

Minutes of a Regular Meeting
of the Vestry
of St. James's Episcopal Church
August 21, 2018

A regular meeting of the Vestry of St. James's Episcopal Church was held on August 21, 2018, pursuant to proper notice of time and place. Vestry members attending were Mrs. Louise Bald, Mr. Arthur Brinkley, Mr. Ralph Cummins, Ms. Melinda Davis (by phone), Mr. Jim Goggins, Mr. T.A. Hickman, Mr. Scott Hurt, Ms. Erin Jewett, Mr. Dave Johnson, Dr. John Mahoney, Mr. Trey Sibley, Mr. Michael Smith, Ms. Karen Stanley, Mrs. Laura Strickler, Mr. Michael Whitlow (by phone), and Mrs. Annie Witthoefft. Mrs. Kathe Hetzer and Mrs. Beth Skidmore were absent. Also attending were staff members the Rev. Dr. John McCard, the Rev. Hilary Streever, 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 5:25 p.m. Motions to adopt the agenda and approve the Minutes from the May 15, 2018 regular meeting were made, seconded, and unanimously approved.

RECTOR'S REPORT

Dr. McCard distributed his written report, particularly recalling the top four priorities for the church, as articulated in the Search Committee's survey including

- 1) Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to reach new people and incorporate them into the life of the church;
- 2) Develop the spiritual generosity of the people to financially support the ministry of the church;
- 3) Develop ministries that work toward healing those broken by life circumstances; and
- 4) Create more opportunities for people to form meaningful relationships.

Dr. McCard said that efforts are underway to address these priorities, and particularly noted that the newcomer program is being redeveloped; the Annual Giving Committee is laying the groundwork for a successful stewardship campaign; the church will send a team of people to investigate the Stephen Ministry, which is a lay pastoral response to those in need; and there have been and will continue to be many fellowship opportunities for parishioners to meet and eat with him.

Dr. McCard also reported that, with the departure of Associate Rector, the Rev. Carmen Germino, and Facilities Manager, Matt Presson, he and the Wardens have been reassessing pastoral and program needs and working quickly to hire a new Facilities Manager. Rather than immediately hire a new priest, Dr. McCard has arranged for the current Pastoral Associates, the Rev. Dr. Bob Friend and the Rev. Dr. Mark Cooper, to increase their respective ministries. Additionally, Dr. McCard has been in conversation with other available priests regarding their interest in helping on Sunday mornings.

Dr. McCard also noted that Thomas Pugh, the Administrative Assistant for Stewardship, Children's Ministry, and Youth and Young Adult Ministry, is seriously ill and those offices are currently short-handed.

Dr. McCard thanked the Hospitality Committee for providing a wonderful farewell reception and celebration for Ms. Germino and Mr. Presson, who asked him to convey their thanks.

SENIOR WARDEN REPORT

Mr. Whitlow said that the Work Plan reflects an amazing amount of work being done by the Vestry. He reported that he is working with Dr. McCard on several processes, including:

- 1) Establishing a Rector review;
- 2) Establishing an ongoing conversation with the Children's Center regarding collaborative efforts;
- 3) Supporting the Annual Giving Committee and the Stewardship Campaign;
- 4) Developing the focus for the "Q&A with the Rector and Wardens" forum scheduled for September 16;
- 5) Writing a letter from the Sr. Warden to the parish that recognizes the support of the Endowment, while underscoring the need for the budget to no longer rely on the Endowment's generosity to fund some of the church's operating needs.

JUNIOR WARDEN REPORT

Mrs. Strickler reported that Mr. Presson would be wrapping up several big projects over the next few weeks before he leaves and announced that David Barnett, who had previously retired as the church's Facilities Manager, has agreed to serve in the interim until a new Facilities Manager is hired. She said that several qualified candidates have already applied for the position and interviews will be scheduled in the next couple of weeks.

Mrs. Strickler also reported that the Buildings & Grounds Committee has started evaluating the reports from Huff Morris and Engineers Plus. There have been several facilities projects accomplished over the summer, including:

- 1) Cleaning out storage spaces;
- 2) Painting, particularly in Gibson Hall areas;
- 3) Repairing plaster damage in the sanctuary ceiling;
- 4) Refinishing Michaux House floors; and
- 5) Obtaining city permission and permits to install directional signage in front of the Michaux House.

SPECIAL GUESTS

Mr. Harry Warner and Mrs. Cheryl Guedri, co-chairs of the Annual Giving Committee, informed the Vestry that they hope to raise \$2.4 million in pledges for 2019. Their strategy includes intentionally segmenting those who currently pledge and evaluating their potential. Over 400 personalized notes with specific requests or asks for an overall 10% increase have been written and included with pledge materials. Mr. Warner and Mrs. Guedri distributed individualized pledge packets to the members of the Vestry, requesting that they make their pledge as soon as possible. Mr. Brinkley remarked that it's helpful to fundraising efforts for the Committee to be able to announce that 100% of the church's leadership has committed to the church's financial support.

Mr. Warner noted that the committee is hoping that the multiple “intentional fellowship” opportunities this fall, including “Doers Dining” gatherings, dinners at the McCard’s home, and “Zip Code” neighborhood parties with the rector, encourage parishioners to feel more connected to their church and result in increased giving.

