

ST. ALBAN'S PARISH, WASHINGTON. D.C.
VESTRY MINUTES – January 27, 2009

Attendees: Clergy and Staff: Scott Benhase, Tim Boggs, Ron Hicks, Interim Finance Director: Douglas Dykstra; Vestry: Kate Bouve, Jim Sottile, Andrea Farr, Eric Melby, Bill Edgar, Keith Jones, Nathalie Bramson, Jennifer Martin, Marc Fetterman, Chuck Holmes, Danette Gentile Kauffman, Robert Woolfolk, Kammie Hedges; Secretary: Stephanie Kinney

Opening Prayer by the Rector

Announcements and Minutes: The minutes for December were approved as amended. Scott noted that the report on Cuba will be discussed in February. Since the reaction to the report's recommendations will not be known for some time, as a contingency measure, Scott will reapply to the Cuban government for the religious license to travel to the island so that this lengthy process will be underway if decisions on the report are taken that make the visas necessary.

Treasurer's Report:

- **Audits:** Doug Dykstra reported that the '06 and '07 audits are clean and almost completed. Some recommendations on financial controls will be passed to the Finance Committee for review before any recommendations are brought to the Vestry. Hozik's cost and performance has led to his retention for the '08 audit.
- **The Financial Report (Attached):**
 - Doug presented the preliminary year-end financial report, which indicates that St. Alban's has finished the year close to budget and with no funds transferred from the Endowment. If current figures hold, we could have a small surplus, which would be put into the Reserve, but a surplus is still not guaranteed at this point.
 - Doug stressed the preliminary nature of the report. He noted that some expenses and income items are still not in the proper category and will be adjusted in the final version of the report. Also, noteworthy is the fact that our pledge income for 2008 was slightly under budget, not a good sign for 2009.
 - Jim Sotille indicated that the final End-of-Year Report will be available by the next Vestry meeting.
 - Those concerned about the proposed 2009 budget allotment vs. the total actual electric bill for 2008 were informed that a new reading has been made but the bill has not yet been received; the 2009 budget electricity expense item will be informed by this information. Marc Fetterman was told that it is too early to see savings related to recently fixing a leak in the water service to Satterlee Hall.
- Nathalie Bramson's motion to approve the report was seconded and approved.

EMP Report (Tim Boggs):

- **Pledge Data:** Tim provided the following data: 384 '09 pledges to date totaling \$1,036,832. Compared to 2008, 30% (of pledge pool) have increased pledge, 35% unchanged, 21% have decreased pledge and 14% are new pledges (54 this year vs. 39 last year). Of '09 pledges the mean (average) is \$2,596, the median (middle) is \$1,365 and the mode (most common) is \$1,200.

- **Lost Sheep:** In addition, as of the meeting, the reports of the Vestry's Lost Sheep calls include promises of 18 additional pledges, which we cautiously estimate could result in \$56,000 based upon past pledging histories and current promises made to Vestry members.

2009 Budget (S. Benhase):

- Scott reviewed version 10 of the proposed '09 budget, noting that this is very close to final. He called attention to the fact that the 2009 budget assumes a \$20,000 reduction in support for the Diocese and that the Bishop has been informed of this.
- Scott announced that Ashley Allen has been brought on board as Secretary and is already doing a terrific job and making a world of difference. Also, Sonya now has a music intern, a Sept-May position the church hopes to sustain on the future through the music endowment. In addition to lightening Sonya's load, the purpose of the position is to support and encourage a younger generation of Episcopal music professionals.
- Scott noted that the budget is protective of the church staff with which we are blessed, envisioning small salary increases (less than the Diocese recommends) for merit and actual work. However, Scott warned, since we have never increased salaries to the recommended level since his arrival, this practice will eventually come back to haunt us. Hopefully, in the future the Church will be in a better financial position to deal with the "catch-up" issue.
- Danette Gentile Kauffman asked for a discussion of the value of an overseas (vs. domestic) youth pilgrimage. It was pointed out that the current pilgrimage to Northern Ireland is already committed to and that the larger issue should first be discussed by the Youth Ministries Committee, which will prepare a presentation for the Vestry.
- Jim Sotille indicated that he was not prepared to discuss contingencies and if our income this year does not meet budget projections, but that the Finance Committee is aware of the issue and conscious of the need to monitor and identify potential measures for savings should adjustments be needed and several have already been identified.
- A **motion** offered by Keith Jones and seconded by Jennifer Martin **to approve the preliminary 2009 budget as presented was passed.**

