

St. James' Annual Meeting Minutes
Sunday, January 27, 2019

Lori Walton called the meeting to order, and Anna Horen led the opening prayer.

Approval of 2018 Annual Meeting Minutes

- Motion was made to approve the January 28, 2018 annual meeting minutes as submitted. Moved by E.J. Hilliard, seconded by Greg Miller. Motion approved.

Introduction of Vestry Members

- Lori introduced the vestry members who were present at the annual meeting: Penny Trant, Monique Manjarrez, John Kimber, John Butterfield, Bruce Roberts, Laura Winter, Evelyn Martinez, Kimberly Patton, Katie Porter, and Sally Morgan. Josephine Amadi was absent.
- The retiring vestry members are Penny Trant, John Butterfield, Bruce Roberts, and Evelyn Martinez.
- Lori presented a gift to each of the retiring vestry members and thanked them for their service.

New Senior Warden

- Monique Manjarrez is the new senior warden for 2019.

Financial Reports – Lynn Locher

- 2018 was a good year for St. James' based on our financial position.
- Our income exceeded budget by 5 percent.
- Our expenses were under budget by 2.6 percent.
- \$13,526 was moved into the Building Fund.
- We received a pledge earmarked for 2019, but because we are a cash accounting system we had to count that as a 2018 pledge. The vestry voted to move these funds into the Special Interest Future Staff account. If we need these funds in the future we can call upon those funds.
- We increased the paid hours and now provide pension benefits for our Children & Youth Minister.
- The Ducks for Bucks funds and private donations supplied funds to pay the tuition for two young women going to high school in Kenya. We also provided Christmas gifts for the girls and their families.
- The funds from last year's McCutcheon concert enabled us to contribute to Abode Services and the Centerville Free Dining Room, and paid for our new sound system.
- The pledges to date for 2019 are below last year. The church leaders have worked hard to hold down costs, but costs such as PG&E and the Alameda Water District keep going up. Lynn expressed concern that she may have underestimated the costs for PG&E, even though we have installed new low energy lights.
- Lynn requested everyone to keep up his or her pledge payments, and if you can donate more please do so.

- Lynn also thanked the counters, who count the receipts; Jan Brandt and Gail Blalock, who record them; and Alice, the administrative assistant, who pays the bills.
- We also increased Anna Horen's hours to 20 hours a week.

Endowment Report – Cathy Knotts, Chair

- The St. James' Endowment Fund and the St. James' Shell Society (those people who have included St. James' in their estate plans) began in 2003.
- The Endowment fund total principal has grown from \$7,200 in 2004 to \$185,899 at the end of 2018.
- Additional funds were subsequently added for the Little Church and the Memorial Garden.
- The general fund principal balance is \$122,961, the Little Church fund is \$35,688 and the Memorial Garden fund is \$27,250. The total market value of the fund ended the year with \$189,323.
- Given recent market volatility, the board agreed not to disperse funds this year in order to maintain a conservative position and protect the principal.
- The board is planning to hold a financial planning seminar this spring, on May 19. A sign up and more information will be posted shortly.
- The Endowment Board normally has five voting members. The current members are Cathy Knotts, Mary Casas, Jino Joseph, and Scott Whitaker. Jeanne Morris stepped down in 2018, and Scott Whitaker will complete his term in April. As a result, there are two vacancies to fill. Please talk with any board member if you are interested in joining the Endowment board.
- Please consider joining the St. James' Shell Society, and including the St. James' Endowment Fund in your estate plans.

Senior Warden's Address – Bruce Roberts

It has been said that we are Jesus' hands and feet. Based on today's second reading (1 Corinthians 12:12-31a) we are much more than Jesus' hands and feet. We are all parts of the Body of Christ each with different functions.

We have sopranos, altos, tenors, and basses.

We have lectors and acolytes and priests.

The Altar Guild prepares the Table.

Greeters greet and ushers escort and introduce.

Teachers teach and Servers prepare.

The secretary records and the Treasurer watches over our treasure.

Vestry members administer the temporal affairs of the church.

Ah, the Vestry, keeping us afloat financially, watching over our physical plant, a cordial group meeting monthly, sharing dinner, working hard for the Parish. Four of us, the class of 2016, are leaving, Penny, Evelyn, John Butterfield and me. I thank the whole Vestry for working very hard this year! And I thank Elizabeth our Secretary and Lynn our Treasurer for working so many long hours, many of them behind the scenes.

In order to keep expenses down we switched our suppliers of electricity and natural gas this year. We changed almost all of our incandescent and fluorescent lighting to LEDs. Technology works in many ways, for and against us. We acquired a new wireless

microphone system due to wireless phone companies taking over the frequencies we were using. We bought new computers, a television, a new sound board, and a new computer server this year. And we changed insurance providers, saving us thousands of dollars per year. But that is just stuff.

