

# Trinity Rutland Vestry Meeting Agenda

February 7, 2026

PRESENT: Sarah, Holly, Cassi, Diane, David R., Lois, Shannon, Judy, Brandy, Melissa

FORMATION SESSION (11:30am-12n)

I. Call to Order 11:32 a.m.

Brief update by Sarah on what is happening re heat/frozen pipes mitigation at Trinity, what's working, what's not, what alternatives are being implemented.

II. Opening Prayer – offered by Mother Sarah.

III. Bible Study on Peter's Call (John 21:15-19). Vestry members read the passage from several different versions of the Bible and shared their thoughts as to the different perspectives presented by each.

BUSINESS SESSION:

I. Approval of January Minutes

A motion to approve was made by David and seconded by Diane. No discussion was needed. Minutes were unanimously approved.

II. Approval of Annual Meeting Minutes

A motion to approve was made by Diane and seconded by Cassi. No discussion was needed. Minutes were unanimously approved.

III. Vestry Organizational Meeting

It was noted in the Organizational Meeting minutes that there was a motion to approve David, Brandy, and Shannon as the Executive Committee members made by Melissa, but it was unclear who seconded the motion. A motion was made to amend the minutes to reflect that the motion was made by Melissa and seconded by Cassi.

Sarah called for a motion to approve both the amendment to the minutes and the minutes themselves. Motion made by Shannon, seconded by Melissa. Both the amendment and the minutes were unanimously approved.

IV. Plan for Cancelling Worship due to Inclement Weather (APPENDIX B)

A motion to approve the Appendix B Plan was made by Lois, seconded by David.

Sarah noted that in working with the staff on this, the staff questioned their capacity to meet the requirements to host an alternative Zoom worship while Sarah is away. For immediate plans, the team who would be here to do it, did not feel comfortable doing so.

Discussion on the plan presented as Appendix B ensued with the general idea that this is how we will handle a decision for cancelling a service for now. The question was asked as to whose responsibility it is to send out the E-mail? Sarah responded it would be Wendy Grace as at this time Wendy is the only one who can send parish-wide emails. It was further mentioned that we need to make sure we

care for parish members like Lois Jaworski, Michael Carroll and others who might not see emails. That we should consider the old-fashioned phone tree for those who might not see or check email. The question “Do we have someone to facilitate getting a phone tree together?” was raised. Judy suggested Mary Ruth. Melissa suggested that we ask people, if you prefer email or need a phone call, let us know. If we find out there are others who need this, then follow through. It was suggested that we make a decision, present it, try it on, and pivot as needed. Judy asked: “Do you think it would be a good idea to survey the Women of Trinity to see if they would be interested in being part of the phone tree? Sarah suggested Judy bring it up at the WOTF meeting on Sunday.

A vote was called for approval, with a minor grammatical editing adjustment made by Lois. Appendix B was unanimously approved. Sarah will communicate to Wendy how this will be facilitated and what we need her to do.

V. Ministry Oversight Team Assignment Check-In:

a. Worship and Spiritual Formation:

- i. Worship (Lois and Holly) Nothing to report.
- ii. Education (Melissa, Brandy, and Sarah+) Nothing to report.
- iii. Pastoral (Shannon) Nothing to report.

b. Mission and Outreach:

- i. Evangelism (David R. and Melissa) Nothing to report.
- ii. Outreach (Cassi, Judy, Brandy) Nothing to report.

c. Stewardship and Facilities:

i. Stewardship (Diane and Sarah+)

Sarah mentioned that we are beginning to start putting together a capital campaign team and that it would be helpful to have people who are able to come and participate during the day to be on the capital campaign team.

- ii. Property (Lois and Judy) Judy asked if anyone else would like to join this team. Shannon said perhaps she could. The team will add Shannon as a “cc” on communications and also copy the senior warden.

Judy advised that the WOTF have been discussing a hood/ventilation system which has the potential to be a Pandora’s box. Because Larry Jensen knows a lot of people and likes the kitchen, Judy asked him if he would be able to help on this proposal and invited Larry to participate in discussions re future commercial use of the kitchen. He agreed. Judy posed the question: How can we make money with this space; how can we do it safely?

