

**ST. PHILIP PARISH COUNCIL
DRAFT MINUTES - SEPTEMBER 15th , 2020**

**15 September Tuesday 7:00 p.m.
via zoom 807-484-6311**

1. Prayer Time

Christopher read a passage from Exodus 14 – the story of the Israelites crossing the Red Sea. He spoke of their experience – coming to the edge of the sea, verse 21: “The Lord drove back the sea and turned the sea into dry land and the waters were divided.” V.22 – the Israelites went into the sea -- the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left.” Christopher drew a parallel between this story -and our experience today. There are so many fearsome unknowns – viral – economic – the fires bringing smoke this week. In order to move through these ‘fearsome unknowns’, we have to move into uncharted territory – new, challenging experiences. Then, like the Israelites, we will find strength for the journey. We will know that we’re not alone. God’s Spirit dwells in us – and goes before us – journeys with us – as we move forward into the unknown.

2. Regrets -none! – all members present by Zoom.

3. Minutes – 18 August 2020 Council meeting:

Circulated on the night of August 18.

Two corrections – 1 from Christopher regarding date of his return to work and one from Karen Van Rheenen clarifying a comment about our furnace and Neal finding out about Hepa filters for air purification.

Motion to accept Minutes as amended: Gillian

Seconded: Judith Slimmon. Carried.

4. Finance Report

Treasurer, Ged McLean circulated September 2020 Finance Report by email prior to the meeting today:

- Although giving continues to be significantly below previous years, it seems likely we will be able to meet our 2020 expenses from a combination of giving and government support. We are in a strong financial position and will be able to make up any minor shortfall from our existing surplus.

- A government wage subsidy of \$11,251.32 has been received and is reflected as a reduced expenditure on wages for the Rector, Parish Worker and Verger.

- We have also received an additional \$19,000. a generous donation from a parishioner.

Motion to Accept the Finance Report: Ged McLean

Seconded: Karen VanRheenen. Carried.

5. Review of In-Building/Zoom worship

Reflections and observations from members of Council were very positive. The two in-building services (Sept 6 & 13) have gone well. Numbers are low, but those who attended expressed gratitude for the opportunity to return to church.

Several who felt very cautious / hesitant about returning with the new covid protocols in place, found that the experience was “better than they thought” / “more enjoyable than they expected.” And “Two thumbs up!”

Several expressed ‘awe’ at the work done to make all this happen – not only effectively – but in a way that allowed people to feel safe. Allan Carmichael, Dave Conway, Ged Mclean & Larry Anthony put in a great deal of time during the summer to get the technical side of the zoom / live-stream worship worked out. The services went very well indeed. There is some fine tuning / de-bugging that will continue. At this moment there is no power to the TV screen monitor – which means that Christopher cannot see the Zoom congregation – it is projected on the large screen behind him.

At the same time though, there was also a sense of ‘loss’ – The service is different now. So many of those who did attend in person wore masks – which is – on one hand – good and necessary – and on the other – confusing to the brain that looks for facial cues and signals to communicate.

Music also an important element in the services and in our conversation: Dave continues to work with a number of different musicians recording audio for music at our services. Julian Greenwood is sufficiently recovered from his broken shoulder and is recording some organ music with Dave.

6. Reconvening small groups

– Wednesday / Thursdays - liturgical service and/ or social gatherings

Council had a conversation about re-starting small groups. Men’s Wednesday morning Bible study has been meeting on Zoom but is interested in seeing how viable it would be to plan to meet in person. For a group of 12 to meet -- with correct social distancing protocols in place -- would be challenging even in at the church. Suggestion was made that perhaps we could create more room at the back of the church by moving several of the pews out of the way.

Christopher quoted the latest joint statement Adrian Dix, Minister of Health, and Dr. Bonnie Henry, B.C.’s provincial health officer, on the coronavirus (COVID-19). Dr. Henry said, “We must hold steady with our layers of protection. From keeping safe distances, to washing our hands, staying home, and staying away from others when we are ill and have symptoms of COVID-19, we must all do our part.”

“Stick with Six” has become the watch word. Outdoor gatherings tend to be regarded as much safer. Council considered the possibility of using the “coffee tent” outside – or looking into the purchase of a larger cabana style tent and outdoor heaters.

The point was made that some families do not want to add any more activities to their “circle” – their own family – with school age young people are already interacting with far more than 6 people. In fact, some people are quite intentionally choosing social isolation and prefer not to attend small group functions.

