

The Episcopal Church of St. Andrew – New London, NH

Vestry Meeting Minutes

22 July 2021

Present: Jay MacLeod, Joe Daly, Chris Heyl, Lisa Kelly, Lin Potter, Mike Quinn, Russ Register, Barbara Smith, Alice Perry.

Absent: Marni Eaton, Morris Edwards, Nonie Reynders.

Jay opened the meeting with the collect for the Feast of Mary Magdalene.

June minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

Finance: Mike submitted **ledger to budget** and written comments by email prior to the meeting, noting there is little to report that we haven't heard in previous months. There were no questions from the vestry.

Mike described recent Finance Committee meetings where the **Planned Giving** topic has been how to invest funds gifted to endowment. In general gifts will be placed in the vestry-directed general purpose endowment fund; individuals wishing to give a gift in perpetuity for a donor-restricted purpose will be asked to give a minimum \$50,000. All gifts will be invested with the Diocesan investment Fund (DIF). An Endowment Committee will be created with members serving for a term of two years. A vestry liaison will be a non-voting, ex-officio, member.

Re-opening: Joe introduced **cook-outs, coffee hour and funeral receptions**, noting that Jay had shared information from Canada's CDC that food is not a factor in COVID infections. After considerable discussion with information about Friendly Kitchen procedures and an expressed hesitancy about large indoor gatherings, we decided to begin offering outdoor coffee hours on 1 August – with juice and water rather than hot beverages, paper cups and plates, and several service stations to limit numbers of people gathered in any one place. At 8 AM people will gather on the lawn outside the door leading into the parish hall; at 10 AM, service will be on the patio.

Similarly, summer Wednesday evening cookouts will commence on 4 August. Funeral receptions for relatively small gatherings will be offered outside unless weather indicates a need to move inside, in which case care must be taken to ensure those gatherings are as safe as possible. If there is likely to be a large gathering, we would ask the family to find a different way (venue) to gather.

We also agreed that small groups are permitted to meet in church, with guidance concerning food service and social distancing.

Jay noted that **Sunday attendance** has fallen somewhat since resuming in-person worship after months of online-only services. He asked that we think about the issue and engage in conversation with people who may be re-thinking what's important in their lives and routines. While we need to acknowledge that and not simply go back to the way things were, we also want to encourage people to recognize and understand the value in the church service and

communion. While we continue to offer online services, for those who watch there is no opportunity for the distribution of communion.

Music Director Candidate: Jay noted we have a particularly strong candidate who will be visiting the weekend of 29 July through 2 August. With the help of the previous search committee, we will discern if he is a good fit by way of audition, interview, references and choir rehearsal and singing at worship on 1 August. While hiring is up to the Rector, Jay prefers to widen the process. If either party decides this candidate is not a good fit, then Jay would organize another search. Meanwhile he may need to find an interim until this or another candidate is available.

Intergenerational Parish Pilgrimage to the Holy Land: Working with Jared Goldfarb as Israeli guide, Jay has put a deposit on 20 seats for flights on Lufthansa with a November deadline to confirm a reservation of at least 10. Four youngsters have committed so far, and additional adults, for the late February trip.

Sacred Ground: Three groups recently completed a film-based curriculum on race and faith that is both important on its own merits as instructive, but also responds to a resolution passed by the 2020 Diocesan Convention mandating that all congregations commit to studying historical and ongoing racial injustice and to acting in accordance with our baptismal vows in relation to racial reconciliation.

Lisa spoke about her group's hard work (led by Jay) and recognition that knowledge gained needs to be shared with skeptics. Her group is also interested in extending relations with Navajoland around racial reconciliation and suggested there may be work that can be done with, for example, migrant farm workers in Vermont or local indigenous populations.

Alice presented comments that had been shared at the recent closing cook-out. Ellen Yenawine noted that the group led by Lucretia Jevne will continue in the fall with monthly meetings to read and discuss Jim Wallis' book: *America's Original Sin: Racism, White Privilege, and the Bridge to a New America*. Action items might include walking with and listening to the folks in Newport where Messy Church and Sunshine Diner are great opportunities to connect. Another initiative to join/support is the Poor People's Campaign centered in Concord. From the group led by Susan Schweizer suggestions included speakers, films and workshops; or one month every year with sermons devoted to Sacred Ground topics. Possible activities such as further engagement with Phillip Brooks, prison work, or Dismas House were named.

In conclusion Jay noted that the curriculum offered material of outstanding quality and spoke of some Sacred Ground participants who have already become involved with restorative justice programs in Merrimack and/or Sullivan counties as a result of their commitment to reconciliation.

Outreach Commission Membership: It was moved, seconded and unanimously voted to approve the appointment of Russ Potter and Tom Rubin to the Outreach Commission.

Any Other Business:

Vestry Vacancy: It was **moved, seconded and unanimously voted to approve the nomination of Karen Zurheide to the vestry**, filling out the term of Greg Vogt who resigned in May, through annual meeting in January 2023.

Buildings and Grounds: Chris announced that sheet rock will be installed for the office ceiling and then painting will commence next week.

Jay closed the meeting with our mutual blessing.

Respectfully submitted,
Alice Perry, Clerk

Note: The next vestry meeting will be at 5 PM on 19 August -- In-person in the parish hall!