

Vestry Minutes

Final Version

Dec. 18, 2005
Adams Room

Present: Clergy and staff: Paul Abernathy, Shearon Williams
Wardens: Mike Townsend, Charley Donnelly
Vestry Members: Rod Lawrence, Julie Murphy, Burton Reist, Lisa Sotir, Susan Thigpen, David Willson, Margaret Wood
Officers: Jack Burton, Hank Donnelly, Gardner Van Scoyoc
Absent: Stewart Andrews, Eileen Blumenthal, Pete Carlson

Action Items and Discussion

1. Diocesan Convention

John Barton, Raiford Gaffney and Don Mosher, who were elected at the 2005 Annual Meeting as parish delegates to the Diocese of Washington, held a discussion with Vestry members in preparation for the upcoming diocesan convention.

Opening the discussion, Paul observed that St. Mark's had made progress over the past seven years in renegotiating and rethinking its relationship with the diocese. Convention delegates are now elected parish-wide, and a tradition is developing that the delegates come to the Vestry in December to get input for the convention in late January. Members reviewed topics relating specifically to the Washington Diocese, such as the role of the Soper Fund in the diocesan budget, as well as the current fragmentation and realignment of the worldwide Anglican community.

Another topic concerned the role of the Vestry in determining how the parish delegates vote at the convention. While noting that they might have to respond on the spot to unforeseen issues and actions at the convention, the delegates emphasized that they wanted guidance from the Vestry on key issues.

2. Second Draft Budget

Mike presented the Finance Committee's recommendations for the 2006 budget. He noted that it included a projected carryover from 2005, the exact amount of which would not be known until January.

The second draft budget includes the following, Mike said:

- 3.5 percent cost of living raise for clergy and staff.
- Diocesan assessment paid 100 percent.
- Set-aside for sabbatical costs.
- Additional \$10,000 for building maintenance and repair.
- \$10,000 in additional compensation for Shearon, to address a compensation inequity.

Using the right of parish members to address the Vestry during open session, Rick Rutherford expressed concern about the pay increase for Shearon. He raised questions about the way in which the increase was requested, as well as the long-term costs of the action. In response, Shearon, Paul, Mike and Human Resources Committee Chairman Gardner Van Scoyoc explained the process and reasons behind the decision.

During the discussion, members noted that Shearon's pay would remain below diocesan clergy pay standards. But Rick pointed out that most parishes are not at the suggested levels, and Paul said he was a long-time skeptic about the guidelines.

3. Sabbatical Planning

Mike reported that he had met with the Sabbatical Planning Team. The committee has already done a lot of work, he said, and will go public with its work in January. A high priority for the next step is to sign up guest preachers for Paul's absence.

4. Vestry Retreat Implementation

Acknowledging the low-key parish response to the reform agenda developed by the Vestry at the retreat, Mike led a discussion of the status of each initiative, and the strategy for achieving it.

- Restructure Sunday Morning
Survey on parish views being distributed.
- Expand and Enrich Small Group Activities
Considering facilitated discussion on sabbatical preparation.
- Simplify Administration
Members addressed the difficulty in getting program leaders to re-examine their ways of operating. It was agreed that the Vestry should ask Pillar leaders to look hard at how they do business with an eye to lessening the burden on everyone.
- Meeting Nights

Mike acknowledged that this goal was proving difficult to arrange, but that in 2006 the clergy and senior warden would try to have weekday night meetings on only two nights a week each.

e. Evaluate Church Needs

Information is being collected about actual space usage.

5. Columbarium Contract

An earlier electronic vote by the Vestry endorsing the Columbarium contract was read into the record.

6. What's New, etc.

Needs Attention

Money Counters – Linda and Bob Ewald were approved as authorized money counters for the collection plate.

Housing Allowances – As required under tax rules, the housing allowances for the Rector and Assistant Rector were approved.

Fundraiser – Mike mentioned that a proposal by Jo Ellen Hayden to conduct a fundraiser for New Orleans during the Mardi Gras party in February would be brought before the Vestry for an electronic vote in January, once final details were gathered.

Seminarian – Paul noted that the upcoming budget needed to include \$1,000 for seminarian David Dill, as previously agreed on.

Church Office – Julie noted concern among some parishioners over the level of response from the church office.

Vestry Greeter – Burton urged that a Vestry greeter be present at every service.

Needs Acknowledgement

Doris Burton, for Christmas Greening.

George Meng, for subsidizing Christian Education Weekend attendance by Sunday School teachers.

Christina Herman, for the Christmas Pageant.

Pete Carlson, for managing financial information on personnel issues.

What's New

Julie: Christmas Party held for Shelter Project.

Paul: Bishop Chane wants clergy in the diocese to have an audit for their discretionary funds. As a result, a resolution is needed on how funds are to be used.

Respectfully submitted,
Hank Donnelly
Register

Reviewed, amended and approved by the Vestry, January 2006.