

St. Gregory's of Nyssa Regular Vestry Meeting Minutes

January 19, 2020

Present: Joe, Paul, Tim, Randy, Katherine, Burton, Kelsey, Linda

Present over phone: Keith

Also Present: Jeremy Clark-King, Jared DeFig, Noreen O'Brien

1. Paul convened the January meeting of the SGN vestry with a prayer at 12:48pm.
2. Approval of Agenda
 - a. Burton, Linda, Katherine, and Randy added reports to the agenda.
 - b. The agenda for the January meeting of the vestry was unanimously adopted as amended.
3. Approval of Minutes
 - a. Katherine identified an extra "or" in item 4B of the December minutes. It was autographically removed.
 - b. The minutes from the December meeting of the vestry were unanimously adopted as amended.
4. Strategic Planning Update
 - a. Jeremy said that he is attending the January Vestry meeting to keep the Vestry in step with the strategic planning process. Jeremy shared that the first strategic planning meeting was a structured conversation to allow people to converse about the church. Jeremy asked four questions on the first day: What do you love about SGN, what does the wider community love about SGN, what couldn't be left out of the SGN story, and what is being created through SGN.
 - b. Jeremy asked if the vestry had any feedback from the first session. Katherine shared that she had only heard very positive reactions. Paul said that he had heard a few complaints about the length of the session and the early start time, which will be adjusted for the next meeting. The session immediately after lunch was particularly low-energy. Burton said he was surprised at how many people showed up and enjoyed getting to move through the space. Randy said that it was tricky to hear what Jeremy had said sometimes when his back was turned as he moved. Linda said that the session was better-run and more enjoyable than similar sessions that she had attended at work. Linda wondered how much people would remember from the session two months later.
 - c. Jeremy asked if there were other themes or items that had stuck with people. He said that he had noticed an enjoyment and a gratitude for SGN's quiriness and differentness. The other side of that was that SGN can be weird, or strange. The other thing that Jeremy noted was that people in the East Bay felt the church was unknown and un-thought of in that area. Jeremy said he heard great gratitude for the inclusiveness of SGN, but also some questions about where the limits of that inclusiveness lie.
 - d. Jeremy asked if there was anything that had struck the vestry that hadn't come up during the session. Randy mentioned that he was surprised the word "mission" never came up; particularly as someone who works with the food pantry. Keith said that he was surprised there wasn't more talk about SGN's position towards the world outside of SGN, and how we hope to influence it.
 - e. Jeremy said that the next steps of the planning process will be focused on naming priorities, which will come back to the vestry for action. Jeremy said he will be back for the February meeting.

5. Membership report
 - a. Linda said that the church has a new sign-in sheet, and new ways of keeping track of new visitors. She said that Friday's game night was enjoyable, but that only three people came. Linda said she would continue thinking of ways to draw people into the church.
6. Building Report
 - a. Burton shared some printouts of preliminary landscape plans from John Roberts. He said that he had met with the landscape firm to share early feedback. Burton said that there will be another iteration or two of feedback, but that the building committee and landscape architects are moving closer to a proposal that can be brought before the church.
 - b. Burton shared some preliminary drawings from the firm that is working on the church lighting, and said the planning is going well.
 - c. Burton said he'd received a reminder email that the church needs to work on establishing an emergency preparedness plan.
 - d. Burton asked why the courtyard door was marked as "not an exit." Randy said the sign in question had been put up for food pantry activities and could be taken down.
7. Lifelong Learning Report
 - a. Randy shared that next Sunday the 26th, the church will host a youth and family discussion led by Susanna Singer.
8. Finance Report and AT&T Service Bill Discussion
 - a. Keith summarized Leesy's finance email. In the most recent iteration of the 2019 budget, the church is over on revenue and under on expenses. This is good, but a lot of the giving was very last-minute, much of it on December 31.
 - b. Keith said that the church is continuing to overpay for services from AT&T, and that keeping our bill low requires someone to regularly contact AT&T and request lower rates. Tim said that the church phone bill had jumped about \$50 to \$378, and that it already seemed high before the increase.
 - c. Kelsey agreed to get in touch with Karen to discuss how the bill had been lowered previously. Tim and Joe said they would look through the bill and touch base with Bryan to see why the bill is so high.
9. Parish Meeting Planning
 - a. Tim reminded the vestry that there are two positions to fill at the upcoming parish meeting. Paul said he would check with the Deanery Representatives to see if they intended to stand for election again.
 - b. Paul said he thought the parish meeting should include a report from the building committee and that he would give a statement as well. Burton and Paul agreed there should be a report from the strategic planning committee.
10. Rector's Report
 - a. Paul shared a printout of the historical trends in SGN's average Sunday attendance and Easter attendance. SGN's average Sunday attendance has been declining for the last four years. Membership and financial giving have increased. Linda pointed out that median Sunday attendance might be a better metric than average, since the average attendance is likely distorted by outlier days like baptisms and Easter.
11. Other Reports & New Business
 - a. Randy thanked Tim for doing a great job getting clergy gifts. Paul said he is continuing to distribute them.
 - b. Katherine said that since next Sunday is Karen's last day, and that the coffee hour chefs are planning a nice spread. Katherine said that anyone who wants to should feel free to bring a dish.

12. Recognition of outgoing vestry members

- a. Tim thanked Randy and Kelsey for their service to the vestry over the last three years, since this is their last vestry meeting before the full parish meeting.

13. The January meeting of the SGN vestry was adjourned with a prayer at 2:25pm.