

Minutes of a Regular Meeting
Of the Vestry
Of St. James's Episcopal Church, Richmond
May 15, 2012

A regular meeting of the vestry of St. James's Episcopal Church was held on May 15, 2012, pursuant to proper notice of time and place. Vestry members attending were Mr. Ryon Acey, Mrs. Louise Bowles, Mr. DeWitt Casler, Dr. Jan Harris, Ms. Mimi Herington, Mr. Jay Jennings, Mr. Michael Lantz, Mr. Steve McCoy, Mrs. Dena Moore, Ms. Mary Watt New, Ms. Newnie Rogers, Mrs. Kendal Sibley, Mrs. Britt Van Deusen, Mr. Stephen Watts, and Mr. Jody Wilcox. Mrs. Margy Brown, Mr. Scott Hetzer, and Mr. Monty McFadden were absent. Also attending were the Rev. Randolph Hollerith, the Rev. Ann Dieterle, the Rev. Alex Riffée, Mrs. Anita Lisk, Mrs. Poconna Thiel, Mrs. Virginia Whitmire, and Mr. Chip Woodson. Mr. Hollerith served as chairman, 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 5:20 p.m.

Motions to adopt the agenda and approve the Minutes from the April 17, 2012 meeting were made, seconded and unanimously approved.

COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

Mr. Hollerith remarked that Bishop Gulick's recent visit to St. James's for baptisms, confirmations, receptions and reaffirmations went well.

SPECIAL BUSINESS

Council Delegates

Wilson Trice's term as a Delegate to Diocesan Council expires this year and he is not eligible for re-election. Richard Rumble, who is currently an Alternate to Council, has expressed his interest in serving as a Delegate. Both Ruth Modlin Ellett and Bobbie Smith's terms as Council Alternates expire this year and both are eligible and interested in re-election.

There being no other nominations, on motions made and seconded, Mr. Rumble was elected to a four-year term as Delegate and both Mrs. Ellett and Mrs. Smith were elected to two-year terms as Alternates to Diocesan Council.

Mr. Hollerith said that, given Mr. Rumble's election as Delegate, he would appreciate recommendations from the Vestry of parishioners who may be interested in serving as an Alternate, completing Mr. Rumble's unexpired term. It was agreed that potential nominees will be discussed at the August meeting.

Parochial Report

The Parochial Report for 2011 was distributed and, with the amendment to add the Rev. Carmen Germino and the Rev. Alex Riffée to the list of priests serving St. James's, the report was unanimously approved.

FINANCIAL REPORTS – JAY JENNINGS, CHAIR

Mr. Jennings distributed monthly financial reports and reviewed the income and expenses. He remarked that revenue for the month of April was less than expected and total revenue is less than it was at the same time last year. Mr. Jennings reported that expenses are as expected.

Mrs. Moore commented that expenses for remedial work on some of the building's systems are not yet reflected in this month's report and that, while unexpected, should not be large.

Mr. Jennings also reported that, in the reserve accounts, the \$15,000 matching grant for Mardi Gras is still outstanding.

Mr. Jennings noted that the cash balance will be reduced when the grants from the Vestry Outreach fund are distributed and that he and Mrs. Moore will be sending a letter to the parish encouraging pledge payments over the summer months.

Accountants are scheduled to review the church's finances for this year and will do another full audit for 2013.

COMMISSIONS REPORTS

WORSHIP COMMISSION – JAN HARRIS, CHAIR

Ms. Harris reported that the committee met just prior to the Vestry meeting.

Hospitality

Mrs. Bowles and Ms. Herington reported that the Hospitality committee planned and provided receptions following both the 9:00 and the 11:15 a.m. services for Bishop Gulick when he visited St. James's on May 13.

Mary Fox has again agreed to chair the committee for the summer brunches, which are scheduled for the second Sundays in June, July, and August.

The Hospitality committee will provide refreshments for a farewell reception for Kent Duffey and Richard Rumble, who are leaving the staff to pursue other opportunities. Mrs. Duffey, the Director of Children's Ministries, will leave at the end of July to pursue a degree in nursing. Mr. Rumble, who is leaving at the end of June, has accepted a call to become a member of the Richmond Hill community and serve as their Director of Communications. Mr. Hollerith said that he was grateful for their ministries at St. James's and glad that, while they will no longer be on staff, will continue to worship and take part in ministries at St. James's.

