

# GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Windsor, Connecticut

April 24, 2018

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## *Call to Order*

### Attendance

Present: Fr. Chip, Ian Rickard, Deacon Denise, Marcia Hinckley, Max Kuziak, Deb Hutchinson, Chuck Drake, Fred McLeod, Connie Hegarty, Larry Young, Ken Roach and JoAnne McLeod.

Absent: Allison Kelly, Karen Tiemann, Scott Sanislo, Jan Lawlor and Jane Cimbak.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by the Reverend Harry (Chip) Elliott with an Opening Prayer.

Father Chip stated that the special meeting of the Vestry of Grace Episcopal Church was being held to discuss and resolve the issues brought forth in the letter we received from Louis Fuertes, Canon, Finance and Operations, regarding our support of the Common Mission of the Episcopal Diocese of CT. Father Chip read significant portions of the letter aloud and reiterated that a canon established at the Diocesan Convention in 2015 requires all parishes to be current with their 10% pledge to the Common Mission Support beginning in 2016. Grace Church contributed 6.5% in 2016 and 7% in 2017; as a result, we currently owe \$16,542 in back pledges. Also, as a part of the canon, a yearly financial audit from 2015 going forward needs to be on file with the Diocese. Father Chip explained that Grace Church has a completed 2015 audit which has been sent to the Diocese. The letter further stated that the Diocese requires all parishes to document that any financial holdings are in federally chartered banks rather than investment accounts; Grace has provided documentation that our funds are with Windsor Federal Bank, a federally chartered bank. The letter further states that our parish has six months to pay the pledges that are in arrears or the Diocese will begin the termination process of the Parish. Father Chip stated that there are currently five other parishes in our situation.

Father Chip explained that if we chose not to pay the back-pledge amounts, we could request a meeting with the Missions Council to appeal. However, Father Chip stated that Canon Fuentes indicated, during a phone conversation, that such an appeal would most likely be rejected. Father Chip stated that he felt our two choices were to either pay the \$16,542 or not pay and have the Church closed. Father Chip reminded the vestry of the support the parish has received from the Diocese: even though Grace Church was very behind on its Diocesan pledge, Father Chip was allowed to come to our Parish, Deacon Denise was sent to help our Parish and we were granted a loan to help pay for the refurbishing of the stained-glass windows. The vestry was reminded that when Deacon Denise came to Grace three years ago, a commitment was made to become current in our obligations within three years. Father Chip and Treasurer Larry Young have discussed the situation; their feeling is that we can meet our obligation this year and next year. Father Chip's advice is to make a motion at the meeting to pay the Diocese \$18,118; this would address the \$16,542 currently owed and keep us current for January through April of 2018. As we go forward, Father Chip suggested that we revisit the budget and instead of paying the Diocese \$1343 per month, we pay \$1737 per month so that we will be current with the Diocese. Larry Young also stated that our Diocesan loan for the stained-glass windows will be paid off in October and that will help us to meet our Diocesan pledge commitment.

A discussion took place regarding the letter and many opinions were voiced.

Ken Roach made the following motion: In recognition of its commitment to the Common Mission of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut, the Vestry of Grace Episcopal Church in Windsor, on April 4, 2018, votes to

immediately bring us current with our commitment to the Common Mission of the Diocese of Connecticut. A check for \$18,118 will be sent to the Diocese to bring us current for our commitment for 2016, 2017 and the first four months of 2018 and to adjust the budget going forward to meet the commitment for 2018 of \$1,737.00 a month.

In a discussion that followed, it was suggested that the Vestry take the opportunity to express its feelings concerning the letter to the Bishop during his next visitation. A vote was taken, and the motion passed with one (1) nay and one (1) abstention.

With no further business before the vestry, Father Chip made a motion to adjourn the special meeting at 8:10 p.m. The motion was seconded and carried.

JoAnne McLeod, Clerk