

Parish Board Meeting FRS – January 17, 2024

Present: Rev. Rebecca Bryan, Rob Authier, **Tina Benik, Jim Supple, Kathy Desilets, Renée Wolf Foster, Annie Maurer, Laurie Evans-Daly, Tom Himmel, Vern Ellis, Minnie Flanagan, Bob Higgins, Lori Clark**, Barbara Garnis, 4th Century Team. *Note: names in **bold** are voting members.*

Absent: Caitlin Creps, Liss Larson

Call to Order: Jim Supple called the meeting to order at 6:03pm.

Welcoming Words: Rev. Rebecca

The chalice was lit, and Rev. Rebecca shared a reading from Kate Bowler's book, *Everything Happens for a Reason: And Other Lies I've Loved*. It is a blessing for times we need permission to change, when everything that has changed reminds us to bless our old selves and continue to grow and stretch.

Minister's Report: Rev. Rebecca

- Justin Murphy Mancini has been offered an excellent opportunity elsewhere and will leave FRS at the end of the church year. Justin has been graceful, professional, and helpful in the planning for his departure. A search committee has been formed including Alan Seale as chair, Hugh Martinez and Betsy Latham from the choir, Jeff Bard as a congregant with different musical tastes and a marketing background, and Lori Clark to represent the Board. Rob Authier will be staff liaison for day-to-day matters. We hope to hire someone during the summer. Anyone who has useful contacts should pass them on. A celebration of Justin's work at FRS will be held on May 5.
- Insight Workshops: Rev. Rebecca has met with Barbara Ganis who reports that interesting information is being gathered from the various inquiry groups that have been held. A meeting of parents of young church who want to be more involved was an offshoot of the workshop for that group. Six to seven young adults are also meeting to consider how they can be involved. Rebecca and Andy Lobb are providing data analysis, and on April 7 we will have a congregational conversation to report the data.
- The Stewardship Team for the Annual Campaign has been formed and a new Connections team headed by Renée Wolf Foster is being proposed. Both teams will be presented in the coming Sunday services. Staff completed all tasks on time. Rev. Rebecca reminded us that in our spiritual community, holidays are important placeholders of connections.
- The Mirzayees are doing well. Our volunteer group is meeting monthly after a long time of weekly meetings as the family becomes more established in their new home.

Gift Acceptance Policy: Tina Benik

Tina thanked the board for their questions and suggestions and asked that anyone who does not understand anything should take time to ask. This policy is important for our planned giving efforts and defines conditions for donations and the funds which will hold such donations. We will vote on this policy at the next meeting.

Finance Report: Renée Wolf Foster with Rob Authier

We are at the midpoint in the fiscal year and work is underway on the church year 2024-2025 budget. Steps have been taken to simplify and clarify reporting. The new report, for example, separates furniture and equipment from general supplies and shows overall fiscal positions on issues by category.

December income is favorable and income from Dish has started. Dish has also paid \$12,000 for consulting fees. AT&T has requested a modification so there is work ongoing in the steeple. We are checking for leaks.

Bailey fund transfer has not been made for the roof. Final engineering suggests that the problems may be less drastic and costly than expected. RFPs for bids on the roof work are out to four vendors based on final engineering, and bids are coming in. Money will be moved when a contractor is chosen, and payment is needed. Work on the steeple lights is still in process.

Jim Supple made a strong presentation to the Finance Committee resulting in their approval of the salary proposal.

We are currently running an operating surplus on the budget, but also coming into the middle of the often-costly winter months. We thank Renée Wolf Foster, Tom Himmel, Rob Authier, and Betsy Latham for the work they did in putting together a tight operating budget which allows better tracking of funds.

Special Zoom Board Meeting: Jim Supple

To go to print on the target date of February 5 with materials for the Annual Campaign, we need to establish the budget—at least for the campaign. The Board needs to approve the fundraising goal so we must hold a special Board Meeting. This meeting will be Zoom only and will not take more than an hour. The Board determined that the meeting will be held on January 31 at 6pm.

Stewardship Report: Vern Ellis

- Annual Campaign: The Campaign is off to an early start. The brochure is in process and Rev. Rebecca and others will make a pitch for additional stewards on Sunday. The hope is to reduce the number of individuals each steward is assigned. The theme is Strengthening Sacred Connections in Our Interconnected World. A lot of work has been done on the solicitation list and there is some data on frequency and timing of donations. A gathering for stewards will be held at Susan Ricker's home on February 10.
- A meeting of the Program Council will be held on February 7 from 6:30-8pm.

Roof Project Vote:

Because of the cost of the repair, we need to get congregational approval for the project. We will need ten percent of the congregation to make a quorum at a special meeting and we could potentially hold the meeting on April 7. Because we need to get the warrant for the special meeting out to the congregation ten days in advance of the meeting, we will need to vote to approve the warrant for the special meeting at our February Parish Board meeting. The Roof will be one of the topics of a congressional conversation on February 18 after church.

Tom Himmel requested updates from the Conveners of the Board Priority Work Groups:

- **The Board/Congregation Communication Team:** Annie Maurer reports that they are planning for a meeting on February 18 to inform the board about key issues—especially especially the roof—which will need to be voted on.
- **The Governance Committee** needs to find candidates for open Board Positions.
- **The 300th Anniversary Team** will report in March. Right now, Laurie Evans-Daly says that they are in progress on a church history which will have nine articles. They have a photographer and Vern Ellis is designing the cover. Sales of the weathercock pin have been slow. Annie Maurer, Cynthia Walsh, and Laurie Evans-Daly are working on a schedule for the year. The signature event will be a party, maybe an All Parish Dinner. Community events are also being planned, including a possible bell ringing on June 25.
- **Safe Church Policies:** We need to work on this. Concerns have arisen about cybersecurity. Rev. Rebecca and Jim suffered aggressive phishing attacks in December. A known white supremacist lives in town and is a concern. Also, as we have been more active with meetings in the church there are some concerns about unauthorized entry. Rob Authier reports that six months ago there was a call demanding that we take down the Black Lives Matter banner. Cynthia Walsh, Tina Benik, and Annie Maurer are planning to attend a workshop on cybersecurity offered by the UUA. We need people to look at what others are doing at their churches. We also need to update policies on opening and closing the building, to consider the balance between risk and access, and to consider what we would do if there were an attack on the church.

Other Updates:

- **Worship Associates** are considering lay led services in July and field trips to neighboring churches in August.
- **Pastoral care Associates** have been discussing community nursing and support for parishioners who experience cognitive and physical problems and have very limited support. The PCAs have formed teams to work with these individuals and help connect them with services.

Consent Agenda

Action: Consideration of December Meeting Notes

Motion: Annie Maurer moved to accept the minutes of the November Board meeting, Renée Wolf Foster seconded, and the motion passed without objection.

Closing Words: Rev. Rebecca

Rev. Rebecca asked us to think of one word that was an intention or goal for the year and to renew our commitment. She invited us to find ways to connect with this truth.

Action: Adjournment

Motion: Kathy Desilets moved to adjourn. Bob Higgins seconded the motion, and it passed without objection. The meeting was adjourned, and the chalice extinguished at 8:10pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Desilets, Clerk