

St. James' Vestry Meeting Minutes

Thursday, January 10, 2008

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

Guests: John Kimber and Laura Winter

Absent: Sylvia Sweeney

Bob Honeychurch called the meeting to order.

John Kimber asked to be put on the agenda in order to give his input to the budget discussion. He was given a chance to speak before the vestry's 2008 budget discussion.

Bob Honeychurch led the opening study. This Sunday is the feast of the baptism of our Lord, where we celebrate Jesus's baptism. Two young people are being baptized this Sunday: Isabel Churchill at the 8 am service, and Lucy Ferro at the 9 am service. Sunday's reading is from Matthew 3.

1. What is the most memorable baptism that you were present for?
2. What do you get at baptism that you do not already have?
3. Two young people are being baptized this Sunday. How will their baptisms change us?

Minutes

The minutes of the December 13, 2007 vestry meeting were approved as presented.

Preparation for annual meeting

- l The written reports for the ministries of each cluster are due by January 15, 2008.
- l The written annual report booklet will be produced in-house and be ready for distribution Sunday, January 20th, the week before the annual meeting.
- l The annual report booklet and budget information will be available on the St. James' website.
- l There will be a question and answer session about the budget on January 20, 2008, to be led by Jan Brandt. Vestry members should attend if possible.
- l The annual meeting is January 27th at approximately 11:30 am, after the one service at 10:00 am. The annual meeting usually runs about 90 minutes. A potluck lunch will be held after the meeting.
- l The vestry, including Jan Brandt and Elizabeth Hart, will sit at the front of the church during the annual meeting.
- l Facilities will coordinate the set-up for lunch.
- l Remind the ushers not to take down the microphones after the service, as they will be needed for the meeting.
- l We will ask people to start self-nominating for the deanery this Sunday, but we will also take nominations from the floor.

Special Interest Funds – proposed re-alignment

- | The auditor felt the length of the Special Interest fund list was excessive – we had up to 90 categories – and that the list needed to be simplified. We also needed to clean up and remove some of the categories that list groups/ministries, etc. that are no longer functioning. We can still go back and look up history.
- | Numbers will not be reused, as has been done in the past.
- | One change – A. Cosby discretionary to Deacon's discretionary.
- | Motion was made to accept Jan Brandt's recommendation for the realignment of the Special Interest Funds as amended. Moved and seconded. Motion passed.

New Vestry Members

- | Ralph Locher, Barbara Dabney, E.J. Hilliard and Meg Williams are retiring and form the search committee.
- | The members of the search committee have been talking to people about serving on the vestry, but they need help from continuing vestry members to find others who would be good additions to the vestry.

Cluster Reports

Communications and Evangelism – as submitted

- | Janet Fischer has been working on a new church directory, but Linda LeGere has not been able to locate the file. Jan Brandt stated that she has recently seen the file and will help to locate it.
- | Laura Winter noted the necessity of making sure information gets on the calendar. Events like the vestry meeting, Shrove Tuesday, etc. were not listed on the calendar.

Facilities and Parish Life – as submitted

Social Ministries and Congregational Care – as submitted

- | Scott Whitaker attended the millennium development goals meeting at the Diocese. The second meeting will be on February 2 at CDSP.
- | This year's Lenten devotional booklet, produced by Episcopal Relief and Development, will be an exploration of the millennium development goals

Worship and Christian Formation – as submitted

- | Please do not use the Canterbury room as a storage room.

Letter from John Kimber

- | John Kimber apologized for an error in his letter – the statement that the vestry had sold off the equity in Bob Honeychurch's and Sylvia Sweeney's house is incorrect.
- | John noted that in one of the communications from the vestry it was stated that reducing the Diocesan assessment is not an option. He suggested that everything is an option.
- | John's suggestions included:
 - | Reduce our Diocesan assessment to 10% of our budgeted income (\$27,890) for a savings of approximately \$20,000.
 - | Add \$5000 to the maintenance budget. We need a to purchase a dishwasher, repair the stove, repair cracks in the sidewalk, renovate the lawn, etc.

