

Trinity Rutland Vestry Agenda

August 21st, 2025, 5-7pm

PRESENT: Sarah Ginolfi, David Thurmer, Brandy Blosser, Diane Novak, Judy Hall, David Rugger; Melissa Alarie, Holly Webb, Clerk.

Guest: Bruce Howard

ABSENT: Lois Castonguay, Shannon Hill, Cassie Whitcomb,

FORMATION SESSION

I. Call to Order/Opening Prayer – Meeting opened with prayer by Mother Sarah 5:10 p.m.

Audit Team – Vestry approval of the annual audit team’s report. Bruce Howard was present from the audit team to discuss findings that need extra explanation. Trinity does an internal audit. Bruce explained the process of how the team conducts the audit. (See attached sheet provided to the vestry that explains what they look at.) The Diocese prefers us to operate out of one account, but Trinity has the Discretionary Fund, the Flower Fund, and the Women of Trinity Fund, in addition to its general account. One important comment is that our treasurer and financial administrator are to be commended for their hard work and the terrific job they do in maintaining the financial records for Trinity.

We need to generate an updated inventory list of everything belonging to Trinity. Each item must reflect the current value of the asset, so that if we experience a loss, we have the backup information needed.

The audit report needs to be completed and submitted by end of September.

Motion made by Diane to accept and approve the audit findings of the committee as communicated; seconded by David T.; vote taken and unanimously approved.

II. Formation

A. Invite, Welcome, Connect

B. Program Calendar Year Overview (with Invite Welcome Connect focus)

Sarah led a discussion on what we are doing to invite, welcome new people to Trinity and what we are doing to integrate them into the life of Trinity and what it has to offer them. Since several members of the Vestry were absent, this process was brief and kept to broad strokes.

Sarah noted that Halloween Parade – October 25th – conflicts with the Diocesan Convention.

Sarah posed the question: Is it possible to incorporate the Youth Group into the Diocesan Convention to make them a presence at that whole-diocese gathering?

Trinity Presents Concerts – what are the benefits, who do these concerts benefit? David R. suggests that we identify an (external) organization that could benefit. David suggests we put that question out there. David suggested the NAACP for the November concert. October has already been designated for Companions in Wholeness.

Christmas Pageant. Sarah would love to do one this year. Perhaps the Sunday before Christmas. Christina would be willing to help with something in this vein.

We will continue this discussion when more vestrypersons are present over the next couple of months.

III. Rector's Report

A. Sculpture Update - hoping to install the base at the end of August, which must set for several days before the sculpture can be placed. Sculpture itself will be installed by the end of September, and we can schedule a celebration for that.

B. Website Updates – Some wondered about doing a major overhaul of our website. For now, we are trying to work with what we have, since there isn't big desire to change the current platform. A "newcomers" tab would be a positive improvement. Trinity's online services are now on YouTube which will help simplify people linking to our services. There is a suggestion for getting our sermons available via a link. Sound Cloud is a suggested platform for the sermon recordings.

All the photos on the website have been updated. More Youth photos have been added. The website needs to look good on both computer and phone modes. The Ministry and Get Involved tabs need a lot of work. Some groups have lots of details, others have none.

Our sound design system is still a problem. We are still not meeting our basic needs. Things are not labeled correctly. The navigation system on the computer needs fixing. We need to identify a better solution for amplifying music and congregational responses. Peter Wilder is coming again next week to make some adjustments. External noises with open windows are problematic. We need to figure out what is happening/occurring (environmental factors) on Sundays that is not happening when Peter Wilder is there troubleshooting. What is failing on Sundays but not at other times?

David R. has been gathering information on what we could do regarding equipment to address hearing music/congregational responses. Use of different microphones. He will get the information to Sarah for discussion with Peter. The mics need to be better labeled. We need to be better informed on how to troubleshoot the system.

BUSINESS SESSION

- I. Approval of June Minutes – motion to approve minutes from June by David R., seconded by Dave T.; vote taken; unanimously approved.

- II. Treasurer's Reports for June and July

Motion to approve the June treasurer's report by Diane, seconded by Brandy;
Motion to approve the July treasurer's report by Diane, pending corrections, seconded by Dave T.

June Report - (No discussion needed) / Vote on June report taken; unanimously approved.

