

Minutes of Regular Vestry Meeting
Monday, November 18, 2013
Christ Episcopal Church
Woodbury, Minnesota

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 pm by Ernie Ashcroft.

Present: Rector Ernie Ashcroft; Senior Warden Phil Vander Haar; Junior Warden Shannon Erickson; Treasurer Dave Leick; Clerk Catherine Jacobson; elected vestry members Paul Fisher, Greg Guffey, Catherine Harrington, Jan Pereyra, Charlene Peterson, Dan Shoemaker, Susan Vold, and Jim Westcott

Absent: Elected vestry member Kathryn Pratt

Prayer and study: Ernie led the group in prayer. We then read Luke 23:33-43 (in Jesus and two criminals are crucified) using Gospel-based discipleship and three different translations of the text. After the first reading we asked ourselves, “What word or phrase struck me?” After the second reading we asked, “What is Jesus saying to me or to the church?” After the third reading we asked, “What is Jesus calling me or the church to do?”

Approval of the agenda: Susan moved that the agenda be approved. Motion seconded and carried.

Approval of vestry minutes: Jan moved that the minutes of the October 21st regular vestry meeting be approved, with an edit to the Communication & Marketing Ministry Team report. Motion seconded and carried. Catherine J. will send the revised minutes to vestry members.

Reflections on the day with Dwight Zscheile: Ernie asked vestry members to share what struck them about the day.

- Dwight did not offer any prescriptive fixes. He wanted to open us up to the fact that going forward we'll all have to “do church” in a different way.
- There is no prescription that will work for every parish; each parish needs to find its own way.
- We need to shift the paradigm without losing what we have that's good.
- There's a large cohort of people that won't come to us; we need to go into the community. In order to do that, we need to determine what the community's needs are.
- There are a lot of unchurched people. Many would not enter a church but would go to a program at, for example, a pub.
- Church gives people something they may not know they need.
- We should explore how we can use our grounds; being outside can bring people closer to God.
- There is a difference between a strategic plan (“What do we want to do or be in five years?”) and the process of discernment (asking “What does God want us to do?”). The process of discernment takes time.

- The church has changed from establishment to disestablishment.
- Our focus needs to be on faith, not just doing good works.
- People don't want church but do need God. Many consider themselves spiritual.
- There needs to be a strong emphasis on spirituality and people's spiritual growth.
- Dwight's "Practicing the Way of Jesus" is a good path.
- There's a generational difference in the desire to "join up." We need to include all ages in any discussions we have.

Ernie plans to convert his own notes from the day into something readable. Paul said that Jamie Mair will ask Dwight for his slides.

Greg recommended *Digital Disciple: Real Christianity in a Virtual World*, by Adam Thomas. This book talks about communication with the Millennial generation and the decrease in the importance of geography in forming a community. Dana has a copy of this book.

Jim recommended reading a synopsis of *Bowling Alone*, by Robert Putman. This book explores the sociological changes in America that has led to decreased membership in organizations like the VFW and the American Legion.

Ernie noted that he found on his sabbatical that churches in England (which is a more secular country than the U.S.) are really reaching out to the community.

Finance report: Dave presented the treasurer's report for October 2013 and the balance sheet for October 2013. There were several items of note. Pledge income was low, but we are starting to see it pick up in November. A property insurance payment was made. Utilities are expected come in significantly under budget. The Loaves & Fishes line item is increasing now that the main dish is no longer subsidized. The parish life minister professional development line item is negative, because the person Dana Fath Strande is taking classes with reimbursed us for a portion of the class costs. We paid two months' share of our Diocesan Fair Share. We have an ~\$11,800 deficit for the month and an almost \$6000 deficit for the year.

Dave's best forecast, based on new information, is that our total income will come in \$1500-2000 less than he thought at yesterday's all-parish meeting, at \$301,000. His best forecast is that expenses will come in at \$303,000.

