

VESTRY MEETING – 1 FEBRUARY 2021, 19.30, via ZOOM
ALL SAINTS' CHURCH, WATERLOO

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

1. Sunny Hallanan opened the meeting with a **prayer**.
2. **Absences:** Gabrielle Conforti-Quinet was not present due to a scout meeting.
3. **Approval of minutes** The minutes of the 4 January Vestry meeting were accepted.
4. **Vestry check-in:** Reflections of term-enders: Bill Bythell had thought back to when he had done a double term before. Times have changed since his first time in 2009. Mike Breton was also there. They were momentous times. ASC had only been in the new building for a year, which was a major change. He had barely arrived on Vestry and when it was announced that the Rector had resigned so his first 18 months were spent on a rector search. Then ASC faced its financial crisis of how to afford the building before we received the Campbell Fund, and then the ongoing efforts to try and diminish the debt and get onto an even keel. When he rejoined Vestry he organized the Convocation Convention and now he's had the pandemic lockdowns. It seems there was always something major going on, together with the day-to-day running of the church. Over this time the size of the parish has stabilized but there has been quite a turnover of parishioners. Our members reflect the ideas and visions of the church. In the December 2020 meeting Vestry talked of our reactions to the lockdown: we were all suffering but in different ways. Everyone is different but we form a team, and it seems to have always been like this. Differences are overcome and the team works for the good of the church. In practical terms, running the church is not a straightforward affair. There are things to discuss and think about. So over the years he's learned a lot and hopefully contributed to keeping it going. Sunny thanked Bill and said that he was notorious around the Convocation for putting on the Convention; he got the Bishop's award that year. It has been meaningful that he's been words and action, training the worship leaders and doing things around the building. Bill says he still intends to be around.
Nick Fern was in a different church building and almost a different church during his previous term on Vestry (1988-1993). They were turbulent years but in a different sense because this was the era that ASC became an Episcopal church. He went abroad then came back to the church and said he didn't want to become involved but he did. And he will continue for another 3 years if voted for. He wasn't happy with the Vestry check-in at the start but it has turned out to be one of the best parts of the meeting; significant and important things are discussed in it. He likes the way Vestry works together and is amazed at how effective we are in lockdown. The meetings are structured well. Sunny thanked Nick and said she was grateful for him coming back; he has such a treasure of our past history. He sometimes calls us to difficult truths and that takes a brave person; he has a gift of time and service. Mike Breton said that he appreciated all the work both Nick and Bill have put in to the running of the church/Vestry. Both are good at giving reality checks. Susan Downhill wanted to thank both men and hopes they'll come back in due course. She is truly grateful to know both of them.

5. Committee reports:

5.1. Pastoral care

- a. Bill reported that pastoral care is looking after itself through Zoom. The advantage is that we see virtually all the core congregation. He's noticed this in the response for readers – and they turn up! There was discussion reflecting concern for those who are not able to participate.

5.2. Visibility

- a. Stefan Jochems reported that a few meetings had taken place with Susan, Sunny, Katie Osweiler and Thomas Huddleston about a new communications plan. They identified that the people who are most likely to come to ASC are interested in a more sacramental approach to worship, and those who are actively engaged in society who want alternatives to the more established church. These people fall into key groups: young families, newcomers, ex-catholics and the socially concerned. If the Vestry agrees, these groups should be our focus, and the committee will strategize how to approach them, for example via our social media. It was moved by Nick, seconded by Stefan and approved unanimously that the Vestry endorses the committee developing a plan for improved visibility focusing on the particular identified groups.

5.3. Fellowship

- a. Kathi-Sue Rupp said the committee met to come up with ideas for Mardi-gras. Pancakes will not work with the current rules, so they're going to design an activity: All Saints' Mardi-Gras Unmasked. The idea is to get to know a bit more about each other. Kathi-Sue will be quiz master and the event will be held on Tuesday, 16 February at 19.30. People will sign up in advance and provide a fact that is unknown to the others. She has designed a sign-up form which will go out in the eBlast. All felt this was a great idea.

5.4 Outreach/Mission

- a. Bill reported that he and Nick decided it was time to do something about Outreach. They want to help charities that parishioners are associated with and came up with Domisum and Oasis Belgium. Three ways the church can help are: direct financial donation; parishioners could make donations and the church could give matching donations; people can help 'on the ground'. Bill thought matching funds was the most appealing. There could also be an ingathering of whatever people can put aside during Lent. Nick pointed out that tax relief is a possible incentive. Later in the year we should try and fit our charity giving within the scope of what the church wants to do vis à vis the environment, etc. Sunny mentioned the Relay for Life (RfL). Donations to RfL are tax deductible and there has been strong participation in it in the past. RfL could be in the next quarter. Katie also talked about publicizing more Outreach through social media, so that when people visit our website, etc. they can see we're doing other things as well. After discussion, it was agreed that Bill will talk to Jane McBride (Oasis) and Sylvette Norré (Domisum) for details. It was moved by Nick, seconded by Mike, and approved: That €250 will be given to each from church funds, and this will be publicized to encourage people to give more.

