

Christ Church Vestry Meeting minutes

June 19, 2017.

Present: Pastor Anna Doherty, Sr. Warden James Elam, Jr. Warden Susan Bertrand, Treasurer David Waletzko, Nancy Thompson, Teresa Shaw, Louis Egwim, Wayne Jarvis, Kristen Wilson, Robb Keech, Vestry Clerk Philip Vander Haar.

Absent: Jenny Burke.

Guest: Molly Weiss.

Called to order at 7:00 by James Elam.

Opening Prayer - Pastor Anna.

The agenda and the minutes of the May meeting were approved.

Scripture Reflection.

The Vestry read Acts 1: 1-14 and reflected on it.

Weiss Postulancy.

Molly Weiss has been recommended for postulancy by the committee that she has been working with her. Postulancy is an initial time of preparation and testing for ordained ministry. She will start in the school for formation on a path to priesthood. Molly has a couple of business purposes for attending the Vestry meeting but first wanted to share her “statement of calling”. Molly read a statement of her journey of faith that brought her to understand her calling to the priesthood.

Molly had two requests for the Vestry. First she requested that the Vestry sign her nomination for postulancy. She also let the Vestry know of the opportunity to provide her with financial support. Although she does not require financial support, there is an opportunity for the parish to provide support. Some parishes like to provide some financial assistance as a way of showing their support.

Wayne Jarvis asked about the timing of the support. Molly replied that her plan is to complete this over a three-year time span. She said that she would leave the form and the information about funding opportunities with the Vestry for their consideration.

After Molly left the meeting, Pastor Anna reported that she, Wayne Jarvis and Janeen Leick had met with Molly over the last year. Pastor Anna reported that she had no reservations about supporting Molly’s postulancy.

The Vestry circulated the nomination form for signature. The issue of providing financial support will be brought up during new business.

Ministry Review

A ministry review of the Hope for Journey Home had been planned. However, the presenters were not able to attend and this will be re-scheduled.

Rector's Report

Pastor Anna had expected to miss the meeting so she had provided an extensive written report. She asked if the Vestry had any questions.

Teresa Shaw asked about the recent survey and when we will we get the survey results. Pastor Anna replied that Blane Huppert would be presenting the results to James Elam and herself. The Vestry will get an update at a future meeting.

Pastor Anna provided an update on the search for a new parish administrator. She reported that we have twelve applicants and will be having interviews later this week with two of the most qualified. They both seem to be very qualified.

Linda's last day will be next week and plans are being made to recognize her retirement.

Sr. Warden's Report.

James Elam commented that the majority of his items are in his written report. However, he did want to highlight a couple of items.

1. We are looking at options for displaying our new mission and priorities statement and how to introduce it to the parish.
2. The National Night Out is an opportunity to reach out to the community and make connections. James asked the Vestry to see where they can provide support for Mike Johnson in the preparations to make this a really successful event. Mike passed around a sign up sheet with opportunities to help.

Jr. Warden's Report.

Sue Bertrand reported that the Building & Grounds Committee did schedule a fall and a spring application of weed treatment. The cost will be \$250 per application and it will come out of the Building & Grounds budget.

Sue reported that Pat Merritt has donated a piece of stained glass.

Consent Agenda.

The consent agenda was approved with some minor corrections to the wording.

Financial Report.

Dave Waletzko reviewed the Balance Sheet and the Treasurer's Report. There were no items of concern to note.

James Elam asked if we could begin to pay out the proceeds from our food shelf fundraiser. As of May there is \$2,574 in the fund.

Robb Keech asked about the budget for rain garden maintenance. Dave responded that it is intended to cover mulch and new plantings. Mulch is the most significant expense and we will see that expense later in the year.

Old Business

Building & Grounds membership -

- The committee is not looking for a new leader at this point but is looking for younger members to add to the group. A “gifts mapping process” for the parish is planned and that may yield some potential members.
- There was some discussion around the need to be flexible enough to let people do things when it fits their schedule.
- Additional discussion was had about the need to have a more detailed description of the tasks that need to be done

IT coordinator and / or team -

- In the long term we think we may need a paid position but at this point we are looking for a volunteer who can spend a few hours a week.
- Another option to consider is to get support from a company like TechSoup. They do discounted work for non-profits and churches.
- Dave Waletzko had questions about what kind of support we need. He didn't think that it would take a lot of time to set things up (such as backups) in a way that they can just run automatically.
- It was also discussed that the level of IT experience that our new parish admin has could influence the kind of help we need.

Sound system management -

- There was general discussion questioning what this entails. What is really involved? How often is it a problem? How much time do we spend? Wayne Jarvis volunteered to help figure out the specifics of what is needed.

