

Trinity Rutland Vestry Minutes

March 26, 2025, 5-7pm

Present in Person: Rev. Sarah Ginolfi, Brandy Blosser, Cassi Whitcomb, Diane Novak

Present via Zoom: Lois Castonguay, David Rugger, Melissa Alarie, Holly Webb

Absent: Shannon Hill, Judy Hall

FORMATION SESSION

I. Mother Sarah opened the meeting with a prayer at 5:05p.m.

II. Rector's Report – Sabbatical Recap and Observations

Sarah shared with us that her time away was really good. She's proud of our whole team on how we prepared for her being away, which allowed the plan for her to be able to rest allowed that to happen. Sarah mentioned a need to plan better next time for having available contact numbers for emergencies encountered by other users who use our building.

Sarah mentioned it was a welcome break from Facebook and wants to make better arrangements for our FB presence both while she is present and when she is away. We need to adjust administrative management of our FB site. This is not something Wendy has the capacity to do, but it's an important way to communicate events in the Rutland area.

Sarah reiterated that working with Eliminator for the Rectory work was a positive experience. She is appreciative of all the work done by volunteers and acknowledges that it can save money. The work can drag out, however, and become an extended disruption to the household when unknown issues come about. Volunteers cannot immediately add an entire extra day of work to accommodate the needs of these surprises. The Eliminator staff was able to do this, though, when the need for an extra day of work arose. They changed their schedule and got the job done with only one extra day of work.

The house is staying consistently at or higher than the thermostat setting, so that is a noticeable improvement. Since the work wasn't completed until February, there hasn't been evidence in a reduction in utility costs. The energy rebate was approved, and we are waiting for that. Important note: During the energy audit, an inspector noted that the ceiling in garage is composed of blue Styrofoam insulation and this is a fire hazard. It can be fixed by fire-protectant paint. This needs to be addressed soon. The door from the garage into the household was also flagged during the home inspection. It should be a fire door now that the door exits to a garage rather than a driveway.

Sarah asked us how her time away was for the vestry.

Lois said she was impressed with all our church services while Sarah was away. They were lovely and so well put together. She couldn't suggest any way to do it better. Liz did a wonderful job.

Brandy: It was nice for Liz to have the opportunity to shine.

Sarah noted that we will try to incorporate Taizé while she is here, not only when she's away.

David remarked that when we have systems in place that are functional as systems, things can run efficiently, rather than being solely dependent on a single person to keep things going. It functions more effectively with a team of people making sure the systems work.

Sarah also noted that we had above average attendance on at least two of the Sundays while she was away. She was aware that there was some anxiety on the part of the vestry about her sabbatical due to previous history of the rector announcing he would leave the parish nearly immediately upon his return.

Diane noted that it was nice to have other people around to bounce ideas off when she needed advice; that it was a big help. She was grateful people were willing to step up.

Lois noted that Diane did a terrific job putting out little fires – plumbing problem, plumber missing, and other emergent difficulties encountered.

Cassi noted that she personally enjoyed having the book to read with the study guide; having a homework assignment in Sarah's absence.

The vestry then went off record for casual conversation of the Henri Nowen book.

BUSINESS SESSION

- I. Approval of February Minutes:
Motion to approve made by Diane, seconded by Cassi. It being felt no further discussion was necessary, a vote was taken and unanimously approved.
- II. Treasurer's Reports for January and February:
Motion to approve made by Cassi; seconded by David.
Sarah advised she had asked for any extra information from finance team, but she didn't hear back anything extra. Diane advised there isn't anything to report. It was one of their briefest meetings in a long time. She remarked that the fundraising team was a clear pathway to spend money on any up-front expenses related to events. It is thought the Jubilee Fund could function as a pass-through for seeding money with expectation of the funds being returned at the end of the fundraiser as they were earned back, but there needs to be some kind of approval process established. Sarah asked if there is a dollar amount that vestry would feel comfortable authorizing for seeding fundraising projects? Diane suggested up to \$500 per event. Sarah called for a motion to allow the fund-raising team to spend up to \$500 per event as seeding money without prior approval and noted that the decision must be communicated immediately that this has been approved. Motion made by Diane, seconded by Melissa. There was no other commentary, and the motion was passed unanimously. Holly is to report back to fundraising team.