5.5 Finance & property

- a. Mike presented the proposed 2021 budget. It is essentially the same as last year with minor alterations. It is difficult to know what's going to happen with

pledging in the continuing lockdown. There are no plate collections when we can't meet in person. We might request more help from the Convocation, like last year, if needed. The format is different from previous years as there is now no column for the ASBL as we don't know what's going to happen there. Nick pointed out that this format is less complicated. Nick noted that the loan repayment of €50,000 is in the budget, the largest amount, which shows confidence that we can repay that.

- b. Sunny reported that when she and Mike looked at the budget the other day they didn't know about the Whites moving out of the building. Fiona White needs to be recompensed in a different way. However, we don't know what the administrator's apartment is worth. There will also be other costs for this transition. As we don't yet have the information, we can accept the current budget proposal and revise it when we need to. Stefan expressed concern about the ASBL finance merging with the other budget lines. There was a motion to approve the budget as proposed: Nick proposed; Bill seconded; all in favor.
- c. A motion of thanks was proposed to Mike for preparing the figures. Stefan proposed; Susan seconded; the budget was approved.
- d. Bank situation: The new account for the Fabrique is in operation but we still have the old one because ING haven't cancelled it yet. They are being stubborn on this but Mike has it in hand.
- e. AGM: Mike is hoping that Maryse will have the accounts ready and hopefully the Vestry will receive the figures beforehand.
- f. Paul Hirsch and Mike were in last Wednesday and are in again this week to do more work on the building and taking stuff to the dump. Nick and Bill also offered to help this Wednesday morning.

5.6 Christian education

- a. Kathi-Sue said that she's a little bit out of touch as she doesn't have children involved. Katie said that nothing has changed but there is a Convocation film series coming up, on the second Saturday of the month and then a follow-up meeting for two different ages groups to discuss the movie, faith and films. They will also pair up with churches to share resources.

6. Other business:

6.1 ASBL update: Stefan said that he will be leaving Belgium for a few years and wants to give the ASBL more urgency before his departure. He has tried to come up with a way ahead for the ASBL with a few proposals but the necessary follow-up has not taken place. Nadia Molenstra has resigned so Roderick is not aware of the obligations. Stefan repeated the recommendations. There are 3 options:

1. Close down the ASBL;
2. Continue with it but there is a need for some professional help;
3. Continue with volunteers but they need to improve and show a professional standard.

Stefan is not in favor of the last option because it has been shown not to work. He felt that this needs to be on the agenda as a priority for the Vestry to discuss where we go from here. Sunny said she would discuss this with Stefan prior to that date and organize the discussion.

6.2 Future Vestry members and AGM: Derek Pullinger, Paul Hirsch and Jane McBride have agreed to be candidates for the Vestry.

Apropos the meeting, Sunny spent a day and more doing anti-racism training with a group in Atlanta, Georgia, experiencing a lot of meetings online and managing breakout rooms. She proposes during the meeting we break into small groups to tell some of our stories, particularly our response to the past year in the church and how we move forward in the church.

The committees need to give a written brief report on what they've done in the previous year and their plans for the following year. Get people excited!

Logistics: We'll have the morning service during which the rector's address will be the sermon and the AGM will follow straight afterwards. People will be told beforehand to have a snack to hand.

Katie asked about voting on Zoom. Is it by ballot or do we raise a hand? Sunny responded by saying that there are 3 spots and 3 candidates so we should be OK. But there is a way of polling on Zoom if we need to.

The accounts need to be accepted by the congregation but the Vestry votes for the budget.

7. **Curate's report:** Katie thanked people for their prayers from yesterday when she wasn't feeling well. She sang the praises of the virtual choir, and thanked Sunny and Fiona for their help. She wants to update the sound system in the church. ASC did get a grant from the Convocation, so Katie organized for a sound specialist to visit the church to make an estimate on her 'dream sheet'.
8. **Rector's report:** Sunny said that Bill had mentioned having the rector search and that rector search concluded with touchdown 9 years ago yesterday! Sunny organized Advent in a box so she is hoping to have Lent in a box. During Lent we always try to do something educational. Each week this Lent the WWs are on a subject based around the psalm: psalms of lament, psalms of pilgrimage, etc. For Ash Wednesday, we are not allowed to administer ashes. The CofE and Episcopal bishops have agreed on this. Fiona and Alasdair White are moving out of the church apartment, but Sunny is thankful to say Fiona will continue as administrator. Nick said that ASC owes Sunny a sabbatical and hopes that she can take some of it sometime soon, perhaps a week's retreat at an abbey. Mike said that the week of Christian Unity had slipped by. Was it acknowledged? Sunny said it was but the plan was late in being organized and it took the form of a podcast, which was announced in a parish eBlast. There may be an alternative ecumenical service in May but the Easter celebrations are an entire month apart which makes it hard for us to fit in with the Orthodox congregations.
9. **Closing prayer:** Sunny offered closing prayers.

The meeting adjourned at 21.15.