

Minutes of the Vestry

St. Mark's Church, Capitol Hill

September 20, 2009

Adams Room

Present:

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

Wardens: Kenn Allen, Senior Warden

Vestry: Joe Calizo, Ed Corr, Christine Farrell, Kristen Hartke, Cecilia Monahan, Vicki Street, and Mary Lee Watts

Treasurer: Kathryn Powers

Register: Greg Niblett

Legal Counsel: Michael Knipe

Absent:

Junior Warden: John Sedgewick

Vestry: Doris Burton and Susan Thompson-Hoffman

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 September 20, 2009 in the Adams Room in the Undercroft of the St. Mark's Church.
2. Cecilia Monahan offered an opening prayer.
3. **Update on the Arts Pillar – Rick Hayes**

Rick Hayes, the current director of the Arts Pillar attended the meeting to provide a report and update on arts activities and to engage in discussion with the Vestry.

The following is a summary of the verbal report and is intended to provide highlights for the historical record and is not intended to be all inclusive or comprehensive:

- a) Rick reported that the Arts Pillar at St. Mark's continues to be robust with a breadth of activities that include visual and performing arts, liturgical dance, a thriving dance studio, photography, a rich music program, and textile arts.
- b) Rick noted that he thinks the Arts Pillar should continue to be led with a goal of incorporating the arts into all the other pillars – Christian Education, Worship, and Outreach.
- c) Looking ahead Rick referenced the following:
 - A possible Passion performance rather than the traditional reading.
 - Exploring the possibility of St. Mark's participating in the Washington, DC Liturgical Dance Festival.
 - Exploring a possible "Arts Advent" theme.
 - The upcoming St. Mark's Player's performance of the Oscar Wilde play "Importance of Being Earnest" in October, noting that he and the Rector have had productive brainstorming sessions about how to incorporate a segment of the play into a worship service. He also noted that future 2010 productions would include "The Lion in Winter" and "Oliver".
 - Exploring possibilities of what might be done to recognize the 125th anniversary (in 2013) of the construction of St. Mark's given its architectural relevance to the arts pillar.
- d) Rick shared several ideas that were under consideration including:
 - Collaborating with "Toastmasters" for those members of the parish who may want to improve their public speaking skills.
 - Including a story telling workshop.
 - A Yoga class for third agers.
 - An acting class for third agers.
 - A Shabat service for Lent.
 - An activity that might link up with the "Laramie Project" which relates to the death of Matthew Shepherd.
 - A class or project connected to memorizing the Book of Mark.
- e) In discussion with the Vestry, Rick was asked what is the biggest challenge that the Arts Pillar faces. He responded that it was getting enough people to volunteer to sustain the pillar and the breadth of activities.

4. Officer Reports

- a) The Register presented the minutes of the July 19 Vestry meeting. There were no comments or questions or changes recommended. A motion was made, seconded, and passed to accept the July 19 minutes as presented.
- b) Kathryn Powers, Treasurer, had distributed the financial reports in advance. There was no significant discussion of the items in the reports.

However, related to financial matters, the Treasurer informed the Vestry that Bertha Martin would cease to be the chief money counter and scheduler of money counters for worship services and the Treasurer informed the Vestry that Susan Sedgewick was willing to take Bertha Martin's place and further suggested that this appointment be formally approved by the Vestry.

A motion was made, seconded, and passed appointing Susan Sedgewick as the chief money counter and scheduler of money counters for St. Mark's worship services.

- c) Senior Warden's Report

The Senior Warden emphasized the stewardship or canvass campaign during his remarks and urged all Vestry members to take an active role in hosting a canvass dinner or facilitating a canvass dinner discussion. He thanked those Vestry members who had already pledged early and encouraged all others to do so as well.

