

Christ Church Vestry Minutes
Tuesday, July 19, 2022
5:00 pm

Attending: Harrison McLeod (Rector), Dena Benedict (Senior Warden), Milton Bates, Betsy Elliott, Betty Parker Ellis (Secretary of the Vestry), Elizabeth Fletcher, Julie Haas, Dexter Hagy, Kay Jenkins, Chris Klasing (Treasurer), Wade Kolb (Asst. Chancellor), Paul Landis, Cindy Poe, Reid Sherard, and Michelle Brown (Clerk of the Vestry).

Absent: Bill Hardaway, Nancy Kennedy, and Cecil Nelson (Chancellor)

Zoom: Nelson Arrington (Junior Warden) and Sam Erwin

The Rev. Dr. Harrison McLeod opened the meeting with prayer at 5:06 pm.

Inviting to All – Dexter Hagy

This is my month to share my thoughts on our core value of being “Inviting to All,” and I decided to share what I think our responsibilities are in being “Inviting to All,” both as individuals and as Vestry members.

When invitations are offered to a group, and a reasonable number are accepted, the invitations can be considered to be **effective invitations**, and the process would be viewed as **successfully being “Inviting to All.”** Similarly, if most or all of the invitations offered are declined, the invitations would be **ineffective** and could not be viewed as successfully being “Inviting to All.” Of course, the results should be analyzed to determine the cause of success or failure. But the key point is that, if invitations are offered and accepted, we would think of ourselves as being inviting to all, and if substantially all the invitations we offer are declined, we could not think of ourselves as being inviting to all.

The main focus of this reflection is to discuss what, as individuals and as Vestry members, we can do to help the effectiveness of our invitations so that we can better achieve our goal of being inviting to all.

The requirements for individuals and Vestry members are different but interrelated. When an individual renders an invitation, it is generally a one-on-one activity, a direct invitation. But the Vestry and its members make indirect invitations through clergy, staff, and volunteers working in the church’s various ministries. So, the following paragraphs discuss the requirements of individuals and Vestry members separately.

My thoughts about what my individual responsibilities are for me to be inviting to all have been influenced by reading a book by Bob Goth called *Love Does*. The first chapter has a story that is closely tied to a key point I want to make.

The story is about the author, Bob, when he was a young high school student in the process of dropping out of school, and his friend Randy, who was a Young Life mentor. On finding out about Bob’s plans, Randy made an unexpected and incredibly loving act of kindness, exhibiting his non-judging, quiet presence to Bob and his encouragement for Bob making his own important decision. The result was that

his act dramatically changed Bob's life. He realized that the world sometimes encourages a person to think that love can be picked up in a Hallmark card, but the kind of love that Randy demonstrated, and that God created and brought into the world through Jesus, is different and involves sacrifice and presence.

What Bob learned from Randy about love, the kind of love Jesus offers, is that it is about presence. It's a kind of love that doesn't just think about good things, it is that Love ***does***. It is an ***ACTION***.

My being inviting to all is also a kind of love and involves an action, and to be accepted, it involves an ***effective*** invitation and, like Randy's gesture to Bob, it begins with an ***action***. I think one or more of the following actions are a part of any ***effective*** invitation and are my responsibility when I am dealing with other people or groups:

1. Being deliberately aware of and trying to ensure that the circumstances at the time of an invitation are conducive to the recipient's acceptance of the invitation and the accomplishment of its purpose
2. Having a friendly demeanor and looking at and speaking in a polite way to the person or people being addressed
3. Being an "energetic" participant
4. Being an active listener
5. Asking open-ended questions
6. Thanking a person for sharing their personal experiences and views
7. Thanking a person for their work
8. Offering positive and encouraging feedback whenever possible or practical
9. Encouraging the input of others and building on ideas they offer
10. Knowing what I want from an invitational encounter and letting that be known in a positive, thoughtful way

The requirements of us as Vestry members, and collectively the Vestry, to successfully be inviting to all includes the above but also includes an additional step.

The Vestry works together with the Rector to manage the church in a way that its clergy, staff, and volunteers, who are the ones rendering invitations, render them in a way that is consistent with being "Inviting to All." This work ***equipping*** the church organization to make effective invitations to be inviting to all was anticipated from the start, and references to it can be found in the New Testament. For instance, Paul's letter to the Ephesians 4:11-16 (NRSV) addresses this:

The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors, **(Vestry members – my edits...)**, and teachers¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,¹³ until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. ¹⁴ We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people's trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming.¹⁵ But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,¹⁶ from whom **(so that,)** the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, (and) promotes the body's growth in building itself **(the church)** up in love.

