

## Vestry Minutes for April 28, 2018 – Retreat at the Morgan House

**Present Vestry Members:**

Genie Davis, Christy Garrett-Jones, Marilyn Larson, Chris Odom, Tom Renten, Carolyn Scott, Leigh Ann Warriner, the Rev. Bob Brown

**Guests:** John Churchwell and Jill Brown

Chris Odom called the retreat to order at 9:10 am with a welcome and thank you to all attending.

The meeting was opened with Morning Prayer service led by Chris.

John Churchwell led the group in an icebreaker activity at 9:23.

At 9:52, the group discussed the “State of the Church” and Chris asked everyone to write down 3 positive things currently about St. Peter’s and 3 actionable opportunities that exist. The group then shared their thoughts and discussion was had.

- Positives included:
  - Influx of new people, especially 20-35-year-olds; excitement for our new priest; Food Pantry; the Liturgy/seasons; a well-organized church; Christian Ed opportunities are extensive; clergy support during the interim period; small groups; landscaping; even with all the newness, we still cling to our traditions; very dedicated group of members; we continue to live out our calling; we remain a positive force in Conway
- Actionable opportunities included:
  - Infrastructure/maintenance; financial stability; more consistent giving; more involvement needed in some of the groups at St. Peter’s; newcomers are providing opportunities for new ministries; more youth and family activities; to not be scared of evangelism; we aren’t very systematic in following up with new visitors; stewardship; be unapologetically Episcopalian; Morgan House can be a door to the community (allowing folks to get comfortable with us in a “homier” setting); honor and care for the older members that may feel lost (more intentional about bringing them back into the fold); more involvement of the youth (care for the kids so parents will come); diversity and color; having an Open House to show that it’s not a scary liturgical church; acoustic improvements to the Parish Hall; genuine Sunday School for age groups; need a full-time captain at the helm (June 18); better utilization of the space we have

At 10:35, the group moved into discussing the budget and finances.

- Revised 2018 Budget
  - Leigh Ann (liaison to the Finance Committee) presented the Finance Committee’s revised 2018 budget. We now have a deficit at the end of the year of \$98,000

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- We have lost \$31,000 in pledges during the last month due to death, leaving church, and reductions
- The Vestry all agreed that spending is not the problem, but rather we have a giving problem.
- Furthermore, we are doing more at St. Peter's than ever before. We aren't overstaffed, and our staff isn't overpaid.
- Leigh Ann shared that the Finance Committee has recommended that we might need to cut back on our nursery worker paid staff. Maybe just have one paid worker and the have volunteers to help.
  - Leigh Ann stated she would confirm the number of nursery workers and how much they are paid.
- The Finance Committee is showing that no expenses have been submitted by the Rector Search Committee.
  - Amy Hawkins needs to submit a report. If no expenses occurred, that's fine, but it needs to be documented and noted.
  - Chris agreed to ask Amy to do this.
- The Finance Committee has requested a copy of Greg Warren's Letter of Agreement.
  - Chris agreed to send this to them.
- The Finance Committee recommends that a policy be set to govern the use of our Line of Credit.
  - The Vestry agreed that this was a great idea
  - John agreed to check with Mary Jane Hodges in the Diocesan office to see if they already have one we can use
- The Finance Committee recommends that a letter be sent to the congregation updating our current financial situation.
  - The budget is not extravagant.
  - The majority of the budget is for staff (payroll) and benefits.
  - They also recommend that we need to have a stewardship campaign focused on taking care of the staff.
    - This would be similar to how we've focused on buildings, maintenance, and facilities before.
  - We haven't been able to meet our payroll needs strictly from our giving for the last 5 pay periods and have had to pull from other buckets.
  - We need to educate the congregation about this and that we have to fix it.
- The Vestry discussed a desire to look at canon regarding Finance Committee rules and responsibilities, including term limits or requirements, in order to be in line with what the national church and/or Diocesan office recommend.
- The financial discussion closed with the Vestry desiring to let Greg Warren know that we see a need for him to address the spiritual component of stewardship.
  - Chris agreed to send this intentional message to Greg asking for his help and attention when he arrives.

