

# St Philip's

episcopal church

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*a church for all people*

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## **VESTRY MEETING MINUTES** **Monday, August 26, 2019**

**Vestry Present:** Amanda Fratrik, Treat Harvey, Marjorie Miller, Pamela Njai, Kelly Ryan, David Shumate, Freda Tucker, Bynum Walter, Glenn Walters, Chapman Williams, Callie Woods

**Clergy Present:** the Rev. Jonah Kendall, the Rev. Sally French, the Rev. Jill Bullard

**Guests Present:** John Yeatts, Kathy Halloran, Charlie Steel, Emily Sparks

**Call to Order** The regular monthly meeting of the vestry of St. Philip's Church convened on August 26, 2019 at 6:09 pm at Jacqueline Harris' home at 1701 Pleasant Green Road in Durham, the Rector being in the chair and the Clerk being present. Jonah Kendall opened the meeting with a prayer.

**Reading** The rector led a discussion about the Stewardship Meditation G3 on Firstness.

**Minutes** The following revisions were noted for the June 24<sup>th</sup> vestry minutes:

- Name spelling correction: Amanda Fratrik said there is no "c" in her last name.
- Revision: Bynum Walter said the Campus Study task force did discuss the project budget, but did not discuss it with Wes (of Moss & Ross).

Bynum Walter made a motion to approve the amended minutes. Dave Shumate seconded the motion; it was approved nem. con.

### **Junior Warden's Report**

In Dan Pearson's absence, Cathy Halloran presented the Junior Warden's report and shared information about current work in the corner garden.

- The plan is to create a pollinator garden and pathways with a garden cross in middle. There will be a sign on Main and Dillard Streets saying St. Philip's church.
- They are drafting an RFQ to send to landscape companies for the planting and garden paths.
- Dan Pearson, Jon Bowman and Charlie Steel have reviewed the RFQ.
- Kelly Ryan asked about garden use with unwanted activity going on there. Kathy Halloran explained that the paths will not extend all the way to the sidewalk.
- Looked at a number of companies. Will send RFQ to at least three or four companies. Then they will have a good sense of options. John Yeatts recommended Tributary. Alexa McKerrow and Milo Pine are helping in the search for companies. Bynum Walter asked whether any are woman or minority owned?
- Consensus: We support the direction of the RFQ.

**Treasurer's Report** (See Dropbox) John Yeatts presented the Treasurer's Report.

- John Yeatts reported that July was a great month for pledges (due to the letter sent out). Also, contributions were good, so overall revenue was great. Expenses were fairly well in line.
- The audit was favorable. It brought up the need to develop a formal liquidity process.
- Amanda Fratrick suggested telling people at the beginning of the year that it's helpful to receive pledges up front or month to month.
- Treat Harvey said if stewardship becomes a year-round process, then we can reiterate this message through year-long campaign.
- Dave Shumate made a motion to approve the June and July financials. Bynum Walter seconded the motion; it was approved nem. con.
- Charlie Steel reported that the finance committee met with auditors, who presented their report.
- The auditors suggested having a policy of keeping a certain amount in reserve.
- The finance committee will look at how much total revenue goes to administrative overhead. Charlie Steel said this number does not have meaning for us because it is designed for large organizations, but the auditors required us to include it.
- There were no adjustments or comments from the audit that were significant.
- Tom Bloom did a lot of work with the auditors.
- Bynum Walter made a motion to approve the audit report. Callie Woods seconded the motion; it was approved nem. con.
- Further discussion: Treat Harvey asked whether we use these auditors every time or switch? The auditor has expertise in nonprofits. Treat Harvey suggested it may be good to change auditing companies from time to time to get new perspective.

The finance committee will be asked to consider changing to another auditor if we have used this one for five years.

## **New Business**

### **Harris Discernment Committee – Jonah Kendall**

- Jill Bullard said she has received Jackie Harris's tax bill. Charlie Steel said we cannot claim religious exemption until the property is being used for church. But it is a low tax bill because the property is classified as agricultural—a tree farm.
- Jill Bullard presented the gate lock and key to the house to Bynum Walter, who presented them to Jonah.
- Jackie Harris' ashes and her seven dogs are buried on the property, which is 49 acres. The tax value of the house is \$855,000.
- Jill Bullard explained that what Jackie meant as retreat center was people's walking through the woods and loving them as she did. She mentioned that Jackie Harris used to host picnics there.
- Charlie Steel said the house was left to St. Philip's upon condition that the property be preserved according to restrictive covenants on the land. She requested that the property be used as a conference and retreat center. If impractical, St. Philip's can sell it according to restrictive covenants and use proceeds for St. Philip's. Jackie Harris' primary desires were to: 1) preserve the property, and 2) benefit St. Philip's.
- Robert Halleyburton has done extensive research with Orange County regarding the property.
- The state of the house: It is a big house with three bedrooms and three full baths. Jackie Harris had agreed to do major renovation until she fell in January. Subsequently, the bathroom was made handicapped accessible and a gate with passcode was added.
- Charlie Steel said that Jackie Harris had insisted that Jill Bullard and Harriet Sturges be her executors. He said they have been extremely diligent and done a wonderful job! Jill Bullard is continuing to work on the estate is to discover things in the house.
- The purpose of the vestry's meeting at the house is to get a sense of house & land. These are part of Jackie's gift.
- The vestry has a big job to discern what to do with this gift. We want to do this appropriately, intelligently and lovingly.
- The executive committee met over summer to put together a possible approach. The committee proposes convening a Harris Property Discernment Committee to focus on assessing the best approach for the gift of the house and property. The document describing the creation of this discernment committee proposes three options:
  - A retreat center for St. Philip's events only
  - A community retreat center with heavy church use

