

Saint David of Wales
Minutes of Vestry Meeting
March 17, 2024

Vestry members present:

Rev. Dennis j Parker, Priest-in-Charge; Kieran Cannistra, Senior Warden; Jim McConnell, Treasurer; Wendy Beth Oliver, Clerk; Steve Bullock-Denniston; Cass Cole; Brian Felder; Mary Hultquist; Cheaquetta Johnson; and Emily Maass.

Not present:

Ned Hayes

Also present: Mark Turner, Chair, Finance Team; and Karen Dollar, Cindy Marvin, and Anne Parks representing the Task Force formed to assess options for staffing our new rector.

Rev. Dennis opened the meeting in prayer at 11:49 am and the meeting was called to order. A quorum was present.

Task Force Report

Karen presented the report from the Task Force. Overall, she noted that their frank discussions had led them to love our parish more. They discussed our income and what we can afford. Based on our current income, we are short of having funds for a full-time rector. In their review, the Task Force went back to 2014 to look what we have been spending. We have always paid low on the scale to our full-time clergy. Our sources of income have been building use, grant money, PPP during the pandemic, fundraising, and pledges and plate. We have often relied on large one-time gifts to fund our operating expenses.

Karen also noted that there is currently a clergy shortage and nationally more clergy are retiring than being ordained. We will need an attractive position to attract talent. She has spoken to other churches who were very helpful. A few years ago a local parish had a failed search and only 50% of Episcopal churches nationally have a full-time priest. This is an era of change and average Sunday attendance has been falling in every diocese in the past two decades. Several churches in our diocese have average attendance of 30 or less. The good news is that average pledges are keeping up with inflation and there will be funds for thriving parishes.

Much of our financial energy goes to our building. Supporting our building has both pros and cons. We do not own the building and it will need upgrades if we significantly increase occupancy.

Cindy reported on interviews with two priests. What she learned will help us ask ourselves good questions about what we want from our next rector. She noted the importance of the next rector showing up for activities and events and being able to lead. She also noted the importance of having consistent, stable administrative support. The two priests she spoke with differ in what they think it means to be a priest. They agreed on the importance of worship but differed on whether parish pastoral care or social justice and community involvement should be primary. We will need to make sure that the person we call has the same vision that our parish does.

Karen spoke about the importance of our profile and that it be clear on our vision and our priorities. We cannot get everything, so we will need to decide what is most important.

The Vestry expressed their appreciation for the work that the Task Force has done. Karen and Cindy departed.

Consent Agenda

The Consent Agenda (Minutes of the February 18, 2024 meeting, February email vote, and the March officer reports) was approved by a unanimous vote after Cass moved to approve and Emily seconded.

Rev. Dennis requested that we send thank you notes to members of the Task Force.

Rector's Report

Rev. Dennis requested that we agree on a behavioral covenant. He encouraged us to look at samples of agreements we obtained from the Diocese at the Vestry/BAC meeting and determine what speaks most clearly to the needs of our community. A behavioral covenant would provide a formal way for us to say how we behave in our community.

Rev. Dennis provided an update on our music program. Finn has submitted his resignation, effective after Easter service. Joshua Hegg, who was a musician at Saints Peter and Paul, will provide support during April. Emily remarked that many members of the community are looking for less traditional music. With his departure, Finn will also no longer be supporting the Taizé service and Rev. Dennis will look for music help through the end of the year.

Financial Report

Jim discussed the financial reports provided in the Vestry packet. He noted that there was not anything of major concern but did see an increase in the cost of gas and water.

Bathroom Repair

The Finance Team recommended approval of repair of the bathrooms using the combined total of the insurance proceeds and up to \$10,000. Steve moved for approval and it was seconded by Cass. Kieran noted that we do not know what the final amounts will be because we do not have solid estimates yet. We would like to upgrade the plumbing from the current galvanized metal pipes. The recommendation was unanimously approved.

Fundraising

Kieran discussed fundraising and previous fundraising events (including the “non-event”). A chili cookoff is being planned as a fundraiser. Rev. Dennis notes that the Rector's Discretionary Fund is low because needs are great. Cheaquetta volunteered to oversee a fundraiser.

Senior Warden Report

Kieran recommended that the Vestry review the Diocese publication: *A Guide for Faith Communities Navigating Clergy Transitions*. It is a very thorough. She also mentioned that an idea from the Vestry/BAC meeting was to have quarterly informational meetings for the parish and we are considering one for April.

Other Items

Cass has drafted a letter on scams that can be sent to parishioners. Wendy will provide a draft of a behavioral covenant to be reviewed at the next meeting. Rev. Dennis plans to introduce the land acknowledgement statement on the last Sunday of April.

Brian closed us in prayer at 1:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Wendy Beth Oliver, Clerk