

St. James' Bishop's Committee Meeting

February 25, 2025

2:00 p.m. at St. James'

Next meeting: 4th Tuesday, March 25, 2:00, in person at St. James'. Julie will not be attending.

E-mail approval of these minutes. Motion to approve: Jackie. Second: Wendy. Vote to approve: Pam, Shannon, Sandy, Julie.

Present: Wendy Arntson, Pam Heidt (Zoom), Julie Lowery, Oliver Pung, Sandy Riley, The Rev. Stacy Salles, Jackie Shock (Zoom), Shannon Verbal.

Stacy delivered an opening prayer.

Approval of minutes. Minutes of 1/21/2025 BC meeting approved by e-mail.

Spiritual formation. Stacy led us in a *lectio divina* exercise, an approach to reading scripture. A scriptural text is read 3 times, with time for silent contemplation between each reading. From *Conversation—the Sacred Art* (by Diane Millis):

- The first time the text is read, the facilitator invites participants to listen for a word, a phrase, or an image that shimmers for them or captures their attention.
- After the first reading, each participant is invited to offer his or her word or phrase into the silence without comment.
- The second time the text is read, the facilitator invites participants to reflect upon what is being asked of them or offered to them by the text.
- After the second reading, participants are invited to briefly share their responses with the rest of the group.

We also talked about holding a vestry retreat, and how we could practice sacred conversations with each other during the retreat. Everyone agreed that the process described in the book will require some practice. Eventually we could introduce the process to the congregation; but it would require some training first. Stacy said she will work on pulling something together for a vestry retreat. At our next meeting we will begin discussing the book, *The Church Cracked Open*, by Stephanie Spellers.

Election of BC officers. Julie and Jackie volunteered to serve as co-wardens again. Wendy volunteered to serve as clerk. Motion to approve these officers: Sandy. Second: Oliver. All in favor. We agreed to continue to meet on the 4th Tuesday of each month at 2:00 p.m. When Oliver gets his schedule for school (starts in mid-May), we will reconsider if we need to change the day and time.

Staying connected with parishioners. Wendy is trying to set up another calling tree for Pastoral Care to contact everyone in church, especially those people we don't see regularly in church. Do we need to touch base with everyone, or only those people who we don't see? Wendy will take the most recent directory and identify the people whom we should contact, to make sure that someone is touching base with them.

Our current mass e-mail list from the office doesn't include Gwangwon and Reese. Stacy has asked Teri to put together a list of everyone who should be on the list. Stacy will investigate how to set up a mass text.

Building and Grounds. No updates. Wendy will check with Len on plans to improve our cleaning service. We also recommended that Len follow up with Melissa Pung, who volunteered to help investigate options for reducing the cost of our Comcast bill (\$335/month).

Vestry Day. Jackie, Wendy, and Pam attended Vestry Day via Zoom on Saturday, February 8, and reported on some of the key things they learned.

Anti-racism training is required of all leadership. There are 3 modules. Sacred Ground counts as #1. And don't forget to take your Safe Church training. Here are the links for the training:

<https://www.edomi.org/antiracismcurriculum/>

<https://www.edomi.org/safe-church/>

On May 19, 6 p.m., at Bentley Library at UM, one of the canons from the Diocese, an historian, will be available to meet with representatives from your church to discuss any interest in using the archives to find out if your church played a role in the history of the underground railroad or other aspects related to race in our past. He has volunteered to search the archives for all interested churches. Janet Tornow, Margaret Engel, and Kristen Novak are interested in attending.

There was a good discussion about how to welcome families with children into our worship space. (This could be part of a larger discussion about our children's program(s) that need to be addressed.) What indications are there, as people approach the church, that we are welcoming of families with children? Signage, like "Atrium for children starts at 9:40," "Activity bags are available," etc. would be helpful. Set up a nice space in the church for children if their parents want to keep them in the sanctuary during the service, to show that they are welcome. And is there an activity bag or special bulletin for school-age children who might want to stay in church? At coffee hour, do we have some activities for children? We need to take children and families where they are, and provide them various options tailored to each one's comfort zone of participation. Recognize that sporadic attendance is the norm for many families, and work from there. Jackie strongly suggests watching this section of the recording. We need to do some work in this area; we will put this on next month's agenda.

