

ST. ALBAN'S PARISH , WASHINGTON. D.C.
VESTRY MINUTES – July 15, 2008

Attendees: Clergy and Staff: Scott Benhase, Erin Hensley, Harriette Sturges, Ron Hicks, Benjamin Huelskamp; Vestry: Kate Bouve, Jim Sottile, Keith Jones, Nathalie Bramson, Marc Fetterman, Eric Melby, Bill Edgar, Chris Holmes, Chuck Holmes, Danette Gentile Kauffman, Robert Woolfolk, Andrea Farr, Sam Lewis, Kammie Hedges; Delegates: Bill Hall, Amy Whitcomb Slemmer; Youth Rep Chase Felker; Secretary Stephanie Kinney

Opening Prayer by the Rector

Minutes of previous meeting: June 10 Vestry Meeting Minutes were approved and appreciation expressed to Andrea Farr for her service as Secretary during the last year. Stephanie Kinney was introduced, having accepted the Vestry's invitation to serve as Secretary during the coming year.

Treasurer's Report (Chris Holmes):

- Exceeding Plan: Referencing the Junior Warden's Report (**attached**) Chuck underscored the Parish's continuing positive financial performance, with income continuing to slightly outpace expenses: pledges have exceeded budget, a one-time unexpected gift and a Gala that exceeded expectations have contributed to this happy situation. With the exception of June, monthly collections are running behind budget.
- Caution called for: The (**attached**) graph illustrating Operating Fund Year-to-Date Surplus (Deficit) confirms this good news but also prompts caution given the sharp decline into deficit spending that occurred between June and November of 2007. It may be wise to identify cut-back options in case they are needed later but no decision needed at present.
- Endowment Fund Semi-annual Investment Report: June 30 Endowment Fund total assets equal \$752,362. \$300,000 from the Endowment Fund has been invested in laddered CD's per the June Vestry decision. The net year-to-date return has been materially less than for the same period last year due to market conditions, but the sale of equity positions early in the year has avoided substantial additional losses. At present the predicted return on Endowment investment will be around 3%. Given more limited investment returns, there will be insufficient 2008 Endowment income to make a budgeted \$20,000 transfer to the Operating Fund. Taking internal accounting factors into consideration, the amount in question may actually be half that. No Vestry decision about best option is required until later when actual income and operating outlays vs. those budgeted are known. Scott noted that in 2009 the Endowment Fund will only have a spending rate of 5% of its market value.
- Designated Gift Funds: Most of these funds are given, usually in memorium, for particular purposes and might be thought of as "plaqued gifts," i.e. those tied to specific items for which an acknowledgment or memorial plaque is appropriate. Clergy discretionary funds and various program or project funds are also included in this category. Scott noted that there are several funds focused on music. He noted that Designated Gift Funds will become a regular part of the Vestry report. Sam noted the need for a plaque for the elevator.
- Audit Status: The '05 audit is finished. Bids are out for the '06 and '07 audits, with hopes for getting a lower bid than currently at hand. Goal is to begin these audits in August.

- Update on Betty Nowland Estate: Per Kate Bouve, proceeds from the legal settlement of this estate destined for St. Alban's are still pending the payment of legal fees and tax obligations.

Junior Warden's Report (Jim Sottile):

The (**attached**) report also details property issues addressed below.

- Satterlee Hall Heating System Repair: Vestry discussed replacement of the boiler component replacement, focusing on timing trade-offs, whole vs. partial system replacement costs and clarification that the Satterlee heating system is separate from that of the Rectory. Full system replacement will not be possible for at least five years. Also recommended for replacement are an electric steam control valve and the water heater, for which second opinions are being sought. Scott urged exploration of a solar hot water heater option.
 - **Motion** by Jim Sottile seconded and approved to authorize expenditure of up to \$19,000 from Reserve Fund to replace the heat exchanger. Jim and the Property Committee will obtain another bid before proceeding with the work.
- Satterlee Kitchen Food Preparation Table: Discussion focused on adaptation of or alternative use of existing table.
 - **Motion** by Jim Sottile seconded and approved to authorize expenditure of up to \$1,800 for a replacement food preparation table.
- Handicapped Access Ramp: Marc Fetterman has prepared a preliminary design but the final design will require results of proposals for a topographical survey (\$1,250) and structural engineering work (\$5,657). This work is required to prepare an RFP for actually building the ramp, which is expected to run somewhere between \$75 - \$100,000. Scott noted that funds could be drawn from the Reserve Fund or from designated requests with appropriate "plaquing" once the construction costs are known, but recommends that current expenditures come from the Reserve Fund.
 - **Motion** by Jim Sottile seconded and approved to authorize expenditure of up to \$7,500 to carry out first the survey and then structural engineering work.

