**Diocesan Council Meeting Minutes**

**Thursday, June 8, 2023 4:30 PM**

**Via Zoom**

**Present:** Bishop Rob Hirschfeld, Margaret Porter, Mary Sturtevant, Emily Drake, Richard Davenport, Joyce Johnson, Shelley Kesselman, Lauren Tennett, Tina Pickering, Chris Porter, Kathy Boss, Alan MacRae, Gregory Anderson,

Benge Ambrogi, Bill Petersen

The Bishop opened the meeting, followed by prayer and self-introductions by new returning members.

**Bishop’s Time**

The Bishop presented Big Rocks to be move in order for the new breath of the Holy Spirit to move through: items of importance he and the staff are focused upon.

*Claremont.* For decades the area has been known for lack of resources, due to economic downturn after mill closures and loss of industry, and known for the Claremont lawsuit seeking educational funding equity. After prayer, discussion, and visits, Kelly Sundberg Seaman, Dean of Formation, is appointed priest-in-charge and Dean at Trinity in its new designation as Pro Cathedral. The Bishop is able to designate a place of mission and mission opportunity. Union Church (mother church or Trinity, but smaller) is to be reimagined in a new partnership between the two that could encompass Epiphany, Newport. A “Sugar River Moonshot” describes the collaborative ministry envisioned along that river. Trinity is host for our 2023 Diocesan Convention, for the first time since 1963. New Hampshire first was born nearby, and the church has previously been a Pro Cathedral. The Bishop will broadcast from Trinity during the Friday convention business Zoom meeting.

*Relationship with the Schools, especially White Mountain School.* Our Bishop is ex officio president of the WMS board, which has worked hard the past year to enhance mission. He spends much time on WMS and Holderness.

*On-going Transitions.* In some places there is a struggle to find leadership, struggle to find growth. The goal is not just provide adequate lay and clergy leadership, but make the congregations begin to flourish.

*School for Ministry.* This is a means of enhancing Christian formation, not just for deacons and priests but also lay leaders, raising up the smart and gifted leadership among us. By the end of this weekend the Bishop will have ordained four people, none of them trained exclusively by a traditional seminary.

*Integration of Offices inter-dioceses (or intra?).* We are trying to take advantages of economies of scale between NH, Maine and Vermont dioceses. Conversations about financial management are occurring across the dioceses. Tina Pickering serves as Canon to the Ordinary for NH and ME bishops, and share Katie Clark as communication officer. Are there ways of sharing financial officers, youth ministry across diocesan borders?

*Capital Campaign*. The fruits of this campaign will allow us to enhance these initiatives, finance congregations that can’t afford leadership on their own—who can obtain assistance and then be weaned off. This has worked every time we’ve done it.

*Commissions.* Work is ongoing in Reconciliation regarding racial reparations, and the Solar Saints are active in Earth Care. The efforts are productive; the bishop gets out of the way and prays and cheers for them.

*Portsmouth Redevelopment.* The Seacoast Shared Ministry decoupled. Leah Philbrick of Rye is now vicar at Trinity, Hampton. Christ Church, Portsmouth is a four-acre located on a main thoroughfare with public transportation access, houses a missional thriving daycare center, possesses a mid-century vicarage, and there’s a burial ground for 18th century enslaved persons. After a decade of struggle, its mission and redevelopment are being discerned by a steering committee composed of local agencies members of the current worshiping gospel-oriented community, with a goal of providing housing and support for survivors of domestic abuse and violence, as well as continuing the daycare.

**Request to re-allocate Mission Resources funding for Portsmouth *Benge Ambrogi***

Various parties came together, listened in the area for needs, talked to several community development corporations. Portsmouth Housing Development, 5013C, has experience creating hundreds of units and developments in the area and understands how to access funding—including tax credits and government grants. Council is asked to reallocate Mission Resources unused funding for $7000 to do a survey as described in an agreement between ECNH and PHA. The Christ Church site redevelopment concept sketch sent to Council prior to the meeting was done by an architect on a pro bono basis—the final design would change. MRC discussed and approved the re-allocation on Tuesday and supports it. The quote breakdown is $6000 for main survey and $1000 get wetland survey which we need, as the property is adjacent to the estuary coming in from Back Bay. Bill Petersen moved approval, Shelley seconded, and the vote was unanimous.

**Council Retreat Subcommittee report re: meeting on 20 April**

Subcommittee members are Alan, Gregory, Benge, Shelley, and Margaret. Selected dates are November 18, with snow date of December 2. Trinity, Tilton will be the site. The agenda focus is carrying on the work following diocesan convention. Planning will continue.

**Other Business**

*Respectfully submitted,*

Margaret Porter

**2023 Diocesan Council Meeting Dates** (subject to change as necessary):

October 19, November 9, December 14