

**Episcopal Church of the Incarnation  
May 24, 2022 – Regular Vestry Meeting**

**Location: Short Hall**

**Minutes**

**Attendees:** Allan Bolchazy, Kathleen Baumgardner, Linelle Lane, Mark Sawdon, Michael Del Vecchio, Patrick Lancaster, Sara Joslyn, Stephen Little, Steven Layton; Stephen Shaver, Rector; Kathleen Kane, Clerk.

**Absent:** Bo Simons, Connie Sinclair, Lois Philips; David Jasper, Treasurer.

**Guests:** None

**Call to Order:** Stephen S. called the meeting to order at 6:31 pm.

**Opening Prayers:** Chaplain Stephen Little offered an opening prayer. Stephen S. offered a prayer for the people who were killed in a mass shooting today at the Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas, as well as for their families and other survivors.

**Check-in:** Stephen Little, Mark, Sara, and Michael each gave a brief personal check-in.

**Consent agenda:**

- **Approval of April minutes:** The minutes of the April 26, 2022 meeting will be considered for approval at next month's meeting, as they were not in the meeting packet for tonight.

**Reflection - The Benedictine Life model:**

Stephen S. presented an overview of the Benedictine Life model, which has a strong influence on the Anglican tradition. The Benedictine Rule is grounded in three vows: stability, obedience, and conversion of life. Rhythm and balance are at the center of the practice.

- *Stability:* In the Benedictine Rule, the opposite of stability is a “gyrovague”, which is a monk who searches by traveling from monastery to monastery without stopping for long. Stability is meant to find God in the here and now. When we do make a change, it is through discernment. Even so, God is present in the here and now.
- *Obedience:* “Audire”, which is the Latin root of the word “obedience”, means to listen deeply. In the Benedictine Rule, all were meant to listen to each other – not just top down from the Abbott. The monastery was not a democracy, but practiced an active group discernment process. A call to obedience is a call to listen and collaborative discernment / decision-making.
- *Conversion of life:* This is the willingness to follow God's call and to embrace change and transformation deeper into the image of Christ. It is a call to

boldness, fearlessness, and courage when afraid, which renders stability rather than stagnation.

The three vows work together in a practice of Rhythm and Balance.

Vestry members discussed how this relates to our own congregation and our experiences of the past 2-3 years? Where do we see these three vows at work in our common life?

- Stability:
  - Trust
  - Balancing the budget keeps us financially stable
  - People who have weathered it through COVID and stayed, embracing the community of our church when things didn't feel stable.
  - Throughout COVID, we maintained our worship services - music, prayers, sermons, etc.
  - We have acted with intention. We have not been in stasis. We made changes in a gentle way.
- Obedience (listening):
  - Music roundtable
  - Vestry
- Conversion of life:
  - EFM - Theological reflection / action.
  - Solar panels
  - Interest in bringing in diversity – age, sexuality, race/ethnicity, etc.
  - Readiness to embrace some change. Still together & feels strong. Will give us courage to go beyond what has felt safe.
  - We are here doing what is best for the church and each other. Comfort level to not be afraid of some change. Willing to listen to ideas and build on them.

### **Treasurer's Report**

- **Monthly Financial Report:** Finance Committee members Steven Layton and Stephen Little presented the April Financial Report as an information item and responded to questions from vestry members.
- **Signers Resolution:** The vestry approved a corrected Resolution designating the authorized signers for Incarnation bank accounts, which corrects Patrick's name. (*Moved: Linelle. Seconded: Stephen Little. Approved unanimously.*)

### **Committee Reports:**

- **Buildings and Grounds Committee:** Allan reported that the connection of the solar panels to PG&E is still in progress. The committee met to review the current list of work to be done. They are working to research and secure bids for proposed projects, which will be presented to the vestry over the next couple of months.

- **Pride Parade:** Allan discussed plans for the Pride Parade on June 4. Incarnation has a spot in the parade and a booth at the post-parade festival in Courthouse Square. We will have informational materials to hand out while talking with people. After discussing several ideas about possible uses of the News & Notes article that Stephen S. wrote about our church's position on abortion, it was decided to have copies for distribution at the booth.
- **Outreach Grants Committee:** Kathleen B. reported that the committee will be meeting to review the mission statement and discuss how to re-establish connections with agencies that have been receiving grants in past years. She noted that new volunteers for the Burbank tutoring project need to have a certification test and fingerprinting, and some good tutors cannot afford the fees. This could be a good use for an outreach grant. They are also checking in with the Living Room, St. Dorothy's Rest, and others.
- **Development Committee:** Mark is stepping down as committee chair, so the vestry will need to identify someone to take over in this role.
- **Invite Welcome Connect:** Kathleen B reported that the group likes the idea of creating more signage in front of the church to clearly display service times and the types of services that are available through the church. Allan said that the B&G committee is looking into that, with Linelle and David Jasper helping. Kathleen B also mentioned ideas for informational banners in front of the church to be changed more frequently and to have fewer words, and the possible use of "Burma Shave" type signs. The group is also looking at how people are greeted when they come into the church, how more information could be provided about the church's ministries, how to brush up the image to make the church more appealing, the need for newcomer / visitor card information to be entered into a database, and the need for directional signage on campus. Allan noted that B&G committee is also working on such signage.
- **Property Development Task Force:** Stephen S. gave an update of the work of the PDTF. A consultant team has been hired to lead the TF through a communication process with the congregation. A TF kick-off meeting with the consultants will be on held on 6/5/22. The TF is anticipating late summer or early fall conversations with the congregation. That will be a time to hear people's opinions and a discernment about where our values are as a congregation. The TF may later want to hire an architect to help flesh out ideas to begin a design process for our campus, based on the values and priorities of the congregation. TF members interviewed an architect who could function as a coach for now – not to serve as our long-term architect but rather to help ensure this first phase of values discernment leads to outcomes that are actionable and to help us screen candidates to actually do architectural design work with us once we are ready. Paying the architect in