Mrs. Bowles distributed the current Vestry policy for the Hospitality committee. She and the committee chairs have reviewed the policy and, having determined that it is no longer applicable, requested that the Vestry repeal it. Following a brief discussion a motion was made and seconded to repeal the 1995 policy, as recommended. The motion was unanimously approved.

Call and Welcome

On June 24, a party for those who are newcomers to St. James's over the past several months will be held at the home of Louise and Russell Bowles. Over sixty invitations will be sent.

Music

Mrs. Whitmire reminded the Vestry of the upcoming Jazz Eucharist at 10:00 a.m. on May 20. She also encouraged members of the Vestry to attend and bring friends to the annual Summer Recital Series, which is at 7:00 p.m. on the first three Wednesdays in June. The first concert will feature the St. James's Festival Chorus.

Worship

Mr. Hollerith reported that he and Ms. Dieterle will lead forums on June 3 and 17 regarding the potential blessings of same-sex unions, which will be discussed and voted upon at this summer's General Convention of the Episcopal Church. Following the convention and once the Diocese of Virginia decides its policy regarding this matter, the Vestry will need to discuss how to proceed on this issue.

STUDY COMMISSION – KENDAL SIBLEY, CHAIR

Ms. Sibley distributed a written report which included brief highlights about the programming for Adult Christian Formation, Young Adults, Children's Christian Formation, and Youth. Mrs. Duffey also submitted a written report for Children's Ministries. Mrs. Sibley said that the committee had met and reviewed this past year's programming and is laying the groundwork for next year.

Youth Ministries

The Junior Youth Group recently had a fun and successful "lock in" in the Michaux House. Mr. Riffée plans to offer occasional Youth Group activities over the summer. The Youth committee will be meeting to discuss plans for next year. Mr. Riffée reported that so far six youth have signed up for the summer Youth Mission trip to West Virginia and he has heard of interest from others. The trip will be in late July.

Children's Ministries

Vacation Bible School registrations are slightly less than last year and Mrs. Duffey thinks that moving the week from the last week of June to early July to avoid conflict with the Trinity Center parish retreat may have decreased children's availability.

Mr. Hollerith commended Ms. Dieterle, Mr. Riffée, and Mrs. Duffey for their good work to develop programs for Christian education and spiritual formation for adults, youth, and children at St. James's.

Mr. McCoy inquired about plans to fill Mrs. Duffey's position and Mr. Hollerith said that he has some leads and is looking for someone with an aptitude for children and teaching.

SERVICE COMMISSION – MONTY MCFADDEN, CHAIR

Mr. McFadden submitted a written report.

Out-reach and In-reach

Mr. Acey reported that fewer “Every Member’s Ministry” (EMM) commitment cards were received than last year. Lay leaders of ministries have been informed about and will contact those who expressed interest in those ministries. Mr. Acey said that the committee is reviewing and evaluating the overall EMM program, including the cost of promoting it as well as whether the cards submitted are for interest in new or reporting of continuing ministries. The committee will be looking for feedback from the parish. Mr. Hollerith emphasized that this program was created as a spiritual discipline.

Mr. Ryon reported that the Vestry Outreach committee will meet in late May to review and determine grants from the Vestry Outreach Fund.

Missions

Mr. Hollerith reported that the two children from the Dominican Republic who were coming to Richmond through the World Pediatric Project (WPP) have been delayed due to issues involving getting visas. At least a dozen parishioners have volunteered to help with these children and their families when they arrive.

The Mission committee welcomed Zach Reid, Dorothy Stone, Mike Wade, and Kyle Martin as new members, and expressed gratitude for the leadership of those members of the committee rotating off – Ferd Baruch, Patrick Strickler, and Cheryl Redmond.

FOUNDATION COMMISSION – STEPHEN WATTS, CHAIR

Personnel

Mrs. Moore reported that searches are underway to fill the positions of Director of Children’s Ministries and the Communications Coordinator.

Stewardship

Chip Woodson distributed a written Stewardship report.

Planned Giving

Ms. Rogers reported that the Planned Giving committee held an event in April at Westminster Canterbury that was hosted by Mrs. Mert Fowlkes and featuring Mr. Hoppy Goddin as the speaker. Committee members are following up with those who attended. Dr. and Mrs. Wyatt Beazley have also graciously agreed to host a party in their home as another opportunity to promote planned giving.

