

Minutes, Grace and St. Peter's Vestry, January 21, 2020

Present: Rev. Bob Bergner, Kelly Mattox (Senior Warden), Susan Stanley (Junior Warden), Linda Simmons (Treasurer), Arnie Pritchard (clerk), Whitney Batson, Jennifer Campbell, Beth Delancy, Will Hart, Mark Mahaffy, Cindy Turner

Excused Absences: Sue O'Connell.

Unexcused Absences: Helen Barajas, Roxanne Burrowes, Nadia Major

Also Present: The Rev. Adam Yates, diocesan consultant

Bob opened the meeting with a prayer.

The agenda was approved

The minutes of the December 17 meeting were approved with minor changes.

Annual Meeting Preparation

Nominations

It was moved and seconded that the vestry nominate the following slate for election at the annual meeting. Incumbents are marked with an asterisk*.

- Senior Warden – Kelly Mattox*
- Junior Warden – Susan Stanley*
- Treasurer – Linda Simmons*
- Clerk – Arnie Pritchard*
- At-large vestry members – Chris Grant, Robin Zenobi
- Delegates to Diocesan Convention – Chris Grant, Will Hart*

The motion was approved by voice vote

Format

On February 2 there will be one service at 9 A.M., and the annual meeting will immediately follow. The meeting will be held in the Church Sanctuary.

The officers and Bob will come up with the agenda. Bob will circulate a draft.

The Wardens' report and the Priest in Charge (PIC) report can be folded into the discussion of PIC goals.

Review of PIC goals

Adam Yates led the vestry through a discussion of the status of each goal.

Goal #1, Financial sustainability

Several things have improved the financial situation:

- We have reduced expenses, the largest reduction (about \$12,000 per year) was in the music program.
- Pledges for 2020 are up by about \$3,000 from 2019.
- We are working on refurbishing some underused space for possible rentals.
- We did well in rectory rentals over the summer.

Unfortunately, there have also been some negatives:

- The Korean church has disbanded and is no longer renting space from us.
- There is only one student at the rectory.
- The building continues to suck up money and effort.

We have forged a good relationship with St. John's North Haven, and cooperated on several things, but there has been no discernable financial impact. We have not found other churches with much interest in closer cooperation.

Will asked how much we are drawing from the endowment. Linda said that for 2019 we drew down \$35,000. For 2020 she expects that we will have to draw down about \$50,000. As of December 31, the balance in the endowment was about \$609,000.

Adam asked if we will could meet the goal of financial sustainability within Bob's initial 3- year term as PIC, which ends at the end of 2020. We are not confident that this is possible. Several helpful things might happen (more students in the rectory, more pledges, rental income) but we cannot count on them.

Kelly asked Adam what the diocese could do to help us finding potential ministry partners. Adam suggested a meeting with the Rev Tim Hodapp, Canon for Mission Collaboration. There was some discussion on possible models of collaboration between parishes. Adam will inform Tim that we would like to meet with him.

Goal #2 Sustainability of Volunteers, and Burnout

Bob said that the bulletin board and in-church announcements have done something on this, but we could do more – perhaps using the website, and e-news.

There have been some changes to the altar guild that have reduced the workload. Some new people have joined. Dinner for a Dollar (DFD) the Columbus House cooking team, and Chapel on the Green have been successful in recruiting and maintaining volunteers. This is not so true of the ministry at Arden House.

We have brought in some volunteers from community services, Cub scouts, etc.

We have dropped some musical activities for which there seemed to be insufficient energy. We may revive bells on a more modest scale.

For celebrations of people's efforts, we have little that is formal beyond the stewardship dinner. Allison Batson received a significant award from the United Way.

We do not have a youth group. There was some discussion of whether there is any interest. Mark felt strongly that we should do more with youth, possibly with St. John's, which has an active youth group. Mark thought that youth groups working together can have an impact and build cooperation.

Goal #3 – Engagement in the Wider Community.

This goal has gone very well. Dinner for a Dollar, Swords to Ploughshares, The Warming Center, Abraham's Tent, and the Gun Buyback are all rolling along. These have also gotten a lot of positive media. Bob is also the go-to invocation giver at the Chamber of Commerce.

Goal #4 – Community Diversity

We held the multicultural service (Nigerian). We participated in the Memorial Day parade and Hamden festival, and part of the season of reconciliation in D.C. Our Lenten course this year will be either on racial reconciliation or about differences.

On extending an Invitation to share gifts and talents – the Christmas pageant did this, as well as other activities mentioned above.

On modeling diversity in leadership – The vestry skews female and older, but that reflects the composition of the parish.

Goal 5 # spiritual growth

The contemplated survey has not happened, we have ten more months.

We may have a parish retreat in Lent.

On sharing spiritual practices, we had the Advent Praise meeting led by Sue Paulsen. Some of what the Faith Study Group has done lately is also in this category.

General Discussion

Adam summed up that we are doing well overall on goals 2-5. On #1 there has been discernable progress, but it is a "doozy" and not all in our control. We think 2-5 are achievable in the next ten months.

Linda reminded Adam that when we meet with Tim Hodapp he should not expect to start at step 1 of dealing with parishes that have major financial issues. We are past that.

