

VESTRY MINUTES
Christ Episcopal Church
Montpelier, Vermont
May 16, 2016

Members present: Rilla Murray, Senior Warden, Chair: Helen Bryan, Josh Fitzhugh, Ted Long, Junior Warden; Kate McCann, Liz Slayton, Corrie Wilcox, and Denise Womer

Others in attendance: The Rev. Paul Habersang, Priest-in-Partnership; John (JJ) Jaworski, Treasurer; Virginia Catone, Secretary; and Elizabeth Parker, Diocesan Council member.

Rilla called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. in the Christ Church choir room, after which Paul read the day's reflection from *Day by Day*.

1. **Consent agenda:** Kate moved acceptance of the consent agenda, comprised of the minutes of the April 17 meeting, the April/May Priest-in-Partnership report, and the April financial report. Corrie seconded the motion, which carried.

2. **Report on Diocesan Council activities:** Elizabeth Parker, Christ Church parishioner who sits on the Diocesan Council, orally supplemented her written report on recent Council activities sent to Vestry members prior to the meeting. Included were synopses of a recent Council meeting on four topics: local mission approaches; all ages formation; dismantling racism effort; and discipleship and evangelism. Most of the report focused on development and implementation of local mission approaches, the outgrowth of a resolution adopted at the November 2015 Vermont Diocese Convention.

Elizabeth also brought up a subject not covered in her written report: establishment of a communications ministry. Kathleen Moore, the Diocesan Communications Minister, is leaving her position this summer and prior to her departure is willing to offer training on developing a communications ministry at Christ Church. She feels that each church should have a team of at least two individuals who are interested in communications and willing to learn how to maximize utilization of the many modern forms of electronic communication. Elizabeth recommended that the Vestry take advantage of this limited time training opportunity as an important part of Christ Church becoming more missional and perhaps also invite some smaller nearby churches such as those in Barre and Hardwick to participate.

With reference to the fact that the Diocesan budget "contains \$45,000 to assist and support congregations in their efforts to develop and implement local mission approaches," Rilla asked Elizabeth to discover more about these funds; i.e., how to access them and the kinds of uses for which grants might be awarded.

3. **Retreat followup and status report:** Activities and meetings following up on discussion and preliminary decisions that occurred since the Vestry's April 17 retreat were the focus of the meeting. Rilla confirmed the formation of a core group called the Housing Committee that will continue initial explorations and work towards the goal of creating housing units in the parish house. Steve Dale will serve as chair, and the other members at this time are Shawn Bryan, Judy

Walke, and Ted Long, along with Senior Warden Rilla Murray and Priest-in-Partnership Paul Habersang as ex-officio members. Rilla anticipates that this small group will expand as they develop a clearer understanding of the scope and nature of the project and that many more parishioners will over time become involved in the complex undertaking. The committee's responsibilities include ongoing reporting to the Vestry on its progress, including who might be served, how the project might be funded, and exactly what will be involved in terms of construction.

Rilla reported on the committee's very positive meeting earlier in the day with Eileen Peltier, Executive Director of Downstreet Housing and Community Development. There was agreement on several imminent steps which she described; and once certain information is known there will be a meeting with appropriate city officials to describe what is envisioned. Rilla mentioned that the three options for housing include adding one story, two stories or razing the parish house and erecting a new building, with a multitude of factors including cost affecting the decision. As the meeting progressed she provided additional details of the discussion with Ms. Peltier, including the benefits of working with Downstreet and the various organizations with which they partner as compared to using private developers.

In an All Parish Conversation scheduled for Sunday, May 22, Steve Dale will bring the congregation up to date on what has transpired thus far and describe the three options. Then Judy Walke will facilitate small group conversations on the subject, and the ideas will be captured on Post It notes and incorporated into a cohesive document for future consideration. Rilla encouraged all Vestry members to attend the Sunday event.

