

**VESTRY MINUTES**  
**Christ Episcopal Church**  
**Montpelier, Vermont**  
**March 21, 2016 – 6:30 p.m.**

**Members present:** Rilla Murray, Senior Warden, Chair; Helen Bryan, Steve Dale, Josh Fitzhugh, Ted Long, Junior Warden; Kate McCann; Corrie Wilcox, Denise Womer

**Others in attendance:** The Rev. Paul Habersang, Priest-in-Partnership; Virginia (Ginny) Catone, Secretary; John (JJ) Jaworski, Treasurer; and Beth Ann Maier, Regional Deacon

Rilla called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. in the Christ Church chapel.

Paul read Psalm 121 and remembered the late Rev. Mary Mansfield, a member of the Christ Church parish family who had died from lymphoma earlier on this day.

1. **Regional Deacon report:** Beth Ann Maier gave some background on her appointment as Regional Deacon and described her role in the service of both Christ Church and the Church of the Good Shepherd in Barre and on several committees and other entities such as the Alleluia Fund Committee and Vermont Interfaith Action (VIA). Her work focuses on outreach ministries, about which she provided some specific program details such as VIA's goal to eliminate homelessness – now described as “being without permanent shelter” – in Vermont and the hope of a local, city-sanctioned group to achieve comparable results in Montpelier. Beth Ann announced that on April 26 beginning at 5:30 p.m. there will be a large ACTION to instruct and discern what various local organizations can do to eliminate homelessness here.

2. **Consent agenda:** The Senior Warden circulated electronically all items on the consent agenda prior to the meeting:

- a. Minutes of January 24, 2016
- b. Minutes of February 15, 2016
- c. Priest-in-Partnership report
- d. Youth & Family Ministry report

There were no requests to move any of these items to the full agenda. Steve moved acceptance of the consent agenda. Josh seconded the motion, which carried.

3. **Finance report:** Treasurer JJ presented the February financial report, which he had emailed to all members in advance.. He was upbeat about the fiscal situation thus far, with the caveat that the picture presented in his written submission is skewed temporarily by the fact that February receipts were not electronically deposited until March. The Vestry adopted a motion from Ted, seconded by Kate, to accept the financial report.

4. **Building report:** Junior Warden Ted gave a detailed summation of what he has learned to date about the church buildings and his ideas and hopes going forward. City of Montpelier Building Inspector Gene Lumbra met with Ted recently and accompanied him on a tour of the

building to determine where there are deficiencies or violations of building codes, life/safety regulations, etc. In essence, aside from fire alarms there are no protections. Ted's pronouncement that the State does not require most of the safeguards he described was tempered by his assertion that in fact Christ Church should institute many life/safety improvements, and he seemed confident that over time the parish can find grants to accomplish at least some of these. In the course of his remarks he referred to the work of the long-term space exploration subcommittee, suggesting that depending on its recommendations and the Vestry's deliberations and actions, there is potential to link some of the needed improvements to new uses of the buildings, which could have significant positive financial ramifications; e.g. grant funds or tax credit(s) to a developer.

Beyond future needs and possible approaches to meeting them, much of Ted's presentation focused on remediation of what he regarded as relatively minor but essential and fairly immediate problems that if unchecked will become much more significant, dangerous, and costly. He has already undertaken an assessment of the electrical system and found it lacking in ways that he described. Moisture is another very serious issue. As his presentation drew to an end, Ted mentioned that he has scanned the building photo inventory in the safe, so there is now a backup copy of that; and he affirmed his intention to continue spending at least part of one day a week for the remainder of the year working on the assessment and addressing building issues.

Josh pointed out the wisdom of developing a multi-year capital improvement plan, albeit tentative, with a project prioritization schedule.