- Possible disposition of the property if the first two options are impractical for fulfillment
- The committee would schedule, and provide presence and access, for St. Philip's events at the property during the discernment time. The committee members would connect with Dan Pearson for maintenance. This would give us an idea of how our use of the property would work towards St. Philip's being a church for all people.
- Structure of the committee: To include Charlie Steel, two 2 people unfamiliar with the property , a person with no connection with Jackie, two members of the vestry. Jill Bullard suggested having an expert in forestry would be helpful.
- Jonah and Bynum have had a conversation with Elizabeth Newman, who has offered to lead this committee. She has time and an interest in environmental opportunity.
- Discernment is to be concluded by the end of 2020. There will be a small budget of \$1,000. The committee will be responsible for reporting back to vestry at least quarterly.
- Treat Harvey asked if the discernment committee would be on the same timeframe as the financial and legal settlement of the house. Charlie Steel said no; the timeline is different but we would be on track to get a financial disbursement by that time.
- Amanda Fratrick asked how we are maintaining the 50 acres. Charlie Steel said good stewardship would require St. Philip's to hire a forester and come up with plan for thinning the forest. Jill Bullard pointed out that we can maintain the tree farm while selling off pines.
- Jonah said the purpose of the discernment committee is to take on such issues.
- It was noted that the Harris Property Discernment document was not included in the vestry meeting package.
- Kelly Ryan made a motion to approve the Harris Property Discernment Proposal. Pamela Njai seconded the motion. Following the discussion below, the motion was approved nem. con.
  - It was pointed out that there will be a communications strategy to go with it.
  - Amanda Fratrick suggested that we amend the document to allow the committee to make a request to the vestry for more money, time, support, etc. It was agreed that the committee can come to the vestry with further requests or to renegotiate terms of charge if the need arises.
  - Charlie Steel said the committee is not responsible for the real estate. He questioned whether, in addition to the committee, we need another mechanism for short-term care for property. Jill Bullard and Harriet Sturges have done this so far. Jonah said they had considered this in shaping this document. He reported that the Junior Warden had said his committee is taken up with other things so cannot take this on. Part of the establishment of this committee is the responsibility for taking on the care

of the property. Jill Bullard will be on the committee. Also, Robert Halleyburton will probably be on it.

- There was consensus on the amended language.
- In further discussion, Jonah reported that Elizabeth Newman expressed interest and the executive committee and Jill Bullard were favorable. Callie Woods asked if any others were considered as a leader? Jonah said he and Dan Pearson had considered Elizabeth even before she expressed interest.
- We agreed that it is important the committee not be considered politicized. Everything the committee will do will be communicated with the vestry.
- Sally said the wording makes it sound like Jonah appoints the leader and the rest of vestry appoints committee members.
- There was consensus that the vestry supports Elizabeth Newman as leader. The path will be to talk with Elizabeth.
- Also it is considered important to have a financially savvy person on the committee. Dave Shumate has agreed to serve. John Yeatts pointed out that the vestry will need to protect the committee especially once they present the decision, given that so many parishioners have strong feelings about this.
- The charge of the committee will be to evaluate the three options and give a recommendation for the vestry.
- Marjorie Miller made a motion that Elizabeth Newman be approved as the leader of the committee. Treat Harvey seconded the motion; it was approved nem. con.
- We agreed to revise the document and incorporate flexibility.
- We will review at the September vestry meeting. Also we will look at appointing a second vestry member to serve on the committee.
- Charlie Steel said he can advise us once Jackie Harris's estate has closed. The state tax return will be on November. He anticipates having the estate tied up by next spring.

### **Mutual Ministry Review - Bynum Walter**

- Dave Shuate asked that the color for good and bad be changed to be consistent.
- Treat Harvey asked whether Bynum Walter will lead in ....
- Bynum Walter identified the main conclusions with action items:
  - Comments indicate that, while the visioning process is working and the strategic plan is ok, we are a bit at a crossroads. Maybe we can do a fuller review than what we do at our annual retreat. Bynum Walter suggested a fall retreat focusing on the strategic plan. Dave Shumate reflected that some things are reduced to a task list. Kelly Ryan agreed, saying it is hard to dig into issues during vestry meetings. The suggestion is to spend a Saturday together and maybe have a facilitator join us. We will follow a similar process to that used to develop the original strategic plan.