July Report - Discussion/explanations by Sarah on some details of the July report, such income received from rents, how they might be allocated differently than they are currently, so this income is used more effectively to meet budgetary expenses for property expenses over time. Parking lot rent, for instance, could be partially allocated toward costs for paving, and partially allocated for other maintenance expenses, provided that sufficient income is retained for required parking lot care/maintenance. Judy asked if any of the funds not allocated for the parking lot could be earmarked for general property management to address property items falling into disrepair.

Suggestion made by Sarah that we allocate 10% of the parking lot rent monthly to the general property fund. David R. suggested we consider allocating 20% to the property fund for a set length of time and then reassess on a regular basis to determine an appropriate percentage to be allocated from the parking lot rent to the general property fund. Perhaps tonight we can make a recommendation to the finance committee as to how the parking lot rent be allocated.

Dave T. commented that all the outside stairs need to be sealed up asap because there is wide open access to animals (mice, rats, squirrels, skunks, etc.) getting through spaces in the stairs allowing them direct access into the building.

There are some horizontal opportunities for needing funding to be funded by the parking lot rent extra funds. There are some up/down opportunities for needing funding to be funded by Smith/Benson Fund

Other discussion of the July report, including a discussion of anticipated funds needed for fuel costs for next season.

Vote on July report was taken, with pending corrections being made; unanimously approved.

IIA: Sarah discussed potential costs for replacing the siding at the rectory. Advised it is difficult to get estimates and when the work could be done. There is an anticipated estimate of between \$30-\$40K for this item.

Sarah mentioned we have a lot of building projects. Several that will take months to find bidders and estimates.

Sarah acknowledges all the expenses that have been faced by Trinity in the recent past. Asked us what we think the congregation's appetite would be for a mini capital campaign for some of these anticipated costs, with us looking at a major capital campaign in the next couple of years.

Judy commented that to support any request from the congregation, we need to do a heat audit to determine the cost to heat the rectory; also, to determine how soon we can recap the cost of a project, we need to know the hard-core numbers of what the costs to heat the rectory are.

David R. said there are also qualitative questions that need to be answered like does the rectory have cooling in the summer; what pests the rectory is dealing with; suggests that we support the ask by a discussion of what things can/should be done to improve the quality of residing at the rectory.

Sarah also mentioned the Diocesan mandate to get away from fossil fuels by 2030.

Brandy suggested the congregation needs to be better informed about all the problems faced by occupants of the rectory due to maintenance, things that remain unaddressed, what has been done and what needs to be done.

Sarah thought perhaps one of the Sunday forums could be a venue for an informational session on the Rectory.

It was suggested that the vestry ascertain what kind of numbers for a mini capital campaign might be acceptable versus numbers for a major campaign soon. We need to be mindful of any efforts towards a mini or large capital campaign affecting the ability of congregants to make pledges to meet annual budgetary needs.

Judy asked how much has been spent on the rectory in the last year? Sarah recalled around \$45K.

IIB: Discussion followed on the matter that there will need to be a \$50,000 withdrawal from the Smith/Benson Fund. We need motion to transfer \$50,000 from the Smith/Benson Fund to the building fund; with part of that to reimburse the Jubilee Fund. The vestry was directed to look at the July non-operating account – Jubilee Fund- disbursements, loans - \$32,000 of the \$50,000 will go back to the Jubilee Fund for loans for building projects for rectory and the roof repair. The rest will allow us to have some funds available for emergent projects. The funds need to be withdrawn now because we can only withdraw funds quarterly – so this is intended to avoid the need to “borrow” from the Jubilee Fund. A motion was made by Diane, seconded by Dave R., to move \$50,000 from the Smith Benson Fund. Vote taken; unanimously approved.

III. 2024 Audit Report (Bruce Howard). See notes on this at the beginning of the meeting.

IV. Ministry Oversight Team Updates

a. Stewardship (Diane and Sarah+) Diane and Sarah met for stewardship.

Doing staff compensation reviews. Discussions of nuances of this with Linda Grenz at the Diocese. They will be meeting with Linda Fay next week.

Currently, there is not a full “team” for Stewardship. There is some anxiety about what happened last year. We need some new ideas for the upcoming campaign and some new blood to assist with how this year’s campaign will be focused.

We have a COLA increase for next year. Health ins. figures will jump by an estimated 13%. Health insurance is anticipated to increase from \$26,000 to \$30,000.

David R. has offered to be the spokesperson for communicating needs, facts, etc. to the congregation.

