

HOCO Vestry Meeting

January 16, 2024

Attendees: Mary Amos, Anne Binns, Joyce Bott, Tim Cavins, Thomas Cooke, Jason Evans, Jacqueline Howells, Margaret Kahn, Carlyle Knox, Niki Menninger, Bob Murphy, Diana Smith

Guest attendees: Karen Crane - Treasurer, Vicki Bott – Genesis II

Clergy attendees: Greg Brown, Cat Connolly

Recording Secretary: Natalie Castro

1) Opening Prayer by Greg

2) Vestry Agenda approved

3) Elections/Appointments/Approvals:

- Motion to nominate Joyce Bott to be Senior Warden – approved
- Motion to nominate Carlyle Knox as Junior Warden – approved
- Motion to nominate Anne Binns to be the Clerk – approved
- Brad Follet and Simms Doster appointed to foundation Board Members – approved
- Nominate Natalie Castro to Recording Secretary – approved

4) Scripture/Bible Study: Cat – Scripture John 3:16 read by Carlyle, followed by discussion and reflection.

5) Associate Rector's Report – Cat

- Christmas and Epiphany services
 - Christmas morning – Jeans and Jammies for Christmas morning service.
 - Epiphany pageant went well, people from RITI as the Wise Men.
- Upcoming
 - 2 baptisms on Sunday – 1/14/24
 - Wedding upcoming
 - Organizing prayer buddies
- Beth is overseeing a Fundraiser for Youth Pilgrimage.
 - Have we thought about opening it up to other churches? Has not been discussed but it can be passed on to Beth.

6) Update on Genesis: Vikki Bott

- What Genesis is: Parish that is participating in the national initiative. How is the parish called to be church? Led by lay ministry group with endorsement of rector and vestry. Who are we as a Parish?
- 18-24 month spiritual journey.
- Based on Episcopal traditions and cost-effective way to guide the church
- Purpose is not to increase membership, worship or giving.
- Genesis II core team: Vikki Bott, Beth Hardin and Kirt Hibbitts
- Genesis II is a subcommittee of the Pathfinders Circle Group
- Foundation grant received of \$5,000.
- HOCO Genesis participation in the program has been going on for 6 months currently.
- 6 churches in the Diocese doing the program currently.

2024 Plans:

- Mapping our neighborhood and walking our neighborhood. Findings: We are the westernmost church in Charlotte. Many parishioners do not live in the church vicinity.
- Caroling with Merrywood – reaching out to the community/seniors.
- Trying out 90-day micro-strategies which are shorter initiatives.
- Genesis commissioning event
- Saints and Stories – looking at what our legacy is.
- Spirit Collage – answer questions such as “I am”.
- Kirt is working on Holy Hikers – walking outdoors and spiritual reflection.
- Table at Sedgifest
- First Friday Film series

7) Finance Report – Karen Crane * See Financial Report

- HOCO 2023 Financial Summary.
 - Ended 2023 with \$225 surplus
 - Great pledge revenue in Dec \$144k
- YTD Pledge receipts \$6300
- Total revenue \$7900
- Sales tax refunds over by \$4400
- Dividends interest over by \$1700
- Expenses favorable to budget by \$45000
- Ministry under by \$2600
- Parish Cash Position \$904k
 - Cash increase due to increase of pledge receipts
- Increase of ministry accounts
- Decrease in net expenses to 2729 Park Road
- Cash depleted due to big items needed. These are over and above the budget.
- Aldan music fund balance is high due to non-disbursement of funds yet. Beginning balance was \$59k now is at \$214k.
- Prepaid pledges will get reversed out in January.

- Questions between gifts and unassigned
 - Standard givers decide to give a gift at year end it goes into the general offering.
 - Unassigned bequest comes from an estate or unknown source go to the designated account.
 - Gifts over \$1500 goes to the vestry to decide where it goes.
- 2024 Budget Discussion:

As of 1/16/24 – 2024 campaign is at \$833k. The goal was \$850k.

2023 budget was \$843k.

Can unassigned bequests go to other fund needs? Yes.

Emergency restricted funds cannot be used to fund other needs.

Current deficit is \$137k. Final budget to be discussed at the vestry retreat.

Motion to allow Holly to continue handling expenses with 2023 budget?

Salary increases for staff discussed.

