

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE HOLY COMFORTER
Vestry Meeting Minutes
October 17, 2023, at 6:00pm Henry Hall

Vestry Members Present: Mary Amos, Anne Binns, Joyce Bott, Tom Cooke, Jason Evans, Ed Gash, Kirt Hibbits, Margaret Kahn (virtual), Carlyle Knox, Bob Murphy, Natalie Parker

Vestry Members Absent: John Snelsire

Clergy Present: Fr. Greg Brown

Clergy Absent: Rev. Cat Connolly

Recording Secretary: Niki Manke

Guest: Karen Crane – Holy Comforter Treasurer and Finance Committee Chair; Ann Moore

1) Convene: Opening Prayer (Ed Gash)

2) Agenda Approval (Joyce Bott)

a) *Motion (Mary Amos); Second (Ed Gash); Approval (Vestry)*

3) Scripture/Bible Study (Anne Binns)

a) Matthew 10:16-23; Jesus sending the disciples out into the world “like sheep to the wolves.”

4) Update Nominating Committee (Kirt Hibbits)

a) John Snelsire has been heading the group. Ed was a big help!

i) 4 nominees for Vestry with a few still floating out there. Asked 40 people and many stated that they were busy. Some said not this year. And some are not eligible. We are working with those not eligible to make them so for next year.

(1) Niki Manke

(2) Diana Smith

(3) Jaqueline Howells

(4) Natalie Castro

(5) Brad Patterson and Simms Doster for Foundation

5) Verger's (Ann Moore)

a) Asking for help because the Verger Guild needs help.

b) Running short on vergers.

c) The person to contact is Bill Reed.

d) Vestry requested a list with bullet points of the tasks completed to help find more vergers.

e) VPOD could be there earlier and take on some of the tasks prior to the 8am. Focus on the “opening of the church” and the Verger can focus on preparing for the service.

f) Could Altar Guild or someone do some of it the day before?

g) Carlyle Knox to discuss some of the tasks with Bill Reed.

h) A few vergers in making. Some from the confirmation class.

i) Perhaps there are some tasks that became their responsibility during COVID and hasn't go back.

6) Finance Report (Karen Crane)

a) September 2023 Financial Statements

i) YTD Pledge receipts favorable to net pledge budget by \$1.6k; favorable to prior YTD by \$47.0k.

ii) YTD Total revenue unfavorable to budget by \$3.3k due to plate offerings over by \$1.1k, net pledge receipts over by \$1.6k, General Offering under by \$11.6k, Visitor under by \$0.3k, Sales Tax Refunds over \$1.4k, Interest and Dividends over by \$12.7k, Other Income over by

- \$40 and Pledge Received-Previous Year under by \$8.2k. Month favorable to budget by \$4.4k. YTD favorable to 2022 by \$38.1k.
- iii) YTD Expenses favorable to budget by \$34.7k. Salary & benefits under budget by \$15.1k, Ministry under budget by \$21.5k, Office under budget by \$3.6k, and Buildings & Grounds over budget by \$7.1k and Utilities over by \$1.6k. Favorable to 2022 by \$7.3k. In comparison to 2022, Salary & benefits is \$8.6k higher.
 - iv) Note payable to Holy Comforter Foundation balance is \$71k with balloon payment of \$68k due November 2024.
- b) Would like for us to consider increasing the threshold for the parish administrator to \$1,500 from \$1,000 for parish administrator.
 - i) *Motion (JE)– To increase the threshold that the parish administrator may approve expenses without having to seek prior approval from the Vestry from \$1,000 to \$1,500. Second (CK); Approved (Vestry).*
 - (1) *Note: This is from any account other than the Vestry Holding Account and the Emergency Fund.*
 - c) Update Strategic Modeling
 - i) Having another meeting Sunday and would like to present to the Vestry at the next meeting.
 - d) Preliminary Budget has been started and should be ready for the December meeting. It is set on the pledge goal of \$850,000.

7) Stewardship – “Freed Up” program from GoodSense (Kirt Hibbitts)

- a) BGG doing financial stewardship class beginning January 28th
- b) \$1,250 for site license. Were able to get the household cost from \$99 to \$19 per household, by committing to \$500 up front. If we get 15 people we break even.
- c) They will be coming into the December meeting to discuss again.

