

Diocese of Rupert's Land
Executive Committee Minutes

Tuesday, May 18, 2021

Present: Archdeacon Simon Blaikie, Bishop Geoff Woodcroft, The Rev. Brian Ford, Sharon Routley, Richard Pilbeam, The Rev. Andrew Rampton, Canon Gary Russell, Chancellor Jim Ripley, Dean Paul Johnson, Archdeacon Helen Kennedy, Archdeacon Naboth Manzongo, Archdeacon Mawejje, Archdeacon Dave Labdon, The Rev. Helen Holbrook, The Rev. Vincent Solomon

Regrets: Marcella Vezina

Staff: The Rev. Dr. Heather McCance, Joy Valencerina

1. Call to Order / Opening Remarks

S. Blaikie took the chair.

a) Opening prayer - Bishop Geoff Woodcroft led us in prayer.

b) Recognition of the Land:

We acknowledge that we meet and work in Treaty 1, 2 and 3 Land, the traditional land of the Anishinaabe, Cree, Dakota, Sioux and Oji-Cree people and the homeland of the Metis Nation. We are grateful for their stewardship of this land and their hospitality which allows us to live, work and serve God the Creator here.

2. Approval of the Agenda

P. Johnson/J. Ripley. Carried.

3. Approval of April 20th, 2021 Executive Committee minutes

J. Ripley/P. Johnson. Carried.

4. Business arising from March 16th, meeting

None was raised.

5. Discussion on CM&M

S. Blaikie referred to a document he has forwarded to Executive members in which we can see a variety of ways parish assessments/apportionments are handled in a number of other Canadian dioceses (similar to our Common Ministry and Mission Fund).

He asked for Executive to begin a discussion, to (in time) bring a motion to Council, and in turn to Synod 2022. This will be on our agenda for next month as well.

He shared information from Joy Valencerina and Sharon Routley: in 2018,

- 10 parishes contributed more than 12.5% to CMM;
- 18 met the 12.5% request;
- 28 parishes contributed between 1% and 12.5%;
- 5 parishes made no contribution at all;
- 4 didn't submit any financial records

Long term viability of the Diocese is challenged by our inability to financially support our mission and ministry, due to a majority of parishes not paying what has been determined to be their "fair share" of 12.5%.

These notes have not been distributed to members of Executive, but if people would like to know which parishes are contributing to what level, Simon can share that information.

P. Johnson – every parish has a story about why they are not paying their 'fair share,' this has been true of the Cathedral as well. The Cathedral has increased their contributions by \$1,000 each year to move towards the 12.5% level.

A. Rampton – There is a lack of understanding in parishes about what the CMM money is used for. In many communities an assessment is perceived as a tax that is somehow owed to a diocese. Ecclesiologically that's not helpful. It's not clear how we might take the 12.5% seriously unless there is some kind of repercussion for not contributing it. Yet, if there are repercussions, it will feel like a tax. A clearer strategic plan for the Diocese as a whole would be helpful; what milestones are we working towards? It feels like a lot of what we do has been reaction rather than careful planning towards goals.

H. Holbrook – It would be helpful to survey parish councils; what do they know about CMM, what are the challenges. It would help to know what is misunderstood at that level. Echoed Andrew's comment about a strategic plan and communication about what CMM is for.

Mawejje – Happy to be part of this conversation at this stage. There are many factors that might contribute to this. We know parishes have financial issues. Cemetery funds need to be separated out from parish funds, and not given as part of CMM. People need to be refreshed in their knowledge of the breadth of the Church, that we are wider than a parish. We are not a congregational Church. CMM is how we respond to the needs of the wider church, nationally and internationally; it is important for members of our parishes to understand what this means. We enable ministry in the Council of the North. We reach to places where we will never be. There are brothers and sisters beyond our own parish. Do we need to tell people more about this? Do we see our obligation to one another? Do we see the Diocese as 935 Nesbitt Bay only? Do we see the Anglican Church beyond Canada?