- I Make sure the sexton has very strong and definite responsibilities. St. James' should be spotless.
 - I Set aside \$1000 per year for a search committee.
 - I Set aside \$2000 for a housing allowance.
- I John also stated that we need to take charge of our own finances and that a surplus is needed because the diocese will not take care of us.

Diocesan Assessment Discussion

- I The Diocesan convention sets the assessment. This has not changed for several years. The formula is 5% of approximately the first \$60,000 of income (which is the minimum salary for a right-out-of-seminary priest). Any income above that amount is assessed at 20%.
- I This year (2008) is calculated from income from 2006. This is because the parochial report that contains financial information is due at the end of March (information for 2007 is due March 2008).
- I The diocesan and national church websites have information on what the assessment is used for.
- I While we had a deficit budget last year, we ended up with a surplus, and all of our bills were paid, including our assessment.
- I Jan Brandt noted that we have \$44,000 in our account. We could raise the maintenance budget to \$5000, set aside \$1000 for a search committee, set aside \$2000 for a housing fund, and still pay our full diocesan assessment.
- I What would happen if we do not pay our full diocesan assessment?
 - I Historically in this deanery (6 churches) there is one church (St. Christopher's) that has not been able to pay its full assessment.
 - I If we do not pay, we have to go in for an assessment appeal, and ask for forgiveness.
 - I We would have to present extensive financial data as to why we cannot pay full assessment. Our desire to have a large surplus is not a justifiable reason to not pay the assessment.
 - I If the appeal is denied, we are denied seating at the convention.
 - I In addition, we would revert to mission status. Mission status means we cannot pay our bills on our own, and assessment is just one of those bills.
 - I If we become a mission church, the Diocese assigns a priest (vicar), who may or not be full time.
- I St. James' is finally able to start building up reserves for capital projects and improvements now that the mortgage is paid.
- I The vestry is not comfortable with not paying our diocesan assessment obligation.
- I The diocesan assessment is under review at the diocese – re-evaluating how we do our assessment formula, with a look at decreasing it. The assessment is burdensome for many congregations.
- I This issue was discussed with the Bishop last year, and he did say that it was an issue for many parishes.
- I Decision: Maintain Diocesan Assessment

Other issues

- I \$2000 for a housing fund could “live” in the building fund

- | What is the cost of a rector search? Estimate is \$15,000 to \$25,000. There will be some savings when not paying a rector. While we will be paying someone it will not be a full rector salary.
- | Ralph Locher suggested that the money should be set aside for the sabbatical fund rather than a search fund. Money could be set aside for a sabbatical fund; if it is not used it could be rolled over into a search fund.
- | Suggestion: Set aside \$1000 for a sabbatical fund.
- | Money for maintenance in budget is for general maintenance, not for capital improvements.
- | Suggestion: raise the amount in general maintenance to \$5000.
- | Suggestion: dedicate \$2000 from building fund to clergy housing reserve.
- | For the sexton, come up with a list of scheduled duties. Bob Honeychurch will talk with the sexton next week. Maintenance of property is an issue that needs to be addressed.

Financial Report and Budget

- | Accounting summary corrections
 - | Operating pledges budgeted through 12/31/2007 should be \$253,000.
 - | Operating pledges paid should be \$269,151.15.
 - | Other operating income should be \$16,432.08.
- | The sewer loan is being paid out of building fund pledges. The loan should be paid off by April.
- | Social Ministries/Outreach was kept at a higher level, as a lot of outreach money came in and out of special interest monies. Some program items also came out of special interest monies.
- | Jan Brandt has a 4 year draft budget comparison available if interested.
- | The draft Saint James' budget keeps the associate rector but reflects a salary freeze for all staff.
- | Linda LeGere's entry salary has been honored, but there is no COLA.
- | As a vestry, we can reconsider the budget at any time.
- | Adjustments to the draft budget:
 - | Add a line for "sabbatical reserve", amount \$1000.
 - | Raise general maintenance to \$5000.

Motion was made to accept the draft 2008 budget as amended. Moved and seconded. Motion passed.

Barbara Dabney led the closing worship.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Hart
Clerk of the Vestry