

Minutes of a Regular Meeting
of the Vestry
of St. James's Episcopal Church
November 15, 2016

A regular meeting of the Vestry of St. James's Episcopal Church was held on November 15, 2016, pursuant to proper notice of time and place. Vestry members attending were Mrs. Peggy Crowley, Mr. Ralph Cummins, Mrs. Becky DeCamps, Mrs. Carol Ann Fuller, Mr. Matt Harper, Mrs. Kathe Hetzer, Mr. Dave Johnson, Mr. Jay Jordan, Mrs. Carrie Montague, Mr. Harry Moore, Mr. Connell Mullins, Mr. Tom Porterfield, Mr. Allan Rees, and Mrs. Tina Sherrod. Mrs. Louise Bald, Mr. Willson Craigie, Mrs. Erin Jewett, and Mrs. Beth Skidmore were absent. Also attending were the Rev. Dr. Thom Blair, Rev. Carmen Germino, Rev. Hilary Streever, Ms. Suzanne Hall, Mr. Russell Lawson, and Mrs. Anita Lisk. 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. The business of the meeting was called to order at 5:35 p.m.

Motions to adopt the agenda and approve the Minutes from the October 18, 2016, regular meeting were made, seconded, and unanimously approved.

COMMENTS & CONCERNS

Mrs. Crowley encouraged the Vestry to attend the Taste of St. James's on Wednesday, November 16. Vestry members Louise Bald and Erin Jewett are chairs of the event, which raises monies to support Food Force.

Mrs. DeCamps congratulated Ms. Hall for this year's stewardship efforts and declared that this year's Feast of St. James's was the best ever.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Stewardship

Ms. Hall distributed a Dashboard report, noting that the Annual Giving campaign was going well and is hoping for an additional 144 pledges to meet the goal of 640 pledges for 2017. She reported that over \$1.7 million has been raised thus far. The Annual Giving Committee anticipates mailing another pledge card and letter to those who have pledged in the past but have not yet for next year, with phone calls to follow up. Mrs. Crowley said that it is often helpful for parishioners to get a reminder call to make a pledge and hopes that this effort will result in enough funds so that the church can do better than a flat budget for next year.

Ms. Hall said that Dr. Blair was the perfect Interim Rector for St. James's, and that he was good about understanding budgets as well as the need for a successful campaign during this transition time.

The Peer-to-Peer effort also has been helpful in cleaning up the church's database.

Mr. Moore commented that it is informative that a significant amount in pledges for the current year was received after the budget had been finalized in February.

Dr. Blair remarked that he is impressed with the momentum and clarity for this year's stewardship and that even a flat budget should be considered a success and something to be proud of and celebrate.

Mr. Porterfield suggested that Vestry members speak about the need for pledges during the announcements at services.

Mr. Johnson said that he hopes that, within two years, the stewardship campaign uses a dollar amount goal and informs the congregation about what is needed and how it will be spent. Mrs. Montague responded that the 2016 Strategic Plan is a road map of what the parish has asked the church to do, so it could be used to explain what it will cost to achieve those goals.

Mr. Cummins asked if there are any concerns regarding the Stewardship campaign. Ms. Hall responded that there have been some dollar decreases in some parishioners' pledges and the amount represented may be difficult to make up elsewhere.

Mr. Johnson added that the campaign is challenged by a "perception of wealth" within the church so some parishioners do not feel their pledge is necessary. This is not true and the campaign has attempted to dispel that perception. He also noted that there's been a concerted effort to promote planned giving in the last few years with some success. The Whitlock Society was established to promote bequests to the Endowment and has helped to increase those gifts.

Mrs. Crowley remarked that the church has a big, exciting year ahead and she is confident the church will do well.

Ms. Hall said that she is grateful for the Annual Giving Committee and this year's efforts to shift the church's giving culture. Mr. Cummins inquired how stewardship may differ going forward to build on this year's efforts. Mrs. Montague suggested starting the campaign earlier. Mrs. DeCamps responded that the Annual Giving Committee will meet to discuss and evaluate this year's campaign and welcomed Vestry members to come to that meeting.

Finance

Mr. Moore distributed the financial reports, remarking that he is hopeful that the church will meet, if not exceed, the current budget. If there is a surplus at year-end, it will carry over to next year. At this time income is 7% ahead of last year; however, expenses are up 5% over last year, though that was expected. There are strong trends in plate offerings, prior year stewardship, and excess of actual stewardship.

Mr. Moore noted that approximately \$75,000 will be taken from the Capital Reserves to pay for previously approved expenses.

Mr. Moore said that preliminary work on the 2017 budget is underway, and the Finance Committee hopes to include a 3% salary increase for the staff, which has not had a raise in several years.

Mr. Moore reported that the Finance Committee recently met with representatives from two banks that submitted proposals for a line of credit supported by the Endowment. One of the requirements in both proposals is to transfer the church's banking business from SunTrust to the bank selected. Mr. Moore moved to:

- Accept an offer of an unsecured Line of Credit from Towne Bank at a limit of \$800,000 at an interest rate of LIBOR plus 200 basis points.
- Appoint Towne Bank to replace SunTrust
- Maintain all operating bank accounts with Towne Bank

Mr. Moore noted that interest rates are currently 2 ½% and will likely increase to 2 ¾%. The Endowment Board has agreed to cover the interest during the period of the Line of Credit.

Terms are that the Line of Credit is for three years interest only and that by month 30 Towne Bank would like to see plans for a new Capital Campaign. If by month 36, there are no plans for a new Capital Campaign, the loan balance under the Line of Credit will transition to a Term Loan, with a to-be-determined maturity.