Paul viewed as very positive the fact that Ms. Peltier regards Christ Church's interest in developing housing as a social justice issue; a way to provide affordable housing in downtown Montpelier to a segment of the population that might not otherwise be served locally.

In the course of the deliberations Liz mentioned the importance of consulting local historic preservation district folks at an early stage. She also had numerous questions to which Rilla responded.

Paul predicted that as time passes Christ Church will be called upon on many occasions and in many different forums to tell its story, starting with the establishment of a collaborative mutual ministry model nearly five years ago and continuing through many notable initiatives and achievements up to the current endeavor and beyond. He observed that a very significant aspect of our parish story throughout this time is the rise of leaders with vision and intellect who are not constrained by having to seek permission to take initiative, who form what have come to be known as "centers for creativity." Ginny Catone has agreed to serve as ongoing chronicler of these passages and events.

4. Parking Committee report and recommendations: Josh presented the findings and recommendations of the subcommittee sanctioned at the March meeting to address certain parking issues. Other members of the group were Ted Lyons, Ed Skea, and Ginny Catone, joined by parish administrator Dierdre Allen. Consensus was reached on the following:

- stencil each of the Church parking spots with the letters “CC”; with the two spaces facing the east designated for clergy and staff;
- parishioners who rent space in the building may park in church spaces when they are in their respective offices; other renters are not entitled to do so;
- parishioners are to be informed that they should not use the church parking spaces on Wednesdays between 8:00 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. unless they are soup kitchen volunteers; or on other days and at times warranted and as publicized in church bulletins or on the website; and that the church will use cones to block out parking spaces needed for special visits or funerals; and
- the parking situation will be reassessed if a problem persists, and future steps might include requiring Christ Church identification on windshields, license plate numbers and, as a last resort, towing of unauthorized vehicles.

Josh and Ted will undertake to stencil the parking spaces as soon as possible. Helen suggested taking a picture of a stenciled space to post on the web site.

5. Definition of outreach: Per discussion at the April 17 meeting on the need for a definition of outreach to guide decisions on the allocation of donations for that purpose, Kate proposed that the Vestry consider the following:

The purpose of outreach at Christ Church is to facilitate through all parishioners our Lord’s caring and sharing of ministries to the greater community (as defined by beyond the congregation, the church facility, or the local sphere of influence of the church); to fulfill our baptismal vow to “seek and serve Christ in all persons.” Through the time, talent and treasure of this parish and its members we participate in a variety of programs and projects to help and encourage disadvantaged members of the community at the locations where those in need are.

Rilla indicated that this subject would be placed on the agenda for a future meeting, after the members have given thought to the wording and discussed any proposed modifications.

Noting that this subject came up because the family of the late Mary Mansfield asked that memorial contributions in her name be used for outreach, Helen pointed out that those donations can be set aside for distribution at a later time.

6. Syrian refugee family: Initiated by Paul at the behest of a parishioner, there was a brief discussion about possibly sponsoring a Syrian refugee family. Although Rutland has made a well publicized effort to welcome Syrian refugees into that community, Paul was unaware of whether in fact any are interested in locating in Montpelier.

Liz observed that it is important to learn what Vermont's Refugee Resettlement Program means by "assisting," in response to which Paul said he had asked the parishioner to contact the organization to learn whether there is any interest and if so, what kind of support would be needed. Rilla suggested that if no Syrian families intend to come to Montpelier, perhaps Christ Church could collaborate with Rutland's Trinity Episcopal Church in some way to assist those settling in that area. Several members spoke in favor of offering some kind of help, and there were no objections to doing so.

7. Recording Treasurer: On a motion from Helen, duly seconded, the Vestry voted to appoint Kathy Preis as Recording Treasurer. Although Aldora Chamberlin was elected to the position in January, she subsequently had to resign due to health reasons and in the meantime Jamie Brooks temporarily resumed the Recording Treasurer duties.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Virginia Catone
Secretary of the Vestry