

Minutes of the Vestry

St. Mark's Church, Capitol Hill
October 18, 2009
Adams Room

Present:

Clergy: Paul Roberts Abernathy, Rector
Susan Beth Pinkerton, Assistant Rector

Wardens: Kenn Allen, Senior Warden
John Sedgewick, Junior Warden

Vestry: Doris Burton, Joe Calizo, Ed Corr, Christine Farrell, Kristen Hartke, and
Susan Thompson-Hoffman

Treasurer: Kathryn Powers

Register: Greg Niblett

Legal Counsel: Michael Knipe

Absent:

Vestry: Cecilia Monahan, Vicki Street, and Mary Lee Watts

Manciple: Jack Richards

Human Resources
Officer: Ed Cousins

Agenda

1. Paul Abernathy, Rector and Chair of the Vestry, called to order the meeting of St. Mark's Vestry at 1:15 pm on October 18, 2009 in the Adams Room in the Undercroft of the St. Mark's Church.
2. John Sedgewick offered an opening prayer.
3. Report by Outreach Pillar Co-chair – Dave Johnson

Dave Johnson attended the Vestry meeting as Co-Chair of the Outreach Pillar. Grace O'Neil, also an outreach pillar co-chair, was unable to attend.

The report of the outreach pillar is attached and the minutes will reflect only highlights of Dave Johnson's presentation and the notes below are not meant to be all inclusive. The detailed report is attached.

Highlights of Dave Johnson's presentation to the Vestry are as follows:

- A. Outreach activities tend to fall into three categories.
 - a) Those financially supported by St. Mark's through its formal budget.
 - b) Those outreach activities implemented without budgeting support but which require volunteer labor or ad-hoc fundraising.
 - c) One time activities which may be initiated by St. Mark's members or leadership.

- B. The following activities receive budgetary support from St. Mark's and more details on each are provided in the attached report.
 - Capitol Hill Group Ministry
 - Samaritan Ministries
 - Honduras Committee
 - Soup Kitchen
 - Grate Patrol
 - For Love of Children
 - Action for Community Transformation (ACT)
 - Rag Dolls to Love
 - Episcopal Senior Ministries
 - Shelter Project

- C. Those activities which are not formally supported through St. Mark's budget process are:
 - a) Alternative Gift Fair
 - b) Race and Reconciliation Initiative
 - c) Partner Arms
 - d) Capitol Hill Group Ministry's Thanksgiving Basket Drive
 - e) Christmas Day visitation at Sibley Hospital

- D. Examples of some of the "one time" activities recently included:
 - a) Respite space for Migrant workers lobbying on the Hill.
 - b) Providing St. Mark's as a rest and refreshment stop for inaugural visitors.
 - c) Episcopal Campus Ministries at University of Maryland.

During this discussion of the Outreach Pillar, the Associate Rector, Susan Pinkerton suggested that we may want to consider doing more with our welcome table as an outreach vehicle. She also suggested more of an emphasis on a "Ministry to the Homeless" with emphasis on making the homeless fully included in our community and a possible Eucharist service in one of the Capitol Hill Parks, like Lincoln Park.

Dave Johnson also acknowledged the support of Ed Corr as outreach liaison.

In addressing challenges to the Outreach pillar, Dave identified the following:

- a) Financial resources.
- b) Availability of volunteers.
- c) Communication across St. Mark's to identify opportunities and to maximize participation in those activities currently supported.

4. Officer Reports

- a) The Register submitted the minutes of the September 20 meeting. A motion was made and seconded to accept the minutes as submitted.
- b) Treasurer's Report – The monthly financial reports were not available due to a technology problem. However, Treasurer Kathryn Powers reported the following highlights:
 - Cash on hand and projections are sufficient to meet current budgeting expectations throughout the rest of the fiscal year which goes through December, 2009.
 - Over the last four years, St. Mark's has been fortunate to have a surplus to help meet expenditures and balance the budget. She expects that there will be no surplus next year and all expenditures will have to be met through funds raised in that year.
- c) Senior Warden's Report – The Senior Warden did not have a written report but chose to highlight the canvass underway to raise funds for the 2010 budget.

He noted the following:

1. 93 pledges had been received to date for a total of \$285,000.
2. He was encouraged by the number of individuals who had increased their pledge but increases had been offset by decreases and the current pledge-to-pledge comparison for those pledging-to-date was approximately even with no net increase yet evident.
3. He encouraged all Vestry members to attend or host a canvass dinner, or facilitate a canvass dinner discussion.
4. He noted, and Vestry members concurred, that the personal hand written thank you notes from the Rector have been well received and have been greatly appreciated.