Additional Property Maintenance Issues

Electrical Fixtures in Satterlee and the Rectory: Jim recommended that expenses for new electrical fixtures be considered a capital expense and paid for from the Reserve Fund and that associated masonry work be paid for from the Operating Fund.

- **Motion** by Jim Sottile seconded and approved to authorize \$6,700 from the Reserve Fund to pay for light fixtures and leave \$2,800 in the Operating Budget to cover the cost of masonry work.
- Fire Safety Lights for Warner Rectory: The Rectory continues to still be operated as a "private home" and the Stonehouse Report recommends immediate action on fire and safety concerns. Scott expressed concern for teen safety in conjunction with their activities on the second floor. Additional Rectory issues will need to be addressed.
 - **Motion** by Jim Sottile seconded and approved to authorize expenditure of \$1,800 for up to three fire safety lights in the Warner Rectory.
- Satterlee Bathroom Upgrade: Scheduled renovation of the Super 60's office to facilitate handicap access to the bathroom in that area is scheduled to begin in August. Super 60's has been made aware of the construction.

Senior Wardens Report (Kate Bouve):

- Parish Planning Weekend Goals Implementation: Two forums (July 27/Sept.21) are planned to broaden Parish awareness and engagement. Daily Cup has published the Top 10 “desired outcomes” from the planning process but these must be aligned with the specific goals under each strategic category and all goals must be translated into action plans and follow-up. Vestry members will need to help recruit parishioners for the implementation phase, broadening the base of parish leadership beyond the “usual suspects.” Scott expressed disappointment that no one responded to his request for feedback via the Daily Cup. The Vestry concurred with Kate’s recommendation to use a one page handout on Strategic Categories with Goals for the July 27 Forum.

Rector’s Report (Scott Benhase):

- Hospitality Commission Proposal: Scott asked the Vestry to consider recommendations from the Hospitality Commission concerning improvements for the Narthex and the Wade Room. Questions and/or feedback should be directed to Erin Hensley or Lacy Gude.
 - **ACTION:** Scott will provide an electronic version of the proposal to Vestry members.
- Cuba Trip: Scott made the following observations preliminary to an August 17 Forum on the trip to Cuba:
 - For first time visitors, Cuba and the Cuban Episcopal Church are enigmatic, notwithstanding people’s openness and willingness to talk about anything, including the government.
 - Cubans want to earn more money but also hold onto many “revolutionary values.”
 - Inventive ingenuity has helped mitigate the hunger problem, e.g. urban gardens and plow oxen
 - Before the Revolution there were 40 priests and 65 Parishes. Only 8 priests stayed, of whom 5 are still alive and are now considered “living saints.” Because of their pre-revolutionary status with the Episcopal Church, they are also pensioners of the US Episcopal Church.
 - Since there has been no agreement among the 5 as to which one should be the Cuban Bishop, Miguel Tamayo serves as Bishop of Uruguay and Cuba.
 - Spanish priests and the Roman church have more latitude because of government interest in Spanish development assistance. Episcopal priests are Cuban and therefore less advantaged. Government is uncomfortable with church outreach and assistance because of implication that government cannot do the job. Bishop Tamayo’s son has formed a Cooperative that is successful. Church/State relations improved after Jesse Jackson’s visit when Fidel learned of his association with Dr. King and was reported to have said that “Any church that supports the ideals of Martin Luther King is a church I (Fidel) can support.”
 - Needs of the Cuban Church are huge. Building materials are not available and churches have deteriorated or collapsed. One recently collapsed church is in danger of having its property confiscated by the Government if the building is not salvaged in time.
 - The possibility of a Senior Youth project aimed at helping rebuild one of the churches is being explored. Andrea pointed out that St. Alban’s must exercise great care and prudence in sending any group because on some level the Vestry and the Church would be responsible in the event of any unforeseen problems.

