

**Vestry Minutes
Christ Episcopal Church
Montpelier, Vermont
January 15, 2018**

Members present: Bruce Story, Senior Warden, Chair; David Blythe, Helen Bryan, Steve Dale, Josh Fitzhugh, Ted Long, Junior Warden; Joan Murray, Liz Slayton, and Corrie Wilcox

Others in attendance: Paul Habersang, Priest-in-Partnership; John Jaworski, Treasurer; Virginia Catone, Secretary; and Shawn Bryan

Bruce called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. in the sanctuary. Rev. Paul, in recognition of this being the federal holiday marking the birthday of notable civil rights activist Martin Luther King Jr., read passages from Dr. King's biography indicative of what he stood for and a relevant passage from the Gospel of Luke.

1. Consent agenda: Helen moved approval of the Consent Agenda, consisting of the minutes

of the December 18, 2017 meeting, the Priest-in-Partnership report for December-January, and the December financial statement. Joan seconded the motion, which carried. Treasurer John noted that 2017 closed out at 102% over budget.

2. Finance Committee report: On behalf of the committee, Helen presented the final proposed budget for 2018, which must be approved by the Vestry at its organizational meeting following the January 28 Annual Meeting. She noted that, with pledges thus far amounting to approximately \$150,000 - about \$20,000 behind last year at this time - it is a bit of a "stretch" budget. As she advised the Vestry at the last meeting, the major increase is \$3,000 in the Diocesan assessment; and the budget does not address the as-yet unknown increase in contributions which the Diocese will seek from all parishes to help cover its 2018 deficit.

John reported that progress continues toward transitioning to the QuickBooks accounting software system.

3. Capital campaign feasibility study: Following up on discussion at the December meeting, Josh advised that Sharon Fannon has reported that thus far \$220,000 has been committed by members of the congregation whom she has interviewed to determine their willingness to contribute to a capital campaign. She will continue her face-to-face meetings to those on the selected list of about two dozen significant annual monetary contributors. Due to the fact that she cannot attend the Annual Meeting, Josh, Paul and possibly a few others will meet with her prior to that event.

Josh told the members that Sharon is pleased with the response from those with whom she has met, that people have been very supportive. He also observed that to

some extent there is a correlation between annual giving and contributing to a capital campaign. Finally, he reiterated the information reported at the prior meeting as to the details which Sharon will provide at the February meeting.

In the extensive dialogue which followed his report, Josh reminded the members that while \$1,500,000 is the estimated cost figure as of now for completing all the known external sanctuary work, \$400,000-500,000 is a realistic expectation of the capacity to proceed with the highest priority projects on the street side of the sanctuary. He pointed out that the Vestry has yet to set a figure as a goal and suggested, in effect, that factors other than contributions from within the parish may unfold in the future as ways to support the cost of the edifice.

A paramount concern seemed to be the longer range picture given that the current effort seems directed primarily at supporting just the most critical needs that should be addressed this year. Joan in particular wondered about the ramifications for the future of focusing on 2018 and the shorter term priority projects, suggesting that to do so might preclude a longer range capital campaign for addressing all the sanctuary restoration needs. She considered it important to remain open on this subject. Steve observed that his interview with Sharon centered on 2018. He also suggested it would be helpful to decide whether contributions might be made on a monthly rather than a yearly basis, to which Josh replied that it would be fine if people choose to do that. Josh reiterated his skepticism as to the ability of the congregation, given the ages of many members, to commit now to contributing to a large scale capital campaign. Paul also weighed in on this subject, pointing out that long-term support of building repairs can include such options as members' pledging contributions through life insurance.

As the discussion came to a close, Paul urged that at the Annual Meeting members have ample opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback regarding a capital campaign. He also made a suggestion as to who might possibly manage the campaign if the Vestry decides to move forward with it.

4. Housing Committee update: Steve reported that there has been little change since the last Vestry meeting. The committee remains reasonably positive as to the feasibility of erecting apartments on the parish house site, contingent on funding availability. The meeting between the church's and the Basharas' architects that he mentioned at the last Vestry meeting has not yet occurred. The housing committee hopes for some modifications in the family's planned hotel and parking structure project which will be compatible with that of the church. He described the city's review processes to which the Basharas' plans are subject and the negative ramifications for the church if an acceptable plan for parking spaces for each housing unit does not materialize. From a space and design perspective Steve remarked that the housing project is feasible although it less ideal than hoped. Indications are that the commitment to securing financing for it remains intact.

Answering an inquiry, Shawn Bryan advised that the greatest opportunity for appeal of the hotel-parking complex would be based on the aesthetics of a parking structure being compatible with Montpelier's downtown aesthetics. He then described the appeal process which a challenge would entail.

5. Convention delegates: Rev. Paul advised that one member of the congregation has agreed to serve as a delegate to the Diocese Annual Convention and that he will meet the next day with another potential candidate.

6. Annual Meeting: Paul also reviewed the items which will be included on the upcoming Annual Meeting agenda. He considered it particularly important from a transparency perspective to talk about the Diocesan assessment.

In the ensuing discussion about the Annual Meeting, there was a suggestion that attention should be called to George Estes' "Open Hands Café" which he will operate five days a week in the parish hall.

7. 150th anniversary celebration: Paul related progress thus far with plans for the upcoming anniversary celebrations. He mentioned several events which already are on the calendar, among them Bishop Ely's June 6 visitation and a celebration that same month of the 25th anniversary of Sister Laurian's ordination to the priesthood.

After Paul told of the wealth of historical photos of the church he found at the Vermont Historical Society, several members offered ideas for the celebration. Among them were David's suggestion to develop a list of all the Christ Church rectors and their years of service and Josh's to put together a time capsule - a project he thought the children could be involved with. Paul added that Dave Simpson has mentioned his interest in undertaking an oral history project. There was a suggestion to solicit the congregation's ideas on other projects relevant to the anniversary celebration.

8. Altar Guild project: Liz described this ministry's initiative to repair old vestments which they will send to Akobo, South Sudan in time for the installation of the Reverend John Jock Chol who recently was ordained as Bishop of the new Episcopal Diocese of Akobo.

9. Fellowship groups: Steve reported that many details have been settled regarding the formation of the small discussion groups which he has described at prior meetings, and he gave examples of topics that the group's might discuss. A letter will be sent within the week asking the congregation to express by February 5 their interest in participating.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Virginia Catone

Secretary of the Vestry