

St. Alban's Parish, Washington, D.C.
Minutes of the Vestry Meeting of January 15, 2008

Present: Scott Benhase, Rector; Tim Boggs, Assistant Rector for Stewardship & Outreach Ministries; Ron Hicks, Parish Verger; Kate Bouvé, Senior Warden; James Sottile, Junior Warden; Nathalie Bramson, Bill Edgar, Marc Fetterman, Kammie Hedges, Keith Jones, Danette Kauffman, Sam Lewis, Jon Sawyer, Mark Shima, Bob Woolfolk, Vestry; Mary Jane Shackelford, WSA Board Rep; Bill Hall, Amy Slemmer, Diocesan Delegates; Chris Holmes, Treasurer; Andrea Farr, Secretary.

Opening Prayer

Scott Benhase called the meeting to order at 6:35 pm and offered an opening prayer.

Minutes of previous meetings

October 2007

Motion: Bob Woolfolk moved to approve the minutes from the October 2007 Vestry meeting as written.

Nathalie Bramson seconded the motion and the motion carried.

November 2007

Motion: Keith Jones moved to approve the minutes from the November 2007 Vestry meeting as written.

Bill Edgar seconded the motion and the motion carried.

December 2007

The draft minutes were amended on the third page, first italicized heading, to change "Nowland" to "Nowlan."

Motion: Bill Edgar moved to approve the minutes from the December 2007 Vestry meeting as amended.

Sam Lewis seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Treasurer's Report

Chris Holmes presented the financial reports. Chris noted that there was a surplus of \$448.49 for 2007. This figure may increase as the parish is waiting for certain contributions, such as a contribution from the Flower Guild.

The Vestry discussed various aspects of the Report. It was noted that the parish has not paid for the '06 audit yet and that contributed to a positive variance.

Scott Benhase reported that, technically, a parish that is more than a year behind in submitting its audited reports to the Diocese may lose its voice and vote at the Convention. St. Alban's is more than a year behind, but it is unclear whether the parish will be able to participate fully in the Convention. Chris Holmes noted that the auditors were aware of the time pressure concerning the completion of the '05 audit.

With respect to the Capital Campaign, approximately \$ 3.3 million has been collected, which is approximately \$100,000 less than should have been collected based on the collection schedule. In total, between \$400,000 and \$500,000 is outstanding.

Motion: Keith Jones moved to receive the Treasurer's Report.

Sam Lewis seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Update on EMP

Tim Boggs gave an update concerning the EMP. As of January 15 the parish had received 392 pledges totaling \$1,151,957. Based on the group, the trend for 2008 indicates an overall increase of approximately 10 percent in dollar amount.

One-hundred and forty "lost sheep" have been identified (*i.e.*, persons/families who pledged in 2007, met the pledges and are thought to be active in the parish but have not pledged for 2008) and are being called.

Tim reported that 115 pledgers gave more than they pledged, totaling approximately \$50,000. Tim intends to review the circumstances of the additional donations. A total of 25 letters have gone to those more than 50 percent behind in their pledges and the letters have yielded responses and good information. He also noted that the parish receives pledges throughout the year. Tim agreed to find out more information concerning the Capital Campaign arrearages.

Junior Warden's Report

Finance Committee

Jim Sottile circulated his written report. In his report he noted that the Finance Committee had reviewed the draft budget and had two comments. First, although the Naselli Trust distribution has been consistent with the \$50,000 in the draft budget, the trustees have expressed concern that the distribution may have to be cut this year. The Committee is not recommending that the figure in the draft budget be altered, only that the Vestry monitor the trustees' quarterly reports and stay in touch with the trustee to minimize any surprises.

Second, the Committee was concerned that the \$15,000 allotted for the audit may not be enough to cover the audits for 2006 and 2007, which are scheduled for completion this year. Chris Holmes has estimated that those audits will cost between \$20,000 and \$25,000, assuming they are done at the same time. Given the delay in completing the 2005 audit, both the 2006 and 2007 audits may not be completed in 2008. The Committee suggests, however, that the Vestry consider revising this figure to cover the audits for both 2006 and 2007.

