America’s history of race and racism, while weaving in threads of family story, economic class, and political and regional identity.

The series meets every two weeks. We anticipate that we would start in the third week of September, to give participants enough time to prepare for the first session.

Participants are registered and given a login so that they can access the required films and most of the reading at no cost. Two core books are used for the series: Jesus and the Disinherited by Howard Thurman, and Waking Up White, And Finding Myself in the Story of Race by Debby Irving.

These can be purchased in hard copy or e-book through Amazon, and both are available through the Free Library of Philadelphia. If you would like to participate but ordering the books is a burden, contact Mother Mariclair for copies.

You can find a lengthier explanation of the program and its aims at: episcopalchurch.org/sacred-ground/invitation

and the ten session syllabus here: https://episcopalchurch.org/files/sacred_ground_syllabus.pdf

If you would like to know more about the program or want to sign up for the September group, please contact Mother Mariclair directly: rector@stmarysatpenn.org
Dear Brothers and Sisters,

During a series of Zoom conference on Advocacy that I recently attended, our Presiding Bishop, Michael Curry, proclaimed: *Advocacy is a Spiritual Discipline!* *Advocacy is the work of love!* *The Spirit of God is Advocacy!* In the Gospel of John (14:26), Jesus refers to the Holy Spirit as our Advocate. Jesus was “political” (he was living in the oppressive Roman Empire) and all through the Gospels, we experience him advocating for those who were the outsiders and not in the mainstream of society.

We of the Episcopal Church are blessed because we have national organizations that spearhead our advocacy efforts: The Episcopal Public Policy Network, one of our national organizations, partners with the Episcopal News Service to support local parishes in their ministries related to social justice and peace. Episcopal Migration Ministries lives our call to welcome strangers by supporting refugees, immigrants, and their communities. These organizations also collaborate with our Lutheran brothers and sisters in their national advocacy efforts: the Lutheran Office for Public Policy.

In addition, Episcopal Relief & Development works in collaboration with church partners and other local organizations to facilitate healthier, more fulfilling lives in communities that are struggling with hunger, poverty, disaster and disease, both here in the United States and around the world. They work alongside participants regardless of religious affiliation or background. All of these organizations have lobbyists in DC who advocate to members of Congress.

In the Diocese of Pennsylvania, Episcopal Community Services (ECS), has changed its focus over the past few years from providing services to promoting advocacy. Their primary goal is to end poverty by advocating for a living wage and ending the “benefits cliff.” This “cliff” penalizes people who advance to a higher salary, thereby cutting off their eligibility for benefits they had been receiving. In reality, this lowers their income and crushes their hope for a better future.

If you remember, a few weeks before the corona virus assaulted us, we had started partnering with ECS with advocacy postcard mailings. Presently, ECS is developing a digital advocacy tool which will provide a direct link that automatically sends emails about critical and current issues to our congressional representatives. In addition, ECS meets with local, state, and federal legislators to advocate for people affected by inequities. ECS will host an online Forum on Justice and Opportunity late in October. Several of you have attended in the past few years and I hope more of you can attend this year (for more information and sign up, see our weekly e-blast).

St. Mary’s is blessed by its history of advocating for civil rights, LBGTQ rights, and for other marginalized people. We as Christians are called to continue this work. As someone in the conference pointed out, we can never let up: advocacy work is a marathon, not a sprint. The grace God bestows on us frees us to be servants to all of our marginalized and binds us in Christ to all of our neighbors.

Peace and blessings,
The Rev. Deacon Barbara Tobin  |  deacon@stmarysatpenn.org
Hello, St. Marians! Welcome to our Fall 2020 newsletter! Admittedly, it has been a challenging few months for all of us. As a huge extrovert, I’ve been struggling with stagnation and solitude quite a bit, but there have still been some very wonderful things that have happened in these unprecedented times and community activism and advocacy has been so inspiring!

We all continue to navigate this landscape to create a new, kinder "normal" which has resulted in accessible and innovative options for so many who have been left out. It's been a great time for introspection as well: We've been recognizing the things that are most important to us, reflecting, and meditating. This past August marked two years for me at St. Mary's, two years in my home with my partner: It's been so wonderful to revisit these memories and they alone gave me hope for our city and community post-COVID. And then my best friend of ten years and partner of five asked me to marry him in late August. Since this happened, my sense of hope has gone through the roof!

