

**VESTRY MEETING – 7 DECEMBER 2020, 19.30, via ZOOM  
ALL SAINTS' CHURCH, WATERLOO**

---

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

1. Gabrielle Conforti-Quinet opened the meeting with a **prayer**.
2. **Absences:** There were none.
3. **Approval of minutes** The minutes of the 9 November Vestry meeting were accepted.
4. **Vestry check-in:** Gabrielle said she had been reading a book called *Advent at home*, which provided an interesting viewpoint on this year's Advent journey. It talks about advent being an uncomfortable time, being reflective at the start of a new year, and how to face despair and darkness before we can move to the light and Christmas. Are there things people are facing spiritually that they are working on to grow in their maturity in their faith? What brings light for you? Gabrielle said as a family in her home for 8 months they struggle with respecting each other's space, mentally, spiritually and physically. There's a need to give each other space when they don't have space. She's reading about what others do with children in small spaces. Nick Fern said he is amazed at what Gabrielle's family has achieved. He is at the other end of the spectrum, living alone and crying out for a hug. Both have their challenges. Nick thinks of Nelson Mandela in basic solitude, who was only allowed to read *The Economist* but kept his humanity. If one goes back more than 100 years, the space we have now in comparison to then is so much larger. Katie Osweiler finds it very interesting to learn about yourself, your spiritual maturity. This is new for all of us. Yes, we've been isolated for a short period. Now everything is new. She is loving making videos for Sunday School but we all need self care. Giving permission for ourselves to feel the way we are and be kind to ourselves is something she's learned about. Kathi-Sue Rupp counts her blessings that she has not had to face the struggles others have had but what has brought her light are the glimmers of normalcy: the music side of things and the bell group, which provide a good lifeline for her. Susan Downhill has so much sympathy for Gabrielle and Nick. Two people live with her and there is plenty of space. There was a lot of camaraderie with the neighbors during the first lockdown, who ended up singing Bach, a communal coming-together in her street as a result of the pandemic. Light evenings came along, and now there's no clapping, and she doesn't see too many people. She feels lucky that she has to work quite a bit and her work hasn't changed too much. She usually finds Advent a joyful season that becomes so busy, but not this year. Maybe we can dig a bit deeper this Advent. Bill Bythell can connect with Susan's thoughts. He's not really looking forward to Christmas. The first time round there was the novelty of lockdown and we were told to give it a month or two. Second time around the message is now wait until February, wait for winter to be over, for half the country to be vaccinated. The waiting period of Advent seems to not be waiting for Christmas but waiting for next year for things to get back to normal. He thinks it will be a new normal because certain activities just won't get going; there will be something different. Bill's getting through it with Chantal; they are at home a lot but also get out and about. Mike Breton doesn't feel depressed or hemmed in. He gets out as much as he can. Christmas will be different this year;

it'll be interesting to see what happens. Stefan Jochems talked about darkness and what it means to us. He's been reading a book by a Czech priest, Tomas Harlek, who tells of a 19th century nun who had a sickly sweet reputation. At the end of her life she went through a dark time, feeling abandoned by God, but she still believed. Darkness is a fundamental part of our faith. Kathi-Sue built on that: it's in periods of darkness that we grow as people, when we are tried and tested, and forced out of our comfort zone. Sunny Hallanan thinks that what is strange is that we're preparing for Christmas, but what happens at Christmas? This isn't what we thought would happen. Katie said that a group Christmas is ruined. But the first Christmas was in a stable and then they fled for their lives. We paint Christmas with a great brush of perfection. Nothing is going to ruin Christmas. Kathi-Sue remarked that in some ways we don't know what Christmas will be like until it's actually here. Bill said that we won't be able to go to church. *Le Figaro* said today that religious organizations are making a plea that if you can watch football, why can't you go to church? Current regulations do seem illogical.

**5. Committee reports:**

**5.1. Finance and property**

- a. Mike reported that the Fabrique account is now being transferred to Belfius. He has reduced the balance in the ING account to a minimum and that will be cleared this week. The KBC is currently looking very healthy with a balance of around €20,000. (Note: €5,000 of this balance belongs to St Esprit Mons, which doesn't yet have its own bank account.) We are up to target on payments to our lender.
- b. He reported that paperwork has been filed with the Bishop for the €2,000: €1,000 is outright grant; €1,000 is a loan with a long time to pay back.
- c. There have been furnace problems over the last two weeks. There was a leak which required new valves, then the creche was without heating for a week. Then the rector's apartment was without heat. Supposedly now everything is fixed. Mike will discuss the bill with Cozie. The boiler needs to be replaced. Nick said he is looking for someone to assess our needs and make bids.
- d. One of the trees in a pot outside the church door was stolen recently.

**5.1.1 Review level of scouts rental to ASC:** the scouts have requested a decrease in what they pay us. They don't pay to meet here, they pay to rent one third of the basement as a storage area. Prior to them having it, they rented a professional storage place. We gave them this more convenient space for a better price. They currently pay €150 per month. Gabrielle, a scout leader, described their difficult financial situation due to lower membership, leadership and Covid. After discussion of various options, Nick proposed €30/month reduction for 5 months and then review it. All agreed with one abstention (because Gabrielle is a scout leader). This starts 1 January 2021. Fiona was asked to relay this to the scouts.