As Vestry members, we have the additional responsibility to **act** to **“equip”** our clergy, staff, volunteers, and their various departments and ministries with the values and tools they need for our church to successfully be inviting to all. This responsibility is in addition to our responsibilities as individuals, and this work is one of the most important tasks of the Vestry as a unit and of us, individually, as its members. To be successful, it must be a **deliberate activity** that is regularly monitored. There are at least 2 main steps.

The first step is to agree that the message we want to send is that we are **inviting all of God’s created people to join** us in a wonderful and wondrous journey and that we expect this message to be reflected by Christ Church in all of its activities.

The second step is to ensure that the values, processes, and behaviors operating within the various departments and ministries consistently reflect those adopted by us individually and collectively as a Vestry and are **actively practiced**.

The fact that people in an organization tend to “mirror” the values and behaviors of its leaders increases the importance of our leaders **practicing** our core set of values – **as individuals and as a group**.

With this in mind, and with Harrison’s approval and input, I think serious thought should be given to developing a list of personal values and practices that can become a part of our everyday life in the Vestry and throughout Christ Church to ensure that we are a church that is inviting to all as demonstrated by our actions. We should have periodic follow-ups as a normal part of our work to analyze the effectiveness of our values and practices so that we can change what isn’t working well and do more of what does work well, continually getting better at what we do and who we are as a church.

One final thought. I don’t think that the love that Randy showed to Bob or that Jesus showed in his ministry was the most important thing that happened. In each case, another action had to take place before those acts of love could occur. It was the act of **perceiving** what was needed – the act of being fully alert and attentive to what was at hand, of looking and seeing, listening and hearing, and taking the time to be thoughtful about what it all meant before any next step was taken. The **action of accurately perceiving** what is needed is **critical** for us individually, and as Vestry members, and it has to take place **before any other action can reliably move us toward being a healthy church** that is inviting to all.

I think the work that we are doing in our Vestry is a fundamental work of **love**, and it only becomes reality through our **ACTIONS**.

Inviting to All – Bill Hardaway

Not present.

Rector’s Report – Harrison McLeod

Below is a list of current priorities that Harrison wants everyone on Vestry to expand on, delete, or add to, as we begin our 2023 budget development. You can work with others but produce your own ideas. List your priorities by what is important to you. You can make as many changes as needed to complete the task. It needs to be turned in by the end of business on Friday. Needing to know where we would like to go will determine what the budget will be.

Current Priorities (Holy Cow & Engagement Surveys)

- i. Increase Inreach & Engagement
- ii. Empower staff to do ministry more effectively and efficiently
 - iii. Develop and implement strategies to reach **new** people and incorporate them into the life of the church
- iv. Develop ministries for healing those broken by life circumstances or transitions (even positive change)
- v. Establish outreach funding per the Vestry resolution of 2021 committing a faithful and generous amount of our annual resources for the benefit of the “Least of these”
- vi. Cultivate partnership with the Diocese

Informal Priorities

What’s the one thing we should be known for? What would you give up?
What has been your most significant experience of the church?

Worship

How do we leverage Worship as the “Front Door” (first experience) of the church?
- More “Inclusive”

Pastoral Care

How do we offer Pastoral Care that reflects love of neighbor?
- Parish Nurse

Outreach

How can we remain faithful to our Outreach Ministries?
- Cultivate opportunities to serve & learn

Engage

How do we more effectively engage parishioners?
- Rally Day/Ministry Fair

Welcoming

How do we become a more welcoming parish?
- Name Tags

Faith Development/Christian Education

Christ Church Preschool

Parish Life (Fellowship)

We are still working on security; an email was sent out to the parents of the Preschool. Harrison had a conversation with American Security. He found out you don't get to select the security guard they send you. Instead, you get the person they have available. We are exploring what's the best personnel to add to the staff so that we not only have security, but we spark confidence in the parents and the teachers. Harrison's peers have told him the best thing he can do is make the building secure. We are looking at making both sets of doors downstairs security doors. Once you walk into the first set of doors the second set will not open until the first set have been closed. We are looking at how to secure the elevator. The door going upstairs is already secured. Things are just a little more complicated than we thought it would be, but we will keep everyone posted.

Q. Have you contacted Pinkerton?

A. We have not.

One consideration was to hire retired police officers.