Sarah posed a question to Diane about an item towards the end of the report regarding transferring excess saving balances to money market funds. Diane explained that the finance team is just trying to make sure that we are getting the most return for our money, but there doesn't need to be anything approved by the vestry for this.

Sarah called for a vote to approve all financial reports and passed unanimously.

- III. Sabbatical Recap – Successes? Misses? What to do next time?

(As this was addressed previously as noted above, there was no further discussion on it at this time.)

- IV. Fundraising Team Update – Holly reported that the net proceeds from the “To Go Chicken Dinner” fundraiser look to be approximately \$775. Keri will communicate that to the finance committee. Holly requested that Sarah call attention to fact we need to have a better idea of who is willing and available to assist sooner so we aren’t scrambling to make sure we have adequate coverage at the last minute. It would be helpful to have a 4th person on the planning team, essentially another pair of “boots on the ground”, so to speak, while we are in the planning and gathering process for an event. Sarah noted that there could be opportunities to loop the youth group in to help with these events.

V. Ministry Oversight Team Updates

a. Stewardship (Diane and Sarah+)

Diane – nothing new to report. We are a little ahead in pledge income and that has been helpful. Sarah indicated that we have picked up one new pledge recently and pledge income coming in has been strong.

- b. Worship (Lois & Holly) – Recap of Taizé. Lois – nothing new to report. Melissa has nothing new to report. Lois mentioned that Holly had led discussion on Nouwen as we wish more folks had attended as only Diane, Lois, and Holly participated. Lois requested a time for Holly and Lois to meet with Sarah. Sarah would like updates from Lois and David on choir, organ, etc. things.

Liz mentioned to Lois that it was a bit much trying to do the preaching, lead the service, and play the Taizé music on the flute all at once. Next year when Sarah will be away longer, she will try to engage another priest, and one additional morning prayer leader, so Liz’s responsibilities are not as steep. Noted it is not Liz’s job to be the priest when Sarah is gone. It’s her job to be a deacon. It’s crucial we keep that in mind for the next time.

- c. Evangelism (David R. and Melissa) David reported that the Borromeo concert went very well. We had a good crowd. Reported that for the upcoming 2026-27 season there are three things booked: Nick Van Bloss will present the Goldberg Variations in late September, 2026. In November, the Lysander Piano Trio will present a similar caliber of music. We are getting a very good reputation for our concerts; there’s a good community vibe and people are enthusiastic. The Upper Valley Baroque is bringing their chamber concert in March 2027. It’s a four-person thing with a well-known soprano performing English songs and chamber opera, which has a big following of their own. We are getting a lot of people in the door. We’re starting to see the same attendees multiple times. We have a wonderful space for chamber music, and we need to capitalize on that. The series is going well and this last concert raised \$800-\$900 in door donations.

Diane, who ushered at the concert, noted that one attendee at the concert spoke to her about having her daughter baptized at Trinity. Another lady commented that she was so struck by the beauty of our space that she may continue to come. Sarah noted to us that a good evangelism effort doesn’t always mean inviting people to worship. Some might need a different “invitation.”

David noted to us that the musicians who are performing here really appreciate the quality and beauty of our space and enjoy performing in our church.

Sarah remarked to David regarding Trinity Presents that we need to make sure that we have a protocol when we are dealing with cash donations; that we need to make sure we have a formalized protocol for counting money collected and a constant check-in with Linda. She also suggested that Trinity Presents may need a dedicated treasurer who might even help write checks to share the load for this with Linda and it is again upping her workload.

Sarah also mentioned that one of the goals of the formation team on Sunday was that one quick and easy thing to do within two weeks was to amp up an invitation and so JoAnn got in touch with the Downtown Partnership. There hasn't been a report back on that yet.