- d) Junior Warden's Report

The Junior Warden's report was submitted in advance and is attached. The Junior Warden was absent and Kenn Allen spoke in his place, highlighting the issue of the possible installation of a shower in the undercroft so that St. Mark's could continue to host homeless families in conjunction with Capitol Hill Group Ministries. Between Kenn Allen and Ed Corr, updates were offered on the progress of this initiative noting that further costing and building requirements need to be investigated. However, they noted that the original plan of installing a shower in the women's undercroft bathroom had been abandoned and an alternative site had been located where a small bathroom and shower might possibly be installed in a manner which would better meet code requirements, pending further study and discussion.

- e) HR Officer Report

Ed Cousins, the HR Officer, was absent and no formal report was offered though the Senior Warden spoke to the primary personnel issue of Baxter House staffing in the next agenda item.

5. Baxter House Staffing Update

The Senior Warden reported that the process of defining the job descriptions of Baxter House was continuing and almost complete but that it was pre-mature to publicly announce those decisions at this point.

6. Discussion on Same Sex Marriage – Next Steps

An extensive discussion ensued on the above topic recapping viewpoints from the well attended town hall meeting on September 16 which most Vestry members had been able to attend.

The Rector and Senior Warden noted that there seemed to be extensive support and consensus in the parish to support actions by St. Mark's and its clergy in supporting the legalization of same sex marriage. The discussion also highlighted that we need to be sensitive to the fact that not all parishioners share that viewpoint. A letter from a parishioner was shared with the Vestry that indicated support for same sex unions and the blessing of same sex unions within St. Mark's but did not endorse same sex marriage.

Parish member and former Vestry member, Don Mosher attended the meeting and was invited to speak. He noted his support for same sex marriage but stated that he thought the St. Mark's Vestry should not take a public stand on a political and public policy issue or presume to represent the entire parish. His e-mail to the Vestry is attached.

Kenn Allen then presented a resolution (attached) stating St. Mark's support for same sex marriage and support for the clergy and lay leadership to speak publically in support of same sex marriage at their discretion. While there was general consensus supporting the spirit and intention of the resolution, there was not common agreement on all of the wording.

Therefore, a motion was made and seconded, that:

“the Vestry support in principle the proposed resolution (see attached) supporting the legalization of same sex marriage, subject to editorial changes to be confirmed in a future electronic vote or the next Vestry meeting.”

The motion passed unanimously.

7. Update on Third Sunday Service

Assistant Rector, Susan Pinkerton, announced that plans continued to move forward on the creation of a third Sunday worship service to be held at 5pm on Sundays. The first service will be held on November 29.

8. Membership Committee Update and Approval of Membership

Kenn Allen presented the following list of individuals to lead and approve the membership committee. A motion was made by Joe Calizo and seconded by Mary Lee Watts to approve the proposed leadership and membership listed below.

Amber Palmer, Co-Chair
Stan Smith, Co-Chair

Paul Abernathy, Rector
Susan Pinkerton, Assistant Rector

Kenn Allen, Senior Warden
Cecilia Monahan, Vestry
Doris Muller-Burton, Vestry
Susan Thompson-Hoffman, Vestry

Alvin Moseberry, Committee Member
Beryl Maloney-Lilliston, Committee Member
Chuck Divine, Committee Member
Irene Kokkales, Committee Member
Kitty Donnelly, Committee Member
Lynda Smith-Bugge, Committee Member
Lynn Kneedler, Committee Member
Michelle Strange, Committee Member
Pete Eveleth, Committee Member
Raiford Gaffney, Committee Member
Sarah Headley, Committee Member
Suella Henn, Committee Member

Caitie Whelan, Advisory Committee
Don Lipscomb, Advisory Committee
Fritz Henn, Advisory Committee
Keith Krueger, Advisory Committee

9. St. Mark's Participation and Clergy Training Project

The Senior Warden presented a Diocese-driven proposal for St. Mark's to become a "Teaching Congregation" by accepting a third year seminary student who would

spend 24 hours per week in the parish during their third year and then work full-time in the parish the following year. The program would be partly funded by the Lilly Foundation if a proposal to Lilly is accepted. Further financial support would have to be raised. (See the attached description from the Senior Warden for more details).

The Vestry by consensus expressed its support for the program and for the Rector and Senior Warden to continue in discussions with the Diocese on the opportunity.

