

Church of the Good Shepherd (COGS)

Annual Meeting

January 21, 2024

In attendance:

- In person: Rick Fiddock, Samantha Conant, Elizabeth Kooperkamp, Tess Taylor, Pat McDonald, Ron Hirsch, Christina Hirsch, Phyllis Bristow-Johnson, Amy Eschelbach, Marjorie Strong, Leo Martineau, Felicia Martineau, Melissa Battah, Toni Stebbins, Phil Moros, Beth Mueller, Kim Bryant, Burton Cooper, Beth Hilgartner, Lindi Liimatainen, Linda Webster, the Rev. Earl Kooperkamp
- On Zoom: Reesie Dobrick, Russell Belding, Lori Belding, Gail Cumming

The 2024 annual meeting opened at 10:45 AM with an opening prayer from The Rev. Earl Kooperkamp.

1. **Reading of the Behavioral Covenant for the Church of the Good Shepherd** ~ Christina Hirsch (Behavioral Covenant attached)

2. **Review Minutes of 2023 Annual Meeting**

The minutes were published on the church website. There were no questions, concerns, or further discussion about the minutes. Tess Taylor moved to accept the minutes; Phil Moros seconded. Motion accepted.

3. **Becoming Beloved Community (BBC) Year in Review** (see attached)

The submitted report summarized activities for the following categories: 1) General/Administrative, 2) Growth, Finance & Clergy, 3) Programming for Families, 4) Caring for Each Other, 5) Mission Outreach, 6) Music & Worship, 7) Community, and 8) Flood Relief. In addition, individual reports were given for the following:

- a. **Garden Committee** ~ report submitted by Cindy Willis and read by Linda Webster (see attached)
- b. **Pet Pantry** ~ report submitted and read by Linda Webster (see attached)
- c. **Stewardship** ~ Stewardship and Planned Giving report submitted and read by Ron Hirsch (see attached)

Pledges increased more than 10% in the 2024 Stewardship Drive. The number of pledges increased from 29 in 2023 to 32 in 2024.

- d. **Food Assistance** ~ Phil Moros.

Phil shared this example of how dedicated, selfless, members of our church operate.

Barre flooded on Monday, July 10, 2023. The following day, Rev. Earl Kooperkamp, Beth Mueller, and Phil Moros removed branches and shoveled muck out of the church parking lot. Later, Phil and Earl delivered water. Even later, the church was called to help provide food to the Good Samaritan Haven. Due to flooding, the Presbyterian Church was unable to provide breakfast that Wednesday. There was no food at the church to feed people, and no one was able to get to grocery stores, but Earl was able to collect food from the homes of Christina Hirsch, Beth Hilgartner, Marjorie Strong, Tess Taylor and Linda Webster. Everyone donated their food at a moment's notice and the Good Samaritan Haven guests were fed.

The Good Shepherd provides breakfasts through Enough Ministries 8 times monthly (2,500 annually) and dinners to the Good Samaritan Haven once a month (350 annually). In addition, it provides 1,600 bags of pet food to the Pet Pantry. The total expense of this is \$7,000-\$8,000. For the most part, meals are self-funded in that dedicated and conscientious people on this team shop and pay for the food that they prepare and deliver.

The food assistance team needs help. The most that they can handle for the Good Sama is 24 meals, but the need is closer to 40. If others are willing to help, please contact Phil.

#### 4. **Junior Warden Report** ~ Leo Martineau

The following are some of the improvements made to the church in 2023: There are heat trays in the far corner at the front of the church to keep ice from falling in chunks. The outside lighting is all LED, either photocell or a combination of photocell and motion, and has enhanced the looks of the exterior. Receptacles were installed in the undercroft. There are now outlets in the far corners to eliminate some of the need for extension cords.

The Episcopal Church has requested a zero-carbon footprint. While that is not a possibility currently, Lajeunesse Construction has been working on a design for the Good Shepherd. Leo received a draft from Lajeunesse Construction. Peak Contractors is preparing a more detailed design. Initially, the concentration was on air exchange in the church and on a heat pump system. In October, however, the fuel lines were red tagged by the oil company which meant fuel would not be delivered until the lines were replaced. Leo was able to get close to the fuel lines, polish the surface corrosion and place rubber mats over concrete to prevent future issues. The lines passed reinspection.

