

St. Hilda St. Patrick Episcopal Church
Bishop's Committee
July 20, 2025
Minutes

Members Present: The Rev. Joseph Peters-Mathews, vicar; Chris Kelley, senior warden; Kerry Fitzgibbons, junior warden; Susy Hessel; Cris Simmons; Amy Squire; Gerry Thompson; Carol Rypkema, treasurer

Others present: Kim Bender Petit

Absent: Monica Isbell, clerk.

Before the meeting the Rev. Joseph Peters-Mathews sought permission to record the meeting's audio for transcription to minutes following the meeting.

The Rev. Joseph Peters-Mathews called the meeting to order at 11:37 a.m. Cris Simmons volunteered to be the time keeper.

Chris Kelley requested that the June minutes be removed from the consent agenda. The consent agenda consisting of the Vicar's Report and Treasurer's Report was adopted by unanimous consent.

Chris Kelley led the discussion on the minutes. Until the morning of the meeting, they had not reflected that the audit had been approved at the June meeting. The audit was approved in the June meeting, but hadn't been uploaded to the drive. Cris was waiting for signatures from Alex Crocco and Stephanie MacLachlan, who were waiting for information concerning 12-Step Groups' insurance certificates and those who were SafeChurch certified. Alex and Stephanie are comfortable signing now. Chris moved to adopt the June minutes as posted. Gerry seconded. The minutes were adopted unanimously.

Kerry Fitzgibbons made an oral report. He has cleaned the grills for the cookout on August 10. An air conditioner unit in the parish hall was spilling water while in a cooling mode. He's reached out to 1st Response HVAC about repairs but hasn't heard back yet. Progress has been made in clearing the bioswale, and another working group is planned for now. The last work party was successful: swale work happened, Kathleen Moore used a machete in the woods, and Dawn worked on the peace garden. Finally: The neighbors to the south are prepared to build a fence to the utility pole. We may need a rototiller to plant some grass for when it's finished. Kerry has repaired door latches to the narthex and nave so that they close properly.

Amy shared with the committee that Republic and the county were in the midst of a labor dispute, which is why the dumpster is completely overflowing. The Bishop's Committee discussed sealing the dumpsters or making a plan to clear excess garbage to the dump.

Chris Kelley declined to make a senior warden's report because he had most of the rest of the agenda. Susy had questions about the Vicar's Report, concerning the Diocesan Investment Fund which was not on the agenda. Fr. Joseph told the Bishop's Committee about Cn. Cristi Chapman's current time constraints and that the Steering Committee of the Board of Directors has asked St. Hilda St. Patrick to make a presentation. Fr. Joseph reiterated that nothing would be done in secret. Susy wanted clarification on what would be presented. Fr. Joseph shared that he's tired of repeating himself, but would be able to add information about the mini-retreat and what has changed since the June 1 vote. Fr. Joseph planned at least he, Chris Kelley, and Carol Rypkema be the presenters. Fr. Joseph and Carol talked about whether the meeting would be in-person or electronic. Fr. Joseph plans to follow up with Cn. Chapman tomorrow.

Susy had additional questions about *Invite, Welcome, Connect*. The Bishop's Committee has used the book for its discussions at the mini retreat on July 19, and now Fr. Joseph is planning a discussion group. Susy wanted clarity about the roles and what was happening with multiple groups looking at the same material at the same time but not together.

Joseph said that he had five copies of *Invite, Welcome, Connect* available on June 1 and people took them. He invited the Bishop's Committee to participate in the Sunday morning discussion groups, given that the Bishop's Committee has set goals for its work. He said that the work of growth can't be limited to the six members of the Bishop's Committee only meeting when all six can get together for work that has to be done by everyone. He said that his goal was to get the information available to everyone so that people can start forming affinities within "invite," "welcome," or "connect" to do particular work so that everyone is working in the same framework.

Kim asked if that would be coordinated by someone and Susy said that's what she was wondering as well. Joseph said that he's the coordinator for now. Susy asked where the BC fits in and said that there needs to be a hub. Joseph said that right now he's the hub because he's experiencing the Bishop's Committee wanting to do a lot of talking about what we might do, but not being on the ground trying to do work yet. Amy asked that the train be backed up, and Susy asked Joseph to say more about that.

Joseph began that this was not just from last month. We've been talking about the long-term financial health of the congregation for two years. Susy asked to stop Joseph because there was a visitor in the room and the Bishop's Committee was talking about the process. Susy asked if people were comfortable with the visitor in the room. Joseph said it was a great question, and Susy asked Kim if she minded stepping out. Chris pointed out that this was a Bishop's Committee meeting and it was open, and that he would object to executive session. Kim said she wouldn't interject but would only listen.

