

Minutes of a Regular Meeting
of the Vestry
of St. James's Episcopal Church
January 17, 2017

A regular meeting of the Vestry of St. James's Episcopal Church was held on January 17, 2017, pursuant to proper notice of time and place. Vestry members attending were Mrs. Louise Bald, Mr. Willson Craigie, Mrs. Peggy Crowley, Mr. Ralph Cummins, Mrs. Becky DeCamps, Mrs. Carol Ann Fuller, Mr. Matt Harper, Mrs. Kathe Hetzer, Mrs. Erin Jewett, Mr. Dave Johnson, Mr. Jay Jordan, Mrs. Carrie Montague, Mr. Connell Mullins, Mrs. Tina Sherrod, and Mrs. Beth Skidmore. Mr. Harry Moore and Mr. Allan Rees were absent. Also attending were the Rev. Dr. Thom Blair, Rev. Carmen Germino, Rev. Hilary Streever, Ms. Suzanne Hall, Mr. Russell Lawson, Mrs. Anita Lisk, and Mrs. Poconna Thiel. Mrs. Crowley served as chair, with Mrs. Lisk serving as secretary.

The meeting opened at 5:00 p.m. with a service of Evening Prayer, with the business of the meeting beginning at 5:30. Motions to adopt the agenda and approve the Minutes from the December 20, 2016, regular meeting were made, seconded, and unanimously approved.

COMMENTS & CONCERNS

Mrs. Crowley wished everyone a happy new year. She commented that the recent Martin Luther King, Jr. Evensong with St. James's Choirs and the choir from Norfolk State University was remarkable. This year's Evensong included the last Norfolk State Choir under the direction of Dr. Carl Haywood, due to his impending retirement. Mrs. Crowley thanked the Hospitality Committee for the wonderful reception that followed the service. Mrs. Hetzer remarked that there was a great spirit throughout the evening and that, truly, "singing has no color."

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Stewardship

Ms. Hall distributed a Dashboard report, noting that the Annual Giving Campaign continues to move toward achieving its goal of 650 pledges, though the funds raised reflect the likelihood of a flat budget for 2017. A letter from the Sr. Warden was sent to the parish to inform the congregation on the current status of the church and the Annual Giving Campaign. Mr. Johnson reported that the list of names of those who have made a pledge, which was included with Mrs. Crowley's letter, has generated both positive and negative reactions. Mr. Johnson explained that the list was meant to acknowledge and thank those who have pledged their financial support for the church and asked the Vestry for their support of the decision to publicize those names.

Ms. Hall distributed a "Scattergram" which indicated intense stewardship activity in September and October, though pledges continue to be received. Ms. Hall announced a \$5,000 Challenge Match from a parishioner for existing pledges that are increased by \$100 or more and any subsequent new pledges. Under the Challenge Match, eligible pledges would be matched dollar for dollar until the \$5,000 amount is reached. While there is some concern that pledges are still being actively pursued, the goal of the Annual Giving Committee is to condense future pledge activity into fewer months. The Committee anticipates beginning the campaign in

September and conclude with the Feast in late October, but certainly would like all pledges to be received no later than December 31.

Ms. Hall promoted the upcoming Financial Peace University course, which includes a stewardship component, as a Lenten discipline and encouraged the Vestry to attend the first night to find out more about it.

Mrs. Crowley remarked that the Peer-to-Peer effort has been very helpful during this transitional year and commended the Annual Giving Committee for their hard work.

Finance

Mr. Jordan reported that the 2016 year-end budget is being finalized. The Committee is checking on the allocation of approximately \$35,000 in surplus from the 2015 budget. The 2016 Capital Maintenance line is over budget by approximately \$46,000 and the Facilities Manager is preparing an analysis to determine the proper allocation of those funds. Shrinkage for 2016 should be lower than expected, which will boost revenues.

Mr. Jordan also reported that the Finance Committee continues its work to finalize the 2017 budget, which will be presented to the Vestry at the February meeting. He and Mr. Moore have met with the program staff to discuss expenses.

COMMUNITY AND THE WORLD REPORTS

Vestry Outreach Fund

Mr. Mullins reported that the Vestry Outreach Fund Committee meets monthly and is still evaluating the applications from organizations requesting funding for this year. Mr. Mullins announced a new city-wide initiative being led by Grace & Holy Trinity Episcopal Church called "Circles RVA," whose mission is to break the cycle of poverty in Richmond. Circles will likely have volunteer opportunities for members of the parish, and Circles RVA will be invited to apply for funding from the Outreach Fund later in 2017.

