

**St. James' Episcopal Church  
Annual Retreat Minutes**

January 27-29, 2012

Bishop's Ranch

In attendance: Rector Lori Walton+; Treasurer Jan Brandt; Vestry Members Stephen Ferro, Brad Hoffman, Laura Winter, Valle Brokes, Senior Warden Janet Fischer, Gary Gearheart, Donald Razzolini, Bev Mosier, Bob Bynum, Mike Scrutton, Bud Spalding; former Senior Warden Mary Casas; and on January 29, Deanery Representatives Barbara Dabney, Alice Johnson, and Jim McConnell. Absent: Nancy Castaneda, Scott Whitaker

Lori Walton called the meeting to order, and Bud Spalding led the opening prayer. Introduction of new members followed: Bev Mosier, Bob Bynum, Mike Scrutton, and Bud Spalding.

Elections were the first order of business for the retreat. Brad Hoffman and Laura Winter were nominated for Junior Warden. Laura Winter was elected Junior Warden. Andy Macrae's resignation from the Vestry was submitted.

**A motion was approved** to name Nancy Castaneda to fill Andy MacRae's position: Gary Gearheart moved and Donald Razzolini seconded the motion.

Basic financial information was shared by Treasurer Jan Brandt. Vestry members need to be frugal and in control of their budgeted accounts. Financial components include the operating budget, special interest accounts, building budget, endowment, and the Rector's discretionary fund. Check request slips must be submitted with a Vestry member's signature on items up to \$250. Items over \$250 must be approved by the Vestry before the money is spent. These check request slips are available in the office or can be downloaded from the St. James' website. A parishioner must have a Vestry member's approval before submitting a check or reimbursement request. Receipts and invoices from vendors as well as checks written to vendors or in reimbursements must be timely and clear with addresses and names included. Additional paperwork that is expected should be explained ahead of time. Current budgets and budgets from 2004 to 2012 are on St. James' website, [www.saintj.com](http://www.saintj.com).

Pew Chairs – In preparation for reupholstering 237 pew chairs, the Worship Interiors Group has offered a price of \$5 per chair to refurbish the wooden parts of the chairs at the same time. They will be able to do the work on site, and will complete reupholstering and wood restoration in 8 days in March. This would add \$1185 to their contract of \$18,960, making a total of \$20,145, very close to the approved budget of \$20,000.

**A motion was approved** to add \$1185 to the budget for Pew Chairs: Bev Mosier moved and Mike Scrutton seconded the motion.

Window Restoration: Hogan Art Glass will begin Monday, Jan. 30, with the restoration of stained glass windows in the Little Church. The first window scheduled is behind the altar, the one in most need of repair.

Voting Methods: Bev Mosier suggested and the Vestry agreed that St. James' should change its voting methods. Instead of voting with a voice vote, we will vote with a show of hands. This method accommodates people who are hearing impaired and those who have language problems.

New Administrator: Vestry members should be especially clear about the building location and time of meetings when scheduling calendar items as a courtesy to our new administrator, Brenda Iodence.

Structure of Vestry Meetings: On the second Thursday of the month, meetings begin at 6:30 pm with dinner supplied for everyone by a designated Vestry member. Food allergies are listed so that members can know what is not permissible. Meetings begin at 7. The person in charge of dinner is responsible for the opening prayer as well as leading Compline in the Little Church at the end of the meeting.

Mutual Ministry Review results were discussed. Julia McCray-Goldsmith and Michael Barlowe submitted their observations of contributions by lay and ordained leadership of St. James toward reaching the vision for ministry articulated in our search process. We have made positive progress toward reaching goals of expanding programs for children and youth, strengthening worship and music, and serving an aging congregation that needs pastoral care. Leadership needs to continue to be raised up in these programs.

Church Governance – Vestry members should read church by-laws. They were last revised in 2003. Cluster reports are due to the Vestry monthly, but the Vestry representative is not responsible for doing everything planned by the cluster. Others can help. An Episcopal Fact Sheet was given out. The Vestry has a dedicated email list: [stj-vestry@yahogroups.com](mailto:stj-vestry@yahogroups.com). Vestry Day at the Diocese was recommended as worthwhile. Mailboxes in the office have been reassigned in alphabetical order.