Joseph said he was curious what Susy was envisioning the BC doing, what the hub of activities was, and that day and the next unscheduled meeting. Susy is wondering if there's the possibility of many hands doing lots of work without direction. Joseph said no, there's not. Susy's biggest concern is that the right and left hands don't know what the other is doing, which is a recipe for

disaster. Susy said that if Joseph wants to be the hub, she can imagine him not wanting to be for very much longer. Joseph said that he's happy to be the hub to get things moving, whatever things are.

Susy asked Joseph to go back to his comment about how he's experiencing the Bishop's Committee. He suggested that the material from *Invite, Welcome Connect* could have been reviewed before yesterday's meeting without requiring an in-person meeting. While much of yesterday's meeting could not have happened via email, he's not sure that the operational definition of growth is different from what was decided on June 1. He feels like the Bishop's Committee is binding itself to meetings at odd intervals with little willingness to work asynchronously to keep processes moving in smaller segments.

Susy asked Joseph how he envisions that. He said people are willing to answer emails and collaborate on Google Drive a little more. She asked him to say more about what that looks like. Chris Kelley offered a comment. He sent an email on June 2 and got one direct response from Amy, even after an invitation for people to weigh in on it. Susy replied to wait until the meeting. He's not criticizing, but his experience wasn't follow up. Chris is also frustrated that he sent an email about the New Wine Skins and capital expenses but got no responses. Chris suggested that the Bishop's Committee can't wait for monthly meetings because the organization is too small and flat. Joseph chimed in that not even special meetings will help.

Carol said she didn't interpret Chris's email as asking for feedback, which Susy said that's she was getting at. She said she interpreted it as "This is something that's on the agenda, think about it ahead of time." Susy observed that before meetings there can be a flurry of emails asking if people want items on the agenda or there are topics they'd like to discuss. She felt like Chris's email fell into that category. Chris read from his email, which said, "Prior to Sunday's meeting, please identify other projects/expenses (with budget amount) for consideration" and included a link to a Google doc. No one opened the Google doc or made any changes to the Google doc.

Chris's frustration is that the Bishop's Committee meetings 12 times a year for an hour. We've got to come up with a way to come up with Plan B if we can't achieve what we set out to do yesterday and on June 1. Amy said that she thought yesterday's meeting was for Plan B. Chris thinks two budgets will need to be developed. His personal opinion is that it's good for people to take initiative and ask forgiveness if necessary. He loves the work Kathleen is doing and the work on the website. We're too small an organization with one part-time vicar who is already doing more work than he's being paid for.

Gerry takes this as a real insight. She counts on the monthly meeting but realizes there's too much to do in one hour a month. She committed to replying more and didn't think she had permission to. Joseph reminded her that the congregation elected her. It was a step for her to realize that more of the work needs to be done online (or in other interactions). Cris offered to meet with Fr. Joseph to get more information. Chris invited someone to be the Bishop's Committee liaison to the Sunday morning meeting of *Invite, Welcome, Connect*. Susy agreed to

be a liaison but said she could not attend. She wanted to know how many wheels were working together or not.

Amy's question is if the expectation was for the Bishop's Committee to be off and doing whatever God's work has been given to do, why did we spend so much time trying to organize yesterday? She thought it was productive, but now Joseph is saying that wasn't the expectation. Joseph said we accomplished the goals. Gerry said she heard Joseph saying more could have been done in advance. Joseph clarified that we didn't necessarily get anything new yesterday other than processing, getting on the same page, and wordsmithing.

Kim asked to speak. Joseph recognized her for 90 seconds. She shared some of the overlapping concerns of left and right hands not knowing what the other is doing regarding the cookout. Kim wants clarity on coordinating outreach as more media is used. How is that being coordinated, is there a process to be sure that everyone is on the same page, and that people aren't duplicating efforts.

Joseph returned to the agenda for five minutes for finances highlights. Carol shared that we're doing better at this point bottom-line wise than we anticipated at the beginning of the year. This is not because the expenses are less, but the revenue is more. We have some generous plate donors who will hopefully become pledgers next year. \$4,000 has been brought in from savings so far, which is needing less than we needed. We're down to \$15,000 in reserve savings. When that's gone funds will need to be undesignated or the DIF dispersal has arrived. We are paying the bills, and may need to bring in more money from savings to cover payroll. One reason for the transfer from savings is to maintain a minimum balance for free checking.

