



January 22, 2021

Dear Christ Episcopal Church Family,

We, your Vestry, write to you at a time when we would normally be preparing to gather in-person for our Annual Meeting. However, in light of the on-going global pandemic and Norwich's high positivity rate, we have made the decision to move our meeting back one week to Sunday, February 7, at 10 a.m., and to shift to an online/phone-in Annual Meeting.

We pray you will make plans now to attend this important meeting in the life of our parish. As you know, CEC is facing significant financial challenges that long pre-date the pandemic. These challenges have forced us to consider again the future of our parish and whether or not closure may be the next faithful step God is inviting us into. We have been in conversation with the Rt. Rev. Laura J. Ahrens, our Bishop Suffragan, regarding CEC's options and possible future. We believe it is time to explore more deeply what the process of closure would look like for CEC. As such, we have invited Bishop Laura to join all of us at our online Annual Meeting. She will share about CEC's options given our dire financial state and discuss with us more deeply the closure process in particular.

We are aware that some of you are not able to join an online meeting. As a result, we made the intentional choice to hold the meeting via the Zoom platform, which offers us the option of a "call-in" feature; similar to a conference call. This would allow as many of us as possible to be "in the meeting" either online or via the phone. Included in this mailing are instructions for joining a Zoom meeting either by telephone or via the online Zoom platform. If you need additional help with Zoom, please call one of us or Pastor Stacey. We will also be following up the online Annual Meeting with a longer letter which will serve as a "re-cap" of the meeting and conversation with Bishop Laura.

In addition to this very important conversation with Bishop Laura, we will also be electing the slate of Officers and Vestry for 2021. For those who do not feel comfortable joining a Zoom meeting by either method, we wanted to provide the opportunity to cast their vote for our slate for 2021. Included with this letter you will find a ballot with the names of those who have been put forward to serve as our Senior Warden, Property Warden, Treasurer, Clerk, and At-Large Member. The ballot has space for multiple members to vote; please use a separate voting line for each CEC member in your household and circle your response. Also, if you plan on attending the meeting, but would prefer to vote by mail, please feel free to do so. Please return your ballot, either via mail or by dropping it in the mail slot in the office door by Monday, February 1, to allow time to count the votes.

One other note regarding our elections; we are aware that, should the slate be approved, we will be leaving one Vestry at-large position open. We have chosen to leave this seat vacant at this time as we process through the needs of the parish moving forward, which includes a smaller Vestry more appropriate to the size of our parish. We are also not electing Annual Convention delegates at this time as we continue to discern our future as a parish. As Annual Convention is not until October

and we are confident that, should the need arise, we can hold a special meeting of the parish to elect delegates.

Finally, we will not be electing Deanery Council Representatives moving forward. When ECCT reorganized in 2016, the Seabury Deanery ceased to exist. Thus we no longer need to elect representatives. All members of parishes in the Southeast Region are welcome and encouraged to take part in all region events and meetings. For more information about the Southeast Region, contact our Region Missionary, the Rev. Rachel Thomas at rthomas@episcopalct.org.

We know this has been an incredibly challenging season in the life of our parish, our city, our nation, and our world. As we move forward, listening and discerning God's heart for CEC, we invite you to join us in *A Prayer for the Parish* from *The Book of Common Prayer* (pg. 817).

Almighty and everliving God, ruler of all things in heaven and earth, hear our prayers for this parish family. Strengthen the faithful, arouse the careless, and restore the penitent. Grant us all things necessary for our common life, and bring us all to be of one heart and mind within your holy Church; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sincerely,

The Vestry of Christ Episcopal Church, Norwich

Bill Small, Senior Warden
George Carr, Property Warden
Jay Deming, Treasurer
Stephen Kimball, Clerk
Dawn Erardy, Assistant Treasurer
Rose Anderson
Lisa Carr
Mary Elizabeth Lang
Michael Lillipp