Sarah expressed that there are a lot of urgent items that need attention and thus looking into how we might diversify our income is a component we need to look at when we’re looking into doing a capital campaign that would address those needs, including any major improvements in the kitchen.

David advised that he is looking into Sacred Spaces grant funding.

- VI. (Other) Worst Case Scenario Case Studies. None beyond the recent radiator incident discussed. See further conversation below.
- VII. Critical Projects for 2025 Check-in
  - a. Organ Project (Scheduling Larry Nevin's Evaluation?) Nothing to report.
  - b. Rectory (Siding/Soffits & Eaves/Heat Pumps, Paving, Loose ends from Phase 1) Nothing to report.
  - c. Paving Rear Lot/Updating. Nothing to report.

The meeting then turned to things we need to be mindful of while Sarah is away on her mini sabbatical.

- A) Asked Lois and Holly to confirm with John and Liz, to be sure they and Rev. Paul Gratz have everything they need. Vestry members need to be aware of checking and addressing things as they may be needed.
- B) We are going to try something new worship-wise. Teamwork this with John and Liz to make sure things are working as needed. Since John will be using the piano more frequently, make sure it is tuned, if needed. Check in with members of choir. Pay attention to things in general to be sure they are working the way they need to.
- C) Do we have the March 8<sup>th</sup> Invitation and Welcome workshop (formation) on the calendar? At the end of this workshop, it is desirable to NOT have a large list of brainstorm but, rather, to come away with two action steps the congregation will do to improve our evangelism and welcome effort. The goal is to have one action step accomplished within two weeks and another within two months and it is critical that these are the responsibilities of the gathered group to see through (not a list for Sarah to manage upon her return). Dana and Fern will lead this discussion during coffee hour formation
- D) Sarah will put together the next book study and pass that on to Liz for implementation.
- E) Pastoral: Sarah indicated to Shannon that her help might be needed for addressing newcomers -- keeping up with welcome newcomers cards, connecting with Wendy and assisting Wendy with follow-up with any newcomers, paying attention making sure who is going to do what, inviting them to coffee hour, assisting them to participate in what we are offering.
- F) Evangelism: Sarah asked David whether he will get information about the Borromeo concert out? Dave responded, "Yes, no problem."
- G) The Invite and Welcome Workshop: Pay attention to and focus things that need to be worked on.
- H) Sarah indicated she currently has no concrete idea what is going to happen with Pride this year. The event will occur on June 20 and asked that we try to keep up to date with that.
- I) Outreach & Evangelism: Asked that some of us attend WOTF meetings and make sure when there is a making money event under discussion, that it fits within our canons. Judy mentioned that Sarah has asked Wendy to get the rummage sale dates on the calendar as that will be especially important to the new fundraising team. Sarah will provide that team with a list of times when not to schedule events.

- J) Stewardship: Sarah advised Diane that it would be a good time to keep checking in with Linda to see what extra help she will need. Asked us to keep our attention upon the work load that is coming out of things happening – insurance adjuster, claims, repair moneys and meetings needed for any of these. Asked us to keep track of these things and make sure Linda’s needs are met and we are responding to her requests.
- K) Check and follow up on things that people have said they want to help with.
- L) Property: Larry is planning to have a meeting of a capital campaign group while Sarah is away. Sarah suggested Rich Jones would be a good resource. Jim Cruise would be another one in figuring out what needs to be fixed, maintained.
- M) Answering the question: Who can respond when an emergency happens. Do we have a 2:00 a.m. call list? Again, Sarah asked us to pay attention to claims stuff, plumbing repairs. Judy suggested that this is a good time to look at what systems we have that alert us to things like broken pipes, heat off, fuel out, that type of stuff. It was noted that we definitely need new thermostats that can be activated by a smart phone, not only accessible in person. The change of our phone system has rendered some of these warning systems defunct. We need to get a timetable thermostat for the parish hall. Lois asked Sarah if she wants us to work on these things while she is gone and Sarah responded in the affirmative.
- a. Judy asked whether Ryan is the contact for the heating systems and suggested that we need someone to figure out and design a system that is going to be up to the challenge of our circumstances. Lois asked again whether the point person for this is Ryan or Lohsen. Sarah responded that it is Ryan.
  - b. It was pointed out that we need at least 3 people who can access and change thermostats remotely as well as the ability to adjust the units when on site.
- N) Building Incident Debrief and Plans for Moving Forward:

Judy noted that the result is broken radiators, but we need to address what went wrong.

