

St. James' Vestry Retreat Minutes

Saturday, March 8, 2008

In attendance: Charlie Paratore, Connie Rux, Jim McConnell, Sylvia Sweeney, Jan Brandt, Scott Kennedy, Janet Fischer, Johanne LaRocque, Bob Honeychurch, Sylvia Ma, and Elizabeth Hart.

Absent: Greg Miller, Penny Trant, Scott Whitaker, and Tim Young

The meeting was called to order and Sylvia Sweeney led the opening study on the Old Testament lesson for March 9th, Ezekiel 37:1-14. Discussion included three points:

- | A moment when St. James' has been living in "the valley of dry bones."
- | A time when flesh has begun to appear on the dry bones at St. James'.
- | When we are fully resurrected (all the flesh is on the bones) who will St. James' be and what will we be able to do? What will St. James' look like?

Basic structure of the Episcopal Church – handout attached

- | The Episcopal Church in the United States formally separated from the Church of England in 1789, after the Revolutionary War
- | St. James' hold property in trust to the Episcopal Church and the Diocese of California.
- | The vestry acts as the "board of directors" – the vestry approves the budget, hires the rector, and makes major decisions.
- | According to the Diocesan Constitution (13.1) the Diocese has the power to raise money by assessment for the operating expenses of the Diocese, and for other purposes as may be approved from time to time by the Convention. Assessments are part and parcel of being members of the Episcopal Church.
- | The Episcopal Church of the USA (ECUSA) has approximately 2 million members.
- | The majority of the Anglican Communion is not white.
- | Many of the members of the Anglican Communion are more conservative than the ECUSA, especially in Africa and Asia.
- | The Church of England has women priests, but no women bishops.
- | St. James' is an outpost of a bigger "we" – we are the Episcopal Church. Autonomy ends at the national level.

Building the Beloved Community

- | The vestry watched a 25 minute video called "Building the Beloved Community", part of the visioning process of the Diocese of California.
- | A set of "I wonder..." questions regarding the beloved community are the core of the sermon from Marc Andrus

Comments on Building the Beloved Community

- | The message that the same old answers are not wanted, and the truth is desired instead is heard and understood – but the questions are not clear.
- | In the community ...
 - | We need to hold one another accountable.
 - | Differences should be celebrated, and not downplayed.
 - | There are a whole plethora of responses possible.

- | There is not just one group.
- | There is room for people who do not agree with us.
- | We should not necessarily try to get those who do not agree with us to come around to our opinion, nor should we necessarily come around to their opinion.
- | We can agree to disagree – but there may be some sorrow because not everyone will get what they want or need.
- | We need to invite others in and to communicate, even if we disagree.
- | We have a responsibility to faithfully listen, but not necessarily to faithfully change – an informed “No”.
- | There is a subtle way that people who are silent are influenced to remain silent.
- | We need to be a bigger visionary community – beyond the only people who count are those with the “loudest voice.”
- | The message should be the ministry (what the need is) rather than the person.
- | In reality there are many people doing things, but those individuals are not being recognized.
- | The beloved community shift is a self perception shift – “it's not about me.” It is not about individuals, but about what we do in the community.
- | It's also not about us (St. James'), but something bigger than us.
- | We need to pay attention to those on the perimeter.
- | We want to be invited more fully into the circle, but if invitations are extended we need to take the time and energy to come to the events and programs.
- | We are in many ways the Micaiah's of the Diocese. Who are the Micaiah's of St. James' and how do we get into their living rooms?

What is working or not working at St. James'

Communications and Evangelism	
Working	Not Working
1. Pamphlets with activities	1. St. James' e-mail list – it communicates only with a segment of the parish
2. The Window	2. No welcome packet for other than young families
3. Website	3. Outside publicity
4. Small group e-mails lists – for vestry, clusters, etc.	4. ID vestry members
5. Welcome packet for young families	5. Not enough evangelism
6. Street banners and posters	
7. Pew cards	
8. Name tags	

Facilities and Parish Life	
Working	Not Working
1. "Jobs on campus" list	1. Kitchen appliances (stove, dishwasher, etc.)
2. Monthly work parties	2. Parish Hall too small
3. Facilities technology	3. Chair/table racks
4. Groups doing coffee hour	4. Carpet in big church and little church
5. Pancake supper	5. Lighting
6. Los Posadas	6. Paving
7. Set-up/tear down	
8. The Campus	
9. Labyrinth	
10. Playground	