The construction timeline changed. Initially, replacing the boiler system was last on the priority list but is now at the forefront of the renovation project. Leo looked at pellet systems, woodchip systems, and all-electric heating, but they are not feasible. Propane is now the focus, and he is looking at 2 high efficiency propane boilers. A 1,000-gallon tank would be installed outside of the church and piped in with some redundancy in the boiler room. A goal is to redo circulation of hot water with energy efficient pumps. This summer, the hope is to remove the boiler and install a propane tank. Leo met with 3 propane suppliers but would like input from those that use

propane regarding companies that they have had good experiences with. Note: We need to burn down the fuel in the tanks and then tell Conti that they will not need to deliver again. They also deliver oil to the rectory.

Leo has experience with energy savings. When he worked at the Central Vermont Medical Center there was an energy savings initiative. After 8 years, the hospital was able to reduce the use of energy (oil, propane, electricity) by \$800,000 a year. Now he wants to help people in the parish understand what energy usage is happening in their own homes. Though he hasn't formalized this with Earl, Leo would possibly meet individuals at the church so they can pick his brain. He has 2 special meters at home. Using one on his coffee percolator, he determined that it took 800 watts to warm up. After perking, the warming plate energized but so did the heating element so essentially, he was using 800 watts every 4 minutes to heat the coffee pot. Leo would like to make the meters available to parishioners to use at home, but he cautioned that they only work on 110-volt (pluggable) items.

5. **Pastor's Report** ~ report submitted by The Rev. Earl Kooperkamp (see attached)

Writer Ann Lamott has 3 prayers: Help me, Thank you, and Wow! Help came following the July flood. Earl gave thanks and appreciation for all of those that helped during this trying time. The wow piece is the recognition of what this church can do. Earl can feel the life and vitality in the Church of the Good Shepherd. 2023 was a hard year but it brought us together and gave us a chance to serve. He can't wait to see what God's call is in 2024.

6. **Treasurer Report** ~ report submitted by Tess Taylor (see attached)

a. **2024 Budget**

2023 actuals will change slightly due to 2024 pledges and funds that came in December so were recorded in 2023. For 2024, the Finance Committee projected income conservatively and expenses on the higher side so the church would not be caught by surprise by anything. Last year, total income was \$77,172.03 and expenses \$84,748.63. The annual net for 2023 was -\$7,576.60. 2024 income is budgeted at \$80,770.00 and expenses at \$93,141.00, leaving an annual net of -12,671.00. Tess is not alarmed by these figures as budgets are aspirational and somewhat of a guessing game. Pledges are up. The 2023 actual pledges were \$49,117.62. 2024 pledges are budgeted at \$60,000.

Operating Income:

- Line item 1708: Envelopes w/o Pledge ~ realistic increase from \$930 to \$3,000 based on the trend of money coming in.
- Line item 1710: Use of Facilities ~ increased in 2023 and Tess believes it will continue to go up as people see that this is a good place to hold meetings. Due to flood damage at Christ Church in Montpelier, Earthgirl Composting! needed to find a new location. Tess responded to an ad on Front Porch Forum indicating that they were looking for a place to rent. Now the business rents space and keeps one vehicle here and the other at Tess's home. Tess now enjoys free composting. Outreach and the good things we do comes back in positive ways.

Operating Expenses:

- Line item: 2711.1: Clergy Salary. This increase reflects what the diocese says a pastor should be paid, plus a cost-of-living increase.
- Line item 2711.5: Pension. This figure increased as the Good Shepherd was paying at a lower level than it should have. It should have increased last year.
- Line item: 2711.7: Health Insurance. This increased as Elizabeth Kooperkamp is now provided health insurance.
- Line items 2723 and 2724: Education and Fellowship – Other. These were not budgeted for 2024. We are seeking grants for these.
- Line item 2724.2: Programs. This figure represents BBC expenses.
- Line item 2735: Telephone/Internet. This was left blank as phone and internet services have been switched to voice over internet with Fidium to allow for Zoom and the church has not received a bill yet. There is no longer a landline at the church. There will be an increased internet expense but it has been a detriment to not have good internet, including for those that rent space. This will likely make the building more attractive for renting.

Non-Operating Income:

- Line item 3960: Receipt for Organizations. This includes designated fundraising money and money for the Poor People's Campaign.

