

**St. Philip Parish Council**  
**MINUTES**  
**Tuesday, 15 June 2021 - 7:00 p.m.**

**1. Prayer**

Christopher read a portion of the passage of scripture appointed for August 15 – from 2 Kings 2:9-12: Elijah asks Elisha what he can do for him as they prepare for his ‘departure’ – when the Lord was about to take Elijah up to heaven. Elisha says, “Please let me inherit a double portion of your spirit.” Elijah says ‘Keep watching’ – i.e.: you need to pay attention – interesting that this reading is assigned at a time of such transition – this is a timely message for us -- it tells us what we need to do – as we find our way forward: -- ask for a double portion of spirit – and ‘keep awake’ -- this mindfulness - combined with the spirit who will guide us -- will move us into a flourishing future. Christopher then led the group in prayers and opened the meeting.

**2. Regrets:** Greg Anctil, Evelyn Savage, Grace Bodie  
**Guest present:** Yvette Bird Co-chair of Vision Group

**3. Minutes – 18 May 2021**

Minutes were sent out on the evening of May 18. Two errors were noted:

1. from Christopher Page: on the wording of the financial update we were going to send out. It is my recollection we had decided to keep the phrase “we hope to continue trimming expenses”

2. second from Karen Van Rheenen:

Under the refugee minutes section, the diocese is looking to transfer to a non-profit. I would not name Intercultural association because that has not been decided.

Badr's committee is working with the intercultural association.

These corrections have now been made.

**MOTION:** Gillian -move the acceptance of the Minutes as amended

Seconded: Esther Accepted / Carried.

**4. Vision Committee – conversation with Yvette Bird**

Prior to the meeting, a document was circulated to council members, from Yvette, co-chair of the Vision Group, summarizing many of issues that the Committee has been discussing. Though these talks have been on-going for several years, they were ‘re-ignited’ at the time of our April council meeting (April 20, 2021) when Bishop Anna and Diocesan Vision Animator, Brendon Neilson, joined / hosted us for our zoom council meeting. The two were doing workshop meetings with church councils throughout the diocese to establish an initial conversation with parish leadership, and to have ‘a bit of a check in on the ministry hopes and identity.’ Bishop Anna opened that discussion about congregational development resources for parish viability and vitality, and asked participants – what it was about St. Philip that was special or ‘life-giving.’

Yvette said, that there are seven regular members of the group (and several occasional) who have met since that conversation with Bishop Anna.

The St. Philip group have taken the quote from Frederick Buechner, offered by the bishop as their watchword:

“The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet.” Frederick Buechner, *Wishful Thinking: A Theological ABC* [1973]

Yvette said they have discussed ways to initiate conversations with the congregation. One of the major discussions has been around the return to building worship – and the understanding that this going to take time and that we need not to hurry to execute any new plans right away.

Yvette spoke highly of the group and the process they are engaged in, - and affirmed to council the need for authenticity and an expression of gratitude.

At this moment – they are asking questions:

- What is needed for St. Philip to share in the deep gladness that God calls us to
- What have we learned through our experience of the Covid pandemic? One major blessing is that it has forced us to live – think – worship – ‘outside the box’
- what will a return to communal in-building worship look like?
- how do we move forward as part of the diocese and stay in tune with where we are as a congregation.

- the committee is asking council for direction

Council Questions: What will the ‘product’ be? What is the desired outcome? Will there be a report?

- YB: specifically trying not to translate the process into ‘product’ - but define – who we are – what we are – what we want from “church” – and letting those answers point us forward, maintain the integrity of this as a ‘spiritual search.’

CP: we do need to show the diocese that we have been engaged in a process

- propose to let this settle over the summer and revisit the subject at our meeting in September

## **5. Summer office plans**

- office plan -Karen Fenimore will be away for most of August.
- She is lining up some helpers who will cover the bases and take care of essentials, but it is most likely that there will be days when no one is available in the church office.

Christopher will be away on vacation and study leave from July 19 through August 30.

zoom worship Leaders: Greg Anctil & Joan Sedgwick

Sermon time speakers:

July 25 – Christopher will pre-record an address for his 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday away

August 1 – Jennifer Sharlow; 8 – Judith Slimmon; 22 – Anthony Hendriks

29 – Gillian Fosdick.

At this moment, only August 15 is still vacant.

The lectionary reading assigned for that Sunday is 2 Kings 2:10-12, 3:13-14

## **6. Office staffing going forward**

Karen Van Rheenen met with Karen Fenimore to talk about the job and hours in the fall – asks, will we need to hire anyone else to share the work load once we return to in-building worship in September?

## **7. Survey results – Larry Anthony**

We had a very good response: 121 completed surveys were received.

The results of the survey paint a picture that is consistent with the status quo as we look forward to returning to 'normal', non-pandemic worship, at least with respect to service length and sermon length (although there is significant support for sermons <15 minutes).

Two possible exceptions to the status quo are (1) moving the 9:00 AM service to later (e.g. 10:00 AM) and (2) elimination of the 11:15 service.

A Zoom presence is a very popular notion, yet <15% of respondents indicated they are willing to attend a Zoom service more frequently than "occasionally". The leadership workload required for Zoom programming was recognised as undesirable, and perhaps unsustainable.

The congregation is, in general, very appreciative of the opportunity to provide feedback in this survey, and there are clear indications that further discussions of the future of St. Philip worship would be welcome.

A proposed mail out was read and agreed upon by council to inform the congregation of the restrictions that remain in place for Church reopening at this time. This was in response to the perception of some congregants' that opening in June would be without restrictions.

Extended conversation – lots of questions. Are we seeing any appetite for a service other than Sunday morning? (No that wasn't a dominant theme in the remarks received)

A great deal of discussion about the time and energy involved in having a zoom service / or live streaming when we do return in September.

Important to remember that Zoom worship will not look like it does now if – post - pandemic, significant numbers of people do return to church – than many fewer remain to participate in the Zoom service.

Also pointed out: we have no idea – no real understanding how people will respond. And the experience of Zoom will be profoundly different from the current experience, once the majority of people do return to in-building worship.

ALL the Covid protocols remain in place for any churches opening in June – that is, Registration is still required; attendance will be limited; symptom check taken before attending; mandatory masks in the building; no congregational singing; no physical exchange of peace; no wine at communion, no socializing before or after the service and a great deal of cleaning of all touch surfaces between services.

**The 11:15 service** has been very special and important to many congregants - but as most are aware, the average attendance in the last months before the beginning of the pandemic was about 14 - and that since then, at least 4 of those 'regulars' have died. Those who remain are such a tiny group now - we must ask ourselves if they really do make a viable "congregation?"

– Is this something we should make a decision about - now – to say that moving forward, in the fall, we will not have an 11:15 service -- but carry only 2 regular Sunday morning services?

Gillian has agreed to contact all the regular '11:15ers' and ask them to meet at the church on **Monday, July 12<sup>th</sup>** at 10:30 am to have a conversation with Christopher about this service.

Reminder too - that we do have the Thursday morning service – which will continue and might be something that the 11:15 congregation would consider attending.

\*\*\* Parish Council members have agreed to a July meeting -- on **Tuesday, July 13** to follow up on some of these discussions

#### **8. Lawn gatherings**

Two 'lawn gatherings' are scheduled: Tuesday 6 July 11:00 a.m., Saturday 17 July 4:00 p.m. With the Phase Two restrictions now in place, we are able to host up to 50 people outside for conversation.

#### **9. Motion to Adjourn - Gillian**

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:**

13 July; 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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