In isolation, I thought I'd revisit some poetry. The above Emily Dickinson quote resonated with me. It speaks to the idea that hope is ever-constant, but the happy resolution of that hope can only come with our action. Thank you all for your patience, innovation, and compassion as our community experiments with different ways to remotely reach out and engage. I can hardly wait to see all of you once it is safe to meet again in person. Until we can meet again, I hope you'll continue to join us for our daily remote worship services, for Sunday morning prayer with sermon and music, and our Sunday Zoom Coffee Hours. And as always, the purpose of our quarterly newsletters is to improve and maintain enthusiasm within our vibrant community of St. Mary's! They are a wonderful resource to find other information on all of our upcoming events and outreach opportunities, scholarly articles on St. Mary's history and music, spiritual reflections and calls to action, and even delicious recipes! There is something for everyone! Another great way to engage with the St. Mary’s community is to contribute to our newsletter. We'd love to hear from you! After all, there wouldn't be a St. Mary's newsletter without the voices of St. Marians! Please feel free to direct any content suggestions and submissions to me by our next deadline, August 15th.

I invite you to take a glimpse at all of our upcoming remote community events and opportunities for outreach this season. Happy Reading!

Always,
Brittany Holdahl | administrator@stmarysatpenn.org
It is late August, almost half a year since we began isolating, distancing and gathering as the Body of Christ remotely. I miss all of you and the smell and feel of the pews, the choir and the organ, the host.

However, we have not been idle. Our Rector, Deacon and staff and the Vestry and various committees have persevered in transforming worship, finding ways to provide for the pastoral needs and social responsibilities of the Parish and in pursuing active stewardship of Parish resources.

The physical space at the Church is not lying completely fallow. The Parish Hall bathrooms are renovated. The Nursery is in session, with reduced numbers.

None of this is ideal but it is all part of the beautiful and messy garden of life. Zoom coffee hour is not ideal but stop by and say hello—it is better than tweets and texts and chat boxes and, as we have relaxed into it, has become more natural. There are smiles without masks. There is good conversation. There is laughter. There is even shared prayer.

We all need more laughter—genuine belly laughter—and we probably all need more prayer face to face—so I invite you stop by virtually if you haven’t recently—even just pop on for a minute—it is not brunch but it will make my day and bring smiles to faces without masks….

Vanessa Albert Lowry | lowryv@gtlaw.com
Join Zoom Meeting:
https://zoom.us/j/95445081781
Meeting ID: 954 4508 1781
Password: 19104

One tap mobile
+16465588656,,95445081781# US (New York)
+13126266799,,95445081781# US (Chicago)
Dial by your location
+1 646 558 8656 US (New York)
+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)
+1 669 900 9128 US (San Jose)
  +1 253 215 8782 US
  +1 301 715 8592 US
  +1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)
Meeting ID: 954 4508 1781

Find your local number:
https://zoom.us/u/adkyeAfxvo
Would you like to join our remote choir?
We'd love to have you!

Please email Michael to lend your voice as a cantor, soloist, or as a member of our choir:

music@stmarysatpenn.org

To listen to and support Michael's independent projects, please visit this site:

michaellawrencesound.com/
Please join St. Mary's at Penn and University Lutheran for this traditional monastic Night Prayer service, a quiet, contemplative way to end the day. We will alternate between the BCP and ELW versions of the service.

Links to those service sheets as well as how to connect will be posted at:

www.stmarysatpenn.org/worship
A Flavor-Packed Dish from Thailand!

You know how helpful Scott loves to be, especially when he sees a recipe he thinks I should make for him. Well he saw a recipe in the New York Times for Larb, a Thai dish that we both love when we eat out, so he forwarded it to me. To call what he sent me a "recipe" is being generous though; there were few amounts specified other than a pound of protein and "a grated garlic clove or two ... (not necessary but nice)." I had to do some research to come up with a real recipe so I did. One person who has tried it posted that it was "the best dinner he's had in weeks". So I've decided to share it with you; this is my own recipe for Larb, and it's delicious. (Now I feel like that little girl in the ads on PBS on cook show Saturdays where she makes a healthy snack and always ends annoyingly, "And it's delicious".)