Mr. Moore said that all this information will be conveyed to the Search Committee so that candidates for the Rector position can be made aware and the Committee can be confident that the final candidate is up to the task.

The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

GOD IN CHRIST REPORTS

Mrs. DeCamps distributed a written report for all *God in Christ* committees.

Strategic Goals Status

Mrs. DeCamps reported the status of the three goals on which the God in Christ committees are focusing:

- 1) Committing to a renewed balance between Sunday worship services and Christian Education hour
Steps have been taken to tighten the 9:00 service by inviting children to come forward to watch the setting of the table for Eucharist before the Doxology; adding communion stations in the balcony; preaching a homily instead of a full sermon; and having the clergy greet people exiting the 9:00 service from the sidewalk if weather permits.
- 2) Providing resources and guidance to allow families, groups, individuals to create their own home-based prayer, study and worship disciplines
Chimes articles with resources have been published; a book discussion of The Spiritual Child has been scheduled during the Christian Education hour; a resource guide for in-home prayer has been created; and the library on the first floor of the Michaux House has been re-organized.
- 3) Cultivating the spiritual discipline of personal stewardship: Integrating stewardship into education and spiritual instruction for our children and youth
Two courses on financial education has been scheduled for the Winter/Spring semester. *Generation Change* is a four-week class for youth and a parent and *Financial Peace University* is a nine-week class for adults.

Adult Formation

Mrs. Fuller reported that the Adult Formation Committee is developing a sustainable model for the Committee, including defining the roles, vision and goals of the committee and determining the appropriate division of work between staff and laity.

The annual parish retreat at Shrine Mont was nourishing and enjoyed by all participants. Mrs. Streever and Mary Beth Abplanalp, Director of Youth and Young Adults, are working on an organizational structure for planning that will include more lay leadership and involvement in the future.

Mrs. Streever reported that adult classes this fall have been well-received and attended. She is currently planning classes and retreats for the Winter/Spring semester.

Young Adults

Mr. Rees reported that the Young Adults Ministry leadership is planning the support for the annual Peter Paul Development Center Christmas party, where the gifts from the Giving Tree will be distributed. The leadership is also planning the annual Stations of the Cross hike on Holy Saturday and a “River Retreat” for young adults in the spring.

Youth and Children’s Ministries

Mrs. Montague reported that attendance for the Sunday morning Youth Groups this year is 40% more than last, as the program continues to grow. Eighteen high school students recently participated in the Diocesan PYM (Parish Youth Ministries) retreat at Shrine Mont, which is double the number that attended last year.

Dr. Blair commented that it is so important for a church to have a vital youth program and this report is a great testimony to St. James’s finding the right staff person and volunteers to lead the program.

Mrs. Montague reported that Sunday School and Children’s Chapel have healthy participation and Becky Page, Director of Children’s Ministries, is working on plans for the upcoming Advent Fair and Christmas Pageant.

CHILDREN’S CENTER

Mrs. Hetzer reported that the Children’s Center director, Debbie Lickey, has broken her ankle and will be working from home for a while. The Children’s Center annual Christmas Crosses have been created and will be for sale on Sunday mornings and through the Children’s Center.

JUNIOR WARDEN’S REPORT

Mr. Harper reported that a contract for the new chiller has been signed with Colonial Webb and the cost was negotiated down from the original proposal. Anticipated completion of the installation is early March, 2017.

Mr. Harper also reported that the work needed for the steeple will be done in two phases – the first to stop water from incursion and the second to fix any structural cracks.

Safety & Security

Mr. Porterfield submitted a report of Protocols and Procedures as recommended by the Safety & Security Committee. Mr. Porterfield requested that the Vestry read through the report in preparation for future discussion and potential action.

In addition to developing a communications plan in case of emergencies, the committee of 8-9 people met over the course of six months to bring forward several items for consideration by the Vestry, including:

- 1) Training staff and parishioners in basic first aid response
- 2) Cultivating a “see something/say something” culture for potential harmful situations
- 3) Determining how to make the church facilities more secure, including the possibility of hiring a professional security officer on-site during church services and activities
- 4) Creating directional maps for fire exits and alarms with instructions
- 5) Conducting safety drills

- 6) Establishing an inventory of individuals on the property at all services and events for reference in case of an emergency
- 7) Evaluating the possibility of the church serving as an emergency shelter for those in our community affected by a natural disaster, such as a flood, tornado, or hurricane

SENIOR WARDEN'S REPORT

Mrs. Crowley reminded the Vestry to send written reports to Mrs. Lisk in advance of the meeting so that she can send them to Vestry members to review before the meeting. She also encouraged the Vestry to complete the Search Committee Survey.

Maternity & Paternity Policies

Mrs. Streever will be presenting to the Diocese a resolution on Parental Leave at the upcoming Diocesan Council in January, which prompted a review of St. James's current policy, approved in 2002, which states that

Full time clergy and staff shall be granted a paid eight-week maternity leave or two-week paternity leave.

Given current market parental leave policies, it is recommended that St. James's policy be revised to increase the weeks for maternity leave to twelve weeks and paternity leave to four weeks. Mr. Harper is still reviewing how this policy would integrate with current sick leave and disability benefits, and so moved that the policy be changed to reflect the additional weeks of parental leave, with authority granted to the Finance and Executive Committee to finalize the policy once that review is complete. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

INTERIM RECTOR'S REPORT

Dr. Blair reminded the Vestry that his door is open and he is willing and interested in listening to any comments and concerns. He remarked that St. James's is a great parish with a great staff.

OTHER

Attendance for the month of October was 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 7:10 p.m.

Anita Lisk
Secretary

Approved:

Rev. Dr. Thom Blair
Interim Rector

Peggy Crowley
Senior Warden