

Minutes of a Specially Called Meeting  
Of the Vestry  
Of St. James's Episcopal Church, Richmond  
June 7, 2016

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A specially called meeting of the Vestry of St. James's Episcopal Church was held on June 7, 2016, pursuant to proper notice of time and place. All Vestry members were in attendance: Mrs. Louise Bald, Mr. Willson Craigie, Mrs. Peggy Crowley, Mr. Ralph Cummins, Mrs. Becky DeCamps, Mrs. Carol Ann Fuller, Mr. Matt Harper, Mrs. Kathe Hetzer, Mrs. Erin Jewett, Mr. Dave Johnson, Mr. Jay Jordan, Mrs. Carrie Montague, Mr. Harry Moore, Mr. Connell Mullins, Mr. Tom Porterfield, Mr. Allan Rees, Mrs. Tina Sherrod, and Mrs. Beth Skidmore. Also present were the Rev. Randolph Marshall Hollerith, the Rev. Hilary Streever, and Mrs. Anita Lisk from the staff, and Mrs. Dena Moore and Mr. Geoff Sisk, former Senior Wardens. The Rt. Rev. Shannon Johnston, Bishop of the Diocese of Virginia, and the Rev. Dr. Mary Thorpe, Director of the Diocesan office of Transitional Ministry, attended the meeting as special guests. Mr. Hollerith served as chairman for the beginning of the meeting and Mrs. Crowley continued upon Mr. Hollerith's departure. Mrs. Lisk served as secretary.

Mr. Hollerith opened the meeting at 5:05 p.m. with prayer. A motion to adopt the agenda was made, seconded, and unanimously approved.

**RECTOR'S COMMENTS**

Mr. Hollerith began by telling the Vestry that, while he's excited about accepting the call to be the next Dean of the Washington National Cathedral, he is grieving about leaving St. James's. Mr. Hollerith said that he's keeping all the cards and letters and emails he's been receiving from parishioners and appreciated everyone's well-wishes. Mr. Hollerith reiterated that he doesn't feel called to leave St. James's, but is feeling called to the Cathedral.

Mr. Hollerith encouraged the Vestry to support Mrs. Crowley as the Sr. Warden during this transition and said that it's important to keep the church on a non-anxious, even keel, particularly since it's typical for anxiousness to arise during a change in rectors. He reminded the Vestry that calling a new rector was not like filling a typical job vacancy; that it was introducing someone as a new member of the church family.

Mr. Hollerith said that, while he doesn't intend to be involved in the search process for the next rector, which would be inappropriate, he did want to be helpful in choosing an Interim Rector who would keep things steady and allow Associate Rectors Carmen Germino and Hilary Streever to continue to focus on their respective duties. To that end, Mr. Hollerith announced that he had approached the Rev. Thom Blair about serving as the Interim Rector and Mr. Blair is amenable to taking the position. Mr. Blair, who retired as the Rector of St. Stephen's some years ago, has attended St. James's for several years and has been teaching the popular Sunday morning Bible Study at St. James's for the past three years.

Mrs. Crowley announced that she has established a Transition Committee to help with hiring an Interim Rector and creating, with input from the Vestry, a Search Committee for the new Rector. Joining Mrs. Crowley on the Transition Committee are

Matt Harper, Junior Warden, Harry Moore, Finance Chair, and former Sr. Wardens Dena Moore and Geoff Sisk. Hiring the Interim Rector and the final composition of the Search Committee will require Vestry approval.

