

Minutes of a Regular Meeting
of the Vestry
of St. James's Episcopal Church
April 17, 2018

A regular meeting of the Vestry of St. James's Episcopal Church was held on April 17, 2018, pursuant to proper notice of time and place. Vestry members attending were Mr. Arthur Brinkley, Mr. Ralph Cummins, Ms. Melinda Davis, Mr. Jim Goggins, Mrs. Kathe Hetzer, Mr. T.A. Hickman, Mr. Scott Hurt, Ms. Erin Jewett and Mr. Dave Johnson, Mr. Trey Sibley, Mrs. Beth Skidmore, Mr. Michael Smith, Mrs. Laura Strickler, Mr. Michael Whitlow, and Mrs. Annie Witthoefft. Mrs. Louise Bald, Dr. John Mahoney, and Ms. Karen Stanley were absent. Also attending were staff members the Rev. Dr. John McCard, the Rev. Carmen Germino, Ms. Suzanne Hall, Mrs. Anita Lisk, Mrs. Poconna Thiel, and Dr. Mark Whitmire. Dr. McCard served as chair, with Mrs. Lisk serving as secretary.

The meeting began at 5:00 p.m. with a service of Evening Prayer, with the business of the meeting beginning at 5:30 p.m. Motions to adopt the agenda and approve the Minutes from the March 13, 2018 regular meeting were made, seconded, and unanimously approved.

COMMENTS & CONCERNS

Dr. McCard announced that he was considering changing the times for the earlier Christmas Eve services to allow more time between them. He asked the Vestry to give him their opinions on whether to move the 4:00 p.m. family service to 3:00 or to move the 6:00 service to 7:00.

Dr. McCard reported that a member of the parish, Ann Caskie, had fallen on the portico steps on Sunday and he has been in touch with the family regarding her condition. She is being treated at VCU Medical Center. Mrs. Strickler commented that installing additional railings on the portico steps is under consideration, noting that the wall railing on the Birch Street side is secure and in working order.

Ms. Germino brought to the Vestry's attention the "Doers Dining" postcard invitation to join a supper club over the summer. This initiative is to foster intentional fellowship across generations and services, particularly since the annual Feast of St. James's has been discontinued. Brooke Taylor and Andy Bennett are chairs for this initiative and over two dozen hosts have been recruited for the first round of dinners and the postcards are being mailed and sent by email to encourage parishioners to sign up. There are plans to repeat this effort during the program year.

Dr. Whitmire reminded the Vestry of the upcoming organ recital featuring David Briggs in celebration of the 20th anniversary of the installation of the church's organ, Opus 112.

The Children's Center will be celebrated on April 22, with Board President Thayer Montague preaching at both the 9:00 and the 11:15 services.

NEW BUSINESS

Diocesan Convention Delegates and Alternates

The Vestry reaffirmed those Delegates and Alternates to the Diocesan Convention previously elected. They are:

Delegates Tom Baker, Ron Odom, Janet Peyton, Richard Rumble, Wilson Trice, and Michael Whitlow;

Alternates Willson Craigie, Newnie Rogers, Michael Smith, and Mark Wickersham.

Support for Candidacy for Seminarian

A letter in support of the Candidacy for Holy Orders for seminarian Kristin Wickersham was presented. The Vestry unanimously certified that Mrs. Wickersham is a communicant in good standing of the congregation and, further, that the Vestry supports her for Candidacy and believes that she possesses such qualifications as would be fitting for admission as a Candidate for Holy Orders.

Designated Plate Offerings

The Vestry unanimously approved the following designated plate offerings for the year:

Bishop Goff's Discretionary Fund	5/20/18	Bishop's annual visitation
Endowment Fund	6/3/18	Founders Sunday
VTS, Yale, General, Nashotah House	7/15/18	Theological Sunday
Central Virginia Foodbank	11/22/18	Thanksgiving Day
Diocese of Jerusalem	4/19/19	Good Friday
Children's Center	3/3/19	Children's Center Sunday

Vestry Statements on Annual and Planned Giving

The Vestry Statements on Annual and Planned Giving were tabled until the May meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

Vestry Greeters and Plate Counters

The sign up lists for Vestry Greeters and Plate Counters were recirculated.

Vestry Retreat

Mr. Whitlow distributed a work plan for initiatives discussed at the recent Vestry retreat, focusing on the three areas of Conversion, Discipleship, and Service. The three small groups discussing these areas all brought up ways for the church to be more welcoming. The work plan has been established to

- Assign Vestry leaders and committees to be responsible for the new initiatives;
- Clarify how to measure results.