Social Ministries and Congregational Care	
Working	Not Working
1. Social Ministry Committee	1. Congregational care needs expanding
2. Winter Relief	2. Transportation
3. Eucharistic Ministers	3. Celebrating
4. Cards	4. Cards
5. Sunrise Village/Tri-City Homeless	5. Cabrillo Park Elementary
6. Miscellaneous outreach	6. Global social ministry
7. Walk-a-Rock-a-Thon	7. Publicity
8. Food pantry	8. Grief support
9. Comforters guild/Rosary makers/ Prayer shawls	
10. Loving Hands	

Worship and Christian Formation	
Working	Not Working
1. Music director	1. Kid's choir
2. Kid's choir	2. Altar guild – struggling
3. Worship/liturgical design team	3. Attendance at youth formation

Worship and Christian Formation	
Working	Not Working
4. Technology	4. Attendance at faith formation events
5. Variety of worship styles	5. Junior/senior high school ministry
6. Footprints	
7. Godly Play	
8. Disciple Builders	
9. Acolytes	
10. Preaching	
11. Eucharistic ministers/lectors	
12. Ushers	

Lead Team and Finance	
Working	Not Working
1. Financial reports in Window	1. Financial planning
2. Creative fund raising	2. Demand on treasurer
3. Counter teams	3. Way we are doing stewardship
4. Lead team	4. Have to have money to lead at St. James'
5. New money handling policy	

Think of a couple of “umbrella priorities” for 2008. How do we live out those priorities in each cluster to determine some action items?

- I The challenge of getting outliers into the mix
 - I Getting those (whose work we do not know) more into community.
 - I Embracing diversity
 - I State of transition – the sense that the world is changing, and we need to find new ways of looking at things because the old ways will not work
 - I Dealing with outdated views of power and entitlement
 - I There are many things that have started out with a lot of energy but are now floundering. What do we need to quit putting energy into?
 - I Too much concentration on the facilities – get items (like the dishwasher) fixed/replaced and move on.
1. Building a stronger network between people who are at the center and those who are at the periphery of the community
 2. Celebrating rich diversity
 3. Perceived power and privilege

4. Utilization of energy and resources

In 2008, St. James' will be (brainstorm list only) ...

- | Welcoming
- | Diverse (not just ethnically)
- | More familiar with each other
- | Brave/courageous
- | Creative
- | Intentional about broadening our circles
- | A 21st century community, not a 20th century community
- | Embracing change (embracers of change)
- | Compassionate
- | Happy
- | The beacon of the Diocese of California in southern Alameda County
- | Clear about whose house it is
- | All of who we are
- | A community that helps people feel good about themselves

Summarize as: brave, compassionate, and happy

- | brave: going out of our comfort zone, doing something different, clarity
- | compassionate: open and accepting, diverse, paying attention, being vulnerable
- | happy: accepting what we can and cannot do, celebrate

Brainstorm: specific actions that truly benefit St. James' and move St. James' forward – toward being brave, compassionate and happy.

Facilities and Parish Life

- | Fix the bathrooms
- | Exterior lighting and concrete
- | Consider greener church
- | More festive events/parties
- | Consider coffee hour outside in summer

Worship and Christian Formation

- | Educate congregation about goals
- | More diversity celebrated in our worship
- | Guest preachers from within congregation

Social Ministries and Congregational Care

- | Celebration of new children
- | Transportation for non-drivers
- | Alternative Christmas market

Communications and Evangelism

- | Publicize good news
- | Hand door flyers for Easter
- | Better newcomer packets

Lead Team and Finance

- | New stewardship model

Bob Honeychurch will send out an e-mail regarding this discussion. Each vestry member is asked to respond to Bob's e-mail via the vestry group list. The hope is to have a close-to-finished product by the April vestry meeting.

Business Meeting

Ducks for Bucks

Motion was made to approve Brad Hoffman as the point person for Ducks for Bucks. Moved and seconded. Motion passed.

Policy for handling money

- | At least two people to handle money, with money double-counted at stations, rather than just handing money to people, e.g. a table set up in the parish hall with two people to accept money.
- | Money for Ducks for Bucks goes straight to Ducks for Bucks

Altar Guild

The vestry received a letter from Margaret Rainey requesting money for a brass missal stand. The vote was approved via e-mail (attached).

Cluster Reports

Worship and Christian Formation

- | Approximately 9 to 15 people have been attending the Belonging series (Sunday morning 10 am program).
- | The Disciple Builders' "Faiths in our Neighborhoods" Series has been attended by approximately 30 to 35 people each week.
- | The Children's choir performed last month, and will perform on Easter.
- | Preacher exchange went well
- | For 2008-09 (beginning Fall 2008) Disciple Builders will have one bigger event per month at the Sunday 10 am time slot.

