

**St. Martin-in-the-Fields**  
**Vestry Meeting**  
**April 25, 2023**

**Present:**

Lydia Ogden  
Victoria Sicks  
Bud Holland  
Barbara Thomson  
Del Bright  
Carol Horne Penn  
Katie Borgstrom  
Harry Gould  
Paula Wineland

Ben Makem  
David Dieck  
Rob Jennings  
Elizabeth Eagles  
Carolyn Green (arrived late)  
Emily Law (arrived late)  
Jim Fairburn (via Zoom)  
Jim Littrell (via Zoom)

**I. Approval of Minutes**

Elizabeth reported Victoria's invitation to improve the grammar in the first couple of sentences of Section I and offered to make nonsubstantive changes to that effect. Rob moved the approval of the minutes. Barbara seconded the motion, and the minutes were unanimously approved. Likewise approval of the summary of the minutes was moved by Rob, seconded by Barbara, and unanimously approved.

**II. Transition Consultant**

Harry shared the process undertaken by the committee tasked with recommending a transition consultant to the Vestry. He said that in the process of interviewing candidates, Bud's unsolicited interest in St. Martin's well-being distinguished him. Harry recapped Bud's biography and then yielded the floor to Bud.

Bud characterized this transition as a holy journey and reminded us that life is about transition. Bud said he and Father Jim have been friends for a long time, and he is glad Jim is our interim. Bud said he will officially begin May 1<sup>st</sup> and will work with us for whatever number of months we want. He sees himself as assisting in the process, particularly helping to walk with the Vestry, profile committee, and discernment committee. Each typically has 10-12 members. Their work should be blessed in front of the church. A couple of people should co-chair each.

Bud next described the parish profile. It gathers up our history and reflects what is the work we yearn to be about. It's one way to offer ourselves to a prospective candidate. The committee will divide up different tasks. They will ask a lot of the congregation to be a part either by survey or conversations, so everyone's views and thoughts are heard. The process should be inclusive of even those we don't always see (e.g., homebound). Profiles are usually 15-20 pages including lots of photos. We could elect to have 1-2 Vestry members on each committee. Vestry will ultimately approve the profile. There will also be a second profile, the Office for Transition Ministry (OTM) profile, which is principally the work of the Vestry to put together. The OTM profile answers 13 standard questions. The Bishop must approve both. Generally, they are approved as submitted. Once they are approved, we will share them with the whole parish and online for the wider world.

After that, the discernment committee work begins. This work is done in confidence. This committee helps get the word out about the position via networking, asking members of the parish who they know, and advertising on Episcopal church databases. The current trend is that not a lot of priests are looking for new calls, but we should get a number who are interested. Bud will help the discernment committee whittle down applicants. The Vestry will decide whether we want one name from the discernment committee or whether we want to consider more than one. Once the numbers are whittled down, candidates will visit St. Martin's during the

week, and the Vestry can arrange to meet them. We can also visit them in their parish, having the priest set up contacts of their selection. Once we get down to 2-3 candidates, the Bishop will want to know. Once a call is made, a letter of agreement (LOA) is drafted and sent to the Bishop for approval. Once the LOA is approved, an offer will be made. It is common that the selected candidate will ask for time to consider the offer. Upon acceptance of the offer, a start date is selected. Bud also recommends we have a transition committee to journey with the new rector to support their settling in.

In response to questions, Bud offered information about the immediate first step of forming the parish profile committee. We should aim to select people who are currently active in the parish, have a diversity of perspectives, are team players, and have demonstrated commitment. We should solicit volunteers but there is no guarantee they can self-select. Bud answered a question about how long each phase typically takes, saying it would be 3-4 months to craft a profile and 3-4 months for search. The whole process takes about a year. There will be about two months between acceptance of our offer and when the priest arrives.

### **III. Interim Rector's Report**

#### *A. Easter*

Jim recounted the entire holy week plus vigil and easter day were joy filled and remarkable. Easter included laying to rest the remains of Frank Griswold in a giant Easter egg. There were a lot of people, so St. Martin's seems alive, and there is opportunity to build on that. Children and Youth service included almost 200 people, which is hopeful for building the future.

