

Minutes of a Regular Meeting
of the Vestry
of St. James's Episcopal Church
March 14, 2017

A regular meeting of the Vestry of St. James's Episcopal Church was held on March 14, 2017, pursuant to proper notice of time and place. Vestry members attending were Mr. Willson Craigie, Mrs. Peggy Crowley, Mrs. Becky DeCamps, Mr. Matt Harper, Mrs. Kathe Hetzer, Mr. T.A. Hickman, Mr. Scott Hurt, Mrs. Erin Jewett, Mr. Dave Johnson, Mr. Harry Moore, Mrs. Beth Skidmore, Mrs. Laura Strickler, and Mr. Michael Whitlow. Mrs. Louise Bald, Mr. Ralph Cummins, Mr. Jay Jordan, Mr. Connell Mullins, and Mrs. Tina Sherrod were absent. Also attending were the Rev. Dr. Thom Blair, 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 5:25. Motions to adopt the agenda and approve the Minutes from the February 21, 2017 regular meeting as printed were made, seconded, and unanimously approved.

SPECIAL BUSINESS

Election of Vestry Officers

Dr. Blair reminded the Vestry that the Vestry had unanimously elected Peggy Crowley and Matt Harper to continue to serve another year as Senior and Junior Warden, respectively, at the October 18, 2016 meeting. A motion was made, seconded and unanimously approved to re-elect Ann Rawls and Katharine Hoffmann to serve another year as volunteer treasurers, and Anita Lisk to serve as Registrar of the Vestry.

Mr. Harry Moore has agreed to serve another year as Finance Chair.

Vestry Greeter

A sign-up sheet for volunteers to serve as monthly Greeters at the church door was circulated.

COMMENTS & CONCERNS

Mrs. Crowley introduced and welcomed new Vestry members T.A. Hickman, Scott Hurt, Laura Strickler, and Michael Whitlow.

Mrs. Crowley reported that she, Mrs. Streever, Ms. Hall, and two members of the Rector Search Committee attended the Consortium for Endowed Episcopal Parishes conference in February. Ms. Hall presented a panel about the "Peer-to-Peer" stewardship effort at the conference and Mrs. Crowley expressed how proud she was of the presentation and St. James's stewardship efforts last year.

Mrs. Crowley announced that the recent *Mardi Gras for Missions* fundraiser was a great success, with an anticipated revenue of approximately \$60,000 raised for missions.

Mrs. DeCamps thanked Mr. Lawson for the inclusion of an article on the sacred spaces of the church in the quarterly Chimes. Mr. Lawson commended Mr. Moore for the idea and noted that a collection of these articles can be found on the website. Mr. Lawson said that these kinds of communications about the culture of the church helps to build for future stewardship efforts and inform the parish how its financial support of the church is used.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Finance

Mr. Moore distributed the monthly report, noting key financial concerns:

- 1) No provision in the 2017 budget to replenish the Capital Reserve Fund or anticipate capital expenses;
- 2) Too much dependence on the Endowment Fund for operating expenses;
- 3) Invoices received several months late negatively affected the ability to accurately project capital expenses.

Mr. Moore noted that Wilson Trice, Secretary of the Endowment Board, had also mentioned in his report at the congregation's Annual Meeting in February that the Endowment Board was concerned about the church's operating budget relying on funds from the endowment. Mr. Moore was particularly concerned about the 3-year commitment from the Endowment for specific salaries.

Mr. Moore reported that he has established a Strategic Finance Committee to look at long-term financial concerns such as the issues he's noted, as well as others that will inevitably occur. The Committee will assess risk factors and evaluate needs to be prepared for future issues.

Mr. Moore noted that, at this time of year, pre-paid pledges causes revenue to significantly exceed expenses; however, that will level out as the year progresses.

The Reserves summary was reviewed, and it was noted that the Capital Reserve Fund reflects previously approved expenses and the Endowment reflects market gains since December. Stewardship receipts comparisons between the year thus far and previous years is also indicated in the report.

Mr. Moore reminded the Vestry that the church is transitioning its banking business to Towne Bank.

Mrs. Crowley reminded the Vestry that the two main goals for the 2017 budget were achieved:

- 1) Provide salary increases to selected staff members as appropriate, and
- 2) Increase Outreach Fund

Stewardship

Ms. Hall distributed a Dashboard report and announced that, while the 2017 Stewardship Campaign has been completed, pledges are still being received. The Peer-to-Peer effort helped with increasing the number of people making a financial pledge to the church, and the Annual Fund Committee hopes to also increase the amount pledged next year.

Ms. Hall announced that the staff will be initiating a "Spring Cleaning" effort to update the church's membership rolls and clean up the database before the new Rector arrives.

The Annual Giving Committee is already at work on the 2018 campaign, beginning with the development of Peer-to-Peer teams. Nearly 100 volunteers are expected to make calls to the parish as part of the next Peer-to-Peer effort.

Ms. Hall announced that Founders Sunday will be celebrated on June 4, which is Pentecost this year, and the Stewardship office will be emphasizing planned giving over the next several months. Ms. Hall noted that it is the generosity of those who have left bequests to the church over the years that is the foundation of the Endowment Fund and it is especially important to support the Endowment, as the church relies on those funds often.