In discuss of the Senior Wardens report, Susan Thompson-Hoffman raised the importance of calling, asking, and recording on a regular basis:

- The reasons previous pledgers either reduced their pledge or did not pledge.
- The reasons people who left St. Mark's have left the church.

She noted that this is critical information to guide future work in keeping our current members and adding new members.

d) HR Officer Report – Ed Cousins, the HR Officer was not present but Paul Abernathy gave the following update on Baxter House staffing.

- St. Mark’s will move to having two co-equal Parish Administrators with responsibilities as follows:
 - Parish Administrator for Programs and Facilities.
 - Parish Administrator for Membership and Finances.

A person for the first position is currently being recruited for and the second position is a re-casting of Susan Block’s position. Job descriptions for both positions have been completed. Raifford Gaffney will continue to substitute on a temporary basis to support St. Mark’s during the current transition in which only one position (Susan Block’s) is filled.

5. Same Sex Resolution

The Rector and Senior Warden presented a revised draft of the same sex resolution which is attached.

Prior to voting on the resolution, a motion was made by Joe Calizo and seconded by Ed Corr that the resolution be on behalf of “the Vestry of St. Mark’s” rather than on behalf of the “St. Mark’s Church or its full membership.” Discussion preceded and followed the motion and it was passed unanimously. With this change reflected in the draft resolution, Doris Burton moved and Christine Farrell seconded a motion that the resolution as written and presented (supporting the legalization of same sex marriage) be supported by the Vestry. The motion passed unanimously. The final resolution as approved is attached.

In relationship to this business item, the Rector announced that he accepted an invitation to testify in support of the legalization of same sex marriage before a committee of the D.C. City Council on October 26 at 3:30 pm. He will circulate his remarks to the Vestry prior to the hearing.

6. Building Task Force

The Senior Warden reported that there would be an extensive discussion at the retreat about St. Mark’s space requirements and the deliberations of the building task force.

To facilitate the work of the task force, funds (approximately \$50,000) will be needed to obtain professional opinions, feasibility studies, and architectural renderings so that the Vestry and the church Parish can make informed decisions about future

building and/or renovation recommendations. Given that current budget pressures likely preclude finding such funding in the budget and given the reluctance currently to raise such funds in the present economic climate, the Senior Warden and Rector have sent a letter to the endowment committee asking that funds be released to provide support for this project.

The Senior Warden also reported that Mike Townsend is completing an extensive background document which will capture the history of deliberations on the type of St. Mark's space usage, space needs, and possible renovations and/or expansion.

7. Retreat Update

The Senior Warden reminded the Vestry that it will meet in retreat with the Pillar Chairs on November 6, 7, and 8. The Vestry will meet in Rehoboth Beach, Delaware in executive session on Friday evening and Saturday morning during which time some portion of Friday evening or Saturday morning would be set aside for the November Vestry meeting.

Other logistical highlights noted were:

- Meetings will be held at the All Saints' Episcopal Church in Rehoboth.
- Pillar Chairs will join the Vestry for lunch on Saturday noon and remain with the Vestry for joint meetings through Sunday noon.
- Attendees (Vestry and Pillar Chairs) will attend service and breakfast at All Saints' Episcopal Church on Sunday at 8am.

8. What's New; What Needs Attention? What's Working? Who Needs Acknowledgment?

- A. The Rector reported that the Christian Education program is in the process of recruiting a new team of four co-directors Bruce Sherman, Woody Osborne, Kenn Allen and Vicki Street are leading this effort.
- B. The Rector also reported that Emily Guthrie, ordained as a Deacon, has discerned a call to the priesthood. Given the time lapse between her ordination (to the Diaconate) and her desire to be priest, the Bishop has advised that she go through a period of mentoring and study to ensure that she is current on issues of theology and ethics.

Additionally, in order to pursue the process toward the priesthood, Emily Guthrie is required to be in a paid position in the Episcopal Church and is currently seeking such an opportunity.

St. Mark's remains Emily's church of membership and, thus, her sponsor. Therefore, the Vestry must hold a conversation with Emily and vote to endorse and approve her candidacy and for her to move forward.

After discussion, the Vestry agreed to meet on Sunday, November 15 (1:15 pm) to hold a conversation with Emily to be followed by a vote.

