

Vestry Minutes (updated draft, August 29)

R.E. Lee Memorial Episcopal Church

August 15, 2016

The regular meeting of the Vestry of R.E. Lee Memorial Episcopal Church was held on Monday, August 15, 2016 at 5:00 p.m. in the Parish Hall of the church.

Present: Vestry Members: George Brooke, The Rev. Tom Crittenden, Susan Cross, Doug Cumming, Carole Elmore, Keith Gibson, Julia Grossman, Elizabeth Knapp, Susan Lawrence, Holt Merchant, Grigg Mullen (Junior Warden), Woody Sadler (Senior Warden), Don Whittington, Absent: Daniel Wubah; Visitors: Tom Gosse, Ann Nay, Steve Shultis and Joe Simcoe.

Opening: Tom noted current prayer concerns and opened the meeting with the prayer written by the Reference Team/Discovery and Discernment Committee (text is provided below). The team has encouraged the prayer's use at Vestry, committee meetings, and regular meetings of church groups.

"Almighty and everliving God, source of all wisdom and understanding, be present with us as we seek to renew the mission of your Church as Christ's mission, working through us in all that we do. Teach us to seek first your wisdom and glory. Guide us to perceive what is your will, and grant us both the courage to pursue it and the grace to accomplish it; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

Tom also reported details of the planned celebration of Marc Nikkel, on Sunday, Sept. 4th. David Cox will be the celebrant, and Susan Meade will preach. The Rev. James Baak Nhial from South Sudan will present a forum on work there.

Approval of June minutes: June minutes were approved, pending corrections noted at the meeting. A corrected version will be distributed to Vestry members.

Capital Campaign: Woody provided an update on the capital campaign (handout attached). Two Campaign Committee positions still needed are chair and coordinator of callers. The latter individual would receive from Vestry members and others suggested names of parishioner who would make calls to parishioners about campaign contributions. From this list of potential callers, campaign leaders will create a master list of selected callers. The coordinator will invite these individuals and later match them with parishioners to call, based on interests. The goal of the calls will be to obtain a pledge or commitment to pledge, thus serving as the meat of the campaign. Bob Glidden and Farris Hotchkiss have considerable experience in fundraising, and have agreed to train these leaders. His current responsibility as chair of the Kendal campaign prevents him from a more active role in our campaign. Doug pointed out that the Vestry needs to find a campaign leader who will coordinate the processes outlined in Woody's handout.

Woody further reported that the case statement has been completed, the brochure is in draft form, and the pledge envelope is being designed. Doug is working on mini articles that will be sent out every other week via email, highlighting work done in the parish in the past and how we can move forward. Sharon is helping to develop the website, and will coordinate with Doug on the history of mission work in our parish, e.g. Meals on Wheels and Yellow Brick Road. Pictures and drawings of projects will be posted on the website. Tom Gosse will serve as Treasurer, coordinating funds that arrive. Cindy Irby, our financial secretary, will be paid additional wages to manage campaign funds, and to ensure the confidentiality of pledges.

In terms of the time frame of the campaign, Woody drew attention to this handout, noting that it will not conflict with the annual campaign. The Rector added that the annual pledge drive will be earlier this year, concluding in mid-October.

Committee Reports:

Finance Committee: Don reported that the Finance Committee met on August 9 and noted the following: The Revenue and Expense reports for June and July show expenses greater than revenues. Total pledge support is \$21,051.20 below projections for this period, although Cindy Irby explained that pledge payments always drop during the summer months yet should rebound in the fall.

Also discussed at the August 9 meeting were the Parish House renovations and the capital campaign. Tom Gosse provided an overview of the historic tax credit and referenced the Letter of Engagement to be signed with the law firm in order to move forward. Although a quorum was not present, members present recommended Vestry approval to allocate \$4500 for legal fees. It was also noted that the campaign committee will need to come together in order to move forward with the campaign.

Historic Tax Credit Letter of Engagement: Tom Gosse followed up on Don's report of the Finance Committee recommendation for Vestry approval of the Letter of Engagement with the Gentry Locke firm. Tom clarified that the signature would be the first of two parts, committing the parish to use the firm's services. At the cost of \$4500, Part I would cover the firm's review of the project feasibility and time for presentations. Part II, would allow the firm to do the work for the tax credit, with a cap of \$50,000 for the cost. However, this cap does not include out-of-pocket expenses, CPA and auditing costs. Expenses would be deducted from the tax credit received, thus not a direct expense to the parish. The auditing requirement consists of verifying qualifying restoration and improvement of historical structures. The architect and legal counsel will ensure that what we design and execute will satisfy audit requirements. Responding to Carole's question about the cost and gains, Tom stated that if we spend \$2 million in historical renovation, of which \$1.2 million is eligible for the credit, then we would receive \$200,000. If we do not spend as much as \$1.2 million, we should not invest in the tax credit process. He added that the tricky part is not knowing whether or not we can raise \$2 million until after we have made the commitment. Woody commented that perhaps other projects, such as the brass restoration, can be included in the total amount spent. Holt asked if a \$2 million project is large enough to generate interest in selling the credit. Tom stated that he has been told that it is. **Doug's motion for the Senior Warden to sign the Letter of Engagement with Gentry Locke was seconded and passed unanimously.**

Construction: Grigg reported progress on the elevator. Drywall has been completed, and the floor for the shaft will begin a week from today. There will be some outside cutting for elevator access on the back side of the building, but the stones removed will be saved for work in other areas.