Non-Operating Expenses:

- Line item 4904: Transmittal to Organizations. This includes money from fundraising events and money received but designated for something (e.g., Episcopal Relief & Development, earthquake relief, Doctors Without Borders, flood relief, Good Samaritan Haven, United Thank Offering for the Diocese of Jerusalem, Poor People's Campaign). These funds are not used for church operations. \$23,061.04 was given to other organizations.
- Line item 2727.4: Organ Loan. This will be paid in full in 2024.

- b. **Balance Sheet** ~ This shows the big picture of where the church is financially. The 2022 balance was \$411,64.47 but thanks to good investing the equity is now \$453,528.66. The net worth is 10% over 2022. This shows a good, healthy organization.

Ron Hirsch noted that a large portion of the \$85,227.12 in checking is allocated to capital expenses so is not available for operating expenses.

Previously, Earl, the treasurer and the Sr. Warden would work on preparing the budget. Now there is a Finance Committee in place to see that it is done well and done right.

## **7. Election of Vestry Members**

Earl thanked Linda Wentworth and Ron Hirsch for serving on the vestry for a 3-year term. Both are eligible for another 3-year term. Linda has declined but Ron indicated that he is willing to

serve for another term. Rick Fiddock volunteered to fill the vacant position. Tess Taylor made a motion to close the slate of nominees. Kim Bryant seconded. All in favor. Slate presented: Rick Fiddock to serve a 3-year term and Ron Hirsch to serve a second 3-year term. All in favor. No further discussion. No objections. Motion accepted.

## **8. Election of Convention Delegates**

Linda Webster, Linda Wentworth, and Tess Taylor attended the 2023 Diocesan Convention as delegates at the physical convention. Elizabeth Kooperkamp served as an alternate at a virtual meeting.

The Good Shepherd put in 2 resolutions at the 2023 Diocesan Convention: Appealing to Vermont Elected Officials to End Gun Violence and Supporting the Vermont Declaration of Inclusion. The Declaration passed in Barre City which brings the total to 124 cities and towns throughout the state. The Diocese of Vermont has now signed on as a supporting organization for the Declaration of Inclusion.

Marjorie Strong, Tess Taylor and Linda Webster offered to serve as 2024 convention delegates, Elizabeth Kooperkamp, Philip Moros, and Melissa Battah as alternates. Ron Hirsch moved to close the slate of nominees. Rick Fiddock seconded. All in favor of accepting the slate of nominees. No opposition or abstentions. Motion accepted.

## **9. New Business**

- a. **Planned Giving** ~ Stewardship and Planned Giving report submitted by Ron Hirsch (see attached)

Earl reported that there were a number of memorial gifts for Anna Cumming, the second oldest member of the church. There are others, such as the McGinley's, that remembered the Good Shepherd in their will.

Ron shared that there are some tremendous episcopal websites that address planned giving. Melissa Battah, Leo Martineau, Bill Crowther and Ron will be working on the Planned Giving Program. Ron read a section from page 445 of the Book of Common Prayer that addresses leaving bequests for religious and charitable uses. Stewardship helps with operating budget. Planned giving is for the future of the church allowing it to sustain itself in years going forward. There will be a mailing early in the second quarter to explain the Planned Giving Program in detail, as well as a recognition program, and how to participate. Members will be asked to consider recognizing the church in their will.

- b. **Member Contact Information** ~ Christina Hirsch

A contact information form has been created and was included with the annual meeting resources online. Forms are also available online and at the church. The form presents options for how individuals would like to be contacted and what interactions they

do/don't want. All preferences go on file. This is private information and will not be shared outside of choices indicated on completed paperwork. All information is for in-house use only. It may be printed but will not be available online.

c. **Upcoming Congregational Meetings:**

There will be a total of 6 meetings held between February 4-6, 2024. A signup sheet was available at this meeting and was then left at the back of the church for the remaining Sundays leading up to the meetings. Facilitators and notetakers are assigned for each meeting.

- i. Sunday, 2/4/2024 8:30 AM, in person
- ii. Sunday, 2/4/2024 10:30 AM, in person
- iii. Monday, 2/5/2024 1:00 PM, Zoom
- iv. Monday, 2/5/2024 6:00 PM, Zoom
- v. Tuesday, 2/6/2024 1:00 PM, in person
- vi. Tuesday, 2/6/2024 6:00 PM, in person

**10. Closing Prayer**

The meeting adjourned at 11:55 AM with a recital of Psalm 23.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lindi Liimatainen, Clerk of the Vestry