Holy Spirit & St Mark’s, Plymouth & Ashland

Bishop's Committee Minutes

November 17, 2019

Present: Rev. Kelly Sundberg Seaman, Rev. Deacon Maryan Davis, Joan Bowers, Wayne Trombly, Guy Tillson, Ruth Harlow, Deborah Holland, Kate Donahue and Paula Hancock.

Scripture Reflections were led by Ruth. We discussed Psalm 98.

Minutes: The minutes were tabled for this meeting. They will be discussed and reviewed at the Sunday, December 15 meeting.

FINANCIALS

The Financials listed below are copied from our October 20, 2019 meeting. Please review them for our December 15 meeting. We will approve the October 20 meeting minutes at our December 15 meeting. Wayne will present two budgets for calendar year 2020. Please review the documents Wayne sent you before the November 17 meeting. Bring any questions to our December meeting.

Financials: Wayne showed us the present financial picture of the Current Asset accounts of both congregations. They are as follows: Cash (Checking) CHS $1,755.30; Checking acct. St. Marks $5,243.14; St. Marks Capital Fund $3,463.62; St. Marks Checking acct. (Outreach) $1,309.19; St. Marks ( Women acct.) $807.84; Wells Fargo (Investment acct.) St. Marks $30,827.57. Total Checking/Savings accts. = $43,406.66.

Other Assets: Land and Buildings: St. Marks - $30,273.00; CHS - $241,694.31. Total Land and Buildings: $271,967.31; Current Assets + Land and Buildings = $315,373.97.

Liabilities: Payroll Taxes: $397.80; Mortgage (DAF) $5,705.57; Total Liabilities: $6,103.37.

Board Designated Funds: $17,001.99. Donor Restricted Funds: $250. Endowment Funds: $344,369.17.

Net Assets: -$28,696.18

Net Income: -$23,654.38

Total Equity: $309,270.60

Total Liabilities + Equity: $315,373.97.

Wayne advised that we could take our Equity accounts and merge them into our operating account. Our Endowment accounts stipulate that we can't access the principle. We can access the $97,000 which is left from the sale of the CHS property on Main Street. We can take the $43,000 from our checking accounts + $100,000 from the CHS property sale of our Main Street property and put it into our operating account. Wayne advised that St. Marks and CHS are still separate legal entities. We can't comingle funds. Joan made a motion to accept the financials as presented. Guy seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

If we continue on our present financial course we will lose $4,500/ month between October and December 2019. Wayne advised that at present neither congregation can afford a full time priest. The present cost for a full time priest would cost us -$66,000. If we decide to go to a part-time priest the cost would be -$14,000.

The Bishop's Committee understanding our present financial picture discussed what we might do going forward. One possibility was to make a motion to discuss with the Diocese the possibility of selling our property and buildings at 263 Highland Street. It is estimated that this sale would save us $15,000/yr. in expenses. This raises concerns about where the 8 AM congregation would worship and what might happen to the AA groups who use Griswold Hall weekly. We believe that the two congregations have merged spiritually.We raised the question as to how we can make the legal and financial parts of our congregations come in line with our spiritual reality. We see ourselves as eventually merging, becoming a new entity with a new name and be located in Ashland.

The Vestry/Bishop's Committee asked what we need to do to get through the next calendar year. Wayne advised that we can authorize Wayne to go to the Diocese and request them to release to us $10,000 from the sale of the Main Street property.

Kelly assured us that we will not lose her services if we go to a part-time priest. This change is alright with her.

REVIEW OF SERVICES

* The Plymouth Community Thanksgiving Service will not take place this year.
* The St. Marks Thanksgiving Service will be Tuesday, November 26 at 11 AM at St. Marks.
* Advent begins on Sunday, December 1.
* Sunday, December 22 at 3 PM there will be a Blue Christmas Longest Night Service. This service acknowledges that the holidays can be emotionally difficult for some people.
* Christmas Eve Service 5 PM on Tuesday, December 24. There will be no Christmas Day Service.
* Epiphany : Faith at Home Homecoming. There will be a Dinner Church service with King cake. There will be a worship service, an activity and dinner.
* Feed My Sheep – Outreach Project. Bring food and pet food. We will distribute between our Food Pantries and Animal Shelters.

**Motion:** We are going to consolidate and rationalize our checkbooks from both congregations. We will use our savings to cover our financial gaps. We will split our financial expenses 50/50 as of October 1, 2019. We will urge the Diocese to merge us into one congregation. We will work with the Diocese on how to use our properties and possibly sell our property in Plymouth at 263 Highland Street.