Amy had nothing to report on the Sanctuary Taskforce. It has been coasting for the summer, though individuals have been giving her updates with a deadline of the end of July. They will meet again in September unless something comes up in the interim. All taskforce members are doing their jobs. Kerry relayed that some members from All Saints want to join when greeter training to receive the information our greeters will have about process for interacting with ICE.

Chris has planned supply coverage for Joseph's last two vacation Sundays. Carola von Wrangel will serve as supply on September 14. Kerry Fitzgibbons will be the point of contact because Chris will be away. Craig Vocelka will cover August 31 and has declined mileage but asked for ferry fare. Priests, including supply priests, can designate income as housing allowance. The Bishop's Committee needs to have a resolution on file stating such. Chris read the circulated resolution into the minutes and moved adoption of the resolution. Kerry seconded the motion. The resolution passed with five in favor, no objections, and one abstention.

Joseph deviated from the prepared agenda and recognized Kim to give an update on the cookout. In June the Bishop's Committee asked for a budget before funds were allocated toward it. The estimate is \$2,000 based on a goal of 100 people at \$20 a head. While the food won't cost that much, other pieces – like marketing – will impact the budget. Seven families from All Saints have agreed to donate \$100 each. \$240 has been donated from St. Hilda St. Patrick,

which brings the total so far between the two congregations to \$940. While this is free to the community, it is not free to put on. There will be a double-sided 8'x3' banner to go above the current sign. That is costing \$290. That will have a QR code so people can get more information. The banner will be simple and coordinated with other artwork. Fliers are being created for inserting into bulletins the next two weeks, and more fliers will be taken to St. Alban's. Some posters are being printed, and more people need to sign up to be involved and engaged.

Chris Kelley asked what the cookout needs from the Bishop's Committee, including budget. Kim found it humbling that All Saints committed \$700 and hopes that inspires more people to give. Joseph asked if there was a number Kim had in mind. She referred to last month's meeting. Carol said that if we have \$200 from St. Hilda St. Patrick already, the Bishop's Committee should allocate at least \$500 so that we're matched with All Saints. Kim proposed \$250 and seeing if the congregation gave more. Kerry suggested sticking with five hundred and backfilling if possible with ongoing donations.

Amy asked if her memory was correct about a goat being roasted. Kim clarified the goat and the grill are being provided by All Saints, and they are coordinating the music. Chris asked if the \$700 they're contributing is going through St. Hilda St. Patrick. Kim said she didn't know how it works and this is a joint venture with both congregations tracking what's being spent. The general consensus is that probably we will not be reimbursing members of All Saints for a pass through our books.

Susy looked at the balance sheet, where Carol had directed her to the line item General Outreach Fund, which has \$2,934.01 in it. Joseph asked if there was a motion to designate \$500 toward the cookout. Gerry moved, and Kerry seconded. During the discussion, Kim asked process about how to go shopping. Joseph volunteered to help with shopping and floating, then let Kim know the process for reimbursement and that St. Hilda St. Patrick does not have a church card or petty cash, but will make it work. She also asked if there's a tablet for the church. Joseph volunteered the use of his. The motion passed unanimously.

Chris reminded the Bishop's Committee that he is traveling a lot for the rest of the year, including a few weeks and then all of September and October and that a stewardship campaign needs to launch before he returns. He asked if anyone on the Bishop's Committee wanted to chair the stewardship committee. Dawn Fitzgibbons has offered to chair the committee. Chris asked if anyone had objection. There was none. Chris asked for a liaison to the committee. Susy volunteered to relay information between the stewardship committee and Bishop's Committee. If we want to keep the status quo and continue on a growth path, we need \$180,000 pledged on November 16, and we're at \$120,000 pledged for this year. There is real work that this body needs to do to avoid a Plan B.

Joseph recognized Chris to talk about capital campaign projects. We are two-thirds through the capital campaign, and Chris thinks it's important to let the congregation know what we've done with our treasure and what our priorities and plans are. Chris reviewed the original plans for the

capital campaign based on the original campaign letter. All except replenishing the savings account and rebuilding the play structure have been completed. Kerry has discovered water damage to the south wall of the Parish Hall with an made up estimate of \$7,500 to repair it. Kerry has suggested purchasing a special brush mower to maintain the bioswale rather than ongoing rentals. Chris estimates \$1,000 for a mid-range mower based on Home Depot's website. Prior Bishop's Committee meetings have talked about replenishing the buildings and grounds budget, which is over by \$1,500 halfway through the year because of deferred maintenance. Carol noted that 1.5x the budget has been spent already of the repairs budget.