8) Update Employee Handbook (Jason Evans & Mary Amos)

- a) Trying to get information from the diocese. They’re hoping to get it this week.
- b) Jason caught up with Russell and they have talked about adding the employee benefits information.

9) Ministry Reports

a) Pastoral Care (Margaret K.)

- i) Eucharistic Visits – 7 in September and October
- ii) Flower delivery setup through end of year
- iii) Evensong setup as well
- iv) Kim weeks taking leadership of Holy Comforter Home Group – looking for volunteers. Doing additional research for medical power of attorney. Parishioners who don’t have family and what to do.
- v) Mary Frances Zachary sending notes to home bound and shut ins.
- vi) We are no longer sending out birthday cards.
- vii) Lazarus Teams – funeral in October
- viii) Jessica is the go to person for the prayer request ministry.
- ix) Jessica keeps the list for Holy Comforter at home and the goodie bags.

b) Youth Formation (Anne Binns) – On shared drive

- i) Amy McKee is leading the Family Ministries Circle Group. Small, but very engaged group.
- ii) Shoutout to those that are helping to keep these ministries moving!
- iii) Amy McKee (Children’s Ministry) - Amy has the lessons prepared for the Children’s Chapel during the service each week. 6-14 kids per week and they are a lively bunch. She is looking for help.
 - (1) Mary Lindsay coordinating Children’s Formation classes with the theme “Exploring our Sunday Morning Ministries” to demonstrate what happens at church behind the scenes.
 - (2) Amy is planning an outing for the children and youth during the holiday season. The hope is to go caroling somewhere local (potentially MerryWood).
- iv) Beth, Tammy, Diana and Drew are leading Youth Ministries and are also looking for some help.

- (1) Beth has been focused on intentionally inviting and welcoming youth and families in the commuting. She has been encouraging Fr. Greg's "Give Me 7" model to prioritize seven minutes focused on people we do not know well.
- (2) Blessing of the Animals success! 64 people were in attendance.
- (3) Kellie Little from The Dilworth Center is coming to speak about addictive behaviors on November 12th. It includes social media and substance abuse with sessions for both parents and youth.
- (4) Youth will be assisting with the Fall Festival and providing childcare for Parents Night Out events.
- (5) The 2024 pilgrimage will be to Costa Rica with Jennifer Everhart helping to plan. Deadline to signup is October 15th. The dates are June 25-July 2. Working on fundraising events to help make it accessible to families.
- (6) Confirmation classes were led by Beth. 7 Confirmants this year and an all day retreat was held on October 7th. Confirmation will be October 29th.

c) Adult Formation (Ed Gash)

- i) Vicki and Pathfinders have been doing a lot of work with Genesis II.
- ii) Mary Ann – Is resigning from ASJ. She will continue through the end of the year.
 - (1) The program calendar and programming process are provided on the shared drive and shows. There is a lot happening at the church and a lot of work has gone into it.

10) Mid-Meeting Reflection (Carlyle Knox)

- a) Go Speak cards. Read to partner and discuss.

11) Associate Rector's Report (Cat Connolly)

- a) Absent – sick leave approved through 10/28

12) Rector's Report (Greg Brown)

a) Clergy Status

- i) Rev. Ed Pickup will conclude his time with us this Sunday, October 22, 2023
- ii) Cat is expected back for the bishop's visit on October 29, 2023. We will be gentle with her parish reentry.
- iii) No word from Bishop Sam as to our having a deacon. It would be a great question for him!
- iv) We celebrated Gay Silver last Sunday

b) Diocesan Convention

- i) November 16-18, 2023 in Winston Salem
 - (1) Fr. Greg stepped down in December, 2022 from his position as Chair of the Chartered Committee for Hispanic Ministries. He is running for no office.
 - (2) Many resolutions are clerical or take into account new technology, around tweaking the language to make sure the Constitution and Canons align; modernizing the pre-convention process; opening up the language for electronic voting; cleaning up departments on Diocesan Council; and the use of teleconferencing.
 - (3) There are substantive resolutions around mental health, guiding principles for world mission, negative stereotypes, affordable housing; as well as an official greeting of Presiding Bishop Michael Curry and thanking him for his ministry.

c) Liturgy and Worship

- i) We expect to confirm 9 persons at the Bishop's Visit.
- ii) La Misa attendance continues to lag.
- iii) Fr. Greg continues to celebrate the Eucharist the first Friday of each month at Matthews Glen
- iv) He continues to celebrate the Eucharist every other month at Southminster.
- v) We had the blessing of the animals at Holy Comforter (Oct 1) and Southminster (Oct 3)
- vi) The bishop will confirm 9+ during his visit on 10/29, as well as meet with confirmants and Vestry on 10/28, and lead a forum after the service on Sunday.

d) Staff

- i) Annual Staff Reviews have begun, and should be finished by the end of October
- ii) The Community Service Requirement for staff has been lifted, and he encouraged them to continue.