Jim also reported that the Committee is going to evaluate the Endowment Fund investments in light of current market conditions and will prepare recommendations for the February Vestry meeting.

A discussion of the report concerning the Finance Committee followed. The Vestry asked whether the Naselli Trust trustees had before expressed similar concerns and suggested that the budget should be adjusted downward. Jim responded that he did not know whether the trustees had ever expressed similar concerns and noted that after some consideration the Committee decided against recommending a downward adjustment to the budgeted contribution. Notwithstanding the concerns, the disbursement this year was greater than expected. In addition, the trustees understand the importance of the disbursement to the parishes that receive funds.

The Vestry also asked what was known about how the funds were invested. Jim responded that he did not know but that it would be useful to look into it because that information could influence the evaluation of the likelihood of the change in disbursements.

Property Committee

Jim Sottile reported that the Stone House Group has not yet produced its report but promises to issue the draft well in advance of the February Vestry meeting. The Committee will present its views and recommendations at the February meeting.

Jim reported that Annie Bissell has prepared plans for renovating the handicapped bathroom in Satterlee Hall. The renovation will widen the door, will take some of the space from the office currently used by Super 60s including the window, but will leave enough space for Super 60s. The Super 60s coordinator is aware of the plans. Javier Montoya, Annie Bissell's contractor, estimated that the project will cost between \$6,000 and \$10,000 depending on what is found when he opens the walls.

Motion: Jim Sottile moved that the Vestry accept the recommendation of the Property Committee to authorize the renovation of the handicapped bathroom in Satterlee Hall (Room 203) in order to make it truly handicap accessible and compliant with ADA regulations, at a price not to exceed \$10,000 to be paid from the Reserve Fund.

The motion was seconded by Bob Woolfolk and carried.

Personnel Policy

Jim is revising the personnel policy consistent with Sandy Loether's recommendations as well as the recommendations of one of Jim's colleagues who works in the field. Jim expects to present the revised document at the February Vestry meeting.

The Vestry asked whether the revised policy will address sabbaticals, as that has been an issue in the past. Jim responded that he had added such a section.

Senior Wardens Report

Kate Bouvé discussed her written report.

Amendment to the By-Laws

Gordon Avery and the former Vestry members who rotated off the Vestry last May are developing proposed amendments in two areas:

1. Election of the Junior Warden
The by-laws do not reflect the parish's current practice of electing the Senior Warden directly and appointing the person finishing in second place as the Junior Warden.
2. Hiring assistant clergy
It appears that the parish's by-laws in this regard are inconsistent with the Diocese's Canon 25, Section 6(b). Generally, the by-laws leave the selection of assistant clergy to the Rector, with the advice of the Vestry. Canon 25, Section

6(b), however, describes a selection process that has the Rector nominating the candidate but actual selection done by a majority vote of the Vestry.

Annual Meeting and Vestry election

The Nominating Committee traditionally is made up of the current Vestry members who will rotate off the Vestry this May as well as a few other parishioners. The Vestry members completing their terms of service this year are: Jon Sawyer, Susan Morris, Mark Shima and Bob Witten. Scott suggested that this core group select the rest of the Committee and present the list at the February meeting for Vestry approval. The list of nominees will be available in March. Jon agreed to convene the Nominating Committee.

Motion: Nathalie Bramson made a motion that the Vestry appoint Jon Sawyer, Susan Morris, Mark Shima and Bob Witten to serve as the core of the Nominating Committee for the 2008 Vestry elections and to present names of parishioners to serve on the Committee to the Vestry for consideration at the February Vestry meeting.

Kammie Hedges seconded the motion and the motion carried.

The Vestry asked that the mark-up of the by-laws be made available to the Vestry for review prior to the next meeting.

Rector's Report

2008 Budget

Scott Benhase noted that the Vestry could pass a provisional budget but the problem is that the all pledges are not in, and so the numbers would be inaccurate. The provisional budget set forth in the draft budget is based on projections from Tim Boggs. The projections are a little higher than current pledges and incorporate anticipated pledges from "lost sheep."

The Vestry discussed the merits of the provisional budget. It was asked whether it was reasonable to expect that, like last year, 66 percent of "lost sheep" will pledge. It was noted that it was too soon in the process to say whether the 66 percent figure will be reached.

