

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

A regular meeting of the Vestry of St. James's Episcopal Church was held on February 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. Carol Ann Fuller, Mr. Dave Johnson, Mrs. Carrie Montague, Mr. Harry Moore, Mr. Connell Mullins, Mr. Allan Rees, Mrs. Tina Sherrod, and Mrs. Beth Skidmore. Mrs. Becky DeCamps, Mr. Matt Harper, Mrs. Kathe Hetzer, Mrs. Erin Jewett, and Mr. Jay Jordan were absent. Also attending were the Rev. Dr. Thom Blair, Rev. Hilary Streever, Ms. Suzanne Hall, Mr. Russell Lawson, Mrs. Anita Lisk, and Mrs. Poconna Thiel. Mr. Charlie Whitaker, Chair of the Rector Search Committee, attended as a special guest. 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 5:25. Motions to adopt the agenda and approve the Minutes from the January 17, 2017 regular meeting as printed were made, seconded, and unanimously approved.

SPECIAL GUEST

Mr. Whitaker reported that the Search Committee is currently in the process of accepting applications and recruiting potential candidates for the Rector position. Several candidates have applied and the Committee is also considering potential candidates who have been referred to it. Mr. Whitaker noted that Pam Wesley from the Berkeley Divinity School at Yale and Cynthia Cannon from the Consortium of Endowed Episcopal Parishes have both been very helpful, as has representatives from the Virginia Theological Seminary and Sewanee.

Mr. Whitaker said the next steps for the Committee is to review all the candidates and determine which ones should be approached to proceed in the process.

CHILDREN'S CENTER

Mrs. Crowley distributed a list of nominees for the Children's Center Board, as prepared by their Governance Committee. The slate of candidates includes Stacy Brinkley, Ruth Ellett, Mark Emblidge, Ann Gurkin, Toni Hamlin, and Marshall Lynch. On a motion made and seconded, the Vestry approved the slate.

Mrs. Crowley announced that the Children's Center has raised the funds to build storage cabinets in the hallway outside the first floor classrooms and has requested that the Vestry approve the relocation of the pew/bench currently located in that space and the building of the cabinetry. A motion was made, seconded, and unanimously approved to relocate the bench and allow the cabinets to be built in that space. Mrs. Crowley suggested that the bench could be auctioned at Mardi Gras for Missions, which the Vestry approved pending determining if it had been given to the church in honor of or as a memorial to someone.

COMMENTS & CONCERNS

Mrs. Crowley announced that the Rev. Carmen Germino and her husband, Facilities Manager Matt Presson, had welcomed their son Christopher Silas Presson on February 20.

Mr. Moore expressed his concern about children going to the altar for the Eucharistic Prayer at the same time the ushers come forward with the offering at the 9:00 service. The Worship Committee had suggested the children come forward at that time to help with the flow of the service. The Committee will evaluate this, as well as other suggestions that were implemented this year in an effort to make the 9:00 service more efficient.

Mrs. Crowley remarked that CARITAS shelter week had just concluded and Mrs. Jewett and her co-chair Carrie Acey provided great leadership. Many volunteers were involved in the week. Mr. Johnson suggested asking Boy Scout Troop 400 to help move in and out the cots used next year.

Mrs. Streever announced that the *Financial Peace University* course was going well. Ms. Hall added that many of the participants are millennials who are not currently members of St. James's and the course has proven to be an evangelical opportunity. Mrs. Skidmore asked if the *Generation Change* course for teens and a parent had concluded. It has, but Mrs. Streever said that, since both courses were well-received, it is likely they will be offered again. Mrs. Streever and Ms. Hall particularly thanked lay leaders for the courses, Scott Hurt, Chris Abplanalp, and Leigh Hulcher.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Stewardship

Ms. Hall distributed a Dashboard report and happily announced that the Annual Fund campaign had exceeded all goals. Over 650 pledges, including 93 new pledges, for a total of \$2,038,106 raised. Ms. Hall said that stewardship at St. James's has become a ministry, primarily because of the "Peer-to-Peer" effort connecting parishioners with each other. All agreed that these results are remarkable and important in this transition year. Ms. Hall remarked that the campaign was the result of lots of work by lots of people. She said that there will be acknowledgement of those who have pledged in the quarterly spring Chimes and in the Annual Report. Mr. Johnson commented that he, on behalf of the Annual Giving Committee, appreciated the Vestry's support.

Finance

Mr. Moore distributed the 2016 Year-end Report and the 2017 Operating Budget.

Revenue for 2016 was similar to 2015 but expenses were down, resulting in a surplus of \$53,429, which will be carried over to 2017.

Mr. Moore moved that the Vestry adopt the 2017 Operating Budget, balanced at \$2,478,111, as presented. The motion was seconded.

During discussion Mr. Moore stated that the two major increases in the budget were salary adjustments for the staff and an increase in the Vestry Outreach Fund. Mr. Moore explained the budget process this year, which included meeting with the staff twice to consider and discuss their budget requests, resulting in trimming budget expenses to meet anticipated income.

The outcome resulted in:

- Adding \$10,000 to the Vestry Outreach Fund
- 9% increase for overall personnel expenses
- Only 4% increase in Buildings & Grounds expenses
- Eliminating instruments at the Blessing of the Animals and Thanksgiving services
- Restructuring the Feast of St. James's to reduce expenses
- Reducing the annual gift to the Children's Center
- The Endowment agreeing to fund the Search Committee costs

Mr. Johnson observed that reducing funds for stewardship will limit what can be done to raise funds in the future and encouraged the Vestry to be mindful of that next year.

