

The Episcopal Church of St. Andrew – New London, NH

Vestry Meeting Minutes

16 November 2023

Present: Jay MacLeod, Billy Kelly, Fifi Mitchell, Claire Pace, Lin Potter, Russ Potter, Mike Quinn, Russ Register, Nonie Reynders, Nancy Rollins, Karen Zurheide, Alice Perry.

Absent: Morris Edwards.

Jay opened the meeting with a shared reading of a Litany for the Renewal of the Church, and a prayer.

October minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

Finance: Mike noted that we are well ahead of budget in relation to income through 31 October but because he had been working to prepare a draft 2024 budget, he did not yet closely review and share with us before the meeting copies of October 2023 operating statements; he will send these out soon.

Mike did send the preliminary 2024 budget and noted that he expects favorable revenue but that the current draft shows a \$56,000 deficit. He explained that the expense side is aspirational, what we should do as a church. There was some question about the wisdom of using “money left over” from a prior year towards such expenses. In response, Jay noted that he had learned from pre-convention materials that St. Andrew’s has the fourth largest average Sunday attendance (tied with St. Paul’s, Concord), and further, that our part of the Diocesan Investment Fund has grown significantly in the 10 years he has been with us – so much so, that he is in favor of using any surplus to make the budget balance rather than to salt those funds away. Both Jay and Mike encouraged us to email with any budget comments, questions or concerns so that Mike can produce a solid **final budget for us to approve at our December meeting** (19 December on Zoom).

Stewardship: Russ Register reported that we have to date received pledges totaling \$416,611 against our goal of \$435,000. This represents 96.5% of the goal met by 139 pledge units with an average pledge of \$3019, many of which are an increase over last year’s pledge. After an email last week from Jay as a follow-up to the original mailed appeal, Nonie, Claire and Karen will telephone those few who pledged in the past but have not yet done so this year in anticipation of the in-gathering of pledges on 26 November when we also observe St. Andrew’s Day.

Core Outreach: In an email prior to the meeting Jay noted we have \$8,354 remaining to be disbursed this year and outlined proposed Core Outreach expenses: \$4000 to the Last Sunday Outreach Matching Fund plus usual contributions to Episcopal Hospital Chaplaincy (\$1,000), Barbara C. Harris Camp (\$500), Camp Coniston (\$500) and Camp Wilmot (\$500). This would leave \$2034 and Jay asked that before the meeting we would review three websites of organizations in Israel/Palestine (identified as priorities by Russ Potter from a longer list provided by Jared Goldfarb) in response to the current tragedy in the Holy Land. In discussion,

we decided to hold the \$4000 for the Outreach matching fund until after this month's Last Sunday collection to be sure that KREM (a usual Core Outreach recipient) receives as much (or more than) as usual from the Last Sunday collection. It was **moved, seconded and unanimously voted to approve Arava Institute for Environmental Studies to receive \$2034 from Core Outreach**. Interest in continuing that support beyond 2023 was also expressed.

Buildings and Grounds: Russ Register reported that installation of the solar array is fully complete, with the panels generating significant energy on sunny days. The electric meter will be moved from the basement to an outdoor panel next week, shutting off electricity for a portion of Monday or Tuesday. This will also accomplish preventing seepage into the basement.

Russ also spoke about the 25-year report recently completed by the B & G Capital Needs Assessment Group. He noted there were 10 suggestions to be implemented in 2024 at a total expense of about \$93,500. He suggested we ask B&G to prioritize those; it was also noted that such costs would not come from the operating budget but would be capital expenses. When asked about a paved walkway for access to the patio, Jay said that project has been funded by an anonymous gift of \$10,000. We will ask Harvey to discuss with the contractor the need for a surface that will adequately support a wheelchair and also not be problematic in terms of lawn maintenance. Mike noted that we have been setting aside \$10,000 per year for such expenses but in reviewing the report as a whole and for its 25-year time frame, he suggested \$37,000 per year set aside for capital expenses might be better. This will be considered as he prepares the final budget for 2024.

Jay thanks Harvey and all involved with Buildings and Grounds projects for their sustained work.