Outreach: Susan Cross reported the Refugee Working Group's update that the family in Lexington has moved family into apartment and that there is no interest in bringing in a second family until this one is settled in. She further reported that Venture Crew, the Boy Scout program that was formerly for post-Eagle Scout members, now accepts teenage women and is starting here. College men and women who were active in Scouts are invited to participate. Those interested should contact the Scoutmaster of Troop 29 Also included in Susan's report were committee approval of the Mission Emergency Fund, and update that Bishop Ben and his wife are returning to Uganda to continue their mission work there.

Crisis Relief Committee: Steve Shultis observed that work on Martha Elmore's house in West Virginia is the fruit of the Christian Outreach Committee's efforts to generate corporate service in our parish. The Crisis Relief Committee: seeks to coordinate support within the parish for external short-term crises, but also to look for local service projects. Steve reported that Martha's house was trashed in the June floods and that parish volunteers have spent about 300 hours restoring four rooms. Donations from parishioners totaling \$2000 have been used to purchase appliances for the house. Financial support for appliances \$2000 donated by parishioners. Steve noted that this project is an example of a "hand up, not hand out", with Martha participating in the work. In addition to the meaningful relationship the working group has developed with Martha, our parish volunteers have teamed up with members of Trinity Methodist Church in Lexington, sharing rides, work, and meals. Steve concluded with the news that Jerry Nay and Father Sacs, Rector at St. Thomas Episcopal Church in White Sulphur Springs, are retrofitting two trailers with tools for future crisis relief projects. The Rector noted that one of the trailers will soon be transported to Lexington for parishioners to see.

Property Committee (report attached)

Program Director (report attached)

Old Business;

Request to Trustees for Gadsden Funds: Woody referred to his drafted letter to the Trustees (attached) requesting approval for Gadsden funding of 1) \$11,000 for the brass restoration, earmarked by the Gadsden Committee in 2015, pending matching funds, and 2) 25% of Gadsden annual income in 2016 for the elevator construction. Items to be restored include the pulpit, lectern, altar rail, and the altar cross. The preservative is guaranteed to last one hundred years, although the guarantee will be invalidated if the items are later polished. Simple wiping of the brass is acceptable, but apparently the traditional polish we have been using degrades brass. The \$22,000 estimate for the work was made two years ago, but since matching funds were not secured until this year, the company is preparing an updated estimate. In addition, Woody noted that he plans to meet with representatives of the Sons of Confederate Veterans. The organization has expressed interest in supporting the brass restoration, based on awareness that most of the figures in the project were given in memory of Confederate officers. Vestry members noted that the brass restoration project might be included in calculating the total spent for the projects eligible for the historic tax credit. **The Vestry unanimously approved the motion to send Woody's letter to the Trustees.**

New Business:

Reference Team: Keith Gibson distributed a handout (attached) describing the Purpose, Process, and Relational Covenant of what has been called the Reference Team, now also called the Discovery and Discernment Committee. In addition to Keith, committee members are Anne Hansen, Tammi Hellwig, Greg Lemmer, Ann Nay and Steve Shultis. Keith stated that the preparation process led by consultants James Isaacs and Barbara Robbins has been rewarding, engaging, and revealing. Keith defined discernment as being able to distinguish with spiritual wisdom God's guidance in what the committee discovers. He noted that the committee has established a Relational Covenant to be heard in a non-threatening way, listen and come to consensus; The committee's purpose is to listen deeply to the congregation to identify what is behind us, and is calling to our future, and letting the process guide us to discover the mission of our church. The process will include creating questions and taking them to the congregation in group gatherings of fifteen to twenty participants for discussion in a non-threatening safe environment. Committee members will moderate meetings and receive training on how to facilitate that experience. The committee will compile in a report to the Vestry themes and larger issues that emerge from the gatherings. These will inform and define what we see as the mission of our church going forward. Sign-up sheets for the gatherings taking place the last week in

September will be available on September 11th. The gatherings may include established groups, e.g. choir and Vestry, and will attempt to incorporate the existing church calendar. It is anticipated that the gatherings will last approximately two hours. Parishioners will also have the option of meeting individually with members of the Reference Team or the consultants. Keith observed that conversations in a group setting often evolve in unexpected directions, so encouraged participation in this format. Doug responded that he had been personally moved by Keith's report, and stressed the importance of listening. Doug recalled that he and Susan Lawrence had earlier this year divided a list of parishioners to call, giving them an opportunity to be heard. He and Susan expressed how happy these parishioners were with this reaching out, and that those they called had much to say. Keith emphasized the importance of openness to anything that is revealed from the discernment meetings. Grigg endorsed the calm, reasoned, careful process that Keith had described, and encouraged allowing time for it to develop. **The Vestry unanimously offered its vote of confidence and appreciation for the Reference Team's work.**

Comments by the Wardens: None

Comments by the Rector: Tom reported interest in the icon prominently displayed at the Jonathan Daniels celebration this past Sunday, and suggested hanging it on the blank wall between the columbarium units at the back of the church. Information about the figures depicted in the icon is provided on the back of the icon and can be used to create a pamphlet with information about figures depicted in the icon. Our copy of the icon is a copy of the original that is located at Episcopal Theological School, the seminary Jonathan Daniels attended in Cambridge. George pointed out that there are individuals in our community who actually knew Daniels, including some who were in his class at VMI. This is important in terms of making the point that Daniels is not just a historic figure from the distant past.

Tom concluded by applauding the new energy in the Christian Outreach Committee, commending its effective and focused outreach efforts since the recent restructuring.

Closing prayer: Keith offered the closing prayer that was also the opening prayer.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 6:30.

Next meeting: September 19, 2016; 5:00

Respectfully submitted,
Anna Crockett