

ST. THOMAS EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Special Church Meeting

Sunday, June 2, 2019

Call to Order 11:31 a.m.

Opening prayer offered by Rev. Canon Linda Grenz

The church's mission statement was read by Sr. Warden, Richard Kyte

Approval of the Agenda: M-S-A-after a question was asked regarding the committees and if they would be discussed at this meeting. Which was yes.

Interim Priest –

- Rev. Canon Grenz began by explaining that there had been a turn in the process. She gave a synopsis of the history of how the Parish has gotten to this point.
- The planned Interim Priest was too expensive.
- A solution has been found in Rev Liz Habacker, who is retired and does not need health insurance or pension. She also would be available on a part time basis. With a decrease in pledges and current financial circumstances, this interim would ease financial pressures and avoid a deficit.
- Avoiding a deficit is important in recruiting a new priest.
- Questions were raised and addressed.
- Thanks was offered to the vestry for being financially prudent in this process.
- Rev. Canon Grenz offered reassurance that this Parish would be fine.
- The plan is that Rev. Habacker would be brought in ASAP after meeting with the Sr. Warden.

Discernment Process-

- Rev. Canon Linda Grenz explained an option available to us rather than calling a rector through the Discernment Process: Priest-In-Charge
- Priest-in-Charge can come in for 1-2 years and then be called as the rector.
- This means that the Portfolio Committee will proceed. There are twelve questions that they are working on.
- We will be listed on two databases: One is Regional, the other National.
- The Regional database only requires answers to three questions and Rev Canon Grenz has already listed our parish on this site. There has been

one application so far. The National database utilizes the Portfolio with the 12 questions.

- There is a tighter timeline with this process-meaning a few months with a candidate possibly by the fall vs 9 months. The vestry can interview and hire the candidate.
- Ideally, there are two candidates to choose from.
- Although, Rev Canon Grenz officially retires July 9, she has agreed to continue to search for our priest post retirement.
- The Priest-in-Charge is a contract that can be converted to Rector whenever the vestry, priest, and bishop agree but often that happens at the end of the first year with the normal mutual ministry review.
- The goal and priority here are to stabilize the parish between Rev. Habacker and then the Priest-in-Charge.
- It was offered that Rev. Susan was originally a Priest-in-Charge here.
- The new Priest-in-Charge would be full time.
- Marty Brown offered details about the portfolio-the questions allow parishioners to let their opinions known of what they are seeking in a new priest.
- These questions will go out to parishioners via email, by mail to those who get newsletters by mail, and will also be handed out in church.
- A few parishioners mentioned that they aren't receiving parish email. Those attending were asked to give Jacki Zahn their name and information if they did not receive the announcement regarding this meeting as it was mentioned to all parishioners. Then their information will be checked in the database.
- It was stressed that everyone needs to participate and answer these questions – no one can assume that their opinion and position is represented.
- All the committees will still be utilized except for the Discernment Committee at this point. If the Priest-in-Charge is not successful, this committee will be reactivated.
- The prayer team will be responsible for praying when the Vestry interviews the candidates.
- The Welcome Committee should begin meeting soon as they will be needed sooner than originally anticipated.
- The Website Committee needs to update the website

- The Communication Committee is needed as much as ever.
- The Parish will be responsible for paying for the move of the new priest. It is estimated that it costs \$8,000 to move a priest who lives east of the Mississippi and it costs \$10,000 to move a priest who lives west of it.
- There was a question raised about utilizing the rectory if it is needed-Rick Kyte, Senior Warden, stated that if it is needed, a revolving loan is under consideration. This has been a topic of discussion for the vestry. Also, a Priest-in-Charge would likely rent housing initially.
- Most clergy would prefer a call to be a rector due to stability, but more parishes are going to Priest-in-Charge.
- Rev. Canon Grenz explained that there are basically two types of priests
 - Professional-where they are on a career path-priest-canon-bishop
 - Vocational-where they are discerning where God is calling them. A Priest-in-Charge is most likely to come from this category. Bishop Knisley and Rev Canon Grenz are more inclined to priests who fall into the vocational model.
- A motion from Rick Kyte was presented: **Motion to authorize, the Senior Warden, Junior Warden and Treasurer to pursue engagement of the Rev. Liz Habecker as a part-time interim consistent with no requirement of health services, insurance, and pension. This engagement will be modeled on the guidelines established by the Episcopal Diocese of RI and subject to ratification by the vestry. M-S-A**
- Rick Kyte will be meeting with Rev. Liz Habecker this Thursday, June 6 at 1:00 p.m. in the

Motion to adjourn at 12:03 p.m. M-S-A

Faithfully submitted by Phyllis Spaziano