

Episcopal Church of the Incarnation
Short Hall
Vestry Meeting – April 29, 2025

Attendees: Robert Aguero, Matt Bonacorso, Joe Ferrucci, John Torres, Karin Dutra, David Jasper, Kathleen Kane, Rebecca Kendall, Laura McLellan, Mark Neumann, Joan Roughgarden; Stephen Shaver, Rector. **Absent:** Lisa Pollard **Guests:** none

Call to Order: 6:33 pm by Stephen Shaver

Gathering: Opening Prayer, Robert – Chaplain

Check-in: Vestry members shared thanksgivings and prayers.

Consent calendar: Minutes approved unanimously.

Land Acknowledgement:

Becoming Beloved Community Ministry sent us the latest draft of the Land Acknowledgement.

As part of our baptismal covenant to strive for justice and peace among all people, we recognize that we stand on unceded tribal and ancestral land. We worship on ancestral Southern Pomo territory, and many of our members reside in the homelands of the Southern Pomo, Coast Miwok, Kashia Pomo, and Wappo peoples. Our beloved oak tree began its life on these lands, and it provided sustenance for their ancestors as it now graces our worship and fellowship gatherings, thus giving us a historical bond. Their stories and ours are intertwined.

With God's help, we commit ourselves to acknowledging the truth of California's history, as well as strengthening existing relationships. This acknowledgment is a first step in improving our efforts to build collaborative relationships with Native peoples.

After discussion, the vestry resolved to approve the land acknowledgment statement, with the removal of the apparently redundant words “and ancestral” at the end of the first sentence, as long as that edit is acceptable to the Becoming Beloved Community team (Stephen will check with Daphne on this and finalize the wording one way or the other). Motion by Kathleen, seconded by Rebecca. *Unanimously approved.*

Quarterly Treasurer's Report:

Joe reviewed how to read the Summary Financial Report. Joe explained how the pledge and other donations rate ebbs and flows during the year and how that creates temporary deficits and surpluses.

Pledges and expenses are on track for the year. Rebecca asked how Capital Campaign donations are tracked, particularly online donations, to ensure they are not misclassified as pledge payments. Joe and John Nykamp will reconfirm that we have clear systems in place for this. Campaign donors are being asked to separate their pledge from their campaign donation, and unusual pledge overpayments are regularly double-checked with the donors as to intent.

Financial Committee Funding Requests

Replace Backflow Device.

Background: The annual backflow inspection revealed that the backflow device is defective. Specifically, the brass casting that the check module sits in is pitted and will not seal on the second check. The inspection device needs to be replaced.

- Repair Estimate: \$3,591.10, from Economy Plumbing. The estimate includes new equipment, installation, permit, and test, and it also includes service on 4/22/2025.
- Repair Time: To be scheduled. Water will have to be shut off for approximately 2-3 hours. Why Necessary: Required by law.
- Request: not to exceed \$4,000, from the Building Repair Fund.

Robert moved that we approve \$4,000 conditionally; with a request to Buildings and Grounds for two additional quotes before any work is done. Kathleen second. *Approved unanimously*

(2) Ancillary Work for New Windows in Parish Offices.

Background: Ken and Melissa Moholt-Siebert donated new windows for the parish offices. New framing and fascia boards needed to be installed for the windows; new miniblinds were needed; and new electrical outlets needed to be added to the walls below the windows. Some of the work has been done already, and some additional work is needed.

- Repair Estimate: under \$4,000, which includes \$1,200 already spent.
- Repair Time: To be scheduled.
- Why Necessary: Necessary for proper installation of the new windows.
- Request: not to exceed \$4,000, from the Building Repair Fund.

Finance team members mention that when accepting future gifts, vestry should work to ascertain all ancillary costs the church will be responsible for ahead of time so those funds can be approved before accepting the donors' generous offering.

Request approved unanimously.

Joe introduced a Project/Event Proposal Form that will be used to track the financial impact of church events. The use of the form is primarily focused on new events and events outside of ministry areas with their own budget.

- Alison will provide the form when space is reserved.
- The review/feedback/approval process is still under discussion.
- Ministry leaders may be included in future budget planning, giving the leaders a better understanding of the funds available to the ministry.