G. Woodcroft – We are looking at the 2018 returns; 2019 was more or less the same, and 2020 looks worse. If we all met CMM, we would be well in the black and have no deficit this year. Thanked the speakers who have shared for their on-the-ground perspective. This is a theological issue about being the Church. The sense of growing congregationalism is disturbing, and will make it increasingly difficult to deal with the issues of CMM unless we change how we speak about them.

D. Labdon – If parishes know what the money is for, they'll be more generous. He has seen elsewhere a tool used by a diocese for a kind of means assessment to help determine if parishes might be able to

afford to give more or less, based theologically on the story of the widow's mite in the Gospels. If parishes see the Diocese as the Church, and feels that we are all part of the same thing and buy into the same vision, every parish would be more likely to give.

G. Russell – There will many parishes who simply say that there is no money at the moment, due to the pandemic crisis. That will mean a low revenue period of at least two years, and we should be planning for that.

6. Discussion on Disposition of 240 Tache Ave, Winnipeg

S. Blaikie presented the document circulated, regarding the property of the previous parish of St. Philip, Norwood. He noted from Canon 19 that Diocesan Council is tasked with the disposition of assets for closed parishes. One of the recommendations from the task force that worked with this parish last year as it was being closed, was that the property be sold.

G. Russell – We had started out this process asking whether there was a way to save this building for ministry and mission, within the Diocese or in partnership with other organizations. No such alternatives presented themselves.

H. Holbrook – A hope had previously been raised about keeping an Anglican presence in that part of the city. Perhaps some of the proceeds of the sale could support this going forward, given the needs in the area.

P. Johnson – Asked if Executive is working on a consensus to make a recommendation to Council?

S. Blaikie – This report was made to and received by the Bishop. This is an opportunity to share our thoughts with the Bishop.

7. Members' Reflections

P. Johnson – Asked for an update on parishes and vacancies.

S. Blaikie – St. Andrew's, Woodhaven is interviewing. All Saints, St. Peter's, and St. George's, Crescentwood are all posted. On-going discussions with St. Paul's, Middlechurch and Christ Church, Selkirk.

G. Woodcroft – Conversations with St. John, Fort Francis, who have requested time to think through options and online worship through St. Luke's, Dryden is ongoing; there is also discussion with the ELCIC about sharing ministry there. The leadership at St. John's, Wabigoon is in conversation with the twon about the use of their building. Ordination and commissioning (and confirmation) has been delayed by COVID precautions several times for St. Mary's, Sioux Lookout. Pinawa Christian Fellowship is beginning a search as their pastor retires next spring; their next incumbent might or might not be Anglican, given their ecumenical nature.

8. Bishop's Reflections

G. Woodcroft - "Live at 935," the livestreamed weekly worship on Sunday mornings from the chapel in the Synod Office, has come to an end. The Bishop and Heather McCance were being called into the diocese for other worship needs. It was a blessing to be part of this. We were able to make connections with rural places and places outside the diocese. Thanks to Heather, to Andrew Rampton, to Sandra Bender, and to Dave and Cara Robinson for doing the tech work for over a year.

A. Rampton asked about the upcoming ordinations. The Bishop responded that the one scheduled for May 30 has been postponed indefinitely; those scheduled for June 6 and 12 are still under consideration.

G. Woodcroft - The death of the Rev. Deacon Lorna Howell so quickly following the death of the Rev. Bob English has hit him hard, and has hit the Diocese hard. We are all tired, and while we have shown incredible resiliency, it is hard. We know we continue to be called to be in people's lives, and also to reach out to one another, and to support one another. We need to do that more.

9. Diocesan Council Agenda

S. Blaikie – Noted that preparation for this is, by constitution, the mandate of Executive. He requested any items be raised today or in the next day; Agenda will be formed on Thursday.

10. Adjournment

H. Kennedy/Carried.

V. Solomon closed the meeting in prayer.