### **QUESTIONS**

The following questions were raised and answered:

- 1) How would the Vestry go about calling Mr. Blair as the Interim? The Vestry would first need to determine if they want to call Mr. Blair.
- 2) Can Mr. Hollerith leave notes about the things he does instinctively that may not be readily known? The Vestry and parish can rely on Mrs. Lisk for much of that and Mr. Hollerith will be sharing information with Ms. Germino and Mrs. Streever before he leaves.
- 3) What would be the most efficient process to contact Mr. Hollerith if questions arise after he leaves? Mr. Hollerith is instructed to stay away from the parish but he would certainly be available for any questions the Vestry as a whole may have and those should be directed to him by Mrs. Crowley.
- 4) Can potential candidates for Rector contact Mr. Hollerith regarding St. James's? Yes, it is perfectly appropriate for interested candidates for the position to contact Mr. Hollerith.
- 5) What is the typical length of the Interim Rector's term? Usually the length of the service of the departing rector indicates how long a parish takes to call a new rector. In St. James's case, it would likely be around a year to thoughtfully go through the process of calling a new rector. Mr. Hollerith urged the Vestry and Search Committee to remember that the new rector will become part of the parish family and is not just accepting a "job."
- 6) When and what should be the next communication to the parish? A letter from Mrs. Crowley assuring the parish and providing information about the next steps in the process (calling an Interim; establishing a Search Committee) should be sent the week after Mr. Hollerith leaves.

### **DIOCESAN REPRESENTATIVES' PRESENTATION**

Bishop Shannon and Dr. Thorpe joined the meeting. Bishop Shannon commented that it is now the Vestry's task to handle the upcoming transition. He said that he is taking this transition personally and observed that the Diocese was losing a "cardinal rector" with Mr. Hollerith's departure. Bishop Shannon also said that he was very proud and pleased for the whole church that Mr. Hollerith will continue serving God at the Cathedral.

Bishop Shannon announced that the Diocese has a new process for calling rectors and there are many factors to take into consideration. He introduced Dr. Thorpe, who would serve as the parish's guide through the process. Bishop Shannon offered a prayer and Mr. Hollerith was excused.

Dr. Thorpe began by asking the Vestry how many of them had ever been through a search process before and what were the most pressing concerns involved. She said that her research had found that the previous search process recommended by the Diocese created confusion and anxiety because of the lack of clarity about what was going on during it. The new process can be adjusted to fit each parish and there are now natural benchmarks for regular reporting by the chair of the Search Committee to the Wardens, whole Vestry, and parish.

The “Parish Profile” that was formerly created is no longer being used, as most, if not all, of the information that was in it can now be found on a church’s website. The new process calls for a “Community Ministry Portfolio” to be created from brief answers to specific questions that will help “tell the story” of the church and will serve as an invitation into conversation. A secondary document will be created for the compensation package. Both will be posted on the Diocesan and national church’s websites. The Search Committee should ask three questions as part of their process to create a Community Ministry Portfolio:

- 1) Who have we been?
- 2) Who are we now?
- 3) Who is God calling us to be in the next chapter of our parish’s life?

Dr. Thorpe said that the person called to be the next rector should be someone who has the skills to lead the parish to accomplish question 3, and urged the Search Committee and Vestry to not get caught in the fallacy that a pre-conceived image of what may be expected is more important than the gifts a candidate may bring.

Dr. Thorpe said it is important to be honest about the church’s gifts but also its challenges. She said that St. James’s is a strong and healthy parish but all parishes have sensitive touch points and the ones at St. James’s should be identified and acknowledged.

The Search Committee is actually a “committee of discernment” because the person they recommend calling as the new rector will be someone who will be an important part of the spiritual lives of the parish.

Dr. Thorpe noted the steps of due diligence:

- Applicant names are received by Dr. Thorpe’s office of Transitional Ministry first and she and her staff vet them.
- The Search Committee will call the applicant’s references and Dr. Thorpe recommends asking those references for further references of people with whom the applicant has worked. Dr. Thorpe also recommends that the Committee do a Google search.
- Once the Search Committee has created a short list of candidates, more formal background checks are done.
- At this point, Bishop Shannon has a conversation with the final candidates.
- The Search Committee then presents one name to the Vestry for consideration to call.

Dr. Thorpe said that the Diocese is committed to the due diligence so that the candidate called will be the right match and will not cause harm to the body of Christ in this place.

Mr. Johnson asked if recruiting of candidates was involved in the process. Dr. Thorpe said that the Diocese is good about determining who has the skill set needed for the churches in a search process and the Vestry should trust the Diocese’s experience and the Holy Spirit to find the right person.

