

## St. James' Vestry Special Meeting Minutes Thursday, January 3, 2013

In attendance: Rector Lori Walton, Treasurer Lynn Locher, Senior Warden Janet Fischer, Junior Warden Laura Winter, vestry members Gary Gearheart, Donald Razzolini, Bob Bynum, Bev Mosier, Mike Scrutton, Bud Spalding, and Clerk Elizabeth Hart.

Absent: Brad Hoffman, Nancy Castaneda, Stephen Ferro, and Jack Rux

Janet Fischer called the meeting to order, and Lori Walton led the opening prayer.

The purpose of this meeting is to discuss how and if we want to fund the projects for the renovation of the Little Church.

### Comments

#### Janet Fischer

- This has not been Janet's favorite project, but she has changed her mind for two reasons:
  - Renovating and maintaining the Little Church is something the parish wants us to do. We should honor that to the best of our ability.
  - We have the remains of people's loved ones buried in the Memorial Garden. If the Little Church should fall into disrepair so that it cannot be used it would affect the remains that are buried in the Garden. We have an obligation to maintain the space.
- Not sure to what extent we can promise to fund projects in the future. That will be in the hands of the vestry serving at that time. Not sure that we can obligate that future vestry.

#### Lori Walton

- When Lori was interviewed for the position by the vestry, one of the questions asked was "What would you do if a parishioner gave \$250,000 to the church, undesignated? How would you feel about having to lead that effort in spending that money?" At the interview Lori stated that the money would come with very high responsibility and would be about the future of the church. Our purpose would be not only to take care of ourselves now but also take care of this place for future generations. Lori said she would be very cautious about how the money would be used. It would come with some very difficult decisions, and Lori would hope that the vestry would support her when those decisions were made.

- However, not once in the interview was there any discussion about restoration of the Little Church. It would have been a different conversation for Lori, with a different answer.
- Lori feels that in some ways the Little Church has become an idol. She is for keeping maintenance up, as she has seen churches where the deferred maintenance has gotten so big that it became impossible for the church to take care of it. Lori, however, has a strong level of discomfort with diverting so much of our resources into a structure that is used for only a few hours a week.
- Lori realizes there are many in the congregation who feel very strongly about restoring the Little Church.
- Lori is comfortable about allocating resources to the Little Church that will prevent it from being unsafe or falling over. She is also supportive of making it nicer on the inside. But she is not supportive of doing this to the detriment of some other ministry.
- If we do make the decision to put a significant amount of money towards the restoration of the Little Church, her challenge to the congregation will be to use our campus for purposes other than ourselves, because we don't do that much, if at all.
- Centerville Presbyterian has 2000 people a week using their facilities. While we will never be at that level, we have been in Fremont just as long. We keep looking back to the Tri-City Homeless Coalition (Abode Services) as our legacy and perhaps now we are just resting on our laurels.
- Lori feels there is a lot we can do here, physically, in our space, that has to do with meeting the needs of the impoverished, that have to do with opening up our space for other people to use. We have to get past our fear of theft, vandalism, etc.
- We need to make St. James' a place for the neighborhood, a place for the community, a place for Fremont, not just a place for St. James' parishioners.

#### Laura Winter

- Laura is still in favor of maintaining the Little Church.
- Would like to look at more of a 10-year project versus a 3-year project.
- Need to ask more questions regarding the things that need to be done.
- Janet Fischer did request that Sylvia Ma ask the engineering firm "What is the life expectancy of the Little Church if we do nothing?" The response was "We could have an earthquake tomorrow and it would fall down." That is all the answer we are going to get.
- Laura would like to spread the project out so we can grow church programs as well.

### Bud Spalding

- Need to consider the Columbarium
- Would like to maintain (not freeze) the Little Church at the level it is now.

### Bob Bynum

- We are the custodians of the building while we are on the vestry and while we are alive. It is a beautiful historic building made of materials that you cannot get any more.
- Agree with Lori that we could make better use of our space in general.
- Increasing the use of our space would probably reduce the chances of vandalism.
- Need to look at projects that do not need to be addressed right away, such as refinishing the pews.

### Mike Scrutton

- Mike comes from a tradition where there are many old churches, and the problem of stopping these buildings from crumbling into the ground is felt the world over. It is a huge millstone around every country's neck. It is the ability of parishes to cope with the problem that changes.
- The difficulty comes where parishes are so much focused on repairing the building that it becomes the congregation worshipping the church building. It can be a huge problem.
- The building is important to this church community. We have a group of people who would want to preserve the building whether they were worshipping here or not.
- Whether we look to the future in terms of using our campus in more and different ways or whatever, we need to have a vision.
- What are we now, what do we want to be in the future, how do we lay the foundations to move this congregation where we think we are being called to be in 5 years time? Is that through more inclusivity, growing our children and youth programs, etc.? What is our calling to be?
- As part of that conversation what do we want to put aside for the important work for the preservation of that building and then move on and move past it?