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

- a) Christine Farrell announced that she had been re-elected to serve on the St. Mark's Players Board as Vice President.
- b) Vicki Street announced that the anthem that had been commissioned in honor of Keith Reas will be performed at St. Mark's on November 13.
- c) Vergers are scheduled to be installed and recognized on September 27.
- d) Installation and acknowledgement of Pillar Heads took place this morning (September 20), an action that was appreciated by the Vestry.
- e) Kenn Allen will thank all of those who had helped organize the September 16 Town Hall meeting.

11. Ed Corr offered a closing reflection.

Respectfully submitted.

Gregory R. Niblett
Register

Attachments

- 1. Original Draft of Same Sex Marriage Resolution
- 2. Don Mosher e-mail to Vestry
- 3. Junior Warden Report
- 4. Senior Warden Report
- 5. HR Officer Report
- 6. Teaching Congregation Proposal
- 7. Vestry Liaison Reports

ATTACHMENTS

Draft Resolution on Same Sex Marriage – with Vestry’s suggested revisions
September 20, 2009

Note – the Vestry approved this resolution “in principle” at its meeting on September 20, pending final editorial revisions and its confirmation by e-vote.

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

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

WHEREAS, in [month, year], we did, after an extensive parish-wide period of reflection and discussion, establish a policy in support of the blessing of same sex unions; and,

WHEREAS, our clergy has in the past and continue 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 evolving understanding of the nature of marriage calls us to re-examine who marriage is for; 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 our parish 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” have expressed their views on these matters;

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

Declare our support for the legalization of same sex marriage; and,

Support our clergy and elected lay leadership in speaking publicly, at their discretion, to make known St. Mark’s support for the legalization of same sex marriage.

Resolved this ___ day of _____ 2009.

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE VESTRY

At the meeting on Wednesday three political issues concerning the Saint Mark's community emerged. Here are my views and reasoning on those issues for your consideration.

Issue #1. Should same-sex marriages be legalized on the same basis as other marriages in the District of Columbia?

Yes, definitely. Why?

First, there is the simple humanitarian issue of respect for each individual's freedom of choice. The choice of a loved person with whom to share a lifetime of commitment is an individual and personal matter. No political institution should unreasonably limit or deny that choice. It should be freely made by the individual and should be honored and protected by society.

Second, there are legal considerations. Governments may legitimately deny permission to marry only under certain compelling circumstances. These include one or both parties (1) not being of the age of consent, (2) not being of sound mind, (3) being otherwise married, (4) being coerced, (5) being closely consanguineous, and (6) intending to marry solely to circumvent laws pertaining to issues such as immigration or immunity from testifying against a spouse. There are ordinarily no such compelling issues militating against the marriage of mutually willing adult same-sex couples.

Our Declaration of Independence declares that we are all "created equal," and that we are entitled to the "pursuit of...happiness." If the pursuit of individual happiness depends on a legally recognized marital relationship with a person of one's own choosing, then denying that legal relationship on the basis of sexual preference is denying that we are all, regardless of sexual orientation, "created equal."

Article III of the Bill of Rights States that "... Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion..." Certain factions in the District of Columbia are seeking to have aspects of their restrictive religious beliefs regarding marriage codified as law binding on all citizens. This attempt to force denominational religious tenets upon the entire population is not justifiable.

Issue #2. Should St. Mark's allow itself to be politicized and to be represented (or misrepresented?) as a whole community in support of, or in opposition to, controversial political issues?

No. Here's the logic.

Individuals are entitled to freedom of choice in matters of political belief and action. They are free to join political organizations to practice those political beliefs and actions.

Individuals are entitled to freedom of choice in matters of religious belief and action. They are free to join religious organizations to practice those religious beliefs and actions

These are different and distinct kinds of choices. Therefore:

Political organizations should not presume speak for their members on religious issues.
Religious organizations (churches) should not presume to speak for their members on political issues.

But, some will argue, what about the “majority rules” concept? Doesn’t that entitle the Vestry to speak for the whole congregation? No. The Vestry has the responsibility of operating St. Mark’s as a church. It was never elected or empowered to “rule” or decide the political choices of parishioners.