Chris wants to propose, and will make a motion, that \$14,000 from the capital income be moved into operating or reserve savings to repay half the cost of painting the church. Amy wanted to be sure that the congregation would know. Joseph reminded the Bishop's Committee that in 2023 painting the church was part of the capital campaign. Based on timing and availability of weather and cash on hand, money was used from savings to paint the church, and repaying savings was part of the original campaign. Carol noted that there's \$15,000 in the reserve savings and \$20,000 in New Wineskins. Chris wants to know what the projects and plans are for communicating to the congregation, especially those who pledged. Before making the motion for moving the money into reserve savings, Chris wants to have a conversation.

Susy began the conversation. Her thought to communicate now is that it's time to have an outward demonstration of the use of our money, specifically the play structure – while noting that lots of good, important work has gone into the church building itself. Joseph share that the executive committee has been wondering if this is still a priority, and appreciated that Susy at least has a resounding yes. Susy is on board with moving the full \$14,000 as long as there's a commitment that the play structure be rebuilt. Susy said that the wooden play structure we had was fine for a long time until it wasn't because they do deteriorate over time. She has been looking at climbing domes, which are much less expensive than a \$1,000 play structure like what we had. She's wondering if we can save a little money while having money to complete other projects.

Carol asked the ages for climbing domes. Susy said she saw up to 12 years old, with domes up to 12 feet. Chris said that the present list includes \$14,000 for savings repayment; \$2,300 to replace the play structure, \$7,500 for parish hall, \$1,000 for brush mower, and \$1,500 for building and grounds maintenance. There are \$22,800 that has been received. Part of the communication he wants to share would be encouraging people that they can still pledge and give because there is another year left of the campaign.

Amy asked for confirmation that the brush mower is \$1,000. Cris asked what fund the scissor lift rental came from. Chris and Kerry answered that it was not from New Wineskins. Cris planned to donate the rental costs of the scissor lift, but hadn't told Carol yet. Carol said she and Cris could figure it out. Chris reiterated that the capital campaign had pre-announced goals that needed to be met as a fiduciary responsibility, but that Cris could donate the brush mower separately.

Joseph recognized Kim. She asked if there is a vision or proposed budget for the area where kids go. She's concerned that the windows aren't compliant and there's water damage to the carpet. Chris said there's no money allocated to that. Kim thinks that if there's an opening to families with kids, those areas need to be addressed. Kerry clarified for the Bishop's Committee that the windows in the classroom wing cannot be used as escape routes and would need to be updated to standard size. Carol noted that the fire marshal hasn't raised concerns about the windows in their annual inspections.

Moving things along, Chris said that the total pledge to the New Wineskins campaign was about \$46,000, of which he's guessing about \$6,000 won't be collected. About \$22-23,000 of the ~\$40,000 has been collected. Carol said that we've spent \$10-11,000, so the actual income from the campaign is around \$33,000 (because there is \$23,000 available). If people give the ballpark, about \$7,000 will be incoming. Chris asked what we've spent. Carol answered \$11,000 to fix the fire sprinklers. With the above noted plans, withdrawing the brush mower, that spends about the balance, but doesn't replenish buildings and grounds for the year.

Chris asked Carol if she has a sense of what we want to do. She said that if we're going to take fixing the parish hall from New Wineskins instead of buildings and grounds, then we're \$2,000 in buildings and grounds. Susy asked if the list of projects he'd previously named was the list of projects prioritized by the Bishop's Committee. Chris said yes, from 2023, per the Capital Campaign folder on the Google Drive. Susy said she wants to make sure we do what we prioritized – and Joseph reiterated that it was the actual campaign letter being completed first before new things. In Joseph's synthesis the Bishop's Committee and Executive Team are on the same page.

Carol said that because the neighbor helped with the parking lot, we saved \$6,000 in essence, though the sprinklers cost more than had been expected. Chris said the remaining projects and new costs about \$26,000. If everyone continues to donate, building and grounds maintenance could probably be restored. Chris asked if he needs to make a motion. Joseph said he didn't think so. Chris started to make a motion and Joseph interrupted to say that a motion can't hurt.

Chris made a motion to move \$14,000 from Capital Campaign into reserve savings, per the original intention of the Capital Campaign. Carol asked if we wanted to make it an "up to" amount in case we need more to fix the Parish Hall. Chris said that his opinion was no because if we move the money into reserve savings, there's more discretion with it than if it stays in capital. By completing the campaign priority it can be used for maintenance or capital. If the campaign doesn't generate the expected income, less flexibility remains. Where Chris is coming from is that there are operating expenses and reserve savings gives us more flexibility. Chris seconded the motion.

