

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE HOLY COMFORTER
Vestry Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, July 16, 2024, 6pm
Bob & Camilla's Home

Vestry Members Present: Anne Binns, Bob Murphy, Carlyle Knox, Jaqueline Howell, Joyce Bott, Mary Amos, Niki Manke, Tim Cavins, Tom Cooke

Vestry Members Absent: Diana Smith, Jason Evans, Natalie Castro

Clergy Present: Cat Connolly, Greg Brown

Guests: Holly Williams, Karen Crane, Vicki Bott

- 1) Opening Prayer – Niki M.
- 2) Agenda Approval – Joyce B.
 - a. Motion – Niki M.; Second – Jaqueline H.; Approved – Vestry
- 3) Parish Survey Results – Vicki B.
 - a. Executive Summary and Appendix B are on the Shared Drive in a folder labeled “Survey” as well as on the website. Reviewers of the draft report included: Greg Brown, Cat Connolly, Joyce Bott (Senior Warden), Beth Hardin (Genesis Team) and Kirt Hibbitts (Genesis Team).
 - b. We're at an inflection point that requires attention and action. Shows that there is an awareness among parishioners and that it's at all churches. Survey shows that the love for Holy Comforter is very strong but there are concerns. Attendance, engagement, finances, etc. Desire to preserve what makes us special but also an excitement and readiness to experiment; however, we don't want to lose the identity of Holy Comforter which is a big challenge to balance.
 - c. Financial Update – most respondents seem to want it monthly in the Blast/Sunday Spirit.
 - Update Forums are not a favorite and would prefer it to be a link to find.
 - d. 144 parishioners responded. Respondents are skewed to older parishioners.
 - e. Tim thought it was hard to find “headlines” and themes. We're a diverse community. We're not a homogenous group and it was disappointing that younger folk did not respond.
 - Holly commented that the younger folk didn't feel like they had anything to really say and didn't want to skew anything with their opinions because they didn't feel that strongly.
 - 30s and 40s are strongly devoted in raising kids and it's hard for them to engage in some of the extracurriculars of church. Also, more dispersed in their attachment.
 - f. Joyce – worship 49% wanted services with wider variety of music. Wonder Love and Praise, Lift Every Voice. Don't want to lose the hymns and sacred music but we need to sprinkle in some others.

- g. Tim – Hispanic ministries, looked for it and found that they weren't responsive. English speaking folks wanted to bring in the Hispanic more. 30-36 people were sent a survey in Spanish. Plan to have a conversation with that congregation to for their input and needs.
 - h. Challenges & Opportunities
 - Need to find ways to welcome and invite younger/new members
 - Address financial sustainability
 - Build leadership skills – it has been noted that there's a core group that volunteer and we don't have a "deep bench". We're a middle management church and need to address how to build management and leadership skills.
 - Boost morale
 - i. Strategic Direction
 - Forum a great way to share some themes to discuss. Vestry is interested in looking at this.
 - Making resources available for compassionate change
 - Build leadership
 - Hispanic ministry focal group
 - Addressing the "nones" – The issue that people have no religious affiliation. They have lapsed in church life. How do we connect with that?
 - j. Hope that they will hear back from Vestry that we are moving forward on XYZ and how Pathfinders can help with that.
- 4) Finance Report – Karen C.
- a. June 2024 Financial Statements
 - YTD Pledge receipts favorable to net pledge budget by \$1.0k. Month unfavorable to budget by \$6.2k. YTD unfavorable to prior YTD by \$30.0k.
 - YTD Total revenue favorable to budget by \$2.1k due to plate offerings over by \$0.2k, net pledge receipts over by \$1.0k, General Offering under by \$1.4k, Interest and Dividends over by \$4.9k, Other Income over by \$3.4k, Pledge Received-Previous Year over by \$0.2k, Facilities Rental under by \$6.0k and 2729 Rental under by \$0.2k. Month unfavorable to budget by \$5.0k. YTD unfavorable to 2023 by \$13.1k.
 - YTD Expenses favorable to budget by \$18.4k. Salary & benefits under budget by \$3.4k, Ministry under budget by \$7.7k, Office under budget by \$1.7k, and Buildings & Grounds under budget by \$7.5k and Utilities over by \$1.9k. Favorable to 2023 by \$2.2k.
 - The deficit at the end of June was \$46.2k against a deficit budget of \$66.8k.
 - b. We're doing well for being halfway through the year. Usually, summer is when numbers decrease.

