Trinity Rutland Vestry Meeting Minutes
April 16, 2026, 5-7pm

Present in Person: Rev. Sarah Ginolfi, Lois Castonguay, Brandy Blosser, Melissa Alarie, Holly Webb, Diane Novak
Present via Zoom: Shannon Hill, Judy Hall, David Rugger
Absent: Cassi Whitcomb

FORMATION SESSION

I. Call to Order/Opening Prayer
Sarah opened the meeting with a prayer at 5:01 p.m.

II. Rector's Report
Mother Sarah noted to the vestry that Trinity is coming out of crisis mode between repairs/improvements at the rectory and addressing the frozen pipe situation at the church.
She also commented that she is finding a need to restructure her work time because she's getting messages at all hours of the day and evenings when it's her rest time. In consultation with her wardens, written guidelines have been created and will be shared with the congregation at large in the Sunday bulletin. She read the guidelines to the vestry and all agreed that her thoughts and requests are completely reasonable.

Insofar as her request for summer vacation, she noted she usually takes only two weeks, but is requesting an extra week from her continuing education allowance (2 weeks/year) to help her parents with housing transition needs. This sum time away will encompass the last two weeks of July and the first week of August, July 20 to August 9. The vestry affirmed this plan and supply is already scheduled.

Just before the meeting today, Luke Krueger who is going to lead our active incident training, met with Sarah to plan out what a session with us would look like; they went thru every inch of the building and Luke will prepare a presentation for us. Sarah and Luke are trying to schedule at a time for a presentation that will not take away from other scheduled activities. It may be possible to do this at the next vestry meeting in May. Sarah suggested that we plan to meet from 5-8pm. We can bring snacks. She will inquire whether this should involve the ushers. She will meet with Luke ahead of time to see what other persons should be in attendance. For now, we should plan on the May 21st vestry meeting running from 5-8.

BUSINESS SESSION

I. Sarah requested a motion to approve the March minutes. Motion to approve was made by Diane and seconded by Judy. There being no additional comments or question, Sarah called for a vote and the motion was unanimously approved.

II. Sarah requested a motion to approve the March Treasurer's reports. Motion was made by Melissa, seconded by Judy. Sarah advised that four times a year we do a review of all of the accounts. The first quarter having ended, the review has just occurred. There were no major flags raised reported in terms of spending other than the extra utility cost related to the alternative heating; it sounds like we're still waiting on the Efficiency Vermont rebate, so that is not reflected as having been received yet. The Youth Fund fronted the initial $985 needed to set up the Diocesan Youth weekend at Rock Point. Registration for the event is now open, so it's anticipated that some of those advanced funds will come back. Insofar as our investment income, there is nothing unusual there. In April we may see a dip in investment income due to global issues. There being no further discussion, Sarah called for a vote and the reports were unanimously approved.

Sarah advised that the Finance Team is recommending an investment strategy that would involve putting $30k of the building fund into a CD to obtain a better interest rate and return on our money. Diane advised the finance committee would like to move some of our money into a better interest setup. There is about $83,000 in the fund and the team is requesting authority to move $30,000 of it into a six-month CD at 2.71% versus .02% percent in a regular savings account. The finance team does not see any major expenses coming along and it makes sense to do this and see how it goes. With the understanding that our share of the parking lot paving expense will be about $23,000, if we move $30,000 into a CD, and still have Smith/Benson fund if needed, we would still have adequate funds to meet anticipated needs. Withdrawals from that fund can only be made quarterly, and we have missed this quarter. A withdrawal could be requested before the end of June. A six-month term CD of $30,000 would tie those funds up only for 6 months. Sarah feels comfortable accepting the finance committee's recommendation. A motion to approve was made by Diane, seconded by Lois, and approved unanimously. Sarah requested Diane to report back to Finance Team.

III. Fundraising Team Update

Sarah requested Holly to update the vestry on fundraising. Holly commented that the three people heading up the fundraising team need to take a bit of step back and re-evaluate how we can move forward more effectively. There were a lot of different proposals for things we could do and we've come to the conclusions that we'll burn out too fast if we take on too many different things. We need to reconsider the overall picture to come up with fewer projects to achieve our fundraising goal more effectively and consider ideas with more potential for engagement by the congregation and community.

Sarah remarked that Keri has tons of fundraising experience and came to the committee with some really great fundraising ideas. Many of the ideas will need bigger and broader parish support and Sarah, too, is concerned about the potential for burnout of the team.
Sarah suggested that we might try putting this back onto the congregation; that perhaps this summer, when we will not be doing traditional formation activities on Sundays after church, that instead we might have opportunities to have some holy conversation with the congregation about what kind of fundraising events might engage their imagination and would be something they could get excited about participating in.