- C. Susan Thompson-Hoffman recommended that the 'pledge pillar' be moved to the center of the church at the altar during the canvass so as to be more visible and accessible.
- D. Doris Burton and Susan Thompson-Hoffman asked if the Vestry would be interested in hearing presentations on membership, liturgy, and building issues learned from their recent "Starting Up; Starting Over!" congregational development conference. The Clergy and Vestry agreed.

In follow-up to their attendance at the conference, Susan Thompson-Hoffman asked permission to craft a survey to assess the current demographics of St. Mark's membership, to enhance the work of the Membership Development Committee. The Vestry and Clergy concurred. She also noted that she would access an Episcopal Church survey tool called "Precept" which could aid St. Mark's in better understanding the immediate Capitol Hill community.

- E. In November, Paul will dedicate the 'Sexton's window' given by Bert and Mary Cooper in the Foster Foyer.
 - F. Kenn Allen reported that St. Mark's "Race and Reconciliation" initiative committee continues to move forward. The Race and Reconciliation committee and the church leadership are working with two consultants who are facilitating a process of assessment and dialogue. Ja-Nay Queen and Mark Brimhall-Vargas are the consultants. As part of this process one of the next activities will include a focus group of 20 parishioners which will be part of a needs assessment to assess parish issues and leadership around diversity and cultural competency. This session will be held on November 2.
 - G. The Rector referenced that he had recently sent Vestry members a set of statistics on membership in the National Episcopal Church and indicated that he would like to have a future conversation about the trends in the national church.
 - H. The Rector reported that he is excited about the current Life, Community, and Faith Class (LCF) which he is co-leading with Rob Hall, Rita Ossilinski, and Christine Gregor. While there are only eleven members in the class they reflect great diversity.
- 9. A motion to adjourn was made by John Sedgewick and seconded by Kristen Hartke and then passed.
 - 10. Susan Thompson-Hoffman offered a closing prayer.

Respectfully submitted.

Gregory R. Niblett
Register

Attachments

1. Revised Draft of Same Sex Marriage Resolution
2. Junior Wardens Report
3. Vestry Liaison Reports

St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Capitol Hill, Washington, DC

Vestry Resolution on Same Sex Marriage

WHEREAS, St. Mark's Capitol Hill has an established tradition of openness and inclusion of all people, without regard to sexual orientation; and,

WHEREAS, in the early 1960s, St. Mark's served as a meeting site of the local chapter of the Mattachine Society, one of the earliest gay rights groups in the United States, and,

WHEREAS, our parish community is blessed with the presence of people of all genders and sexual orientations in committed relationships; and,

WHEREAS, in July, 1999, St. Mark's, after an extensive parish-wide period of reflection and discussion, established a policy in support of the blessing of same sex unions; and,

WHEREAS, our clergy has in the past and continues to perform such blessings; and,

WHEREAS, its 75th General Convention in 2006 reaffirmed The Episcopal Church's historical support of gay and lesbian persons as children of God and entitled to full civil rights; and,

WHEREAS, our parish community is blessed with children being raised in "two Mom" or "two Dad" families whom, we believe, should enjoy the same legal protections, economic stability, and emotional security enjoyed by children being raised in traditional "one Mom/one Dad" families; and,

WHEREAS, our evolving understanding of the nature of marriage calls us to re-examine for whom marriage is sanctioned; and,

WHEREAS, past leaders of the parish have spoken publicly on issues of civil and human rights, including the rights of people of all sexual orientations; and,

WHEREAS, the Rector and the Vestry invited members of the parish to engage in a dialogue on issues related to same sex marriage, including whether St. Mark's should take a public position on the legalization of same sex marriage; and,

WHEREAS, members of the parish, through individual communications and participation in a "town hall meeting" have expressed their views on these matters;

Now, THEREFORE, we, the members of the Vestry of St. Mark's Capitol Hill do hereby:

Declare the support of the Vestry of St. Mark's for the legalization of same sex marriage; and,

Support our clergy and elected lay leadership in speaking publicly, at their discretion, to make known this position.

Resolved this 18th day of October 2009.

