

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE HOLY COMFORTER
Vestry Meeting Minutes
March 21, 2023 at 6:00pm in Van Every 207

Vestry Members Present: Mary Amos, Joyce Bott, Jason Evans, Ed Gash, Kirt Hibbits, Margaret Kahn, Carlyle Knox, Bob Murphy, and John Snelsire.

Vestry Members Absent: Tom Cooke, Anne Binns, Natalie Parker

Clergy Present: Re. Greg Brown, Rev. Cat Connolly

Recording Secretary: Niki Manke

Guests: Genesis II; Tom Brackett (virtual), Steve Matthews (virtual), Vicki Bott (virtual), Rev. Canon Earnest Graham (virtual); Ministry Report - Patrick Pope (virtual); Loaves & Fishes - Mac Redfern & Edie Livingstone; Personnel - Russell Weil; Finance Karen Crane.

1) Convene: Opening Prayer (Carlyle)

2) Agenda Approval (Joyce)

- a) Item 14a "Meeting Minutes" will not be discussed tonight. Technical difficulties.
- b) Approved

3) Scripture/Bible Study (Bob M.)

- a) John 6:16-27 Jesus Walks on Water & The Bread of Heaven
- b) This took place the day after that John the Baptist was killed and it was likely heavy on Jesus' heart. Also occurred after the feeding of 5,000. Jesus was becoming famous during this time and there was a lot of tumult. Mark and Matthew relay the same story.
- c) Why were the disciples afraid to see Jesus' walking across the water? i) MK - That's not normal. JE - Maybe they didn't recognize him. KH - The water was rough so were they afraid to be in open water while it was turbulent? MA - Maybe they were afraid for Jesus. MK - Lots of chaos so they're already on high alert so maybe they're not seeing the world clearly at that time like many of us feel when we're in that state. This is just one more thing upsetting their world.
- d) The author includes a lot of miracles in this Gospel. Why were they including all these miracles?
 - i) CK - The gospels in general were showing how Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of Man, and the miracles are a part of that narrative. The stories of the miracles were a part of the evangelism of early Christians. KH - They were not expecting a carpenter to show up. They were expecting a King, so it required a lot of convincing. e) What does this tell us about Jesus' humanity?
 - i) JB - Sometimes we all need to get away from the chaos. BM - And it doesn't even work for him. They chased him down. CK - They tried to get him in the boat, and he stayed away. Chaos of our own making, then chaos in the world.
- f) Vs 27
 - i) MK - We need the spiritual form of God. CK - The new manna from heaven in the breaking of the bread. He is using the oral tradition in the history to KH - Don't love me just because I fed you. JS - Thinking about the work we have to do here, vs 20, as volunteers of the church we may be afraid of the work we have to do but if we trust in God we do not need to be.

4) Associate Rector's Report (Cat)

- a) Conference in Jacksonville was good. Trip down was rough. Reconnected with seminaries from school. Changes in giving at churches. Lots of good speakers b) Lent program is going well. 7-16 people
- c) Taizé service was good
- d) Cozy compline small but sweet
- e) Parish Retreat - Eucharistic Prayer from Church of England. Art projects and planning holistic weekend.
- f) Spanish celebrated La Misa for the first time. Hooray!!!
- g) Coming up on her 1-year work anniversary (May)

5) Genesis II (Vicki Bott, Tom Brackett, Steve Matthews & Rev. Canon Earnest Graham) via Zoom

- a) Vicki gave an introduction about Genesis II, when the Pathfinders Circle Group was informed about the program by Earnest Graham. Vicki noted that Genesis II, is not a small group working and that the whole congregation will need to be involved and listening to the Holy Spirit.
- b) Joyce Bott, Greg Brown, Elizabeth Hardin attended a Saturday seminar/workshop about Genesis II on February 18, 2023. The group attending the workshop had further discussions with Pathfinders, Greg & Joyce, Tom and Steve after which a decision was made to move forward with the program. Next step was to request vestry support. c) Tom Brackett - Wisdom Team
 - i) Tom has worked for 3 presiding bishops. Gathering information from various congregations how they have made the turn. Trying the common themes that have worked out and figuring out how to share with the church at large. Tom has worked with cathedrals and small network churches.
 - ii) Wisdom Community/Wisdom Team - serial redevelopers and congregation leaders. They are a broad group of people across the spectrum: some are in their 70s, professional interns, people of color, courageous congregants, and some who are quieter. They will match us up with a Team and introduce them slowly.
 - iii) It is roughly an 18-month process with clergy and team.
 - iv) 6 congregations in NC moving through pilgrimage and transformation in the diocese.
 - v) Mechanics
 - (1) Team of 5 people with a leader where you move together with diocese cohort and other cohorts.
 - (2) 20 hours a week (with meetings)
 - vi) Has learned that the practices are the same but the way we share the process varies widely depending on the size of the congregation.
 - vii) Questions & Answers
 - (1) JE -
 - (a) What does it cost?
 - (i) No cost
 - 1. Greg noted that it is not "free." It is a benefit of paying the diocese and National church our annual assessment over the years and has great value.
 - (b) Why us?

