

St. James' Vestry Retreat Minutes

Saturday, February 26, 2011

In attendance: Mary Casas, Andy MacRae, Stephen Ferro, Janet Fischer, Laura Winter, Donald Razzolini, Molly Lubwama, Brad Hoffman, Valle Brookes, Dean Valentine, Gary Gearheart, Lori Walton+, Elizabeth Hart and retiring vestry members Scott Kennedy, Charlie Paratore, and Jan Scrutton. Absent: Greg Scheuffele, Jan Brandt, and retiring vestry member Penny Trant

Lori Walton called the meeting to order, and Mary Casas led the opening prayer.

The *Vestry Resource Guide*, presented at Vestry Day at Grace Cathedral, is available for vestry members to look at.

Lori has modified the *Vestry Handbook*. The vestry will vote for approval of the changes to the *Vestry Handbook* at the March meeting.

Junior Warden

- The job description for the junior warden is available in the *Vestry Handbook*.
- The job description for 2011 includes:
 - Assisting the rector in policy design for areas which fall under the rector's responsibility, such as weddings and funerals
 - Assisting the rector and the Evangelism cluster in the establishment of materials and programs to welcome new people and integrate them into the fuller life of the church.
- The nominations for junior warden are Andy MacRae, Stephen Ferro, and Laura Winter.
- It was moved and seconded that the nominations be closed. Motion passed.

Information and Announcements

- New members of the vestry will need to meet with the treasurer, Jan Brandt, to learn how finances are structured. Jan will schedule the meeting.
- Structure of the vestry meetings:
 - 6:30-7:00 meal. Vestry members rotate who brings the meal
 - Meeting begins at 7:00 and ends at 9:00.
 - Each meeting begins with a prayer, and ends with Compline (from the Book of Common Prayer). The person who brings the meal will lead Compline.

- The commitment of the vestry is important. The vestry members are leaders in the church and should take their role seriously. Prepare in advance, engage equally, and participate.
- Review all materials in advance and be prepared to discuss.
- Submit monthly cluster reports in advance of the meeting.
- Look at the budget report and review last month's meeting minutes.
- You are the liaison/responsible for overview of your cluster – pay attention to the budget, what your cluster is doing, and your cluster's expenses.
- The vestry votes approval for any expenses over \$200.
- Try to wait until the vestry meeting for vestry approval. If it is an urgent situation, the senior warden will initiate a vote via e-mail. Reply with your vote to just the senior warden. If there is a need for discussion, send an e-mail to the senior warden voicing your concerns, and the senior warden and Lori will discuss and review.
- Lori has purchased letterhead stationary and envelopes with the St. James' logo. Total cost is \$224.97.
 - Motion was made to approve the purchase of letterhead stationary and envelopes with the St. James' logo. Moved and seconded. Motion passed.
- Anti-Racism Training is a requirement of the Diocese. Lori said the training is an excellent experience. The training is available in various opportunities and formats, from possible in-house to Diocesan events.
- Diocesan Assessment
 - Also required is a review/discussion of the Diocesan assessment.
 - The Diocesan assessment is like St. James's "pledge" and is based on income, number of parishioners, etc.
 - There is a movement in the Diocese to change the formula. The bishop is asking every vestry in the Diocese and the Deanery to have a dialogue about the assessment and the way the formula is set up. This is new – the formula has not changed for many years.
 - The Assessment Review Board will make recommendation to the convention, based at least partly on information from the 82 congregations and Deaneries. There will be a vote at the convention.
- Every February the Diocese holds a Vestry Day. Andy MacRae, Stephen Ferro, Greg Scheuffele, Laura Winter, and Mary Casas attended. The day was fairly informative and beneficial.
- Vestry Retreat
 - To consider – the Southern Alameda Deanery has, for the last 3 years, had an annual vestry retreat for all the parishes in the

Deanery at Bishop's Ranch in January. It runs Friday through Sunday, and cost is \$150.00.

- There is group work with speakers, as well as time for each parish to have their own meeting.
- Deanery reps also attend, and there is a Deanery meeting.
- Calendar Issues
 - Book sale has been postponed.
 - Contact Aimee, the administrative assistant, at admin@saintj.com for events to be added to the calendar.
 - Aimee is responsible for the calendar, the weekly e-mail and the Sunday bulletin.
 - April 30th is Ducks for Bucks. This is led by Brad Hoffman and Tom Blalock.
 - § Motion was made that St. James' participate in Ducks for Bucks on April 30, 2011. Moved and seconded. Motion passed.
 - May 14th is the Walka-Rocka-Thon to raise funds for the Home Warming program (formerly Winter Relief). St. Anne's will be joining us. The walkers will meet at St. Anne's and walk to St. James'. There will be a picnic afterwards. Might be a good idea to have the book sale on the same day.
 - Gavin Ferro's baptism is May 15th.