Sarah advised that the fuel tank ran out of fuel and asked us not to jump into blaming this on the fuel delivery people. Jim Cruise has advised that most companies have a clause where you can’t come after them about this anyway. Bill Meub is available for counsel, if legal issues come up. Do not go to another lawyer, call Bill.

Sarah explained that on Wednesday, when John went into the sanctuary, he noticed the temperature was at 33 degrees, and the furnace was off. We thought we caught it in time. However, when Gil was in the basement, he discovered the furnace was out of fuel. We have one gauge that doesn’t work or always reads zero; one that looks like it might cover both tanks. We need to figure this out. Johnson was scheduled to make a fuel delivery the next day, but unfortunately by the time we realized there was a problem, the tank was empty, and it was already too late. A pipe in the bathroom in narthex froze, but did not crack. Now that facility is working fine. Two radiators in that area were also not working but are now working. We usually leave the faucet running in that bathroom. We leave a faucet running in the kitchen.

Shannon noted that it sounds like there wasn't any damage to items in the sacristy. Sarah advised that the radiator next to the acolyte room was cold to the touch. That one is on the sanctuary thermostat. The sanctuary was fine. That radiator is working now. A couple of carpets have some water damage. The floor in the acolyte room (painted) may need work as it got very wet.

We need to buy a shop vac that anyone can lift, not one that's not manageable. We need something that is not more than 40 pounds when full.

David requested clarification that we are in clean up, assess, and dry out mode. Sarah confirmed, but with a qualified asterisk, acknowledging we need for a time to have auxiliary heat. GW Savage has been wonderful. Contact information is taped to Jason at GW Savage is taped to the counter in the office, his cell#. We will forego processional/recessionals for now because of equipment and wires being everywhere. We are at a tenuous place of temporary stability.

Because the pipes were frozen, we couldn't drain them. At least for now the pressure is stabilized, so as the pipes thaw, the water can be contained/managed. We need to replace the long radiators in the sacristy and acolyte room that cracked because they are obsolete and not replaceable. The tall skinny radiators that cracked likely can be replaced with similar models. We need to pay attention to the fuel tanks. The furnaces have various zones/circulators that can be adjusted to meet requirements.

Sarah advised that Sue Patrick and Liz have created a temporary sacristy in Linda's office and other temporary places where the sacristy items can be in secure locked areas. We have temporary safe locations for sacristy items that need to be locked up. We may want to lock up microphones in Sarah's office as they would be expensive to replace.

O. Other worst-case scenarios:

In the event someone dies, for instance. At the moment, no other parishioner currently is in a tenuous place. We have a great pastoral care team. Liz is the first person to call. Sarah will send email to us all with all important phone numbers and a text string.

Melanie Coombs, the other priest covering, may possibly be available in addition to Liz. There might be circumstances where Sarah would need to be informed: For instance, if something happens to a vestry person or staff member, or massive emergencies; or if absolutely necessary, Sarah has to sign something.

If we need to vote on an expense for a big-ticket item or circumstances, in such a situation, Bill Meub would be someone the vestry could consult on this.

P. An interfaith clergy group has been circling on how we would respond if ICE comes to Rutland and is the group to connect with should the need arise. Terry Hanley and Rabbi Wohl are point persons on this. Sarah will provide their contact information. We do not need to reinvent the wheel as this is already in progress. The Vermont Interfaith Action group is coming up with a system, and has been very clear in telling us that we do not try to come up with something on our own.