Q. Would security be during Preschool hours?

A. Yes, at least during Preschool opening at 7 am and closing at 6 pm. We already have security on Sunday although the afternoon security is not as successful. Most of the people we're working with don't want to work Sunday afternoons.

Q. Could we go to one entrance to the Parish House for staff and Preschool, with a receptionist and security?

A. It has already been explored to put a receptionist at the front doors downstairs. Not sure about putting a person in the space between the doors.

Comment: With the new school year coming up things may change. Monday the 15th will be the first day of the fall year, maybe we can focus on what we can do at this point and give people a heads up on what's going on.

Q. Does the Preschool have a budget for security?

A. It would be a shared expense for up and downstairs

Harrison will keep everyone posted.

Vestry will have the opportunity of meeting with the Director of Youth Ministries candidate at 6:45-7:15 pm in Room 251 after we adjourn. Joleen George comes highly recommended from St. John's Episcopal Church in Montgomery, Alabama. A part from tonight there may be other times and opportunities for you to speak with her. We need to gather input from all as quickly as possible.

Joleen was asked how she builds parents' support for the ministry and her response was -- she does everything she can to get involved in the community and build strong relationships that are beneficial to all.

We have a couple of people we've been talking to about the Children's Ministries and will keep you posted on that search, too.

We have completed the interview with the Communications person. The question comes up if we want to make this a full-time position after Jessica's return. Harrison and the Wardens have been in discussion about that in terms of the budget and they will be getting back to everyone.

Q. Do we need someone full time for Communications?

A. Yes, we would do great with two full-time people.

Q. Does the Preschool have communication issues? Can we split the salaries?

A. No. Probably but would rather have them full-time upstairs.

Fall Kick-off is set for September 11. We will be having Sunday School. We are doing our best to try and recruit people for each individual age group.

Q. Will there be another event like the Flour Field Event?

A. Yes, but we will be doing something for September 11 on campus.

Comment: September 10 is Sparkle Day

Senior Warden – Dena Benedict

It's nice to have four priests on staff. Thank you to Cindy Poe for hosting in her home a welcoming reception for Lindy Bunch. It was nice having the chance to meet Lindy's parents as well.

November 20, 2022, is the date for the Annual Meeting.

We will vote on having an open period for Vestry nominations instead of specific dates for now. Just as a formality, Reid Sherard will be making the motion, and I will ask that the motion be seconded to get the nomination process going.

Motion to approve Nomination Open Period for Vestry Elections

Motion: Reid Sherard made the motion that the Nominating Committee has set the dates for election nominations for Vestry, Wardens, and Delegates coming up this fall. It has been recommended that the (open period) be from August 17, 2022, through September 14, 2022, at 5:00 pm. Betsy Elliot seconded the motion. Discussion: Extra time was added because of the holiday, which is Labor Day. All were in favor. None opposed. The motion passed.

Junior Warden – Nelson Arrington

We are in the process of putting together a small committee to review security protocols campus wide. We will have Active Shooter Training coming up the first part of August and a security audit is being done by the Police Crime Prevention Department. Nelson will be walking the campus with them while they are here. Once the audit comes back, the committee will do an evaluation and come up with the best way to address what's in the report. It will address things like using a common entrance.

Q. Who will receive the Active Shooter Training?

A. All of the staff including Preschool.

Q. Should the parish know so they can decide if they would like to participate?

A. We have talked about offering it to the ushers but had not thought about offering it to just anyone who would like to come. It is a good idea that would be a helpful step to take. If you are a greeter or an usher that should be a requirement for them.

Treasurer's Report – Chris Klasing

In June we slipped into a deficit. It was not as bad as we had expected.

We do have plenty in unrestricted cash and have not dipped into any operating reserves.

Request for Endowment Draw

Motion: Paul Landis made a motion to accept and approve Q3 Endowment Draw. Milton Bates seconded the motion. There was no discussion. All were in favor. None opposed. The motion passed.

Suggestion: Refocus on ages 25-40 on giving. People don't have any idea what it takes to run this church. We need to be more straight forward in asking about their giving and be more direct on pledges.

- Actively marketing the need is very good to talk about.
- Trying to do a better job in small groups.
- We've gotten away from teaching the children of the church to give which needs to be addressed.

Minutes from June 21st Vestry Meeting

MOTION: Reid Sherard made a motion to approve the June 21st minutes as presented. Cindy Poe seconded the motion. There was no discussion. All were in favor. None opposed. The motion passed.

New Business:

No new business.

Closing Devotional

Harrison closed out in prayer.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:33 pm.