Ingredients: 2 Tbsp. white rice toasted deeply golden brown and ground (optional says NYT); 1 Tbsp. vegetable oil; 1 pound protein (ground pork or chicken); 1/2 tsp. red pepper flakes; 4 cloves of garlic, minced; 1/2 tsp. sugar; 3 Tbsp. fish sauce (divided); 1 large shallot sliced (onion if you don't have); 3-4 scallions sliced (whites and greens); 1 1/2 cups (plus more for garnish) chopped herbs (mint, cilantro, and basil, preferably Thai); 1 thinly sliced fresh chile (again Thai if you can; I've used jalapeno); 2 Tbsp. lime juice; 1 Tbsp. rice wine vinegar (optional).

I do make the toasted rice powder, but only because I'm cray-cray, (though the NYT dismissively admits it adds "depth and crunch"; trust me – it does). Grind the toasted rice in a mortar and pestle or in a spice grinder -- the Turkish coffee grinder that I use for spices ground it too finely to add crunch. Heat the oil in a skillet and add the meat, breaking it up to cook. I find those potato mashers with the zigzag wires work well breaking up ground meat, though they're useless for mashing potatoes. Let the protein cook adding the red pepper flakes, garlic, sugar, and 2 Tbsp. fish sauce. Add the shallots and scallions along with the chopped herbs and the chile pepper and continue to cook until the shallots start to soften. Finally mix in the rice powder, the lime juice, and the remaining fish sauce and rice wine vinegar if you like. You can also add some salt and pepper to taste (I do 1/2 tsp, of both). Top with the reserved fresh herbs, and remember, the more herbs you use the better. And you can always make the dish hotter if you like with additional crushed red pepper or more/hotter chile peppers. Serve with cooked rice and/or rolled in lettuce leaves. Let me know how it works out!

As always: Bon appetit!

Martin Bodtmann | marbodt@aol.com
Below is our budget progress for the first seven months of 2020. Our revenue continues to exceed our expenses thanks to a Crisis Rent Replacement Grant from the Diocese of Pennsylvania in the amount of $20,000.

Please continue keeping your pledge up to date. The percentage of pledge payments received thus far is close to what was received around this time in prior years.

Frank Innes | finnes@alum.drexel.edu
Since we’re in a global pandemic much like the global flu pandemic of 1918 which occurred during the final year of the Great War (World War I), I went into our archives to browse the Vestry Minutes for that year.

The minutes of October 14, 1918 concluded with this paragraph: The rector presented a letter for the Philadelphia Council of National Defense requesting that the several guilds of the parish participate in a parade in interest of the Fourth Liberty-Loan campaign. As nearly all the members of the parish guilds are interested in the work of various patriotic and war organizations Dr. Kent suggested that a reply to that effect be forwarded.

The tone of the paragraph gives a clear sense of how unified our forebearers were toward the war effort. A quick internet search for “Fourth Liberty-Loan campaign” returned the headline “Philadelphia Threw a WWI Parade That Gave Thousands of Onlookers the Flu” from Smithsonian Magazine. The parade took place on September 28th, over two weeks before the Vestry meeting, so, hopefully, few St. Marians succumbed to the flu as a result of the letter to Philadelphia Council of National Defense.

On the previous page, you will find the Treasurer’s Report for the first seven months of 2020. For comparison, turn to the next page to see a list of parish expenditures for the year of 1918 with war-related donations highlighted!

Frank Innes | finnes.alum.drexel.edu
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<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tr>
<td>Church War Comm.</td>
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JOIN US FOR
Remote Worship
VIA FACEBOOK LIVE

MONDAYS THROUGH FRIDAYS
MORNING PRAYER @ 9 AM

TUESDAYS
MID-DAY ROSARY @ 12 NOON
STARTING SEPTEMBER 8TH:
ZOOM OFFICE HOURS WITH
MOTHER MARI CLAIR FROM 12:30 TO
2:30 PM
(MEET-WITH-ST-MARYS-AT-
PENN.APPOINTLET.COM)

THURSDAYS
CANDLELIGHT COMPLINE @ 8:30 PM

SUNDAYS
MORNING PRAYER
WITH SERMON AND MUSIC
@ 10:50 AM

FOR ADDITIONAL INFO, VISIT WWW.STMARYSATPENN.ORG
Present: Jonathan Ashton, Mariclair Partee Carlsen, Frank Innes, Vanessa Albert Lowry, Sally Hillman Redman, Elle Rothermich, Cassandra Royall, Sophia Reeder, Karen Stachelek, Barbara Tobin, Aaron Todd, Scott Wilds (*Due the coronavirus pandemic, the Vestry met virtually using teleconference software.)