Sarah mentioned that Becky Congdon might be someone to visit with. She is new to the parish but is finding Trinity to be a good place for her. She is involved with the motorcycle community and came to Sarah with a thought about doing a blessing of the bikes that could include a lunch offering that could be a fundraising component.

Sarah wants to encourage the fundraising team to see themselves now first as people raisers rather than money raisers. Sarah was concerned from the outset by how much money the team was being tasked with raising this year. She wants the fundraising team to understand that if we do not meet the goal, it is not because the team failed, it's because Trinity simply wasn't ready. We need to successfully grow the movement in other ways to inspire others to volunteer. She will continue to advocate for that. Linda Fay has already considered that money from apple pie sales could go to the general fund rather than to the WOTF. This effort usually raises in the range of $1000 annually.

Sarah wants to encourage us to think more as a congregation as a whole; where do we have energy as a congregation? How will something fit into the overall life of our parish so that we don't plan something when we don't have the people power to do it well. We need people to understand that leadership a team is in an executive role, not a management role. The team's job is to inspire people to do things.

David advised that he could connect us with someone who is quasi-regular at Trinity who has a lot of background in getting people together for the purpose of raising money. He will get back to us on that.

IV. GW Paving Bid. Sarah presented the new quote for paving the rear parking lot. The bank is on board with the bid. It was noted the bid does not include line striping as GW does not do that, so we'll have to contract with a different company for that. We will need to work that out. As the paving is for rear lot, having it without lines is not problematic for the bank. The rear lot will be a total digout of the lot. Had we been able to get this under contract in 2025, it would have cost $42,000, but the 2026 bid of $54,820 is due to increases in materials and over all costs. This was a tough lesson learned: that the desire for multiple comparison bids doesn't always align with contractor availability and decision timeline demands. Judy asked what is the cost of striping? Sarah advised that the bid from last year was $600, but the company who bid last year just didn't make it happen. We are hoping it won't be more than $1,000 in 2026, but the figure reality is unknown. Shannon asked in regard to striping whether we are also going to take care of the front lot? Sarah remarked that this desperately needs to happen. People are parking on our sanctuary side of the lot and ignoring cones and signs.

As for the sanctuary side of the front lot, we need lines striped there. We were hoping to do a re-asphalt like the other side of the front lot, but now that we know what the back lot will cost, we need to rethink that. We need to deal with a dip in the lot that is a tripping hazard. We are also considering the addition of another handicapped space but that may not be workable. Follow-up with GW should include asking if there is a way they could fill the dip in the lot with some asphalt. It is estimated the cost for paving sanctuary side could be another $25,000, so with our share of the rear lot paving being ~ $28,000, that could mean a withdrawal of over $50,000 from property fund and perhaps that is not advisable at this time. It was inquired where the dip came in the lot originated. Holly and Brandy advised in the 1970's there used to be an enormous pine tree there surrounded by a small soil island. When the tree was removed and the space paved over. As the roots below ground rotted and decomposed, this created a sink hole in the parking lot.

Sarah asked whether anyone would be willing to follow up with line striping people next week to see if they can come out to look at the project. Shannon or Lois will make the call. Sarah will provide the contact information for the businesses to be called. She will ask Wendy to be in touch with GW for scheduling the rear paving asap.

Sarah informed us that there has simply been a request by the Bank for an extension of the existing lease. M&T is seeking another 5-year lease with an increase of 10% in the rent to $14,520/year. M&T has confirmed everything in the original contract.

Sarah requested a motion to approve the new GW bid. Motion made by Lois, seconded Judy. Sarah called for a vote and it was unanimously approved. Sarah will sign the contract with GW and ask Linda to cut check for the deposit. We'll pay the rest when the job is complete and then bank will reimburse us for that remainder.

V. Ministry Oversight Team Updates:

a. Stewardship (Diane and Sarah+) Diane advised there is nothing new. Sarah noted that we need to start stewardship work earlier this year so we aren't crashing into it in the Fall and suggested we aim to get this started in August if possible.

b. Worship (Lois and Holly) Lois noted that she and David still need to meet with Sarah to talk about matters associated with the choir, the organ, discussions with John and where things are at. Sarah advised she had a debrief with team for Holy Week and some things were noted that need a few tweaks to make things better and more effective. As to the Maundy Thursday service, there were only about 7 people who were not there because they had "jobs" as part of the service. We should consider discussing why we are doing this service and whether we might do something different; perhaps a meal followed by the stripping of the altar. Sarah reminded the team that there's no such thing as a "Christian seder." This is a Jewish ritual, so we may simply have a simple meal.

c. Evangelism (David R. and Melissa): David: He is working on finalizing arrangements for the Fall concerts. David mentioned considering whether future concerts should occur Saturdays or Sundays. He is leaning towards Saturday to avoid conflicts with similar other local events. Right now, the only thing requiring a decision is that we need better chairs that musicians can use when they play. Musicians love our space, but our metal folding chairs are brutal for performers. We need professional performance chairs. David suggested obtaining four to start and then acquiring more over time, remarking that the choir could also use them. To acquire performance chairs that would last a couple decades, the chairs cost about $330 each. David made a motion to approve $1500 from the Jubilee Fund to purchase a set of 4 chairs. The motion was seconded by Lois. There being no further discussion, the motion was unanimously approved.

