

Minutes of a Regular Meeting
of the Vestry
of St. James's Episcopal Church
May 16, 2017

A regular meeting of the Vestry of St. James's Episcopal Church was held on May 16, 2017, pursuant to proper notice of time and place. Vestry members attending were Mrs. Louise Bald, Mrs. Peggy Crowley, Mr. Ralph Cummins, Mrs. Becky DeCamps, Mr. Matt Harper, Mrs. Kathe Hetzer, Mr. T.A. Hickman, Mr. Scott Hurt, Mr. Connell Mullins, Mrs. Tina Sherrod, Mrs. Laura Strickler, and Mr. Michael Whitlow. Mr. Willson Craigie, Mrs. Erin Jewett, Mr. Dave Johnson, Mr. Jay Jordan, Mr. Harry Moore, and Mrs. Beth Skidmore were absent. Also attending were the Rev. Dr. Thom Blair, the Rev. Carmen Germino, 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 April 25, 2017 regular meeting were made, seconded, and unanimously approved.

COMMENTS & CONCERNS

Mrs. Crowley welcomed back Ms. Germino from her maternity leave.

Mrs. Bald reported that the "Young Adults" group has re-branded and will hereafter be called the "Second Quarter" group. The recent river retreat for this group was well-attended and will be offered again next year.

Mr. Lawson told the Vestry that they will receive a test eChimes, which has been re-designed, and encouraged Vestry members to send him their opinion of the new design. He also noted that the Communications Committee is poised to offer assistance to the new rector transition team once the new rector is called.

Mrs. Crowley said that the recent update from the Search Committee about their progress is timely. She noted that Geoff Sisk, a member of the Search Committee, complimented the Communications staff for St. James's website remarking that, having looked at many websites as part of the search process, he believed St. James's had the best one.

Mrs. Crowley reminded the Vestry that this is the last regularly scheduled meeting until August, but everyone should be aware that a meeting may be called over the summer for the Vestry to vote on and extend a call to the new Rector.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Finance

Mrs. Thiel distributed the monthly report. She explained that the highlighted figures in the report are assumptions of income to be received from the Endowment Fund. Mrs. Thiel noted that pledge receivables are often low during the summer months and sometimes the church will borrow from Cash Reserves to cover expenses during those months; however, all funds are replenished to the Cash Reserves before the end of the year if that happens.

Mrs. Thiel reported that the most recent statements were sent only to those who hadn't yet made a pledge payment this year.

Stewardship

Mrs. Crowley made a motion to adopt the establishment of the Strategic Stewardship Committee, as proposed by Mr. Johnson. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

Mrs. DeCamps reported that Peer-to-Peer Captains and several “Data Collectors” have been recruited. Several training sessions will be offered over the summer before calls begin in September.

Mr. Cummins recommended establishing a communications plan to inform parishioners why they need to pledge before the Annual Giving Campaign gets underway in the fall.

Mrs. Crowley said that, as Sr. Warden, she would be sending another letter to the parish in June and could add something about Stewardship to it.

COMMITTEES REPORTS – *Community & the World*

Missions

Minutes from the most recent Missions Committee meeting were distributed. Mr. Cummins reported that nearly \$70,000 was raised by the Mardi Gras for Missions fundraiser and over \$163,000 is in the missions fund. He said that \$5,000 is usually granted for each mission, but more may be allowed on a case-by-case basis. The following funding has been approved by the committee:

- **Youth** – \$5,000 (\$1,000 for the Mini-Mission, \$4,000 for the Youth Mission)
- **Richmond** – \$5,000
- **Honduras** – \$7,000 (\$5,000 as a standard mission allocation and \$2000 as a special additional allocation)
- **Cuba** – \$5,000
- **New Orleans** – \$200 (this funding is to provide the deposit for housing for a renewed New Orleans Mission team, planned to take place in the late fall, 2017, or winter, 2018)
- **World Pediatric Project** – \$6,800 (\$5,000 as a standard mission allocation and \$1,800 as a special additional allocation)
- **Haiti** – \$10,000 (\$5,000 as a standard mission allocation, \$5,000 as a one-time additional allocation to help pay for a van {replacement for a stolen van} to transport Wings of Hope residents)
- **Thistle Farms** – \$2,500 (this funding is to support a three-person exploratory mission team to Thistle Farms, Nashville TN, to investigate the possibilities for a mission partnership)
- **Visual Storytelling Project** – \$1,500 (this funding would be used to produce 15 poster-sized photos of mission teams in action for display at the church)

Mr. Cummins noted that a mission team will return to New Orleans, staying at Trinity Episcopal Church’s housing for mission teams, and an urban farming initiative in New Orleans is being discussed.