Mr. Moore said that he was concerned that the budget did not include replenishing the Capital Reserve Fund, which was significantly depleted this year. He also announced that he was establishing a Strategic Finance Committee to determine the church's long-range financial viewpoint so that the church can be well prepared for future financial needs.

Mrs. Crowley commended Mr. Moore for all his time and effort to develop the budget and Mrs. Thiel for her expertise.

The question was called and the motion to adopt the 2017 Operating Budget as presented was unanimously approved.

GOD IN CHRIST REPORTS

A written report for all *God in Christ* committees was distributed.

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*

The clergy has reviewed the current plan and has decided to stay the course until the summer schedule begins. A meeting to evaluate the efforts that were made this year to balance the worship services and the education time will take place at the end of the year.

- 2) *Providing resources and guidance to allow families, groups, and individuals to create their own home-based prayer, study and worship disciplines*

Sunday School students made prayer cubes to facilitate family prayer at home.

- 3) *Cultivating the spiritual discipline of personal stewardship: Integrating stewardship into education and spiritual instruction for our children and youth*

Generation Change for youth and a parent was well-received and will likely be offered again. The Wednesday night *Financial Peace University* has been well-attended and feedback has been positive.

Worship

Mr. Rees referred to the report, which included information about worship assistants, Baptism Guides, and Music.

Dr. Blair commented that he has observed that the efforts to restore the Christian Education time to its fullest has been helpful and is working.

Mrs. Streever remarked that the recent Youth Sunday was great, with youth serving in most worship assistants' roles – including as Officiant and Preacher – for the morning services. Efforts will be made to reach out to those youth who participated to encourage them to take on worship assistant roles such as lectors, ushers, and LEMs on a regular basis throughout the year.

Adult Formation

Mrs. Fuller noted in the written report the actions taken to address Strategic Plan Goals, including

- offering several retreats for adults
- providing a variety of classes to equip parishioners with tools and information to deepen their faith
- creating small groups gathered in faith
- planning pilgrimages during this year and next
- establishing “field trips” to connect faith with local attractions

Mrs. Fuller also brought to the Vestry's attention upcoming Lenten study opportunities as listed in the recent quarterly Chimes. This year's Lenten theme is “Reconciliation.”

Youth and Children's Ministries

Mrs. Montague reported that 47 middle and high school students and 10 chaperones were registered for this year's youth “SNOWFEST” weekend.

Sunday School children participated in two CARITAS projects. The Vacation Bible School curriculum this summer will be *Camp Out*, with registration beginning on March 1.

Mrs. Montague expressed her concern about fewer children participating in Sunday School and Vacation Bible School than in past years, remembering in particular how few children brought in mite boxes to flower the cross last Easter. She encouraged the Vestry to continue to monitor to see if this continues to be an ongoing trend.

Young Adults

Mr. Rees reported that the Young Adults Ministry leadership met recently and is working on two upcoming events;

- 1) River Retreat in Weems May 6 & 7, co-chaired by Brian Bald and Jeremy Berteele
- 2) Stations of the Cross Hike on Belle Isle on Holy Saturday, April 15

Mrs. Bald added that the Young Adults Committee has been “sacred stalking” on social media to help update the church's database and is working with Mr. Lawson to register new young adults through the website.

JUNIOR WARDEN'S REPORT

Mrs. Crowley reported on behalf of Mr. Harper that there's a video online of the chillers being loaded onto the roof for installation.

Also, Laura Shuford, Facilities Coordinator, will be covering for Mr. Presson during his paternity leave.

SENIOR WARDEN'S REPORT

Mrs. Crowley reported that the Diocese's recent convention theme was "Walk in Love" and she expressed her thanks to St. James's Delegates and Alternates who attended as representatives of the church. Wilson Trice and Newnie Rogers, whose terms as Delegate and Alternate, respectively, expire this year are both eligible for re-election. Alex Slaughter, whose term as Delegate also expires, is not eligible for re-election this year. Mrs. Crowley has contacted Mr. Trice and Ms. Rogers and both are willing to stand for re-election. The Vestry will elect two Delegates and two or three Alternates at the March or April meeting and Mrs. Crowley encouraged the Vestry to contact her with recommendations of parishioners who may be interested in serving.

The Wednesday night Christian Journey series on February 22 will feature an update on the Strategic Plan. Mark Shuford, a member of the Strategic Planning Committee, has agreed to speak about the plan, but Vestry members are needed to report on the progress the Vestry has made on the plan thus far.

Mrs. Crowley concluded her report by acknowledging the members who will be rotating off the Vestry – Mrs. Fuller, Mrs. Montague, and Mr. Rees – thanking them for their three years of service and giving each of them a gift in gratitude.

INTERIM RECTOR'S REPORT

Dr. Blair commented that he hoped the Vestry was proud of themselves and the good and unusual work for stewardship, which he felt was remarkable and commendable. Dr. Blair noted that ongoing efforts for long-term financing will be very important going forward and he appreciates Mr. Moore's foresight. Dr. Blair said that he was encouraged by the success of the work of the Youth and Young Adult leadership, which is particularly important in this day and age, and that adult Christian formation was going well. He remarked that all the efforts of the staff and leadership has been great and he couldn't imagine anything other than continuing success for the church with the new rector.

OTHER

Mrs. Crowley reminded the Vestry that the March meeting date is a week earlier than usual, on March 14, and the annual Vestry Retreat follows on Saturday, March 18. The new Vestry will be installed on Sunday, March 12, at the 9:00 a.m. service.

Mrs. Crowley asked the Vestry to note upcoming events listed on the reverse of the agenda, particularly the Annual Meeting on Sunday, February 26.

Attendance for the month of January was distributed.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Anita Lisk
Secretary

Approved:

Rev. Dr. Thom Blair
Interim Rector

Peggy Crowley
Senior Warden