Mr. Whitlow said that the work plan is a document that can be amended, as needed. Dr. McCard added that this approach allows for the sharing of information at any time, rather than waiting for when committees are specifically assigned to report. Both Mr. Whitlow and Dr. McCard encouraged everyone on the Vestry to take responsibility for and be purposeful in taking action on these initiatives, as the work will likely overlap existing committees. Goals will need to be determined so that priorities can be established.

DISCIPLESHIP CONVERSATION

Dr. McCard said that the church needs to orient itself to bringing people together. As an example, he noted that the Young Adults group recently had 75 adults and 35 children attend a party. Mr. Hurt commented that offering opportunities for parishioners to get together is the important component.

Mr. Cummins commented that a recent Forum was on the topic of “digital discipleship” and how to reach out to people and the importance of using all communications tools available, particularly to attract young people. Studies have shown that there are large challenges facing churches, with the change in societal attitudes and general dynamics affecting the Church. Now, more than ever, it’s important to keep multiple generations working and meeting together.

Mrs. Strickler noted that people are seeking authentic experiences and the church may need to re-evaluate how it operates.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

A summary report from the Discipleship group of committees was distributed.

Hospitality

Mrs. Skidmore reported on the number of receptions the committee provides during the year and said she appreciated the collaborative effort of all those involved.

Buildings & Grounds

Mrs. Strickler reported that Huff Morris Architects and Engineers Plus are actively working on the evaluations of spaces.

Work is proceeding on a variety of buildings and grounds issues previously prioritized and funding approved. Mrs. Strickler encouraged the Vestry to take note of the new directional sign in front of the Parish House and reported that the application for a permit for the corresponding sign in front of the Michaux House is in process.

Safety

Mr. Brinkley reported that several initiatives have been taken into consideration, particularly in regards to engaging the ushers to be more mindful of potential safety issues, as well as their service as a welcoming presence for those coming to St. James’s.

Communications

Mr. Cummins reported that the committee is currently considering how to best share the good work and community of St. James’s. He recommended Vestry members personally share church events on their social media outlets.

Dr. McCard noted that the website needs to be updated so that it is more user-friendly and that all parishioners should be encouraged to regularly post about St. James’s.

Memorial Garden

Mr. Cummins reported that approximately the Executive committee has approved funding for several repairs in the Memorial Garden, including stone repointing, electrical work, and pump replacement.

Stewardship

Mr. Johnson reported that the Strategic Stewardship committee is in the process of developing a specific plan, beginning with proposing the 2019 Budget in May, rather than wait until after the Annual Giving Campaign. This is an effort to educate the parish about the financial needs of the church.

Planned Giving

Ms. Davis reported that there are over 55 people who have responded that they plan to attend the upcoming party for the Whitlock Legacy Society members, honoring those who have named St. James's as a beneficiary in their wills. Ms. Davis announced that Jim and Bobbie Ukrop have agreed to serve as chairs of the Whitlock Legacy Society this year and reminded the Vestry that Founders Sunday will be celebrated on Sunday, June 3.

Annual Giving

Ms. Hall announced that Harry Warner and Cheryl Guedri have agreed to serve as co-chairs for the Annual Giving Campaign this year. The committee meets on the second Wednesday of each month and is working toward establishing better connection and fellowship within the congregation.

Personnel

Mr. Whitlow announced that he is working on establishing a discipline for approval of expenditures by staff.

Finance

Mr. Hickman distributed the financial report for the month of March and a summary financial statement. Mr. Hickman said that previously revenues had been divided by twelfths so he has restructured the report to better indicate when revenues are more typically received. He reported that the church's year-to-date financial position is good, but suggested it was critical to communicate the need for parishioners to make pledge payments over the summer months.

RECTOR'S REPORT

Dr. McCard reported that the clergy is implementing the "Journeying Through Grief" ministry to track those who are bereaved. Four books are sent over the course of the first year after someone has lost a close loved one.

Dr. McCard reported that the Executive Director of St. Joseph's Families and Wings of Hope in Haiti, where St. James's annually sends mission teams, has been accused of sexual misconduct. Dr. McCard and those who have experience with the Haiti mission are confident that there is no basis for the allegations. There is currently a defamation lawsuit in Maine, where the individual who is making these claims resides. Dr. McCard wanted the Vestry to be aware that these false accusations are being spread via the Internet and include emails accusing Dr. McCard and others involved in the missions of supporting a "child predator" because we send mission teams to these places in Haiti. Dr. McCard is in conversation with the Diocese to see if he should pursue legal action.

The special Easter offering resulted in nearly \$5,000 being collected.

OTHER

The attendance report for March 2018, including attendance for Palm Sunday, Holy Week services, and Easter, was distributed.

Dr. McCard asked the Vestry note the upcoming events listed on the reverse of the Agenda.

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

Michael Whitlow
Senior Warden