What about people, after all we are Jesus' hands and feet. We, St. James', fed the homeless at Sunrise Village and at the Centerville Free dining Room, and Sacred Space. We visited the folks at Hillside Care Center, we had Bible Study, we had many Faith Formation meetings. Summer Day Camp hosted many boys and girls again this year. We participated in the Tri-City Interfaith Council. The Scout who lead the other Scouts putting in our new front lawn last year received his Eagle Scout Badge here in August. We were able to extend the hours for both our Associate Rector and our Youth and Children's Minister. We supported Hope and Miriam in Kenya so they can go to high school. Oh, and we supported our Rector for her Sabbatical this year. Again, when I say "we" I mean all of us. And what about the Window, our newsletter? It doesn't happen by magic - parishioners and clergy contribute, edit, proof and publish it - a lot of work goes into each issue.

I would particularly like to thank our Rector (and CEO) Lori for her very active support and guidance this year.

Remember. We are all part of St. James' doing our part, big part, little part, all for the community, the Body of Christ. Thank you all for your support this past year. See you in Church.

Comments

- Sally wanted to add the weekly service at the Masonic Home, led by Karin White with help from Elaine Miller, to Bruce's list. It is a small congregation but an appreciative one.

Thank You's from Lori Walton

- To Bruce Roberts, the senior warden, and Kimberly Patton, who served as junior warden.
- To Dave Nelsen - who has led most if not all of the building efforts, who helps with our recycling, garbage, and compostables, and who is Lori's go-to person when she needs anything.
- To the ministry staff, Anna Horen, Jan Scrutton, and Jennifer Carini, all of whom are committed Christians first, and committed employees to this church. All three take their work seriously and have a passion for what they do.
- To Elizabeth Hart - who takes the minutes at the meetings.
- To the volunteer office - Jan Brandt, Gail Blalock, Alison Saichek, and Lynn Locher.
- To the Altar Guild - who set up the altars for Holy Communion, and all the other things that happen in order to make worship happen. Thank you also to the directress, Katie Cunningham.
- To Sandra Motley - who makes sure the kitchen is stocked and that there are birthday cupcakes available.
- To the office volunteers, Ruth Poole, Gail Blalock, Lauren Doherty, and Katie Cunningham, who helped with the office, especially when the parish administrator left for another position.

- To Mike and Jan Scrutton – who pulled together an office manual.

Comments from the Floor

- Anna Horen added her thanks to Lori, and to all the people who make things run smoothly at St. James', particularly during the months when Lori was on sabbatical. Anna felt very supported.
- Gregg Feeney – Gregg mentioned that many people learn about St. James' from the Internet, so kudos to our Internet folks. He also mentioned how welcoming and friendly members are to new people.
- Thanks to our Webmaster, Janet Fischer, and Mike Scrutton, who supports her.
- Jennifer Carini – Jennifer mentioned how much she appreciates working at St. James', and thanked everyone for their support. She also thanked Jan Pearson, who has helped recruit people for the choir, and the road crew, who help set up equipment and check the sound. The road crew consists of Greg Miller, Mike Scrutton, Bud Pearson, Bruce Roberts, Laura Winter, and Tom Scrutton.
- Penny Trant – thanked the Men's Group and the work parties. While materialistic things are not why we come to church, viewing the church from the outside before you get to know the people is important and St. James' distillates both the heart on the inside and the outside.

Acceptance of the 2018 Annual Report

- Thank you to Janet Fischer for putting together the annual report.
- Motion was made to accept the 2018 Annual Report as submitted. Moved by Bud Spalding, seconded by Dave Nelsen. Motion approved.

Additional Comments

- Elaine Miller, the south Alameda Deanery representative for the Diocesan Disaster Preparedness Team, announced that Diocesan Disaster Preparedness Team will be having three seminars on disaster preparedness. Elaine also thanked members of the St. James' disaster preparedness team – Dave Nelsen, Bud Pearson, and Laura Winter.
- Elaine also thanked the 21 volunteers who serve as coffee hour hosts.
- E.J. Hilliard thanked the congregation on behalf of the faith formation group. E.J. mentioned that St. James' is the most educated congregation in our Diocese regarding resolutions. When resolutions come to the floor at the annual conference, our deanery, especially this parish, is well acquainted with the agenda of the resolutions committee, and for that E.J. wanted to thank everyone.

Election of Vestry and Deanery Members

- A vestry member serves on the vestry for a three-year term.
- According to the St. James' bylaws, St. James' needs a minimum of 10 vestry members, and a maximum of 12 members.
- We presently have 11 vestry members, with 4 retiring, and 7 continuing. There are 3 people running for election.