Billy asked if we were pursuing the idea to hire a staff person to be handyman and gardener. Consensus was that by including additional amounts in the budget for such tasks, we could hire someone as needed for the work rather than create a position on staff.

Worship: Jay told us that because we celebrate St. Andrew on 26 November, he has moved observance of Christ the King from the last Sunday before Advent to 19 November. He also mentioned the ordination of Joe Rose on 9 December, expecting it to be a big occasion with likely spill-over into the parish hall and livestreaming too.

With Advent approaching, Jay will be on silent retreat from the afternoon of 26 November through 2 December. Christmas Eve services are to be at 4, 6 and 9 PM (with fourth Sunday in Advent services at 8 and 10 AM).

The vestry welcomed Jay's suggestion to halt the Thursday Healing Eucharist for a period, based on the few people coming forward for healing, to be replaced with occasional healing ministry at a Sunday service, with additional ordained clergy at "stations" to anoint those who come forward. Midday prayer will be offered all week with names of those on our parish prayer list read aloud on Thursday. One reservation is if people will miss the midweek Eucharist.

Nominations: Karen worked with outgoing vestry members (Morris, Lin, Alice) and herself as outgoing Warden to create a slate for annual meeting, with Jay's involvement. **The final slate will be presented at the December vestry meeting for approval.** With the exception of

Alternate to Convention/Convocation (agreement to serve is expected soon) the following have agreed to serve: Nancy Rollins as Junior Warden, Jennifer Giles to complete Nancy's remaining two years on the vestry, Kathy Mathias as clerk for three years, with Jerry Coogan and Susan Feyrer also for three-year vestry terms. JoAnn Hicks will serve a second two-year term as Delegate with Bill Morgan for a first term as Delegate.

Plans for 2024: Jay spoke about the proposed choir school to begin in January, but on a Monday rather than Friday after school. He spoke of the guidance received from St. John's in Portsmouth and the huge amount of advance work Nicole Densmore will need to do in December, and described a schedule for an all-age Eucharist on the first Sunday of the month when the children will sing. Those weeks, singers will also meet after school on the Friday preceding the Sunday service. "St. Andrew's" will be part of the group's name (not yet finalized) to emphasize that this is to be a church choir to sing songs from the world church. Envisioned as paperless singing as we launch the program for students in grades 2-5, we anticipate it offering to kids who stay with the program as they get older to be taught and able to read music and be a bridge to adult choir.

Jay explained that he sent an honest report on Messy Church to the Mission Resources Committee and will submit an application for a grant of \$19,000 toward the new choir school.

Jay mentioned plans to take Sunday morning servers of all ages out for an evening of bowling.

As to Voorhees internships, consensus was that we would do it again in the summer. This means we need to get a group together soon in order to get a flyer out in December and to decide whether interviews will be conducted in person or on Zoom.

With 30 people expressing interest in the pilgrimage along St. Cuthbert's Way, the large group will split into two groups. "Through walkers" will complete the trek in five days, gathering on 9 September to begin the walk on 10 September. A second group, which can include through walkers but also those walking shorter segments each of six days, will join the first group at Durham Cathedral on 15 September to begin their walk on 16 September.

Any Other Business: Lin suggested a brochure of some sort about St. Andrew's should be available in the Thrift Shop to be given to those expressing an interest in the church.

Karen noted that she and Claire will meet on Friday with Jay to conduct his annual evaluation. Claire and Jay will soon be meeting with other staff for their annual evaluations.

Jay noted that he and Nancy will be meeting with someone interested in locating a new private preschool at St. Andrew's.

It was **moved, seconded and unanimously voted to approve \$40,000 from Jay's 2024 salary as a housing allowance**, where St. Andrew's does not provide clergy housing.

Alice summarized the recent Diocesan Convention business meeting, noting more than 170 attended on Zoom and approval of all five resolutions including a Diocesan budget of more than \$2 million. Other resolutions concerned reducing the use of plastic throughout the Diocese,

making reparations to indigenous and people of color, plus a constitutional change and several canonical changes to bring canons into alignment with current practice.

Jay closed the meeting with a moment of silence and together we offered a mutual blessing in the words of the grace.

Respectfully submitted,
Alice Perry, Clerk

Note: The next vestry meeting will be 19 December 2023 on Zoom.