All other numbers remained as what was requested excepted the music budget.

- Patrick's budget impacted the most. The budget notes \$15,850 without the choral scholars.
- Patrick will be on sabbatical in 2024. His salary and supply will need to be paid.

Personal outreach to contact members who have not pledged. Each vestry member to attempt contact.

- Currently about 60 people

Will staff cuts need to be done based on the current budget?

- Greg to review what he needs and wants, and any changes needed.
- In consultation with Genesis – possibly a 3rd clergy that speaks Spanish.
- What are we investing in? Money was put into music relative to the budget. What are our priorities? What do we currently have as a staff?
- Revenue growth is needed.
- Job descriptions were updated spring 2024. Employee handbook is being updated. Compensation bands used to gauge pay.

Finance committee has given options to fund the budget. Can decisions be made by the vestry retreat?

The budget has been cut but in order to be the church we want to be, we need growth.

Need to analyze how to we can survive with a budget deficit in order to grow in the next few years.

New personnel handbook: will that help us analyze the staff positions we have.

If we target salary and positions, can we reforecast the budget?

Why does the church own a rental property? Perhaps this needs to be analyzed – possibly sell it? Much more discussion needed.

Joyce - Motion to allow the church to use the 2023 budget as guidelines until the 2024 budget is approved: Motion approved by all.

8) Employee handbook

- Jason and Mary – committee is creating/updating a new employee handbook. Not ready for approval yet but it is being reviewed for finalization.

9) Vestry Minutes

- Jason confirmed the vestry minutes are updated through October 2023 on the website. Redacted versions sent for review.

10) Reflection and break: Joyce presented a short discussion about things to know about our priests followed by a short break.

11) Rector's Report – Greg

- Vestry retreat is 2/9 and 2/10
- Vestry Covenant: Envisioning component and get to know each other.
- BGG Speakers 2024 - Blessings, gratitude, and generosity. Each vestry member will speak or choose someone to speak. Why you're here? How has Holy Comforter blessed you?
- Need a net 7 new members each year to get out of deficit budget
 - How can we make a connection with knowing our individual story?
- Leadership meeting 4 times per year – request for Vestry to attend to learn about each other to make stronger connections.
- Clergy status: Contacted about receiving a 2-year clergy. We are the only church in Charlotte who has a Sunday service in Spanish.
 - Possible bilingual clergy to serve.
 - Diocese will help with a grant for clergy position.
- Greg will serve as chaperone on Youth Pilgrimage.

12) Senior Warden's Report – Joyce

- Option for more income for the church: Building use. Possible venue for parties. Other ideas and discussions to follow.
- Solar panel update: Project ongoing since June. Voted via email to spend \$3k to do interconnection who agreed to do the work. A donation was made for the payment. Duke credit will roll over to next year.
- More work to be done and the vestry to decide if the work will move forward.
- Non-responder contacts for pledges. List is made and each member chose contacts to call.
- 2024 Vestry Liaisons:
 - Tim will take Hispanic Ministries
 - Anne will take Invite/Welcome/Connect
 - Diana will take Spiritual Formation
 - Nikki will take Outreach
 - Jacqueline will take Music
 - *(Note, after the meeting it was decided that Anne will be liaison for Spiritual Formation and Diana will be liaison for IWC)*
- Monthly Vestry meeting assignments: A list is made for assignments and should be reviewed by each member.
- Brief discussion regarding FreedUp – each vestry member is encouraged to sign up. This will help with financial stewardship.
- The vestry will sign up for at least 1 community dinner.

- It was suggested that each vestry member encourage ministries to also sign up to volunteer
- It was agreed that the vestry will help with community dinner on 2/28.

13) Junior Warden's Report – Carlyle

- Fresh water pipe break between the columbarium and the bell. Hopeful that the leak is below this area and 6 feet deep. Unsure what the leak is from but will be inspected. Does not believe that the entire pipe will need to be replaced in the near future, but it may need to be replaced in the future.
 - When the Memorial Garden is worked on, they may be able to shed some light on the issue.
 - Recommendation made to inform parishioners with loved ones in the Memorial Garden about the digging near the columbarium.
- VPOD /Counting duties and schedule is updated and available for view.

14) Old business – approval of the 2023 minutes

- Motion to approve – approved

15) Closing prayer – Greg