

St. James' Vestry Meeting Minutes

Thursday, May 8 2008

In attendance: Tim Young, Jan Scrutton, Scott Whitaker, Charlie Paratore, Greg Miller, Sylvia Ma, Janet Fischer, Connie Rux, Penny Trant, Jim McConnell, Jan Brandt, Sylvia Sweeney, Johanne LaRocque, Bob Honeychurch, Keri Mogret, Lynn Locher, and Elizabeth Hart.

Sylvia Ma called the meeting to order, and Bob Honeychurch led the opening study about Pentecost, which takes place 50 days after Easter. There is also a Jewish holiday called Pentecost (Shavuot) that takes place 50 days after Passover. Pentecost is the “birthday” of the church – a universal sense of the church that everyone heard in their own language. Do we as the church speak in such a way that each can hear the message in his/her own language?

Website statistics – presented by Keri Mogret

- | There is usually a “blip” at the end of the month, probably because of the newsletter.
- | There are approximately 50 to 70 visitors to the website a week. Most are direct visits – people who already know about St. James'.
- | Some recent searches include Easter egg hunts and Episcopal Church, Fremont.
- | Most visitors to the website are from the Bay Area.
- | We are able to target Fremont, Newark, and Union City through the ad words that appear on the right. These ads have been paid for by a coupon. There is \$35 left.
- | Have had some people state they found us by our website. In general, people find us in two ways, either by the website or they drive by the church. People may also have found the website through newspaper ads.
- | There was a spike in website usage after parishioners were referred to the website regarding the changes to the 8 am service and Rite 1.
- | The most popular sections of the website are Ministry, Worship and About.
- | Visitors to the website use primarily Google (20-25%), Yahoo (6-7%) and direct URL (53%).
- | Looking to build name recognition in the community.

New Consecration Sunday – presented by Lynn Locher

- | Lynn Locher is the chair of the Stewardship Task Force Committee. Her sister is on a stewardship committee in a church in Arizona. Her sister's church has used the New Consecration Sunday program successfully in that church.
- | The program needs the by-in from the vestry to be successful.
- | New Consecration Sunday program was created by Herb Miller.
- | “What percentage of your income do you feel God is calling you to give?”
- | Three times more dollars per year than churches that just take offerings.
- | Proposal for St. James' (see attached for powerpoint and spreadsheet listing costs).
- | Estimated cost for program includes Leader's guide and CD-ROM, program books for team, and postage: \$332.85
- | Events include a dinner or dessert for vestry, church leaders and spouses, and a catered brunch for all parishioners. Estimated costs for the dinner/dessert and catered

brunch range from \$3673.75(brunch in Big Church) to \$7387.25 (brunch in a tent set up in the parking lot, see attached).

- | If the stewardship committee does this program, they would not be able to do the fall roundup. Lynn suggested that the vestry do the fall roundup in that event.
- | Sylvia Sweeney stated that this program is a good way to give a “shot in the arm” to stewardship. She warned against shortcutting the catering end, as it will generate ill will and resentment for those stuck in the kitchen. It should be a grand celebration, a big party thrown for the church.
- | Bob Honeychurch stated that the money spent on the program results in an increase in funding, with benefit in the long run. For example, if we receive a 10% increase in money, only 2% would be used for the celebration.
- | The program works for 2 to 3 years in a row. After that point, the giving usually quits going up, but usually doesn't drop down.
- | Lynn Locher suggested that the vestry needs to discuss this without her present. Does the vestry feel comfortable supporting this program, and spending this kind of money on the program? Lynn requested a decision by the next vestry meeting.

Concerns/Discussion regarding New Consecration Sunday

- | There will be complaints about how much money would be spent. It was noted that if the pledges increase by 20% the complaints would quiet down.
- | There are never any guarantees. Is the whole experience worth it?
- | Focus is on giving back to God's work, not just paying bills.
- | Might bring people back to church who only attend 2 or 3 times a year. The only commitment is to sign up for the brunch.
- | Inviting people to generosity; not inviting them to “pay the bills.” “What is God calling you to give” - period.
- | What people can personally do, not just give money.
- | Bob Honeychurch's experience: It is a really re-energizing experience for congregations. It is about being thankful, and thankful for God's blessings in our lives.
- | Sylvia Sweeney's experience: Has seen a 10-15% increase in money, and it was a positive experience that generated positive energy.
- | But, there has to be a firm commitment from the leadership. We will be celebrating who we are – what's wrong with throwing ourselves a party?
- | A tent set up in the parking lot would should that this is special, not just the usual celebration. People who normally gravitate to the kitchen will not be able to do so.
- | A “family reunion” - come home to St. James', homecoming Sunday
- | Questions we might get and need answer for (answers could be rolled into announcement period and/or letters):
 - | Percentage of income – before or after taxes?
 - | “I give money to other organizations as well” - total amount given to all organizations a tithe?
- | Bob Honeychurch asked the vestry if there was general support of the program.
- | Sylvia Ma suggested that Lynn Locher send out the spreadsheet regarding costs, and then allow the vestry some time to consider before supporting the program.
- | Janet Fischer stated she would like to learn more about the program.

- | It was decided to continue the discussion via e-mail and come to a decision by Thursday, May 15 on whether to accept New Consecration Sunday in principle so the Stewardship Committee could make plans.

Other Business

- | Barbara Dabney's son and daughter-in-law's house in San Jose burned down. Barbara's daughter-in-law made the Alleluia banner in the Big Church. A fund has been set up to help the Harris family.
 - | Motion was made to give \$500 from the Special Interest-Outreach Fund to the bank account fund for the Harris family. Moved and seconded. Motion passed.
 - | It was suggested that St. James' could help them do something to earn money as well. For example, the daughter-in-law could be paid to make a quilt that St. James' could raffle off.
- | Donations for the people of Myanmar (Burma).
 - | Motion was made to donate \$250 from Special Interest-Outreach fund to Episcopal Relief and Development for Myanmar. Moved and seconded. Motion passed.
 - | Encourage others to donate. Checks can be written to St. James' with the notation "ERD". That money will be included in the check to Episcopal Relief and Development.

The April 10, 2008 vestry minutes were approved as presented.

Cluster Reports

- | Lead Team – as submitted.
- | Communications and Evangelism – as submitted.
- | Parish Life
 - | Appeal for graduates' names
 - | Will be producing our own cards to give graduates
 - | Change from flowers to bookmarks for Father's Day
 - | Considering ice cream social at 10 am.
 - | Appeal to help purchase flowers from Costco for Mother's Day
 - | On Mother's Day, the children's choir will be singing at the 11 am service. Those children will be presenting flowers to their mothers.
- | Facilities
 - | Working on obtaining bids (5 contractors coming next week) for the bathroom renovation and for concrete repair (walkway from the parking lot to the Education Building, as well as other repairs.)
 - | Ralph Locher and Barbara Dabney are looking into the solar project.
 - | The sexton position has been filled by Art Gallardo. His hours are 8:30 to 11:30 Monday through Saturday.
- | Social Ministries and Congregational Care
 - | Not sure how feasible parishioner rides are – it depends on how many people participate as drivers.
 - | Possibility of program of visitors to those with limited mobility.
- | Worship and Christian Formation
 - | Disciple Builders are starting their congregational survey for adult education.

Financial summary attached.

Sylvia Sweeney said that the diocese in Nevada decided to push some other names forward.

The closing prayer was led by Penny Trant.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Hart
Clerk of the Vestry