

Vestry Minutes

Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, Oxford, Ohio

August 11, 2020



Present: Terri Thornton, Interim Rector; Dave Guilfoyle, Deacon; Pete Lindsay, Sr. Warden; John Harper, Jr. Warden; Jim Michael, Treasurer; Stacey Peterson, Clerk; Vestry members: Rosalyn Benson, Martin Ganev, Ken Grabach, Lisa Hermann, Glenn Julian, Bonnie Mason, Ellen Reister and Margaret Smith

Absent: Karen Ander Francis

Spiritual reflections led by Martin

Agenda for 8-11-2020 meeting was unanimously approved – Bonnie moved and Margaret seconded.

Approval of minutes for June 9 and 23 and July 14 meetings were unanimously approved in three separate votes.

Upcoming activities:

- Sept. 8, 7 p.m. – Vestry meeting
- Sept. TBD – Stewardship Campaign begins
- Oct. 4 – Diocesan Bishop Breidenthal visitation
- Oct. 13, 7 p.m. – Vestry meeting

July 2020 Financial Report – Jim

Jim noted the following:

- Small mistakes on pages 2 and 4 that will be corrected.
- We're ahead of budget in terms of both accrual and cash bases; there's less income than was budgeted for in several categories but also reduced expenses.
- Page 7 – Unrestricted Fund Balance is more than \$68K, but that includes the \$32K loan that we might have to pay back.

A motion to accept the July Financial Report with corrections was unanimously approved – Rosalyn moved and Bonnie seconded.

Rector's Report – Terri

Terry reported the following:

- She met with area clergy and Miami Dean of Student Affairs and is meeting with other pastors and the executive director of Hillel.
- We have a Parish Zoom account, and we're reviving the HolyT@oxford.org email account.
- Information is being added to the website aimed students, along with a banner.
- Worship services are coming together well.

- Some parish groups are holding small, physically distanced meetings, include women's monthly lunch, Friday evening prayer and group watching of the Sunday service.
- We've come a long way from where we were a few months ago, but we must start to move forward with maintaining church life in the best way possible.

Terri discussed the following issues related to the transition process:

- It's been a challenge for her to get to know parishioners with limited in-person contact.
- We need to transition from being reactive to being proactive.
- Usual communications techniques, like management by walking around, don't work now.
- The first step is to focus on circles of influence within the Parish – clergy, Vestry and staff are at the core of leadership, followed by a second ring made up of Ministry chairs and other congregational leaders. The next ring is engaged parishioners, followed by parishioners who participate but not regularly and then people who participate sporadically. Right now, the bulk of the work is falling the first two circles, which isn't healthy.
- We must identify spheres of influence. Parishioners will respond more positively when contacted by someone they know. We can use this technique to ensure people aren't lost.
- We need to create a structure that enables fast, efficient communicate, minimizing the number touchpoints without overburdening one group.

Plans for new overarching groups:

Terri has identified major areas of church life that can be grouped together. Existing committees covering these areas won't go away, but the chairs will become part of the bigger groups. In this way, spheres of influence can be used to draw people in. The groups include:

- Liturgy, worship and spiritual life
- Parish life, health and ministries (parish activities outside of liturgy)
- Communications
- Stewardship of blessings
- Infrastructure (what do we need to move forward)

Vestry members will serve as liaisons to these groups; others will chair them. An overall Task Force will be established to get things going with this effort.

The new Task Force:

Terri suggested we use the spheres of influence to reach out to parishioners with a short survey to determine how they're doing and get specific information, such as how they want to communicate and participate, and how we can make things easier. Discussion followed with comments about the existing call chain that hasn't worked all that effectively. It wasn't based on spheres of influence so Vestry members are calling people they don't know. It didn't cover everyone in the parish and didn't include any follow-up, among other things.

Terri noted there will be a workshop soon for the Vestry on the transition process and things the group needs to know to be effective at this time.

Revision of Minister's Letter of Agreement – Pete

Terri was hired with a half-time commitment, but now it's time to consider having her go full time. Jim confirmed the budget will support a fulltime commitment.

A sense of the Vestry motion was unanimously approved to have Terri on a fulltime schedule – Rosalyn moved and Ken seconded.

Vestry vacancy – Pete

There will be two upcoming Vestry vacancies – Karen has resigned, and Ellen will leave late fall. Pete asked Vestry members to check with possible candidates and make recommendations. Jim later noted that Lisa and Martin will end their terms in January; Lisa is eligible for another term.

Annual pledge drive – Pete

Margaret and John make up the Stewardship Committee; others are needed to help. The pledge drive will get underway in September.

Congregation survey – Terri and Rosalyn

The new Task Force will lead this effort. Elaine, Rosalyn and Terri have volunteered to be on it.

Vestry workday – Pete

Sometime soon, we will meet for a Vestry workday. Terri plans to poll members on preferences.

New business

- Talawanda School District has asked if children would be able to use church Wi-Fi
- Miami's annual Mega Fair will be virtual.
- Plans should be made for when Rex Man, the new music director, starts.
- The Bishop will hold a Zoom meeting with the Vestry after the service on October 4.

Comments for the Good

- Some parishioners who we haven't heard from for a while have re-established contact.
- We're averaging 60 views of Sunday services, which translates to about 80 people watching.
- Friday in-person Evening Prayer service is drawing more people.
- Appreciation was expressed for the chapel being open all time, and the suggestion was made that we put signs up welcoming people and limiting numbers.
- A resource webpage is being created for families.

Closing prayer led by Martin

Respectfully submitted,

Stacey Peterson

Stacey Peterson, Clerk