The Missions Committee is currently considering an exploratory or a full mission trip to North Haiti, a medical mission to Appalachia, and a mission to Utah to partner with an Episcopal Church on a Navajo Reservation. The Committee is also discussing incentives to recruit new missionaries.

Welcome

Notes from the Vestry Retreat small group session with the Hospitality and Welcome Committee leaders were distributed. Mrs. Sherrod reported that she, Dr. Blair, and Mrs. DeCamps would be meeting with the Usher Team Captains in June to discuss the Welcome Committee's desire to involve the ushers as an integral part of the Committee's goals to extend a warm and welcoming first impression to visitors and parishioners alike as they come into the church. Mrs. Bald commented that she has personally experienced and observed occasions when the ushers were unwelcoming and is encouraged that the Committee will be meeting with the usher leadership to discuss this issue.

Mr. Harper reported that, as a precursor to the June meeting with the Usher Team Captains, he, Dr. Blair, and Mrs. Lisk had spoken with the Chief Ushers Harry Turton and Brink Brinkley to discuss welcoming and accessibility and they are already including instructions about these topics in their weekly reminders to the scheduled teams. Both Mrs. Sherrod and Mr. Cummins suggested exploring other methods of communicating with the ushers so that information is better received.

Mrs. Sherrod also announced that the Welcome Committee will be hosting a Newcomer party in late June.

Children's Center

Mrs. Hetzer reported that current enrollment in the Center is good. New buses are due to arrive soon and the Center is in the process of determining where they will be parked.

Hospitality

Mrs. Hetzer reported that the Hospitality Committee is busy with upcoming receptions for the Bishop's visit in May, Founders Sunday/Pentecost in June and Mrs. Parkinson's farewell, also in June.

Outreach

Mr. Mullins reported that the Outreach Committee has invited 24 agencies to apply for the \$95,000 in grants available. The Committee will meet soon to determine the awards. Mr. Mullins said that the grants are usually paid in full if under \$1,000 and in two payments if more than that. Current Outreach Committee members are: Mr. Mullins and Mr. Cummins, Katie Morris, Mignon Tucker, Bobbie Ukrop, David Wade, Harry Warner, and Chip Woodson.

Mrs. Crowley said that she was pleased that this year's budget included a \$10,000 increase in the Vestry Outreach Fund and hopes future pledges will allow it to grow even more, though she cautioned that the Vestry must be mindful of other needs in the church when creating the annual budget.

JUNIOR WARDEN'S REPORT

Mr. Harper reported that the Strategic Buildings & Grounds Committee and the Handicapped Access Committee continue to meet.

He also said that the planned steeple repairs are expected to be done in July or August and the repair and restoration of the Chimes will begin in June. The chimes will be out of the steeple during the steeple repairs, which offers an opportunity to fix interior cracks in that area. The cell equipment in the steeple will also be removed while the repairs are being made. While there is

equipment for two cell companies currently in the steeple, only the AT&T equipment will be returned, as the other company has gone out of business. Mr. Harper noted that there is a possibility of negotiating with Verizon for a future cell equipment lease.

SENIOR WARDEN’S REPORT

Mrs. Crowley thanked the members of the Vestry who had contributed to Mrs. Parkinson’s farewell gift. It will be presented to her at the reception following the 10:00 a.m. service on June 25.

INTERIM RECTOR’S REPORT

Dr. Blair talked about the transition process and what it’s like to be a new rector and how the Vestry can support that person. He particularly noted that members of the Vestry should make time to personally meet with the new Rector and to encourage anyone who may have any concerns, including themselves, to make an appointment with the Rector to discuss them.

Dr. Blair reported that he has been advised by the Diocesan Transition Officer, Mary Thorpe, that the norm for an Interim Rector to leave is 2-3 weeks before the new Rector begins on-site.

Mrs. Crowley added that it will be important for the Vestry to be cheerleaders for the new Rector and to be welcoming and supportive.

Mrs. DeCamps recognized Dr. Blair for his fine leadership during this interim period, to which all heartily agreed.

OTHER

The attendance report for April was distributed.

Mrs. Crowley reminded the Vestry to note the events listed on the reverse of the Agenda.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Anita Lisk
Secretary

Approved:

Rev. Dr. Thom Blair
Interim Rector

Peggy Crowley
Senior Warden