

Diocesan Council Meeting Minutes
Thursday, December 12, 2013
Grace Church, East Concord

Attendance

Bishop Rob Hirschfeld, Kitty Cornwell, Betsy Hess, Susan Langle, Roger Nicholls, Sue Poulin, Kate Atkinson, Margaret Porter, Kurt Wiesner, Bill Exner, Gail Avery, Jason Wells, Richard Davenport, Connie Morton-Ewbank, Canon Hannah Anderson, Lucy Crichton, Anne Milne.

Opening

The Bishop called the meeting to order at 4:07 p.m. Moderator Margaret Porter volunteered to take minutes in Secretary Carol Twomey's absence. Kitty Cornwell volunteered to bring snacks to the January meeting.

Devotions: Dwelling in the Word

Luke 10:1-12

The Bishop sought volunteers to read the verses aloud. In between each reading the group reflected on the text, answering the question, *What word or moment in passage sparks your imagination or curiosity?* During this discussion Bill Exner recommended Winnie Varghese's new book *What Shall We Become?* which ties in with restructuring.

As a closing question, the Bishop invited each person to think about the street he or she lives on, and the neighborhood, to imagine the houses within a 1/4 or 1/2 mile radius, and the names of the people in those houses. *Do you know who they are? Would you be able to say something unique about each of those households, based on your knowledge of being inside their house? Would you be able to describe their house? Has there been a particular moment where you would say God has been called upon or God showed up in that household, all those households? How far in that exercise can you go?* Responses varied.

Asked why the Luke passage is so resonant for him, the Bishop replied that he is more and more convinced that God's mission has a church, that we are being sent out, increasingly being called to go. There are possible experiments within the diocese where we could do this, without sandals, staff, bag, and see what happens. We can be thinking about those who aren't drawn to church yet are not without God. Our talking so much about welcome and inclusion allows us to stay focused on our tent or community. Being sent out in another way is frightening. We'd be going out not just to bring them in,, letting God re-form, re-shape, renew us. We don't know what it will look like. But the hopefulness in the passage is that the harvest is plentiful.

Gail Avery then read from *The Message* the next part of the story, what happened when the 70 came back.

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Anne Milne moved to accept the minutes as written, Kate Atkinson seconded. Motion passed.

2014 Staff Housing Allowances

The approval for staff housing allowance deductions will be done by email after the documents are prepared. The Bishop stated that courts are ruling on this as an issue of the separation of church and state issue through a lens of separation of Church & State and appeals are planned. The Chancellor of TEC says the ruling is carefully thought out and there will be adjustment time to deal with changes.

Staffing at 63 Green Street

Kathryn Buttrick resigned as Canon for Mission Resources, a role envisioned as a combination of CFO and administrator helping churches and their vestries, working in stewardship, and overseeing Trustees' funds. In future the Coit House funds and grants will be managed by the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation. Becky Forbes was called back into service temporarily during the search for a successor.

Mission Mapping

Saturday, December 7 was Mission Mapping Day for diocesan leadership. Consultants Renee Charney and Sean Tracey led the group through exercises and deep discussion of the lenses through which we might re-shape diocese. Rather than viewing our diocese as a state map with pinpoints of church locations, how might we collectively consider the *spirit* of the diocese, in order to more faithfully make decisions? Kurt Wiesner stated that it was not an easy discussion but found it some of the best use of his time he's experienced in the diocese. "We realized we're on a road." Hannah Anderson reported Sean Tracey's comment that the group did more work in that one day than most can accomplish in three sessions. He was struck by our determination not to define ourselves by comparisons to "competitors." Rather, our uniqueness is our expression as the Body of Christ in this world. Margaret Porter commented that the group was broadly representative of the diocese and where mission is happening and the day was not outcome-driven. Sue Poulin appreciated the liturgical focus on our baptismal covenant and that the discussion was based in reality versus imagination: "Not who we wish we were, but who we really are. Not just reflective of the past, but right now."

Online survey results were shared with the Council and briefly discussed. The Bishop explained that Mission Mapping had started as a strategic planning, but was too "top down" and morphed into something more. What are we being equipped to do as a church, not just for our own survival? "Those who are willing to lose their lives will gain it."