I. Spiritual Practice – Mariclair

II. Information: Welcome new and returning Vestry Members! We welcome Scott Wilds and Elle Rothermich to the Vestry. Thank you to Sophia Reeder and Sally Hillman Redman for their service!

Approval of April minutes – Frank moved, Jonathan seconded. Unanimously approved.

Rector’s Update:
Irving Street Project – The St. Mary’s parking lots are currently screened off with fences. Penn has scaled down this construction project, which should be completed by end of June. They are putting down new lines and repaving. Likely next summer, there will be another round of construction. Those paying for parking at St. Mary’s will receive parking passes for the Fresh Grocer garage.

Parish Hall Update – While SMNS and everybody are out of the building, we’re planning to get started refurbishing the existing bathrooms and fix the floors. Al Panaccio initially quoted $60,000 for this work. We can likely use the $30K diocesan grant for this work. Capital Campaign is unclear how feasible for the rest of the work. Sarto is valiantly trying to get this work priced and on a timeline. It might be cheaper as they can come in at any hour rather than only at night, which was the original plan. Parish Hall Committee will reconvene once this work is priced out.

Organ Project – Hopefully still on track to get this work completed by the end of August. Mariclair will try to take June 7th off. Sabbatical Sunday!

Deacon’s Update:
UCHC – Dinners still happening with takeout containers. Sara is still helping out, possibly Juan as well. Likely will be takeout for a while, as it is hard to be socially distant during these meals. Also, a challenge while the bathrooms are being worked on. Looking into getting a freezer, this is needed. Barbara believes that we are currently serving more than the usual amount of 30-50 at each meal. They’re also distributing masks and hand sanitizer.
Opportunities for Learning – Re: racism, more details in the weekly newsletter.

Social Justice Letters – Barbara wants to get these going again. Electronic letters from ECS?

III. Discussion
Parish Prayer Circles Check-in – Checking in about folks we may not be reaching regularly. It seems nearly all bases are covered in some way, though we haven’t been in touch with Shirley despite best efforts including repeated phone calls and notes, but we’ll keep trying! Scott and Mariclair are in constant contact with Michael Holloman. He hasn’t said if he’s attended the UCHC dinners. His brother is in touch. Scott reports that Michael was mugged a few days ago, but he scared off the assailants. Possible to formalize the prayer circle program in the fall and get training for co-leaders of these prayer groups, help build relationships/a network outside of Sunday morning service and strengthen bonds between parishioners.

Annual Meeting – Went about as well as it could over Zoom, which was pretty good!

Bishop Daniel’s Reentry Plan – Bishop Daniel sent out a big reopening plan. The Bishop of New York sent out what is essentially a condensed version of Bishop Daniel’s plan. June 28 is the current date they’ve recommended for reopening, but we’re still encouraged to reopen as slowly as we need. Some of the bigger churches are planning to wait until after Labor Day. Others are waiting until contact tracing is in effect. Mariclair would like to form a small group to plan St. Mary’s reopening. We will also consider what Penn does. Jonathan, Barbara, and Cassandra are willing to work on this, and potentially Janet Deatrick. Not all parishioners have the means of attending the St. Mary’s Facebook livestreams. We will need to begin stockpiling disposable masks and hand sanitizer, possibly a touchless hand sanitizer stand.

