

Minutes of a Regular Meeting  
Of the Vestry  
Of St. James's Episcopal Church, Richmond  
August 23, 2016

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A regular meeting of the Vestry of St. James's Episcopal Church was held on August 23, 2016, pursuant to proper notice of time and place. Vestry members attending were Mrs. Louise Bald, Mr. Willson Craigie, Mrs. Peggy Crowley, Mr. Ralph Cummins, Mrs. Becky DeCamps, Mrs. Carol Ann Fuller, Mr. Matt Harper, Mr. Dave Johnson, Mr. Jay Jordan, Mrs. Carrie Montague, Mr. Harry Moore, Mr. Connell Mullins, Mr. Tom Porterfield, Mr. Allan Rees, and Mrs. Beth Skidmore. Mrs. Kathe Hetzer, Mrs. Erin Jewett, and Mrs. Tina Sherrod were absent. Also present were the Rev. Dr. Thom Blair, the Rev. Hilary Streever, Mrs. Mary Beth Abplanalp, Ms. Suzanne Hall, Mrs. Anita Lisk, and Mrs. Poconna Thiel. Mrs. Crowley 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 5:25 p.m.

Motions to adopt the agenda and approve the Minutes from the May 17, 2016 regular meeting and the specially called meeting on July 19, 2016 were made, seconded, and unanimously approved.

Mrs. Crowley welcomed Mr. Blair, who will serve as the Interim Rector through the search period, and members of the Vestry introduced themselves to him.

**COMMENTS & CONCERNS**

Mrs. Fuller thanked Mrs. Skidmore and the Hospitality Committee for providing a lovely reception for visiting Bishop Griselda of Cuba, and to the Summer Brunch Committee for providing two excellent brunches in July and August.

Mrs. DeCamps commented that the Summer Jazz Mass has been going well, with an average weekly attendance of about 40 people.

**FINANCIAL REPORTS**

**Finance**

Mr. Moore distributed and reviewed the monthly financial reports. He noted that pledge receivables are significantly greater than this time last year but expenses are slightly higher, primarily in the areas of Buildings and Grounds and Personnel. Regardless, the church is in a good financial position. Mr. Moore also noted that the Endowment accounts are doing well because of current market conditions.

**Stewardship**

Mrs. Crowley thanked Ms. Hall and the Annual Giving Committee – Mr. Johnson, Mrs. DeCamps, Bobbie Ukrop, Trey Sibley, and Janet Hogg – for all the work they have done over the summer to prepare for the fall campaign. The “Peer-to-Peer” effort has recruited approximately 80 volunteers as leaders who will personally contact all the members of the parish. Mrs. Crowley announced that the Vestry will receive their pledge

cards earlier than the parish in general and encouraged members of the Vestry to submit their pledges as soon as possible so that the campaign can publicize that 100% of the Vestry has made a commitment to the 2017 Annual Fund.

Ms. Hall distributed a written report. The calls being made in the “Peer-to-Peer” campaign will serve to touch base with the congregation, encourage pledging, and help to clean up the church’s database. This effort also follows the new strategic plan’s directive to raise up lay leadership and participation. Call lists were distributed to the volunteers and pledge cards and information will follow.

Mr. Johnson commented that he has discovered that the stewardship effort this year has really become a ministry for those who have agreed to lead. Mrs. Bald commented that the peer-to-peer approach also has made the people involved feel that they are being heard about the stewardship process.

Dr. Blair remarked that this year’s stewardship campaign is particularly important, as the final candidates in the search process will note the level of stewardship as an indicator of the life of the parish.

Ms. Hall distributed this year’s stewardship prayer, authored by parishioner Rosie Messer:

Gracious God, we know all things come from You. You provide for us because of Your immense love. Undemanding, You ask for nothing; waiting patiently for us to return only a portion of what we have been given. All You want from us is that we give freely and always with love. In gratitude and thanksgiving we pray, Amen.

## **GOD IN CHRIST REPORTS**

### **Worship**

Mrs. DeCamps distributed a written report. *The God in Christ* Committee has chosen to focus on three strategic goals this year:

1. Committing to a renewed balance between Sunday worship services and the Christian Education time.
2. Proving resources and guidance to allow families, groups, and individuals to create their own home-based prayer, study and worship disciplines.
3. Cultivating the spiritual discipline of personal stewardship.

Mrs. DeCamps reported that the lay leaders for the various *God in Christ* ministries met with the appropriate staff and Vestry to brainstorm ideas regarding the balance between Sunday worship and Christian Education and made several suggestions, and she shared those adopted by the committee. Additionally, Mrs. DeCamps reported on a meeting with all Worship committee lay leaders and key staff, and provided a status of each working team.

Mrs. Streever reported that several initiatives have been implemented toward the second and third goals, including listing a variety of resources on the website and offering retreats, classes and Forums that address these goals.