- (i) Because the Diocese put out an invitation and Pathfinders in our church said we might be interested. Pathfinders met and sought this as an answer to their Mission Statement.
- (2) JB - What do you need from us, if anything, to move forward?

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- (a) This is not a committee process. It is for the whole congregation. Genesis II is a team that works as a liaison to the congregation. Example is they take us on tours of the community to renew our relationship of the neighborhood. Important to note that the whole congregation needs to go along. Motion/vote doesn't really need to happen. They just need us to move along with the Team.
- (3) BM - What is the end goal?
 - (a) Mr. Brackett discussed and shared a document that lists some of the outcomes.
- (4) EG - What are the learnings you have had with EUSA in rolling it out & the "stickiness" so that doesn't sit as a potted plant? Sounds too good to be true. How do you get the boulder up a mountain?
 - (a) In every congregation there is something that works well and there is story and history. Many of us that are new to this we don't always grab on. We realize that every congregation has a Tipping Point that we try to work with and around. Try to use those who have been around the congregation awhile to learn where that is.
 - (i) Law of the Few; The "Stickiness" Factor; Power of Context – This is the heart of what they do which are items they pull from Malcolm Gladwell.
 - (5) JE - Things on the screen are touchy feely and not concrete things. How do we measure? Is that what we are after? More people coming on Sunday? More revenue? Or are we looking for softer things in the end?
 - (a) Tom: More people on Sunday and more revenue are by-products of the real objective. Looking for people's hearts to be tuned in.

viii) Vestry Discussion

- (1) It was noted that for this to work, the group of leaders and the congregation need to be committed.
- (2) 90-day micro strategies are part of the process and see what works for Holy Comforter
- (3) *MOTION (Joyce Bott) to agree to support the leaders in moving forward with this program; SECOND (Ed Gash); 8 – AYE, 1 – NAY*
 - (a) Nay is because they would like to get more "meat". Seemed a little too "touchy-feely".

6) Naming Opportunity - Loaves & Fishes (Mac Redfern)

- a) Reminded the story of the Loaves & Fishes. Lady at Holy Comforter knew we had a problem in Charlotte with food insecurity and she started feeding 1,000 people out of a closet in the Yak(?). 130,000 people were this year.
- b) Mac also shared the history of St. Martin's who created Friendship Trays to help feed the elderly in their neighborhood. Started getting more churches and more people involved. As more churches and more people got involved, St. Martin's had to rebuild the kitchen.

They served/delivered 133,000 trays this year. Friendship Trays has a growing need due to “Aging in Place” which is a fast-growing demographic.

- c) There was difficulty with COVID trying to get food to those who needed it. Started to bring the truck to Holy Comforter for people to pick up food. Friendship Trays was doing something similar. Holy Comforter started using Friendship Tray’s model to deliver groceries and delivered groceries to 30,000 people.
- d) During COVID, the Loaves & Fishes and Friendship Trays have merged, and they are now in need of a new building. A grant has been received from Atrium for more fresh food, but space is an issue because of refrigeration. A larger building is needed, and

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they found a 90k sf building on Beatties Ford Road (most need in this area). The building is being gutted and a facility to fill the needs is being constructed. Commercial Kitchen, Test Kitchen, in house pantry, meeting rooms, 14 walk-in fridge and coolers. This new facility is estimated to cost \$22M. One family has raised \$2M. The Faith Community has raised \$600k. There has been \$9M in commitments so far. We need to be in the mix because of our legacy. Mac emphasized: LOOK WHAT HOLY COMFORTER HAS STARTED!