5. Long-term subcommittee report: Prior to the meeting members received a written report and related attachments on the work of the long-term space exploration committee, established by the Vestry in November 2016 and chaired by Steve Dale. Steve now recapped highlights of that report, starting with the committee charge to look at potential ways to achieve greater use of the church's building space to enhance mission and ministries and generate additional revenue to help achieve sustainability of Christ Church. The documents included a listing of the committee members and sections outlining the broad principles that guided the group's work; the committee process and some addenda reflecting the extent and depth of the explorations in specific areas deemed worthy of pursuit to accomplish the goals outlined in the group's charge; and five recommendations to the Vestry for moving forward.

The first recommendation pertained to the Vestry's applying to its decision-making a set of criteria similar to those employed by the subcommittee in developing its proposals and included some specific proposals of conditions warranting inclusion in the decision-making process. Recommendation #2 was to actively pursue housing as an option; findings in this area were described and numerous specific housing-related recommendations were outlined. The remaining three recommendations were broader and viewed as having smaller and less stable income-producing potential. (*N.B. Electronic or paper copies of the referenced reports will be provided to any parishioner upon request to Steve Dale or to Ginny Catone, Secretary of the Vestry.*)

Discussion and questions followed Steve's oral recap of the document. He declined to give specific details pertaining to various housing options, saying it is too early for data on what the

options might be; rather, his hope was to reach a conclusion as to whether Christ Church is ready and willing to proceed down a road that would alter the use of some portion of its current facilities. Rilla, an active participant with him in explorations into affordable housing possibilities, added some observations. She commented on the value and importance of Downstreet Housing and Community Development, an organization which is extraordinarily well connected with all the agencies in the area. The staff there is excited about the potential of working with Christ Church on the basis that it could be a model for other churches to follow, thereby playing a significant role in the solution of local housing issues, and they think Downstreet could help attract funds for a project at our church.

Paul was enthusiastic about the fact that the conversation about alternative use of church space is in progress and indicated that the subject will be the focus of the upcoming Vestry retreat. He declined to give specific details pertaining to various housing options

6. Retreat: The Vestry retreat has been scheduled for Sunday, April 17, from 4:00-8:00 p.m. at the home of Ginny Catone, who will provide supper. Rilla announced that Jackie Arbuckle, Deacon at All Saints Episcopal Church in South Burlington, has agreed to join the Vestry as the facilitator at the retreat. In the course of her work on various other endeavors Jackie has developed the skills and experience to facilitate others. After Rilla and Paul had an initial meeting with her, they met with Vestry members Steve and Helen as a retreat planning group and agreed that the event will focus on long-term sustainability including missional sustainability. The hope is to arrive at a consensus about the direction the Vestry wishes to pursue and a structure and process for proceeding; and to develop a communications plan involving the congregation as a whole.

Rilla encouraged other Vestry members to contact her if they have questions, concerns or additional ideas for the retreat.

7. Crisis prevention and response committee: Following up on discussion at the prior meeting over the lack of a disaster management plan, Rilla reported that Maggie Thompson has agreed to chair a new committee to develop a plan and protocols for preventing and responding to crises. It will cover myriad kinds of contingencies, ranging from such issues as harassing phone calls to floods. Although the committee has not yet been formed, Rilla indicated Ted will be consulted to the extent building issues are involved, and she hoped another Vestry member would be willing to be part of the group. She welcomed members' ideas on additional potential members who might have emergency management or prevention experience.

Steve brought up issues of building security; i.e., who is responsible for locking the church at the end of the day or evening and the fact that without a key it is impossible to lock that door from the outside. He considered the present situation deficient and thought that use-of-space agreements with tenants and various other individuals and organizations should reflect a policy that will better ensure building security. Rilla indicated that access and locking of doors to the outside will be addressed by the new committee, and in the meantime the policy is that the individual in charge of an event is responsible for locking the building.

8. Parking: Rilla raised the subject of parking issues in church spaces; namely, that on some occasions people park there regardless of whether or not they are parishioners and or have business in the church. A lively discussion ensued, culminating in Josh's acquiescing to Rilla's request that he form a subcommittee to address the parking issues discussed. (Ginny volunteered to be a member, and later Ed Skea and Ted were added to the group.)

The meeting ended around 8:20 p.m. with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted:

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Virginia Catone  
Secretary of the Vestry