The committee is also discussing possibilities associated with the 100th anniversary of the laying of the cornerstone of the sanctuary at W. Franklin and Birch Streets. Mr. Hollerith said that he is looking forward to talking about the church’s next 100 years and is investigating whether or not the cornerstone can be removed to see what was put inside when laid in 1912.

Annual Giving

Eleanor Angle and Charlie Whitaker have agreed to serve as co-chairs for this year’s Annual Giving campaign. Sally Starling, who was going to co-chair the Feast, will be moving out of state and is no longer available to serve. David Stock has agreed to co-chair the Feast and a co-chair to serve with him is being recruited.

Fan the Flame

Pledges continue to be received. Mr. Woodson expects a portion of the pledges in arrears to be uncollectible, but is hopeful a large percentage of the outstanding pledges will be received.

Buildings and Grounds

Mr. Watts distributed a written report for Buildings and Grounds, as well as a report and recommendations for church safety and security.

Mr. Watts and David Barnett, Facilities Manager, are completing the response to the Philadelphia Insurance Companies loss control report recommendations. Mr. Watts said that training personnel and volunteers will be needed to carry out the recommendations of the safety and security report. Mr. Watts remarked that he is confident the budget has the funding to implement some of the recommendations offered and that he believes a long-range plan is needed. Mrs. Moore commented that it may be difficult to reconcile being a welcoming community while balancing safety concerns. Mr. Hollerith thanked Mr. Watts for his time and effort on these issues.

Mr. Watts also reported that SCAN has asked and been granted permission to create a “container garden” on the patio of the Michaux House.

LIAISONS

Episcopal Church Women – Newnie Rogers

Ms. Rogers reported that several women are meeting to discuss events for next year.

SENIOR WARDEN’S REPORT

Mrs. Moore initiated a discussion regarding the issue of the use of credit cards to pay pledges and asked Mr. Hollerith to share his opinion on the subject. Mr. Hollerith responded that he was initially opposed to the idea when proposed several years ago, concerned that parishioners would create personal credit card debt to pay their pledges. Now, however, credit and debit card usage has evolved and is used more universally. Additionally, Mr. Hollerith has reconsidered the position that it is the church’s responsibility to be concerned with how parishioners manage their own finances. Therefore, Mr. Hollerith said that now his only potential concern with offering parishioners the option to pay their pledges with a credit card is the transaction fee charged and whether or not that would be absorbed as an expense by the church or by the parishioner.

Mrs. Moore said that the Vestry needed to first consider the philosophy and theology of using credit cards as a method of pledge payments and determine if the Vestry is comfortable with it. If the Vestry decides that it is willing to accept credit cards, then it will need to wrestle with the question of fees.

Mr. Woodson reported that a survey by the Consortium for Endowed Episcopal Parishes (CEEP) indicates that many churches offer this option and absorb the transaction fees as part of the cost of doing business. The survey also showed that this option appeals to a demographic of people who now pay their bills with a credit card.

Regarding the transaction fees associated with using the credit card, Mr. Hollerith noted that the church's budget currently absorbs the stock commission fees associated with stock transactions.

Ms. Harris commented that, if this option is offered it is likely the use of credit cards will grow, as will the transaction fees costs to the church. Mr. Casler remarked that the use of credit cards is more and more the way of doing business in the world. Mr. McCoy and Mr. Wilcox expressed concern about the fees and how to manage them. Mrs. Moore suggested that a smaller committee be formed to research over the summer how to implement the use of credit cards and how best to handle the costs involved. She also wanted to be clear that credit cards would be offered as a matter of convenience for the parishioner and would be only one of several options to pay pledges.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the use of credit cards as an option to pay pledges. It was determined that, while the Vestry is prepared to offer credit cards as a method of pledge payment, a subcommittee would be appointed to research recommendations on how to manage fees. The Vestry agreed to vote at the regular meeting in August on the subcommittee's proposal on how best to handle fees involved, recognizing that the results of the subcommittee's proposal may impact whether or not to accept pledge payments with credit cards at all. Mrs. Moore, Mr. Jennings, Mr. Wilcox, Mr. Woodson, and Mr. Hollerith will serve on the subcommittee.

RECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Hollerith reminded the Vestry to review the events listed on the reverse of the Agenda.

The service attendance report for April was distributed.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Anita Lisk
Clerk

Approved:

Rev. Randolph Marshall Hollerith
Rector

Dena Moore
Senior Warden