

**VESTRY MEETING – 4 MAY 2020, 19.30, via ZOOM
ALL SAINTS' CHURCH, WATERLOO**

Present: Mike Breton, Bill Bythell (Senior Warden), Nick Fern (Junior Warden), Rev. Sunny Hallanan (Rector), Susan Downhill, Gabrielle Conforti-Quinet, Stefan Jochems, Kathi-Sue Rupp, Katie Osweiler (Curate)
Staff: Fiona White.

1. Nick Fern opened the meeting with a **prayer**.
2. **Absence:** There were no absences.
3. **Approval of minutes** The minutes of the April Vestry meeting were accepted with one small change.
4. **Vestry check-in:** Nick Fern said he had been going to use the subject of organizations and hierarchies but that it would be too lengthy in light of the Bishop's document (see below) that needed to be discussed. Instead, Nick talked about the lockdown and said that he has found the last seven weeks very difficult. Everyone who can has supported him but he's still struggling. People said they were thankful for good shepherds; others have organized their week so that they have contact with people every day. The parish is a microcosm of how the world is currently: some are alone and bored and others are working more than ever. Sunny Hallanan asked is the church meeting peoples' needs? Nick said that he got through to most of the parish members listed on a phone list supplied by the church office. Brenda, the only parishioner known to be with no Internet, is receiving lots of calls.
5. **Convocation regulations for reopening churches:** The Bishop sent a document to all churches in the Convocation in preparation for when services can resume. The Vestry received this document last week and all had read it thoroughly. Singing may not be allowed; we will have to wait for the Belgian decree – and also the Anglican Council. Groups of more than 50 are banned until the end of August. Luckily ASC doesn't have those numbers for a regular summer service and the church space is flexible. We will ask all parishioners to provide a photo of themselves, which can be put on their regular seat. This will mark their seat for when they return to church but in the meantime it has them 'with' those who are already in the building. Bill Bythell said that seats must be kept for visitors. Would we use paper bulletins or project the words on a screen? While screen is not a generally popular idea here, it is a time of special need. Gabrielle Conforti-Quinet mentioned that her children sing much more these days with the words and music on the screen. Nick suggested that just one system is used. Katie Osweiler volunteered to do the projecting. Marc Smets-Tolley could be asked to be a back-up. The bulletin information can go out in advance. A screen-based service should be an option via Facebook Live. There might be a cost to use Zoom after the end of lockdown, perhaps €15 per month (the Convocation is currently paying for the account). As the Internet in the church itself is not reliable, a subscription for 4G could be taken out and an iPad used. Gabrielle noted that the virus survives for up to five days on paper. Regarding the offering plate, Sunny suggested that this is placed inside the church and people can either give before or after the service, but still be most encouraged to use bank transfer. The money collected would be left until the following Sunday before it is counted. She emphasized the spiritual value of the symbol of giving an offering.
The eleven points from the Bishop were discussed.

1. *How will you respond if your worship gathering is initially limited by local requirements to no more than (say) 100 people? If you are limited to a smaller number of people by our government leaders, what's the plan at your church to provide a place and time for them to worship?*

Space for 50 would be more than enough. Singing would be a problem.

2. *Should you add and/or shorten worship services to allow for social distancing? If physical gatherings are limited in size, you may want to consider one or more of the following options:*

(a) *offer a larger number of services, limiting attendance at each;*

(b) *encourage people to continue worshiping online;*

(c) *remove chairs from your worship space, or mark seating spaces on pews, to help people avoid close contact;*

(d) *block off pews so that people no longer sit right behind someone.*

The chairs would be reorganized and some removed so that the correct spacing is provided. Families with children (who should be further from vulnerable people) could go on the balcony where there is room for three families spaced well apart.

3. *How will you manage and potentially limit access? What additional role will ushers have in seating people, managing the flow of people at communion, and other moments of movement?*

Ushers will guide people in at a distance. There will only be a queue at communion time.

4. *What adjustments will you make to the offering of communion, to baptisms and funeral gatherings, and to music ministry, in response to the bishop's pastoral directive?*

We will move to wafers, there will be no wine and the rector will wear gloves or hand sanitize. Sunny will give home communion if it is allowed. (Baptisms, funerals and music ministry was not discussed at the meeting.)

5. *How will you take up your weekly offering?*

The collection plate will be placed by the church door for people to drop money into. Is there a way to make an electronic payment direct from a mobile phone?

6. *What are you doing now to sanitize and sterilize your church building—and to put in place a plan for doing so regularly? Will this require a new team of people whose ministry it is to walk around wiping door knobs and other surfaces? Now is the time for all this to take place, not the week of the "you can go back to church" announcement by government officials.*

This is an ongoing process at All Saints'.

7. *How will you continue to engage the communities whom you have served through virtual online worship?*

We will continue to show the service online via Facebook Live as we regularly have one or two new faces as well as former parishioners attending our current services.

8. *In particular, will you need to invest in new digital equipment right now? Do you have adequate Internet connectivity, audio capture systems, and video cameras? Do you need help with planning this?*

We may take out a 4G subscription to ensure Internet connectivity in the church. We need to see if our projector and screen are adequate for this.

9. Who can oversee the technical aspects of your church's new digital frontier? Will a new staff or volunteer position emerge from COVID-19—someone whose job it is to oversee the technical aspects of the new digital frontier?