Campus security and philosophy of welcome – continued conversation

We discussed the results from the quick vestry poll at the March meeting, below.

- We should offer a ministry of hospitality (space, bathrooms, food/drink) to all people on Sunday mornings from 8-12, regardless of their participation or not in programs (liturgy and formation). (disagree)

1 disagree	2	3	4	5 agree
4	2	2	0	3

- Our hospitality for all people is expressed at Sunday Open Table, but from 8a-12p our ministry of hospitality (space, bathrooms, food/drink) is for those participating in our liturgy and formation programs, and those not participating in them should not be encouraged to use our space/bathrooms/food/drink during this time.

1 disagree	2		3	4	5 agree
3	0		0	5	2

Details were shared regarding how Open Table guests participate on Sunday morning between their arrival for breakfast at 6:30 am and during the 8:00 and 10:15 services. Senior Warden shared her observations of what occurred in Farlander Hall between 9 and 11:30 am last Sunday.

Brainstorming ideas regarding use of Farlander and outdoors for zoom service:

Add an usher?

Should we offer other elements of the service? Collect offering?

An incense-free zone. No candles.

Should the service go back outside?

Should we have a long-term outdoor service?

Some might be better with live streaming from home.

Are some people afraid of coming into the church?

Is supervision needed in Farlander between services?

What about the security guard idea?

Immigration Response:

Some reading materials were sent out for reading with the vestry agenda:

(1) Press Democrat article, “Sonoma County churches, synagogue declare themselves sanctuaries for immigrants amid Trump administration crackdown” [What’s driving local congregations to declare themselves sanctuaries for North Bay immigrants - The Press Democrat](#)

(2) Materials developed in the Episcopal Church in Massachusetts, including some model protocols suggested for congregations: <https://www.episcopalcitymission.org/ice-protocols>

(3) The website for North Bay Rapid Response Network, a local group operated by the North Bay Organizing Project, that seeks to support immigrants who may be targeted by enforcement actions: <https://www.northbayop.org/nbrnn>

Discussion circled around the following:

- Would it be appropriate for us to develop any protocols regarding the possibility of immigration enforcement actions here at our church?
- How should we as a congregation be part of the wider conversation about immigration?

- What does “sanctuary” mean and is this a term we feel called to use in our public witness?
- Are there actions we feel called to take at the vestry level (adopting policies, training ushers or other volunteers or staff, spending money ...)?
- Are there organizations we might want to partner with or encourage members to volunteer with?
- Bob Wohlsen’s packet about immigration legalities should be considered in training ushers and front-facing ministry participants.
- Develop ministries that support immigrants who are afraid to go out? Bring communion?
- Constitution supports freedom of worship, and ICE incursions may interfere with this right.
- What does civil disobedience look like?
- Stephen will draft some first ideas toward a set of policies regarding law enforcement actions at church and share so that the vestry can provide feedback.

Capital Campaign - fundraising plan

Stephen shared and discussed the Capital Campaign funding spreadsheet, which outlines the numbers of households to be asked to consider donations at \$100,000, \$75,000, \$50,000, \$25,000, and lower amounts. The sum total of the various “asks” comes to \$4.875 million; our working goal for the campaign is \$4 million. There may be outside funds such as grants, community donors, etc. in addition to parishioner donations.

Stephen shared that the Architect Liaison team is hard at work with arranging contracts with architects, contractors, and subcontractors to move forward with the conceptual design phase.

Capital Campaign – draft letter to Standing Committee

Stephen presented a draft letter to the Diocesan Standing Committee keeping them updated on our capital campaign plans. He asked for vestry feedback on the letter over the next week, after which he’ll send it.

Development Committee:

22 households have put Incarnation in their will and 19 households will attend the Legacy dinner, on Saturday May 10th, with the bishop. Volunteers are lined up and a caterer has been hired. Program with the Bishop is under development and the name of the Legacy group will be announced at the dinner.

Summing up: highlights for this Sunday’s announcement

- Approval of Land Acknowledgement – (read at the service)
- Legacy Dinner update!
- Immigration conversation – Ask for feedback from the congregation.

Closing Prayer – Robert, Chaplain

Meeting adjourned at 8:50 pm

Respectfully submitted,
Karin Dutra, Clerk