

Minutes for the Vestry Meeting with Bishop Jennifer Baskerville-Burrows, following our 10:30 Service at St. John's (2/3/19)—at about noon.

Present were Bishop Jennifer Baskerville-Burrows, the Rev. Jan Oller and vestry members, Nancy Bennett, Jeff Burd, Sheila Evans, Jim Gary, Marc Hudson, Jessica Roosa, Jennifer Snook, Deb Vaught, and Alan White. Treasurer John Culley was also present.

Rev. Jan began the meeting with a prayer. Bishop Jennifer asked the vestry members why they chose to serve on the vestry. Jennifer Snook, a new member of the vestry, spoke of her wish to get the children more involved in the Church. Deb Vaught, also a new vestry member, spoke of her desire to be more active in the Church. Nancy Bennett said words to the effect that she wanted to make sure of the continuing health of the Church and its congregation. Alan White had wanted to serve on the vestry before but had only recently been able to make the time available to do so. Jim Gary, who will serve this year as the Senior Warden, has only recently retired (he is working part-time as an engineer) and now feels an obligation to serve more fully. Jeff Burd, who is now our Junior Ward, spoke of serving for a long time on the vestry of another church and was feeling burned out, but now he is eager to serve more fully. John Culley, our treasurer, spoke jokingly of being tricked into becoming St. John's Treasurer, but cheerfully expressed his current readiness, "Here I am!" Jessica Roosa, our third new member of the vestry, spoke of feeling an impulse to serve God. She and her family have fairly recently joined St. John's, but she has felt the calling to do more. Marc Hudson, who has served on the vestry once before, feels that serving on the vestry is a way of deepening his practice as a Christian. Sheila Evans referred to herself as a matriarch who has had a lifelong connection with St. John's (her father, Rev. Foster was priest here from 1957-1961) and she has served on the vestry three other times. (She also has sung for many years in our St. John's choir: her beautiful voice is a gift to us.)

Bishop Jennifer spoke of her pleasure in getting to know us and learn about our ministries. She encouraged us to drop her a note. This is not simply to gather information: she looks forward to getting to know us and be in conversation with us. She spoke of other opportunities for us to meet. She then asked us to speak to our work and St. John's work in the community, and what things distinguish our church. Nancy observed that St. John's is on a fiscally sound footing and it looks like we are here to stay for awhile. Jessica said that St. John's is good at welcoming people. Marc spoke of how many in St. John's are active in HUE (Humans United for Equality) and other organizations and that we are seeking ways to help our community thrive and become a more welcoming place. He spoke of the recent HUE sponsored Beautiful Community Dinner celebrating MLK's birthday, which many of our church community served at. John noted that we are ecumenical and work with First Lutheran and First Christian. He mentioned Derek Nelson, a Luther scholar, and his wife, the minister at our Lutheran Church. This ecumenical group raised \$2000 (at a beer and brats gathering) that went to support Halfway House, a ministry for women coming out of prison. St. John's has also committed \$500 a month for 2019, roughly half of the funds needed, to support the Recovery Coalition, for those recovering from opioid addiction. We noted the poverty of many in our wider community. Jennifer and Deb spoke of the number of children on the free or reduced lunch program—around 75%. The Youth Service Bureau (which has been housed in St. John's Wheat House though will be moving soon) runs the CASA program, which is very important in this community. Jennifer mentioned the opioid crisis that, as it is with many communities, is part of our social reality. Sheila, who is a retired nurse, works in our C'ville Free Clinic. She notes the need for Spanish-speaking interpreters there. We have a thriving Baptist church where Spanish is the first language and our Catholic church, St. Bernard's, has many Hispanic congregants.

We spoke at greater length about the Wheat House which has housed the YSB (the Youth Service Bureau) for the past forty years. The YSB will soon be moving to new quarters, and so the parish will need to decide what to do with this building which is afflicted by bats and asbestos, and is rather run-down. Later this month, we plan to have two architects walk through the house to give us their take—whether or not the building is structurally sound, and what it would take to rehabilitate and repair it. Or if we should take it down. The vestry will invite the parish into this important conversation. It was noted that we need to speak with Julia Whitworth, rector of Trinity, Indianapolis with respect to their discernment process around

Haven House, which offers temporary housing for youth in the LGBTQ community. Bishop Jennifer alerted us to the nonprofit, Partners for Sacred Places (PSP), which provides grants for the renovation of church-related buildings.

We also spoke of our annual late summer dinner in Whitlock Hall for the students of Wabash's bridge program (a three week intensive program to work with incoming freshmen who are identified as needing some skill building to succeed at college). We spoke of our new regular congregant, Jose Marquez-Franco, a Wabash freshman from south Texas who was raised as a Seven Day Adventist. Jeff Burd spoke of Kairos, the prison ministry that he and his wife, Shirley, are involved in. Marc Hudson spoke of the Morning Prayer that Sam Vaught organized at Wabash and which Sam and Helen Hudson led at the Center Hall chapel from the Fall of 2014 until his graduation in 2016. Rev. Jan spoke of our community's effort to build an endowment for St. John's. She is proud of the generosity of our congregants—St. John's is a giving community. But she did observe that we are an ageing parish; that we have at our church more funerals than baptisms.

In terms of our Church services, we spoke of how we favor the traditional Episcopal hymns. Jessica Roosa spoke of our need to balance the old with the new, how we probably need to look into how we can create some spaces for the KLove kind of music, Christian Rock. Bishop Jennifer spoke to the need to make space for all the people, and the work of Gospel singer Kirk Franklin, for instance, appeals to many. However we feel, the non-denominational churches are fueled by such music and perhaps, partly owing to this, are growing in attendance. Yet, even so, there remains a hunger for something deeper that is ancient and abiding. And that a church these days needs a lot of bandwidth in its services to thrive.

Jan spoke to the variety of services we have at St. John's during the Advent and Christmas. We have a 5:30 Christmas Eve service at a stable of two of our parishioners, freezing, but satisfying to conduct our holy service among the straw bales and clucking hens and snorting horses, with little technology except electric lights. Through Survey Monkey we have learned that, though there are some dissenters, most want to keep this service. We have also had, traditionally, a 10:30 p.m. Christmas Eve service, but many find that too late to attend, and so we will likely move that up to 8 p.m. We also share ecumenical services during Easter week with Christ Lutheran Church, the Disciples of Christ and the First Christian Church.

Bishop urged us to be in prayer. That is most important for our church: that we all need to take time to pray deeply.

Rev. Jan spoke to another strength: we have an active adult forum at 9:15, between our two services. On any Sunday roughly 25%-30% of our regular adult attendees come to our forum. She also mentioned our choir, which "is small but mighty." And our EFM group, which has been terrific. Also mentioned were our small dinner groups which about half of our adult members take part in. And our White Elephant party which Jim and Kathy Gary hosted and which had a huge turnout this year.

Bishop Jennifer mentioned how she was moved by our ritual of gathering around the altar to receive communion. That practice, she said, conveys a feeling of intimacy, and is surely part of the strength of your community.

Our meeting adjourned with a prayer at about 1 p.m.

--Respectfully submitted on 2/21/19 by Marc Hudson, Clerk of the Vestry