

ST. ALBAN'S PARISH, WASHINGTON. D.C.
VESTRY MINUTES – February 17, 2009

Attendees: Clergy and Staff: Scott Benhase, Tim Boggs, Ron Hicks, Douglas Dykstra;
Wardens: Kate Bouve, Jim Sottile; **Vestry:** Nathalie Bramson, Bill Edgar, Andrea Farr, Marc Fetterman, Kammie Hedges, Keith Jones, Danette Gentile Kauffman, Sam Lewis, Jennifer Martin, Eric Melby, Robert Woolfolk; **Youth Member:** Oliver Eid; **Secretary:** Stephanie Kinney; **WSA President:** Joanne Brainard

Opening Prayer by the Rector

Announcements and Minutes: The minutes for January were approved as amended. The will of a recently deceased parishioner stipulates a substantial bequest to the Capital Campaign.

Treasurer's Report:

- **4th Quarter Pledge Income:** Jim Sottile flagged pledge payments pre-paid for 2009 and incorrectly coded as 4th quarter 2008 pledge income. These corrections, when posted, will lower income for 2008 pledge receipts. Doug Dykstra is working hard to clear up the relevant accounting requirements. A full report will be provided in March. Doug announced that as of Dec. 31, the church had \$726,000 in the bank and that the time consuming manual review will ensure proper posting of income and expenses for 2008.
- **EMP Report:** Tim reported as follows:
 - A new focus including personal letters in October and December 2008 to parishioners with unfulfilled 2008 pledges has made a big difference in fulfillment. This has resulted in a 98% pledge fulfillment rate for 2008.
 - The 2009 EMP will close on Sunday with a report to the Congregation and an appeal to address the \$27,500 shortfall, thus allowing us to meet our proposed 2009 budget. Notwithstanding the obvious hardship the financial crisis is causing within the congregation, thus far we have 401 pledges for 2009 averaging \$2,700 each, with 8-10 additional pledges still expected.
 - Especially encouraging are 56 new pledges, which is high. A mid-year “ask” will be focused on new parishioners who have not yet pledged.
 - Thank-you letters will go out this month. Scott expressed confidence that the gap with the proposed budget will be closed, but said no new employees will be hired until we reach our pledge goal.
- **2009 WSA Budget:** Scott welcomed Joanne Brainard, President of the Workers Of Saint Alban's (WSA), and asked her to present WSA's 2009 budget. Scott explained that since WSA is not a separate 501(c) (3), it acts as a subsidiary of the Church and therefore the Vestry is ultimately responsible for its actions. Underscoring that Vestry approval of the budget is purely an up or down vote, Scott explained that WSA's vetting process makes it uniquely qualified to determine how Op Shop money is dispensed and that the WSA Board will continue to govern these decisions. The Vestry should be aware of WSA's plans for the year and it is important that the Church's budget reflect the full contribution of WSA to St. Alban's outreach efforts.
 - Joanne explained that since Op Shop revenue had declined, this was reflected in the overall 2009 WSA budget, especially in the decrease of grants to the Diocese.

- WSA will continue its annual \$15,000 contribution to the church's operating budget and will be responsible for giving \$10,000 to certain community ministries, but the community grants for organizations that exceed WSA's mission guidelines will not be given until December, pending availability of funds.
- In response to a question, Joanne indicated that there has been no discussion of an increased contribution to St. Alban's operating budget and no increase has been requested.
- Scott underlined the importance of WSA retaining semi-independence in light of their excellent vetting process for grants but also stressed the importance of having the St. Alban's budget reflect total parish contributions to outreach. He noted that WSA minutes are now copied to Doug and the Rector and hopefully by 2010 it will be possible to have WSA's budget integrated with that of the church without disturbing WSA's decision making and governance processes.
- **Sam Lewis commended WSA for its good spirit of transparency and cooperation and moved that the Vestry approve the WSA budget as presented. The motion was seconded by Jennifer Martin and approved.**

2009 Budget:

- Scott reviewed version 12 of the proposed 2009 budget, noting that this is very close to final with only a \$27,500 shortfall in projected pledges, which he is sure will soon be closed. He asked for approval of version 12 as the budget for 2009 with the caveat that if pledges did not reach the projected \$1.1 million level, Erin's replacement would not be hired.
- In response to a question from Danette Gentile Kauffman about the possibility of capping the Elsa Ward Medicare supplement payout, Scott explained that this was an expense incurred years ago when Medicare costs were low and the commitment could not now be voided or amended without hardship to the person involved, who is now extremely frail. The lesson for the future is to "avoid unfunded mandates."
- Sam Lewis, who urged that Scott not wait on hiring a replacement for Erin, was assured by Scott that no opportunities would be lost by waiting until March for the pledges to come in. Lacey Gude, Jennifer Martin, Tim Boggs and others need to be consulted and interviews need to be conducted, all of which will take time. Kate Bouve and Jennifer Martin stressed the importance of a third priest to the future of the church and the emphasis that should be put on seeking support to close the gap.
- A **motion** offered by Bob Woolfolk and seconded by Sam Lewis **to accept the 2009 Budget as presented was approved.**
- Scott expressed appreciation for the fact that this is really a bottom-up, staff budget thanks to staff input and help from Doug Dykstra. He agreed that now is the time to start thinking about how we handle bequests vis-à-vis the endowment vs. the reserve fund and noted that the Stewardship Commission already has this on its agenda to address by April. Jim Sottile noted that the Finance Committee is aware of a number of bequests this year and will be presenting a recommendation for handling these in March. The reserve fund currently has \$760,000. The Finance Committee believes an appropriate minimum for this fund is \$500-600,000.