NEW BUSINESS

Strategic Stewardship Report

Three strategic committees – Stewardship, Buildings & Grounds, and Finance – were established in response to the 2016 Strategic Plan and the Search Committee survey. Mr. Johnson presented the report developed by the Strategic Stewardship Committee and thanked those who had served on the committee for their extensive time and efforts. The committee, which included seven former Sr. Wardens and one former Jr. Warden, met four times in addition to participating in a retreat. The report included the following results and recommendations:

- 1) The Endowment Fund should not be used for operating expenses. Doing so inhibits the growth of the Endowment.
- 2) A 6-year comparison of stewardship efforts revealed that the average and median pledge has remained relatively the same, even as the number of people and the total amount raised has increased.
- 3) The recent “Peer-to-Peer” stewardship strategy increased pledges but revealed a generational gap in giving. Approximately two and a half new pledges are needed to make up for the loss of one pledge from an older generation.
- 4) There are three ways to support St. James’s:
 - a. Pledge (the backbone of the operating budget)
 - b. Special gifts
 - c. Estate and planned giving.
- 5) There is a need to invest more in stewardship, including additional staff and resources, and reaffirm the importance of stewardship. The committee recommends that the Stewardship Chair serve as a member of the Executive Committee.
- 6) Steps to take going forward include:
 - a. transparency with the parish about the financial needs to completely support the church;
 - b. hiring appropriate level of personnel;
 - c. paying attention to resources;
 - d. preparing for upcoming stewardship efforts, including organizing support for a future capital campaign.
- 7) An estimated \$90,000 in additional funding is needed over the next two years.

Mr. Johnson concluded the report by stressing that the Vestry must ensure that stewardship efforts are successful.

Ms. Hall announced that the pledge cards this year include a proportional giving chart to help parishioners determine their level of giving. She also commented that the logo for the Annual Giving campaign and its theme of “One Bread, One Body” encourages giving as a ministry.

Discussion of the report included comparing St. James’s level of stewardship with national trends and the need to find out why people don’t contribute to the church or, if they do, why at a low level. Mr. Johnson commented that many have a false perception that St. James’s is a wealthy church with many affluent parishioners so their pledge is unnecessary or doesn’t need to be much.

Mr. Johnson reminded the Vestry that the earlier approval of a proposed budget is a different approach for the Annual Giving campaign, with the idea that it will better reflect how much financial support the church needs rather than creating a budget based on the amount raised through pledges.

Mr. Warner cautioned the Vestry to be sensitive when the subject of a capital campaign comes up, as the timing, the needs, and the amount goal have not been determined. Likewise, Mr. Whitlow said to be wary of speaking of the Children's Center as a competitor for funding. Mrs. Streever also encouraged the Vestry to remember that, when considering the generational differences in pledges, Millennials likely do not have the same resources as Baby Boomers and those older, and the Vestry should value what may be their sacrificial giving, even though the amount may not be comparable.

Safe Church Policy

Dr. McCard distributed the "safe church" policies that the Children's & Youth Ministries follow. Mrs. Streever noted that these practices help protect both children and adults.

Support for Ordination to the Diaconate

Dr. McCard announced that Kristin Wickersham continues in her process for ordination. A motion was made and seconded to certify Vestry support of her candidacy to be ordained to the Diaconate:

The Vestry of St. James's Episcopal Church, in Richmond, Virginia, in the Central Richmond Region of the Diocese of Virginia, certifies that Kristin Robinson Wickersham is a communicant in good standing of the congregation. The Vestry supports this person for Ordination as a Deacon and believes that she possesses such qualifications as would be fitting for admission as a Deacon of this Church.

The motion was unanimously approved.

Personnel

Dr. McCard noted that a personnel update had been covered in previous reports. Mrs. Streever announced that she was pregnant and due in December.

OLD BUSINESS

Vestry Statements for Annual and Planned Giving

A motion was made and seconded to ratify the Vestry Statements on Annual and Planned Giving, as voted upon via email. The motion was unanimously approved.

Vestry Meeting Dates

A revised list of Vestry meeting dates was distributed.

WORK PLAN TRACKING UPDATE

The Work Plan spreadsheet was distributed. Mr. Whitlow reminded the Vestry that the spreadsheet was created to help track action towards goals established at the Vestry Retreat.

FINANCE REPORT

Mr. Hickman distributed a monthly report, noting that Sunday plate offerings during the summer were less than anticipated, particularly in June. Both revenues and expenses are currently favorable and, while cautiously optimistic, he is concerned there may be a swing back.

OTHER

Dr. McCard announced that Diocesan Bishop Shannon Johnston had announced his retirement and the Diocesan Standing Committee intends to present at the November convention a candidate to serve as the Provisional Bishop to serve in the interim until a new bishop is called.

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

The following information was distributed:

- 1) Fall Study Guide
- 2) Oberammergau pilgrimage informational flyer. Dr. McCard noted that the pilgrimage to the Holy Land with Dr. Cooper was nearly filled.
- 3) Attendance report for May/June/July 2018

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned with a benediction by Dr. McCard at 7:05 p.m.

Anita Lisk
Secretary

Approved:

Rev. Dr. John McCard
Rector

Michael Whitlow
Senior Warden