- Comments also indicate a lack of clarity about roles. It would be good to re-circulate documents on vestry member and clergy responsibilities as well as the Galilean covenant.
- There is a question about how formation is planned. It was stated that stewardship will be a big part of adult formation. Sally said parishioners bring forward ideas that go to Sally & Jonah. Sally tries to pull together ideas and evaluate them informally. For example, we generally do programs on racial justice around Lent. We do clergy-led Bible studies. We implement ideas from Sunday small-group offerings. So, ideas come from everywhere.
- Emily Sparks is responsible for programming for children and youth. We have two set programs that are working well: Catechesis of the Good Shepard and Journey to Adulthood. There are children's ministries and youth committees.
- Kelly Ryan said she is interested in connecting programs, sharing curriculums with various groups including Rite 13, J2A, and YAC. We have a treasure of resources, including numerous well-trained children and youth leaders. Sally would like to talk with Kelly Ryan about transition points.
- It is time to rethink our vision about formation. Jonah said that now a lot of people are hungering for what we are about. We need a vision for being a community. This can be the basis for our vestry to explore the vision process.
- Also, we need clarity about how we're going to communicate information about formation. There is a lack of information about the great formation programs we have.
- Pamela Njai reflected on talking about the Galilean covenant and upheld the idea of humbling yourself. There may be things that we as vestry members may not want to do but that are important to do. How do we encourage parishioners to be stakeholders? Jonah and Pamela Njai agreed that a key component is connection.
- There was consensus that we would a retreat would enable us to focus on strategic visioning in a more complete way than during regular vestry meetings, when there is so much volume that some of the bigger issues fall through the cracks.

## **Old Business**

### **J2A Policy Guidelines - Emily Sparks**

- The 2005 policy was revised and a 2018 policy created.
- Current parents (Scotland pilgrimage) have voiced concerns. They felt that with the auction, they were funding their own and St Philip's and their youths' portions.
- The old policy relied largely on the Midgett Fund for support but that fund is in decline.
- A committee convened to evaluate J2A Policy Guidelines and proposed guidelines that changed the financial responsibility to half by parents and half by

the church. The church's portion will be funded primarily through the J2A Auction.

- J2A Auction co-chairs will include one parent and one non-parent. Youth will themselves do two fundraisers.
- The pilgrimage fund will be used instead of the Midgett fund for additional needed funds for the St. Philip's portion.
- Any overage will go to the pilgrimage fund. Scholarships will be continued (supported by pilgrimage fund).
- We will involve more voices of parents in decisions for the pilgrimage destination.
- We will cap the trip cost at \$3,000.
- Amanda Fratrik made a motion to approve the revised J2A policy guidelines. Kelly Ryan seconded the motion; it was approved nem. con.

### **Stewardship Report – Treat Harvey**

- Stewardship materials will be sent out on September 4, including a letter (sample in Dropbox), list of events, pledge card and debit form. The letter, aims to get people in the spirit of giving out of their abundance.
- Stewardship events include a 10am adult forum on September 22 and a stewardship campaign kickoff brunch on September 29. The committee is recruiting people for 4 opportunities to present ministry minutes. The culmination will be Commitment Sunday on October 27, in connection with saints of St Philip's commemoration.
- Vestry members should try to attend as many as possible. The hope is for every parishioner to attend one event.
- The committee is working with an aspirational budget for 2020.
- Pledge cards give various ways to pledge and focus on newer donors. John Yeatts asked who pays credit card fees (3 percent)—is St. Philip's paying the fee or can the fee be passed along to the donor? Tom Bloom can tell us.
- Freda Tucker asked when yellow tokens would be launched and recommended talking with Duncan Smith about it first.
- Callie Woods is collecting lists of facilitators and RSVPs to the event. Jonah encouraged vestry members to attend as a leadership group.

### **Senior Warden's Report – presented by Bynum Walter**

Bynum Walter briefly described the Consortium for Endowed Episcopal Parishes (CEEP). She suggested it may be good to plan ahead and have a few of us, including members of the Finance and/or Stewardship Committees, attend the CEEP Network annual conference. The next one is scheduled in February, 2020.

## **Rector's Report**

- Jonah asked the 4 outgoing vestry members to meet between now and the September vestry meeting.
- He said we all should be thinking about saints of St. Philip's, who will be commemorated on October 27.
- Jonah also mentioned the J2A revisions, reporting that they are in ongoing negotiations with the lawyer for Leader Resources.

**Pastoral Concerns** were presented by Sally.

**Dismissal and Adjournment** Jonah offered a closing prayer. The rector adjourned the meeting at 8:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Marjorie Miller, Clerk