There was a question about what happens to an endowment in a mergers or other cooperative arrangements between parishes. Adam replied that it depends on exactly what we do. Tim can tell us the nitty gritty on this.

Several people mentioned that our location in Hamden is important for our ministry.

Linda asked if the recent revaluation of all parish real estate by the diocese affects the diocese's thinking about what should happen to parishes. Adam said that it does not. He said that as long as a parish is operating it effectively owns the property. It only goes to the diocese if the parish goes out of business. He added that because the land records of many towns are not on line it is often difficult to collect information about titles to property held by parishes, and we would have to look at the land records to be sure about the ownership of our real estate.

Inter-parish Mission Committee/Retreat Follow-up

Nothing further on this

Relations with the diocese

Nothing further on this

Treasurer's Report (Linda Simmons)

Linda distributed:

- A profit and loss statement for all of 2019
- A balance sheet as of December 31, 2019
- A profit and loss statement comparing the preliminary results for 2019 with a proposed budget for 2020

The endowment was about \$609,000 at the end of December. This is the largest it has been since late 2017.

The cash balance shown does not include some late- December collections, but it does include some prepaid pledges for 2020.

The profit and loss statement for 2019 shows a shortfall on pledges, which may or may not be real.

We lost the Korean church as a tenant in December, which will reduce revenue for 2020 by about \$9,600.

Revenue from organizations is a bit higher because of a few small things.

The fundraising line is t-shirts, of which we have some left.

We got a small grant from the diocese to cover some of the rectory work.

Linda said that special contributions in envelopes designated for special collections (Easter flowers, etc.) should not be counted as part of anyone's pledge.

Linda said that she believed that all expenses for 2019 have been accounted for. Total revenue was about \$12,000 less than expected, expenses were about \$24,000 less than expected. We projected a deficit of about \$62,000, the actual loss was about \$50,000.

Will asked whether we have any investments in fossil fuels in our endowment. Linda replied that since our endowment became part of the diocesan Donations and Bequests fund, we have no say in where it is

invested. She said that in a large diversified portfolio like D&B there is probably some investment in fossil fuels. There would have to be a conversation with the diocese on its overall D&B policy.

We are budgeting for a \$50,000 loss.

The 2020 budget assumes that there will one student in the rectory for the spring semester, and two in the fall. It assumes no income and no additional expenses related to the potential rental space downstairs.

Under security – The figure should be \$1,300. not \$385.

The figure for Repairs and Maintenance does not take major projects into effect.

Our maintenance costs would be significantly higher if not for the efforts of Bill Menosky.

We are cutting copier expenses in half by getting a different deal.

The figure of \$20,000 for Common Mission Support (i.e. the mandatory contribution to the diocese) is a placeholder. The exact amount is to be determined.

The budget assumes that we will have an organist for 48 Sundays.

Bob's compensation may be re-allocated between salary and housing allowance once he gives Linda the information she needs.

We have been told that our organ should get a rehab of at least \$10,000, which is not in the budget.

Bob said that we no longer need music licensing, so that can be cut.

The Treasurer's report was accepted subject to audit.

It was moved and seconded that we approve the budget with the adjustments indicated above. The motion passed on a voice vote.

Stewardship

The amount pledged for 2019 is just over \$132,000, an increase of about \$3,000 over 2019

Town of Hamden events

The gun buy back will be on February 15

We hope for two new sites for Dinner for a Dollar by mid-February; one on Friday evenings at the Keefe center and one on Saturday evenings at Hamden Plains Methodist Church. There was some discussion of how food will be bought and distributed in the expanded version of DFD.

Mark mentioned that during the Warming Center parked cars in our lot are have been obstructing snow removal. It is unclear whom the cars belong to. Bob will ask Kim to address this.

Grace and St. Peter's 200th anniversary – Mark needs the date of any planned observance and any information about the parish's history. Several sources of information were suggested.

Rectory and Renovation Committee - Beth Delancy and Bill Menosky will meet tomorrow with an attorney who has agreed to give us some free advice on the legal implications of renting the downstairs space. Beth distributed a draft list of questions for the attorney, as well as a draft form for applicants who might want to rent space. We have gotten some emails from people interested in using our space.

Mark showed a sign with which has been retrieved from downstairs, which may go in front of the church. It can't be put up in winter.

Operations Updates

Music/Worship –Going well. The Christmas pageant went well, the organists have done well.

Stewardship – See above

Altar Guild – Going well

Buildings and Grounds The garage is now set up for Swords to Plowshares. We have had to replace the hot water heater in the kitchen; the old one dated from 1991. Nothing should touch the water heater, or it could blow up.

Communications: we have gotten some amazing **press**

Staff: Doing fine, as usual

Web presence: The improved website is still great

Pastoral Care: Bob and Mark have visited several parishioners who are permanently or temporarily homebound. (Sue O'Connell, who also participates in this ministry, was not present to report).

Parish Activities: Already covered

Kelly will contact the Wildmans about providing soup for annual meeting.

We will postpone our meeting with Tiffany Reed from the diocesan mission/fundraising project, because the need for a meeting with Tim Hodapp appears more pressing.

The vestry adjourned and read Compline.

Next Meeting February 18, 2020