There are several ways the position is advertised, including posting the Community Ministry Portfolio on the Diocese’s and national church’s websites for 4-12 weeks (depending on the time of year) and emailing notifications from the Diocese to Transition Ministry offices within the Anglican Communion. Dr. Thorpe will also contact her colleagues through the Transition Ministry Conference Board, which specifically reaches Dioceses throughout the United States.

Dr. Thorpe noted that priests will often take the time to reflect and pray about the position before submitting an application. She said that the clearer the church's needs are presented, the better aligned the applicants will be that apply.

Mrs. Bald asked how priests who may not be looking for a new position, but who may be a good candidate for St. James's, would be aware of the opportunity, both Dr. Thorpe and Bishop Shannon replied that "word of mouth" in the Episcopal church will reach many. Bishop Shannon remarked that the national news of Mr. Hollerith's new call will also serve to get the word out about the vacancy at St. James's.

Mr. Harper asked how the Diocese can be sure the applicants are who and what they purport to be. Bishop Shannon replied that the non-listed references and his "bishop to bishop" conversations typically reveal any concerns.

When asked how frequently the search process produces a "bad batch" of candidates, Bishop Shannon said that he can think of only one instance since he began the new process in 2007, and that was early on. The bishop reminded the Vestry that the Diocese of Virginia is a "self-apply" diocese, meaning that applicants can submit their own names for consideration in addition to those recommended by others. He expects that there will be many qualified candidates interested in the position at St. James's.

Mr. Sisk asked how many churches in the Diocese are currently in a search process. Dr. Thorpe said that there are a number of churches whose rectors are retiring so there are quite a few in the search process. She said that only three churches the size of St. James's are currently in a search process and about 40 are in some stage of a search process – anywhere from just beginning to ready to make a call.

Dr. Thorpe distributed a folder of handouts that covered the Transition Process Overview and discussed the next steps for the Vestry, specifically that:

- The Vestry and parish should prepare for a farewell to Mr. Hollerith.
- The Vestry and parish should be aware that once a priest leaves his/her position, they don't return for parish activities such as weddings and funerals. The parish must look forward and not back.
- It is recommended that the Vestry call an Interim Rector who has experience in a church the size of St. James's. This position is temporary during the transition between the departure of Mr. Hollerith and the arrival of the new rector. The Interim Rector functions as the Rector but for a fixed period of time, working collegially with the current Associates. The Diocese will recommend at least two candidates for the interim position within a month or so for the Vestry to consider.

Bishop Shannon remarked that interim ministry has changed over the years and there are some priests who are trained specifically for interim ministry.

When asked if the parish could choose an Interim Rector from within the parish, Dr. Thorpe advised against it, stating that it may create an awkward situation once the interim period ends. Mr. Cummins asked how long an interim period typically lasts. Dr. Thorpe said that, since St. James's is a healthy and thriving parish without mismanagement or problems, she expected the interim period would be around 14 months. Bishop Shannon agreed, stating that he would expect the process to take anywhere from 12-18 months.

Mr. Moore asked if the Bishop had any reservations about calling a priest from outside the Diocese and Bishop Shannon said that he did not. While he, as the Bishop of Virginia, may have an idea of priests in the Diocese who he thinks may be ready for a call to St. James's, he is certainly willing to listen to other Bishops about candidates from their Dioceses.

Dr. Thorpe said that, once a short list of candidates is developed, interviews via Skype typically determine which candidates will be visited, incognito, by members of the Search Committee. Bishop Shannon said that sometimes a candidate visits a church – also incognito – for which he/she is being considered. Bishop Shannon reminded the Vestry that the search process is extremely confidential, particularly as the number of candidates is narrowed.