We are going to ask Marc Smets-Tolley, who was a great help at the 2018 Convention. Katie Osweiler can also help with this.

10. What is your plan when volunteers step down?

[That's not allowed!]

11. Do you have a plan for reducing expenses if your church's offerings don't rebound?

As soon as lockdown began we reduced expenses as far as we could: reduced heating, no cleaner. (Of course when we return to the building some of these expenses will return, but we have saved for a few months.) The Vestry sent an email on 16 April to all our parishioners requesting extra financial support at this difficult time. We have had a very good response so far.

6. Ministry and committee reports:

6.1. Outreach/Mission

a. Bill contacted Katie with a proposal to find some good causes. Mike Breton said that the church already has €300 which could be doubled. Bill suggested 50% to provide assistance to those suffering from domestic violence and 50% for homeless refugees. It was suggested that €300 would be sent to Oasis (but to a specific project) and €300 to Belgium Kitchen, which has opened a new center run by former refugees for refugees.

6.2. Finance & property

- a. Mike reported that the roof has been repaired and the invoice has been received.
- b. BioBabies were back in today for the first time since the end of March. Mike will talk to Florence to see if they received government support, of which we will hopefully receive 50%.
- c. A friend of Florence would like to advertise his garage with an illuminated sign in our car park. A motion was passed not to have it.
- d. Mike received a call from the church bell repairer. Do we want to get it repaired for around €800? It was decided not to have the work done at present.
- e. There is enough money in the ASBL account for Mike to make another payment to our lender.

6.3. Christian education

a. Kathi-Sue Rupp said that the regular Tuesday Bible studies were proving popular. Could they continue after lockdown? There have been as many as ten attendees but usually there are four or five people. Katie says that it works well with an intimate group. We will have to see what people want. Some things, like Bible study, almost work better online. The Wondrous Wednesdays invest in people and there is good participation. This might also be something to continue with after the end of lockdown; maybe something educational on the first Wednesday of the month, and something lighter on the third Wednesday.

Could we do something more for children? This may not work so well considering an earlier time and groups being present in the church building.

- b. Sunny said that it would be good to have some inter-generational education. Linda Grenz (Leader Resources) has given the Convocation the rights to her programs, for example *Journey to Narnia* for adults and children.

6.4 Pastoral care

- a. As mentioned above, everyone on the current list of parishioners was telephoned. The list should be re-visited for getting in touch again.

6.5 Visibility

- a. Stefan Jochems and Susan Downhill had met to come up with suggestions for becoming more visible. The present time is offering a window of opportunity and lots of websites are getting more traffic. Is the Vestry open to looking at something else at this time?
 - i) A Facebook advertising campaign was suggested, as used by other not-for-profit organizations. An advertisement reaching 3,000 people would cost €500.
 - ii) Sermons on YouTube work well. We should encourage sharing and make our presence known.
 - iii) We should make our church re-opening into a story for the local newspapers.
 - iv) We need to try and reach the English-speaking Francophone community.
 - v) We could run a service for the Scouts, but it would need the right approach.
- b. Visibility money can be found. The cost is as low as €1 per day for a Facebook advertisement. The meeting agreed it was worth looking at.

6.6 Fellowship

- a. The current before and after-service fellowship is very positive at the moment. Care must be taken as we come back together physically.
- b. The less religious events – Singing with the Saints and the Trivia quizzes – are all very positive.
- c. It was noted the the Bishop has said that there must be no coffee hour when services first resume in the church.

7. Other business:

7.1 Corona virus and how it's affecting ASC: It was suggested that we keep people connected so we'll continue with the Zoom worship. We're providing community, which has a charm of its own.

7.2 Safeguarding classes: Fiona reported that all Vestry members and clergy were now up to date with the courses. There are two people who help with Sunday School who still have some courses to do.

7.3 ASBL update: There was nothing to report.

- 8. Curate's report:** Katie reports that she is helping with the Convocation Youth on Wednesdays at 18.00. A Convocation-wide project is running for Pentecost. She has received the paperwork to say her course will take place in the USA mid-June to mid-July. She will leave on 31 May (if she can find transport!) to learn how to be a military chaplain. She hasn't heard about the job she applied for in England but knows they want to do a face-to-face interview. She could go in May (if they want to meet her), traveling as a diplomat.

- 9. Rector's report:** The Bishop has asked if we would want a Convocation-wide service for Pentecost. Hopefully by then some people will be able to come out of lockdown, but not everyone. ASC are interested in being involved. The Commission on Mission Congregations has a church planting conference she is scheduled to attend in October, but everything is currently on hold. She is thankful for Katie, Alasdair and Fiona. A new fridge was purchased for the small apartment. We are currently locked out of SMARTgreen's offices (they changed the lock). Their area houses the electrical breakers and heat controls for the entire top floor, so we need access. Nick Fern asked about Sunny's sabbatical, which has had to go on hold for now. She asks that everyone be flexible and feels that things will still be awkward in December. She's not making any concrete plans. It was suggested that, in the absence of Katie, maybe a retired priest could come (or via Zoom) for services and that Jo Jan Vandenheede could lead funeral services if Sunny was away for a few weeks.
- 10. Closing prayer:** Nick closed with a prayer and the meeting adjourned at 21.30.