- iii) We will have our Staff Retreat on Tuesday, November 28 off campus. Doug Bacon will discuss Strengthfinders results with staff, and help us determine how we can use our strengths to further our mission and ministries. Ahead of this Fr. Greg is doing some Values/Vision/Mission work with staff for both individuals, and as a staff. PLEASE KEEP IN MIND THAT VESTRY HAS APPROVED \$4k FOR DOUG THAT WILL BE DUE AFTER THE RETREAT.
 - iv) We still anticipate that Patrick will take a sabbatical in 2024. It will be for three months.
 - v) We have prospects for both Children's and Youth Ministers positions
 - vi) He has asked Vestry's help to generate SMART Goals for each and all staff (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Time-bound).
- e) **Circle Group updates**
- i) Our next Quarterly Leadership Meeting will happen in November. There is new life and leadership (Patricia Hatch) in the Outreach Circle Group; and renewed vitality in the Adult Spiritual Journeys Circle Group. Others are revisioning, which is appropriate for where they are in their respective life cycles.
- f) **Programming**
- i) Fr. Greg gave a Camino Talk that went really well.
 - ii) Beth Hardin has been working 25+ hours/week to keep our MS+HS Youth Programs afloat, and is a primary mover with the search for our Directors of Religious Education for Youth and Children
 - iii) Confirmation retreat was held on Saturday, October 7 at Avondale Pres.
 - iv) Fr. Greg will continue Advent Movie Night in November
 - v) PLEASE CONTINUE TO BOTH PROMOTE **AND ATTEND** parish programs and events!!!
- g) **Local Concerns**
- i) We are planning a group education piece for our collective Park Road Clergy membership, to move us forward in ministry and to build fellowship among our churches. In the upcoming election year, we are choosing a program from Just Faith around Christian Listening. It will be a 7-8 week program beginning around lent.
 - ii) Our Park Road Clergy meets once a month for fellowship and to plan common events. Our Lenten Wednesday Programs are popular and growing!
 - iii) Churches include; Holy Comforter, Avondale Presbyterian, Park Road Baptist, Sedgefield United Methodist, St. Luke's ELCA, Southminster, and Woodlawn Community Fellowship.
 - iv) We were visited by Oscar Rozo, Hispanic Missioner from the Diocese of Western Carolina and two members of the Episcopal Church in Newton, NC. They wanted to learn firsthand about all the Spanish language ministries we have going on at HoCo
 - v) Fr. Greg wrote an all-parish note regarding the tragic news out of the Holy Land

13) Senior Warden's Report (Joyce Bott)

- a) Kick-off Sunday – Make sure Vestry has all made their pledge.
- b) Annual Meeting
 - i) Liaisons – make sure individuals know that they have a role at the annual meeting. Make sure they have remarks prepared. 2-3 minutes of something to say prepare. Have the list of people who work in the ministry.
- c) Safe Church
 - i) We need to get it done.

14) Junior Warden's Report (Carlyle Knox)

- a) Solar Panel update. Virtual vote by November 1.
 - i) There is information on the shared drive in the 2023 folder in the "Solar Information" folder. The document breaks down the three options to vote on with detail regarding: How much up front; How much savings; How much expense. Going to reach out to Strategic Modeling Group to see if they have concerns or comments.
- b) Fall Cleanup on October 28. Variety of projects depending on weather. Tear out old beds and install new beds
- c) Painting lot lines

i) Need a day of good weather.

15) Old Business/Reminders

- a) Approval of September 2023 Minutes – minor edits that came in late. Niki to edit and re-send to everyone for approval.
- b) November 2023 BGG Speaker, Jason Evans
- c) November Ministry Reports: Natalie and Mary

16) Closing Prayer (Ed Gash)