

**Vestry Minutes
Christ Episcopal Church
Montpelier, Vermont
May 21, 2018**

Members present: Bruce Story, Senior Warden, Chair; David Blythe, Shawn Bryan, Josh Fitzhugh (by telephone), Sarah Hofmann (by telephone), Diane Holland, Ted Long, Junior Warden; Joan Murray, and Liz Slayton

Others in attendance: Rev. Paul Habersang, Priest-in-Partnership; John Jaworski, Treasurer; Virginia Catone, Vestry Secretary, Helen Bryan, co-Chair, Capital Campaign Committee; and Sharon Winn, Capital Campaign Manager

Bruce called the meeting to order, after which Paul read a prayer for Pentecost.

1. **Consent agenda:** Diane moved approval of the monthly consent agenda, consisting of the April 16 minutes, the Priest-in-Partnership's report for April-May, and the April financial statement. Liz seconded the motion, which carried.

2. **Capital Campaign:** Helen Bryan gave an update on the campaign, which will be announced to the congregation on June 3. The first phase, which is underway, is to identify leadership gifts, crucial before progressing with a bigger campaign. The goal of this stage is \$400,000, which is near to realization. The next goal will be directed at the whole parish. Finally, the campaign committee hopes to reach out to former and inactive church members and the greater community.

Helen went on to report that the campaign steering committee is still in the formation process; and that it continues its work towards establishing the campaign's final monetary objective by discerning the amount which might be expected via a one-on-one canvass of every individual or family unit in the parish. She observed that assurance of pledges from the leadership's individual members to donate to the campaign is crucial to the success of the intra-parish campaign. To that end, certain members of the leadership team, after training from church member Ellen Lovell, have been practicing with one another the big "ask's." Sarah Hofmann has agreed to serve as chair of the parish gifts team. Josh is the chair of the leadership gifts group.

Capital Campaign Manager Sharon Winn followed with details on the process of launching the campaign. On June 3 there will be an announcement to the congregation of the total campaign goal, with the expectation of reporting that by that date \$400,000 will have been pledged. She interjected that reaching that amount is easier than will be achieving the larger campaign goal through smaller parish individual/family gifts. August 31 is the date for completion of that phase.

At this point Sharon observed that she would train each member of the Vestry and then former leaders, once they have made their individual pledges, on how to conduct the every member canvass. She like Helen stressed the importance of the leaders' making their individual pledges by the June 3 announcement to the congregation. The expectation for each of these leaders is that they will meet individually with four or five members/family units of the congregation to seek their ability and willingness to donate. In the course of the discussion, she described "connection" and "relationships" as key elements of the this process, with the leaders - having already made personal pledges - building on and strengthening personal relationships and connections within Christ Church. Sharon stressed

that broad participation is crucial to the campaign, within the parish and well as reaching out for support from the broader community.

Upon completion of Helen's and Sharon's opening presentations, Bruce described from his personal and positive experience the worth of the training and practice sessions and the good reaction to his conversations thus far with (a) member(s) of the congregation about pledging to the capital campaign. At this point Helen agreed that the training was very valuable and empowering and gave the members of the leadership group a sense of doing something valuable and worthwhile, very important and positive for our church community.

Josh added his affirmation that the one-on-one experience has great value, and that a member who has already pledged has greater confidence in approaching other parishioners than if she or he had not done so. Regardless of the financial outcome of the individual conversations, he thought the outcome will be healthy for the church.

As the discussion on this topic concluded, the members learned of a May 24th meeting to discuss communications strategy with Maurice Harris, the Diocesan Communications Minister; that he will take the lead on initial training; and that the core campaign committee will need to add a communications leader.

3. "Hearts on Fire" stained glass window proposal: Prior to the meeting the Vestry received a written summary outlining an idea for commemorating in a visible and permanent way the 150th anniversary of the sanctuary and honoring the entire parish, past, present and future; while at the same time potentially raising some money to help with the parish capital campaign goal. Campaign Committee Chair Helen now orally recapped the genesis and evolution of this proposal, which in essence would involve commissioning a stained glass window featuring Mike Ridge's exciting "Hearts on Fire" anniversary design to replace the last non-commemorative window at the southeast corner of the sanctuary. *(Secretary's note: Inasmuch as there was a comprehensive written proposal and that the Vestry ultimately did not take formal action at this meeting, for the sake of brevity not all details are included in these minutes.)*

Chris Jeffrey, a local stained glass artist, would create the window, partially using pieces of old stained glass stored in the church's attic. He would try to prepare a rough sketch of his proposed design for the June 3 kickoff of the capital campaign. His preliminary estimate for the project is \$10,000 and he would want a \$2,000 deposit. Due to its complexity and other work he has already scheduled, Chris cannot complete it until 2019. The members also learned that there is an unused intact stained glass window in the attic, the value of which does not exceed a few hundred dollars. Rather than trying to sell it, Chris suggested that with the glass from that, along with the additional pieces of old stained glass, he could create at least two or three smaller windows, for an estimated cost ranging from \$300 to \$400 for each piece depending on size and niceness of the designs.