Outreach

Mr. Mullins reported that CARITAS and The Healing Place, under the guidance of Executive Director Karen Stanley, is planning to establish a Healing Place for women.

Missions

Mrs. Fuller distributed a written report. Mission trips to Santiago, Cuba and Jacmel, Haiti are planned for the fall and several other mission opportunities are being considered, including a work weekend at Shrine Mont in the spring and another mission to Northern Haiti. Four mission trips during the summer are currently in the planning stages, include a return trip to Southwestern Virginia for High School Youth; gleaned on the Northern Neck for Jr. High Youth; Honduras; and Richmond. The Missions Committee is also working towards increased involvement in mission trips.

Mrs. Fuller encouraged the Vestry to attend and support the upcoming "Mardi Gras for Missions" fundraiser on February 28.

Mrs. Hetzer commented that parishioners Scott Hetzer and Ferd Baruch will be participating in an upcoming medical mission to Port-au-Prince, Haiti, through a non-profit organization.

Call and Welcome

Mrs. Sherrod reported that the Call and Welcome Committee will host a “Meet & Greet” at the church in March and a party in early summer.

Stewards of the Earth

Mr. Harper reported that an “energy audit” is currently underway at no cost to the church. The Committee is considering other “green” initiatives.

Children’s Center

Mrs. Hetzer reported that the Center recently concluded a successful campaign to raise funds to purchase two new buses. They are currently exploring where the buses can be parked, as they will not fit in the church’s parking deck, as the old vans did.

Mrs. Hetzer commented that the Center has invited the Vestry to tour their classrooms and that will be scheduled sometime in the spring.

JUNIOR WARDEN’S REPORT

Mr. Harper reported that the crane needed to install the chillers is scheduled for Saturday, February 4, weather permitting.

SENIOR WARDEN’S REPORT

Mrs. Crowley commented that she appreciated members of the Vestry taking the time to join with the Search Committee and their consultant from *Holy Cow! Consulting* to review the results of the recent congregational survey. An Executive Summary has been commissioned from the firm, but results indicate St. James’s is doing very well. The consultant remarked that the church received an exceptional response for the survey and extended praise for the church’s communications efforts. Mr. Johnson remarked that he thought the survey gave a really good indication of what’s going on in the church and recommended doing it every three years or so. Mr. Lawson said that the survey will be helpful to future strategic planning committees and easier for them to work with previously established data. Mr. Cummins remarked that a survey can inform how the church may want to change behaviors, but that is difficult to do when most parishioners are satisfied.

Mrs. Crowley reported that the Vestry Nominating Committee (Peggy Crowley, Chair; Becky DeCamps; Bill Gregory; Erin Jewett; Jay Jordan; Thayer Montague; Newnie Rogers; Mark Shuford; and Emily Stock) had met and selected three parishioners for 3-year terms and one parishioner for a 1-year term from 45 nominations. The list with photos and brief biographies will be published and distributed well before the annual Parish Meeting on February 26. Mrs. Crowley encouraged those who nominated someone who was not selected this year to nominate them again next year, when six people will stand for 3-year terms and three people will stand for 2-year terms.

INTERIM RECTOR'S REPORT

Dr. Blair announced that he and Mr. Moore had met and discussed the establishment of a larger Strategic Finance Committee that will focus on long-term financial needs and goals. Dr. Blair advocated for having a committee specifically to think about the church's finances for the next 3-5 years, particularly since the church will have a Capital Campaign within that timeframe. The Vestry's Finance Committee will continue to focus on the annual operating budget that covers regular expenses and income. Dr. Blair agreed with expanding stewardship efforts so that they are year-round noting that, as needs continue to grow, the church must move forward or it will certainly move backwards.

OTHER

Mrs. Jewett, one of the co-chairs for CARITAS, encouraged the Vestry to volunteer for the upcoming CARITAS Shelter week at St. James's February 11-18.

Attendance for the month of December, as well as year-end attendance statistics, were distributed.

Mrs. Crowley asked the Vestry to note upcoming events listed on the reverse of the agenda.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

Anita Lisk
Secretary

Approved:

Rev. Dr. Thom Blair
Interim Rector

Peggy Crowley
Senior Warden