Legalizing same-sex marriages has much support at St. Mark’s. Probably some members privately and silently honestly believe that marriage is exclusively ordained as a union between man and woman. If anybody were to publicly advocate in the name of the St. Mark’s community for legislation legalizing same-sex marriage, what would that say about our respect for the religious convictions of these members? It would be a sad irony if, in our zeal to be inclusive of some parishioners, i.e., same-sex partners, we effectively disowned or ignored other sincere believers as included members of St. Mark’s.

What about other issues? Where does “advocacy” end? Do we declare that St. Marks is:

“Pro-life” or “Pro-choice?”

In favor of amnesty for illegal immigrants or in favor of tough immigration law enforcement?

For government- run healthcare or opposed to it?

There is simply no way to represent truthfully the whole of St. Mark’s on almost any political issue.

Issue #3. Should the clergy be authorized to do political advocacy or lobbying in the name of St. Mark’s community?

Definitely not.

We advertise that, “whatever you believe or don’t believe,” you are welcome at St. Mark’s. This is laudable, and it inevitably results in our being diverse and heterogeneous in our religious and political beliefs. No one, lay or clergy, can honestly claim to speak for the whole community of St. Mark’s on a political issue. Therefore, no one should be allowed to do so.

It is, happily, a free country with freedom of speech. Clergy members are at liberty personally to support or oppose whatever political propositions they choose. While doing so they are as free to wear their uniform (clerical collar) as any other citizen would be to wear his/her occupational garb. If addressing public gatherings or legislative bodies Paul and Susan should take care to specify that they are speaking only for themselves.

So, what can those members of St. Mark’s who choose to be active in support of same-sex marriages do? We can generate a petition saying that we, the signing individual members of St. Mark’s, urge the passage of legislation legalizing same-sex marriages with all the protections and prerogatives appertaining to other marriages. This can be used to influence the City Council, to influence public opinion and to counterbalance propaganda of religious groups opposed to same-sex marriages. This would allow St. Mark’s members who favor the issue to step up and be counted while protecting from pressure or misrepresentation those who faithfully believe otherwise or who simply choose to eschew activism.

In conclusion, I personally do not want the Vestry, the clergy or St. Mark’s congregation deciding or lobbying about my political positions. I prefer to make my own mistakes. I’m quite good at that.

Thank you for reading this.

Junior Warden's report Aug 2009

Current Activities:

1. The Nave floor was sanded and refinished
2. The stone walls in Classrooms 3 and 7 were sealed so as to eliminate the continual shedding of masonry grit into the classrooms..
3. The water seepage in undercroft Women's bathroom and library appears resolved. No further leakage has occurred
4. The Baxter house leak in 1st floor bathroom has been repaired.
5. The shower project has been on hold pending completion of shelter project for this summer.
6. Fire Alarm System. A false alarm occurred on 21 Aug. The system continues to operate in local mode as it is not yet hooked to the central office via telephone lines. The air gap between the Verizon jacks and the Antronnix equipment needs to be bridged in an acceptable manner. The concern that we will get an unacceptable number of false alarms remains.

Future Work

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

September 17, 2009

To: The Vestry of St. Mark's

From: Kenn Allen

Subj: Senior Warden's Report for August and Early September

Here is a quick update on things of possible interest.