- c. Per Tim's suggestion, cash position report has been further detailed. Total cash decreased \$24.6k for the month and \$254.7k for the year. Temporary restricted cash was decreased by \$6.0k.
- d. It has been questioned why church would commit to additional salary/benefits when in deficit position. Announcements need to inform the parish Daisy Colon is not being paid from the operating budget. This can also be communicated at the forum and added to The Blast. We also need to give the Diocese some credit since we give a lot of money to them.
- e. Questions in the survey regarding 2729 Park Road
 - Sent to Holly – The current tenants are pleased with their current lease and want to extend. The lease ends at the end of July so by August 1 we need to send them a new lease. Current rate is \$3,200 which includes yard service. Fair to give them a slight increase, but not a big one. For the condition of the house, we're on the high side, but for other houses in the area, we're on the low side. Karen suggests raising rent \$100/month.
 - Carlyle suggested we have a subcommittee to discuss what are options for the house and committed group. Spin-off of 2701 CG. Holly stated that any time that she tries to talk to a developer, they want money just to give ideas.
 - Karen – congregation might appreciate knowing that someone is hearing and investigating it.
 - Can we agree to come up with the right set of talents to develop a report. Russel Weill and Frank Alexander. Holly would be willing to call. Frank Alexander is a developer and recently retired. Need a minimum of 3. Carlyle suggested bringing in an outside voice as well. Karen felt the 2 mentioned were good ideas because they have been involved in development.
- f. Still to have a financial portion in the upcoming forum.
 - Joyce to update about Daisy Colon.
 - Carlyle and Greg to update about 2729 Park Road.

We owe \$68k and Foundation did not immediately approve to modify through extension the loan yet as they wanted further investigation into the Diocesan loan option. Jonathan Weathers noted that the Diocesan loan was intended for improvements or capital projects. With the ballon payment due in November, it is suggested to provide the Foundation with this information and request they again consider the loan modification/extension.

- 5) Scripture/Bible Study – Carlyle K.
 - a. John 5:30-47

6) Junior Warden's Report – Carlyle K.

a. Sidewalk

- Folder in shared drive about the crosswalk.
- Crosswalk is happening and we don't have the time, money and resources to fight it. Based on advice from Russell and Jason and based on what we learned from the meeting with the City, get an appraisal.
- There has been some email traffic getting our "political group" in front of City Council, but it was stated that this may not be a recommended path.
- Jason is supposed to be getting an appraiser but he's out of the country. Carlyle to follow up.

b. Solar Project Update

- Contract has been shared with Mary Lindsay Evans and Joyce. Their comments have been addressed by Renu.
- Also been shared with the Foundation. Carlyle wants to send them questions and comments.
- Don't have a contract yet but moving towards it.
- We did not launch a bio-panel program yet.

7) Ministry Reports

a. Worship & Music – Jaqueline H.

- Meets monthly – Hank Schmulling is retiring as lecture captain and Heather LaJoie is taking over.
- Summer schedule continues through September 1st and standard schedule will resume on September 8th.
 - Liturgy & Music Ministry requests clergy and Vestry consider moving to 1 service. Discussion about options for an "other" service in the event we move to keeping summer schedule.
- Important Dates to Note:
 - Bishop's Visit: September 29th
 - All Saints' Day: November 1st (Friday)
 - Christmas Eve: December 24th (Tuesday)
 - Ash Wednesday: March 4th
 - Palm Sunday: April 13th
 - Maundy Thursday: April 17th
 - Good Friday: April 18th
 - Easter Sunday: April 20th
- Bilingual Services: Epiphany and Pentecost

b. Hispanic Ministries – Tim C.

- Good attendance for conference held every other year for Hispanic Ministries --- held at Kanuga.