Junior Warden's Report (J. Sotille):

- **Property:**
 - **Phone and IT:** Jim apologized for having to inform the Vestry post facto, but the \$6,095 bill for the urgent replacement of the phone and IT line (shared with Church House) came due and has been paid, with Church House paying its appropriate share of the total.
 - **Fire Safety:** The new emergency lighting in the Rectory has been installed at a cost of \$1,200, as projected.
 - **Satterlee Roof:** Estimate for a new 30 year roof has just been received today and Jim will have a recommendation regarding the roof and the solar panels in February.

Senior Warden's Report (K Bouve):

- Pursuant to her December Progress Report on the Strategic Planning initiative, Kate has been in touch with our facilitator, Royster Hedgepeth, to discuss a follow-up retreat. Scott noted that we want to be able to provide a good update on the initiative at the Church's Annual Meeting in May.

Rector's Report (S Benhase):

- **Housing Allowances:** Scott noted the need to authorize 2009 housing allowances for each of the clergy, per the IRS code and the Secretary signed documents authorizing \$60,000 for the Rector, \$36,000 for Tim Boggs, \$36,000 for Harriette Sturges and \$2,800 for Erin Hensley.
- **Op Shop Robbery:** There has been another theft in the Op Shop. This time \$3,000 was taken from an unlocked safe in the unlocked safe room and the security camera was positioned in such a way that the person could not be identified. Scott emphasized that the Op Shop is a part of the Church and stressed his concern for the safety and security of volunteers and the integrity of the operation. He has discussed all of this with Russell Eckel, who will be the sole Op Shop point of contact for moving forward. Ron and Doug have reviewed the situation and made new security procedure recommendations. Ron will get a new security camera system within two weeks and also a buzzer alarm. Doug, who is now also treasurer for WSA, and Ron will stay on top of the improved security procedures issue. Stephanie Kinney, also a member of WSA, pointed out that the need for a better and properly positioned security camera had been raised after the last theft and no action had been taken, hence the importance of the commitment to install new security equipment expeditiously.
- **Cuba:** The Cuba trip report will be addressed in February.
- **Replacement for Erin:** The search for Erin's replacement has gotten under way, assuming that the Church's 2009 income stream will sustain this. It is clear there will be excellent candidates and all appropriate groups, such as the Youth Ministries Committee, will be consulted.
- **11:15 Service:** Between now and September, we need to look holistically at how to bring more congregants to the 11:15 service. Since 2001, attendance at this service has declined in almost all Episcopal Churches due to lifestyle and generational changes. Some ideas Scott would like to explore include "retraditioning" the service to resonate more with younger members, embracing more plain song and chanting, investing more energy and money in the post 11:15 coffee hour to encourage a brief discussion among parishioners and with the clergy member who gives the sermon. Scott wants to "test market" any new approaches via focus groups, survey monkey and the choir, but he also stressed that we should not be afraid to experiment and fail. All thoughts on this subject will be welcome.

Old Business

- **Arts and Memorials Committee:**
 - **"Orphaned Art:"** Marc Fetterman announced that the Committee has asked an auction house in Bethesda assessing our "orphaned art work." Wendy Reeves, (a

parishioner who is a Curator at the National Portrait Gallery and a member of the Committee) has offered several other suggestions if the auction house is not interested in the art.

- **Sanford family “music” window:** Margaret Foley has painted a copy of the now “hidden window,” which is envisioned to be displayed on the north wall of the transept next to the organ console. Marc previously suggested lighting the window so that it can be seen from the outside, an idea the family appreciates and supports. February 22 is the target date.

New Business:

- **Lenten Retreat:** Jennifer Martin called attention to the retreat with Carlyle Gill Feb. 27-March 1, noting that there are still some spaces available.
- **Job Workshop:** Nathalie Bramsom noted positive feedback from the Workshop and the fact that Gray Maxwell was bullish on employment opportunities on the Hill in the wake of the change of administrations.

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

Stephanie Smith Kinney, Secretary