Sarah would like to incorporate our youth in our stewardship efforts in some way – give them a voice.

b. Worship (Dave T. and Lois) Nothing to report currently.

c. Evangelism (David R. and Melissa)

Our O&E team – members of the LGBTQ community have been significantly in the forefront of this ministry since the historical church’s neglect of the LGBTQ+ community is often presented as to why younger generations don’t believe “All

are welcome” statements from the “average” church. The question was posed: How do we communicate better to the community at large with our signs and otherwise that the LGBTQ community is welcomed – we need more than euphemisms on our sign. Sarah wants to be sure she has the vestry’s support in whatever signage we opt to use, what language we use, what colors, what content, etc.

We have a proposal for replacement of signs from Tuttle Printing. (The Banner is the PVC sign). The parking lot sign looking west is faded. One facing east cannot be easily seen. We need a sign that informs folks about our what our memorial garden is, what is appropriate in the space – just basic communication of its purpose.

Request was made for a motion from vestry to spend up to \$500 on the three signs covered by the Tuttle proposal. The estimate includes a sign for the memorial garden so people know what it is and updates to the faded signs into the parking lot. A motion to approve up to \$500 from Jubilee Fund for this purpose by David R.; Diane seconded. Vote taken; unanimously approved.

- d. Education (Melissa, Brandy, and Sarah) The team has not met. Sarah is meeting with Rev. Stephanie Weathered (former priest). She wants to be involved. She sees herself as a behind-the-scenes coordinator. We need to explore what are practical things we can do to grow and deepen our faith. Suggestions: Bible study with action; Youth Group will be continuing. Kate O’Hagen will be joining the group. Sarah is looking at handing off some of the duties related to the youth group to others to grow that ministry.
- e. Pastoral: Shannon and Liz are working on this.
- f. Property (Judy, Dave T, and Lois) Judy said we have covered everything in the meeting already.
- g. Service and Outreach (Cassi, Judy, Brandy) – one thing that will be a significant change for O&E is that Ernie is transitioning out of leadership. The ministry needs to be making long-term plans on how we expand on this ministry to keep it moving forward under new leadership.
- h. Mention of the Bowling Fund Raiser – Spare2Care is a very important fund raiser to fund Rutland Neighbors (f/k/a Companions in Wholeness). Vestry-approval is

being sought for sponsorship for two teams at \$250 each. A motion to sponsor two teams at the \$250 level with monies from the Jubilee Fund made by Brandy, seconded by Melissa. Vote taken; unanimous approval.

V. Critical Projects for 2025 Check-in:

- a. Organ Project – nothing new.
- b. Rectory (Siding/Soffits & Eaves/Heat Pumps, Paving, Loose ends from Phase 1) – nothing new yet.
- c. Paving: Not happening in 2025. The lines are still hoping to be painted in SE lot.
- d. Parish Roof –Initial Phase COMPLETED
- e. Chapel Ramp Refinishing COMPLETED
- f. Parish Kitchen Hood- - no discussion
- g. Sunday Snow plan (See Appendix A) – no discussion.
- h. What else?
Judy: in conjunction with Companions in Wholeness, she suggests we use our Sunday coffee hour as an opportunity for a sandwich making effort for sandwiches to be distributed to CIW community. Need to explore how do we do it? Logistics? We will be working with Liz on this.

VI. “Homework” – Complete Online Safe Church Training – FINAL CALL

VII. Adjournment at 7:05 p.m.

The Next Vestry Meeting will be on September 18th, 2025.

APPENDIX A: SNOW PLAN

Brainstorming a plan for cancelling in-person worship if there is extreme weather on Sundays.

The Quechee Church example discovered by Lois:

When the worship service is cancelled due to bad weather or some other emergency, the cancellation will be communicated as follows:

- An email message will be sent to all those on the Quechee Church Email List* by 6 am.
- The church website will be updated to note the cancellation by 7 am with a banner announcing the cancellation.
- Even if the service is not cancelled, please use your own best discernment, as to whether it is wise for you to travel. There can be great variation in the weather and road conditions within the broader Upper Valley, and this may preclude you from participating on any given Sunday.
- For all other events, an email will be sent to participants. If you have any questions, contact the leader of that ministry or group.
- if you are uncertain that you are on the church email list, please email office@quecheechurch.org.

Trinity Office/Staff Notes on this plan.

- A. (All) Sunday morning seems too late to announce a cancellation. Many choir out of town and Deacon Liz lives in Danby.
- B. Wendy may not be able to update the website on the weekend.
- C. We do not have a way to send a mass text message. Mass email possible.
- D. We could investigate signing up with media news outlets to be on their list of closures.