

ST. ALBAN'S PARISH, WASHINGTON. D.C.
VESTRY MINUTES – 16 June 2009

Attendees: Clergy and Staff: Scott Benhase, Tim Boggs, Suzanne Toro, Ron Hicks, Douglas Dykstra; **Wardens:** Kate Bouve, Jim Sottile; **Vestry:** Nathalie Bramson, Ruth Cline, Andrea Farr, Chuck Holmes, Keith Jones, Danette Gentile Kauffman, Jennifer Martin, Richard Parkins, Ann Ramsey-Moor; **Youth Member:** Oliver Eid; **WSA President:** Joanne Brainard; **Diocesan Delegates:** Paul Brewster, Bill Hall; **Secretary:** Jim Tate.

Opening Prayer by the Rector

Announcements and Minutes: Approval of the minutes for May 2009 was postponed until the next meeting in order to assess their completeness.

Treasurer's Report: Jim Sottile provided a report on the first five months of 2009 (January 1st – May 31st) and provided summary comments (attached). May pledges are 40 percent below expectations, and attendance was up from historic levels for the same period. During the discussion which followed it was noted that there had been no first quarter pledge reminder issued. Richard Parkins moved, and Nathalie Bramson seconded that the report be accepted. The motion was passed on voice vote.

Stewardship Commission Report: Tim Boggs reported on a recent meeting of the Stewardship Commission (Commission). He reminded the Vestry of the Commission report of 2008 and discussed plans for further implementation of the report recommendations. Two recommendations for upcoming vote regarding policy resolutions were presented for Vestry consideration. They will be provided to the Finance Committee for their review, as well (attached).

The Commission noted that a number of key features of the report are being implemented but that much remains to be done. Future implementation will be done in five discrete areas that reflect the key components of the report. The Commission anticipates that leaders in each area and clergy will recruit new participants to the Commission's work. The areas of concentration and current leaders are:

1. Re-launch of the Phoebe Nourse Society for planned giving – Danette Kauffman, Suzy Mink.
2. Commemorations Program for one-time gifts in memory, thanks or celebration (previously Celebrations) – Mark Edwards, Bob Pettit.
3. Endowment Growth – Nathalie Bramson, Joe McLean
4. Children and Youth – Jennifer Martin, Alex Netchvolodoff; assisted by Rev. Harriette Sturges, Rev. Jered Weber-Johnson.
5. Continued Research on Best Practices – Erin Micklo Gray, Joe McLean.

The Commission endorsed two changes in Parish policy and requested Finance Committee and Vestry consideration and adoption:

1. Endowment Allocations – “Resolved, that in addition to the relevant provisions of the Stewardship Commission Report, it shall be the St. Alban’s Parish policy that in any given year no more than 4% of the total value of the Endowment, as determined by a three-year average on a date certain, shall be allocated.”

There was no discussion of this resolution.

2. Bequests – “Resolved that henceforth, it shall be the policy of St. Alban’s Parish that any bequests given to the Parish which are not otherwise designated by the donor shall be divided as follows: 90 percent of such bequest shall be deposited into the Endowment Fund and 10 percent of such bequest shall be deposited into the Operating funds of the Parish.”
“However, this policy is modified by the following restriction: until such time as the Endowment Fund has been made whole by the repayment of all funds owed to it by the Parish Capital Campaign, one hundred percent of each bequest received by the Parish and not otherwise designated by the donor shall be deposited into the Endowment Fund with a ten per cent portion of each such deposit being credited toward this loan repayment.”

Discussion on this resolution followed:

- Clarification- The Reserve Fund, not the Endowment Fund is used as a buffer in order to even out the receipt of pledges throughout the year.
- Clarification- The Capital Campaign is due to close at the end of 2009, and is approximately \$260 thousand in debt to the Endowment Fund.
- Concern- Since bequests are the last gift from a person; all undesignated bequests should go to the Endowment Fund to have a lasting benefit to the parish.
- Clarification- These resolutions follow “best practices” used elsewhere in philanthropy and the Episcopal Church.

Ruth Cline, St. Alban’s historian and member of the Vestry, reminded all that historically, due to Reverend Warner’s efforts, St. Alban’s maintained three funds for ongoing giving opportunities. They were: Building Fund; Reserve Fund; and Endowment Fund.

Scott Benhase reported that the Vestry would take up this issue in future meetings and that there would be no vote on them at this time.

Workers of St. Albans Report: Joanne Brainard, President of the Workers of St. Alban’s (WSA) thanked the Vestry for recently improved communications.

