

**Christ Church**  
Vestry Meeting Minutes  
Regular Meeting of the Vestry  
Tuesday, April 8, 2014

**Present:** The Rev'd Joanna P. Hollis, Rector; Rector's Warden Paul Ambos; People's Warden Sheila Cooper; Vestrymembers Beth Binde, Kelly Bogan (arrived at 7:15), Gerri Callahan, Andrea Cunnell, Carole Forsythe, Judith Kuldinow, Effie Lamptey, Debra Lowe, Sarah Luke, Andy Murphy, Artie Phills, and Melisande Skillicorn.

**Also Present:** Treasurer Jonathan Gloster (via telephone)

Rector Joanna Hollis called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. with opening prayer by Vestrymember Gerri Callahan.

Dwelling in the Word was on Matthew 21:1–11.

**Approval of Minutes of Regular Meeting of March 11, 2014:** Vestrymember Artie Phills moved approval of the minutes as distributed. The motion passed, with Vestrymember Carole Forsythe abstaining.

**Correspondence:** Clerk of the Vestry Gerri Callahan reported no correspondence received.

**Treasurer's Report:** Treasurer Jonathan Gloster reviewed his written Treasurer's Report to the Vestry, April 8, 2014 Meeting (March 2014 Report). Mr. Gloster reported that while the plate collection is up, it still was necessary to draw down \$12,000 more than budgeted from the investment account to cover bills. Mr. Gloster noted that there are no downward trends, and expenses and personnel are on target. He stated that gas and electric expenses are up 31.5% due to the harsh winter. In this regard, he further reported that property expenses are up due to boiler repairs and snow removal. Mr. Gloster reported that office expenses increased 25% due to copier expenses, but that should even out over the year. He advised that the Adult Education expenses are due to the purchase of books for the Lenten series but those costs will be reimbursed as people pay for the books. He stated that he will send Fellowship Co-Chairs Effie Lamptey and Melisande Skillicorn a detailed accounting of the hospitality expenses. Regarding Stewardship, Mr. Gloster advised that the cost for envelopes normally is paid in December, but this year it was done in January. In summary, Mr. Gloster stated that income and expenses are almost equal, but that is because of the draw-down from the investment account. Rev. Hollis advised that she has received payment for books and asked why that was not reflected. Mr. Gloster stated that Bookkeeper Irene Fialkowsky is waiting for direction on where to post the payments.

Rector's Warden Paul Ambos moved to approve the report and file for audit. The motion carried unanimously.

### **Reports by Title**

***Exterior Restoration:*** Mr. Ambos advised that he can send the report he has prepared to the New Jersey Historic Trust once Treasurer Gloster signs it and the voucher form.

Vestrymembers Beth Binde and Melisande Skillicorn asked Mr. Ambos to explain what the report is. Mr. Ambos advised that the final report is required under the terms of New Jersey Historic Trust's grant. The report details the work done with the funds from the State. Specifically, he explained that it describes the following work: underground drainage, Parish Hall windows, new window sills in the second floor of the Choir Building, the Cloister ramp, cleaning and repointing the stone on the Church building, Church building slate roof replacement, outside property re-grading, incidental repairs and new electrical service. He noted that the renovation and rewiring of the hanging Tiffany lamps in the sanctuary, while not included under the grant, were part of the project. Mr. Ambos advised that there is one final disbursement from the State for the uncovering of the organ, which the State will make upon submittal of the invoice. In response to Ms. Binde's question, Mr. Ambos advised that the shortfall for the project is in the tens of thousands. Mr. Gloster stated that a \$250,000 loan from PNC still is outstanding. Mr. Ambos noted that there still are outstanding pledges, and Vestrymember Artie Phills is working on determining what is outstanding. Mr. Phills noted that the pledges did not include the extra electrical work.

***Rector's Report:*** Rev. Hollis submitted a written Rector's Report, Vestry April 2014. Rector Hollis noted that the Report includes notes on the Neighborhood Gatherings. She advised that she will be using the chart on the Neighborhood Gathering Results in the future and that she will do a short narrative for the Close Call. She stressed the importance of leadership attendance at parish events and programs.

### **Committee Reports**

***Finance:*** Finance Chair Carole Forsythe gave an oral report. Ms. Forsythe advised that the Committee has not met because she has been away. She advised that progress is being made on the new accounting system. After Easter, she will work with Parish Administrator Julia Utz on the new system. Ms. Forsythe stated that they need to determine how to upload the necessary parish records. Once the system is working well, Ms. Fialkowsky's work requirements will be reduced. Ms. Forsythe noted that the Communications Committee will be responsible for advertising. She reported that she will be meeting with investment advisor PNC Bank in the next few weeks.

***Property:*** Property Chair Kelly Bogan reviewed his Property Committee Report to the Vestry, April 8, 2014. Mr. Bogan stated that most items on the "Completed projects" list cost between \$150 and \$750. He noted that items 11 (roof repair 5 Paterson St. entrance, \$16,602) and 12 (lift repair \$11,402) on the "Projects under review" list are significant potential costs. He advised that Handi-Lift inspected the lift and declared it to be unsafe. Ms. Binde asked whether the lift repair costs are typical, since it seems that the lift often needs repair. Mr. Gloster stated that the major repairs and maintenance are typical for this lift, and the costs actually are less

because the Church has a maintenance contract. In response to Ms. Skillicorn's question, Mr. Gloster advised that the outside groups using the Church buildings have been advised not to use the lift, precisely because of the repair and maintenance costs. Ms. Cunnell asked about the age of the lift and asked whether the repair cost is an item on which Stewardship should focus. Mr. Phills stated that the lift is eight years old. Mr. Bogan reported that the original cost was between \$50,000 and \$52,000, and it would cost approximately \$60,000 to replace. In response to Ms. Cunnell's question, Mr. Bogan stated that he has reached out to other companies for bids. Ms. Forsythe suggested checking the repair records for other companies. Mr. Bogan noted that Music Director John Sheridan holds choir practice in the chancel now that the lift is not working. Mr. Ambos advised that the present lift is more complicated than the previous one, which was only a chair rather than a platform and only assisted on the main flight from the Children's Chapel level to the Auditorium level.