Remove gardening from Buildings & Grounds responsibilities -

- There is a proposal that we remove the care of the garden areas from the Building & Grounds Committee's responsibilities. We will ask families to sign up for weeding and trimming of different parts of our garden area.
- The rain garden should also not be the Building & Grounds Committee's responsibility. Laura Niederhofer is spraying with weed killer. She will likely need 20 people in the fall when it is time to cut it back. Wayne Jarvis suggested that we should put the word out long enough in advance so that people can work it into their schedule.

Ceiling fans -

- Teresa Shaw reported that someone told her that they would like us to put ceiling fans in the fellowship hall. That will be added to a list of items for consideration.

Communications Committee Update –

- Wayne Jarvis reported on a meeting held with Kelsey Schuster, the Missioner of Communications for the Diocese. They discussed how to reach out to the community. They talked about strengths and weaknesses. Items they are targeting is the website, the email blast, internal technical support, the communications plan, and expanding outreach generally. The website seemed to be the most urgent in terms of needing attention. There are opportunities to make our website more appealing and engaging. There are some service providers who could help us but they, of course, cost money. Wayne had asked Kelsey what kinds of services other churches use. We are still looking into that and will be working on this over the rest of the summer.
- The email is another thing we can work on but we will look at that after the website. There are ways to improve the quality of the email that goes out.

Update on the fixing our internet speed -

- Vestry clerk Phil Vander Haar reported that the motion to upgrade the Internet speed was passed by an email vote between the last meeting and this meeting. The motion, as follows, will be added to this month's minutes to provide documentation of the action taken.
 - *The Vestry moves that a contract be signed with Comcast to upgrade the internet speed to 100Mbps/20Mbps. This contract has zero upfront cost and a three-year commitment to a \$319.85 per month fee.*

Comcast has come out to do a ground survey and have put us in line to have this installed.

New Business

James handed out the ballot for candidates to fill Pat Jennings' open Vestry position. The nominees are Sandy Dokka, Ugo Egwim, and Aaron Twait. Ballots were circulated and collected. The winner was Ugo Egwim. Pastor Anna will follow up with Ugo. She will remind the other individuals of the opportunity to stand for Vestry at the next Annual meeting.

The consideration of Molly Weiss' request for financial support will be tabled. We will look into what we've done for past candidates. Pastor Anna will find out what other parishes have been doing.

Recap of Decisions and tasks assigned and items tabled

1. Ugo Egwim was elected to fill Pat Jennings' open position.
2. James will ask Building & Grounds for clarification on the help needed.
3. Wayne will research what is involved in the management of the sound system.
4. James will talk to Building & Grounds about ceiling fans for the Fellowship Hall.
5. James will talk to Laura Niederhofer about setting dates for rain garden well ahead of time.
6. Molly Weiss' nomination for postulancy was approved.

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7. Sue will follow up with Pat Merritt on the stain glass window that she is interested in gifting to the church.
8. We will research what sponsorship we've done for past postulants and Anna will check with other parishes on what they have done.

Closing Prayer - Pastor Anna.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:53.

Rector's Report

We have had a lot of things going on this past month, which I wanted to share with you all!

First of all, many of you already know that our parish administrator Linda Deaver is retiring at the end of June. Her last day is June 30. Linda and her husband Chuck are moving to New Ulm to be closer to their children. The wardens and staff will be taking Linda out to lunch to celebrate, and we plan to give her a gift, celebrating her 5 years of ministry with us. If you see Linda, please offer her your thanks.

I have included with this report a copy of the job description for the Parish Administrator position. James and I put this together, which I hope adequately reflects our desire to consider expanding the administrator position to include website and social media updates, as well as general communications. We have posted the position on our church Facebook page, as well as Craig's List and the newsletter among local congregations. At this point we have had almost twelve applicants for the position. Sue, James and I have sorted through applications, and we will be interviewing our top three candidates next week. While it would be great to have Linda's replacement in by July 1, James is also exploring the possibility of hiring a temporary employee, if we need it. We will certainly provide you with updates as we know more.

If you have any questions about the process, please feel free to talk to any one of us.

Blane has finished tabulating the survey data, and is meeting with James and myself next week to talk through some of the results.

I have put together a committee of people to help plan out adult formation for the next year. We met for the first time on June 15, and there are a lot of great ideas and plans for upcoming formation. I am grateful for the committee's help in putting together a good program for the next year.

This month we had the first of our summer Wednesday programming events, on June 14. This is a continuation of our Wednesday night offerings that we have during the school year, only we are offering it once a month during the summers. Last year, we received some feedback that summer learning opportunities are a welcome addition for families, so we we are trying it out this year. We had a lot of fun on June 14, so please join us next month for our next installment!