- The WSA plans to provide a report in The Chronicle on outreach to the community with Opportunity Shop (OpShop) funds.
- Ron Hicks has contacted the Cathedral Foundation staff with a request for more frequent cleanup of trash and other materials behind the OpShop.
- Eric is planning to establish a direct link to OpShop information on the St. Alban's website.
- The expected retirement of OpShop regulars makes the need for new volunteers more urgent. Vestry was encouraged to take time to volunteer at the OpShop when possible.
- The question of OpShop being open on Sunday afternoons was raised, but action was deferred until a scheduling proposal is made to the Vestry.
- The opportunity for young people who have school or Youth Commission service or service learning requirements was mentioned as a possible source of volunteers.
- Scott Benhase reflected on WSA's successful grant program and its importance to the parish's outreach contributions. He anticipates reporting the WSA budget as an independent element within the parish budget.

Junior Warden's Report: Jim Sottile reported that natural gas expenses have been moved to a one year fixed contract resulting in a reduction from \$1.43 to 73 cents per thermal unit.

- The handicapped accessible ramp requires slight redesign before going to proposal and bid. It is expected to be completed by late fall.
- The Nourse Hall kitchen design has been completed at an expected cost of about \$9,000, and will go to the Property Committee next. Completion of the project is expected by August.
- Permitting for the Satterly Hall solar panels will proceed after a redesign and evaluation that will tie the panels into the roof joists allowing more panels and higher output. This project is possible because of a grant from the DC government. Contractor's work is expected to take 6 to 8 weeks. An installation celebration for early fall was suggested.
- The current reserve fund balance is \$900. An amount of approximately \$725 thousand is an appropriate reserve fund balance to maintain. This amount would break out as \$250 thousand for liquidity and \$350 for unanticipated expenses.
- The endowment fund has a balance of \$500 thousand. All funds are in fixed income instruments as of now. At the August 2009 Vestry meeting, the Finance Committee will have recommendations for asset allocations of the endowment fund balance.
- An amount of \$175 thousand has been set aside for the accessible ramp.

Senior Warden's Report: Kate Bouve requested the Vestry volunteer to act as liaison to and actively engage in follow up to the six strategic areas identified in the Parish Planning Retreat (attached). These are:

- Incorporation
- Program Management
- Outreach
- Children and Youth Ministries
- Space Utilization and Facilities
- Stewardship and Resource Development

Kate requested volunteers contact her following this meeting with their preferences. Danette Kauffman requested that the six strategic areas of planning should be represented by the Vestry at the Newcomers Dinners. Kate suggested that each Vestry meeting have reports from each of these areas. Jennifer moved, and Bill Hall seconded a motion that the Sr. Warden should make specific invitations to Vestry to serve on the strategic planning teams. Motion passed on voice vote.

Rector's Report: Scott Benhase discussed an incident at the National Cathedral the morning of June 10th, hours before James von Brunn entered the Holocaust Museum with a loaded gun in downtown Washington, DC. The official response to the Cathedral incident resulted in unnecessary rumors and confusion at the day care center. Scott Benhase has communicated directly with the Cathedral Foundation staff, asking them to share information promptly to prevent future incidents from creating unfounded rumors and anxiety affecting staff and parents.

- St. Alban's has been approached to have a Sunday evening Eucharist in Spanish.
- A special Eucharist Thursday evening, June 18, will be followed by a focus group to evaluate possible changes to the liturgy for the 11 am service. Vestry was encouraged to attend and participate.
- The Parish Meeting survey results suggest little interest in the Annual Meeting and emphasized the importance of the election of Vestry. As a one-time change allowed by the bylaws, Scott Benhase suggested changing the Annual meeting to Sunday the 6th of June 2010 following the 10:00 Service with child care and lunch provided. Keith Jones moved and Jennifer Thorson Martin seconded a motion to accept this one-time change. Motion passed by voice vote.
- A Choir tour to Germany/Austria/Prague or Wales/Northern Ireland in 2010 was suggested in a summary report submitted by Sonya Sutton (attached). The Vestry discussed the importance of coordination of fundraising and expressed support for the music program and its benefits to St. Alban's. Sonya plans to participate in a familiarization trip in November which will be at no cost to St. Alban's.

Old Business: None.

Compline was led by Keith Jones.

Executive Session: The Vestry meeting was adjourned so that members could meet in Executive Session.

James Tate, Jr., Secretary