

TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH, RUTLAND, VT
VESTRY Minutes
September 19, 2024

Present:

The Rev. Sarah Ginolfi, Holly Webb, Fern Fryer, Dave Thurmer, Judy Hall, Cassi Whitcomb, David Rugger, Jay Slenker (joined at 6:30pm)

Call to Order/Opening Prayer:

Sarah+ opened the meeting in prayer at 5:04pm

Approval of 2024 August Minutes:

Fern motioned to approve the minutes from August. Holly seconded. Passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Reports for 2024 July/August:

Dave T. motioned to approve the financial reports from July and August. Judy seconded. Pass unanimously.

Rector's Report:

- There was some concern among the Finance Team that income was lower than expected for where we usually are at this point in the year. Sarah+ investigated and learned from Wendy that there are several larger gifts that, given previous individual giving practices, are likely to come at the end of the year.
- Sarah + also confirmed that the replacement network extender was installed, so the livestreaming system is fully functional again.
- Finally, she affirmed a hope for better creation care practices in our hospitality offerings which would include more consistent composting of food waste, fewer disposable plates and cups, and more consistent use of dishware and reusable table cloths for larger functions.

NEW BUSINESS

Landscaping for Campus Beauty and Safety

This month, a subgroup that included Holly Webb, Melissa Alarie, Jay Slenker, Judy Hall, Bill Meub, Jim Cruise, Gil Nell, and Mother Sarah formed to discern ways that we could improve visibility on campus by pruning overgrowth and removing some trees/shrubs that were creating hiding spaces. Overgrowth is also lessening the ability for other vegetation to thrive due to overgrowth. The subgroup agreed on a plan to give several areas on campus long overdue "haircuts." Bill and Sarah+ met with Kyle Taylor from Taylor trees who (generously) bid \$2,200 for the whole project. After presentation to the Vestry, Fern motioned to approve the bid, Dave T. seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Sarah+ drew attention to her discovery that several areas in the building (the library, chapel, and some hallways) are not covered by our current motion detection system. Conversation among the Vestry noted a desire to expand coverage and add security cameras to capture the campus grounds.

Vestry Roles, Function, and Procedures Discernment

- The Vestry continued the conversation we had with Bishop Shannon before her visit. In that session, we discussed ways to decrease time spent discussing dense operational issues and focus more on Vestry formation and strategic planning.
- Possible oversight areas and committee liaison appointments might include 1. Buildings 2. Grounds 3. Worship 4. Stewardship 5. Outreach and Evangelism 6. Finance 7. Christian Formation 8. Children and Families 9. Pastoral Care. The team especially highlighted a need for more consistent oversight of the buildings and grounds by members in the parish because the staff are over functioning here.
- The group supported bringing back an annual retreat for the Vestry near the formation of the new Vestry each year.

2025 Budget Considerations

- Judy offered to be on a team to bring more clarity and transparency to building and grounds-related budgeting. She noted that there are many expenses under one category, so it's hard to track things and know what we're spending. There also isn't transparency in what is spent at the Rectory vs. what is spent at the church. Some preliminary research revealed that the church tends to "crisis spend" to fix issues rather than invest in regularly maintaining the grounds and buildings. The Rectory renovation process alone has revealed many weaknesses that ought to have been fixed years ago.
- Sarah + inquired if the non-operational Youth Fund might be expanded in name to serve "Children, Youth, and Families."
- The Diocesan Convention hasn't yet approved the recommendation for COLA increases and insurance premiums. Given her service on the Standing Committee and Executive Committees at the diocese, Sarah + suspects that a 2.5% COLA increase, the \$500 merit increase, and the ability for parishes to offer clergy/spouses/families the BCBS PPO 70 + an HRA plan as the minimum insurance coverage rather than the BCBS PPO90 plan. Sarah + will meet with the wardens to have preliminary conversations.
- Aside from matters related to compensation and the addition of a deacon, the Vestry does not recommend any major considerations to add or subtract from the 2024 budget for preparation of the 2025 budget. Sarah+ requested the following to be considered:
 - Providing Wendy the same \$500 Continuing Education benefit that Sarah+, Liz+, and John receive. So, in 2025, that line item would increase from \$1,000 to \$2,000. Deacon Liz+ benefit was already approved in her Letter of Agreement.

- Increasing Christian Education from \$500-\$1000 to broaden Christian formation programming
- The parish raised \$800 to support the Pride festival this year. Can that count toward the \$500 goal for 2024 Fundraising?

OLD BUSINESS

Mission Statement Survey Next Steps

The springtime survey to discern a more compelling and memorable mission statement for the parish garnered too few responses to make any parish-wide movement. Only 20 or so. The Vestry suggested we try again with the top vote getters. The following six statements each had votes from at least three unique survey respondents:

- Following Jesus. Serving the Community (1st place overall)
- Glorifying God in loving service to our neighbors. (2nd Place overall)
- Loving others as Christ loves us.
- We are children of a loving God, sharing God's abundance.
- A faith community inspired to welcome, engage, and serve all.
- Our Episcopal family welcomes, engages, and serves our community.

After conversation, the Vestry agreed to ask the congregation over the next two Sundays to choose from among the first three listed above.

Rectory Update

- Good progress. The plumber will come next week to install the sink, vanity, and toilet in the upstairs guest bathroom. He'll also install the dishwasher. Several smaller projects in the kitchen and bathroom remain: trim, paint, and wall plates/backsplash for the kitchen.
- Jim is projected to begin work to remove the rear garage door and wall that in (with a door) in the next couple of weeks.
- Still TBD on cleaning up the pest waste and insulation in the attic.

Organ Project Update

David R. and Holly have compiled numerous documents and communications to better understand the scope of the organ project and its project timeline. They will engage in further conversations to better determine the current functionality of the organ and what still needs to occur to complete Phase 1 of the project.

Trinity Presents Concert Series

- Jay motioned to approve \$2,000 from the Jubilee Fund for the upcoming Taconic Strings Concert on September 29th. Fern seconded. Motion passed unanimously. A free-will offering will be taken. For this concert, all donations will be distributed equally between

the Jubilee Fund and the Youth Group fund. Cassi offered to write a description of the Youth Group to the program.

- Jay motioned to approve \$3,500 for the upcoming Ampersand concert in the Spring. David R. seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Adjournment at 7:01pm

The next Vestry Meeting is October 17th, 2024