Links to the video of Vestry Day and to the slides are below:

Vestry day video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8I8Kv8U3tmE>

Vestry day slides:

<https://www.edomi.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Vestry-Day-2025-slides.pdf>

2025 Goals. We discussed a number of possible goals for 2025:

- Investigate options for welcoming families with children, including signage.
- Continue partnership with FIA, including new scholarship partnership. Do a monthly activity at Hilltop Apartments.
- Crossroads support. The summer program is on hold because most of their work is funded by federal grants.
- Something in the area of social justice—"repairing the breach." Start by figuring out our own history—and depending on what it is, we might want to follow up on this with a project. Or write an article for the SunTimes. (Sandy's neighbor writes for the SunTimes.) Stacy will let Margaret, Kristen, and Janet know that we are interested in doing something in this area. If we find that we need/want to do reparations, we could donate to community organizations that are lifting up people of color—like Hilltop, FIA scholarships.
- Reaching out to the immigrant population in Washtenaw County. Where is the Latin American community going to church? The Catholic church? If so, can we partner with them in some programs? Stacy will ask about this at the next Ministerial Association meeting. Could also include this as a Coffee & Conversations topic. Scio Farms has a big

immigrant population. Even if it's just letting people know we're available to provide support.

- Other ideas mentioned on Sunday during our coffee hour discussion: concert series (ask Alice or Gwangwon for their contacts), worker appreciation event.

Oliver and Wendy will check to see what the high school or community might be doing for the Gay Pride parade. If Dexter isn't doing one, maybe we could partner with Chelsea.

Clergy search. The search committee is currently working on the church portfolio. They are meeting Sunday to pull this together. It is due March 15.

2025 Budget. There were some errors in the budget that we approved at our January meeting; so, a corrected budget was sent to BC to review and approve. During the annual meeting it was suggested that we add \$200 for Children's Formation to the budget. What would this be used for? Stacy has some ideas for using the funds for our youth. Or we could use it for creating a child friendly environment (see recommendations from Vestry Day above). Motion to approve the corrected budget with addition of \$200: Wendy. Second: Shannon. Jackie opposed; she wants us to work toward creating a balanced budget. All else in favor. In looking for a new priest, we need to be realistic about what we can afford, so that we don't always have a deficit budget. We agreed that we should write thank you notes to everyone who pledged for 2025. Shannon volunteered to write these. The notes will not include the pledge amount, as this should only be known by the treasurer and the priest. We had some discussion about who needs to know what the pledge amounts are. The priest wants to know if there's a problem. But the treasurer can alert the priest if someone drops their pledge significantly. Stacy is fine with not knowing the pledge amounts.

Rector's report. Stacy won't be in the office next Tuesday—she will be attending a clergy conference. She is working on the Ash Wednesday service. She has scheduled one more conversation for Coffee Hour. We have morning prayer on the 16th, and Roger will be preaching. The Dexter Ministerial Association is meeting this month. (Stacy agreed that we can remove this agenda item.)

Financial report. As of 1/31/2025, operating income exceeded operating expenses by \$12,940.85, which is \$7,415.85 better than budgeted. However, salary expenses did not reflect the 3.0% COLA; the new pay rates weren't paid until mid-February with retroactive payments to January 1. Motion to accept the January financial report: Jackie. Second: Sandy. All in favor.

St. James' Morton Cox Legacy Scholarship. We discussed the Memorandum of Agreement (MOU) from FIA for the use of funds from the Cox gift for educational scholarships. The plan is to use the remaining Cox funds as an endowment, and to use approximately 5% each year to award a scholarship to an FIA client. We agreed to donate \$2,000 this year, and FIA will contribute \$500. Our preference is for the scholarship to go to a Dexter resident or Hilltop client. FIA will be responsible for administering the scholarship, including advertising, receiving and reviewing applications, selecting the recipient, and sending the funds to the appropriate institution. BC will review the MOU after our meeting and vote on whether to approve this. Post-meeting: Motion to accept the MOU: Jackie. Second: Shannon. All in favor.

Adjourned: 4:20

Respectfully submitted,
Julie Lowery