- e) Mac is challenging us to feed and to help with what is not a food problem, but a distribution problem.
 - i) Mac is requesting the Vestry to grant permission to run a fundraising campaign similar to the one done for Roof Above last summer. The campaign will ask Holy Comforter to raise \$100,000 over a 5-year period. The champions of this campaign are Mac Redfern, Edie Livingstone, and Tom Kerns.
 - ii) Mac feels confident we can do this because of the success of Roof Above and our strong history with Loaves & Fishes. He had success in the past because when he first came to Loaves & Fishes, they didn’t have a truck and they raised \$50,000 with a match from the Levine’s. Now they have 3 trucks. Mac also mentioned the strong person in Tina Postal who is all over tv and radio and has been great at getting the word out.
- f) JB asked when Mac needed this by.
 - i) He would like the plaque for Holy Comforter to go on the building in October.
- g) Vestry Discussion
 - i) JS raised concern about this coming “on the heels” of the 2nd ask but feels it’s more important to the church and the history with the church. JE feels comfortable with the 3-month window but had similar concerns as JS. KH - If it was anything else, he would question, but this is in our core. People will give out of their love. ii) CK - Greg do you support doing the fundraiser?
 - (1) Greg does. However, he limits outside fundraising to core missions so that he can help manage the various fundraisers, and so they don’t overlap each other or our own Annual Giving Campaign.
 - (2) KH - Roof Above, didn’t church give some funds to support. Permission to fundraise and for some money from the church?
 - iii) There was discussion about whether Holy Comforter should or will allocate funds to the Loaves and Fishes campaign. There are two possible sources of funds, if Holy Comforter wanted to support the Loaves and Fishes campaign above and beyond what individual parishioners donate. Both are Designated funds: Vestry Outreach line item (000893) and Outreach (000802) The YTD March2023 balance for Vestry Outreach is \$11,070. However, Vestry voted in February meeting to allow a \$1,000

expenditure to support the Concert for the Human Family, which will reduce the balance to \$10,070. The YTD March2023 balance in the Outreach account is \$10,151.72, but the vestry needs to understand how this account was established and how the funds can be spent.

- iv) KH – If we the vestry decides to monetarily support the Loaves and Fishes campaign, then we need to be careful how we message our commitment. Do we announce our commitment? Might make people ask questions.
 - (1) JB – the vestry does not need to make a decision about the churches monetary support at this meeting but can/should discuss at future meetings.
- v) MOTION: CK MOTION to move forward with supporting Mac Redfern and Edie Livingstone in announcing the Loaves & Fishes campaign to raise \$100k with the caveat that the announcement happens before Greg leaves for Continuing Education

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(Camino) and is completed by the end of May. MA second. Approved.

7) Personnel Committee (Russell Weil)

- a) working with Vestry to tick off some items related to personnel policies
 - i) Social Media Policy - draft of a broader policy.
 - ii) Staff Job Description - More detailed job descriptions for existing employees. (and updating). Things have changed in the 5 years.
 - iii) Assessing Office Structure - Look at who we have and the job descriptions and understand what the needs are.
 - iv) Developing Pay Raise Structure for 2024 and beyond

8) Ministry Report Worship & Music – (Patrick Pope)

- a) His weekly focus remains on preparation of music for 2 Eucharists each week. b) The choir is strong, faithful, & dedicated. 37 singers with 26-28 singers weekly at service. Got together for Spring Retreat 3/18 for extra time to prepare music for Holy Week & Easter. Season will end Trinity Sunday 6/4.
- c) On the afternoon of 6/4 will be Hymn Festival, choirs & guest instrumentalists. A survey will be coming to the congregation asking about favorite hymns for the festival. d) Handbell and Children's Choirs
 - i) Handbell has 8 members who practice on Thursdays.
 - ii) Children's Choir has 3 members who practice every Wednesday before Community Dinner. Been hard to recruit due to parents not ready to commit to weekly practices post COVID.
- e) Paul Malina, choir scholar, is to have a voice recital 3/26 at 5pm. He graduates this spring from Winthrop.
- f) Patrick is to perform an organ recital of Holy Week appropriate music on Palm Sunday 4/9 at 5pm.
- g) Pleased with the monthly Choral Evensong on the 3rd Sunday of the month. The Three Choirs' Evensong in March had great attendance. Patrick printed 100 leaflets and gave them all out! Mary Amos and her group provided a wonderful reception.
- h) The choir got new vestments in December which they wore for the first time on

Christmas Eve. Thankful to the congregation for their support through the Alden Music Fund.