IV. Action
Treasurer’s Report – Frank provided a report through April. Scott moved to approve, Vanessa seconded. Unanimously approved.
Finance Committee Overview – Vanessa SMNS may soon require some rent relief, possibly waiving their parking fees. The Bearded Ladies are still paying rent and haven’t asked for relief in a few months. We may have to revisit St. Mary’s finances if we continue to lose building revenue. Mariclair is applying for a grant from the diocese of $10K–$20K to help with lost revenue due to the pandemic. Select Vestry Officers – Motion to elect Scott Wilds as People’s Warden, Frank Innes as Treasurer, and Aaron Todd as Clerk. Vanessa moved, Frank seconded. Unanimously approved.

V. Closing Prayer – Mariclair
Minutes of the Vestry Meeting
June 23, 2020, 7PM-8:30PM

Present: Jonathan Ashton, Mariclair Partee Carlsen, Frank Innes, Vanessa Albert Lowry, Elle Rothermich, Cassandra Royall, Karen Stachelek, Barbara Tobin, Aaron Todd, Scott Wilds (*Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the Vestry met virtually using teleconference software.)

I. Spiritual Practice - Barbara

II. Information:
Approval of May minutes – Frank moved, Karen seconded. Unanimously approved.

Rector’s Update:
Irving Street Project – They will complete this project by July 1 allegedly. Scott and Frank reported that they saw this yesterday and it does appear to be nearly finished.

Parish Hall Update – Bathroom work is going well. They’ve ripped up the bathroom floors and leveled the floor in the women’s room. Scott, Sarto, and Vanessa will select tile for the floors and walls. Both restrooms will have changing tables!

SMNS – The St. Mary’s Nursery School will resume on July 6. And they will stagger their enrollment in the fall.

Guests – Brittany won’t come back to the St. Mary’s office for now. She is working effectively from home. Guests who come to the church will have to wear masks and use hand sanitizer. The Bearded Ladies will have to have one of them present when hosting events to ensure compliance. Goal to keep a 3-week rolling log of who has been in or out of the church. July Vestry meeting – We usually take it off, but we will meet this time since so much is going on and possibly take off in December instead.

Mariclair has invited a diverse array of folks to guest preach over the next few months!

5 parking spaces available. $155/month per space.

This year’s diocesan convention will be virtual. St. Mary’s staff is working hard. Patrick will resume working at the church every day starting in July. Michael continues to record organ music. We’re looking into other ways to have the choir participate in services. Organ work has restarted. Mariclair will check in with Steve Emery to get a status updated. Should still be on target.
Deacon’s Update:
UCHC – Juan has to go back to work. Sara is still helping each week.

Opportunities for Learning – Advocacy Tools for Loving Your Neighbor on Thursday, July 9 from 12:30-2 PM

Social Justice Letters – Barbara will send out letters to send to congress people. Email is the fastest response. Send Barbara ideas of letters to send.

Zoom Racism Session – Sign up in the newsletter/on the website.

III. Discussion
Parish Prayer Circles Check-in – Going well. Folks are enjoying reaching out to other parishioners regularly.

Becoming Beloved Community Program – Stevenson’s School Diocesan training school for Deacons. Using the curriculum our Bishop Michael Curry has made as cornerstone. Takes 4 aspects of our covenant and uses it for anti-racism training. Mariclair has reached out to other churches to see if they would be interested in partnering to do this together. Two five-week sessions. It’s an hour session on Wednesday evenings.

Reopening Planning Committee Letter to Bishop Daniel – The committee met first time two weeks ago. Initial plan for reopening. Meeting again this Friday to talk again. New July 1st guidance coming from the diocese. Hopefully this will clear things up. The safest plan is to wait and see and not reopen until later.

IV. Action
Treasurer’s Report- Frank provided a report through May. Scott moved to approve, Cassandra seconded. Unanimously approved.

Finance Committee Overview– Vanessa
St. Mary’s received a PPP loan. Frank is getting stamps for the office! Bathroom project discussed. Investments have started to increase - good news! We have to recalibrate the church budget in the future once we know what income looks like. Waiting for reimbursement from the diocese for the bathroom repair work.

V. Closing Prayer – Mariclair
Minutes of the Vestry Meeting,
July 28, 2020, 7PM-8PM

Present: Jonathan Ashton, Mariclair Partee Carlsen, Frank Innes, Elle Rothermich, Cassandra Royall, Karen Stachelek, Aaron Todd, Scott Wilds

Absent: Vanessa Albert Lowry, Barbara Tobin

(*Due the coronavirus pandemic, the Vestry met virtually using teleconference software.)