**5.2. Christian education**

- a. Gabrielle reported the team is working on plans to keep the children engaged. Katie's well-received program from the fall is over. Bible studies continue.
- b. Sunny pointed out there was a certain amount of education in the Wondrous Wednesday services. The Mark-a-thon this upcoming Friday is also education.

- c. Katie reported that Felicity is doing class and a special project with Rite 13ers. There is a youth game night on 13 December.

### **5.3. Pastoral care**

- a. Nick had nothing to report.
- b. Katie checks in with Roswitha and Bobby Jackson who are doing OK. Their Thanksgiving meal left them feeling loved.
- c. Mike is in touch with Brenda Barleycorn.
- d. Eliane Gyselynck really enjoyed her Thanksgiving meal. She is currently suffering from shingles.
- e. Katie wondered if Gemma Pullinger would appreciate help. Her newborn baby was back in hospital due to seizures, but is now home again.

### **5.4 Visibility**

- a. Visibility committee will meet Thursday, so there was no report this evening. Susan said they will follow up on resolutions of Convention.
- b. Christmas lights are up. Mike thanked Sunny for putting them up.
- c. Sunny reported that the Facebook numbers are good: there are around 600 hits when Katie sings, on the Sunday School classes, and on many of the Wondrous Wednesdays got to 900. High numbers encourage more people to watch things. Kathi-Sue asked if it was possible to feature shorter videos from a service. The answer was 'yes' and this has been done, but it does require more work. One of these, a handbell video had probably our highest number of hits. The best way to get more hits is to share our posts.
- d. People are coming back to our Zoom worship who don't come to in-person or hybrid services.

### **5.5 Fellowship**

- a. Kathi-Sue reported that Thanksgiving went well. There will be a cookie exchange on 20 December. The organization for this will be easier. People bring cookies to the church by Saturday, 19 December and pick up on Sunday. It will be coordinated as before, with worship, a fellowship event with Lessons & Carols. Sunday's carols will be religious, and we will sing the more secular at Wondrous Wednesday (WW) a few days before. Cookies will be delivered to people who can't get to the church. There is a donation of mince pies already in the church. Things are moving forward.
- b. Nick issued a vote of thanks to all those who were involved in the preparation of the Thanksgiving feast.

### **5.6 Outreach/Mission**

- a. Bill said that he hadn't received details of the causes that ASC wanted to support. Sunny apologized for not having done this work of the committee yet. It will be in an extra eBlast.

## **6. Other business:**

- 6.1 ASBL update:** Nick said that Nadia has resigned the ASBL due to her health. He feels that the ASBL is redundant. Mike has sorted out the financial side. Mike said that Roderick Abbott has submitted a letter to the ING, which should be dealt with quite quickly. Stefan sent Mike a book on ASBLs. which is making interesting reading.

Sunny asked the ASBL committee to check in with David Sayers to find out why the Anglican Council was told they had to have an ASBL. Nick had checked with the Scottish Church. They have a Fabrique and all their accounting is done through that, with no ASBL. Nick or Mike will talk to David Sayers before any action is taken whether or not to close the ASBL. Susan asked if the ASBL can function without a bank account. We are being threatened with having our bank account dissolved, not the ASBL. Nick said that Holy Trinity is in the same situation as us, i.e. an ASBL account with ING. Susan wondered if it was the same with the Catholic churches. Bill said that the first church car was owned by an *association de fait* (no ASBL in those days). The ASBL was founded to own the rectory. Stefan noted that although Nadia has given her notice, the ASBL still has to have 3 officers. Roderick is looking into this. She has access to 'taxonweb' via passwords, etc., which need to be handed to her successor.

**6.2 Hahneman project:** Stefan has contacted three specialists; two have responded and aren't interested. It seems there is no market for the picture. Sunny said for the time being she will put it in a frame and hang it on a wall.

**6.3 Future Vestry members and AGM:** Assuming that it will be online, the meeting agreed on holding the AGM after the service on 21 February. By then 3 new Vestry members need to have been found as there are 2 vacancies and Bill has to go off. A suggestion was made to have people from Mons and St Servais on ours but they already have to have their own vestries (called Bishop's Council, but the same thing basically). Various people were suggested and will be asked. While we meet on Zoom it is easier for some to participate.

7. **Curate's report:** Katie now has a group of Lutheran leaders that meets once a week. They did a clergy retreat and it was good continuing education. Katie and Sunny are talking about taking time off after Christmas.
8. **Rector's report:** In spite of the difficult circumstances, attendance has been good: we got up to 46 for Advent 1 on zoom (and we don't know how many *really* attend on Facebook live). People seem to be keeping spirits up in spite of the circumstances. Flexibility is needed in Covid-times! Bill sent out the schedule and then Sunny changed it, and then changed it again. The Pagaent will now be on Christmas Eve. It was decided to have the Lessons and Carols service on the evening of 20 December, as it is unlikely other area churches will participate if it is not in-person.
9. **Closing prayer:** Gabrielle read a closing prayer.

The meeting adjourned at 21.19.