

Christ Church Cathedral
Annual General Meeting
Meeting Minutes
February 28, 2021 – 12.30 p.m.

1. Present

The Very Reverend M. Ansley Tucker chaired the meeting. The meeting was held by Zoom. 79 people were present.

2. The Meeting was called to order

The Reverend Ross Bliss, opened the meeting with prayer, and held in remembrance members of the cathedral departed this life in 2020.

3. Mark Thompson provided an overview on the use of Zoom for the meeting

4. Regrets

- Jocelyn Rea

5. Mark Thompson was appointed the Clerk of the Meeting by the Chair

6. Consent Agenda

M/S that the Consent Agenda be adopted, as follows:

1. Adoption of Meeting Agenda
2. Adoption of Minutes of the AGM meeting held on February 23, 2020
3. Reception of Written Reports into the Record
4. That the Dean convey the thanks of the Parish to Jennifer LeBlanc, Mark McDonald, Mark Thompson, and Ed Hayley for their diligence in preparing the materials for this meeting.
5. That the Cathedral Management Team be authorized to appoint an Auditor to provide a Notice to Reader on the finances of the Cathedral for the fiscal year 2021, remuneration to be set by the Treasurer in consultation with the Management Team.

Carried

7. Year in Review

The Dean provided commentary on a PowerPoint review of the past year (electronic copy on file).

8. The Dean's Charge to Vestry

The Dean delivered her annual charge (appended to these minutes).

9. Financial Presentation

Ed Hayley, the Director of Finance and Facilities offered overview of the 2020 financial statements as reviewed by Pallan and Associates (statements on file).

M (Mary Hendy) /S (Sue Moore) that the 2020 Financial Statements be adopted as presented.

Carried

10. Deficient Reduction Plan

Michael Wolff and Ian MacLennan presented a seven-point deficit reduction plan, to include:

- i. Research
- ii. Education/Information
- iii. Definition and clarification of cathedral mission and ministry
- iv. Short term funding initiatives
- v. Long term initiatives for sustainable support of mission and ministry
- vi. Community building
- vii. Communication

There was an engaging discussion regarding various aspects of the plan.

M (Marilyn Taylor) /S (Neil Macdonald) that this Vestry approve in principle the draft Deficit Reduction Plan, including a target deficit reduction of at least \$100,000 to be achieved in 2021.

Carried

11. 2021 Budget

Ed Hayley presented the 2021 Budget, projecting an operating fund deficiency of \$175,515 and a consolidated deficiency of \$197,546.

M (Michael Wolff) / S (Valerie Ruhe) that the draft budget for 2021 be adopted as presented.

Carried

12. Recognition of Leaving Members

The Chair recognized and gave thanks for the contributions of Mary Hendy and Jocelyn Rea, both stepping down from the Cathedral Management Team, and for the contributions of Janet Bailey, Nancy Leal and Sue Moore stepping down from the Cathedral Council.

13. Nominations and Elections

The following persons were acclaimed to office.

Cathedral Management Team

- Ian MacLennan (Year 2)
- Marilyn Taylor (Year 3)
- Isabel Weeks (Year 2)
- Michael Wolff (Year 4)

Members of Synod (3 year term)

- Ian MacDonald (Year 1)
- Marilyn Taylor (Year 1)
- Isabel Weeks (Year 1)

Continuing Members of Synod (no election necessary)

- David Mensink (Year 3)
- Valerie Ruhe (Year 3)
- Ian Alexander (Year 2)

Alternate Members of Synod

Martha McGinnis	(Year 3)
Sue Simpson	(Year 3)
Jesse Robertson	(Year 1)

Cathedral Council

Charlotte Ellard Webster	(Year 3 – Youth Member)
Margaret Ketchen	(Year 3)
Jonina Syms	(Year 2)
Mark Thompson	(Year 2 – Vestry Clerk)
Ken Conrad	(Year 1)
Caroline Hudson	(Year 1)
Susan McKelvie	(Year 1)

14. Conclusion of Meeting

The Reverend Ed Lewis offered special thanks to all the staff and volunteers who helped pull together and deliver our first virtual Annual General Meeting.

The meeting was concluded at 3.29 pm with a prayer offered by the Vicar.

Dean's Charge to Vestry February 28, 2021

When I first turned my mind to what I might say to you this year, I thought to ferret out the minutes of the 1919 and 1920 annual meetings of this Cathedral Church. Possibly, I mused, we could draw some comparisons. In 1919 Christ Church Cathedral was on the cusp of making bold plans for a new cathedral. It was simultaneously mourning the deaths of 57 young men who had died in the Great War; and was suffering financial setbacks due to the cost of the war effort. My research in the archives turned up scant, but identifiable, reference to these challenges.

But the thing to which I could find absolutely no reference was the Great Flu Pandemic of 1918-19, despite the fact that then, as now, there were shutdowns and death. I imagine that anthropologists could have a field day analyzing the silence of our ancestors in the face of so much grief and suffering. Were they simply too overwhelmed even to speak of it? Was there some notion of manliness that prescribed endurance? Or a cultural norm about discretion and privacy? Or maybe a lingering 19th century resignation to the vicissitudes of life as the inscrutable will of God? ("The Lord giveth, the Lord taketh away: blessed be the name of the Lord.")

