

FRS Board Meeting – September 8, 2021

Call to Order/Opening Holly Cashman called the meeting to order at 6:37

Members Present Reverend Rebecca Bryan, Vern Ellis, Lucy Litwin, Michelle Kimball, Tom Himmel, Holly Cashman (chair), Tim Fountain (Treasurer), Jim Supple, Juliana Beauvais, Minnie Flanagan, Micah Donahue, Renee Wolf Foster, Kathy Desilets (clerk)

Check-in/Reading Chalice, Opening Words Rev. Rebecca reminded us to embrace our present moment and offered a reading entitled Everyday Grace.

Open Issues/Strategic Thinking

Retreat Debrief Holly Cashman **Reflections** – Good to think about covenant; this can lead us to good and important work. Community is a way to be better people, smarter people. We covered a lot of ground, rich conversation.

Governance Update Juliana Beauvais introduced matters requiring board action.

Tom Himmel resigned in July as Chair of the Finance Committee due a conflict of interest with his interim staff role. From the September meeting until the staff position is filled, Tom will attend the PB meetings as ex-officio (i.e., required but non-voting) member in his role as interim Business Administrator (ARTICLE VII, Section 3). The governance committee proposes that Tim Fountain, who is to be elected to fill the role of the chair of the Finance Committee.

Jim Supple made the following motion:

Motion: "I move that the Parish Board elect Tim Fountain to serve as Chair of the Finance Committee for FY2022."

Michelle Kimball seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Tina Benik is willing to take the role of Chairperson Elect and Vice Chair of the board filling the role left open by Judy Fayre's departure.

Lucy Litwin made the following motion:

Motion: "I move that the Parish Board approve Tina Benik as Chairperson Elect to serve as Vice-Chair of the Parish Board for the 2021-2022 church year, who will function as Parish Board Chair the following year." Jim Supple seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Per ARTICLE IX, Section 3. The Governance Committee shall be named by the Parish Board each year in June. We need a motion to accomplish this. Section 6 also says the Governance Committee members must be announced to the society. We should put this in a future Steeple and maybe announce at the special fall meeting as well?

Minne Flanagan made the following motion:

Motion: "I move that the Governance Committee be re-appointed for FY2022 with members Juliana Beauvais (elected Governance Chairperson), Maureen Adams, Renee Wolf Foster, Lori Clark, and one vacancy to be filled and that the Committee be charged, in addition to fulfillment of its regular work, with other priorities as may be established by the Parish Board."

Holly Cashman seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Juliana also announced that plans are being made for a training on governance issues for all board members, especially those who are new. Watch notification of the dates for this training.

Open volunteer positions Holly Cashman reported that 2 positions that currently need to be filled by congregants are (1) Cochair of the Human Resource committee (this committee works on issues regarding staffing) and (2) someone to work with on the continuation of the Vision, Mission and Ends into the area of covenant. Renee and Jim are currently committed to work with Laura Parks (consultant) on this. The small group is charged to develop and plan and process to move this work forward and we need one more.

Finance Update Tom Himmel delivered the report. 1. Usually year to date finance report is presented at each meeting. Not much action these two months. 2. We have hired a contract bookkeeper (Michele Doucette) who is working on getting budget numbers into the bookkeeping system She will do also accounts payable/bill paying. This will ease things for Diane. A system for validation of checks has been developed. 3. Final reports for the previous budget year are in process and will be available soon. We will be able to use some of the PPE Grant in the coming year. 4. Steeple rentals are moving forward with as detailed in the finance report. Key issues are maintaining the integrity of the steeple structure and maintaining an appropriate income stream.

Goals:

Rev. Rebecca discussed the fact that the governance of the church has changed. The new focus is on policy governance. In this type of governance, the primary role of the board is to assure that the policy of the congregation serves its values, mission, and ends and acts for the well-being of the congregation. There are three goals:

1. **Moving the values, mission and ends forward.** At all levels of the way we function (finance, staffing, operations, communications, etc.) how do we move the congregation forward to do the best for all?
2. **Intentional Growth** – Up to this time, growth has been spontaneous. We are now about a 500-member congregation. What do we need to do to support this growth and where is more growth needed? How do we care for the needs of all?
3. **Stewardship** – Caring for building, staff salaries, fiscal responsibility to work we are committed to. How does this become part of the work of the church at all levels?
4. **Caring for the well-being of individuals in the congregation.** It is important to think of how much we ask of the congregation in a time when most of us are living with overwhelmed feelings.

Holly Presented these questions to guide our discussion:

- How do the goals relate to who we are, what we want to do and how we want to do it?
- Given the current covid environment what work can we do the work of the goals?
- What are concerns and challenges? What objections might there be?
- What might we do to be responsive to concerns?
- Where do we see ourselves (both as a board and as individual) fitting in?

Discussion Summary:

- The size of the church (about 500 members/friends) means a lot of change. As a bigger church we need to look at the momentum needed to get people involved. As we grow, we should

consider what involvement is important to people. What do we expect of everyone as a member? We need to work on the ways that all members have the connections they need/want, and those members understand what is expected of them.

- Phone calls to congregants, just to check in last year was a route to connection. We might consider a similar outreach with a series of strategic prompts. Another way to take the temperature of the congregation might be a survey – perhaps an annual one where we can see trends. A survey might be dangerous and seem disconnected if we don't speak to people directly.
- Small Group activities - Chalice Circles, Book Groups, Choir – other groups. Wednesday church meetings with dinner strengthened people's feelings of connection.
- The Values, Mission and Ends (VME) was a project that about half of the members were directly involved in – largely through small group discussions. Right after we released this work, we were forced to change our operations because of the pandemic. We need to find the best way to make the VME a visible and constant part of church life. There are models for this in other churches.
- We have metrics on clicks on social media, length of engagement etc. We should consider if we can use this and other available data to move us forward.
- We have had a lot of staff changes and that has likely hurt some connections.
- As a smaller church, many people were personally connected, and there was a natural sharing of key issues. Now we need to be more deliberate.
- Why do we care about numbers? Care about our denomination and how we are seen in the community. We have 8 staff members – lost two positions. Only the minister full time. Two staff members are dealing with significant family problems.
- With growth – we need both parishioners and staff in real leadership roles. We don't have enough staff to support everyone.
- How do we help people get a sense of belonging... it is what allows people to take the risk? The kindness and connection are the reward.
- Important to be welcoming...consider language that is welcoming. Some people may be put off with the idea of being a point person, but really want to help. Many have more potential to lead than we see in ourselves. How do we foster this?
- We need to start somewhere and not get stalled by perfectionism or scared by having a big game change

Consent Agenda

Trustees report September 7

2021 CAP report June 15, 2021, In the board packet. Re: ongoing work.

Motion was made by Kathy Desilets **I move that the Parish Board approve all items on the Consent Agenda** Juliana seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Closing

Process Check Google Form All participants signed check in either online or in person with results returned to Holly.

Closing words Rev. Rebecca

Motion to adjourn was made by Juliana and seconded by Minnie @8:10. The meeting was closed by unanimous consent and the chalice was extinguished.