The Vestry discussed areas in which the budget could be cut or additional revenue obtained. It was decided that although the provisional budget was helpful in illustrating certain issues, the Vestry should not approve it. It was noted that, although we have set a contribution to the Diocese, that figure may be adjusted

downward, and it was noted that we have done so in the past. The importance of basing the budget on pledges in hand, rather than projected pledges, was emphasized.

The continuing resolution remained in place to continue funding the parish at 2007 levels.

Clergy Responsibilities in 2008

Scott Benhase distributed a handout listing parish ministries, lay leaders and clergy liaison. Scott reported that the division of responsibilities for the clergy was working well with concern only for leadership for Lent and Advent retreats. Nancy Usher Williams will provide oversight for the retreats, but clergy will not be able to provide leadership for the duration of the retreats because of Sunday responsibilities.

The Vestry noted that some of the ministries may not be aware that they have clergy support in this way, and it was suggested that the handout provided by Scott be published.

It was noted that Margot had been the liaison for the acolytes and ushers, and that her departure leaves a gap in the support network. The Vestry also noted that there were not enough ushers at the 11:15 service, but that efforts were being made to recruit more ushers.

Communications Committee

The Committee has been most concerned with the following:

1. *Chronicle*
The draft will be sent to the Committee for substantive review (not just typos). Parishioners will have the option of receiving the *Chronicle* online. Scott reported that he believes the parish administrator Eric Gustafson will have developed that capability by summer.
2. *Brochures "FAQ"*
The objective is to address frequently asked questions regarding *e.g.*, joining the church, Christian formation; memorial gifts, *etc.* The product will be made available online and in the narthex.

Nathalie Bramson told the vestry that the Committee should be made up of people with relevant backgrounds and availability. Anyone with suggestions for Committee members was asked to contact Nathalie. Nathalie suggested special thought be given to newcomers.

Scott Benhase reported that beginning Ash Wednesday Good News would be shared daily via e-mail in the form of a newsletter *St. Alban's Café*. The writings will consist of reflections and discussion from the clergy and Sonya Sutton on various topics.

It was noted that, consistent with the results of the mutual ministry review, the first monthly brown bag lunch with the Wardens, the Rector and parishioners (in this instance, two parishioners) took place yesterday. Normally the lunch will be held the second Monday of the month.

Old Business

Handicap accessible ramp for Church: Marc Fetterman reported that there had been no new developments concerning the ramp.

Arts & Memorials Committee: The Vestry noted that there had been an offer to sell the parish a painting of St. Alban's. Marc Fetterman will follow up. The Vestry asked about updating the plaque on which the start and end dates of the each rector is noted. Ron Hicks is investigating the matter and will report back to the Vestry when he has a cost figure.

St Alban's/Cathedral group update: The Group has not met since the last Vestry meeting. Bill Hall reported that drafts had been sent back and forth, but that he hoped to have a substantive report for the February Vestry meeting. Scott Benhase noted that the document should be generally positive but that it may also need to address certain matters in the form of a restriction, *i.e.*, "shall not."

Hospitality Commission (Greeting, Newcomers, Receptions): Scott Benhase reported that he hoped that the following individuals would serve in the Commission as follows: Lacey Gude, Chair; Neil and Emma Wilson, Newcomers; Nathalie Bramson (and another individual), receptions. Another person must be found to head up the Greeting ministry.

Signage: Scott Benhase noted that temporary signs are not a solution, that permanent signs are needed. Marc Fetterman offered to accompany Scott on a tour where they could evaluate the parish's needs. The Vestry suggested that the signs convey a "look" for the parish consistent with the "look" of the brochures. It was asked whether there were any graphic artists in the parish. Scott Benhase suggested adding a box to the *Chronicle* "Help Wanted" to broadcast a request for this and other specific kinds of skills.

The Vestry will endeavor to obtain information concerning the source and cost of the Cathedral's signs.

Blood Drive: Amy Slemmer reported that the blood drive went very well, collecting 46 units, exceeding our goal of 39 units.

Compline began at approximately 9 pm.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 pm.

Andrea F. Farr, Secretary