addition to the consultant team would still be well below the amount of funds authorized by the vestry for the TF work.

### **Decision Items:**

- **Vacation proposal from Stephen:** Rather than seeking a merit raise, Stephen S. is requesting more vacation time that he can take on Sundays so that he can take some long weekends with his family. He currently receives 20 days of vacation, which includes 4 or 5 Sundays. Steven Layton explained that there would be no financial hit for hiring supply priests on these added vacation Sundays, because Stephen is no longer gone on some Sundays for College of Congregational Development or St. Andrew's services. Vestry members agreed that providing more family time for the Rector demonstrates our values and all will benefit. The vestry voted to approve a revision to Stephen's Letter of Agreement to read that he will receive "five calendar weeks of annual vacation (25 workdays), including up to 8 Sundays." (*Moved: Steven Layton. Seconded: Stephen Little. Approved unanimously.*)

- **Pastoral Care funding proposal:** Stephen S. discussed how we might use some of our financial resources for pastoral care. He feels that we need more staff time and energy to coordinate the kind of care that we do for each other. We now have Daughters of the King, Visiting Eucharistic Ministers, clergy visits, the Verhoeff's holiday meals, and situational pastoral care. Many of these ministries do not coordinate with each other. Stephen recapped ideas for pastoral care that were discussed during the vestry's 4/26/22 meeting.

Stephen also noted that Karin Dutra is ready to phase out of the staff role as children ministry leader, but she wants to stay involved as a volunteer and will ramp down her involvement over time. Perhaps she could help train up children's chapel leaders and get it institutionalized. Stephen is unsure about hiring someone to replace Karin and no decision on this is needed yet.

Stephen thinks that it makes sense to seek a part-time pastoral call staffer, for 10-12 hours per week, at an annual cost of \$10,000-\$15,000. This could be for a one-year catalyst, as with Karin and children's ministry, or perhaps for a longer term. He noted that the coordinator should be someone with experience working in a mental health, spiritual care, social-service, or similar field.

Another idea is to bring on an associate clergy person at some point in the future. While it is risky to use short-term money for staff positions, we have some one-time money that could be used to fund a curacy position for two years. A curate is an assistant priest who is usually newly ordained and is usually hired as a temporary position.

The vestry voted to authorize Stephen S. to draft a job description and start a search for a part-time pastoral care coordinator for one-year using up to \$15,000 from the Congregational Development grant, which has a current

unallocated balance of \$19,778. (*Moved: Steven Layton. Seconded: Linelle. Approved unanimously.*)

**Discussion Items (DDDD):**

- **St. Andrew's Update:**  
Stephen S., the wardens, Daphne, and Mary Goshert met with Bishop Megan and the Canon of the Ordinary to discuss the status of the mission. The group advised Bishop Megan that, while Incarnation still cares about our Episcopal presence in the West County region, we feel the mission in the form it has existed is no longer viable. The conversation will continue after Bishop Megan sits with the issue and we will continue to seek her guidance for the future.
- **Sesquicentennial further discussion:**  
Kathleen B and Patrick discussed developing ideas and said that more help is needed. Celebration of the anniversary would be marked by activities throughout 2023, culminating in Advent with the anniversary of the first service in the church building. Ideas include asking the Santa Rosa City Council to do a proclamation for a Church of the Incarnation Day, with photo displays in council chambers and possibly at museums. The committee will draft a report and will put more focus on discussing specific events soon. Allan stated that the B&G committee will want to know the event dates so that they can spruce up the campus ahead of time.
- **Walnut tree proposal:** Allan discussed the two walnut trees on the church property that are dying. One is threatening a neighboring house and the other is hazardous for our playground area. He received a quote for \$3,250 to remove one tree and trim the other. There is a sense of urgency given the hazards so rather than wait till next month for a decision, the vestry voted to approve use of Building & Grounds Fund monies to hire the arborist for this work. (*Moved: Allan. Seconded: Kathleen B. Approved unanimously.*)
- **Vestry overnight at St. Dorothy's Rest in Occidental** – The vestry's summer retreat will be held at St. Dorothy's Rest on from Friday, July 15 through Saturday, July 16.

**Closing Prayer:** Chaplain Stephen Little offered a closing prayer.

**Meeting adjourned: 8:53 pm**

**Next monthly meeting of the vestry to be held on June 28, 2022.**

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Kane, Clerk