Diocese of California

- Originally spanned the entire state of California. As the state became more populated, it was divided into different dioceses – Northern California, El Camino Real, San Joaquin, Los Angeles and San Diego.
- The Diocese of California is made up of 82 congregations, more than half of which are mission churches. Mission churches are unable to self-sustain and receive money from the Diocese. Many mission churches do not have full-time clergy. They have a vicar, rather than a rector, and a Bishop's Committee, rather than a vestry.
- The Diocese of California physically spans the Bay Area – to the north, Inverness, to the south, St. Anne's (Fremont) and Los Altos (Peninsula), to the east, Brentwood/Livermore and to the west, Half Moon Bay.
- There are 20,000 members in our Diocese.

When you are ordained in a diocese, you have canonical residency in that diocese. You can obtain a letter to officiate in a diocese you are not canonically resident in, rather than change residency. Jim McLeod, who is canonically resident in El Camino Real, has offered to help and support our congregation. Jim will be preaching on May 29th, when Lori is gone. It will also be the 50th anniversary of his own ordination.

Andy MacRae was elected the new junior warden.

Clusters (as proposed for 2011 *Vestry Handbook*)

- Lead Team
 - Endowment Board
 - Fundraising
 - Clergy
 - Wardens
 - Stewardship Committee
 - Treasurer/Finances
 - Technology
 - § Audio/video
 - § Office systems and machines
 - Worship
 - § Acolytes
 - § Altar Guild
 - § Eucharistic Ministers
 - § Lectors
 - § Liturgical design team
 - § Usher
 - § Worship Committee
 - § Choir – adult, children
- Social Ministries and Congregational Care
 - Abode Services
 - § Sunrise Village
 - § Home Warming
 - § Walka-Rocka-Thon
 - AEMCH
 - Blood Centers of the Pacific
 - Centerville Free Dining Room
 - Comforters Guild and Prayer Shawl Ministry
 - Loving Hands
 - Other outreach efforts
 - Healing Ministry
 - Loss support groups
 - Women's spirituality
- Facilities
 - Facilities Committee
 - Current renovation projects
 - Memorial Garden and Columbarium
 - Playground Committee
 - Sexton
 - Work parties

- Injury and illness prevention
- Communication and Evangelism
 - Advertising and publicity
 - Bulletins
 - E-mail list
 - Weekly e-mail
 - Sunday's news
 - Newsletter
 - Parish photo directory
 - Outdoor banners
 - Website
 - Welcoming and newcomers
 - Visitor follow-up
 - Events for new or potential members
- Parish Life
 - "Available for Lunch"
 - Food and fellowship
 - Kitchen coordinator
 - Ladies Flatlanders
 - Men's trip
 - Receptions
 - Sunday morning breakfast club
 - Sunday morning coffee hour
- Christian Formation
 - Faith formation
 - Youth group
 - Other youth programs
 - Godly Play
 - Bible studies
 - Baptism preparation classes
 - Marriage preparation classes
 - Confirmation preparation classes
 - Child care
 - Children's worship bags
 - Church camps
 - Library

Modifications that have been made to clusters from previous *Vestry Handbook*:

- Pulled Worship out of Christian Formation; Worship is now part of Lead Team
- Technology is also under Lead Team. Need for the office to be efficient, as we are working with a skeleton crew
- Added children and youth to Faith Formation.

- Need to work on children's programs.
- Need to re-examine child care. For example, could have story time. Need to make nursery brighter, more welcoming. Also need to discourage children over age 4 from being in the nursery.
- Proposing changing the start of Godly Play to 10:30, when the service begins. Presently, Godly Play starts at 10:00. This would mean reducing Godly Play to 45 minutes, so children can come to the service for communion. This would make it easier for parents. This discussion to continue in the cluster.
- Removed building superintendent from Facilities – now have Facilities Committee.
- Added to Evangelism – welcoming and integrating new members, visitor follow-up, and events for new or potential members.
- Winter Relief has been changed to Home Warming
- Injury and illness prevention added to Facilities.

The vestry member is the liaison to the cluster, rather than "in charge." Check in and attend meetings when you need to, inform your clusters when you need to. You do not have to do all the work – you want to foster and promote volunteerism. If at the end of your time on the vestry you feel that you have been pulled through a keyhole, then we are doing something wrong.

Spending Money

- The issue of spending money is a different orientation than what Lori has previously worked under – e.g. the rector needs approval to spend money.
- Has to do with levels of authority, permission, and trust
- The laity must come to the vestry cluster liaison before they can spend money, and need signatures for reimbursement. This protects the treasurer, gives an accounting of where the money goes, and provides equality – everyone is treated the same.
- If you are the vestry cluster liaison you should not be chair of a committee within the cluster. You cannot sign your own check permissions.