- Hispanic Ministry significantly younger participants. Lot of energy and inspiring to see it since it's something we're looking at for our future. Holy Comforter attendees left very inspired.
- Officially welcomed Daisy on her first day. Had cake and lunch (still doing every first Sunday of the month).
- Crowds have been mixed, not a huge crowd but not the same crowd that was here last week. A lot of conversation about why people think they're a part of our church but don't show up every Sunday. Tim looking forward to round table to find out why.
- August 17th end of summer party. Invite everyone who feels a part of the community and get together and have good conversation.
- We've enjoyed having Cat come and celebrate in Spanish.
- Greg – meeting with clergy and Daisy and she is on fire! Pastoral care and visiting folks to talk. Wants to move the service because 12:30pm might not be the best time.

8) Associate Rector's Report – Cat C.

a. Confirmation

- 7 youth preparing for Confirmation in Sept.
- Retreat day with Greg
- Bishop's dinner – confirmands –September 28th is the dinner. None of the confirmands are Spanish speakers and there is thought as to whether we have all parish service that is bilingual or ask if bishop will stay for La Misa. Greg is asking if she has any Spanish proficiency to give La Misa that intimate time with the Bishop.

b. Wonderland Tea (August 3, 2024 – 2:30pm – 4:30pm) – Kim Weeks is helping with décor. Invite someone who is not a Holy Comforter member. Postcards of future Holy Comforter events will be shared.

c. Building Use – Trish has created a website. Holly managing calendar. Prepped and ready to go. Kevin Tydings is looking into agreement.

- Cat is working with Kirt to find out from other churches about advertising.

d. Mother Gay's funeral was a wonderful service and reception. The family was very grateful.

e. Cat going on vacation to England August 5th through the 21st.

9) Rector's Report – Greg B.

a. Annual Giving Campaign – 20 people came to the kick-off at the Brown Residence. Langley's and Jaqueline Howell are taking the lead.

- Notes to be distributed to attendees, invitees, and Vestry
- Next meeting is Tuesday, July 23rd.

b. Vocational deacon – no news to report

c. Transitional deacon – Daisy Colon

- Started July 1st. Working 20 hours per week – 10 of which are assigned to Holy Comforter. She will spend 2 Sundays a month with us primarily with La Misa.
- d. Sabbatical May-July 2025
- e. Other
 - Youth Pilgrimage to Costa Rica – June 25-July 2
 - Vacation in late July
 - Celebrating monthly Eucharist with Matthews Glen (1st Friday) and Southminster (4th Wednesday)
- f. Ministry Leaders (Staff/Vestry/Leadership)
 - Pastoral Care and Customer Service – ITS OUR COMMON CALL
 - We are in service to each one we meet/who meets us
 - Guarding people’s hearts (regardless of their treatment of OURS)
 - Acting with integrity (4 Agreements: Word, Personal, Assumptions, try your best)

10) Senior Warden’s Report – Joyce B.

- a. Tracking – first report due August meeting
 - Emailed Jessica today to pull together with the other staff members.
 - In the shared drive there is an Excel document that shows the service attendance
 - Carlyle asked Jessica to reach out to other churches for parochial reports from other churches. Jessica reaching out to St. Peter’s and Carlyle to St. Martin’s.
- b. Vestry Nominating Comm
 - Met for first time in June.
 - Communication about what it means to be a member. And other various basics about being Episcopalian. Need to have announcements in various formats.
- c. July 28th Forum – please attend
- d. Holy Comforter website - Vestry Meeting Minutes & financials are up to date
- e. Recording Secretary
 - Trish and Joyce worked on putting something in The Blast

11) Old Business/Reminders

- a. Approval of June 2024 Minutes: Motion – Bob M.; Second – Anne B.; Approved - Vestry
- b. Aug ministry – Outreach & Ministries (Niki), IWC/BGG (Diana)
- c. BGG Speakers – July (Tim C.); Aug (Anne B.); Sept. (Bob M./Joe Mynatt)
- d. Aug. Vestry Assignments: Dinner (Diana S.); Open/Close Prayers (Jason E.); Lead Scripture Study (Jason E.); Mid-Meeting Reflection (Carlyle K.)

12) Closing Prayer – Niki M.