1. During the month of August, while Paul was gone, I checked in regularly in person with each member of the staff, attended one of their weekly staff meetings and was in almost daily email communication with them. At my request, they submitted written weekly reports every Friday afternoon and an end of the month "what's coming up in September" report. I compiled these into a single report for Paul to help ease his return after vacation.
2. With the help of vestry liaisons and pillar chairs, we completed a new "leadership directory" and a calendar for the year in time for first distribution on September 6.
3. The work of the Stewardship Team is well underway. Katherine Loevinger has assumed responsibility for overall coordination of the team's work. We have revised the goal downward from the 12% increase we discussed with the vestry in July to 8%.
4. We have had two meetings of the Building Task Force. Members are Paul, John Sedgewick, Greg Niblett, Ed Corr, Mike Townsend, Penny Hansen, Ed Turner, Rob Hall, Don Ellison, Jane Rutherford and me. We are in the process of reviewing all past space studies and relevant reports. We believe it would be appropriate to make the issue of our space needs and options for responding a central focus of the joint vestry-pillar retreat.
5. We are continuing to recruit a co-chair to serve with Bill Jordan to lead the Governance Task Force.
6. We are in the process of reviewing and finalizing the contract with JaNay Queen, our consultant for continuation of the Race and Reconciliation dialogue. We anticipate work getting underway next month with the leadership of Peter Sherer, Jack Burton and Penny Farley, co-chairs of that committee.
7. We are in the final stages of completing the job descriptions for the Baxter House staff. We believe we can begin recruiting by the end of the month for the position currently being filled on a temporary basis by Raiford Gaffney.
8. Based on the discussion in the July vestry meeting, we decided to finance purchase of a new server rather than pay for it upfront. We have secured a \$6,000 loan from National Capitol Bank which can be repaid at any point we wish. As a result, we will have a cash outlay in 2009 of under \$1,000 rather than the full \$6,000.
9. Advocates for Survivors of Torture and Trauma decided not to rent space in the undercroft for their work as we had thought they would. It appears that the church where they currently are based two days a week in DC gave them more space and a better deal.
10. With Jack Richards' help, we have affixed welcome letters from Paul on the interior A Street entrances to the Nave and have hung the strategic map in the foyer outside the Nave and just outside the Parish Hall. A final copy remains to be hung in Baxter House.

11. Expressions of gratitude are due to:

- Doris Burton for organizing the Parish Picnic;
- Burton Reist for serving as Grillmeister;
- Each of the pillars, the Players and the Yoga Studio for their financial contributions to the picnic and to Crane Miller for rounding out what we needed from the Pub – without all of this support, the picnic could not have been held; and,
- Susan Pinkerton, Susan Block, Raiford Gaffney, Megan Courtney and Jeffrey Workman for their excellent work in keeping things moving during Paul's vacation.

Human Resource Officer's Report

September 20, 2009

Baxter House Restructuring Job Descriptions depicting the proposed realignment of responsibilities are in the final review process.

Diocesan Council (**Not** for public discussion until an announcement is made by the Council):

*2010 Compensation Guidelines for Clergy and Lay Staff will remain at 2009 levels with special consideration **for enhanced compensation** given to those whose compensation falls below these guidelines. (There will no COLA adjustment).*

At the General Convention, two items of note with budgetary ramifications for the parish:

Effective January 1, 2013, a mandatory Lay Employee Pension System will be implemented for those working 1500 hours/year and more. If a defined benefit plan is selected by St. Mark's for its lay employees, a mandatory 9% of pay contribution will be made by the parish to the Church Pension Group. If a defined contribution plan is selected instead, the parish would make a 5% contribution and match at least 4% for any employee contributions to the plan.

Secondly, a Universal Denominational Health Plan will be implemented for the entire Episcopal Church. Multiple plan options will be made available. (As they say, details to follow, hopefully by the October Vestry meeting). The effective date is also January 1, 2013. Cost-sharing options will be introduced as well and plans offered must be equal for both clergy and staff.

Respectfully submitted,

Ed Cousins, HR Officer

September 17, 2009

To: The Vestry

From: Kenn

Subj: Opportunity to Become a "Teaching Congregation"

This is a background memo for our meeting on Sunday, September 20. Please read in preparation for our discussion and decision as to whether we should participate in this project. To do so will require us to submit a proposal by October 7, thus requiring us to make a decision at this meeting. You will recall receiving information about this project in August when I invited any vestry member who wished to do so to join Susan P and me in a meeting about it at St. Luke's Bethesda.

In July, Paul was invited to attend, along with a lay leader, a meeting at the Diocesan offices to learn about an opportunity to participate in a project to better prepare seminary graduates to become parish priests. As neither he nor Susan was available, I attended as our representative. I was joined at the follow-up meeting in August by Susan and Vicki who responded affirmatively to my invitation to the Vestry.

