

MINUTES
ST. PHILIP PARISH COUNCIL
Tuesday, July 7, 2020 @ 7:00 p.m.
via ZOOM

Present: Christopher Page, Larry Anthony, Karen Van Rheenen, Greg Anctil, Dave Conway, Raymond Fieltch, Gillian Fosdick, Esther Graham, Sharon Richmond, Jennifer Sharlow. Ged McLean, Ken Davidson

1. Open with Prayer

Christopher read a brief passage from Richard Wagamese's book, *"Embers, One Ojibway's Meditations"* (Douglas & McIntyre. 2016):

"Nothing ever comes to rest. Everything keeps moving. Even stationary objects are moving, though we do not see it. Change is constant and that means we are not the same from one moment to another either. Our cells are constantly in the process of changing. So if I am moving through a tough situation, there is no point trying to find "rest" so that I can cope. That is impossible. Instead, I can choose to change trajectory to move in a direction that will lead me toward peace. THAT is always attainable."

Christopher followed the reading with a brief reflection and prayer.

2. General Announcements:

i Christopher's vacation: begins on Monday, July 20.

He will be away for six Sundays: July 26, August 2, 9, 16, 23 and 30, - returning to parish work on Monday, August 31. Our first "in-building worship" is planned for Sunday, September 6.

Wardens Larry Anthony & Karen Van Rheenen are on deck to ensure the smooth running of our Zoom services during this time. Larry will host the services and Karen has speakers and readers, lined up to cover the bases.

ii Organist: Christopher and the Wardens communicated (by email) with Jill Ann Siemens. They have now concluded our working relationship with her.

3. Discussion - with input from each member of council - to address the following:

At our meeting in June, council members were unanimous in the decision to continue with Zoom worship through the summer weeks when Christopher is away and postpone our first 'in-building worship' until September. On June 23, 2020, Christopher circulated an email to council outlining five possible scenarios for worship in the fall.

- bearing in mind that all high touch surfaces must be sanitized before anyone re-enters the building after every gathering

- that there will be no congregational singing at any In-Building (IB) service

- that children must remain with families and physical distancing of two metres in every direction must be observed

- that the maximum allowable attendance in the St. Philip building is forty

Option "E" was the favourite: one in-building eucharist service with live music by a small ensemble that can be distanced from each other and other parishioners and stream the service

on Zoom to permit live participation from people at home. Some technical issues will need to be worked out, but I don't know why this can't work.

Comments:

- Great desire is to find a hybrid solution that incorporates both Zoom and offers the option of participating in a live stream service from the church.

- Need to make sure that the system can be interactive – Zoom is working well now

Phoning Committee – One of the “actions” that came out of the June Council meeting, was that Sharon facilitated a phoning committee to be in touch with all parishioners to ask specific questions about their thoughts about Zoom church and worship re-opening in the building at St. Philip within the new parameters laid out by the diocese.

Judith Slimmon went through the responses and reported back to Council with some of the findings from those calls:

Asked about attending In building church worship in fall:

20 replied - YES – they would definitely like to do so.

33 replied - NO – they would not attend church – given the current protocols.

17 expressed ambivalence.

On the subject of Zoom church:

33 Attend.

34 said they would not attend. – some were attending too many Zoom meetings for work or business – others felt out of their depth with the Zoom technology.

5 were hesitant.

Conversations were held with more than the 70 households these numbers represent – but answers respondents shared did not necessarily fit neatly into one of these categories.

One thing did seem clear though – the low numbers of parishioners, who offered a definite – yes – we do want to be in the building for church worship services – means that it is unlikely we will need to be concerned about a booking or reservation system to limit or allow some – but not all of the people who want to attend.

- Other comments: From past participation in live-stream meetings with Zoom participants, the mix can bring some complex challenges. We need to work to ensure that those in the church are not seen as the “in group” and Zoom church members are not watching passively. In addition to her concern about the possibility of a split between an "in" IB group and "out" Zoom group, Esther wondered if we should be pursuing alternative, creative ways to worship in building instead of attempting to salvage and replicate what we can of the former, regular services.

Reopening Preparation Tasks: - Karen Van Rheenen and Larry Anthony have been given the task of organizing the re-opening, with the help of volunteers. They will start now to put some things in place. We need to have a supply of hand sanitizer; quantities of cleaning products, signs printed and laminated, plexiglass purchased, prayer and hymn books and bibles removed from the pews, etc.