The Vestry then took a short morning break.

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The next session of the retreat was a discussion of our facilities. Leigh Ann, as Junior Warden, led this section.

- Repair hallway by Jerusalem's office
  - This should be completed by the end of May.
  - Ric Readnour is doing this.
  - \$3,875 is the high-end projection of the final cost.
  - This was NOT covered by insurance.
- Columbarium, Courtyard, old Parish Hall/EYC building
  - There are two issues in the garden/columbarium area:
    - The elevation grade from the current Parish Hall is poor.
      - Soil that was added to the area during the sanctuary construction and over time hasn't helped.
      - Excavating the courtyard to improve flow would be very hard with the labyrinth and burial sites.
    - We have a water retention issue.
      - There isn't a proper layer of shale between the clay and topsoil which would aid in drainage.
        - Water just sits between the two layers and then backs up into the topsoil.
  - The only way to resolve the issue is to install a French Drain system.
    - Leigh Ann has spoken to A&B Dirt Moves and Durden Landscaping; both companies are going to submit quotes for this job.
  - We also have a drainage issue in the backyard (area behind the current Parish Hall and the old Parish Hall/EYC building).
    - This issue causes water to pool underneath the old Parish Hall/EYC building.
    - It also sometimes touches the subflooring.
    - This has now become a safety issue.
  - Leigh Ann recommended that we close off the old Parish Hall/EYC building and use it for storage only. The Food Pantry would move to the current Nursery area. The Nursery would move into the education classrooms. The EYC would move back to their old room across from the choir room.
  - The Vestry decided before taking action on this to break for lunch, then do a field trip to survey the area.

The group moved into the kitchen and dining room to share lunch together.

Following lunch, everyone walked across the street and walked through (and smelled) the old Parish Hall/EYC building. The group took quite a bit of time walking around, discussing, asking questions, and getting a feel for the space. The Vestry also walked down the Christian Ed hallway to the classrooms and the old EYC room. After the tour and idea sharing ended, the group moved back to the Morgan House.

- Leigh Ann made a motion to move the Nursery and EYC to their new locations (see above) by the end of May and to move the Food Pantry by the end of June.

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- Carolyn Scott seconded the motion.
- No further discussion was required, and the motion was passed by the Vestry unanimously.
- Leigh Ann agreed to work with Jerusalem on getting the ball rolling.

Chris began the next topic of discussion on the agenda: Vestry Information. Due to a resignation earlier in the year, a Vestry position was open, and the group needed to fill it. At the previous Vestry meeting, the group decided to consider the 2 church members who were on the Vestry ballot at the annual meeting in January but were not voted onto the Vestry at that time: Claire Losardo and Taylor Tennison.

- The Vestry had a discussion about both candidates.
- Chris called for a vote between Claire and Taylor.
- Claire was unanimously chosen to complete the term vacated by Tracy Simpson.
- Chris agreed to contact both candidates to inform them of the decision.

John shared with the Vestry that a Diocese-wide meeting with parish admins, bookkeepers, and Diocesan staff was recently held at the Morgan House. The event was well-attended and there were some action items that came from it that we needed to address.

- St. Peter's currently does not have a credit card usage policy.
  - John told the Vestry that the church has 3 physical credit cards, plus a Kroger card and a Sam's Club card.
  - John presented a proposed policy which the Vestry modified slightly.
  - Christy Garrett-Jones moved to approve the policy with the corrections.
  - Marilyn Larson seconded the motion.
  - No further discussion was needed; the motion passed unanimously.
- Insurance coverage for staff, Vestry, and volunteers
  - John presented a report from the conference regarding insurance, bonding, and the fiscal year.
    - Insurance covers all staff, Vestry, and volunteers should an accident or future lawsuit occur.
    - Additionally, the church has flood insurance.
    - John shared that the fiscal year cannot be changed and must run concurrent with the calendar year.