Mr. Johnson thanked and praised Ms. Hall for her work and noted that the congregation needs to be educated about the importance of making a commitment to give to their church, and from a different perspective than they may choose to give to other charitable organizations.

Ms. Hall presented last year's approved Vestry Statements on Annual Giving and Planned Giving, asking the Vestry to re-affirm them for this year. On a motion made and seconded, the Vestry unanimously approved the following Statements:

Vestry Statement on Annual Giving

What we give to the Church's work in the world depends on the relationship each of us has with God. In considering a level of commitment, we must reflect on and pray about our thankfulness to God for the good things given to us in this life. The Vestry encourages charitable giving, with the hope that a pledge to support God's work at St. James's will be an individual's or family's largest charitable gift.

The Vestry acknowledges the Biblical tithe of 10% of annual income as the standard of giving to God's work in the world. We strongly encourage our fellow Vestry members and parishioners to be mindful of the tithe as we prayerfully consider our financial commitment to the vital work and ministry of this congregation in our community and in the world, pledging as much toward a tithe as able.

We further recognize that in order to expect parishioners to contribute a larger percentage of their giving and time to St. James's, the Church must communicate clearly how it uses its resources to support the ministries and maintenance of St. James's. This information can be found in the Church's Annual Report, the Annual Giving Case Statement, on the website, and in many other church communications.

Vestry Statement on Planned Giving

In deep gratitude for the gifts that God has given us, we, the Vestry of St. James's Episcopal Church in Richmond, Virginia, wholeheartedly approve and support the planned giving ministry of our parish. The health of our church is built on the generosity of many, some of whom are no longer with us. We give thanks for their gracious gifts and recognize our responsibility to future generations for the continued strength of our parish.

We believe in the importance of returning to God part of what God has given us. Therefore, when we consider or review our individual estate plans we commit ourselves to make some provision for the St. James's Endowment Fund, Inc. as our

individual circumstances permit. We encourage every member of the parish to do the same.

Mrs. Crowley acknowledged and thanked Mr. Johnson and Mrs. Bobbie Ukrop, who served as co-chairs of the Annual Giving Committee.

COMMITTEES REPORTS

God In Christ

Mrs. DeCamps reported that she has been keeping track of the Vestry goals set for these committees last year and referenced the February Minutes for the status of those goals.

One to Another

Mrs. Skidmore distributed a written report from the Hospitality Committee. This Committee doesn't meet regularly, but provides receptions for specific events.

Mr. Harper reported that the new chillers have been purchased and installed on the roof of Gibson Hall. He thanked Mr. Lawson for adding the drone videos of the installation on the website, as it will increase awareness in the parish of the project and send the message that the Vestry is taking care of the church property and being good stewards. Approved work on the steeple is forthcoming. Other facility projects accomplished include the installation of a new fire system and updated electrical panel; moisture repair on a portion of the ceiling in the sanctuary; Memorial Garden, courtyard, and parking deck lighting replacement; and other improvements to the property.

Community and the World

Mrs. Hetzer reported that the Children's Center will be moving the old pew in the hallway on the first floor and building storage in that space. Plans to add a covered sandbox in the playground area is being revisited with the landscape architect. The Children's Center has invited the Vestry for a tour, which has been scheduled before the April Vestry meeting in lieu of the usual Evening Prayer.

Nancy Warman, Director of Servant Ministries, submitted a written report, highlighting four particular areas of outreach:

- 1) CARITAS (Churches Around Richmond To Assure Shelter) – Shelter week at St. James's took place in February under the leadership of Erin Jewett and Carrie Acey, with Sharon Wayne assisting with evening programming. Mrs. Warman reported that CARITAS will be implementing a recovery program for women, The Healing Place for Women, as part of a larger endeavor to create a CARITAS Center, which will house many of their current services, including shelter weeks at churches.
- 2) REAL (Recovering from Everyday Addictive Lifestyles) – The Outreach Committee has had a tour of the living areas in the Richmond Justice Center for participants this program that helps keep inmates from returning to jail.
- 3) Circles RVA – This new initiative in Richmond would be one of several chapters across the United States “to inspire and equip families and communities to resolve poverty and thrive.”
- 4) Local Outreach Mission Week – The “mission at home” will take place in mid-June.

SENIOR WARDEN’S REPORT

Mrs. Crowley encouraged all to arrive at this Saturday’s Vestry Retreat promptly at 9:00 a.m.
Mrs. Crowley reported that the Rector Search Committee is moving forward and hopes to have 6-8 candidates to proceed to the next phase of the process soon.

INTERIM RECTOR’S REPORT

Dr. Blair commented that the larger goal for the church is to build a base of community that is intent on being the body of Christ in this world and it is especially important for the church’s leadership to remember that in the midst of the everyday work of keeping the church functioning.

OTHER

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

Important meeting dates, a new Vestry Roster, and attendance for February were distributed.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

Anita Lisk
Secretary

Approved:

Rev. Dr. Thom Blair
Interim Rector

Peggy Crowley
Senior Warden