I. Spiritual Practice - Mariclair

II. Information:
Approval of June minutes – Frank moved, Cassandra seconded. Unanimously approved.

Rector’s Update:
Irving Street Project – The Irving Street project work is finished. Connecting St. Mary’s to the Penn FIOS network unfortunately did not happen as planned due to the project being scaled back because of the pandemic. Mariclair is still working with the University to get this to happen at some point in the near future.

Parish Hall Update – The bathroom work is basically finished. Some ironing out needs to happen with the bill. The stall dividers are currently delayed. Overall, the bathrooms look very nice! Unrecognizably so!

SMNS – The St. Mary’s Nursery School is back in session and it’s going well. Minor parking issues.

Organ work – going well and is still on target. The organ project is coming in at $2,000 over the quoted price due to an electric relay that can’t be fixed so has to be replaced. But, when we did the final fundraising accounting, we realized Mariclair raised $3000 more than we thought, so we are still fine for paying for the work.

Continuation of Phase II – Phase II, which we’re currently in, has been extended until at least the end of August/early September. Philly has prohibited gatherings of 50 or more until March. Hopefully we can do a monthly outdoor liturgy, but the diocese still limits us to hosting services of up to 25 people indoors/outdoors. We may do this if there are only a limited number of parishioners who are interested. If more than 25, we’ll work out some sign-up scenario. Updates about this are forthcoming. The St. Mary’s Reopening Planning Committee next meets on August 7.
$20K Grant – Mariclair applied for and received a $20K COVID grant from the diocese. This is great news!

Deacon’s Update (provided by Mariclair in Barbara’s absence):
Backpack drive for NSC. Done a little differently this year. We're doing $10 sponsorships for one full-size backpack that includes supplies including masks and hand sanitizer. Goal of 50. 60 backpacks have been sponsored so far. We'll keep fundraising to see how far we get! Mariclair will drive the backpacks over.

USC forum for Justice and Opportunity: October 26-30 – 12:00pm – 1pm each day. Small registration fee.

Fall Advocacy: Won't be able to do voter registration this year due to the pandemic. Deacon Barbara invites everyone to submit additional advocacy ideas.

Becoming a Beloved Community will not be offered until Fall of 2021. Instead, we'll participate in the Sacred Ground program put out by the presiding Bishop's office. 10 sessions meeting every 2-4 weeks. Film-based. Another way to talk about racism and anti-racism training. Discussion sessions of 1 - 1.5 hours with "homework" assignments in between. All are welcome to attend.

20th Anniversary of the Concordat. The 20th anniversary of the Concordat between the Episcopal Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is this August, and we will celebrate it with UniLu with a pulpit swap. We will have a pulpit swap on August 16, during which UniLu will worship with us. On August 23, we'll be joining their live service via Zoom and join their coffee hour afterward.

III. Discussion
Parish Prayer Circles Check-in – Please keep trying. Folks aren't responding as readily as before. Mariclair will be calling to ask how parishioners are doing. Please forward any pastoral concerns to Mariclair.

IV. Action
Treasurer’s Report- Frank provided a report through June. Scott moved to approve, Jonathan seconded. Unanimously approved.

Finance Committee Overview- Mariclair and Frank
Scott is now a co-signer. Committee decided not to take quarterly disbursement from endowment due to receipt of the PPE in the hopes that it will bolster further.

Motion to ratify E-vote from 8 July, for $3125 to Knapp Masonry for pointing repair. (completed 11 July). Frank moved to approve, Cassandra seconded. Unanimously approved.

V. Closing Prayer – Mariclair
A Prayer for Fall

Gracious God, we give you thanks for the many blessings of this life, and in the dry, desert times when we wander in the wilderness of grief and worry for our country and our city, we pray that you keep us ever mindful of your unfailing presence and love. Watch over and strengthen all those essential workers who sacrifice their own safety for our communal wellbeing, and help us to have the courage to advocate for their protection and fair treatment. And, when this time of pandemic has passed, may we be even more determined to right the systems that have failed the undervalued and forgotten members of our society during this plague. In your Name we pray, Amen.