

CHRIST CHURCH CHRISTIANA HUNDRED

Vestry Minutes

July 11, 2024

7:30 PM

Present: Chuck Arensberg, Ran Barton, Audrey Bruce, Cindi Cozza, Barb King, Ted Ledden, Alexander Maynard, Thorpe Moeckel, Scott Nickle, Jamie Poston, Bart Reese, Jaq Whalen, Alexia Wolf

Also Present: Stacey Carpenter, Michael Kurth

Absent: Ruth Beresford, Eliza Phillips

The meeting was called to order by Ran Barton, Senior Warden, at 7:19 PM, and he offered the opening prayer.

State of the Parish

Wardens' Report: Ran summarized the latest Renovation Team report from Heather Kenny of Ministry Architects (MA). Ran, Ruth, Cindi, Alexia, and Heather met July 2 to continue working on the plan to transition strategic plan tasks from the Renovation Team to the Vestry. MA is also delivering a communications plan for us to share ongoing progress toward our goals. There will be a hand-off meeting in September where the Renovation Team will share their key learnings from having participated in the strategic planning process. Ran noted that since he was named senior warden, several people have reached out to him to share their thoughts about parish matters. He encouraged Vestry members to treat conversations with parishioners as an important source of feedback and to bring those insights to meetings as the situation warrants.

Finance Committee Monthly Report: Ted reported that the Finance Committee had not yet received the report from Terri Carpe for the month of June. The current number of pledges received to date is 422, which meets our goal not only in number but in the proportion of new pledges coming from families with younger children. While the dollar amount of the average pledge has decreased (to be expected as younger families have less resources to give), Mark Parsells is nevertheless extremely pleased by the trajectory of the pledging unit count.

Leadership and Governance

Strategic Plan Year Two Process: Ran remarked that while focusing on the strategic plan is outside the Vestry's usual scope of business, it is arguably the most important work that we will do over the next few years. This addition to our duties may affect the shape of our meetings for some time to come. He reiterated that we embarked on this work to stem the tide of declining attendance and pledging, some of which is driven by societal changes but some of which is within our influence. As we move forward with execution of the plan without the close involvement of Ministry Architects, we will need to draw on the knowledge of the parishioners who have been involved so far. We must keep in mind that we are coming up on the end of Year Two; Year Five will be here before we know it, and we cannot let our focus and activity drift. Each year of the plan has benchmarks for each of the three goals (to grow our Episcopal faith community, to grow deeper relationships with God and each other, and to faithfully manage and steward our property, financial resources, and time and talent). He reviewed the second-year benchmarks to emphasize that the

roadmap is there for us to follow and to measure our success. He touched on the progress we made in the first year and then listed the five-year aspirations that show how high our aims are. His action items for the Vestry are to (re-)read the November 2022 Assessment Report, between now and September to think of who else we can engage to continue the work being done by the Renovation Team, and to consider how we structure Vestry meetings to dedicate sufficient time and thought to the achievement of the strategic plan. He envisions that Vestry members will align themselves to the three overarching goals to lead teams that maintain momentum toward meeting the benchmarks, and he welcomes input on that structure. Scott asked if we could obtain a list of parishioners to brainstorm potential volunteers; Ran can request that to be run from the Shelby database. Chuck added that we are at a critical inflection point where the departure of MA could lead to the effort stalling, so we must act intentionally to maintain momentum. Alexia noted that according to MA, most parishes take on about five benchmarks per year, while in our first year we accomplished eleven. Scott mentioned that we should ensure that we are utilizing the Green Show as an invitation to the community to come back and join the parish. Ran asked that Vestry members think about the plan and benchmarks in the coming weeks to prayerfully discern which aspects they resonate with and engage with him and each other to discuss the Vestry's approach to strategy work going forward. Ran will send out the assessment report with his presentation slides.

Monthly Management Tasks

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the parish annual meeting in May and the June Vestry meeting were approved as presented.

Other Concerns and For the Record: Michael expressed gratitude for all the people who have been coming to church at the invitation of current parishioners. Stacey expressed gratitude to Michael and Ruth for holding down the fort while she was away for three weeks, and she looks forward to returning the favor when Michael goes out on leave. Scott reported that the Stewardship Committee will soon begin planning for the fall pledging season, discussing how to transform it into a year-round celebration of time, talent, and treasure. Chuck mentioned his excitement at Sheila beginning her tenure here. Barb shared that a few parishioners have asked for a designated place to store nametags at church rather than having to remember to bring them. Jaq suggested adding pictures to the online directory to help with connecting names to faces. Scott asked for a better method of distributing meeting documents; Ran and Jenno had discussed this topic earlier and will work on a low-overhead solution as well as a group chat.

Stacey shared about her experiences at General Convention: key topics were transparency in Title IV (clergy discipline); changing the prayer book to say that marriage is between two people (rather than a man and a woman); Navajoland will now be allowed to elect their own bishop; and some dioceses are merging. Stacey encouraged anyone who is interested in the governance of the church to run for diocesan election as a lay delegate. For her, the best parts were seeing how the national church operates, worshiping with a few thousand people, and connecting with friends from other dioceses.

The closing prayer was offered by Jaq. The meeting adjourned at 8:33 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer O'Connor, Clerke