

Minutes of the Vestry

St. Mark's Church, Capitol Hill
February 21, 2010
Adams Room

Present:

Clergy:	Paul Roberts Abernathy, Rector Susan Beth Pinkerton, Assistant Rector
Wardens:	Kenn Allen, Senior Warden John Sedgewick, Junior Warden
Vestry:	Kristen Hartke, Doris Burton, Christine Farrell, Mary Lee Watts, Joe Calizo, Susan Thompson-Hoffman, Ed Corr, Cecilia Monahan, and Vicki Street
Treasurer:	Kathryn Powers
Register:	Greg Niblett
Legal Counsel:	Michael Knipe
Human Resources Officer:	Ed Cousins has resigned as Human Resources Officer for health reasons.

There were no absent members.

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 February 21, 2010 in the Adams Room in the Undercroft of the St. Mark's Church.
2. Doris Burton offered an opening prayer.
3. **Update from Governance Task Force – Bill Jordan and Heather Burneson**

Bill Jordan and Heather Burneson attended the Vestry meeting as co-chairs of the governance task force.

They announced that the following members of the task force had been appointed and also provided a timetable of activities to the Vestry as follows:

Governance Task Force Members: Don Ellison, Grady Hedgespeth, Ozgur Ozkan, Susan Sedgewick, Jim Shelar, Vicki Street, John Terry, M.L. Wagner, and David Willson

Governance Task Force Proposed Timeline

September – October 2009 – Recruit co-chair; Vestry approval of Committee Charter

October – November 2009 – Recruit members

December 09 – January 2010 – Formulate detailed work plan and schedule

February – May 2010 – Information gathering

May 2010 – Parish meeting to open process to everyone for comments/questions

May – August 2010 – Parish meeting for Draft Report Comments

October 2010 – Report Completed; Draft to Vestry

Heather and Bill explained that the Governance Task Force has been charged with revisiting and reviewing St. Mark's overall parish governance structure and functioning.

The co-chairs outlined a series of issues that were neither inclusive nor exhaustive of what might need to be addressed. Upon research and review the committee will discern recommendations for change and improvement or conclude that current arrangements are appropriate and working as well as can be expected given the nature of our parish, generally, as a voluntary association and specifically, as St. Mark's.

Preliminary issues notified were:

Overarching Issue #1: The relationship among what we might term as the three “circles of leadership” – the Vestry, which serves as the policy-making body; the Pillars, which are responsible for our programs; and the “executive,” which is made up of the Rector, the Wardens, and the Parish Officers. Possible questions to be addressed are:

- Are the roles of each clearly understood and articulated? Can someone new coming into one of those roles reasonably well understand the expectations?
- How do/should they relate to one another, particularly in terms of oversight, accountability and authority? What are the boundaries of authority in each case?
- How do/should they intersect so as to integrate their respective labors and support and sustain each other and, hence, the parish community as a whole?

- What is/should be the proper relationship of the staff to these circles of leadership?
What is/should be the leadership role of staff?

Overarching Issue #2: What is St. Mark's operative definition of shared (joint, mutual, or collaborative) ministry? Is it important for us to come to a consensus understanding and operationalize it? If so, how might we do that?

Overarching Issue #3: In regard to our governing documents (i.e., by-laws and the existing charters for various aspects of parish life), are they up to date? Are they observed? That is, to what extent have we, in the natural course of life, strayed from the "letter of the law" to "the spirit"? Does that matter? Should we bring our governing documents into conformity with practice or should we revisit practice in light of them? To what extent do they need to be reviewed and renewed and who should undertake that task? Where do we not have charters or other governing document that we should have?

Other issues that may arise in the course of the governance task force work might be:

- The make-up of the Vestry, Wardens, and Parish Officers. Is it what it should be? Are the terms, lengths and limits appropriate? Should the make-up in any way, other than how it now does, relate to the Pillars?
- The appointment of Pillar chairs. How does it happen? Are there established processes in place? Are they the same? Close enough? Does it matter? Are they observed? Are they known? Do they work effectively? How can they be improved?
- The oaths of office taken by Vestry, Wardens, and Parish Officers. Are they appropriate? Do we understand them and how they relate to the diocese and larger church? Do we abide by them?
- Is our governance structure and functioning appropriately transparent to the parish? How can it be made more so?
- Do we have in place appropriate processes for leadership development? For supporting and sustaining leaders?

The work of the task force will be one of research, analysis and recommendation, including consultation with current and former leaders and with the wider parish community.

4. Christian Education Pillar Discussion – Brock Hansen, Nadine Hathaway, Don Lipscomb and Heather Powers.

The pillar representatives reported on the following accomplishments and challenges facing Christian Education. Brock Hanson and Heather Powers represented the Sunday school portion of the leadership and Don Lipscomb and Nadine Hathaway represented the adult education portion of the leadership.

Accomplishments:

- Launched the Christian Education Season September 2009 with a Parish wide challenge to listen to one another regarding hopes, desires and expectations of the program through an open forum.

- Successfully launched three LCF Classes in a row. The spring 2010 class did not launch due to the snowstorm and other factors which gave more credence and impetus for a parish-wide discussion of the CE program.
- Launched two well attended Rector's Receptions in September 2009 and January 2010 (second year in a row) for newcomers and potential LCF participants.
- The Christian Ed weekend in January 2010 was led by a creative and energetic content team: Louise Walsh, Alvin Moseberry and Vera Oye Yaa Anna.
- Christian Education worked with the Arts Pillar and Outreach Pillar (Race and Reconciliation Chair) to offer "For Tomorrow" a performance of Hilda Stern Cohen's poems scheduled for March 27th.
- Conducted evaluation of Sunday School, providing classes for 110 children and youth, acquired curriculum resources to support teachers, and launched 2-year pilot program of Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Level III for 4th and 5th grade.