The basic idea of the proposed project is to identify six congregations – ideally 2 each in Virginia, DC and Maryland – that are willing to become "teaching congregations" by accepting third year seminary students who would spend 24 hours per week in the parish during their third year (still taking two courses per semester at VTS) and then would work full-time in the parish the following year. Because the students will need to modify their normal class schedule to free up time in their third year, the first placements would not occur until 2011 even though students would be recruited into the program this fall and would be assigned to a participating parish during this school year. As a result, they need to get the six parishes lined up as soon as they can.

"Teaching congregations" would assume responsibility for preparing a person to move into parish ministry. They envision a structured process which would include a rota of assignments related to the various ministries of the church with significant mentoring by the rector, other clergy, lay leaders and the parish as a whole. The six participants also would work together as a mutually-supportive peer group. The rector would serve as the day-to-day supervisor for the participant.

The folks from Christ Church Alexandria who have been doing a version of this program and who are leading development of this new effort, articulated what they think a parish needs in order to be part of this:

- A passion for the training of future priests, for making a contribution to theological education;
- A belief that it has the capacity for mentoring;
- A breadth of ministry for participants to explore;
- A rich environment for personal development;
- An ability to commit the time to do the work.

A proposal was submitted in August to the Lilly Endowment in Indianapolis, after significant consultation with staff there, requesting at least 50% of the estimated 4-year, \$2.5 million total budget required for the project. Additional fund-raising will be undertaken once approval from Lilly is in hand.

Here are details relevant to our consideration.

- Although participating parishes will be chosen now, we would not see our first participating seminary student until the summer of 2011, at the conclusion of his/her second year of study. In the next two years, we would be part of the “board” overseeing the project and completing curriculum planning, etc.
- During the student’s third year, he/she would work with us around 24 hours a week. The cost to us would be the same as what we now pay VTS for a seminarian, about \$2,400 a year.
- The following year, after graduation and presumably ordination, he/she would work with us full-time. Salary and benefits for that year would be paid by the project budget, not by us.
- Our commitment would be to have three people resident with us over four years beginning in summer 2011:
 - 2011-2012 – 3rd year student
 - 2012-2013 – Post-graduate and new 3rd year student
 - 2013-2014 – Post-graduate and new 3rd year student
 - 2014-2015 – Post-graduate
- Our total out of pocket commitment of cash would be the same as it now is for our seminarian.

The primary commitment we must make is of the time of Paul, Susan, other staff and lay leaders to provide mentoring for participants as they move through their assignments with us. Clearly, this is a major commitment, not one to be taken lightly.

After discussion among ourselves, Susan, Vicki and I agreed that the final decision as to whether to bring this to the Vestry should rest with Paul since he would be in the lead role for the project.

In my discussion with Paul, we recognized that this kind of mentoring fits very closely with Paul’s interests and that it is consistent with our efforts to support clergy development through our engagement with our seminarians and with the support we offer to our own clergy, staff and lay leaders through our advisory committees.

Thus, we agreed to bring this to the Vestry with a positive recommendation that the Vestry approve our continued engagement with the project and that we apply for consideration as one of the participating parishes.

That is the decision we are asking the Vestry to make on Sunday.

Vestry Liaison Reports September 2009

PARISH LIFE

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

Accomplishments

- Participated in Parish Picnic distributing a Parish Life Calendar
- Parish Life Calendar also posted on Yahoo Group
- Coordinated Dinner for Same Sex Marriage Discussion on September 16th

Upcoming Events

- Monday, September 14- Literary Lions Reading Group, Penniman Room at Baxter House at 7:30 p.m
- Saturday, September 19- Third Ager's Fall Potluck, Estate Planning, Parish Hall, 11:00-2:00
- Sunday, September 20 – Young Adults Potluck in Baxter House, 6:00 pm
- Monday, October 5- Literary Lions Reading Group, Penniman Room at Baxter House at 7:30 p.m
- Friday, October 16- Film Club showing of "An Ideal Husband" at the Yanish's Home
- Friday, October 23-Wine, Women, and Cheese Social, Marlane Liddell and Greg Gay's home 6-8 pm
- Sunday, October 25- 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