- Simon Baptista, who is in charge of Hispanic ministry for the Diocese, will visit Saint Alban's on August 3.
- Iona Senior Services Super Sixties Changes: Iona informed Scott that it has terminated Samiha's Super 60's contract. After being notified, Scott met with Linda Smith and Iona's Interim Program Director, to confirm the basis for this action and that all proper procedures were followed. Iona seeks to revitalize the program with new activities, and reports that participation has already increased. Scott answered questions about the past and present relationship between St. Alban's, Iona and Super 60's and some of the issues that Iona has been addressing over time. It was noted that St. Alban's does not have a person on the Iona Board and that perhaps it should. Scott expressed confidence that Iona will improve the Super Sixties program.
- Children's Ministry Update (attached): Harriette Sturges reported on recent developments and growing participation in a challenging transition year. Training enough adults to fully support the Catechesis program will take five to six years. A key goal is to double the current number of adults involved (7/8) in two years. 40-60 children are currently participating and there is room for more. The children are "learning to do theological reflection at an early age." Vestry members were encouraged to observe the children's program. All vestry members should be able to give directions to all the children's ministry venues. Harriette is working on a brochure for Children's Chapel; Vacation Bible School pamphlets are out. Timing issues have been addressed and classes have been cut back to 45 minutes. Scott will offer an option for an afternoon class for, among others, those in the Early Childhood Learning program.
 - **ACTION REQUIRED**: Harriette flagged the need to remedy mold and wetness problems in the stairwell going down to the Children's classrooms in Satterlee, which contrasts with the inviting environments in Nourse Hall and in the classrooms themselves.
 - **ACTION PROMISED**: Harriette will provide parents with an annotated syllabus this year to help them engage with their children on the week's topic
 - **ACTION PENDING**: A five page, end-of-year Catechesis S.W.O.T. (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats) report has been completed. It will be shared in a series of meetings to help refine it and ready it for final distribution.
- Calendars: Scott passed out the proposed Music Calendar for Oct-May (**attached**) and the Youth Ministry Schedule (**attached**). St. Alban's and the Cathedral are now sharing calendars in advance for coordination purposes, and the St. Alban's Parish Calendar will be published in August.
- Check Signing Authority: Scott noted the need for more people to have check-signing authority.
 - **Motion** by Keith Jones seconded and approved to add Tim and Erin to those authorized to sign checks. Scott clarified that the policy still holds that two signatures are required for any check over \$5,000.
- Articles of Interest: Scott called attention to latest edition of the magazine Congregations, recommending an analysis of how size affects congregations. Also of interest are articles on the "Seven Habits of Highly Effective Churches" and "How Different Emotional Systems Affect Strategic Planning."

OLD BUSINESS

- Arts & Memorials Committee: Marc Fetterman noted that the Committee would like to propose an elevator plaque. Marc indicated that he has spoken with Jennifer about her father's paintings and will nudge the Committee to take a decision on them.
- Handicap accessible ramp for Church: Marc Fetterman indicated that the Historic Preservation Office must now be consulted.
- Relations with the Cathedral: Scott announced that the St. Alban's/Cathedral Covenant has now been approved by both parties. Cathedral cutbacks will continue, a factor that will limit the Cathedral's ability to undertake new projects such as the proposed Café and calls for us to keep the Cathedral in our prayers. In response to a query, Scott clarified that the Foundation owns the land around the Cathedral and would be the responsible party for any action involving boundaries or other land issues.
- History of St. Alban's: The manuscript has been finished and plans are for the book to be published and ready for signing by All Saints Day.
- Parish Directory: Final corrections have been sent to Owens Mills.
- Youth Representative: Chase Felker expressed appreciation for the opportunity to serve and share what he learned with others.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: none required

Compline was led by Sam Lewis and the meeting was adjourned.