

St. Alban's Parish
Vestry Retreat Minutes - May 18-20, 2007
Hilltop House Hotel
Harpers Ferry, West Virginia

Present: Scott Benhase, Kate Bouvé, Jim Sottile, Nathalie Bramson, Bill Edgar, Andrea Farr, Marc Fetterman, Kammie Hedges, Ron Hicks, Keith Jones, Danette Kauffman, Sam Lewis, Jon Sawyer, Bob Witten.

Not Present: Susan Morris, Mark Shima, Bob Woolfolk, Allan Thorson

Friday evening: Getting Acquainted

Following Evening Prayer, the Vestry engaged in dialogue to get to know each other and to develop a sense of the different topics of concern. Each shared how they came to St. Alban's and why they remain. Although the stories of initial introduction to St. Alban's varied, the common denominator was the development of relationships that are central to their lives.

The Vestry then spent time reflecting the parish Mission Statement; things St. Alban's has done well and should continue to pursue in the future; and wishes for St. Alban's future. Among the wishes noted: encourage generosity; outreach programs that actually focus on establishing two-way connection with the church; make strangers welcome; better meet the needs of our immediate community; recognize the variety of paths that bring people to St. Alban's; recognize the need to embrace change.

The evening session concluded with Compline.

Saturday Morning: Property

The Vestry discussed the history behind the current property status. A "request for proposal" has been issued to three firms obtain an assessment of the buildings. No positive responses have been forthcoming. A discussion of some of the physical, regulatory (*i.e.*, zoning and permits) and handicap-accessibility challenges facing the church followed, as well as space needs and priorities for a future building project.

Following a mid-morning break the Vestry discussed how St. Alban's could better use the current space, the various programs that use space, and the extent to which the space meets needs. Concern was expressed that our square footage was adequate, but that it was not laid out efficiently. Also, certain parts of the infrastructure (the bathrooms in Satterlee Hall, for example) were inadequate.

The Vestry discussed the continuing relationship between St. Alban's and the Early Childhood Center and concluded we needed a closer working relationship.

The Vestry also addressed possible ways to "green" St. Alban's, *i.e.* reduce the negative impact on the environment. We are awaiting a proposal from an energy company that installs solar roof panels with no costs to the institution. The company fixes utility costs for the recipient at the current level for three years. In exchange, the company then sells the excess power generated by the solar panels. The morning session concluded with prayer.

There was discussion concerning the 5:30pm service. The 5:30pm service will be held in Nourse Hall beginning in September. We hope to have music at this liturgy, but for the time being resources do not permit the addition of paid musical accompaniment.

The Vestry addressed the need for a covenant with the Cathedral concerning the boundaries around the activities and programs of the Cathedral's community. It was emphasized that it would be pointless for member of the St. Alban's community to discuss the matter in committee with representatives of the Cathedral unless the Dean agrees to be bound by the conclusions of the committee. It was reported that Bishop Chane is aware of the history of St. Alban's vis-à-vis the Cathedral and understands why St. Alban's parishioners might be concerned by the creation of a community at the Cathedral. The community includes approximately 250 members (defined as those who signed cards expressing interest in the endeavor) and of those, roughly one-half dozen are St. Alban's members.

It was asked why we changed from white wine. Scott Benhase had requested the change because red wine is traditional. There was a general recognition that the rosé currently in use should be replaced by red wine, and it was suggested that Scott explain the matter in a public manner.

At 9:40 pm the session concluded and the evening ended with Compline.

Sunday Morning: Wrapping Up

The final session touched on a variety of topics.

The categories in the budget are being refined by Scott Benhase and Vilma Smith and should be ready in time for the 2008 budget process. It was noted that giving is ahead of the schedule upon which the budget is based. In order to explain this occurrence it would be useful to determine where people are in terms of fulfilling pledges. It was pointed out that certain pledges were received after the official pledging period closed. A discussion followed concerning the budget and various items in the budget detail. It was noted that parish organizations should provide income and expense reports to the Vestry. Certain organizations, such as WSA and the Flower Guild provide data for the annual audit, so the data may be available from Vilma Smith.

St. Alban's outreach through the Super 60's was discussed.

The structure of the funding for the various pilgrimages was addressed.

There was discussion concerning the need for additional signage. It was noted that the Cathedral had gone through the process and St. Alban's might benefit from the Cathedral's experience, both in terms of finding a complementary style and finding a good vendor.

The Vestry discussed the level of support given to the chaplain, Carolyn Seaton, at American University. Although Scott Benhase and Margot Critchfield go to campus, St. Alban's does not provide any financial support. It is expected that Erin Hensley will become involved with this.

Discussion followed concerning the maintenance and dissemination of current information within the parish. Ideas were shared concerning the state of the parish website and what could be expected in the future. It is expected that PDF downloadable files will be available on the website. St. Alban's has been using an outside contractor to update the website. It is anticipated that staff will be able to do more of the updating, and that eventually program coordinators will be responsible for updating relevant portions of the website.

There was additional discussion concerning the budget, and it was noted that some of the larger categories, such as "maintenance contracts" should be broken out so it is more apparent what is covered by that category.

Motion: Sam Lewis moved to receive the Treasurer's Report. The motion was seconded by Bob Witten and approved unanimously.

After Eucharist, the 2007 Vestry Retreat concluded at approximately 11:50 am.

Andrea F. Farr, Secretary