

VESTRY MINUTES

March 8, 2022

Meeting conducted via Zoom.

Present: The Very Rev. Mac Brown, Rector; Rusty Gaston, Sr. Warden; Harvey Yocum, Jr. Warden; Paul Richard, Treasurer;; Marilyn Farrow; Janice Wagner; Phyllis Nottingham; Geilan Ismail, Guest; Gwenneth Glenn, Clerk

Absent: Billy Archuleta, Gary Buff, Gini McDermott

The meeting opened by Zoom at 5:37 PM with Fr. Mac's Prayer.

This was a special meeting called for the purpose of answering specific questions posed recently by Bishop Hunn as to how our parish will proceed from a Mask-required to Mask-optional situation. After our plan is approved by the Diocese we will implement it.

The questions were and our answers are:

1. Considering your specific congregation how many of your people are fully vaccinated?

We understand "fully vaccinated" to mean having had 2 covid shots. As of this meeting, in Taos County 84% have had one shot, 75% have had two shots. To limit spread we need 65% having had two shots. We are probably more vaccinated than the general population of Taos County, but using CDC guidelines, we feel it safe to say that we mirror Taos County.

2. How many visitors does your congregation receive?

We admit all visitors, typically 2-8 per Sunday.

What feedback from new visitors have you received about masking?

We have had no negative feedback at the door where signage shows that we expect everyone to be masked. Usually we have a positive response such as "Thank you for doing this." We provide new masks for anyone who has neglected to bring one.

3. How many children who are unvaccinated are in your congregaton?

More than 5, fewer than 10 have not been vaccinated.

4. How many of your parishioners are caregivers, or live with people who are unvaccinated or immunocompromised or work with people who are unvaccinated or immunocompromised?

Our estimate is that 50-75 people fit this description, which represents a large proportion of our people, many of whom are elderly. Many of these people don't attend services, and many of those watch our service online instead. We estimate that we attract 75 viewers per week.

5. How will you inform your congregation, and potential visitors, including those who are approaching the doors of your building, what to expect when they enter?

We use signage. We have greeters in the Narthex each Sunday to explain.

The clergy make announcements aloud. We keep people up-to-date in the weekly email newsletter and in Sunday bulletins.

6. Who will monitor the CDC data each week and how will you inform the congregation that masks are again required should there be a new variant or a rise in the risk level in your county?

Our rector, Fr. Mac Brown, will monitor the statistics with the help of parish member and medical expert, Dr. Geilan Ismail, MD. We realize that this will be a continuous and, most likely, a slow process.

For example, if your county is green for a week, but then goes to yellow or if a new variant arrives, how will parishioners know they need to bring masks?

Signage, greeters at the door, verbal announcements in church, written announcements in the Sunday bulletin and our weekly email newsletter.

We also feel it important to keep Masks Required, both during services and in small-group meetings for at least 2 weeks with the County in green before we move to Masks Optional. (Our choir will remain masked for hymn singing, even if congregation has Masks Optional.) If the county goes back to yellow we will HOLD and stall our progression. If the country goes back to red we will go BACK to wearing masks full-time.

That is to say, we have developed a stepwise approach to normalization. Masks will continue to be required during singing and going to the altar rail for communion for at least 2 weeks with no evidence of increase in COVID cases before moving to the next step. Masks being optional will be the last step as St James works towards returning to pre-pandemic service style. If the county goes to yellow, further steps forward will be on hold until we're back in green, and if it goes to red, we will return to pandemic precautions.

Old Business: At our last meeting on February 15, 2022 we moved and passed to accept art work from an anonymous donor to sell with the profit to be kept by St. James Church. After some research, Rusty wondered whether we now feel differently about this project. Discussion followed. Harvey then moved that we rescind the previous motion and decline the offer. Phyllis seconded. By show of hands, all voted to decline the offer. There was one abstention. Rusty will write a Thank You letter to the donor to be signed by Rusty and Fr. Mac Brown.

The vestry formally approved the minutes of the February 15th meeting.

Coming Up: Our Vestry Retreat will occur on Saturday, April 2, 2022, 9:30-12:30 with lunch included. We will meet in the Santiago Room and take advantage of our new online equipment there to make this a hybrid meeting.

Bishop Hunn will visit Northern New Mexico March 31-April 4, 2022.

The meeting adjourned at 6:44 PM with a closing prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Gwenneth Glenn, Clerkk