### Adult Christian Formation

Mrs. Fuller remarked that Mrs. Streever was well-organized and is working closely with the Adult Christian Formation Committee for guidance, advice and support. The new strategic plan is being used to inform programming for the year. Mrs. Fuller reported that the Adult Forum on September 25 will be a “State of the Parish” and the Forum on November 27 will be a report from the Search Committee.

### Children’s and Youth Ministries

Mrs. Montague reported that this summer’s Vacation Bible School had approximately 45 campers and 23 youth volunteers. The campers participated in a service project to benefit the Children’s Center and children from the Center joined the campers on the last day of VBS to enjoy snow cones together.

Mrs. Montague also reported that volunteer recruitment for Sunday School is going well, and the Youth Leadership Committee is recruiting volunteers for the Youth program. Both the Junior “mini-mission” and the High School youth mission were successful and will help promote the trips next year.

### Young Adults

Mr. Rees remarked that there is a strong leadership team involved in Young Adult ministries and noted that these young people are passionate and committed and the future leaders of the parish.

Mrs. Bald reported that some events from last year will continue, but the focus this year will be to get young adults involved in current church events rather than creating events just for that age group.

### Safe Church Practices

Mrs. Abplanalp distributed a written report explaining the concept of “safe church” practices that described how adults and youth/children should interact. Mrs. Bald suggested that parents be informed about the recommended adult/child ratio for classrooms in case they need to be asked to stay to achieve the appropriate ratio.

### **JUNIOR WARDEN’S REPORT**

Mr. Harper reported the following:

- New lights have been installed in the Memorial Garden and tree wells.
- The new fire alarm system is being installed this week.
- The Steeple Committee is scheduled to meet to discuss recommended action to propose to the Vestry.
- The electrical distribution system replacement preparatory work has been completed.
- The engineering preparatory work for installing a new chiller has been completed and new proposals to replace the chiller are due soon.

Mr. Harper reported that he has a couple of minor corrections in the previously approved work in the parking deck. St. James's owns 77% of the parking deck, with Beth Ahabah owning 23%. The Vestry previously approved moving forward with the work in the Parking Deck based on 75% ownership. Mr. Harper noticed this 2% ownership discrepancy between the date of the last Vestry meeting and the date of the requested action by the Endowment Trustees regarding this work. The Endowment subsequently approved funding 77% of the expenses related to the scheduled maintenance. It has also been determined that drywall around the elevator in the parking deck will need to be replaced. This was not included in the submission previously approved by the Vestry. Mr. Harper said that as a result of the above referenced two items, the final total expenditure will be different than previously approved. Therefore, he moved that the Vestry agree to the additional total expense of \$2,060. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

### **SENIOR WARDEN'S REPORT**

Mrs. Crowley reported that the following had agreed to serve on the Search Committee for the next rector: Margaret Corwin, Campbell Delk, Ida Farinholt, Scott Hetzer, Helen Kemp, Laura McCoy, Newnie Rogers, Trey Sibley, Geoff Sisk, Scott Ukrop, Charlie Whitaker, and Chip Woodson, with Mr. Whitaker serving as Chair and Mrs. McCoy serving as Vice-Chair. The Committee already has meetings scheduled, including one with the transition officers at the Diocese.

Mrs. Crowley said that she is confident that the church is in a great state and she firmly believes all that has transpired since she became Senior Warden is God's plan.

### **INTERIM RECTOR'S REPORT**

Dr. Blair said that he is glad to serve St. James's and is looking forward to the year. He commented that he has every confidence that the parish will look back on this year of transition as a great one and his goal is to maintain the church's current strength, if not leave a stronger parish for the new rector.

Dr. Blair reported that he has been meeting with individual staff members and has realized that there are a lot of moving parts to keep St. James's going. He said that he thinks highly of the staff and is impressed with their competence and effectiveness and that the Vestry should be proud of them. He encouraged the Vestry to be supportive of the staff during this time of transition.

Mr. Cummins asked what the Vestry can do and Dr. Blair suggested keeping their ears open for good candidates and to send recommendations for the next rector suggested by friends and family to the Search Committee. Mrs. Crowley noted that the Vestry will also support the search by budgeting for the search process in the 2017 budget.

### **OTHER**

Attendance figures for May, June, and July 2016, with comparisons to the same months in 2015 for reference, were distributed.

Mrs. Abplanalp invited the Vestry to come to the Sunday School Open House and the Youth Ministries Kick-Off on Sunday, September 18.

Mrs. Lisk reminded the Vestry to review the upcoming events listed on the reverse of the Agenda.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

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Anita Lisk  
Secretary

Approved:

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Rev. Dr. Thom Blair  
Interim Rector

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Peggy Crowley  
Senior Warden