

Vestry Meeting Minutes
10/8/09

Attendance:

Voting - Ruth Beard, Sarah Blair, David Blythe (Senior Warden), Laura Buel (Junior Warden), Diane Holland, Angela Simpson, Ed Skea

Non-Voting – Sarah Baker (Treasurer), Martha Holden, Rilla Murray, Sr. Laurian, Dave Simpson (Secretary)

Opening Prayer: Led by Sr. Laurian

General Business:

Audit – David distributed copies of the recently completed audit including the transmittal letter to Bishop Ely that accompanied it for the members' reference.

Rectory – Laura distributed copies of the letter that came with the market analysis from Tim Heney, as well as copies of the quotes from Heating and More for the heating system repairs. David indicated he is awaiting a call back with an estimate from a roofer.

Listening Hearts – Rilla and Martha joined the group to share information about a companion/parallel book to Listening Hearts entitled Grounded in God, which is a program designed for group discernment. Church copies of the book were made available to the group. Rilla shared her experience on a Vestry that used the Grounded in God book to create a culture where God was at the center of all decision making, a format that allowed them to reach consensus on many difficult issues. Martha and Rilla offered to lead the Vestry in a sort of retreat, a one-day 6-hour session to introduce us to the program. No specific action was taken by the group at this time.

H1N1 Precautions – Sr. Laurian distributed copies of the Diocesan Swine Flu Guidelines that were issued by the Diocese. The Bishop has chosen to produce a set of guidelines and leave their administration up to the local congregations, rather than try to distribute statewide mandates. The indication is that if you are infected with the virus, you will be contagious before you have symptoms.

She recommends decisions be made at this meeting about three things:

1. **Whether or not we will discontinue intinction** – When people intinct (dip the bread in the wine), many get their fingers into the wine accidentally, especially the children. The concern is that, since one of the primary ways the disease is spread is through the hands, if one person who is infected intincts, the germs may be introduced into the wine and potentially infect others. This is less of a concern when taking the common cup, because the disease is not as easily spread in this manner. There was some discussion on various ways that we could have a specific intinction cup, separate from the common cup, but the concern was that if one infected person contaminates the intinction cup, then it is contaminated for all, and that the responsibility would fall to the LEMs to manage this potentially complicated scenario with four cups at the altar. There were strong feelings on both sides of this issue, and much discussion seeking the balance between the worship traditions and public safety. Susan indicated that the Cathedral in Burlington, as well as other parishes in the state, has discontinued intinction at this time. **(See Resolutions)**

2. **Whether or not we discontinue handshaking at the peace** – Again, as the disease is thought to be spread through the hands, there is increased risk of infection when shaking hands. Coupled with this parish’s tradition of a VERY interactive exchange of the peace, where some shake hands with every single person in the room, the risk of a relatively few infected persons inadvertently spreading the disease quickly throughout the congregation is increased. Instead, we might consider other forms of exchanging the peace, such as bowing. Susan indicated that the Cathedral in Burlington has made recommendations that people not shake hands at the peace. (**See Resolutions**)
3. **Distributing hand sanitizer in the building** – Sr. recommends at least four locations, at both entrances to the church, at the credence table, and the sacristy. LEMs and Priests would use hand sanitizer during communion. (**See Resolutions**)

Sr. also recommended that the Vestry consider developing a “threat level” system to manage the remaining guidelines, and empower the Senior Warden to make the decision to close the church separate from the Vestry if the threat becomes catastrophic and there is not time to convene a meeting. There was general consensus around the table that this was so. We would also make photocopies of the Diocesan guidelines to have available on Sunday.

Incorporation – Jackie and Dot had attempted to open an account specifically for the Discretionary Fund, but were told by the bank that we needed to be incorporated as a non-profit. Susan shared that the individual parishes in VT are covered under the non-profit status of the Diocese, and need not pursue this. A letter stating this was sent to David by Susan, and copies distributed to the members for future record/reference. Susan also indicated that there is a Treasurer’s Handbook available from the Diocese. David will follow up with Sarah re: these accounts. (**Action Item!**)

Interim – Susan led the group through an exercise based on “The Five Developmental Tasks of Interim Ministry”, a handout from a previous meeting that was emailed to Vestry members on September 23rd. This discussion served to filter our needs as a congregation through the five tasks, so that Thad has somewhat standardized information to apply towards his inquiry. This was an involved discussion that gave a glimpse into what issues the congregation may be facing during the interim period. Issues of communication, oversight, the relationship with the Diocese, systems and processes took the fore. The essentials of this discussion are to be merged (by the Secretary [**Action Item!**]) with our original “Strengths and Challenges” document, sent to the members for review, then sent on to Thad with the financial package.

Laura had crunched the numbers based on last years budget, and it was determined that the church has approximately \$70,000 to spend on the full compensation package for an interim. Susan indicated that this amount would translate into approximately 8-9 units of time per week, or the rough equivalent of $\frac{3}{4}$ time. It was agreed among the group that, given the current financial picture, we would not seek a full-time interim, but rather a $\frac{3}{4}$ time.

Susan stressed to the group that the information being sent to Thad is still fluid, and we may discover that, as we are moving through the process, our needs are not necessarily where we thought they were, and that the process allows for flexibility and change, so the important thing is that we get the process moving. She indicated that there have been two interim pastors who knew Christ Church and were interested in coming here, but have since been picked up by other parishes. The time to act has come.

Financials:

Diocesan Assessment - Sr. Laurian presented briefly on the Diocesan assessment, and shared with the group a document that is apparently distributed at every Diocesan council meeting. This document breaks down by congregation the percentage of total assessment paid YTD. Of the 47 congregations listed,

Christ Church is at 0%, while the next lowest amount is 75%. To put it mildly, this document was eye-opening. Sr. Laurian indicated that this is taken into account when we are applying for grants such as the Sacred Places grant, and stressed that paying the assessment must be given renewed importance going forward. As of this meeting, we are paid up through 2008, and have enough above operating expenses to make January 09's payment, which Sarah will do. There was some discussion about how, in the absence of David's salary, we should be able to make, if not double, then one and one-half payments during the Supply phases. There was insufficient financial data present to move forward with a formal decision.

Resolutions:

A motion was proposed and adopted to discontinue the practice of intinction at the altar rail, make a recommendation but not discontinue shaking hands at the peace, have hand sanitizer available at entrances to the church, on the credence table, and in the sacristy, with Sr. Laurian to make a formal announcement at the service.

Next Meeting Monday 10/19 at 7:00