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

Sarah noted that the youth group has a planned weekend in May up at Rock Point and she will be getting more info about that out to families. She noted there is a girl from a church near NH who wants to get involved. She is the only youth in her church and is stoked about this event. Sarah acknowledged that this is a church planting ministry. The wider response from the diocese has been minimal, but many parishes haven't youth involvement in decades. It will take time, but Trinity is helping to lead the way.

e. Pastoral (Shannon) Reported that the knitting group is kicking off well. People are having a fun time. Liz is wonderfully shepherding this team and responding quickly to needs as identified. Sarah noted that the pastoral care team is following protocols better. We are no longer doing solo visits to homes. It's okay for nursing homes and hospitals because there are plenty of people there, but home visits need to be buddy visits.

f. Property (Judy and Lois)

Lois: Provided a brief update on frozen pipes event. We have a bid from Lohsen of around \$10,000 to replace the radiators. The insurance company has estimated \$8,000. The bid needs to include repairs to the floors, so the actual costs will likely be more than \$10,000. If we want Lohsen to order the radiators, we need the vestry to approve the cost to do so. The insurance claim stuff isn't going to be figured out tomorrow. Electric bills have doubled. We have reached out to the insurance company about this, and we must prove that they are twice the usual. We do not yet have bill from GW Savage for the immediate damage assessment and control. That will be a significant bill, including propane and equipment, for the whole time we are using their equipment. We are not out of the woods on this. We need to know if we are approved to move ahead with Lohsen so we can order the radiators. It was asked if we need vestry approval to move ahead. What is the protocol? Sarah responded that for an expense of this significance, yes. If we don't have it, it leaves vulnerability if something goes wrong. A motion to approve the bid from Lohsen was made by David, seconded by Brandy. There being no further discussion, the vote was taken and passed unanimously.

Sarah asked Diane to communicate with Rich authorization to move forward with getting the radiators ordered and to follow up with the adjuster on the other things. We need to assemble mediation costs (electric) and need to know how the remediation and reimbursement process is all going to work. We also need to test how the space is holding heat without the supplemental heating equipment so that we can stop holding onto the GW Savage equipment. Jim Cruise has remarked that he thinks the insurance company has low

balled the cost of this claim. It is unknown at this point whether we'll need Bill Meub to assist us.

Siding: Lois remarked that we need to find somebody to do the siding. It's been a year and we do not have anyone signed yet. Two Birds could have done this most economically, but they are now booking into 2027. Lois is kind of at the end of her siding rope. People are either booked, too busy, we can't find them. The whole Eliminator treatments in the attic and basement of the rectory are great, but the siding is the next big step, we need to be realistic that siding likely won't happen in 2026. Lois will get an updated bid from Two-Birds and see if we can get on their schedule for 2027. The only difficulty with that is that if they give us a bid and we say yes, there will be a need for upfront money, and it will be a good chunk of change.

We haven't heard any scheduling from Eliminator for sealing up the exterior yet. This is part of the original scope of work. Sarah will reach out to Trina for a timeline as to when they can do that work.

g. Service and Outreach (Judy, Brandy)

Brandy: Reported the WOTF has met is finalizing plans for the rummage sale on 5/1 and 2. Wendy has a good drop-off system setup. Brandy discussed new ways to get news of the event out to the public. Suggested printing out a ½ sheet reminder people could put on their fridge or give to friend, post it publicly, etc. We need to provide list of things not to donate for rummage sales and communicate that the Trinity rummage sale is not for the items you no longer want in your house but aren't willing to just give away to anyone; things you're still tethered to. Anything that comes in should go at end of the sale, not be hung onto until the next sale.

Sarah announced that the Pride Festival downtown main event will be on Saturday, June 20th. Beyond that, Sarah has no idea just what is going to happen. The Rutland Pride organization has encountered loss of funding, and the planning team has been decimated. Sarah is open to hosting an interfaith pride service again. We also want to encourage youth group participation. Lois commented that our interfaith service was wonderful. Sarah will bring that up to the interfaith group. Trinity may be best positioned to host such a service.

VI. Critical Projects for 2025 Check-in

a. Organ Project (Scheduling Larry Nevin's Full Evaluation?)

Sarah saw Larry Nevin today. He's doing a tuning tomorrow. We will have a more in-tune organ for Easter. When it warms up, the full evaluation will occur in about a month.

b. Rectory (Siding/Soffits & Eaves/Heat Pumps, Paving, Loose ends from Phase 1)
See notes above.

c. Paving Rear Lot/Updating

Sarah reiterated the need for this to be done before renewal of contract with bank. We have the money in the property fund for this cost since most of the money collect from the rental goes to fund future paving needs. This will likely be a large bill.

VII. Adjournment: *The Next Vestry Meeting will be April 16th at 5pm.*

Sarah noted she hasn't decided on her vacation time this summer – thinking mid to late July early August. Thus, there won't be a July vestry meeting.

Adjourned at 6:35 p.m.