It would be good to reach out to parishioners who haven’t been attending – either Zoom church or in-building worship - and find out if there is something they would like to see / attend at the church or with other parishioners.

Opportunities for socializing are important. But with masks and physical distancing, then hearing becomes another important issue.

Some are simply getting out of the habit of making a space for church on Sunday morning. Their lives are filled with many commitments and they find great pleasure in being out in nature – walking, hiking or on the water.

One challenge with the Thursday morning group is that there are 2 distinct parts to the morning. A small faithful group who attended the Eucharist and a larger group of 8 -12 who met afterwards for a Bible / Book study. The book study could continue on Zoom – but the timing would be awkward for most to come to one and then ? return home for the zoom study?

Another consideration is the cleaning that would necessarily have to follow any group meeting at the church.

7. Youth group

Grace has been connecting regularly with 6 – 10 young people. She is very aware that they are back at school now and many are getting used to meeting in person again. They miss this in their interactions with youth group friends. Grace would like to propose a Youth Group gathering on Sunday mornings from 10 -11 -- outside - for hikes or games or outdoor movies. And then as we move into the cooler, wet days of winter, perhaps they meet downstairs in the lower basement level at church?

Lots of conversation about this. So much support – so great a desire in the council group to facilitate, encourage the youth and to make something available for them. All were united in their conviction that it would be a great shame if youth involvement became a casualty of Covid. But our conversation was tempered with the reality that the youth are divided into large cohort groups at their schools. They all attend different schools. The numbers of people they'd be interacting with would soon grow exponentially.

We circled back to the conversation about cabana tents and our ability to meet outside. So many considerations – from Municipal restrictions to Diocesan approval to space and cost. A tent large enough to host a socially distant group would represent a substantial investment.

If the tent(s) is up in an on-going way – is that covering the lawn - or the labyrinth – or a good chunk of the parking lot?

Several parents made the observation that when kids are with their friends, they are laughing and boisterous -- and it is just not a reality to think that they will be 'social distancing.'

So, rather than enlist shoppers to price out tents and outdoor heaters -- we suggest that Grace do a short poll with parents to see if it is a realistic possibility that they would want their children to attend an 'in-person' gathering.

Important to start with 'baby steps' – we know that there are a very small number of regulars who visiting at Zoom youth group. Best to start with them – getting together outside and then see if there is the will to pursue this.

Children:

The suggestion was made at Council last month that since Shannon put something together for the younger children for 'Welcome Sunday' in September each year, perhaps she could come up with a gift idea that the church could send out to families with children. Several volunteers expressed willingness to deliver these to the families / children and have a brief socially-distanced visit – in the same way that Larry and Joan have done with the birthday bag deliveries of licorice each week.

8. Office support – long-term

Karen Fenimore has made a commitment to cover the bases in the church office for the next few months. She is currently working 3 mornings a week. Council needs to keep in mind that we do need to find someone for the job to take over in the new year.

9. The BC Diocesan episcopal election will be held on-line, Saturday, September 26. The seven candidates for Bishop: Kevin Arndt; Jennifer Cooper, Douglas Fenton, Anna Greenwood-Lee; Alastair Singh-McCollum; Lon Towstego, Dawna Wall.

<https://bc.anglican.ca/episcopal-transition/candidate-information>

Our Synod delegates are Christopher Page, Karen VanRheen, Dave Conway, Jenn Sharlow, Sharon Richmond – and the Rev. Ruth Dantzer – who is attending as clergy – but is also a member of the parish.

10. Parish Virtual Christmas Pageant - Conversation postponed until next month

Initial details were shared in a parish email on August 7, 2020. Plans are in the works for a virtual Pageant. The idea is to string together short videos to make one Christmas Pageant video. The production will include the traditional pageant readings and songs, as well as Christmas traditions of parish community members. The hope is that some members of the congregation may be willing to do a small video clip and share how the season shines in their home. Jenni Jennings, Karen Fallen and Barbara DiLucca are looking for actors/story tellers; Tech helpers; Musicians; Readers and Photos of earlier pageants.

11. Motion to Adjourn

Motion offered in a 4-way tie from Gillian – Ken – Sharon – and perhaps? Judith Carried. Resoundingly. Finished with 'The Grace.'

Next meetings: 20 October, 17 November, 15 December

*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
be with us all evermore. Amen*