- The September 13 worship service got the school year off to a strong start with the recognition of more than 90 Christian Ed leaders: 40 teachers of adults, 25 teachers of children, 25 administrative staff, and four Co-Directors, two of whom – Heather Powers and Don Lipscomb – were the day's preachers. It was also the first day of Sunday School.
- The 2009-2010 catalog is in print and posted online, and reflects the Co-Directors' dedication to soliciting parishioners' input and using it to craft a diverse and interesting selection of adult classes for the lowest cost.

- An October 3 workshop featuring Dr. James Gordon, a long-time leading voice in integrative medicine, is an example of moving beyond traditional CE offerings as well as a way to bring the wider community to St. Mark's.
- The Rector's Reception on September 20 will offer newcomers and those who have not taken LCF a chance to meet the year's LCF teachers and receive Paul's invitation and encouragement to participate in the Gateway classes. Last year's reception boasted attendance of 45 newcomers and led to healthy LCF classes for both spring and fall.
- A significant CE change for 2009-10 is the pilot expansion of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd classes up to age 12; veterans Nora Rumpf, Terri Trissell and David Trissell are teaching the new class. The success of this Catechesis III expansion will be monitored as the decision to make the change permanent is under consideration.
- Catechesis is feeling an especially pointed loss from long-time teacher Evelyn Sinclair's death. Teaching positions were shuffled to fill the void.
- Finally, a concern being discussed is preparation for the flu season's impact on Sunday School. The Co-Directors will create a plan subsequent to a September 15 meeting with

Paul.

OUTREACH

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

Since we haven't had our first meeting yet (it's scheduled for Sept 30 in the Parish Hall) it's a pretty short report with just some highlights of what has happened over the summer. We should have more to report next month.

- On Aug 9th a group of men, women, and kids of all ages gathered to help make dolls for Rag Dolls 2 Love. Rag Dolls 2 Love is a non-profit organization that, through volunteers, creates and distributes soft cloth dolls to children who are at risk for becoming emotionally damaged due to war, natural disaster, or serious illness. We made about 50 dolls and we are currently working with Worship to schedule a date in October to bless the dolls before sending them to RD2L who sends them on to the needed areas. The sewing day was a big success and we will definitely have more sewing/ craft projects in the future.
- Our ongoing projects of Grate Patrol, canned goods for Samaritan Ministry and Soup Kitchen are all going well. In fact, Soup Kitchen got a record 34 casseroles this past Sunday plus five casserole dishes of leftovers from Pub Lunch!
- Coming up we'll start preparing for the Thanksgiving and Christmas specific projects including CHGM thanksgiving baskets and The Holiday Project. The CHGM baskets will be highlighted in an October Mission Moment. We will also start working with Worship to finalize plans for Outreach Sunday on January 31st. This Sunday will serve not only as a day to recognize the outreach board and the outreach done by St. Mark's but also as a kick off for the Mite box project which will run throughout the Lenten season.
- The RD2L dedication will be on October 4 and the CHGM mission moment will be on November 8.

WORSHIP

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

The Worship Planning Team met on Sept 8th in the Parish Hall.

Administration of Communion during the H1N1 Flu Season

- We distributed a letter from the Archbishop of Canterbury encouraging congregations to take precautions such as eliminating wine served in the common chalice and using intinction by the clergy only instead.
- Discussion from the altar guild members in attendance centered around their concern that the grape juice we use could be a definite source of germs for our kids and other who partake of grape juice since it doesn't kill germs as wine does.

- A decision was made to keep our practices the same for the current time – and re-train lay servers to use the purificators EACH time the cup is passed, and to ensure they use the hand sanitizer on the altar before serving the wine / grape juice to parishioners.
- We are also going to encourage ANY parishioner who doesn't feel well to stay home on Sunday.