- Ken Davidson is creating the plexiglass 'shield guard' for Christopher to use during the distribution of the bread at Eucharist.

Small Groups: - Also consider a time in the fall to begin Thursday Eucharist again. – small faithful group has been attending. Could that continue?

-What about a time for evening prayer?

- Build on small gatherings. What about the 11:15 Service?

Choirs – some starting up again? Stories in the news – that a number of choirs are starting up again - some dispute the notion that singing is particularly dangerous. Restrictions from the Diocese may change or be updated as new information becomes available.

Nothing is written in stone. Everything is in motion. Everything is evolving. Our Zoom church has evolved. We learn. We grow. We change. We are gathering information to make the best decision we can – for the four Sundays in September. We are not making a decision for the rest of the year 2020.

We don't know how long the Covid 19 restrictions will be in place. With a resurgence of the virus, we could be required to move back to the earlier, more conservative and cautious protocols.

Dave Conway – advocate for the 'hybrid service' – but realizes that we are not going to meet every need. Still, this option may be the closest that we can get to the "old normal".

It will only be one provisional solution and it is essential we will need to actively seek other creative innovations in the way we gather virtually and in person.

This part of our discussion included both services & outreach to children – families and seniors:

Children: Important to reach out to families with young children – imagine other ways to bring parents and young children together. Like the word on choirs, the Diocesan judgement call may not necessarily be in sync with the provincial health standards.

There was much interest in generating some activity for children. Small groups – meeting outside? Comment was made about the very positive rapport that Grace has developed with the teen group. She is a wonderful leader – a real gift to the parish - takes initiative in connecting and responds to impromptu suggestion. Had a great – responsible – social distance - outing at the lake this past Sunday. Very positive influence on teens.

In the phone out – a number of people said they would like to see something outside.

- Gonzales Preschool met out side in June – they used hoola hoops to mark personal spaces

There are a lot of logistics to organize an outside service – very different and challenging to put on a service outside – entirely dependent on the weather – sound is a challenge – volunteers are needed to cart and then clean everything used – eg – chairs. And noise is a consideration: we do want to be mindful of our neighbours.

Seniors: Two gatherings have been planned for outside – at the church on **Thursday July 16:** 2 separate time slots -- at 10 am and 2 pm - ‘bring your own tea party’ – meet with Christopher – good response - 12 to 15 people interested in attending at both times. Any concerns about use of / cleaning / monitoring the washrooms? – This is part of the consideration - and lists being made.

More details on the details from Dave on putting together a “hybrid service”:

The goal of this model of worship service is to have an In-Building service integrated with a Zoom service that allows congregational participation both in person and at home. Those at home would be able to interact with those in the church building in real time. This would include people doing readings and prayers.

- We will need to do a number of experiments - dry run through this summer to prepare for our hybrid live stream / Zoom service.

Allan Carmichael has been investigating the best way to do all this and he has come up with a working plan that will require experimentation over the summer to clarify the details.

Allan will start off using just the equipment that we already have (including the newly purchased mixer and a webcam that he has available) and see from there if we need to make additional expenditures on gear. For instance, we don't know yet whether a second laptop will be needed to run the church projector so that the In-Building participants can see the Zoom participants.

There would be a tech person running the cameras and streaming for the service whose job would include running the projector. This person would be trained and familiar with the technology and paid to do this job every week. The plan is for Ian Carmichael and one or two other youth to take on this role.

Costs / possible purchases necessary: This platform will be part of our future for some time to come. Council wanted to authorize the Wardens to be able to approve any necessary purchases necessary to our Zoom / Stream capability - up to a maximum of \$2,000.

Altar Guild: members of the altar guild have expressed willingness to be part of creating a welcome space for the first services held in the building in September. Gillian will forward an email circulated to Guild members from Karen Fenimore.

Date set for next Zoom Council meeting: Tuesday, August 18, 2020 @ 7:00 pm

Closing: Christopher finished with another quote from Richard Wagamese:

“It’s all about opening, really. When I open myself to the world and its possibilities – even its hurts – I become whole. But when I choose to close, my life becomes fraught with struggle. Everything I do becomes about shielding myself rather than inviting good energy to fill me. Everything is energy, so I try to let the negative pass through me, rather than holding on to it.

The Grace: The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. Amen
(2 Cors. 13:14)