

In Attendance: Parishioners of Trinity & St. John's Parishes (Approximately 40+)

Disposition: The Clerk from Trinity Parish has been asked by the Wardens to act as a Consultant to the parishes for Business Transformation Strategy. The Clerk's role by taking the minutes of the meeting were to include commentary regarding:

1. What did Trinity parishioners think and how did they feel about the letter the Jr. Warden sent
2. What did Trinity & St. John's parishioners think they should do about their current status

The minutes of this meeting were taken according to the agenda, the talking points from the Jr. Wardens letter and include thoughts and guidance (in retrospect) from the consultant, respectfully submitted by Trinity Parish clerk.

Meeting Minutes:

1. Opening Prayer – Mitch Palmer

2. Opening Remarks

- a. Why are we here today?
 - i. Because we are in transition; we are at a crossroads.
- b. We have four options:
 - i. Worse Case: Close
 - ii. Survival Mode: Status Quo until the parishioners and or money runs out
 1. Communion 2X a month and MP 2X a month
 - iii. Tolerable: Get a PT Vocational Priest
 - iv. Best Case: Get a Full-Time Priest (Trinity) and a Part-Time Priest (St. John's)

3. Discussion of Letter – Facilitated by Senior & Junior Wardens -The Senior & Junior Wardens elaborated on excerpts of the letter:

- a. The only reason we are not "ready" is because we do not have the money, according to the Diocese.
 - i. This is not the only reason the Diocese believes we are not ready although it may be the main reason.
 - ii. The focus of our next steps may be better served to determine answers to the questions in the letter versus focusing on "finding our own priest in our own way".
 1. What is our mission at Trinity?
 2. What are we lacking that could be a detriment to attracting and retaining families?
 3. How do we bring members back to our weekly worship?
 4. What are we doing or not doing that has caused such a significant drop in attendance?
- b. The Diocese is not our enemy but they are not our friend.
 - i. Our perceptions belong to us and we need to consider the ramifications of the perceptions we own.
 - ii. The Diocese does have the ability to push back and make our existence within the whole of the Western Massachusetts Episcopal family isolated.
 - iii. We may want to consider developing a strategy that empowers us to leverage their "friendship".
- c. The Diocese says they want to help us but they don't actually help us.
 - i. The Diocese is prepared to help us within the parameters they have determined they would help any parish within the Western Diocese.
 - ii. Trinity & St. John's have determined that they want "help" in a very defined and specific way that is tailored to each of the parishes.
 - iii. The Diocese seems to believe that a one size fits all approach will be the first line of defense.
 - iv. Again, we may want to consider developing a strategy that empowers us to leverage their "help".

- d. The Diocese made up this ridiculously high operating budget number and we do not have to pay any attention to that because we have always gone on a “faith” budget and that’s what we are going to continue doing.
 - i. We can still work with a “faith-based” budget and also demonstrate that we respect the Dioceses numbers.
 - ii. If we cannot somehow balance our position on this we will not have an opportunity to see “the list” of candidates and our position for search will remain “in-study” indefinitely.
 - iii. We must carefully consider the 2019 realities even if we do not agree with them.
 - iv. Perhaps we do not agree because we do not believe this to be attainable or necessary?
 - v. We need to search ourselves why we are resistant to this operating budget number, otherwise we are not setting ourselves up to collaborate with the Diocese.
 - vi. We may want to consider being mindful of the Diocese financial position as well as our own; they are also facing “2019 realities”.
- e. All flocks need a shepherd; we want a person that has a genuine calling.
 - i. This statement is absolutely true and sincerely what we want.
 - ii. We need to be mindful that “genuine calling” is not code for “inexpensive” versus a person that genuinely sees all the good in our parishes and a bonus is they will be paid appropriately to do what they are genuinely called to do.
- f. We can work very hard to bring people in the door but what are they going to see when they come.
 - i. We may consider this as a statement that the Diocese is also thinking about, which is another factor of why we are not “ready” to call a full-time priest.
- g. We will research where (Episcopal News Service – Living Church) we can put our own ads for a priest.
 - i. There are several considerations for this statement.
 - 1. First, there may be some restrictions about placing ads in these two periodicals.
 - 2. Second, if there are restrictions and we decide to go outside into the secular world (i.e. LinkedIn, Indeed) to advertise, what message does this send about us as a parish?
 - a. Will we be thinking outside the box or adding fuel to the fire with the Diocese about being a couple of “difficult” parishes?
 - 3. Third, many candidates that have gone the traditional seminarian route to be in the priesthood may not consider the outreach legitimate because it is outside the conformity of the ecclesiastical leadership and organizational structure.
 - a. We should continue being inventive with a very mindful and intentional approach that is collaborative and brings us the end result we seek.
- h. The churches, for the foreseeable future will not be merging (not ever) and are not closing.
- i. What do we want? Are we going to vote?
 - i. Not now – we will decide in June.
 - ii. We are going to have another meeting on June 30th .

4. Closing Remarks – Trinity Parish Clerk

- a. Trinity Parish clerk volunteered, with the consent of the wardens, to be a consultant for the purposes of traversing through the “2019 realities” of congregations.
- b. This consent was based upon her expertise in mergers & acquisitions, business transformation and turnaround.
- c. She assured parishioners that the role would be about “listening” and facilitating the execution of their vision for each parish.

5. The Lord’s Prayer – Participants

Meeting adjourned at 11:30AM

Respectfully submitted, Donna L.K. Chiacchia, Clerk, Trinity Church Whitinsville, MA