

VESTRY MEETING
Saturday, August 10, 2013
TPIC Office

IN ATTENDANCE: The Right Reverend Stephen T. Lane, The Reverend Caroline Hines (TPIC), James Clunan, Lauri Fernald, Donald Graves, Linda Lewis, Jackie Lowe, Nancy McCormick, Steve Mahoney, Maude March and Sheila Pulling.

Right Reverend Stephen Lane opened the meeting informally, with a discussion of an e-mail from Vicki Wiederkehr about changes that are perceived in the summer communities throughout Maine, particularly but not only the coastal regions. Ephron Caitlin contributed with how some of the summer chapel communities are helping hold the church together, but the changes and preferences for how people spend their summer time and the attendance at worship services of the summer community are changing the face of the church.

OPEN IN PRAYER: The meeting formally opened at 10:08 am, with prayer for the poor and those in need.

STAFFING CHANGES AT DIOCESE: Right Reverend Bishop Lane related how the Diocese was in the midst of significant staffing changes, reducing staff from 13.2 to 8 full time staff. Those remaining will spend more time in Parishes around Maine. The break-out will be for 2 support staff and 5 pastoral staff working in the field now. The youth ministry will be reduced from 3 to 1 person. The changes will take place by the end of the year.

Staffing changes are being driven by

- the desire to do things differently, but also by
- the reality that the Diocesan budget has gone from \$2.2MM to \$1.8MM since 2007.
 - Parish income has bottomed out and is up 5% this year.
 - The budget of the Diocese trails the Parish by two years by formula.
 - After the September meetings, we are going to be really looking at how we position ourselves to minister to our communities. It will be different.
 - That said, we do have capitol programs going on, new buildings are being built.

Jackie Lowe asked how we compare to other Dioceses nationally. The Bishop responded that

- culturally, our society is becoming increasingly secular.
- 70% of the younger generation have not been exposed to a religious experience, whether Episcopal, Jewish, Buddhist...any of the faiths.
- Financially, New England is suffering disproportionately worse and as of today, there are only 67% of the clergy positions in New England that existed in 1972.
- It is hard to have a career track in Maine today, with the #1 age group being 50 and older and the #2 age group those under 16.

Nancy McCormick asked where the church is doing well in Maine. The Bishop responded that

- Portland is doing well, with property that is affordable and schools of good quality.

- In the Windham, Falmouth, Yarmouth areas some growth is occurring because of an influx of young retired families.

Summer communities were discussed further, and it was noted that:

- 18 summer chapels exist in the Diocese, with St. Jude's being the only one that is part of a year-round population.
- These communities are requiring increasing help with insurance, supply clergy and other matters from the Diocese.
- Sustaining families no longer have the capabilities to hold on to the process due to declining participation. People no longer can or are willing to take 2 months off as in the past.
- A possibility to sustain summer chapels might be to run pledge campaigns in the summer, rather than towards the end of the year, when the summer population is besieged by other solicitations.
- A discussion of what characteristics delineate a church from a summer chapel followed.

HOLY CONVERSATIONS: This program finally is getting some traction, and understanding our relationship to the larger community around us is critical to our future. How represent ourselves to those around us is an important missional responsibility for all churches. We must, however, know ourselves first.

- Linda Lewis commented on how lucky we are to have Caroline as our TPIC, and how she is helping us extend program ideas on how to reach out into our parish,
 - like the House Church concept and
 - the support of the Elementary School Greenhouse project.
- The Bishop mentioned a good book in this regard, American Grace, by Robert Putnam.
- Maude March expressed that it was important that the Holy Conversation not ever end, and that we need to be able to respond to "search" questions like "Why do you go to worship?"
- In our denomination, the ability to read music, the love of liturgy and understanding of the contribution to our spiritual lives made through use of the Book of Common Prayer.

THE DISCERNMENT PROCESS: This is really going to get rolling in August, according to the Bishop.

- The first list of culled applicant names will be given to the Discernment Committee by Canon Vicki Wiederkehr on August 27th.
- If necessary, we will present the opening at the Fall Conference, but we hope to fill from the candidates presented to us .
- The Bishop cited St. Paul's in Brunswick, where
 - the Discernment Committee went through 55 names, but their final selection was turned down by the Vestry.
 - The Vestry took over the process, got a short list from the Diocese, and now have a candidate.
- Some suggestions were made to support the Discernment Committee, including:

- Filming the services at St. Jude's. The St. Jude's chapel will be closed when the finalist(s) visit.
- Having Bill Haugen speak to some of the candidates.
- Bishop Lane observed that Canon Wiederkehr does understand our Parish. While she is on leave now, she will be back by September 15th.

PARISH MISSION WORK: Our relationship with Haiti was discussed, with Linda Lewis mentioning Haiti, noting that we have people from 3 of the Parishes on the island that will be going on a mission trip there and asking of the commitment of the Diocese to this relationship.

- The Bishop indicated that the Diocese typically has five year Terms of Companionship with mission work and that we were on our 2nd 5 year term with regard to Haiti.
 - Our Diocese wants to work at the Parish level.
 - The Bishop of Haiti wants us to funnel support through the Diocese and has been arguing for the completion of the Cathedral Close, but we are unable to get it rebuilt.
 - Our program has become an outlier, from the Haitian Bishop's viewpoint, but we still see many Parishes there in need of help, so we are at a bit of a stalemate.
 - A book was recommended by the Bishop entitled Toxic Charity, by Robert D. Lupton. Bishop Lane considers that Haiti is becoming a dysfunctional mission opportunity in that they are not becoming more self-reliant. Steve Mahoney describes it as two power structures with two completely different objectives, a source of conflict.

ITEM OF BUSINESS: We earlier approved a payment to cover David Schildkret's stipend of \$1,250.00. However, the amount we were actually to have paid was \$1,500.00.

- **A MOTION WAS MADE** BY MAUDE MARCH THAT DAVID BE PAID THE \$1,500.00, RATHER THAN THE \$1,200. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY JACKIE LOWE AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY BY THE VESTRY.
- It further was recommended that we formalize agreements like this in the future, rather than rely on verbal transmission.

CLOSE IN PRAYER: We closed in prayer for those in need at 11:35AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Donald Graves
Clerk of Vestry