### **Old Business**

***Vestry Retreat:*** Rev. Hollis reviewed the Vestry Retreat. She advised that she introduced the vision statement at Sunday's services and noted that she and the parish leadership need to keep relaying the statement. She stated that the parish needs to own that statement and determine how to live it. She asked leadership to contact her with any ideas on how to engage the parish in the vision. Ms. Skillicorn suggested including the vision statement along with the mission statement in the bulletin and parish notes. Mr. Phills suggested using a bottom-up approach by holding small group sessions to discuss so that the parishioners embrace it and understand that everyone has a role. He stated that ongoing face-to-face discussion is needed. Warden Sheila Cooper stated that the groups can function as focus groups similar to search committee focus groups. Mr. Ambos noted that relationships with each other are fostered by interacting with each other and that the Neighborhood Gatherings revealed a desire for more fellowship. He said this can be done by working in small groups. Vestrymember Judith Kuldinow said it would be helpful for the parish to understand all of the activities at the Church and suggested a rotating schedule so that the parish can learn about the activities. She suggested inviting parishioners to see the activities such as Godly Play. Rev. Hollis noted that this is just the beginning of the discussion and to let her know of any ideas. She advised that Rev. Jerry Skillicorn will be conducting an adult formation session after Easter, and that might be a good opportunity for discussion of the vision statement.

***Highland Park Street Fair:*** Ms. Binde submitted a written report on the parish table at the Street Fair, scheduled for May 18. She reviewed the cost-savings measures and stated that the budget is \$250, which has been raised by private solicitations from parishioners. This includes a \$100 advertising budget, registration fee and printing costs for post cards. She reported that Rozann Shackleton will do the publicity piece and has designed the post card. She stated that there will be floating ducks to attract children's attention. She asked anyone who has ideas for gift certificates or prizes to contact her. She advised that she has spoken to Music Director Sheridan about concert tickets as a possible prize. In response to Vestrymember Debra Lowe's question, Ms. Binde stated that the fundraising involved contacting people to ask for donations. Ms. Kuldinow asked about the pricing at Michael's Graphics to which Ms. Binde responded that

she and Ms. Shackleton are still pricing the printing costs. Ms. Ambos suggested including a QR code on the postcards.

**New Business**

***Rector's Discretionary Fund:*** Rev. Hollis explained that the Rector's Discretionary Fund is used to help people in need of funds for various purposes, including bills and rent. She has gotten a number of requests from individuals since she arrived at Christ Church. She explained that given the requests and the amount of money in the fund, she feels it is advisable to have policies for disbursement so that she may help the most people. The money in the Fund is from weddings, funerals, and other donations. She distributed a Rector's Discretionary Fund Policy for information and comment. She modeled the Policy on one from another parish. The Policy includes a limit of \$200 per calendar year per person/household, and payment may only be made once per year for a particular item. Ms. Lowe asked how Rev. Hollis determines who is eligible. Rev. Hollis explained that she needs written proof of the bill at issue and that she will call the payee if necessary. She explained that she does not give the money to the requestor but rather writes a check directly to the payee. Rev. Hollis further explained that she asks the requestor about other available sources of funds and that she will get a list of other resources to give the requestor. She noted that given the harsh winter, heating and electric bills have been the majority of requests. She has said no to some requests. Mr. Gloster asked whether there is a network of ministers in New Brunswick who share requests. Rev. Hollis is not aware of any. Mr. Phills asked how she addresses requests for bus fare. Rev. Hollis advised that she will call the bus company and ask if it will accept a check. She does not give cash nor does she give checks for cash, and the Policy states this.

***Easter Appeal:*** Rev. Hollis advised that the Easter Appeal letter has been mailed. The appeal is for donations to use for outside items to make it known that the Church is a functioning entity and not simply a historic structure.

***Topics on the Mind of the Vestry:*** Mr. Ambos advised that he updated the Vestry Assignment List and asked that he be advised of any further changes.

Ms. Binde noted that the Gourmet Soiree fundraiser is approaching, to be held May 10.

Rev. Hollis advised that Vestry packets will be distributed the Sunday before the meeting. Accordingly, anyone with a written report must get the report to Parish Administrator Julia Utz by the preceding Thursday. Rev. Hollis noted that the financial reports will be separate but will be in mailboxes by Sunday.

Ms. Skillicorn inquired as to whether Christ Church will continue the Fourth of July celebration. Rev. Hollis answered affirmatively and asked anyone in leadership who has been involved to contact her.

Ms. Binde asked about providing the Close Call only electronically. Rev. Hollis advised that the post-office mailings have been decreased but not eliminated.

Ms. Kuldinow asked about the possibility of making the Trenton Thunder game at which the choir sings a fundraiser. She noted that the parish gets the tickets at cost, so perhaps the parish could sell the tickets for above cost as a fundraiser. The game this year is July 29, 2014 and she will send out an e-mail to determine whether to pursue the idea.

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m. with Compline led by Ms. Callahan.

Respectfully submitted,  
Gerri Callahan  
Clerk of the Vestry