### Lori Walton

- Lori does not want to have to address this issue every year.
- One of the areas Lori has not concentrated on yet is a visioning process using the parish profile.
- We need to lead with a vision for the future.

### Donald Razzolini

- Donald does not feel that this vestry has the right to make decisions for all the vestries that come after us. We do not know what types of problems/issues new vestries will be facing in the future.
- A 10-year project may be more feasible if we can figure out how to do that.
- Donald agrees with maintaining the church so that it can still be used. However, he does not want to spend thousands of dollars on it because we have other things to do, like growing the church.

### Bev Mosier

- Bev sees the perspective of people wanting to preserve the building that has been part of their lives.
- It is hard for Bev to get her head around spending a large amount of money on a building when there are so many other things/needs that are more important.
- The church should be about people, both people in the church and people outside the church that we can serve.

### Elizabeth Hart

- Would like to see the Little Church maintained so that it doesn't fall down, but some of the restoration projects (such as refinishing the pews and walls) doesn't need to be done right now.
- A friend who was visiting mentioned that the church she goes to now has a beautiful worship space, but what her friend misses is not the building, but the people, the community, and the support she had here.
- The lasting legacy of the church is not the building, but the people here.

### Gary Gearheart

- Concerned that in some ways the Little Church had become our false idol.
- We need to be careful of where that line is between renovation and maintenance. We want to keep the Little Church maintained and viable, but we may not need to put a lot of money into improvements.
- The Little Church is not our mission. Our mission is the children, the music, the people, and the outside community. We are not here for the Little Church, we are here to serve the community.

### General Comments

- We don't really have a definition of what constitutes a "huge chunk" of money. We need to determine how much are we willing to spend and then cap it.

- Since the last vestry meeting, the \$3,500 for architectural plans for the crawl space has been put on hold because the \$3,500 was not a contracted amount but an estimate.
- The Little Church could be an equal part of our usable space, one of many different types of spaces that we have available here.
- The Philippine Independent Church has been using the Little Church for 20 years. We could approach them at some point for contributions toward renovation.
- It was suggested to take Sylvia Ma's list, identify things the vestry feels need to be done to maintain the Little Church and keep it a safe space, decide on an amount we want to dedicate to the project, and then give the committee the budget.

Needed	Not Now	Other
Mold/dry rot - electrical room - kitchenette	Lighting - external - internal	AV  Ambry
Internal wiring - move panel - safety related	New kitchen cabinets	Leaky sink
Middle joist brackets (p. 3-4, 14 of report)	Broken window in sacristy	Exterior window trim repair
Cross-ties – plans and installation	Retrofit of crawlspace	
Gutters	Floor	
Re-grade perimeter	Carpet	
	Pews	

- It was suggested to present to the Little Church Committee a list of the things the vestry believes need to be done now and are the most important in terms of safety and sustainability of the building, as well as a budget to do these things, but leave it up to the committee to prioritize the repairs.
- The vestry will still have to vote on every bill because the bills will be over \$300 each.
- What of these items will require building permits? Would those items that require permits be counted in the 20% of the repair cost required to improve accessibility?

- It was strongly suggested that we need to have a project manager, someone on site who knows construction and who will oversee the project and represent our interests. Will ask Sylvia Ma if she has any recommendations.
- We have \$161,359 left in the Schader Fund. If we earmark \$100,000 for the Little Church, we will still have approximately \$61,000 left.
- It was recommended that the money be transferred into the Special Interest Little Church Fund. Lynn will make the transfer on paper, but keep the money in the Schwab account, with its slightly better interest rate (versus the Heritage account).
- The Little Church fund presently has \$1,700, and will probably receive \$900 from the Endowment Fund, for a total of approximately \$2,600.
- This \$100,000 will be in addition to money from the Schader Fund that has already been spent on the Little Church
- Motion was made to take \$100,000 from the Schader Fund and dedicate it to the Little Church repairs. Moved by Bev Mosier, seconded by Donald Razzolini. Motion approved.
- There will not be further budget allocations for the Little Church from the Schader Fund.
- If there are repairs that fall outside of the list that happen in the normal course of things (for example, a roof leak) then those would have to be funded.
- After the \$100,000 is spent we can look at other fundraising efforts to fund further work that is done.

Lori Walton led the closing prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Hart  
Clerk of the Vestry