

# ST. PHILIP PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES

18 May Tuesday 7:00 p.m.

via zoom: 807-484-6311 p/w: worship

## 1. Prayer

Christopher first read a brief passage from Michael Pakaluk's new book, *The Memoirs of St. Peter: A New Translation of the Gospel According to Mark*. Professor Pakaluk, a professor at the Catholic University of America, provides a new rendering of the ancient Greek text and also provides lively scholarship in the commentary that follows his translation. Reading from Chapter 6:35-40 [Jesus feeding the 5,000 / loaves & fishes story], Christopher commented that we are the recipients of this super abundance and all we need to do is access that abundance and share it.

He then led a prayer to open and commit the meeting time to the One who provides for us all.

## 2. Regrets - Greg Anctil

## 3. Minutes – 16 March 2021 and 20 April 2021

**Minutes of the March meeting** were circulated on the evening of March 16.

Christopher suggested a correction regarding a comment made at the in-camera part of the council meeting and this change was made.

**MOTION:** To accept Minutes of 16 March 2021 as amended – Gillian Fosdick

Seconded: Karen Van Rheenen Carried.

**Minutes of the April meeting** were circulated on the evening of April 20.

Sharon offered two corrections

Page 4, her comment about "Every person has a soul and every soul needs to be nourished." initially came from Judith Slimmon at their last Visioning meeting (TF) in March, 2021.

Second item: Page 4. "Committee met in June 2020". I said that the committee had been struck in January 2020. We met in January and February - our March 2020 meeting was cancelled. We've also met recently and some members have withdrawn.

These changes were made.

**MOTION:** To accept Minutes of 20 April 2021 as amended

– Gillian Fosdick

Seconded: Esther Graham Carried.

## 4. Feedback to 20 April meeting with Bishop Anna & Brendon Neilson

Round the Zoom screen of all present:

GF: confused and bewildered by it – not clear what the point was – it felt like they came to share the news that we were "dying" -- started by asking for our perception of our 'condition' – and then "summed up" with their own version -- not one person had replied – 'I think we're dying.'

ES: some good aspects – positive that Bishop apologized for the lack of transparency as the Diocesan Vision had been communicated previously.

EG: yes – some glimmers of hope – it was positive that Bishop is aware that the organization is too expansive & unwieldy, - so, - hope that she might take some action – as administrator to begin to pare down their expenses.  
She has ‘inherited’ -- been saddled with -- this presentation and is trying to make sense of it with us - sees that there are parts that are not working. Some hope that she may make some changes.

JS: it was a little confusing. She must be worried about the Diocese - rather than individual churches – she is in a tough position.

GM: had high hopes – don’t anymore. – but will give her another chance

[This conversation was in two parts, sandwiching Ruth’s presentation below – but is presented here as one . . . just for. . . clarity.]

KD: the parishes do not have bottomless resources to support the diocesan “vision” – the first thing they must do, is to determine the level of free will offering available from the parishes – and thereby define the envelope that the Diocese has to live within

LA: Visioning process for him has been coloured by past experiences at another church – where nothing ever came from these visioning quests – that could modify or correct the direction the church was moving. It always seemed a useless exercise.  
- it can be used as an empty exercise OR we can make a decision to do something that steps on people’s toes -- and those people will leave and we redefine ourselves by the new vision.  
- the Bishop did say that raising money was not the top of the list

DC: felt optimistic about the conversation – or – certainly didn’t think it was all bad – different from the trauma of old Synod days – when any attempt to modify the program would be shot down – seemed much better this time – Anna was sharing her vision - thinking about – and wanting us to think about - what other people will need - what kind of personal support can we offer -those with mental health issues - we are entering new territory for us – what can we offer? It is a good question – feel very sympathetic & supportive of her tendency to look beyond immediate circle to say – what can we do to serve the wider community?  
She was challenging us to say – what good are we? – what are we providing? It did sound like she has moved beyond the line we’ve been hearing for so long – “we need money – so – what is your vision?”

GB: I agree that she was trying to push us on how to reach out to neighbours. The bishop has a hard job. I think she has good intentions.

KVR: - going to stand with the “Polyannas” – I think it was a positive meeting – not that the exercise was meaningful or helpful – but saw it as a huge backing off of the old hard stance. She was listening. She wasn’t defensive. She was attacked a couple of times and stayed steady with it.

CP: spoke to the bishop on the phone after the meeting. She asked then about feedback  
- that was a good sign.  
- felt she communicated honestly – and yes – she has a tough job - but she is more flexible  
- the single biggest take away was the clear sense of what a positive, caring community we have – CP came away feeling that she would have to see that we are doing something right – he felt heartened by our responses.

