

**Trinity Episcopal Church, Rutland, VT**  
**Vestry Meeting Minutes**

December 19, 2024

Present: Fern Fryer, Brandy Blosser, David Rugger, Dave Thurmer, Jay Slenker, Melissa Alarie, Judy Hall, Holly Webb, and Sarah Ginolfi

- I. **Call to Order/Opening Prayer** at 5:06 PM
- II. **Approval of November Minutes** - Jay motioned to approve via email on December 4. Fern seconded that same day. Unanimous approval via email by December 8.
- III. **Treasurer's Report for November** - NB Discussion of the 2025 budget occurred later in the meeting with Dana present. **Fern moves to approve. Dave Thurmer 2nds. Unanimous Approval.**
- IV. **Rector's Report** - Lawyers for the city and the diocese are close to developing a framework for the agreement to house a new sculpture on the grounds of Trinity. The extra time is due to the novelty of the arrangement and the desire to get the details right.
- V. **New Business**
  - A. **The Rector's 2025 housing allowance** was discussed and proposed: "Whereas The Rev. Sarah Ginolfi is employed as a minister of the Gospel by Trinity Episcopal Church in Rutland, Vermont, which although providing a residence for her does not provide the full cost of maintaining and furnishing such a residence; the Vestry resolves that of the total compensation to be paid to The Rev. Sarah Ginolfi during 2025 that \$3,000.00 be designated as a parsonage allowance with the meaning of that term in Section 107 of the IRS Code of 1986. The designation of the above amount as a housing allowance shall apply to the calendar year 2025 and all future years, unless otherwise provided by the Vestry of Trinity Episcopal Church." **Brandy moves to approve. Melissa 2nds. Unanimous approval.**

**B. Report from the Finance Team: 2025 Budget Discernment (Dana)**

Dana was elected to convey the state of budget development to the vestry and alert us of upcoming challenges. Trinity is experiencing several budgetary pressures that, if we do not make adjustments,

would cause us to make a significant draw on the principal of our investments because of a significant projected shortfall.

The main expenses are salaries and benefits (driven upwards especially by the rising cost of insurance), office operations, and heating oil.

Pledges have also lagged, and 2025 pledges have come in lower than expected.

Dana notes that, in a financially healthy church, pledges should account for about 60% of the budget. We are projected to account for less than half of the budget with pledges.

The Finance Team discussed a number of ways to address this budgetary challenge other than depleting the investments. These ideas included:

1. A supplemental appeal for the stewardship campaign.
2. Lower projected expenses. One of the main things we can do is budget for less fuel oil. Jay noted that when services were held in Nourse Hall in the winter to save oil, it only saved a relatively small amount of money. Dana suggested that some of the cost could come out of the building fund rather than the operation fund. On that same topic, Outreach and Evangelism could be funded from the Jubilee fund.
3. Being creative with how we use the non-operating account. Every dollar we raise in the operating fund is taxed by the diocesan apportionment. (NB The Diocesan Apportionment is 16% of income that we pay to the diocese as a portion of income. The only exception is the holding fund.)
4. Finally, there is fundraising. We need to think of ways to generate income via fundraising. We can do things like a hot dog sale on Loyalty Day. Or hot chocolate around Christmas time. Fundraising needs to be a team that is dedicated only to that specific task.

Action Item: It was resolved that there would be a \$10,000 stewardship ask from the congregation, made during announcements at Sunday service. Dana and Holly are to make the request.

## **Old Business**

### **C. Trinity Presents (David R.)**

Repairs to the piano are on the verge of completion, on schedule and within the approved budget. Logistics for the March concert are coming into place in a timely manner.

#### **D. Organ Project (David R.)**

Peter Walker continues to make good progress in addressing the remaining items from Phase I of the original organ project. He recently identified a potentially serious issue with the blower that prevents him from completely tuning the organ. He cannot fix this issue. Larry Nevin will be brought in to assess and propose a remedy.

**Fern moved to approve \$500 for the assessment of the blower by Larry Nevin. Jay seconds. Unanimous approval.**

As Trinity nears the end of Phase I, it is important to take time to reevaluate the organ project based on a carefully discerned combination of user requirements, past performance by Walker, a clear understanding of the instrument's ongoing maintenance needs, and a clear-eyed assessment of our resources.

**Fern moved to pause the organ project upon completion of Phase 1 and take time to reassess. Judy Seconds. Unanimous approval.**

#### **E. Vestry Member and Roles Discernment (Schedule 2025 Retreat)**

Potential members were discussed with regards to who was willing to serve.

#### **F. Policy Manual Update**

The policy manual lists many ministries that have significantly changed. The document needs to be updated to reflect current practices and ministry structures.

Fern: All the ministries need to be written. She wonders if they need to be written in a different way to honor the fluid nature of ministry. Many aspects of this document change year to year. Fern provided several useful edits in writing that will be scanned and considered.

#### **Adjournment at 6:53**

Next Vestry Meeting is January 16, 2025

Respectfully submitted by David Rigger