- Being a vestry member is an important part of being part of the Episcopal Church, but it is also a fulfilling ministry. It is not only about business (finances, buildings, and major decisions for the church) but it is also an opportunity to come together as a group, to build relationships, to have a level of intimacy that you would not normally have with other people.
- Penny Trant mentioned that being on vestry gives you a totally different outlook on exactly what happens within this church. It gives you a clear inside look on how the church works. Penny encouraged people to seriously consider running for vestry.
- Vestry meetings are open to everyone except during executive sessions.
- The three people who have agreed to run are Stephen Ferro, Julie Guzior, and Sylvia Ma.
- Motion was made to accept Stephen Ferro, Julie Guzior, and Sylvia Ma as vestry members by acclamation. Moved by E.J. Hilliard, seconded by John Kimber. Motion approved.
- The Deanery representatives/Convention delegates attend Deanery meetings four times a year, and attend Convention one time a year. At Convention they vote on our behalf. It is a two-year term.
- Our continuing Deanery representatives are Jim McConnell and Ken Trant. There are 3 openings.
- The people who were retiring, Meg Amouroux, John Amouroux, and Scott Whitaker, have agreed to sign up for another two years.
- Motion was made to accept Meg Amouroux, John Amouroux, and Scott Whitaker as Deanery representatives/delegates to convention by acclamation. Moved by Janet Fischer, seconded by Margaret Broun. Motion approved.
- There are two alternatives to convention. Jan Brandt is retiring as alternate, and Elaine Miller is continuing.
- Motion was made to accept Penny Trant as the second alternate to convention. Moved by E.J. Hilliard, seconded by Janet Fischer. Motion approved.

Comments

- Margaret Broun thanked Bruce Roberts for the excellent job he did while Lori was on sabbatical.

Rector's Address – Lori Walton

This sermon served as both the Annual Meeting Address and Homily for the Holy Eucharist service.

A family relocated to Fremont from another country. Mom, Dad, two children. Being a church-going family, they decided to shop around. Being from an Anglican tradition, they visited St. James', but thought they'd try other denominations to see if there was something new the family could experience. However, their little boy, who at the time was 8, remembered his visit to St. James', and one day while driving past, he spots the church from the car window and proclaims to his family, "there's our church!" They've been members ever since.

A couple was going to a church down the road. Being a same sex couple worshipping in a denomination that rejected same sex relationships, they hid this most crucial part of their lives, being forced to separate the life-giving love they shared with each other from the worship of a God whom they knew loved them even more. During the effort to pass proposition 8, the measure to outlaw same sex marriage, this couple was confronted with a congregation that was actively promoting the proposition, a proposition that would make it illegal to live out their lives in the most committed way. So, they felt they needed to leave. One of them was driving down Thornton and saw the “everyone is welcome” part of our street banner, and she and her wife came to St. James’ for a visit. It was when there were two interim priests here, both of whom were gay, ironically. This, combined with the warm welcome and “we don’t care if you’re gay” attitude brought this couple home to St. James’. They’ve been members ever since.

Last Easter, with Jan’s help, I recruited five children to help me with the sermon by coming forward and telling a joke. Honestly, I was worried this would go off okay, mostly because I figured the children would be shy and uncomfortable in front of a full church on Easter morning. When it came time, the five walked up with confidence, told their jokes, and owned the room. It was clear to me then that this church is not my church, or their parent’s church. It is their church, a place where they understand themselves to be seen, heard, and important.

These are stories of belonging. Several years ago we had a day retreat to talk about our identity, and one line immersed that I have never forgotten – Someone said that being a part of St. James’ is like “coming home to a place I’ve never been before”.

My own story of belonging happened the first day I arrived as your rector back in 2010. I was both excited and a little nervous. A colleague of mine had started a new position just weeks before, and she told me that when she showed up, it was just like any other day. Her office still had clutter in it from the previous priest. The room had the musty smell of being closed up too long. The administrator was there, but nobody else. She didn’t necessarily feel unwelcomed, but she also didn’t feel welcomed in that special way someone wants to be welcomed – noticed, like it mattered that she was there, like her being there made a difference to others.

I had no idea what to expect my first day, so I set expectation aside and just showed up. When I arrived, my name plate was on the door. The office had been freshly painted and cleaned. There was a welcome basket of snacks and gift cards to places around town. A vase of beautiful flowers sat on the desk. People were there to welcome me, to say hello. All of these things, little and big, made a huge difference and told me a story about this community. Your doors and your hearts are open to receive. I really did feel like I was “coming home to a place I’d never been before.”

This is church. A place to belong. A place where you are recognized and included, whether you’ve been here 60 years or 6 weeks. We create a space to belong, a place where every single person can bring all of who they are into this sanctuary and up to the altar of a loving and living God. Now I want to be honest here. We have come a long way, but we are not all the way there. We can still do more in becoming a place where not a single person feels like they need to leave something of themselves at the door before they walk in. It is my hope (and my plan) that in this upcoming year, we will look at creative ways of expanding our worship to better reflect the diversity of culture, age, and expression of our congregation.