Cluster members

- Lead Team – Lori Walton, Mary Casas, Andy MacRae
- Social Ministries and Congregational Care – Brad Hoffman and Gary Gearheart
- Facilities – Laura Winter
- Communications and Evangelism – Greg Scheuffele and Valle Brokes
- Parish Life – Dean Valentine and Donald Razzolini

- Christian Formation – Molly Lubwama, Stephen Ferro, and Janet Fischer
- Note another change – there is one person on Facilities, and three on Christian Formation. We have a strong Facilities Committee, and we need to jumpstart children's programming.

Ways to advertise events

- Weekly e-mail – In a succinct paragraph/summary
- Sunday news – Wednesday evening deadline. Contact admin@saintj.com
- The Window – Longer articles. Deadline is the 15th of the prior month. Contact [window@saintj.com](mailto>window@saintj.com)
- Website – Short summary of events coming up. Contact webkeeper@saintj.com
- Yahoo Groups list – For community events, non-specific church events, quick notices, prayers

Presentation – Transitions (based on a Fresh Start presentation)

- Change and transition are different.
 - Change – act or instance of making or becoming different
 - Transition – a passing from one place, state, or condition to another
- Three aspects of transition
 - Letting go
 - Neither here nor there
 - New beginnings
- Letting go
 - Old comfortable ways and identity (even if not “best” it is comfortable).
 - It is important to explicitly acknowledge loss. Clear on who is losing what, what we are afraid of or unwilling to let go of, what we will miss.
 - Accept the reality and importance of subjective losses – perception is reality
 - Letting go can often feel magnified as “loss” happens
 - Expect and accept the signs of grieving and/or signs of relief
- In the midst – neither here nor there
 - When change is deep and/or far reaching the time between old identity and new can be several months or even years
 - Most creative time and the most anxious time
 - Reorientation and redefinition – a time for innovation
 - Time for developing new vision, creating new connections, imagining possibilities
 - Very important not to skip this

- Very important not to get stuck in the midst or to go backwards
- Be intentional about this time, use it to generate life
- Interim time/writing profile – uncomfortable stage, anxious time, discomfort
- The vestry has the benefit of going through the process. The people in the pews may only see end result
- Define the path and invite someone to the path, rather than define the place and have them meet you there
- New beginning
 - New energy moving in a new direction
 - Clarity and a sense of belonging
 - Sustainable – a shared vision that can take a lot of time to create
 - New symbols, new rituals
 - No longer “the new...,” no longer “we used to...”
 - Takes about 5 years to get to the new beginnings. Yet, the average tenure for most rectors is 4 years. Could this contribute to the decline in churches?
 - Assumes people are connected to their church and to God rather than to their rector. Why liturgy is so important.
- Not distinct stages – individually people are in different places and different stages. For example, still letting go with a new rector because of changes in programs.
- Letting go: Acknowledging loss.
 - In terms of St. James’ what have you personally had to let go of? What do you think you are still hanging on to?
 - What has the congregation had to let go of? What do you think the congregation may still be holding on to?
 - Part of the language of letting go is forgiveness
 - Congregation is still having to let go of having 2 clergy people, and accepting the reality of having only one clergy person, and the financial realization of where we are at
- In the midst: between what was and what will be
 - This is both an anxious and creative time. Thinking about your current ministry or St. James’ has a whole, what signs have you seen of anxiety, resistance, or fear? What is getting in the way of a healthy transition? How can we as a vestry address this?
- Areas of communication
 - Problems include:
 - § Triangles rather than direct conversation
 - § Past language to describe new realities
 - § Focus on emotion rather than issue or need
 - § Use of email to post strong opinions/dissatisfactions rather than to disseminate information or plan events/meetings

- Have you experienced these types of communication? How, as a vestry, can you help to strengthen the modes of communication within the community as a whole?
- Behaviors that foster healthy communication
 - § Do not engage in triangles, encourage direct communication
 - § Take a temperature read of the situation. Is this reality or is this a past situation?
 - § Though emotion is important and not to be ignored, emotion can often derail the intended result. Try to keep perspective and aware of the issue in light of the emotions around it
 - § Email is effective for disseminating a lot of information quickly but is not always effective in addressing important issues. Spend time wondering if email is the best tool for what you are communicating
- Now looking at creativity about your current ministry or St. James' as a whole, what signs have you seen of the creative and innovative possibilities of being in the midst? What can we as a vestry do to harness and cultivate these toward a new beginning?
- New beginnings
 - On a scale of 1 (still focused on loss) to 10 (establishing a sustainable new identity) how far along is St. James' as a whole in making this transition? What signs or conditions inform your rating?
 - What hopes do you have for the new beginning? What needs to happen?

Covenant of Leadership – What can we promise to God, to our church, and to each other (as vestry members)?

Lori Walton led Holy Communion.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Hart
Clerk of the Vestry