Before moving into the next section of the agenda, Chris realized that the group failed to officially approve the revised 2018 budget. He asked for a motion to do so, which Leigh Ann did. Marilyn seconded and with no further discussion, the motion was approved unanimously.

The Rev. Bob Brown and his wife Jill arrived just as the Vestry was moving into the next topic of discussion: What Needs to Happen Before Greg Arrives.

- Chris shared that Greg has indicated that he and Mark Lamb have furniture that would be appropriate for the priest's office. This generosity will save the church from having the expense of buying new furniture.

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- Greg has indicated that he also has his own Apple laptop that he'd be perfectly fine using.
  - The Vestry discussed this but decided it would be better if the church purchased a laptop that remained church property. This would allow Greg to use his laptop for personal needs and the church's computer/laptop for church needs.
  - Bob suggested the Vestry ought to check with the Diocesan office to see if they have a relationship with Apple that could be used.
    - John agreed to do this.
  - John also agreed to work with Chris to make sure a Mac will work with the church software and networking.
  - Leigh Ann shared that she is reaching out to a technology company to have them quote what it would cost to check our current networking and update where needed.
- Endowment Committee
  - Chris shared with the Vestry that St. Peter's has an endowment fund that has never been given the attention it needs and deserves.
  - Eric Hutchinson previously chaired this committee and has indicated his willingness to help going forward, but not to chair a committee.
  - Bob reinforced the idea that planned giving (the endowment) is a very necessary component of stewardship that St. Peter's needs to be sure to address. It should definitely be on our website.
  - Chris indicated that he would like to invite Eric to a future Vestry meeting to catch the Vestry up to speed so we can make decisions of how to address this going forward.

The meeting was running slightly behind so the afternoon break was skipped. The group moved into the short-term events/plans section of the agenda.

- Mother's and Father's Day
  - Chris made a plea to the Vestry to make a slight change with how we celebrate these two days. Going forward the Vestry as a whole will plan and support receptions for both days.
  - For Mother's Day:
    - Leigh Ann is ordering a cake from Kroger
    - Genie Davis is ordering flowers for mothers and mother figures
    - Marilyn Larson is providing the makings for mimosas and drinks.
- Farewell Reception for Bob
  - Bob has indicated that he doesn't want a big to-do on his last day.
  - A simple reception is fine, but nothing elaborate is his wish.
  - Chris and Leigh Ann will work with those that have volunteered to head this up to get it planned.
- Welcome Receptions for Greg and Mark
  - Several members have already volunteered to host welcome receptions/gatherings for Greg and Mark.

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- Greg has previously stated he'd like to meet the small groups and then do more cottage-style meet and greets (similar to the Vestry meet-and-greet we did at the Larsons).
- The Vestry will compile host names and as the time gets closer, begin to connect those folks with Greg.
- Leigh Ann mentioned the possibility of having Greg attend Bob's last Sunday service to have a transition ceremony. Chris agreed to reach out to Greg to see if he was open to this.

Chris realized that the Vestry failed to approve the previous month's minutes. He asked everyone to review the minutes after which Marilyn moved to approve. Christy seconded and with no further discussion, the minutes were unanimously approved.

May counters/closers:

- May 6 – Carolyn and Leigh Ann (maybe)
- May 13 – Leigh Ann and Marilyn
- May 20 – Christy and Chris
- May 27 – Claire and Brett

The next Vestry meeting will be on Wednesday, May 23, 2018, at 6:00 pm in the church library.

At 2:25 pm, Genie moved to adjourn the meeting; Carolyn seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The retreat ended with Bob conducting Holy Eucharist with the Vestry in the sanctuary chapel.