

Minutes of a Regular Meeting
of the Vestry
of St. James's Episcopal Church
November 21, 2017

A regular meeting of the Vestry of St. James's Episcopal Church was held on November 21, 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, Mr. Matt Harper, Mrs. Kathe Hetzer, Mr. Scott Hurt, Mrs. Erin Jewett, Mr. Jay Jordan, Mrs. Tina Sherrod, and Mrs. Laura Strickler. Mr. T.A. Hickman, Mr. Dave Johnson, Mr. Harry Moore, Mr. Connell Mullins, Mrs. Beth Skidmore, and Mr. Michael Whitlow were absent. Also attending were staff members the Rev. Dr. John McCard, the Rev. Carmen Germino, the Rev. Hilary Streever, Ms. Suzanne Hall, Mr. Russell Lawson, and Mrs. Anita Lisk. Dr. McCard 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 5:25. Motions to adopt the agenda and approve the Minutes from the October 10, 2017 regular meeting were made, seconded, and unanimously approved.

COMMENTS & CONCERNS

Mrs. Crowley commented that two significant church events had occurred since the last Vestry meeting – the Feast of St. James's and the Taste of St. James's – and both were outstanding. The Feast was held on-site and was a great welcome to Dr. McCard. The Taste of St. James's had a good turn-out and may set a new record for sales.

Dr. McCard remarked that the recent mission trip to Haiti was successful, with lots of singing, dancing, and building at the Wings of Hope facility in Jacmel, Haiti. Dr. McCard announced that Ms. Germino was invited to Cuba, along with parishioners DeWitt Casler and Zach Reid, to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the Cathedral in Havana. On behalf of the church, Ms. Germino presented the Bishop of Cuba an unused cope owned by St. James's.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Finance

The financial reports for October 2017 were distributed and reviewed. Mrs. Bald summarized the report, noting especially that plate offerings and prior year stewardship are lower than expected. Buildings and Grounds expenses are expected to increase, as some invoices for recent work were received after the month closed. There was a boost in pledge payments in October and another is expected after statements are sent in early December. It was noted that investment income with the Endowment also increased.

Mrs. Crowley commented that this time of year is difficult and somewhat confusing because parishioners are being reminded to pay their pledge for the current year, while also being asked to pledge for the next year.

Stewardship

Ms. Hall distributed and reviewed the current “dashboard” report for the Annual Giving campaign. Another pledge card will be sent to all who have made a pledge in the last couple of years, but who haven’t yet pledged for 2018. Another \$500,000 is need to make the monetary goal and 156 more pledges are needed to make the pledge goal of 700. Ms. Hall welcomed the Vestry’s thoughts about next year’s Annual Giving campaign.

Mr. Harper commended Ms. Hall for her good work and asked when the current campaign will conclude so that budget work can begin in earnest. Ms. Hall said that the Annual Giving Committee will review the campaign’s status in December.

COMMITTEE REPORTS – *God in Christ*

Written reports were distributed and reviewed. Mrs. DeCamps reported that the God in Christ Committees were on track for reaching strategic plan goals.

Worship

Mrs. DeCamps said that the staff is still considering what to do regarding a Sunday evening service, specifically the Jazz Mass.

The leaders of the various lay worship ministries met with Dr. McCard to introduce themselves and their ministry. Both the Wheels Ministry and the Video Squad need to recruit additional volunteers. It was agreed that the Video ministry was especially important as a tool to reach out to those who can’t come to the church.

Mr. Whitlow has met with Dr. McCard to discuss Safety and Security recommendations, with a report on this matter forthcoming at the December Vestry meeting.

Baptism Guides

Mrs. DeCamps announced that Mrs. Streever, as the Associate Rector responsible for Adult Christian Formation, will serve as the point person for this ministry to baptismal families. New guidelines for the volunteer Baptism Guides and the families have been developed.

Music

Mrs. DeCamps noted the special music events held during the fall, including:

- Evensong with the Parish Choir in September
- Blessing of the Animals with the Cherub, Children’s, and Youth Choirs in October
- Bluegrass Mass with the West Gallery Choir in October
- The Feast of St. James’s, featuring music from The Sound of Music in October
- Choral Eucharist with the Parish Choir and Evensong with the Youth Choir in November

Adult Formation

The Committee met with Mrs. Streever to review progress toward the strategic goals. Many educational and formation opportunities are being offered. Mrs. Streever announced that the theme for the Lenten series will be about substance abuse and addiction. Mrs. Hetzer recommended parishioner Lynda Hatcher’s recent book, Mothering Addiction.

Shrine Mont Retreat

Mrs. Hetzer recapped the recent annual parish retreat to Shrine Mont, noting a rise in attendance over the previous two years. The intergenerational program was led by author and family minister Jerusalem Greer. The results of a survey sent to the retreat participants was distributed. There was some discussion about potentially subsidizing the cost for participants to make the retreat more affordable.

Young Adults

Mr. Hurt announced that the “Young Adults” ministry has been re-branded “Second Quarter” to better indicate the age range. The committee is trying to offer activities that are inclusive and have opportunities for small group engagement.