Ultimately, Helen sought the following feedback/decisions:

- (a) Does the Vestry want to go forward with the commissioning of a new stained glass window featuring the 150th anniversary logo? Would the cost come from the capital campaign or would a possible donor be sought to commission the window?
- (b) Do the Vestry and/or the capital campaign steering committee want to commission two or three smaller windows?
- (c) Would the smaller windows be used for?

Gift of donor to new Hearts on Fire window?
Gifts of appreciation to significant donors?
Raffle or silent auction items?
Offered for sale to parishioners?
Offered for sale to anyone?

The proposal elicited considerable discussion, both pro and con. Among the latter category were Josh's reservations, which he described in detail in a letter of this date addressed to the Senior Warden and the others on the Vestry. His primary concern was that "...the window may distract us, and our contributors, from the need for structural repairs to the church, which of course is the principal goal of the capital campaign." Josh also had reservations about using the "Hearts of Fire" design created for the 150th commemorative banner design, both because of the edgy image itself and the vivid colors, which may not fit in with the more muted hues of the other stained glass windows.

David expressed his lack of enthusiasm about using the 150th celebration and capital campaign design for the window. He like Josh viewed the image as disturbing; and he thought that while using it as part of an event or campaign might be acceptable, he questioned incorporating it into a permanent addition in sanctuary housing very beautiful and classic stained glass windows.

Similarly to Josh, Ted stressed that the primary focus of the capital campaign must be on the need for critical sanctuary repairs. He suggested that at a later time it might be feasible to consider a moderated version of the proposed window design.

Numerous other members seemed favorably inclined to incorporating the dove imagery into a window. Liz, for example, observed that not all stained glass windows are traditional, and that the provocative design will be representative of the current era and will cause viewers to ponder its meaning. Diane reflected that the existing window at the back of the sanctuary seems out of character with all the others, which are of a distinctive style of the 1880's and 1890's; and she explained why she thought the proposed new one would be relevant, "a living organism." Joan, who also was very favorably inclined toward the design, described it as "full of energy, just as the spirit is full of energy." Later, during discussion of possible modifications that might render the design more broadly acceptable in a sanctuary window, Joan pointed out that it automatically will change because the medium - stained glass - will have changed. She also offered to contribute to the effort to moderate the design to make it more acceptable to those who found it disquieting.

Bruce pointed out that the large banner that will hang on the exterior of the sanctuary and the posters replicating the design will elicit considerable feedback in the next month, and that by the time of the June meeting the Vestry will be more informed about the general reaction to it.

The discussion came to a close with Helen's observation to the effect that given the differences of opinion, the Vestry did not seem ready to vote on the stained glass window proposal. Although she had hoped to have a drawing of the window design from Chris Jeffrey in time for the approaching 150 anniversary celebration, she now suggested other options might be considered if there is a decision to commission a possibly modified design, such as publicly announcing the project once the capital campaign fund raising goal has been achieved.

4. **Hotel-parking lot project update:** Shawn called the members' attention to his very brief written report dated May 19, reporting that:

The city has concluded hearings on the hotel and parking garage and the Development Review Board is working on language for the permit to allow construction. We are waiting to finish negotiating the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) until we see the requirements the city imposes in the permit. Once we have the permit in hand we will finish negotiating the MOU with the Capital Plaza Corporation.

5. **Finance Committee report:** Josh said that Treasurer John needs guidance as to what account to use to pay the bills for professional assistance to Christ Church relating to the hotel-parking lot proposal and negotiations. At this point they amount to approximately \$6,000. If the Vestry does not authorize a source of funding, restricted funds are being used inappropriately. Bruce pointed out that the bill from the attorney representing the church's interests, along with those for appraisal and engineering services, are all related to the building.

On a motion by Shawn, seconded by Diane, the Vestry authorized the Treasurer to pay the bills described above from the building fund.

The meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:
Virginia Catone
Secretary of the Vestry