I don't know.

But I do see that they, like us, were living in times of great upheaval, political fragility, and economic uncertainty. And I also see that rather than sit under a broom tree (as did the peevish Jonah) and wait for blessed death to release them from the injustice of it all, they resolutely turned their attention to the future, and to creating (and paying for) a legacy for generations yet unborn. Starting with Memorial Hall, now our Cathedral School, completed in 1923, and followed by the cathedral itself, dedicated six years later in 1929.

What about us?

We, too, are in turmoil. I hope that we are finding within ourselves the same grit and determination, the same generosity of spirit and substance even in times of trial, and the same conviction that the work of the Church – and of this cathedral in particular – is not done yet.

I know that I am not alone in this. In the year leading up to the pandemic, we engaged in an intentional visioning exercise called "Greater Works than These." There we turned our attention to how this cathedral might best be a cathedral "for the city" in the middle years of the 21st century. And we had lots to say. In the meantime, however, COVID has both interrupted and affected our next steps – which would have been to move from "what and why" to "how." From big ideas to particulars.

One of the issues which was already facing us, but which COVID has magnified, is *capacity*. Capacity includes people, space, expertise (or access to expertise), enthusiasm and money. You can dream up the best idea in the world, but if you can't house it, or pay for it, if you don't know anyone who knows how to do it or who wants to do it, you're hooped.

As most of you know the urgent issue of capacity at this time – the issue that pops the cork on the others – is finance. Today, we will be considering a deficit budget. This certainly isn't the first deficit budget we've ever considered, and it is nowhere near the worst: but it is the

deficit budget that will carry us over the brink if we don't address it. Our operating reserve is sufficient to bail us out this year, but by the spring of 2022, if we carry on as is, it will be entirely depleted. Not good.

This was why we recently hosted a series of conversations entitled "Serious Talk about Finances and the Cathedral's Future," to seek ways to increase capacity. Nearly 100 people took time and great care to offer their wisdom and suggestions. I hope you will recognize many of these ideas in the Deficit Reduction Plan that will be presented for approval later in this meeting; and it is only the basis of a plan like this that we will go on to present a deficit budget.

Our "Serious Talks" were fascinating, not only for the ideas that were generated, but for some of the assumptions that appeared to undergird our conversations. To be honest, I do wonder if some of these need to be revisited at this time in the church's history.

One assumption seemed to be that our financial security depends upon getting more people to come to church on Sunday. There is no doubt that as Christians we want as many people as possible to share our love of God and the liturgy. Similarly, there is no doubt that there is a correlation between church attendance and offerings. However, I want to suggest that the days are long past when attendance is the key measure of success. Absent some kind of "Great Awakening" (which do seem to happen every 70 years or so), we are never going back to the 50s. We need to accept that the Church of the future will be a smaller church. It is time to recover the wisdom of the Old Testament prophets, where we learn about "remnant theology" – the conviction that no matter how bleak the future looks, there will always be a faithful remnant to carry forward God's program for the world. Do you remember the image we repeat each Christmas? "A shoot will spring forth from the stump of Jesse."

The measure of our success will be the extent to which we manage to accomplish what Jesus set in motion. To be sure, what happens here on Sunday is not peripheral or unimportant. Far from it! But it is in no way the *raison d'être* of the Church – it is only our starting point. Let us never forget that Jesus did not come to found a church, let alone to lay down a liturgy. It does appear that he himself, as an observant Jew, attended synagogue, but when you stop to think about it, he spent precious little time there. He preached, he taught, he healed, he fed people where they lived their lives. His objective was to mend the world – with justice, mercy, peace and truth.

Our worship, our study, our prayer – these are not the reason for the church's existence: they are *only* the splendid means by which the Church is nourished and girds up its strength to carry out Jesus' mission to love the world. But absent that outward turn, we have done little more than grasp God's grace and hoarded it for ourselves.

Now what does this have to do with capacity? And particularly with financial capacity?

We know that the churches which are thriving (and notice, I didn't say "growing" – although numerical growth is frequently experienced) are those who have found a way to serve the vineyard in which God has planted them. They thrive, in part, because once they concern themselves (hands on) with people outside their own front doors, they begin to catch the attention of neighbours. Once they are seen to be enacting gospel values of mercy and justice, they enjoy a surge in public opinion. They begin to attract people who want to come alongside and join in God's mission to the world. And money follows mission.

The question for this Cathedral community in the near term is, What, or what more, does God need us to do in order to heal, to mend, to nurture this city, this neighbourhood? Which is to say, God's city, God's neighbourhood. What assets do we already bring to the table – space, people, skill, enthusiasm, and yes, even money? What help would we need, and where would we find it? Let us, please, operate not from a position of scarcity (we're too few, we're too old, our space is limited, we aren't rich), but – as did our forebears a century ago – from a deep sense of God's abundance. Abundance which is not in our hands alone, but in the hands of all who believe that better is possible.

Respectfully submitted,

M. Ansley Tucker