

St. James' Vestry Meeting Minutes

Thursday, September 14, 2007

In attendance: Janet Fischer, E.J. Hilliard, Ralph Locher, Johanne LaRocque, Connie Rux, Scott Whitaker, Jan Brandt, Greg Miller, Tim Young, Jim McConnell, Barbara Dabney, Meg Williams, Sylvia Ma, Bob Honeychurch, Lynn Locher, and Elizabeth Hart.
Absent: Sylvia Sweeney

Barbara Dabney called the meeting to order.

Question: Why have so many of the Sunday readings been from the book of Jeremiah recently?

- There was a resolution at the National Episcopal Conference that congregations move toward the use of the Revised Common Lectionary.
- In the Revised Common Lectionary, the Old Testament stories are heard more intentionally, in order to get more of the sense of flow of these epic stories.
- Nod to the Judeo-Christian tradition.
- The old lectionary (as in the Book of Common Prayer) often tried to match the Old Testament lesson to the gospel reading.

Bob Honeychurch led the opening devotion, based on this Sunday's gospel lesson, Luke 15:1-10.

- What is a word, phrase, or image that jumped out at you as you heard the text read?
- What does this text tell us about what God has set for us at St. James'?
- Name one tangible, concrete thing that this church can do because of this text.
- Ideas generated by the vestry:
 - Be welcoming, no matter if someone attends regularly or not.
 - Invite people we haven't seen in a long time to dinner or service.
 - Be purposefully conscious of the congregation – find out how people are doing if they haven't been seen for a while.
 - Exit-type interviews – find out why people are leaving. What are the needs that we are not meeting?
 - Follow up with newcomers.

Visioning

- Website on church wellness <http://www.churchwellness.com/>
- Membership development – retaining members and recruiting new members
- Leadership development – recruiting, preparing, and supporting people who can become effective leaders
- Communication strategy – using technologies and good communication skills to disseminate information and build community.
- Spiritual development – spiritual disciplines the foundation of congregational life.
- Young adult ministries
- Listening church – how we listen to what parishioners have to say

- Metrics – measuring progress

Communication strategy

- Disseminate information through the newsletter, bulletin, and website
- Building community – in-house activities and activities for the community at large
- Tracking – how did you hear about St. James'?

Leadership development

- Recruiting, training and supporting leaders
- Finding people to replace retiring members of the vestry
- Mentor people
- Have people talk about what they do, and what is involved.

Membership development

- Intentional small groups – people don't always know about all the small groups
- Identify small groups and prepare resource list (already have such a list)
- Distribute resource list to "new" people
- Profile several groups a month – perhaps a regular column?
- Follow-up with leaders of that group – semi-annual report

Listening church

- Set aside a period of time for people to stand up and share something during the service (perhaps during the prayers for the people?). Parameters would need to be established, such as each "sharing" should be one to two sentences, be only about the person sharing (no one else), and there no comments from others would be allowed.
- How do we know what is going on if people don't have a safe place to share something?

Spiritual development

- Disciple Builders, book club, am bible study
- Study questions that people could use to reflect on Sunday readings.
- Progress could be measured by seeing how many people were attracted to classes, etc.

Minutes

The August 9, 2007 vestry meeting minutes were approved as presented.

Website

- Being revised, much more user friendly
- New "buttons" on the left will take you around the site
- Features include pictures. If person is 16 years old or less, a waiver is needed from the parents. If the person is over 16, there is tacit permission for the picture to be on the website unless that person asks for the picture to be removed.

Pledges

- Vestry members have given Lynn Locher their pledge cards. The “Statement of Support for St. James’ Pledge Drive” will go out with the next newsletter.

Financial report

- Slid behind on pledges but made it up in other areas, so our income is \$2216 behind.
- However, our operating income over expenses is \$16,552, and our operating cash is \$20,892. The point at which a special meeting would need to be called is operating cash at \$17,000.
- There has been \$1614 in additional donations for the sewer fund.
- Building fund includes capital improvements, not just the mortgages.
- Playground – We are being charged for sales tax (approximately \$1600) that did not appear on the original invoices.
- Special Interest – Lead Team is working on whittling down the list by approximately 50%; and consolidating some items. This will be done at the close of the books at the end of the year. Lead Team will then present to the vestry a list of the changes for approval.

Budgeting process

- Based on taking prior year’s actuals and adding 3%
- Some items were adjusted because some things were purposely under spent to save money, or other people spent their own money (donations)
- Jan Brandt will be sending out 2007 budget information and starting working on 2008 budget (with 3% added)
- Special meeting for working on the 2008 budget will be on Thursday, October 18, 2007 from 7-9 pm. Work will need to be done at the cluster level before this meeting.
- Need to think about what we are going to have as growth areas (budgeted more than 3%). Last year the growth area was music.
- We have some items that have come out of special interest money and not out of the budget.

Calendaring

- The Diocesan Convention is October 19 (evening) and October 20. All are welcome to come and watch, but cannot vote.
- Sunday mornings at 10:30 am is choir rehearsal. If events require technology those events will need to be coordinated with the choir.
- Pumpkin Patch – Pumpkins will be delivered Sunday, October 14 at 1 pm, and sales begin on October 15. People are being asked to sign up for one or two 2-hour blocks to sell pumpkins.
- The date of the mortgage party (originally scheduled for November 11) needs to be changed.
- No staff meeting December 25.

The different ministries are now being asked to sign up for hosting coffee hour.

Cluster reports

- Lead team – no written report
- Communications and Evangelism – as submitted
- Facilities and Parish Life
 - Fire – One of the lights for the main sign fell over and set the redwood bark on fire (which smoldered and produced a lot of smoke)
 - Emergency lights – need to check invoice. Why did the lamps/batteries burn out so fast?
 - Need to update rental agreement (insurance question)
- Worship and Christian Formation
 - EFM – the mentor will be Bob Honeychurch. Program will begin in January.
- Social Ministries and Congregational Care
 - There is no longer a liaison to Tri-City Homeless Coalition. The Social Ministries committee should deal with this issue, as we have a long relationship with Tri-City Homeless which should be continued.
 - Possibility of a “Food Pantry Sunday”

Leadership pledges (this figures are the corrected figures sent by Lynn Locher via e-mail on Friday, September 14, 2007)

- 19 pledges submitted from the vestry, stewardship and clergy (“leadership pledges”)
- total amount of pledges: \$101,284.00
- average pledge: \$5330.74
- total operating: \$78,822.00
- average operating: \$4148.53
- total building: \$22,462.00
- average building: \$1182.21
- Same pledge units in 2007: total amount of pledges \$87,800.00; and average pledge \$4621.05.
- Pledges for 2008 show an increase in total pledges of \$13,484.00

The closing devotion was led by E.J. Hilliard.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Hart
Clerk of the Vestry