In the story from Luke, Jesus shows up and reads a piece of scripture taken from the Prophet Isaiah, words about the Good News – release from what binds us, recovery from what damages us, freedom to live fully in our own glory and in God’s glory. Jesus ends his teaching with the words, “Today, this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” Today. Right now. Here, where we belong. All of these things are ours to take and to share – release, recovery, freedom. This is what salvation is, and Jesus is telling us that salvation is not something we wait for, salvation is something Jesus brings. Where Jesus is, salvation shows up and communities are transformed.

So, we start with belonging and then we move deeper. I recently heard someone say that we are not offering a clearance-sale Christianity. We are not saying come into God’s house and we will water down the message so much that you’ll feel only comfort and not challenge. Instead, we are inviting each person to engage with, wrestle with, talk to, rest in God so that our lives might be different for being here. This is what distinguishes church from a social club. We don’t stop at pleasantries. We invite intimacy, self-reflection, giving to others, stretching ourselves out into the world, challenging each one of us to be so integrated with Christ that without Christ, we are diminished. Worship is meant to be transforming. As are outside of Sunday events – working together to minister with others, eating and drinking and laughing together, sharing our stories with each other, learning from our tradition, understanding that whether we are friends or not, we are the family of Christ and that takes it to a whole new level. Commitment. Authenticity. Unity. Kindness and mercy.

Saint Paul has written a letter to the Jesus Followers in Corinth in about the year 50. Corinth is a major city seaport in Greece. It was almost completely Gentile, was cosmopolitan and multi-ethnic. Paul writes because he’s learned of conflict in the community, petty arguments about who was better. The people in Corinth had forgotten the most important aspect of being a Jesus Follower – that we are all equal in the eyes of God, and that our purpose as Christians is to be a transforming community, saved through the love and mercy of God, actively working to create a space so that all people may enter in to this incredible, life-giving, world-changing walk with Christ.

So Paul reminds them, reminds us all, that the Body of Christ has many members and we are dependent on every aspect of the Body. We simply cannot manifest Christ in the world if we are not welcoming every person as equally loved by God. We cannot claim our own salvation if we are not seeing the salvation in others. We cannot feed at the table and be truly fed if we are not understanding that all have a place at the table. Simply said, we all have a part to play in moving the community towards becoming more and more a place where the Spirit is alive.

Earlier this morning we held our annual meeting. The canons of the church say I, as the rector, need to give a “state of the church” address, so this sermon serves that purpose as well. So what is the state of our church? Healthy. Vital. Relevant. Engaged. Growing. Transforming.

A few examples. A living church is an organism which changes as time goes on. In 2018, we saw a few changes that are evidence of our willingness to keep stretching and reaching. We began a relationship with Maisha Bora in Kenya, enabling us to support Hope Nanyole and Miriam Nangila in going to high school. We also began a relationship with the Fremont School for the Blind where a handful of students show up during the week to collate our

Sunday materials – it helps us get the job done, and it helps them have an experience of responsibility and accountability as an employee. We started the Green Team in an effort to be more environmentally responsible with our recyclables, compostables and trash. We hired a new parish administrator, Alice, and a new nursery worker, Ami. We welcomed a new seminarian, Andrea, and we increased the ministry hours of our Associate Rector and Children & Youth Minister which allows our reach to be further and more impactful. Under Jan's leadership, we started a successful youth group and under Anna's leadership, we will begin to see new offerings in Adult Faith Formation. Attendance is up and while we didn't quite reach our income goal for 2019, twelve new families have pledged and over ½ of you were able to increase your pledge. And in the middle of all of this, I went on sabbatical for over four months – which is evidence that our shared leadership is well developed and strong.

We've done a lot in just one year, and 2019 will bring us additional changes and our momentum will continue. We will look at new outreach opportunities and we will increase our opportunities for our personal and corporate formation. And the thread that will run through the year is the awareness that we do not exist for ourselves. We exist for God, and we do that through going deep and going wide, through increasing the sense of belonging and increasing our impact in our community and beyond.

We are living in world driven by fear, exclusion, and individual concern over the concern of others. We, St. James', we are uniquely poised to proclaim what nobody else is proclaiming – that true power lies in the unshakable, never-ending, unrelenting, ever-present love of God. We are seeking an ideal world. Here, in church, we are proclaiming a new world, the reign of God, and here, we are rehearsing that world so that out there, we may share the Good News that indeed, the true story of each person, of you and of me, is that God loves us, God is with us, God will never leave us – and for that, we say Amen.

The slideshow of the events of 2018 was presented at the end of the worship service.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Hart
Clerk of the Vestry