Other Items of Discussion and Action

- We also reviewed the upcoming sermon of Fred Taylor on Sept 27th and a discussion was started on how to incorporate the Jewish high holy days into our services.
- A decision was made to include a scene from the St Mark's Players production of "The Importance of Being Earnest" which will be directed by Rick Hayes.
- Susan Pinkerton and Janice Gregory concluded the meeting with a wonderful discussion of their upcoming service on October 25th, the focus being on Honduran Liturgy and Stewardship.

ARTS

Rick Hayes – Pillar Chair
 Kristen Hartke – Vestry Liaison

After a quiet summer, the various arts groups at St. Mark's are just getting into the fall arts season.

- Classes begin this month in the Dance, Yoga and Music studios.
- The St. Mark's Players held auditions on September 13-14 for their fall production of "The Importance of Being Earnest, which will run in the Nave October 23-November 7.
- The Players also have refurbished their website: www.stmarksplayers.org.

YOUTH MINISTRY

Megan Courtney – Director
 Joe Calizo – Vestry Liaison

Megan Courtney started off in her position as Director of Youth Ministries on August 3rd, and has been off to a quick start. In addition to learning the ropes at Baxter House, she has also been spending time with members of the community who have assisted with the youth program in the past. Many of these folks are part of the Youth Ministry Board, a group designed by Sian Jones to primarily assist Megan in implementing and troubleshooting the various aspects of the youth program.

Here are September events that have been part of the youth program:

September 6 th	Parish Picnic: (Games and activities for the kids)
September 12 th	Diocesan High-School Dance
September 20 th	Welcome Back Brunch (The purpose of this event is to
recruit volunteers	to assist with the youth program.)
Sept. 25 th -27 th	High School Retreat (Rehoboth, leaders in addition to Megan will be Terry Adlhock, Ben Schaibly, and Kristen Keating)

Other upcoming events are the Middle-School Retreat (October 17th or 24th) and I am working with Megan to have the Youth Ministry Board meet in the next few weeks.

STEWARDSHIP TEAM

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

The Stewardship Committee is: Kenn Allen, Paul Abernathy, Susan Pinkerton, Katherine Loevinger, Greg Niblett, John Sedgewick, Kathryn Powers, Josie Jordan, Peter Sherer, George Meng, Cecilia Monahan.

The committee, a “cabinet” of parish leaders, has met three times: on July 14, July 29 and September 1. There was also a mini-meeting of just Kenn and Josie in August.

The meeting on 14 July was chiefly a soup-fueled brainstorming session, led by Kenn Allen. The group grappled with such questions as: whether to make this a year-round effort; how best to ask for funds in a difficult year; on what timetable the money generally comes to us; and, most importantly, *is this giving of treasure life-giving to me or to others?* balancing vision and reality.

Josie Jordan recapped how previously she had planned Canvass events, scheduling sermons, a large-scale event, and “Why I Give” statements from members, a mass mailing, and pledge forms on each bulletin. The physical nuts and bolts of the process.

Paul, Susan, John and Kenn were given the assignment to convert our discussion into a draft plan and timetable in advance of the next meeting.

At that next meeting, on 29 July and with more delicious soup, Kenn shared the draft Stewardship Campaign Plan and Calendar, with a theme of “For Us, For Others.” The major message was the need to regain the financial position we lost last year, to bring us back to “core capacity”. A bold goal increase of 12% would enable us to restore the Diocesan pledge, support new initiatives, and provide staff with COLAs.

The September 1 meeting, with cookies but, alas, no soup, picked up the previous discussion of the size of the proposed goal increase. There was lively debate on the matter, including the issue of surviving versus flourishing, and ultimately a compromise goal increase of 8% was agreed upon.

Kenn handed out a final plan and calendar for the canvass months of September through November, spelling out the actions and responsible parties. Josie distributed, and we discussed, her detailed outline and calendar for the Canvass (Agape) dinners, which are to be held throughout the weekends of October 16 and October 23.

The official kick-off for the Stewardship Campaign is Sunday, September 20, with a sermon by Paul.