- i) Choir has been invited to sing at the Washington National Cathedral for Eucharist and Evensong 7/16.
- j) Early stages of planning for a pilgrimage in late Spring of 2024 to Scotland and Ireland. They will sing at services and have concerts at 5 venues.
- k) Summer of Remarkable Music will return this summer from 6/19-8/28. It was well supported last summer.
- l) Patrick will personally and professionally play at other places in spring and summer.
 - i) Sunday, April 23 – collaborating with my graduate school colleague John Stender, director of music at First Presbyterian Church, Rochester, MN, playing and conducting an Easter-themed festival of music with his choirs.
 - ii) Tuesday, April 25 – playing a solo organ recital at the Catholic Church of St. Louis, King of France in St. Paul, MN
 - iii) Wednesday, May 31 – playing a solo organ recital at Grace Church Cathedral for the Piccolo Spoleto Festival in Charleston, SC.

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- m) Patrick thanked the Vestry for their attention and support and invited them to attend a rehearsal to see how the choir prepares for each week.
- n) *MOTION (Joyce Bott) to move remaining Ministry reports to next month's meeting due to the late hour; SECOND (Carlyle Knox); APPROVED (Vestry)*

9) Finance Report (Karen Crane)

- a) February 2023 Financial Statements
 - i) YTD Pledge receipts are favorable to budget by \$32.0k; favorable to the prior year by \$49.9k.
 - ii) YTD Total revenue favorable to budget by \$35.1k mainly due to plate offerings by \$.06k, pledge receipts by \$32.0k, and General Offering by \$2.4k. Favorable to 2022 by \$32.9k. Month favorable to 2022 by \$9.5k.
 - iii) YTD Expenses favorable to budget by \$4.2k. Salary & benefits by \$1.0k, Buildings & Grounds over budget by \$2.9k and Utilities under budget by \$1.5k. Unfavorable to 2022 by \$21.8k with \$20.0k attributable to salary & benefits.
 - iv) Note payable to Holy Comforter Foundation balance is \$73.9k with balloon payment of \$68k due November 2024.
 - v) Holly talked to First Bank approved moving to all 4.5% Money Market accounts.
- b) FDIC/Emergency Fund /CDs
 - i) There was a discussion around current banking uncertainties and FDIC insurance and the balances that Holy Comforter has at our banks. Do we need to consider moving some money to another bank? Having multiple banks, is more difficult for the Parish Administrator (Holly W.) to monitor balances from a daily operating process perspective. The Finance committee is not overly concerned, and don't want to necessarily jeopardize the existing relationships, service or rates we currently receive due to meeting certain balance thresholds. However, the Finance Committee will monitor the situation and come back to the vestry with any additional recommendations.
 - ii) The church has 2 EINs from the national church and diocese restructured due to

concerns around property and building when parishes leave the Episcopal church. Holy Comforter can use both EIN and be more protected under FDIC rules. The Finance Committee recommends moving funds, up to the \$250,000, to the other EIN.

- iii) Emergency Fund balance is currently set at \$130k. The Finance Committee recommends setting that at \$150,000. The funds would be moved from Unassigned bequest to the Emergency Fund.

(1) *MOTION (Jason Evans):* Move \$20,000 over to the Emergency Fund. *SECOND (Margaret Kahn); APPROVED (Vestry)*

- iv) *MOTION (Jason Evans):* Motion to provide the Treasurer, Senior Warden, Parish Administrator, in consultation with the rector, to move money in response in the event of a crisis regarding the banking uncertainty and FDIC concerns. If action is taken, the larger Vestry is to be informed as soon as possible and this authority is to be reviewed annually. This is in response to current overall banking and FDIC concerns. *MK SECOND (Margaret Kahn); APPROVED (Vestry)*

10) Mid-Meeting Reflection & Break (Kirt)

- a) Romans
- b) Kirt also read the “dart” scene from Ted Lasso and added a “Believe” sign above the door.

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11) Rector’s Report (Greg)