### The Search Committee

Dr. Thorpe recommended a Search Committee of 5-9 people, consisting of a good cross-section of the parish's demographics. Search Committee members should have

- the time to commit to the process – it won't be helpful to have an extremely qualified person if they can't really be a part of the process;
- the ability to be discreet – someone who can keep confidences;
- the capability of discernment – someone who not only prays and listens for God's will, but can hold their own opinions lightly and be willing to listen to others' opinions;
- parish life involvement – so that the needs of all facets of the parish are considered (this is not a committee in which to try to re-engage a parishioner who hasn't been involved in the church of late);
- good communication skills
- trustworthiness – someone that the parish believes will consider what is good for the whole church.

The Vestry creates the Search Committee and chooses its Chair (and possibly also a Vice-Chair).

To create the Committee, Dr. Thorpe suggested that each member of the Vestry put forward three names and note the names that surface more than once. She advised against an open nomination process for names of people to serve, nor having anyone who had been on the Search Committee that called Mr. Hollerith. Dr. Thorpe also said that members of the Vestry should not also serve on the Search Committee, as their responsibility as a Vestry member will be to serve as a protector and cheerleader for the Search Committee.

Mr. Johnson asked about administrative support for the Search Committee. Dr. Thorpe said that volunteers, rather than staff, should serve in that role. Any volunteer should understand the need for confidentiality and that they are supportive of the Committee and not a member of it. Dr. Thorpe said there are consultants, as well as some software programs, such as *Holy Cow*, that can be helpful to navigate the search process.

### Covenant between the Diocese and the Parish regarding the Search

Dr. Thorpe drew attention to this handout. The Vestry is expected to

- budget for search expenses
- approach the process prayerfully and with integrity
- funnel questions to the Diocese through the Sr. Warden.

Dr. Thorpe commented that she and representatives from her office will meet with the staff to go over the search process.

Bishop Shannon remarked that the Diocese is involved in the process as a servant, not as the authority, and the calling of the next Rector is in the hands of the Search Committee and Vestry.

Bishop Shannon and Dr. Thorpe wished the Vestry well and, then along with Mrs. Streever, left the Vestry meeting.

### **SENIOR WARDEN**

Mrs. Crowley announced that the Hospitality Committee was already planning a reception in Valentine Hall for Mr. Hollerith's last Sunday, June 26.

As Mr. Hollerith's final service is expected to have high attendance, it was recommended that additional ushers be assigned for that morning, and perhaps preparation for overflow seating in the Parkinson Room, as well. The presentation of farewell gifts will occur in the sanctuary at the conclusion of the service so that everyone can better observe and hear and it can be recorded.

A letter has been sent to the parish soliciting monetary gifts for Mr. Hollerith's farewell purse. On a motion made and seconded, the Vestry agreed to commission a plein air painting by artist Andras Bality. Mrs. Crowley announced that portrait artist and parishioner Loryn Brazier has volunteered to paint an official portrait of Mr. Hollerith for St. James's.

On a motion made and seconded, the Vestry agreed to compensate Mr. Hollerith until the end of July (including the use of his remaining vacation days) and to extend his insurance coverage until the end of August or whenever he can join the Cathedral's insurance plan, whichever comes first.

The Vestry agreed to reconvene on a date to be determined to decide who to call as an Interim Rector. Mrs. Crowley asked Vestry members to send her their recommendations for the Search Committee and she and the Transition Team will cull the list to make recommendations to the Vestry.

It was agreed that, as parishioners have inquiries, the Vestry will explain that following the 10:00 a.m. service on June 26 the church will celebrate Mr. Hollerith's time at St. James's, and the Vestry will send a letter to the parish explaining the search process, will create a Search Committee, and call an Interim Rector.

### **FINANCIAL REPORT**

Mr. Moore distributed a financial report for May, noting that income exceeds expenses to date and that half of the anticipated pledge income has been received as of the end of May. Mr. Moore announced that a friendly reminder to pay pledges will be sent in July to people who have not yet paid toward their pledges.

### **OTHER**

A Vestry meeting was tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, July 19, at 5:00 p.m.

Mr. Cummins volunteered to create a closed shared site on the Internet for the Vestry to share information regarding the transition.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

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Anita Lisk  
Registrar

Approved:

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Peggy Crowley  
Senior Warden