## 2012 Vestry Cluster Assignments

Communications and Evangelism: Valle Brokes, Mike Scrutton

Congregational Care & Social Ministries: Gary Gearheart, Bev Mosier

Facilities: Brad Hoffman, Bud Spalding

Faith Formation: Nancy Castaneda, Stephen Ferro

Parish Life: Bob Bynum, Donald Razzolini

Lead Team: Janet Fischer, Lynn Locher, Lori Walton, Laura Winter

Deanery Representatives: Barbara Dabney, Alice Johnson, Jim McConnell, Scott Whitaker

Cluster Meetings and discussions were held from 2:30 to 3:30 pm. Teams worked on goal-setting, communication with partners, and reporting responsibilities. It was suggested that each person check e-mail once a day.

Evening session discussion centered on ways in which we can tell Christ is strong in our midst because we see Christ working through St. James:

work freely given in feeding families and singles at the Homeless Shelter – we see dignity.

in the Wednesday service we see a community of intentionality holding up the church in prayer

in Work Parties we see participation, inclusion, fellowship.

8 o'clock service – service a community of the ages, feel the ambiance of the Little Church

Sunday School students taking up offering – children seem happy, radiate energy, show a liturgical presence

Home Warming is a manifestation of Christ's helping, of social justice

Healing Ministry we feel the presence of God

Bible Study highlights our intentionality, studies of sermons

Faith Formation at 9:15 we see happy participation, we are all teachers

Breakfast camaraderie, friendship

How are we distracted from seeing or experiencing Christ's presence?

gossip and bitching, negativity

inward focus too strong

delicate balance goes wrong

locked in on "how we've always done it" instead of how to go forward

not being aware when we speak that we may not all have the same views

lack of awareness in general

assumption of world religious views – "everybody knows "

insider language

not wearing name tags – encourage nametag wearing

say name when making announcements

we can be materialistic – focusing on things, buildings, one job or project

What can we do about distractions?

utilize the gifts we have  
listen and do not engage or counter arguments  
on hearing gossip, address concern and correct  
do not create triangle relationships -- suggest direct contact  
embrace past as past and look forward to our goals and the capacity  
and ability to build something for the future  
do our best and assume others are doing their best  
notice when others are uncomfortable – pay attention to speaker  
in talking to a new person – talk in different format or language  
learn how to integrate and welcome people

Each Cluster shared goals.

Social Ministries: Gary and Bev

In congregational care, be more intentional and do needs assessment; create a team; if someone's in the hospital, bring food and help to families; develop deaf ministry with social outreach and congregational care; contact Fremont Oak Garden, School for Deaf, chaplaincy at Washington Hospital; work with Nets for Life (Scott Whitaker); study effectiveness of Rockawalkathon.

Facilities: Bud and Brad

basic maintenance; assault plan for major projects such as patio, parking lot; help Scott Kennedy and Patty Lacy with Little Church restoration projects; develop a disaster evacuation plan; document safety training for insurance (OSHA) – this is required; make safety a priority

Communication and Evangelism: Mike and Valle

Find out what is or isn't working in communication; efficient use of communication and hitting the right target; we may be welcoming but not anchoring; study steps from first visit to integration; where are groups; increase number through door and number who stay; develop cohesive messaging.

Parish Life: Donald and Bob

What's working or not working re: kitchen; inclusive parties including community; coffee hour can integrate healthy food; include ministries in hosting coffee hours

Faith Formation: Stephen

Youth and visibility of youth group; service participation; encourage youth to read and usher to foster empowerment as guided by the youth group leaders; anchor families with children; advertise sport groups that don't schedule games on Sundays; help low stress/ low effort connections.

Lead Team: Lori, Janet, Laura

Maintain good communication and be open and approachable; facilitate Vestry; hear and listen; team is assigned to monitor clusters in general; participate in discussions of Schader Trust and solving clergy housing.

Deanery Representatives gave a report of their Deanery discussions.

The 2012 Deanery concerns/events up for consideration and/or calendaring include: Annual Bash - picnic in Pleasanton; Family Camp at St. Dorothy's rest; a project for Episcopal charities to consider; support for Sacred Space ministry; support bodies/\$\$ for Corazon; AIDS Walk in Golden Gate Park; resolve communication difficulties among the churches; an education/training curriculum for the deanery churches to attend and/or present. The concerns are that we not over commit and do a good job with whatever we decide. Some things are one-time only and other efforts would be ongoing. The deanery reps are Barbara Dabney, Jim McConnell, beginning two-year terms, and Alice Johnson and Scott Whitaker finishing two-year terms.

**A Motion was approved:** The Rector, the Senior Warden, Junior Warden, and new Treasurer will establish signatures on the bank Heritage Accounts and the Schwab Accounts. Bud Spalding moved, Gary Gearheart seconded.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Valle Brokes