Junior Warden's report Sept 2009

Current Activities:

1. The down spout/drain on south side of nave backed up and resulted in water seepage in undercroft Women's bathroom. This should not have happened as the drain was power washed in June. The blockage was cleared and water appears to be flowing freely into the sewer. The situation will be monitored
2. The shower project continues to be on hold pending resolution of potential code issues. A permit is likely needed before bids can be prepared.
3. Ed Green Maintenance Contract has been updated but will not be executed until budget allocations for 2010 all complete.
4. Initial meeting on St. Mark's Player equipment inventory held. Actions required to complete inventory identified.
5. Three air purifiers purchased for undercroft classrooms at the request of the Christian Ed. team.
6. Approved St. Mark's Player's WIFI in Parrish Hall. Will assess performance and utility for the full St. Mark's community over the next year.
7. The church elevator passed inspection and has been certified for 2009/2010

Future Work

1. Complete the fire alarm installation
2. Complete inventory of St. Mark's Player's equipment
3. Get bids on shower project and prepare recommendation to vestry re funding.
4. Prepare and post instructions for turning off fire alarm.

Vestry Liaison Reports September 2009

PARISH LIFE

Elizabeth Long and Kristi Kubista-Hovis – Pillar Chairs
Christine Farrell – Vestry Liaison

Accomplishments

- Committee being formed to run Mardi Gras in February, 2010.

Upcoming Events

- Thursday, October 2009 – Third Ager's trip to Dondona Manor, home of George C. Marshall in Leesburg, Virginia.
- Friday, October 23-Wine, Women, and Cheese Social, Marilu and Peter Sherer's home
- Sunday, October 25- Young Adults Potluck in Baxter House, 6:00 pm
- Sunday, October 25 – Caregiver's meeting
- Monday, November 2- Literary Lions Reading Group, Penniman Room at Baxter House at 7:30 p.m
- Sunday, November 15- Deadline for Gospel articles, pictures, etc.
- Sunday, November 15 – Household Goods and Furniture Drive, Women to Women, Parish Hall
- Friday, November 20- Film Club, show TBA, at the Yanish's Home unless specified.
- Sunday, November 22- Young Adults Potluck in Baxter House, 6:00 pm

Ongoing Events

- Pub Lunch and Coffee Hour Sign-ups are continuing

Concerns

- There currently is not a leader for the Lambda Lions group
- Men to Men group activities also seem to have slowed down and the group has lost momentum

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Brock Hansen, Nadine Hathaway, Don Lipscomb and Heather Powers – Pillar Chairs
Vicki Street – Vestry Liaison

Children – Heather Powers

- Finishing Sunday School registration
- Classes moving forward
- 8-10 yr olds are meeting in the Adams Room
- A few bumps in the 4th and 5th grade class
- Junior High (14-23 kids) - need another teacher. Service or field trip is planned.
- High School has a strong team and good plans

Adults – Don Lipscomb

- Strong registration for all classes begun or held so far:
 - Roll Away Stone class underway by Fred Taylor
 - Unstuck class on 10/3 with Dr. Jim Gordon
 - LCF Fall class to begin this month
- Bruce Sherman and Woody Osborne are recruiting new Co-Director candidates – have met with Paul, Kenn and Vicki regarding the process and will be presenting their recommended slate later this fall
- January Weekend leaders have been chosen
- Spring Talks, led by Betty Foster and Peter Eveleth

OUTREACH

Grace O’Neill and Dave Johnson – Pillar Chairs
Ed Corr – Vestry Liaison

See report sent in advance that summarizes their programs.

WORSHIP

Jan Lipscomb and Loretta Veney – Pillar Chairs
Mary Lee Watts – Vestry Liaison

The Worship Committee met on Oct. 6th to plan out the themes for the next several Sundays in October and November, leading up to the Advent season.

Oct. 11th—Importance of Being Earnest scene as part of the service

Oct. 18th- Kenn Allen will give the sermon with the theme of Stewardship, Service and Charity

Oct 25th- Honduras Service

- The Honduras team will be the layservers, beadles, etc

Nov. 1st—All Saints Day and baptisms

- Will be a liturgical dance

Nov. 8th- Given that Paul and Susan will be at the Vestry retreat, an alternate priest will be needed and this is still being worked out.

Nov. 15th—Bishop Chane will visit St Marks

Nov. 22nd—Paul will preach, and the Committee is considering a theme along the lines of Verna Dozier’s Dream of God

The Committee will hold its next meeting on Nov. 3rd.

ARTS

Rick Hayes – Pillar Chair
Kristen Hartke – Vestry Liaison

No report received.

YOUTH MINISTRY

Megan Courtney – Director
Joe Calizo – Vestry Liaison

Report received but with a technical glitch.

STEWARDSHIP TEAM

Paul Abernathy and Kenn Allen – Conveners
Cecilia Monahan – Vestry Liaison

No report received.