- a) Vestry Retreat
- b) Liturgy & Worship - Lent & Holy Week
 - i) Ash Wednesday
 - ii) Commissioner Mark Jerrell Preaching
 - iii) Rev. Mark Jefferson Preaching
- c) Circle Group Updates: Pastoral Care, Adult Spiritual Formation, Anti-Racism
 - i) Next Quarterly Leadership Meeting 5/4
 - ii) CG-Leaders Appointments
 - (1) cg-ARSI: Co-Leaders: Gail Fennimore & Tedd Roseberry
 - (2) cg-Adult Spiritual Journeys: Co-Leaders Greg Brown & Mitzi Alexander
 - (3) cg-Liturgy & Music: Co Leaders: Greg Brown & Patrick Pope
- d) Staff Update
 - i) All have now observed the community service requirement at “Roof Above”! (Yay!)
 - ii) Staff Group Presentations: Sarah Cavins led one, Jessica Dunlap test-ran a new program today! Cat said it went well.
 - iii) Jessica and Greg are spending a morning thoroughly rewriting her job description.
 - iv) ESL Coordinator Position -Magdalena Rowe will be replacing Geraldine Ledezma. The work together for a few weeks to ensure a smooth transition.
 - v) Been actively working on Pastoral Care for those parishioners who have stepped away a little bit. It is going well, Greg is continuing to reach out to others.
- e) La Misa
 - i) Through Anabel Zambrano’s leadership, La Misa has has arranged for Lenten lunches following the services.
- f) Christian Formation
 - i) Mother Sally is assembling a group of women to walk The Camino this fall! ii)

“Christian Storytelling” is on pause, too many things are diluting participation in Christian Education.

iii) The Lenten Movie Series continues with “The Hundred Foot Journey”, and “Shawshank Redemption”. This year’s theme is Transformation.

g) Camino Planning (5/15-6/30)

i) Greg is arranging with Rev. Reggie Payne-Weins to supply with us while he is away. He is also supplying on 4/23.

ii) Seminarian Ed Smith will also be serving here this summer, practicing liturgy and preaching.

iii) Rev. Cat led the Eucharistic Prayer in Spanish last week and rocked it. h) Greg requested support for moving Sunday service times during the summer when attendance drops to:

i) English 9am

ii) Spanish 11 or 11:30

i) Lenten Luncheon series with Park Road churches. Cat leads tomorrow (March at Avondale.

12) Senior Warden’s Report (Joyce)

a) Based on discussion at the vestry retreat in February, a document has been created and posted in the vestry shared drive, March folder, that begins to outline more details around designated accounts. However, we need a single document that gives additional details on each account – an “origin” story document that is updated at least annually.

b) Mary Amos and Anne Binns will head up a sub-group to develop this document. i) Purpose is the development of a document that tells the “origin” story of each designated account, so that Clergy, Vestry, and other lay leaders can better

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understand the purpose of each account, who controls account as well as any constraints on how funds can be spent.

ii) Gift policy may need to be reviewed and updated as necessary. The Finance committee may need to provide a review as well.

iii) Parish Administrator, Holly Williams, should be able to provide additional details.

c) Financial Information - what, where, & who

i) We have been publishing financial bullet points, but it’s in the minutes, rather than separate document, that is easily found. Neither the minutes or embedded financials have been posted since November. Nothing has ever been posted in the bulletin board.

ii) Clerk - responsible for working with the office to get the minutes and financials posted each month.

iii) Vestry needs to discuss all communication channels – Web site, bulletin board, Sunday Spirit, and Blast. Last year, the vestry had only approved posting of minutes financials on website and bulletin board.

d) Convention Delegates

i) Holy Comforter has four of NC Diocesan delegates spots and an alternate for each. Delegates serve 3-year terms. Alternates serve 1-year terms. The number of delegates is determined per our parochial report. For 2023, we have one open Delegate spot and two open alternate spots. Conventions take place in November of each year. Please give some thought to possible delegates and/or alternates. e) Mutual Ministry

- i) Contact has been made with Rev. Canon Earnest Graham about the process.
Expect to start mid-late summer, due to Greg's Camino walk.

13) Junior Warden's Report (Carlyle)

- a) Reminder that our Parish Workday, Saturday April 1, 2023, 9:00am-12:00nn
 - i) 10 parishioners have committed so far.
 - ii) Encourage vestry participation.
 - iii) bring pitchforks and wheelbarrows for spreading mulch.
- b) Facilities 2701 Circle Group
 - i) Did a walk around of the property. They would like to remove the big bush at the corner to place some signage. Also want to re-paint the parking stripes before April 28 (before concert, if possible).
 - ii) Discussion around marking parking spaces for visitors

14) Old Business/Reminders

- a) Date set: Concert for the Human Family, April 28
- b) February 2023 BGG Speaker, Tom Cooke, Completed 2/19
- c) March 2023 BGG Speaker, Mary A., scheduled 3/12
- d) April 2023 BGG Speaker, Ed G., scheduled 4/xx
- e) Ministry Reports Due April: Parish Events - Large, Parish Events (Bob M.) - Weekly/Small Group (Jason)

15) Closing Prayer (Carlyle)