## **5. Worship Survey Possibility**

Ruth McGhee joined us to deliver a presentation considering the logistics of sending out a survey, to canvas the parish about what the Sunday morning schedule should look like when we return to in-building worship.

Ruth uses the Google Survey tool in her work and is super familiar with the platform. She has done an awesome job of putting this together and assured council that the program is easy to use, easy to read and easy to make changes, -- and that the results are easy to collate.

- Ruth is willing to hand it all over to council or to work along side anyone who is keen to be part of this.

The program is quite phenomenal and can produce results in every conceivable format – from graphs and pie charts - to linear scales and detailed written responses.

- Results can be downloaded to a spreadsheet

- The surveys can be anonymous or identified.

- We can print out the questionnaire to provide copies for those not on-line.

Council was pleased, impressed and grateful to Ruth for her work on this.

Council members approved in principle the decision to make use of this survey tool – to send out to the parish – but as our questions are primarily about how people are feeling regarding a return to in-building worship – we decided to table this for further discussion at our June meeting.

Ruth has now added Larry Anthony as a collaborator. Dave Conway and Evelyn Savage will work with him to fine tune our questions to the congregation

KVR: Wanted to emphasize that the questions we ask about Zoom Church should only be included if we can continue to offer the virtual services once we do return to in-building worship.

CP: A survey is not a decision - it is simply gathering information

LA: there is always a danger that when you consult people – they will expect that their choices will honoured.

## **6. Finances – Treasurer – Ged McLean**

I have completed a projection of year end expense vs income. The short answer is we are projecting a deficit of income below expenses of approximately \$45,000.00

## **communication to parish**

## **St. Philip Financial Update May 2021**

As of May 2021 our givings are significantly lower than previous years and we project by year end to be 25% below what we had planned to meet our approved budget. Even though the 2021 budget is the smallest in recent memory **we hope to continue trimming expenses**. Even so, we are projecting to end 2021 with a \$45,000 shortfall. Please consider this situation when planning your giving for the rest of the year. Thank you for your continuing generosity and faithfulness,  
Karen VanRheenen (warden), Larry Anthony (warden), Ged McLean (treasurer)

## **7. Refugee Committee**

Karen Van Rheenen passed to council a request from Badr and from Jennifer Plumridge. Badr and his sister, Bushra are trying to raise \$30,000 to complete the refugee application to bring their parents to Victoria. They would like to circulate a message to members of the parish, asking for any help in raising this money. Since the Diocese is now moving the refugee sponsorship program out from under the diocesan umbrella and into the community (in much the same way that they have divested interest in the Threshold Housing and the Loaves and Fishes programs) the church is not really involved in the same way that we had been in previous years. There is no one from St. Philip on the Refugee Committee at this time. However, there a great deal of compassion and good will. Council discussed allowing Jennifer to circulate their request – and agreed to this.

The question was also raised as to whether we would wish to make a lump sum contribution from the parish. But council felt that we couldn't make such a donation a corporate priority at this time.

GM: requested that the message circulated be very clear that any donations were not coming to St. Philip and should be made directly to the Intercultural Association - specifically naming Badr's refugee project.

## **8. Gonzales Contract**

Karen Van Rheenen is council's representative to the Gonzales Preschool. Every year in June, the Preschool signs a one-year rental agreement contract with St. Philip, running September to September.

Two points:

- i. Last year they asked to increase their usage of the building to include Friday mornings. This is to help them meet with Covid protocols of social distancing requirements.
- ii. Each year we have added a 2% cost of living increase.

Karen will sign the contract next month, for the coming year, and wanted to confirm that council was on-side with the Preschool continuing to use the building on Friday mornings and also agree to maintain the very minor increase in rent.

This was agreed.

## **Bring forward for June meeting discussion:**

### **- Summer?**

- worship plan; lawn gathering ?
- picnic September, neighbours?

### **- "Decline" conversation**

as circulated by email 28 April

At our recent PC meeting with the Bishop, the term “decline” came up frequently. This raises a number of questions for us as a church that we might benefit from addressing:

1. how do we define “decline” as a church?
2. according to our definition, do we perceive that, pre-pandemic at St. Philip, we were a “church in decline”? (nb: average Sunday – 2017: **173**, 2018: **162**, 2019: **169**)

**9. Motion to Adjourn - Evelyn Savage**

**All said ‘the Grace’**

**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**

next meetings: 15 June, 21 Sept, 19 Oct, 16 Nov,  
14 Dec (nb: 2<sup>nd</sup> Tue in Dec not 3<sup>rd</sup>)

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