

### 11.30.21 Special Vestry Meeting

Present: Mtr. Tracy, Nancy Shephard, Benjamin Davis, Joanna Phillips, Bart Coddington, Win Fernald, Alliee DeArmond, Chris Rowen, Francis Bayaca, Michael Hudson, Kathy Butler, Debra Spencer (notes)

The meeting began at 7:03pm. Mtr. Tracy reminded us of the bylaws which allow us to have between 9 and 12 vestry members. She said that every year we struggle to find enough people to make a 12-person vestry. People often resign because of health or work, leaving a vacancy which is hard to fill. Mtr. Tracy explained the recruiting process, which begins with the outgoing class of vestry members meeting to:

- discuss the qualities they feel are needed in people recruited, to balance who's still on the vestry and who's leaving; qualities can vary from year to year
- prayerfully go through the parish directory to find people who they feel may be called to serve
- arrive at lists of prospective candidates (each outgoing member makes their own list, then they compare to see if the same names come up)
- send letters to prospective candidates (but this year they skipped this step because the process was begun later than expected)
- make follow-up phone calls to the candidates to help discern whether they feel called to serve

This year the parish were asked to prayerfully suggest candidates to the outgoing members. At the end of this process, the members had a very short list.

Bart moved that the vestry consist of nine members. Benjamin seconded the motion.

Discussion followed, and these ideas, questions, and answers arose.

- What causes this shortage? Several factors: many with vestry experience are aging out, have low energy, have died, are newly retired and want to get their bearings. When younger people are elected, they tend to resign, citing work and family.
- How will we allocate duties with only nine people? We'll continue with the team model but with three members each on the internal and external teams and [five?] on the admin team.
- What if we keep the vestry at twelve and end up with only ten even after recruiting? We'd have open positions which would affect a quorum. We can't change the official number after the election.
- If we have nine, and two people resign, then what? This year two people volunteered to fill vacancies for one year. In favor of having vacancies and exploring ways to fill them. But appointment after election means the parish doesn't get to vote on those people. Also, if they miss the vestry retreat, they don't get to help set goals and don't get to bond.
- The parish doesn't really vote because the ballot always has exactly the number of people to fill the vacancies. However, each candidate must have a majority of the votes cast in order to serve.
- It will raise the workload on each of us to have only nine, especially for the senior warden. But our hope is that the team approach will make the work shared and not to

awful.

- Could we change to another number, like ten? Yes, but nine is cleaner for the yearly classes.
- We need to discuss how we do things at the vestry retreat. It should be a regular practice to consider the size of the vestry each year.
- Twelve is not a magic number. In reality, we haven't really had twelve members for a while. We should review our recruiting process. It's hard to recruit people who have already given a lot.
- Twelve is a traditional magic number, not unique to St. John's. There were twelve disciples.
- The hope for twelve is that the work will be shared more broadly. [Here I wrote, "Workload will reflect number working," but that wasn't what was said.]
- The three-year commitment is daunting. We might look at changing it to two years.
- This motion acknowledges the work of the nominating committee who recommended changing to nine. It's better to feel that nine is the full vestry than to have empty chairs. We should say the Lord has given us these nine people and they're enough.
- The number one mistake vestries make is feeling that there must be twelve members.
- Twelve families make a synagogue.

Win called the question. Allie reminded us that that just means we vote on whether or not to vote on the motion. So Mtr. Tracy put up the poll. The result was 9 yes, 2 no. Mtr. Tracy put up the poll to vote on the motion: 10 yes, 1 no. The motion carried, and now nine is the official number of vestry members at St. John's. We may change it in the future.

The meeting adjourned at 7:43pm.

Other ideas brought up:

- Does the team model mean more meetings than the liaison model?
- Some people know nothing when they're elected or appointed to the vestry and it can be confusing. Maybe we should rethink the whole thing. Maybe newer parish members would be more willing if they knew what they were getting into. Maybe experienced vestry members should mentor the less experienced. Maybe we should change the monetary giving requirement, adjust it for younger people. New ideas come from new people.