The vestry discussed the need to replace the garbage disposal, at a cost of \$3500. Catherine H. moved that we use capital campaign funds to replace the garbage disposal, and that if we are ever in a position to repay it, we do so. Motion seconded. The vestry discussed the degree to which this could be included a capital expense, the lack of wisdom in ending the year with a significant budget deficit when capital campaign funds are available, the outcome of the proposed repayment for the curb stop, and that one aspect of a future capital campaign should be to build an endowment for building and grounds maintenance. Motion carried.

The vestry received the treasurer's report.

Annual meeting arrangements: The parish annual meeting will be held on Sunday, February 2 at 10:30, after a single service at 9:30. A parish dinner will be held the night before. The outgoing vestry members (Jan Pereyra, Charlene Peterson, and Kathryn Pratt), the wardens, and Ernie form the nominating committee. The vestry discussed the nominating process. It was decided that for the next two weeks parishioners will be asked to let the nominating committee know if they are interested in serving on the vestry. In early December the nominating committee will develop a ranked listing of potential candidates. Committee members will approach these people in order, in order to develop a slate.

Two concerns were raised about this process: First, we should ensure that our bylaws reflect our actual process. The executive committee will look at the bylaws and consider whether they need to be amended to bring them in harmony with our actual vestry election practices. Second, this process is fine if all is going well, but if there is conflict within the parish, this process does not provide parishioners much opportunity to select vestry members.

Stewardship timeline: In the interest of time, we did not discuss this agenda item.

Reflections on the all-parish meeting: The meeting was well-attended and went well.

Ministry team reports:

Building & Grounds: Jim said that things are going well. The team had gotten a bid on lawn mowing. The heating had been adjusted in the wake of getting the new boiler. People are signing up for shoveling. Work on the rain garden has begun.

Communication & Marketing: Greg followed up on his action items from the last vestry meeting. He said that currently we can have three more Christ Church email addresses at no cost, but he is working on getting us non-profit status with Google so that we can perhaps have more. The diocese has already paid for next year's website hosting, so we won't be responsible for that until 2015. He has given Dave estimates on the costs of our computer services.

Faith Formation: Charlene said that three 32-inch flat-screen televisions and brackets have been donated and will be put in the Sunday school rooms. Additional screens may be put in the narthex and the downstairs airlock. The Christmas pageant will be held at the 4 pm Christmas Eve service. A traditional service will be held at 8:30 pm Christmas Eve, and there will also be a 10 am Christmas morning service. In lieu of the traveling ceramic Mary and Joseph, we may have finger puppets this year.

Finance & Legal: Dave said that the team did not meet.

Outreach: Catherine H. said that Alida Knoll and Katherine Line want to have a gift-giving tree again this year.

Pastoral Care: Jan said that she and George Ham still plan to get together to discuss this team.

Small Group Ministries: None

Stewardship: Dan noted that this is a big week for stewardship, with pledge cards due on Sunday.

Strategic Planning: None

Welcoming & Evangelism: None

Worship & Music: None

Junior warden's report: Shannon distributed suggested verbiage for vestry members to use when welcoming visitors during the Sunday morning announcements; she will also email this language to vestry members. She has a meeting Wednesday regarding the storage space study with which she's been tasked.

Senior warden's report: None

Rector's report: Ernie said that Sunday is Pledge Sunday. He hopes to see vestry members in church with their pledge cards. Ernie also reiterated how well he thought Sunday's all-parish meeting went and extended his thanks to Dave and to Blane Huppert.

Final review: Catherine J. reviewed our action items:

- Catherine J. will send the revised minutes of the October 21st meeting to vestry members.
- The executive committee will look at the bylaws and consider whether they need to be amended to bring them in harmony with our actual vestry election practices.
- Shannon will email to vestry members suggested verbiage to use when welcoming visitors during the Sunday morning announcements.

Adjournment: Ernie closed the meeting with prayer at 8:46 pm.

Catherine F. Jacobson, Clerk