

## Vestry Minutes

Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, Oxford, Ohio

April 9, 2019



**Present:** Sara Palmer, Rector; Pete Lindsay, Sr. Warden; Hugo Olaiz, Jr. Warden; Jim Michael, Treasurer; Stacey Peterson, Clerk; Vestry Members: Martin Ganev, Ken Grabach, John Harper, Lisa Herrmann, Bonnie Mason, Ellen Reister and Margaret Smith

Guest: Kathleen Carels

**Absent:** Chris Shoker and Debbie Williams

**Spiritual reflections** presented by Ken for Chris.

**Agenda for 4-9-2019 Meeting:** Unanimously approved – Hugo moved and Bonnie seconded.

**Approval of 3-12-2019 Vestry Meeting Minutes:** Unanimously approved as amended – Hugo moved and Martin seconded.

### **Share blessings and challenges in our lives – Sara Palmer**

Vestry members shared a blessing and a challenge in their lives as part of a relationship-building effort.

### **Outreach report and concerns – Kathleen**

Kathleen, as Outreach Commission chair, shared the group's concern that the Outreach budget line was reduced to zero from \$4K as part of an effort to balance the 2019 budget. She noted commission members requested to address this topic at the Feb. 24, 2019, Annual Parish Meeting, but were told it wasn't the appropriate time. However, Kathleen said she wasn't made aware earlier of full extent of the planned budget cut when it would have been the appropriate time to discuss its effect on the church community.

Kathleen said her intention is to heighten Vestry's awareness of this budget decision and initiate a discussion about ways to rebuild the budget line. She provided a list of the agencies that received Outreach funds in 2018 and reviewed plans for the Easter offering allocation.

Discussion ensued with the following points raised:

- Sara noted that the Outreach Commission could be transformed from a group that signs checks to one that does fundraising through events, such as the Pancake Supper.
- One Vestry member, who was not on Vestry last year, said they had not heard about the cut to Outreach budget until recently and were surprised to learn of it.
- Another member said we're failing as Christians if we don't find ways to fund Outreach. Doing that might involve several strategies, including announcements in church and making outreach an explicit component of the Annual Pledge.

- Jim noted the 2019 budget was discussed at Vestry and Finance Committee meetings since October. That all parishioners can attend Vestry and Finance Committee meetings. And maybe this issue can prompt renewed vigor in our annual pledge campaign.
- Kathleen said she will watch the budget process carefully in the future. She noted that putting the onus on one commission to marshal parish resources to do significant fundraising may not be workable. As is, finding 10 people to manage the 10 Community Dinners a year is a challenge that's extrapolated out when other projects are added.

#### **Rector's Report – Sara Palmer**

- **Green beer day:** Parishioners manned the coffee table from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The number of students they met was "stunning."
- **Pastoral care:** Two elderly parishioners aren't doing well and should be kept in our prayers.
- **New people:** A few new students attended recent services. Sara noted Vestry members should invite family, neighbors and friends to celebrate Holy Week at Holy Trinity.
- **Holy Week:** Services are listed on the website. Sadly, Joe the donkey, at 105 years old, won't be able to attend this year.

#### **Capital campaign update – Jim**

Jim, speaking on behalf of himself and Jack Southard, proposed forming an ad hoc Capital Campaign Committee that would include the two of them as co-chairs, Diana Uhlman, Margaret Smith and Dick Nault. Conclusions on how to proceed include:

- A goal of \$200K to pay off our mortgage, with no extra fundraising on top of that goal. The Endowment Trustees currently transfer \$11,500 per year to the parish to help with loan payments. Paying off the bank loan will allow the Trustees to consider other uses for endowment income as permitted by the Endowment Charter.
- Outside consultant aren't needed; we have an experienced group that will be helping.
- The campaign would be kicked off in fall 2019 and get underway in the spring and summer.
- Immediate priorities include developing a case statement, collecting supporting documents, setting out levels of giving and developing a campaign timeline. The committee will meet in a week to work on the case statement and develop a statement to run in the May Triad.
- People will have three years to pay their pledges.

Discussion ensued with Vestry members making the following comments:

- Paying off debt isn't an effective marketing technique. Emphasizing that we'd be able to stop sending money to the bank and instead have it available to the church could be effective.
- It was clear during the earlier Capital Campaign that there would be a future campaign.

A motion to authorize a limited-time committee of the five people named above for purpose of creating a capital campaign was unanimously approved – Pete moved and Ellen seconded.

#### **Stations of the Cross proposal – Sara and Pete**

Bob and Marianne Dice have proposed donating 14 Stations of the Cross mahogany plaques from Trinity Episcopal, a Connersville, Ind., church that recently closed. If accepted, the plaques would be mounted on either side of the Nave.

Pete provided background on the Stations of the Cross as part of Lenten services. He noted it's a tradition more familiar to people with high church backgrounds. This is one of many ways to express faith, Pete said, However, there is no requirement to do the Stations of the Cross service, and the plaques could be viewed as pieces of art.

Holy Trinity's Memorials Committee will be asked to provide a recommendation on whether to accept this is a gift and what restrictions we want to put on it, if any. We would then have to find out if the donors are OK with any such restrictions. The Art Committee would also have to approve the donation. Ultimately, it would be Vestry's decision whether to accept it.

Vestry members examined three of the plaques and raised questions, including:

- Could the plaques be on display temporarily as a seasonal memorial? Pete noted the donors would have to be in agreement with that approach.
- Do the plaques fit aesthetically with the design of the church?
- Would having them permanently mounted send a message about how we worship? Do we see ourselves as consistently in a penitential mode? Would this one way of worship be construed as "the way"?

It was noted that many churches have moved away from the Stations of the Cross tradition, in some cases re-interpreting it by going to actual places and focusing on social justice issues.

### **2019 March Financial Report – Jim**

Jim said the bottom lines on page 4 and 5 of the January through March Income and Expense Report show we are in the black, with a net income of \$158K. But the Reserve Funds column shows a -\$5,910. That's money we're spending out of our reserves to balance the budget.

In response to a question, Jim said the College Grant fund is tracked on page 8 and is being used to pay 10% of the Rector's compensation. Sara said we will ask the Diocese to pay 10% of her salary in the future.

A motion to accept the March Financial Report was unanimously approved – Ellen moved and Ken seconded.

The meeting was adjourned following a call and response led by Hugo for Chris Shoker.

Respectfully submitted,

*Stacey Peterson*

Stacey Peterson, Clerk