

St. Gregory's of Nyssa Regular Vestry Meeting Minutes

February 16, 2020

Present: Tim, Paul, Burton, Keith, Anne, Linda, Margaret, Katherine

Present by phone: Joe

Also Present: Jeremy Clark-King, Randy

1. Paul convened the February meeting of the SGN vestry with a prayer at 1:00pm.
2. Approval of Agenda
 - a. The agenda for the February meeting of the SGN vestry was unanimously adopted.
3. Approval of Minutes
 - a. Minutes from the January vestry meeting were amended autographically to correct the spelling of Noreen O'Brien's last name.
 - b. Minutes from the annual parish meeting were amended to clarify Jessica Anderson's position as the alternate deanery representative.
 - c. Both sets of minutes were unanimously adopted as amended.
4. Strategic Planning Update
 - a. Jeremy presented the four areas that the parish had identified for focus during the second strategic planning day: Wider Community, Building Intentional Community, Mission, and Children & Youth.
 - b. Jeremy asked for reflections on the second parish-wide planning session. Keith said that it was heartening to hear the community coalescing around the topics we are all feeling. Paul said that he felt the most robust topics were about relationship rather than program. Linda said it was good to hear people come up with ideas and put their names to them. Jeremy said he'd heard it asked how we tell the story of what's happening outside SGN, as well as how we keep people in touch internally.
 - c. Burton said that he sensed fear from parishioners about the church's finances and attendance, which he didn't feel as a member of the vestry. Paul said that he'd heard from at least one person that it can be hard to meet with folks from SGN outside of Sunday, partially because everyone has such busy schedules.
 - d. Keith asked if there were any actions identified during the vestry retreat. Linda summarized the discussions from the vestry retreat: the vestry mostly focused on disseminating information and making sure every vestry member had heard all the major themes from the day and did not move on to identifying concrete actions.
 - e. Jeremy asked if the vestry desired to have a renewed/revised statement of vision, mission, or purpose for SGN. Jeremy also said the Vestry might consider taking some of the sub-goals from the major themes and breaking them out into action items.
 - f. Jeremy summarized the "Wider Community" theme sheet; it includes items like FoG camp, the food pantry, meditation classes, and other activities. Jeremy said that this sheet felt unclear to him, particularly since it includes so many concrete actions. Linda and Joe offered that the discussion on the Wider Community sheet had focused on action brainstorming under the two broad headings of activities that bring people into the church and activities that benefit the community outside the church. Paul said he'd like to hear more about why SGN interfaces with the wider community, rather than how.
 - g. Jeremy moved onto the "Building Intentional Community" sheet, which included actions like fellowship dinners, intentional co-living, and ways of connecting in-person and remotely.

Jeremy said that this sheet is about what SGN wants to choose to do to create community. Keith said that intentional community is multifaceted; it is not just about making church at home, or living in a commune, or making a weekly work group, but instead about offering different ways that churchgoers can plug into community. Burton said that he felt that the intentional community ideas are linked to the "wider community" ideas; in particular, a healthy community will draw in more people from outside. Jeremy pointed out that vice-versa, SGN members who are happily involved in the SGN community are more likely to interact happily with the wider community.

- h. Jeremy moved onto the "Mission" sheet, which asks "have we achieved what we set out to achieve when SGN was founded, and are there new things that we want to take on?" Tim said that the question in part comes from parishioners who have joined SGN after its founding class, and whether the mission that it was founded with is still just as relevant today. Part of the question is not just what will SGN do for the next five or ten years, but what will SGN do for the next hundred years as well.
 - i. Jeremy summarized the "Children and Youth" sheet, which talks about how SGN fosters youth and child activities. Jeremy said he'd picked up on a desire for a youth coordinator, but also a willingness to focus on the issues themselves rather than on any one solution. Paul said that that modern San Francisco seems like a very difficult time and place to raise children, and that what he wants for children is to feel loved. Keith shared that the vision of SGN for children might be one of refuge or shelter. Jeremy asked if children & youth ministry is a subset of building intentional community and pointed out that children and youth minister to the rest of the community. Randy said that many of the voices under "children and youth" were voices of anger focused on the loss of SGN's youth minister. It's important to understand that simply hiring a new minister may not solve all the issues.
 - j. Jeremy said that the two items for consideration by the vestry are whether these are in fact the areas that SGN wants to focus on, and to identify specific actions to take in the near and long-term with regards to each. Jeremy said that the "Mission" focus area strikes him as particularly important and might guide the other areas. The others in turn can provide action items.
 - k. Margaret pointed out that many of the items on the sheets can be attributed to one individual; Jeremy agreed, and said that it's part of the vestry's role to take that under advisement and discern appropriately. Keith asked if it would be appropriate to form a committee to move forward with the strategic planning process.
 - l. The vestry thanked Jeremy for his help in the strategic planning process.
5. Executive Session
 - a. The SGN vestry meeting adjourned to executive session for one hour at 1:49pm.
 6. Columbarium Cost
 - a. Paul said he had been researching the cost of columbarium niches at various locations, and he would like to raise the cost of SGN columbarium niche to \$5,000. He feels this is comparable with costs at other churches.
 - b. Katherine said that she would support this, provided the price change is advertised and people are given the chance to buy in at the current price.
 - c. The vestry voted unanimously to raise the price of a columbarium niche to \$5,000. Burton abstained.
 7. Membership and Welcoming Report
 - a. Linda shared that several new members intend to join SGN in the next couple months. She is excited to welcome them.
 8. The February meeting of the SGN vestry was unanimously adjourned at 3:10pm.