Susy asked to amend the motion to say "and commit to purchasing and have in place a play structure by Welcome Sunday." Kerry seconded the amendment to the motion. Amy asked Susy when her built-in deadline was. Joseph said September 7, Welcome Sunday. Susy said she

would love to see it sooner, but if we're going to try and have a crescendo, let's try and have something for kids to do.

Chris spoke against the amendment. He said there are a number of people who would love to see that but his frank concern as the fiduciary body of St. Hilda St. Patrick, the play structure is a luxury compared to operating expenses – though he would love to have it. He is concerned that it is an attractive nuisance. He doesn't think it's something we can afford at this time, certainly not by Welcome Sunday in part because he's not available to make it happen. He'd like a separate conversation about the play structure and wants his motion to be a simple moving the \$14,000 from capital to savings.

Susy said that she understands and Chris asked to hear from others first. Carol asked Kerry if he'd talked about play structures with Church Insurance's risk management facilitator. Because there was not one at the time, Kerry did not but offered to call Church Insurance for more information. Kim thinks more due diligence for safety is important but doesn't think the timeline is realistic. Having waited, Joseph recognized Susy who asked the Bishop's Committee to reflect on what we have to offer children and families particularly in the larger scheme of what and who we're trying to attract, and noting the limited resources.

Susy shared a story about a previous priest of hers who came to the nursery upon starting a new call as an associate because he wanted to see what was provided for families and how children are cared for because that is the reflection of the health of the church in terms of basic resources. Chris reminded that the first vote is about the timeline of September 7, not the movement at all. Chris moved the previous question and asked to end the debate. Before that vote had been approved Susy asked to amend her amendment. Chris observed that that should not be done. Joseph called a vote on binding the movement of funds from the capital campaign to reserve savings to building a play structure by Welcome Sunday. The amendment was defeated.

Susy asked that this at least be on the agenda. Chris suggested Susy bring a proposal to the next Bishop's Committee meeting with a proposed purchase, what the costs would be, etc. he'd love to see it on the next month's agenda. Carol asked Kerry to be in touch with risk management to have that information by the next meeting. Gerry said that her impression was it would be good to do something visible for the congregation. The parking lot shows that work has happened, and it's something easily seen – but the play structure is still on the list and we're not removing it.

Joseph asked if the Bishop's Committee was ready to vote on Chris's motion. The motion passed unanimously. Chris shared his plan to write the congregation and update. Carol wanted to remind the Bishop's Committee that the total amount of cash would stay the same, but the shapes of the pie would change to be more accessible for our current needs.

Despite running half an hour behind, the vicar declined to table the last item on the agenda. Mutual ministry goals are supposed to be adopted annually so that there can be an annual

mutual ministry review. Despite six years at St. Hilda St. Patrick there have been none. It has not been a priority, but Chris has brought us back to the wording of the vicar's letter of agreement which sets at most three mutual ministry goals – work shared by the vicar and Bishop's Committee. The proposed goals are having an all-congregation meeting to discern the future of the church and to have a significantly more balanced budget to stay in line with the last Bishop's Committee's objectives and what was presented at the annual meeting. It is okay to list tasks that have been accomplished as "goals" because the year is already halfway through.

Joseph reiterated that adopting the budget is the Bishop's Committee's prerogative alone, but he thinks this is a mutual goal because he keeps reminding the Bishop's Committee of the previous commitment. He acknowledged that it would impact him personally, but neither Joseph nor the Bishop's Committee is the whole congregation. He feels that this body of Christ here matters more as a whole and he won't pitch tantrums about his salary being cut and wants to encourage the Bishop's Committee to do what is necessary to fulfil their fiduciary responsibilities. When asked if anyone wanted to add another goal, Carol said these two are big enough.

Kerry suggested a third goal of growing, which will be created based on other work. It is ongoing and an out growth of June 1's meeting. It won't require different or more work but and be styled differently.

For the Good of the Order Chris asked the Bishop's Committee to give Kathleen Moore feedback about the trifold she's created. Carol shared that at a congregation where she works an immigrant from Burkina Faso is able to sponsor a shipping container back to the church in the city he's from. Carol will be putting announcements in the bulletin because they are asking for specific donations. In the past when the food basket fund has been flush she's bought things. Carol is saving food baskets money for the backpacks. She is asking \$150 from the general outreach fund.

Susy moved donating \$150 toward this endeavor from the General Outreach Fund. Kerry seconded the motion. Chris planned to vote no not because it's not a good purpose, because when people give it is presented as outreach into the community. He suggested that if it doesn't pass that come from discretionary funds or announcements. There were four in favor, two opposed. The motion passed.

Fr. Joseph said a closing prayer. Chris moved to adjourn the meeting. Susy seconded. The motion to adjourn passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 1:01 p.m.