Q. Judy and Liz will be the contacts for Trinity participating with Rutland Neighbors for the "Sleep Out" event on March 20<sup>th</sup>. Sleep Out will occur at Good Shepherd. We were approached to host, but are not

going to because we do not have a quick and easy way to let anyone in the building for bathroom use. We will be hosting breakfast on March 21st, in the morning following the overnight sleep out.

R. Lois requested Sarah's exact dates for leaving and returning. Sarah is leaving Thursday, February 19. She will be here Ash Wednesday, the 18th, and leave on the 19<sup>th</sup>. She will be local until 24 Feb when she leaves for the Cape, and gone the rest of that week; back for a little bit, and then out of the country from March 6 to March 14. They have someone coming in to check on the cats and generally the house. That person will have her contact information if something comes up at the rectory.

S. Status of the rectory projects: As to the project with Eliminator, the basement insulation is done; 6" of insulation has been installed. The attic work will take place the week of February 9, on Monday and Tuesday. The difference of having professionals vs volunteers conducting the work has made things a little simpler for planning purposes.

Sarah inquired if there is anything else we need to cover?

Shannon: What is the proper response if accidentally alarms are tripped, such as just happened? Who needs to know?

Sarah: In relation to the recent situation, we learned about the pipes bursting within moments of it happening because the pipe burst in a room with a fire alarm. However, that alarm is now defunct and needs to be replaced sooner than later. Wendy is in touch with Royal Group. In the next week, Diane will reach out to Wendy on that. We need to have an inspection of the whole fire alarm system to make sure it is up and running. We need to be sure the fire department has an up-to-date number for whom to call for contact in Sarah's absence.

If the alarm is tripped by accident, there are instructions on how to deal with that in the panel for the alarm near the parish office, but the instructions are not in the panel near the sacristy. Sarah will get alarm instructions to that panel.

We can turn it off to get it to stop ringing, but then we need to reset the system. As to the circumstance that we don't get it turned off promptly, does anyone need to be notified? Sarah doesn't think it is tied into the fire department. The response is to keep putting in the code to shut the alarm off. But then the panel must be reset.

There being no further business to be discussed the meeting was adjourned at 1:37 p.m.

Adjournment: *The Next Vestry Meeting will be March 26<sup>th</sup> from 5:00pm-7pm.*

## APPENDIX A John 21:15-19 (NRSVUE)

<sup>15</sup> When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my lambs.” <sup>16</sup> A second time he said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Tend my sheep.” <sup>17</sup> He said to him the third time, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, “Do you love me?” And he said to him, “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my sheep. <sup>18</sup> Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go.” <sup>19</sup> (He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.) After this he said to him, “Follow me.”

## APPENDIX B: Inclement Weather Snow Plan for Sundays

When Sunday worship needs to be cancelled due to extreme weather or some other emergency, the Rector (or individual leading worship if the Rector is absent) will make the decision in consultation with the Senior Warden and other staff. Such a cancellation will be communicated as follows:

An email will be sent to the parish by 5pm on Saturday evening to communicate that the worship service is cancelled. A post to the website and the Trinity Facebook group with the same information will be shared. Members of the congregation who have an active presence online are encouraged to reach out by phone to those who may not receive the message in these formats. At this time, we will not host an online Morning Prayer gathering via Zoom if in-person worship is cancelled. Parishioners are invited to join our Cathedral, The Cathedral Church of St. Paul, for their online service at 10 a.m. The website for the Cathedral Church of St. Paul is: <https://www.stpaulscathedralvt.org>.

Special Note: When worship is cancelled due extreme weather conditions, the Rector is not expected to drive or walk to the church to catch anyone who did not receive the message. The Rectory may only be a few blocks away from the parish, yet extreme weather can make travel even in this short distance unsafe. Any foot or car traffic can also interfere with the city’s efforts to clear the roads and sidewalks.

When weather is moderate, but the service is not cancelled, the parish asks everyone to please use their own best discernment, as to whether it is wise to travel. There can be significant variation in the weather and road conditions throughout the greater Rutland area.