There are two updates on my own continuing education. I have been accepted—very last minute!—into a course on non-profit management at the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University. I will be away participating in this course, June 19-21, so I will unexpectedly unable to attend this month's vestry meeting. My apologies for missing it! I do expect that the course will help provide me with some of the tools that I need to continue to grow in my professional capacity as an administrator.

Also, with all of the recent changes in staffing here at Christ Church I have enrolled in a two day course Stepping Up to Staffing, at Luther Seminary in St. Paul. That course will be offered August 21-22, so I am looking forward to learning more about staffing issues also.

If you have any questions or concerns about anything mentioned in this report, please feel free to let me know. Sorry to miss this month's meeting! I am so grateful for your leadership and your thoughtfulness!

Senior Warden's Report

- Continue to work on upgrading internet. Contract with Comcast has been signed. Comcast was out for a second site survey on June 13 to ensure there weren't any issues with installation. Signed "Access to Property" authorization June 15. Awaiting date for cable installation. Continue to communicate with Pierre to ensure Buildings & Grounds is kept informed.
- New copier has been installed. Linda was trained on its use by Loffler representative. There were issues with our staff connecting their computers to the copier, but these have been resolved. New copier is capable of printing in color and has many additional features over the old model, e.g. banner printing. As previously stated, our new contract with Loffler is \$100 per month less than before.
- Mike Johnson and I have both made announcements of a plan to initiate an "Adopt a Garden" program to cover maintenance of landscape areas around our church property. This primarily includes regular weeding and shrub trimming, as appropriate. Pierre is in the process of creating a map of the church property showing the landscape areas. Once completed we will post this map and invite families to sign up to maintain sections of the church's landscape throughout the growing season.
- Working with Pastor Anna and Sue Bertrand to begin process of finding a replacement for Linda. At the same time we are engaging a temp agency in case there is a gap in coverage.
- Met with Sarah Miller, Regional Director, International Association for Refugees (IAFR) and some members of support team for Ruth. Sarah is working on a project to fill the gap in support for asylum seekers in Minnesota. Sarah educated team on our role in supporting Ruth and offered additional assistance, and resources.
- Continue to work with Emergency Preparedness Committee, chaired by Catherine Harrington to develop a plan for Christ Church. Working on acquisition of an automated external defibrillator (AED) unit for Christ Church as a result of recent CPR training sessions. We will proceed with the purchase of the unit once the full cost for installation are known. We will then offer the congregation the opportunity to cover these costs through donations.
- Led first discussion on Racial Reconciliation at Wednesday Adult Education. Discussion was centered around a series of videos by Bishop Michael Curry on "Spirituality and Racial Justice."

Building and Grounds

The Building and Grounds update:

- Will soon receive a \$500 rebate from Excel for converting our outside security lights from 160 watt metal halide bulbs to 36 watt LED bulbs.
- The mowing teams are active weekly to keep up with the growing grass. Saving about \$400 per week (if we had to hire the mowing by a lawn service).
- The new copier was installed on May 24.

Sue Bertrand

Communications & New Member Engagement

New Resident Mailings: The fourth month of new resident mailings are being sent out soon. There were 197 total names on the list. The May mailing cost \$156.53, \$60 for buying the list, \$96.53 for stamps, however that does not include the indirect cost of envelopes / printing. We have asked Nancy Forman to ask people in the new member meetings if they received a letter. So far we have not heard of anyone attending church that received a letter, but we are still early in when we would be getting that feedback (i.e. people responding to May mailings would likely not have attended new member orientation yet). We plan on evaluating at the end of the summer to determine if we continue.

ECMN Meeting: The Communications Committee met with Kelsey Schuster from ECMN. We went through an evaluation process identifying some of our areas of strength and opportunities for improvement. There were five main areas that we identified for opportunities for improvement, 1) update the website 2) update our email format 3) develop and improve internal support, 4) develop communications plan / calendar and 5) expand and enact outreach. We have identified some of these as things to focus on in the near term (i.e. this summer) while others may take longer to organize. Most of these are not discrete tasks that can be achieved, but ongoing processes that we can optimize, but must continue to maintain and improve. We will be discussing the results with the broader communications team to create a more concrete plan in place for advancing these areas.

Wayne Jarvis

Welcoming Committee

For the welcoming committee, we have a training/refresher scheduled for Tuesday, June 20, and a visitor orientation scheduled for Wednesday, June 28.

The ever-present reminder for everyone to is please chat with visitors and include them in conversation with other members. Also ever-present is the reminder to be aware of anyone whom you haven't seen at church for a few week and give them a call to let them know they are missed.

Mike Johnson