Communication and Evangelism

- | Lead team suggestions on how to improve the Window
- | The directory needs to be republished and sent out. It could be sent out as an attachment to an e-mail. It would NOT be posted to the website.

Social Ministries and Congregational Care

- | Last meeting the vestry approved \$250 for excess baggage for Mike Peterson's ministry to Mexico. \$208 of that was used to pay for one bag and a cargo van to deliver the materials.
- | Alice Johnson delivered a check to Tri-City Homeless for Winter Relief 2007.
- | The Walk-a-Rock-a-Thon will take place in late April in cooperation with St. Anne's. The tentative plan is to walk from St. Anne's to St. James'.

Parish Life and Facilities

- | There is a facilities meeting on Wednesday. Laura Winter is preparing sketches of proposed bathroom plans
- | Need to plan for the Easter egg hunt – have eggs filled, people to help put the eggs around the campus, help the children find the eggs, etc.
- | Penny Trant has suggested a family game night, and has talked with Elaine Miller.
- | Barbara Dabney has been doing research regarding solar panels.

Lead Team report

- | There have been two fund raising events – the McCutcheon Concert, which raised approximately \$2700, and the book sale, which raised approximately \$1000.
- | Have received two checks from e-scrip for \$68.21 and \$29.18.
- | Linda O'Connell has resigned from the vestry for personal reasons., so there is now a vacancy on the vestry. The new person will be part of the Parish Life/Facilities cluster.
- | Sylvia Ma attended the stewardship meeting in February. There was a 6% increase in pledging although there were less pledging units.
- | Building fund – the sewer loan is paid off, so we will have money for capital projects (e.g. bathroom renovations, etc.)
- | Easter envelope money will go toward the bathroom renovation fund.

New vestry commission

The new vestry will be commissioned on the Sunday after Easter, Sunday, March 30th, at the end of the 8 am service (8:50), the beginning of the 9 am service (9:10), and the beginning of the 11 am service (11:05).

Website www.saintj.com

- | Janet Fischer explained some of the features of the St. James' website.
- | There are buttons on the left side on each page
 - | About Us
 - | Calendar
 - | Worship – worship times, Godly Play
 - | Ministries – page for each cluster. Disciple Builders has its own page
 - | News – includes sermons, newsletters, vestry minutes, reports and financial documents.
 - | Leadership – staff and vestry
 - | Links – Bay Area, Diocese and National
 - | Map
 - | Contact us – mailing address, phone numbers
- | Will be adding a page for Easter and for visitors.
- | St. James' comes up under sponsored links if you do a Google search on “Easter Fremont”. This is possible because of a \$50 gift; cost is 5 cents a hit.

Financial Report

- | Check requests should be authorized by the vestry for their particular cluster, and should be for authorized expenses that vestry members know about ahead of time.
- | Requests then go into Jan Brandt's box.

- I If the request is OK, the request then goes into Sylvia Ma's (senior warden's) box, or into Janet Fischer's (junior warden's box) if Sylvia is not available.
- I A routine request (e.g. gas for the mower, flowers, candles) does not require full vestry approval.
- I A large one-time expenditure does need full vestry approval.
- I For outside speaker fees, an address is needed; if the amount is over \$200 social security number may also be required.

Budget

- I There are four pieces to the budget
 - I Operating – the only part that is budgeted. It includes income (pledges, unpledged, use of church, etc.), salaries, electric bills, maintenance, etc.
 - I Special Interest – includes memorial garden, liturgical design, fund raising (to allow expenses to be pulled out before money is transferred to operating), camping trips, and money raised for a specific purpose.
 - I Building – not accessed. Used for capital improvement purposes, e.g. a new roof, major paving, bathroom renovation – for improvements meant to last 5 years or more.
 - I Endowment – Endowment fund spending decisions are vestry decisions. Endowment board manages the accounts.
- I All loans have been paid off.
- I There are three special interest bank accounts – would like to consolidate that to two accounts.
- I In special interest, \$3403.95 is accrued interest and is undesignated.
- I Motion was made to use a portion of the undesignated special interest money to pay off the money owed in Facilities 2630-75, Playground (\$385.77) and the money owed in Event 2630-51, Future Pay, Wedding/Funeral (\$338). Moved and seconded. Motion passed.
- I Endowment board expenses are for events and mailers.
- I Investments under the Building Fund is to provide a vehicle for accepting stocks donated by parishioners.
- I The final numbers for February will be sent via e-mail.

Bob Honeychurch led the Eucharist, and the meeting ended at approximately 5:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Hart
Clerk of the Vestry