Junior Warden's Report (J. Sottile):

- **Audits:** The '06 and '07 audits have been finalized and submitted to the Diocese and Hozik has offered a fixed bid of \$13,000, inclusive of expenses, to do the '08 audit. A **motion** offered by Jim and seconded by Kammie **to retain Hozik&Co. to conduct the 2008 audit was approved.**
- **Bequest allocation:** Of the \$250,000 Francine Swift bequest, \$25,000 will go towards the Operating Budget and \$225,000 will go into the Reserve Fund. In keeping with an earlier decision, this bequest will be used to pay for the new ramp.
- **Boiler:** The Satterlee boiler was not functioning for a week due to a water leak, overheating and burned gaskets that required the help of the Fire Department to remedy. Shapiro and Duncan have made the repair; the bill thus far is \$28,200 and a total bill of \$30,000 expected. Insurance probably won't cover the incident but we are looking into the possibility. We are also engaging an independent contractor to evaluate the likelihood of further failure. To date we have spent on repairs a substantial percentage of the cost of replacing the unit, which we earlier decided we could not afford to do. The question now is how long the repaired boiler will operate before additional major costs are incurred. Are we ok for the next five years? The fire actually has provided us with an opportunity to make a better assessment than would have been possible otherwise. The DCFD is to be commended for its rapid response to the fire emergency at the Church and the staff did a magnificent job of evacuating the premises and ensuring the safety of everyone.
- **Roof:** Jim still does not have the needed data and will report on this item in March.

Senior Warden's Report (Kate Bouve):

- **Parish Planning Retreat:** The Retreat is scheduled for March 20-21 and efforts to advertise the event and expand the number of parishioners involved are underway. The goal is to have a compelling report of accomplishments for the Annual Meeting in May.
- **Satterlee:** We may need to reconsider thinking about the Satterlee renovation, depending on findings about condition of the boiler. If the boiler assessment results are negative, we may need to replace it sooner than ever imagined, which could also affect thinking about any eventual Satterlee renovation. A negative assessment could also cause us to have to recast the March workshop to some degree. A project of this nature cannot go forward without ample public information and education on the subject.
- **Vestry Nominations:** We will need to elect two delegates and four Vestry members (Marc Fetterman, Sam Lewis, Kammie Hedges and Bob Woolfolk, who are leaving the Vestry since their term is up.) this coming May. A delegate replacement is also needed for Amy Slemmer, who has moved to Boston. Bob Woolfolk has agreed to chair the Nominating Committee.

Rector's Report (Scott Benhase):

- **Cuba:** The Cuba trip has not evoked passionate interest in deepening ties unless constraints on travel and other restrictions change, so this will not be pursued until there is something tangible that can be done in the way of an overseas ministry there. Good will visits are ok but not sufficient for a meaningful program. Scott admitted to sharing the views expressed in the Report and believes this is not the time to move forward on the issue. When asked whether other churches are involved, he said that

some are doing fundraising through the Episcopal Church of Canada and then processing the money from there.

- **11:15 Service:** Ways to strengthen this service have been discussed at some length in today's staff meeting and by June the clergy hopes to invite a focus group and members of the choir to provide feedback on a package of ideas. Some elements being discussed include:
 - nuanced change in ethos and effect
 - different mood with and extension of the Service over coffee in Nourse with liturgy concluding in Nourse
 - emphasis on explicit experimentation, perhaps by September
- **Shell Kimble:** Shell has completed General Ordination Exams and the St. Alban's parish, her home church, must endorse her work. This was done with signatures of the Rector, the Secretary and majority of the Vestry on a paper distributed during the meeting.
- **Iona Senior Services:** There is a potential crisis brewing at Iona. The Iona Executive Director has taken abrupt, dramatic and totally unconsulted actions on programs at both St. Alban's and Adas Israel. Scott is baffled by what has transpired and will be in contact with the Executive Director. She has not contacted St. Alban's directly about any changes or decisions regarding the Super 60's program. Scott emphasized that the Seniors program is an important one and now is not the time to abandon it.
- **Sanford Window Painting:** The painting of the Sanford window will be blessed on Sunday, February 22 at the 9:15 service.
- **Survey Monkey:** The two page Survey Monkey results regarding views on the proposed "Community Night" were distributed. The survey indicates enthusiasm for the idea, which is good news.

Old Business

- **Ramp:** Marc Fetterman reported that work on the ramp is moving forward, pending sign-off on the project by the Historic Preservation Office.
- **Arts and Memorials:** Marc reported that there is little commercial interest in the early 19th century "orphaned paintings." Wendy Reaves believes that Georgetown University may be willing to take them into their religious art collection, and this will be pursued.
- **Archives:** In anticipation of the eventual need for "swing space" in connection with various projects, Marc suggested that we need to clean up the archives in the attic of the Rectory. Boxing cost for the materials is being explored. Marc and Ruth Cline want to propose a history story board for the Narthex and they also want to visually honor the Rectors of St. Alban's in the Wade Room
- **Spring Gala:** Kammie Hedges reminded everyone that the Gala has been set for Saturday, April 25 with Susan Morris acting as Chair of the organizing committee.
- **Op Shop Theft:** Noting that follow-up to the theft is now a police matter, Scott reviewed changes affecting procedures for handling money and new security measures such as new locks and security camera positions.

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

Stephanie Smith Kinney, Secretary

