

# CHRIST CHURCH VESTRY MINUTES

November 19th, 2020

## 01. CALL TO ORDER.

- a. Present in person were: Mark Reneau; Troy Eichenberger; Laura Eichenberger; Rachel Lamar; Charlotte Boatwright; Barbara Arthur; Chip Caldwell, Senior Warden; and Fr. Will Levanway, Priest in Charge.
- b. Present on Zoom were: Ray Barney and Seth Sizer. Also in attendance was Brian J. Henry, Parish Admin.
- c. Upon declaration that a quorum was in attendance, the meeting was called to order at 5:32 PM

## 02. OPENING PRAYER & DEVOTIONAL. Fr. Will Levanway.

**03. CONSENT AGENDA APPROVAL.** The Priest in Charge opened the Consent Agenda and solicited requests to move any items to Old Business, New Business, or Other Business. Hearing none, the Consent Agenda was approved without objection.

## 04. OLD BUSINESS.

- a. 2021 Officers: Begin discussions
  1. It was noted while the precedent is that the officer positions are only one-year terms, nothing precludes anyone from filling the role multiple years in a row. Suggestions for Senior Warden, Junior Warden, Treasurer, or Clerk can be made to Chip Caldwell or Fr. Will. Decisions will be made at the December vestry meeting.
- b. Development Goals Ideas.
  1. Chip asked what do is the output we need to be thinking about and how do we go about achieving that output? Fr. Will observed the outcomes are very different depending on the goals, some are straightforward, some will require more thinking.
  2. Chip suggested we send out a survey or assign vestry members to call some of the congregation so they can get some feedback on the goals before the vestry retreat.
  3. In discussion about communication, Fr. Will noted we need shared desire about what we're pursuing. There's a difference between disagreeing about a goal, and disagreeing how we pursue a goal. As well, there needs to be ways for us to healthily and constructively communicate those disagreements, which falls under the goal of establishing a Community Covenant. He suggested that, under non-pandemic circumstances, there could be a sort of meeting with a meal after the service once a month where we could openly discuss issues.
  4. Chip suggested #9 and #15 could be merged together "Define healthy patterns for communicating..." & "Develop a community covenant..."
  5. Barbara suggested we need a clear protocol of where and how to go to air grievances, in a way that's not injurious to the parish. If we can avoid that by saying if you have issues, this is where you go and this is how you do it.

Fr. Will said there may need to be point people for certain issues, such as for diversity and inclusion, or how we're spending our money, etc. who you can talk to and they can either explain what's going on or pass things up the chain.

Chip suggested this is more of an isolated issue, and asked if we need to create a whole protocol just because of one incident.

Rebecca disagreed, and said many people have come to her with problems regarding the parish, and as well she has been that person and gone to others with problems. She said she would love for us to have that protocol where we can redirect people's complaints to Father Will, or a vestry member if it's about Fr. Will, or another point person. She noted the rule she was taught ages ago was "do not triangulate."

Ray pointed out that when someone comes to her with a problem, she doesn't go to another person to talk about it, she goes to a priest or a senior member of leadership. She emphasized what she doesn't do is go around and continue to talk about it. She observed that we have talked about this particular issue a bit, and even had Fr. Talbird help the vestry go through this with the family, and at the end of the meeting with Fr. Talbird, he said people talked to the father of the person about his daughter, but no one spoke to her herself. They talked about it to the church and to other people. Ray said the advice that Rebecca suggested was good, that if someone comes to you with a problem you redirect it to Fr. Will or a Warden, and end it. She again emphasized that we need to stop gossiping and letting things fester.

Chip recommended reviewing the protocol from the Diocese of New Jersey that was scripturally based with a several point plan of if you have an issue, here is what you do.

Will suggested the term "covenant" might imply you get kicked out if you don't abide by it, so perhaps framing it as a "rule of life" instead, goals that we aspire to and mechanisms to handle when we fall short.

Chip noted if he was a visitor looking at Christ Church's website and saw "here's how you complain about stuff at Christ Church," however, if it were framed more positively such as "in these divisive times, we as a loving parish have come together to create a way in which we have a dialogue about things with which we might not always agree" that has a different flavor. He suggested further it could tie in with mission and identity, such as "we desire to be a place where people can come and feel comfortable, whatever their positions may be. Our mission is to be a safe place."

Fr. Will observed that people likely will appreciate that transparency. Newcomers don't always know what a community is about and what they're getting into. Plenty of Evangelical churches have this sort of stuff on their website about what they believe and where they want to go, and there's no reason we cannot do the same.

6. On goals #3 and #12: Mutual collaboration with Project Canterbury.

Will suggested it would be nice to get the vestry talking to the PC board. He asked the vestry how they think about the relationship between the parish and the campus ministry, if they see it as its own separate thing that they just support, or if they wanted those attendees to be drawn to come on Sunday mornings.

Ray noted when PC had its own priest, it was different. She used to cook for them, and we'd do a couple of joint services a year, but now that Fr. Will is their priest, more Christ Church parishioners may try to support it and attend on Mondays. She thinks it's very important, and if we as parishioners come (when COVID is over), maybe they can draw students in to Sunday services too.

Laura mentioned in the past there was a joint All Hallows Eve service where you'd come dressed up, that they'd done a fish fry together in the past, and she can see there being more commingling now that we share a priest. She also agreed that when PC had its own priest it felt more separate.

Troy observed from his time on the PC board that there may be a perception on the PC side

that they are not welcome at Christ Church. He also noted the Anglo-Catholicism of Christ Church may be intimidating.

Rebecca suggested when we have the Bach Choir or other events in the future, we can offer students a few free tickets. She asked if we had ever paid people to do the aspects of worship like the altar party and torch bearers and wondered if we could offer pay or food or some other incentive to students to do so.

Will said he has thought about paying choral students to sing in the choir, because if a student is singing, two or three of their friends may come to the service to see them.

## **05. NEW BUSINESS.**

- a. 2021 Budget Approval.
  1. Seth offered recognition for the people who put together the budget proposal.
  2. Seth moved that we approve the 2021 budget in full; after a second, the motion passed unanimously.
  3. Chip noted that even though several large cuts were made to the budget, anyone can bring a special request to the vestry for approval to disburse funds.
- b. Solving Vestry "Class of 2023" imbalance – one new member to assume James Hawkins remaining 2 years
  1. Rebecca Smith volunteered to take the two-year term.
- c. Bylaws Change to Update Mid-Term Vacancies Process.
  1. Chip recognized Audrey Workman for helping work on the language to amend the bylaws for the issue created by mid-term vacancies.
  2. Rachel made a motion to accept the changes to the bylaws; after a second, discussion opened with Seth noting that we do have to get it approved by the Diocese before it goes into effect. Rebecca asked what the process would be for deciding who takes the smaller terms; Chip said the process is unspecified and therefore is left up to the vestry to decide how we go about it. The motion passed unanimously.

## **06. OTHER BUSINESS.**

- a. Annual Meeting Debrief
  1. It was noted we had less attendees than usual.
  2. Chip asked how the annual meeting went for those who attended digitally. Seth noted it was difficult to hear anyone who was in Fox Hall other than Fr. Will.
- b. Chip thanked our outgoing vestry members Laura and Joel, as well as the entire vestry for their work in this tumultuous year and he expressed how much he enjoyed working with them all. Seth thanked Chip for his leadership as Senior Warden.

## **07. CLOSING PRAYER.** Fr. Will Levanway.

## **08. ADJOURNMENT.** Meeting adjourned at 6:56 PM. The next meeting will be December 17th, 2020 at 5:30 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Brian J. Henry