#### *B. Pastoral work*

Jim reported an ongoing serious load of pastoral care needs. In addition, there have been funerals every weekend for the past four weeks with two more upcoming. These have been for longstanding members, and Jim has encouraged their remaining family members to become more involved.

#### *C. Personnel*

Carolyn is heading up the Personnel Committee and will share more. They are exploring how we define roles. Noor Diskan has been back with us and has taken a lot of responsibility. Jim has been actively working since Easter to find a new parish administrator. Anne Alexis will be leaving in mid-June. We will begin looking for a children, family, and youth minister to replace her.

#### *D. Budget*

Jim reported that we will be working within our budget but sometimes outside the budget lines to accommodate staffing needs. His goal is to resolve staff challenges so we will be in good shape for a new rector.

#### *E. Properties Committee*

We are still working to reconstitute the Properties Committee under a new chairperson. Jim thinks it should have two arms: daily maintenance matters and larger issues. There are current committee members with expertise in both. Jim also wants to engage more members with grounds caretaking, including mowing, edging, and biannual cleanup. Volunteers worked hard prior to Easter to make things look good.

#### *F. Membership engagement*

Kate Maus is leading an outreach effort to the congregation. It will begin soon. Twenty-five volunteers will be calling members listed in the directory to see who we are and who we are not. The goal is to get people engaged with a ministry they are passionate about. Victoria suggested we use this project to disseminate information about transition. Father Jim agreed.

### *G. Spring highlights*

Tyrone has planned a summer concert series, including Pride Evensong. He is also exploring the possibility of running a choir camp.

## **IV. Finance**

David reported in Tom's absence. He said there is no big headline. At the Finance Committee meeting they discussed how to accommodate staff needs within our budget. We are running above budget on giving. Office supplies and utilities are also a bit above. A small group is involved in research into the Employee Retention Tax Credit (ERTC) program, which the federal government created in response to the pandemic. If we qualify, it would give us credit for having kept all our staff on during lockdown. The Investment Committee is seeking to welcome back some members. A subset of the Finance Committee meeting is looking at "nonoperating funds" (i.e., assets of parish not reflected in our operating budget). The goal is to develop protocols for oversight.

## **V. Personnel Committee [*Executive session portion removed*]**

Carolyn shared that the Personnel Committee is comprised of Paula, David Adams, and Carolyn. They developed a profile for the open parish administrator position, which has been out about three weeks. They are also looking at how to delegate the technical work among staff. Their goal is that people are being fulfilled in what they do, and our needs are being met. They will be looking at our policies and procedures to make sure we are, if not best in class, at least compliant. Carolyn reflected that this committee will help give an incoming rector confidence and support.

## **VI. Rector's Warden's Report**

### *A. Nominating Committee*

Barbara shared that Harry and Ben are the cochairs of the Nominating Committee for the new Vestry class. Pam Prell and Adenike Webb serve with them. Barbara has been providing guidance. They have had one meeting where sixteen names were generated. Since then, additional communications have whittled the list down to between ten and twelve. They will rank order their choices and then try to come to consensus. Barbara will weigh in regarding the candidates' bandwidth. A Thursday meeting will further narrow the field. There are three openings. Barbara says we are trying to balance the need for Vestry members and people to serve on the parish profile committee.

### *B. Properties Committee chair*

Barbara asked if anyone would volunteer. No one did. Father Jim identified one member of the congregation who he thinks should handle day-to-day properties-related matters. Harry is hopeful one of the new Vestry class will have an interest in the role of chairperson.

## **VII. Next Month's Agenda**

Barbara told us Hal Taussig suggested we do a demographic study of the community around. The aim would be to help us better understand the context of where the parish is and what our potential is. It would complement Kate's outreach but be an outside look. Discussion followed.

Victoria recommended we craft a transition update to the parish by letter. She noted there is lots of good stuff to say, and it would be reassuring. Barbara agreed and said we will do a letter as soon as possible. We identified volunteers to share a transition update for this Sunday's announcements.

David ended the meeting with a beautiful alternative version of the evening prayer.