The Gatherers/Diocesan Website

Hannah Anderson provided an update on the group that is no longer called the Branding/Marketing Team, which is overseeing a process that will run from the 2013 convention to 2014 convention. She shared the word cloud created from the sticky notes collected at convention. Creative ideas include gathering stories using a Story Corps technique. This would involve a team going out to a parish or community or group event to interview people with video cameras or recorders, inviting people to tell the story of what's going on in lives. This material could be made available on the website. The Bishop would also be interviewed, perhaps about the Scripture passage of the 70, and what it means to be sent into the world.

Commission on Ministry

Hannah Anderson described how the COM has been newly focused on the ministry of all the baptized. They are currently reviewing as Phase 1 the discernment period—how a priest responds to inquirers and the creation of the Clearness Committee. Phase 2 would require a regional or diocesan committee. The goal is to take the model out of a specific parish and transfer it to a larger region involving more churches. Caroline Fairless and Jim Sims are developing the Clearness Committee model to be unveiled in January. Sarah Rockwell and Judith Esmay are collaborating on the Discernment Committee, and their work will be complete in the fall. Those discerning a sense of call to ordained ministry would follow one track. COM wants to put time and energy into determining available resources for those on the non-ordination track.

Kids 4 Peace

Kate Atkinson announced that the New Hampshire K4P group is working with K4P Vermont for the first campers, coming in August. The team has met with Josh Thomas, national director of K4P, and learned that they don't have to raise as much money as they initially believed. The goal is about \$30,000 for one year, which primarily funds the kids who are coming—travel expenses, etc. The diocesan convention display table took in \$400. Fundraising is ongoing. Christmas gift donations are encouraged: a card was created to announce the gift to the recipient being honored. They are exploring various grants, and suggestions were made by Council members.

Developments in North Country Ministry

The Bishop provided some background on transitions to date at St. Stephen's, Colebrook, St. Barnabas, Berlin, and St. Paul's, Lancaster. Vacant clergy positions at the latter two parishes resulted in exploration of collaboration and possible formation of a North Country mission hub. Richard Davenport, North Country Missioner, will now serve both Berlin and Colebrook, and Janet Lombardo has gone from Berlin interim to serve as interim at Lancaster. There is great opportunity for partnerships and mission. Richard Davenport announced that the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation grant was renewed for the community meals.

Developments in Lakes Region Ministry

Trinity Church Tilton is in discernment about whether to remain in their building and are looking around the neighborhood at alternative prospects. St. Jude's, Franklin, currently housing the Twin Rivers Interfaith Food Pantry, might become useful space. St. Mark's, Ashland is similarly focused on location, and by Pentecost will decide about the use of their building.

Mission Resources

Margaret Porter informed Council that the applications for mission grants and 2014 Fair Share adjustments are posted on the diocesan website. The Fair Share application deadline is Jan. 31, with recommendations presented to Council by mid-March. The committee's next meeting is January 7. All members, including new ones, attended the Mission Mapping day.

Announcements

Kate Atkinson, Jason Wells, and Hope Butterworth have met with Jenn Lombardo, director of Concord's Friendly Kitchen. Starting in February a noontime service will be offered at the facility on the first Sunday of the month.

Brendan Whitaker will be (sort of) retiring as priest at Church of the Epiphany, Newport.

St. Matthew's, Goffstown received 17 new pledges, as part of the best stewardship campaign ever.

All Saints, Littleton will be the new home for the North Country Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program. The clinic will be carried out on site.

January 9 Meeting Agenda

Clergy Compensation: how to have conversation, what resources are available. The Bishop will confer with Task Force leaders. Betsy Hess and Chris Porter can lead us in the discussion.

2014 Council Meeting Dates

January 9, February 13, March 13, April 10, May 8, June 12, July ?, August 14, September 11, October 9, November 13, December 11

The meeting closed with prayer at 6.13 p.m.

Addendum: On December 18-19, voting by email took place. Housing allowance deductions for Bishop Hirschfeld, Canon Anderson, and North Country Missioner Davenport were approved by Council.

Respectfully submitted,
Margaret Porter
Moderator