

Vestry Minutes
Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, Oxford, Ohio
Jan. 9, 2024



Present: Rev. Julie Fisher, priest in charge; Dave Guilfoyle, deacon; John Harper, senior warden; Rosalyn Benson, junior warden; Stacey Peterson, clerk; Vestry members: Jeff Ittel, Alex Nyquist, John Schaffer, Karen Shilling, Stephanie Southard, Jessica Sparks, Bill Ubbes and Gregg Wentzell; Special Guest: Rev. Jack Koepke

Absent: Jim Michael, treasurer, and Vestry member Michael Reardon

Spiritual reflections led by Stephanie

Agenda for 01-09-2024 meeting was accepted with the addition of scheduling the German dinner for Sunday, February 4, 5-7 p.m., at \$10 per person – John H. moved, and Stephanie seconded.

Vestry unanimously approved a motion that Holy Trinity pay the cost of any student who attends the dinner – Karen moved, and Stephanie seconded.

Minutes for 12-12-2023 meeting were accepted – Rosalyn moved, and Stephanie seconded.

Reports

Financial issues – John H.

Vestry unanimously accepted the December Financial Report, which was distributed prior to the meeting – John H. moved, and Rosalyn seconded.

Parish Nominating Committee 2024 – Karen

The committee has met once and delegated some responsibilities among its members. The nomination form will appear in the Sunday bulletin. The two current wardens do not plan to stand again.

Mutual Ministry Review (MMR) – Rev. Jack Koepke

An MMR is intended to do the following:

- Review the ability of the Vestry, the rector and the congregation to share leadership and further the mission of the church.
- Evaluate the past 12-18 months and answer the question: How can we do our ministry together better in the future?
- Provide an opportunity for leadership to offer constructive feedback to one another.
- Establish overall goals.
- Launch a larger cycle of review and ministry planning.

The MMR process results in the following:

- Agreement on 3-4 areas of strength in Holy Trinity's shared ministry.
- Agreement on 2-3 high-level changes that would promote greater effectiveness.
- The foundation for the next MMR.

Jack said the three parts of the MMR process are review, planning and work. He recommended the following steps that the Vestry should take:

1. Decide when to elect priest in charge to be a rector.
2. Appoint a small team of Vestry members to design an MMR process specific to Holy Trinity. Jack can help with this.
3. Conduct planning to implement the process.
4. Conduct the review.
5. Communicate the results with the congregation
6. Set the date for the next MMR.

Questions to ask as part of the MMR process include:

- What are Holy Trinity's strengths?
- What changes do we want to make to be more effective?
- What are 2-3 goals we want to commit to?

Vestry members discussed the following points:

- Challenges of the last MMR.
- How the Holy Cow survey results as well as more recent feedback might be useful.
- The relationship between the MMR and strategic planning to carry out the goals.
- The necessity for ongoing communication with the congregation.

Jack's suggestions on the small committee appointed to design the MMR process include the following:

- Wait for the new Vestry.
- Limit the group to 4-5 Vestry members.
- The committee decides how many times it meets; Jack suggested keeping it simple.
- The committee decides what feedback it needs from the congregation; the main questions to ask are the following:
 - What went well in the last 12 months?
 - How can the Vestry and the rector be more effective?

In further discussion, Jack noted the following:

- The MMR focuses on how the parish gets better at what it's doing. It requires the parish to commit to a few high-level goals and say "no" to things that don't fit the current goals.
- As a result of the MMR process, the Vestry might decide to revise the church's mission.
- It's important to look at the gifts of the congregation in determining the mission and not focus only on the needs of the community.
- Make sure to set measurable goals.
- Sometimes 12 months between MMRs is too short a timeframe; that's why 18 months is an option.

Vestry members raised concerns about making sure every voice is heard, particularly in the small planning committee; that there is a focus on mutual collaboration; and that goals are achievable, so the process is successful.

Vestry vote to call a permanent Rector – John H.

A motion was made by Bill Ubbes and seconded by Stephanie Southard of Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, Oxford, Ohio, to call our current priest in charge, The reverend Julie Blake Fisher, to become our permanent Rector.

John H. then entertained a motion to have a comment or Q&A period, but none was made. The motion was passed by a unanimous voice vote.

John H. stated the following:

Rev. Julie Blake Fisher, on behalf of the Vestry and the parish of Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, we formally invite you to lead us and guide us in a prayerful and discernful manner for as long as you want to job.

Julie read the following statement:

Beloved in Christ: It is with great joy that I accept your call to become your Rector. I spent many years in discernment about my next call, even before the pandemic, and of all the parishes I conferred with, this one was clearly the place where God was calling me to partner in ministry. I can't say enough about the excellent work of the Search Committee in sharing your hopes and dreams with me and praying with me about them. The sixteen months I've spent working with you all as Priest-in-Charge have given me time to get to know and love you all both as individuals and as a community. My sense of calling has only deepened over this time, and I look forward eagerly to serving among you for many years to come.

Jack will contact Rev. Michael Spencer, Canon for Transitions and Congregational Ministry, to get the next steps underway.

Comments for the good of the parish

John H. noted that the successful election of Julie to be rector is his comment for the good of the parish.

The meeting was closed by John H.

Respectfully submitted,

Stacey Peterson

Stacey Peterson, Clerk