

Draft Subject to Vestry Approval

MINUTES
Trinity Episcopal Church
Vestry Meeting
January 15, 2018

Present: The Reverend Dr. Luk De Volder, rector; the Reverend Elise Hanley, associate rector; Lisa Omark, Senior Warden; Charlotte Rea, Junior Warden; David Soper, Treasurer; David Assis, Sheila Bonenberger, Barbara Casey, David Jenkins, Andrew Smyth, Mary Ann Stroup, Patricia Thurston, clerk, locum tenens. Regrets: Richard Mammana, Fiona Boucher, Karen Isaacs, Kim Morris, Geri Mauhs, Sarah Woodford.

Luk called the meeting to order at 5:46.
The meeting began with opening prayer by Charlotte Rea.
Barbara Casey did the covenant reading.
Elise Hanley read the Acts 19:1-7.

Conversation: Reflection on Vestry Service Experience.

This discussion responded to three questions, used for guided conversation:

1. What is one highlight of your service on Trinity's Vestry?
2. What is one challenge you faced during your time as a Vestry member?
3. What is an area of focus you would like to see Trinity's 2018/ 2019 - 2021 Vestry classes address?

Highlights:

New staff!

Strong Sexton staff.

Eat-Pray-Play (young families).

The smaller group size is wonderful. Vestry members feel closer to each other.

The 2016 bylaws and the Covenant help new Vestry members know what is expected.

The Summer Ministry Meetings were an excellent way for Vestry members to focus on the church's ministries, beyond the Vestry discussions.

This Vestry has evolved, so that we have a better understanding of the interests of the church, at its heart. Someone suggested we do these ministry meetings earlier in the year.

ECY (Episcopal Church at Yale). We've enjoyed this new relationship.

James' Tuesday ministry.

The Pipe Organ.

Increased involvement with Episcopal Churches in NH and the region.

We love the diversity of our parish.

Challenges:

Attending other services, to see how the other services feel.

The fragility of our unity. We need to keep working to maintain and enhance our connections between Vestry and Clergy, and between Vestry and non-Vestry parishioners.

The difficulty of finding time to be as immersed in the church as we would like: participating as ushers, acolytes, sitting with people we don't know. Vestry members feel the challenge of not having enough personal time to be as involved as we would like to be.

Music program: Supporting Walden in his efforts to recruit new members.

The challenges of some of the people who attend our services. An example was discussed, where a woman who had over time demonstrated a pattern of behavior that distracts from the service, left her seat and sat on the altar steps. Another parishioner who was familiar with the woman, and who had been sitting with her, helped deal with the situation as kindly and peacefully as possible. Another example was given where a different woman stood up and started speaking during the service. We, the Vestry, feel we need to have a defined idea of what we consider “disruptive behavior”, and a plan for dealing compassionately and decisively with the people who are exhibiting disruptive behavior in our worship space during the service. We need to work with the sextons to be sure we have guidelines and procedures. We need to know how and when we deal with the behavior, and we should have the sexton’s mobile numbers so we can text them for help, if needed. Partnering with the sextons is essential for dealing with people who behave differently from what we expect or are used to. There’s a balance of allowing people to worship, while preserving the worship space. We need to think about how we go about preserving our worship space. We need to consider what people who behave differently are teaching us.

The challenges of outreach to this community, in general. We need to expand our circle of caring to encompass the homeless and those with challenges such as drug use and mental instability. How do we address the issue of people who come in for coffee downstairs, or for lunch at Chapel on the Green, who don’t attend the service?

We also need to be aware of people who come to our services, who are scared off and feel uncomfortable. There are people who do not attend our church because they feel uncomfortable about The Green and the corner of Temple and Chapel.

Our thinking has changed from observer, to feeling responsible for the church, and for the people.

Regrets: So many needs and opportunities for service and not enough time to do it all.
Recent turnover in the church office.

Focus

We need to continue to focus on attracting young families. We need to fine balance between working with people on the Green and the neighborhood leadership (NH city leaders, Yale).

Tuesday Ministry success. We need to continue supporting this ministry.

Focus on the wider community and outreach. We should consider a Vestry member from Chapel on the Green and the Tuesday Group. We are engaging more with the community. There’s a meeting with the Police Chief that will help us address some of the challenges that come to us because of our location.

We need another revenue stream, beyond pledges. We have a parish to be proud of.

Luk talked about a very positive review by the diocese. We’re the most active parish in our diocese. We have a high percentage of active membership. We can’t take it for granted. We must be vigilant. The challenge is opening ourselves to the struggles of other churches. How can we reach out and help. We need to open ourselves to growth. An example is the Taize service, where half the attendees are visitors. We get a lot of visitors, but we need to figure out how to get them to stay. In the church world we are a high functioning parish. We speak our mind, but we maintain civility.

The Lombard Mennonite Peace center – Barbara Casey

The center does safe church training for church leadership.

Vestry members are encouraged to do this training.

Linda, in the church office, is coordinating training attendance.

Holiday Bazaar Recognition

Mary Ann Stroup will be preaching at the 10:00 am service. We will be recognizing 25 years of extraordinary success of the Holiday Bazaar; and 25 years of beautiful memories.

Administrative Operations

Treasurer's report – David Soper.

The November report was presented. We are close to closing the books for 2017. There are no changes for the approved budget of 2018. We're in the process of getting reimbursement for the steps.

Stewardship report – Dave Jenkins.

We are getting closer to our goal. We will need to make some phone calls. There are only a few names for phone calls. We're at \$428,000, with a goal of \$450,000. Some people on the call list have moved away. Luk is connecting with them as "Friends of Trinity".

Annual General Meeting – Lisa Omark.

Sunday after the 10:00 am service. Food will be provided by the church. Vestry members can bring sodas. We will have a short business meeting to introduce new Vestry members. The Holiday Bazaar will be the highlight. Joe Dzeda has designed a plaque.

Vestry Retreat, February 23-24 – Charlotte Rea.

The retreat will be a time to reflect. Dinner Friday night at the Graduate Club. The retreat time on Saturday will be at the Lawn Club, beginning 8:00 am. Vestry members are asked to make a \$75 contribution to help defray the costs.

Recognitions

Luk acknowledged the work of the outgoing Vestry class. The church has 41 ways to continue ministry and service. Anyone can be a guest at Vestry meetings. Rotating and staggered terms are a healthy way to get a wide variety of people to participate in church governance, while preventing burnout.

Luk thanked David Soper for getting Linda up-to-speed.

ECY has met with David Soper about finance best-practices, and they are grateful to him.

Thanks to Lisa Omark and Charlotte Rea. We have adjusted our hiring processes. Lisa's expertise behind-the-scenes was particularly helpful.

Closing Prayer – Charlotte Rea.

Vestry Retreat: February 23-24

Next Vestry Meeting: March 19