Youth

Mr. Hurt reported that there have been several recent activities to engage youth, including the Parish Youth Ministries (PYM) retreat for high school-aged students and the cooking class to prepare goods for the Taste of St. James’s.

Mrs. Jewett commented that Mary Beth Abplanalp, the Director for Youth and Young Adults, has been meeting with individual volunteers to keep them engaged. Youth leaders are also trying to keep track of youth who have slowed or dropped their level of activity in an effort to re-engage them.

Children

Mrs. Bald announced that the Sunday School children will be collecting books to go with the Peter Paul Development Center Giving Tree gifts. The Advent Fair on December 3 will be for all ages.

NEW BUSINESS

Mrs. Crowley announced that she is in the process of establishing this year’s Nominating Committee. Vestry members for six three-year terms and three two-year terms will be elected. Mr. Hurt, who is currently completing an unexpired term, has agreed to stand for one of the two-year terms. Mrs. Crowley hopes to nominate former Vestry members for the other two two-year terms. A list of former Vestry members by class was distributed and Mrs. Crowley encouraged current Vestry members to review and consider who to nominate. Mrs. Crowley also encouraged the Vestry to nominate other parishioners whom they believe would be valuable members of the Vestry for the three-year terms. Nominations should be sent to Mrs. Crowley and Mrs. Lisk.

Mr. Jordan commented that St. James’s has a history of electing new people for the Vestry, but agreed that it may be helpful for people with experience to fill the two-year terms, since there will be nine new members nominated this year.

Dr. McCard is preparing a Vestry Commitment Letter that will convey expectations of Vestry members.

OLD BUSINESS

Accessibility

Mr. Harper distributed the report from the Accessibility Committee and commended the members of the Committee for their work. The Executive Committee agrees with the

recommendations presented by the Accessibility Committee; however, the Rector makes the final decision about whether or not to implement them.

While there have been a few negative comments about the removal of half of the front pews to create wheelchair accessible seating, the Committee has received mostly positive feedback during the trial period.

Mrs. Crowley noted that there may be additional possibilities for more permanent accessibility when monies are raised through a capital campaign.

Buildings and Grounds

Mr. Harper distributed the report from the Strategic Buildings and Grounds Committee, noting that the purpose of the committee is to develop a strategic approach to future buildings and grounds needs in an effort to plan for how much they will cost and when to expect that they will need to be done. The Committee recommends hiring consultants to evaluate all the substantial systems in the facilities which will establish a maintenance schedule for repairs and costs. The Committee specifically recommends hiring Engineers Plus for the mechanical, engineering, and plumbing (MEP) systems and Huff Morris Architects for structural evaluations. The fee for Huff Morris is \$2,500 and \$31,340 for Engineers Plus. Mr. Harper proposed that the Vestry review the proposals and vote at the December meeting. Mrs. Bald noted that, of the expense for Engineers Plus, \$20,000 is a fixed cost and the remainder covers potentially changing expenses. The Executive Committee recommended establishing a “not greater than” figure for those expenses for the motion to be voted upon in December.

Mr. Harper said that these expenses would likely be paid using the church’s established line of credit and the Endowment Board would be informed of this action.

Mr. Harper expects that an investment in these studies and the resulting reports will prove helpful for the upcoming Capital Campaign, informing what will be necessary for the future regarding buildings and grounds needs.

It was agreed to table this issue until the December meeting. Vestry members were asked to keep the distributed printed materials so that they will have them available for that meeting (and thus avoid re-printing).

RECTOR’S REPORT

Dr. McCard commented that he and his wife, Cynthia, had been invited to several “small group” parties during the fall, which they have found to be very helpful in getting to know people in the parish.

Dr. McCard announced that he had recently attended the groundbreaking for the renovations at Beth Ahabah and he and Rabbi Nagel have casually discussed a potential joint pilgrimage to the Holy Land in the future.

Dr. McCard commended parishioner Jim Ukrop on his recent Lifetime Achievement Award for Philanthropy. He and several members of the staff will attend the luncheon honoring Mr. Ukrop.

The “Lunch and Learn” tour offer by the Peter Paul Development Center for Dr. McCard and members of the Vestry was a great opportunity to see the East End of Richmond and to better understand the services provided by the Center.

OTHER

The attendance report for October was distributed.

Dr. McCard reminded the Vestry to review the upcoming events listed on the reverse of the agenda. He particularly noted the upcoming Advent Fair for All Ages on December 3 and the Alternative Gifts Fair on December 3, as well as the many upcoming Advent opportunities.

Dr. McCard also asked Vestry members to keep Mark and Laura Shuford in their prayers, as Mark recently has undergone surgery.

Mr. Lawson distributed the Winter Quarterly Chimes.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned with a benediction by Dr. McCard at 7:10 p.m.

Anita Lisk
Secretary

Approved:

Rev. Dr. John McCard
Rector

Peggy Crowley
Senior Warden