Sarah noted the Rutland County Pride Festival is June 20th. We do have our application in to see if we can have a booth. This has been a meaningful way for Trinity to be involved with this community. She suggested that there be only two volunteers at a time so we're not hanging out like a group of friends but engaging with the participants in the event. Sarah will take charge of gathering a group of volunteers since the OE team ministry is in discernment. We may want to look at whether there might be other ways for us to engage and participate than with a booth; there should be more walking around and engaging with the attendants at the festival. We also need to realize that it cannot continue for one person to be present at the event for 10 hours. If someone fights to be that person, that's great, but we should not expect that to happen for community events.

d. Education (Melissa, Brandy, and Sarah+)

- Melissa confirmed she is in for the weekend with the youth group and the youth of the diocese to Rock Point.
- As to the Sunday education sessions, Sarah has suggested pausing the twice a month sessions over the summer in favor of casual opportunities to have educational moments; she suggested a period of listening for what the congregation wishes to study for future offerings.

e. Pastoral (Shannon).

- Shannon reported that there is not a lot that's new. Things are going along well with the knitting group; it is figuring out when to meet again. Pastoral care visits are going well.
- Holly reported that following last week's request for some additional coffee hour hosts, someone spoke with her mentioning that they wanted to participate but were intimidated by the extent of the offerings provided weekly and that the cost to do so was not within their means. Judy advised that we always encourage a group to do it and that it is a lot for one or two people; that we always need people to help with plating the food and cleaning up. Suggested that we let people know that if they are interested, they should join the overall

team. It would be a good idea for us to put something in the bulletin explaining how this all works.

f. Property (Judy and Lois):

- Lois stated that there had been emails going back and forth regarding the resolution of the frozen pipes and water damage; that everything has been cleaned up but that we haven't gotten bill from GW Savage yet. The question was posed as to whether we have followed up on the possibility that the insurance estimate was pretty low for the damages suffered. This issue was raised by Jim Cruise who said we need to see real dollar estimates, get more proof of real costs, and send these along to the insurance company. We need to confirm what our deductible is and establish what our coverages/limits are. Judy says GW Savage is a good company to be working with. This restoration project is still ongoing.

g. Service and Outreach (Judy, Brandy) Brandy – rummage sale is on 5/1 and 2. In a couple of weeks we have a sub committee meeting about a discernment process regarding goals for the upcoming year and beyond. Wendy has asked a few people to go out and have conversations with people in the parish about how they see the role of the group. There will be a meeting on the 26th to go over conversations with parish at large.

VI. Critical Projects for 2026 Check-in

a. Organ Project (Scheduling Larry Nevin's Full Evaluation?) David reported now that we are beyond Easter, we are trying to get Larry Nevin on the calendar as we are in an evaluation-appropriate time period.

b. Rectory (Siding/Soffits & Eaves/Heat Pumps, Paving, Loose ends from Phase 1) Lois reported that we are still waiting for updated bid from Two Birds. They have indicated they are in the real bind because prices are changing significantly. Shannon reported that she may have the name of another provider. She will get his contact info to Lois. Lois stated that the siding project will definitely be a 2027 job but we will have to put a payment down when we sign a contract. Shannon advised that she may have another siding contractor that we could approach for an estimate. She will get Lois contact information.

Sarah requested David to follow up with the finance committee about where the proceeds from the Barromeo Trinity Presents concert are supposed to be going *vis a vis* mention of a capital campaign. David clarified that the net proceeds are going to the general fundraising efforts of the parish this year, not to a capital campaign.

VII. Adjournment: There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:32 p.m.

VIII. Report of Email Voting

a. M&T Bank Parking Lot Lease – In a series of emails from 4/28-4/30, David motioned and Diane Seconded a to extend the current lease of the rear parking lot by 5 years at a 10% increase in rent. Attached Appendix A Unanimous approval.
b. Smith and Benson Transfer – In a series of email from 5/12-5/15, Lois motioned and David seconded to authorize a transfer of $45,000 from the Smith and Benson fund to the Building Fund to be made available to complete the Rectory Siding Project. Unanimous approval.
c. Two Birds – Rectory Siding Project – In a series of emails from 5/12-5/15 Lois motioned and David seconded to accept the contract from Two Birds Design Build and remit to them the requested materials/deposit amount of $16,295. Attached Appendix B. Unanimous approval.