

On Sunday, September 25th at 11:30 am, Christ Church (Brampton) will hold its Annual Vestry.

Dear Christ Church Family ~

Today we are releasing our Annual Vestry package. You may be asking yourself what is Vestry? Why should I care? Is this really something I need to pay attention to? We believe the short answer is...YES. If you consider this your parish, Vestry is a very important aspect of our life together at Christ Church.

WHAT IS VESTRY?

The term Vestry term refers to the decision-making body of the congregation ~ it is the “business” of the church. At our Annual Vestry we elect and/or appoint officers for Christ Church. These include Church Wardens, Members of Synod, Advisory Board, Envelope Secretary and Treasurer. Although governed by various Canons and Episcopal (Bishop) authority, it is similar to a company’s Annual General Meeting where motions are presented and voted on. To vote at Vestry, a member of the congregation signs the following declaration:

“I solemnly declare that I have been a member of the Anglican Church of Canada and of this congregation for at least three (3) months, that I have attended regularly scheduled services of worship with this congregation at least three (3) times in the past year, that I am of the full age of sixteen (16) years and that I have not voted as a member of any other vestry during the previous three (3) months, nor do I intend to vote in any other vestry during the ensuing year”.

Practically speaking, a member of Vestry receives Holy Communion, makes a financial contribution and participates (or has) in the church life by volunteering in some capacity.

CORPORATION:

Together, the Incumbent and the Churchwardens, collectively referred to as “Corporation”, are responsible for the administration and management of the business affairs of Christ Church. Wardens are appointed and/or elected at Vestry. Corporation meets on a scheduled basis and communicates to the Parish throughout the year and the Wardens are always available to address questions and/or concerns.

ADVISORY BOARD:

Advisory Board members are also either appointed or elected at Vestry and meet quarterly as another way of providing communication and input between Corporation and the congregation. They provide a valuable sounding board for decisions that are meaning made and bring forth suggestions.

Corporation communications and Advisory Board Minutes are posted on our website www.christchurchbrampton.ca under the tab Media/Resources. There you also find Annual Vestry Reports and recent copies of the Courier and Weekly Bulletins.

LAY REPRESENTATIVES TO SYNOD:

Synod is the governing body of a diocese. The number of lay representatives is determined by our Average Sunday Attendance ~ that is just one reason why an accurate Sunday attendance count is so important. The more important reason is that it is an indicator of our health as a parish. Yes, dollars are important but having a financially viable church without anyone coming on Sunday morning really isn’t living out its mission!

OTHER POSITIONS:

The appointment of our Envelope Secretary, Treasurer, Financial Reviewer and Heritage Committee Members make up the balance of the personnel appointments at Vestry.

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

As a self-sustaining church, Christ Church is responsible in its entirety for its financial operations. The key to Christ Church being financially viable is you ~ it is as simple as that. We are self-supporting with **over 80% of our income derived from offerings**. This is why we place an emphasis on individual Christian financial stewardship. Without healthy offerings, we simply cannot afford the ministry that we have.

Each year at Vestry, the previous year's Financial Statements and current year's Budget are presented and approved. At Christ Church, we have two distinct accounts that together are reported in our Financial Statements. These are referred to as the **Heritage Account** and the **Operating Account**. Perhaps the easiest way to distinguish between the two accounts is this ~ the Operating Account is our day to day chequing account where we manage our income and expenses whereas the Heritage Account is more like a savings account or RRSP that is used for large capital projects. We have an expression amongst leadership that goes like this "we don't dip into our RRSP to pay for the electricity bill at home, so we shouldn't do it here either".

As an Anglican parish within the Diocese of Toronto, our governance and financial relationship can be somewhat confusing and/or foreign to some folks. Think of Christ Church as a small business or a "franchise" of the Diocese and with that comes various "franchise fees" and obligations ~ the biggest of these being our Allotment. Over the past 5 years (2012-2016), Christ Church's average annual allotment was \$58,200. In F2016, our allotment represented 14% of our total expenses. It is an amount owed before we pay for anything else. That said, the work of the Diocese is supports the greater church in terms of outreach and provides us with valuable corporate services and direction. Also, Christ Church has benefited from grants made available to us, most notably an Our Faith, Our Hope grant in F2015 and a curacy grant in F2017 (with another instalment in F2018).

RESULTS:

Ideally, our income should exceed our expenses. For several years, we have been able manage to keep our expenses as flat as possible. However, there are two things that dramatically impact our results, namely:

1. A short-fall in planned offerings
2. An inflationary increase and/or unplanned expense

As your Wardens, we would be absolutely thrilled to present a balance budget but to do so requires either an unrealistic increase in offerings or a reduction in expenses. For clarity, reduced expenses can only mean a reduction in programming. It is as simple as that!

YOUR ROLE & TAKE AWAY

Christ Church is YOUR parish. Like the generations before us who have supported Christ Church so that **it is here for us today**, it is now our responsibility to make sure that we provide the sure footing for those who come after us, for "Better Things Are Yet To Come" ~ that it is how God, working through us, delivers His Kingdom on Earth. **So here's the ask...**

1. Review the Annual Vestry Report, Draft, Motions, F2016 Financial Statement and F2017 Budget
2. Plan to come to Vestry next Sunday following the 10:00 am service
3. **NEW THIS YEAR** - if you are able, please submit any questions you might have prior to Vestry to christchurchbrampton@bellnet.ca or drop them by the church so that we can compile and answer them ~ there is really no such thing as a bad question but we want to make the meeting as efficient and as transparent as possible!

We prayerfully hope to see you next week at Vestry. In the meantime, please feel free to speak with anyone of us.

Peter Harvey
Rector's Warden

Paul Wren
People's Warden

Jeffrey White
Deputy Rector's Warden

Janet Volkes
Deputy People's Warden