Children and Youth Program

- A large number of children are enrolled in Youth Programs, particularly 4th and 5th grade and especially Junior High which has 22 students currently enrolled. A large junior high class is expected for the next two years. Space and teachers will be issues; two or more classes may be needed.
- New training and materials are in place for the catechesis program under the youth program. In addition, the experimenting with the "Living Catechesis Three" curriculums, the Christian Ed leaders continue to look for meaningful ways that St. Mark's functional education tradition can be incorporated into the Sunday School program for junior and senior high school students.
- Youth Confirmation Class has been held, with teenagers confirmed at the Cathedral.
- Meetings with the Youth Director are more consistent and better coordinated.

Adult Program

- Core Gateway Classes have gone well.
- Fall LCF Class was very well received.
- CE is successfully experimenting with classes with guest leaders and in-town weekends.
- Baptism classes continue to be a strong part of our program.
- The "What's An Episcopalian" continues successfully as does "Introduction to St. Mark's" class.
- CE is continually seeking new offerings.

What's coming up that Vestry should be aware of?

Dates for dinner discussions are March 12-14 and March 19-21 and are being organized by Betty Foster and Pete Eveleth.

- These dinners are Parish-wide conversations focusing on the future of Christian Education.
- The next group of Christian Ed co-directors need to be selected; Woody Osborne and Bruce Sherman are heading the effort.

What issues, challenges, are the pillar facing?

(where can the Vestry help)

- Space constraints continue to be a problem.
- Training – teachers and leaders need to be better trained.
- We need to better assess current member needs and desires.
- We need to better understand the period of transition that Christian Education seems to be navigating as the church membership and priorities change.
- Budgeting constraints may constrict what we can do in terms of on-going training for Catechesis teachers and other activities.

5. Officer Reports

- a) Register – The Register presented the minutes of the January 24 meeting which were accepted and approved without changes.
- b) The Treasurer had previously sent out the treasurer’s report and there was little discussion except to note that cash flow was in a reasonably good place.
- c) HR Officer Report – The Rector and Senior Warden reported that Ed Cousins had resigned as HR Officer due to health reasons and that they were currently considering candidates to replace him.
- d) Junior Warden’s Report – The Junior Warden reported that various maintenance issues had been recently attended to in terms of repairs. A brief discussion was held on St. Mark’s snow removal policy. The Junior Warden and Ed Corr reported that drawings were in process for the shower project and St. Mark’s would shortly move forward with applying for a permit for the construction.
- e) Senior Warden’s Report – The Senior Warden did not give a formal report but chose to focus his time on the following agenda item #6 and #7.

6. 2009 Report of Episcopal Congregations and Missions

The Rector had to depart during the Christian Education presentation. In his absence, the Senior Warden presented St. Mark’s draft submission for the 2009 Report of Episcopal Congregations and Missions. As there were a few questions about the report that could not be answered in the Rector’s absence, the approval of the report was tabled with plans to resume the discussion by e-mail and pass a motion to approve the report by electronic vote. [The report was subsequently passed by electronic vote on February 25].

7. Update on Capital Campaign discernment process.

The Senior Warden reported that the discernment process was moving forward and that the original building committee had evolved to four separate committees with each having a specific focus and appointed leaders as follows:

- a) A Building Task Force led by Ed Corr which will focus on issues related to the physical plant, architectural designs, and various renovation and expansion options.
- b) A communications team led by Michael Townsend which will seek to keep the church community informed about progress and activities related to a discernment process that might lead to a capital campaign.
- c) Jane Rutherford will lead a committee focusing on gathering input from community stakeholders.
- d) Doris Burton will focus on a “Dream Catching” committee which will solicit ideas from St. Mark’s internal community of stakeholders about what we need to do with our physical structure to fulfill our mission as we move into the future.

The chairs of these four groups will serve on a steering committee with the Rector, Senior Warden, and Junior Warden.

The four committees will be announced at the annual meeting and time will be focused on the discernment process at Shrine Mont with hopes for some recommendations by June for the Vestry.

8. Update on Annual Meeting Preparations and Slate of Candidates.

Doris Burton, Kristen Hartke, and Christine Farrell reported that preparations were going well for the annual meeting on March 6. Five candidates had obtained enough signatures to be presented to the parish for nomination for the next three-year Vestry term: Michael Knipe, Rick Hayes, Jim Steed, Marilu Sherer, and Bill Dickinson. Rick Rutherford’s name would be placed in nomination as diocesan delegate.

The committee announced that an annual report would be published and distributed.

9. What’s New? What Needs Attention? What’s Working? Who Needs Acknowledgment?

The following items were discussed.

- a) How is the membership committee doing and is this effort getting launched well?
- b) There was no update on the new DC policy on parking meter enforcement.
- c) New parish life leaders are still being recruited.
- d) Need to improve our nametag system in terms of location – the hanging ones keep disappearing.
- e) Policy and ministry issues relating to homeless individuals sleeping overnight in the undercroft without permission.

10. A motion was made, seconded, and passed to adjourn.

11. Vicki Street offered a closing prayer and reflection.

Respectfully submitted.

Gregory R. Niblett, Former Register by
Raiford Gaffney, Current Register