**Addendum:**To take $10,000 from St. Marks and seek $10,000 from the Diocese from the Building Fund from CHS. Take $5,000 from the Bartlett Fund for 2019. Take $5,000 from the Bartlett Fund for 2020 (at a later date) for expenses. This will leave us with a $26,000 deficit for 2019.

**Resolution for Housing Allowance**: A portion of Kelly's salary is specified for housing and is not taxable by the IRS. The motion for Kelly's housing passed unanimously. This motion needs to be passed annually.

The Diocese reviews our financials annually. Benge and Gloria Gallant have reviewed our financials. Wayne will present their recommendations at our December 15 meeting.

DIOCESAN CONVENTION UPDATE

The Diocese passed a resolution at Convention that changes the canons. The change has to do with the status of parishes and missions. Now parishes and missions have their own vocations. Missions have their own vocations and ministries. The closing of a parish or mission was unattached from our status and placed in a different and separate category. The canons removed any stigma related to becoming a mission.

The Convention accepted the Standing Committee's resolution to change CHS status from a parish to a mission. This makes both St. Marks and CHS a mission. We are now a Bishop's Committee and Kelly a vicar.

BISHOP'S INITIATIVES

* Clergy coaching to support congregations/priests.
* Large congregations create curate internships and partnerships.

NH SCHOOL FOR MINISTRY

The Bishop has created the NH Schol for Ministry in Tilton in the basement of the former Trinity Church. Residential accommodations are available. The school will train deacons, priests and lay people. The school will train priests initially. The students will work at home. They will meet as a cohort on a schedule at the Trinity Church location. The program will run for 3 years. Rev. Kelly Sundberg Seaman has been hired as the Dean of the NH School For Ministry. She will start in her new position on January 1, 2020.

With Kelly as the Dean of the NH School for Ministry it will mean that $35,000 will be deducted from our financial books in 2020. Our congregation will be responsible for 60% of Kelly's expenses. The Diocese will be responsible for 40% of her expenses. As of August, 2020 Kelly's expenses will be split 50/50 between our congregation and the Diocese. Under this plan Kelly will be able to stay as our vicar. As Dean she will be training clergy for other congregations in the Diocese and the larger New England region. This change will mean that the lay leadership and parish volunteers will need to step up to assist the church to continue our present schedule and programs. Wayne will submit two budgets to the Bishop's Committee at their December 15 meeting. Please review all financials he has sent us.

NEW OFFICE SPACE

We have found office space on Main Street Plymouth. We will have an office in Atty. Brian Ray's office on Southern Main Street in Plymouth. We will have a meeting room and our own private entrance to our space. We have shared parking with Brian Ray's office. We are across the street from Voices Against Violence and Bank of NH and next door to the Plymouth Area Community Closet. We will be able to have signage on the street or on the door. The office space is available for occupancy as of December 1. Rent for the office space will be $350/month. The CLC will be closed. Office operations will be split between our downtown office and office space at Sherrill Hall at St. Marks. A proposal will be submitted to the Diocese about the possibility of renting the CLC space to bring in additional income.

SENIOR WARDENS REPORT

Ruth explained to the Bishop's Committee about a Carbon Emissions Reduction Program being overseen by Debra Baker from the Diocese. We will discuss this program in more detail at a future meeting. The Diocese would like to have this program introduced to the Diocese during the Easter season.

FAITH AT HOME UPDATE

Rev. Deacon Maryan advised the Bishop's Committee that she has been talking with parents of our Faith at Home Program. Parents have expressed that they would like to see crafts available for our younger children. Maryan has begun to research crafts that are more appropriate for our younger children. Maryan will bring a sample of these crafts to our next meeting.

ASHLAND OPEN HOUSE FRIDAY, DECEMBER 6

Anne Lamson will coordinate our participation in the Ashland Open House on Friday, December 6. If anyone wants to walk through Ashland singing Christmas carols please contact KB.

Please review your emails. The Bishop's Committee may need to solicit some votes via email for issues before the December 15 meeting. We will look at the format of our Annual Meeting. We would like to have a unified Annual Meeting that enables parishioners to address issues.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Wayne advised that he would like to meet with the Finance Committee. He would like to hire two independent appraisers to appraise our property at 263 Highland Street.

GRISWOLD HALL

The Bishop's Committee needs to discuss the issue of finding a “home” or alternate worship space for the 8 AM congregation. We need to begin discussions with the 12 Step Group Recovery through PSU. We need to be open to 12 Step Groups at the local level but also at the college level.

ADJOURNMENT

Wayne made a motion to adjourn. Kate Donahue seconded the motion. The motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 12 noon.

Respectfully submitted,

Paula Hancock, Clerk