

R.E. Lee Memorial Episcopal Church
Vestry Retreat – January 13 & 14, 2017

MINUTES

The 2017 vestry retreat was held at The Belfry with the following in attendance:

Tom Crittenden (Rector), Woody Sadler (Sr. Warden for 2016– present by skype), Grigg Mullen (Jr. Warden for 2016), Susan Cross, Don Whittington, Susan Lawrence, Doug Cumming, Catherine Marcus, Keith Gibson, with the newly elected members, Buster Lewis, Lynn Dent, Ann Hansen, and Merce Brooke. In addition, Sharon Massie (Program Director) and Mo Littlefield (Clerk).

Arrival: All in attendance arrived for dinner at 6:30 p.m., followed by the opening of the Vestry Meeting at 7:30 p.m.

Welcome & Approval of Minutes: The Rector welcomed all and called for action on the minutes of the Vestry meeting held on December 19, 2016. With no corrections or additions offered, the Rector announced that the minutes are approved as distributed by e-mail with accolades of appreciation to Anna Crockett, volunteer Clerk of the Vestry for 2016, with additional appreciation to Mo Littlefield for volunteering to be the Vestry Clerk for 2017 (to be approved by the Vestry).

Housekeeping: The Rector announced that the Belfry is provided to the church at no cost, and thanked all vestry members for providing potluck breakfasts, lunches and dinner meals, in addition to his providing instructions on dining, sleeping arrangements and cleanup duties at the conclusion of the retreat.

Opening Devotion: The Rector offered a moment of prayer at the opening of the business session, with Sharon leading A Prayer For Renewal.

Distribution of Work Booklet: The Rector distributed workbooks to each of the participants, calling attention to the listing of the Vestry members and their e-mail addresses and phone numbers. (Buster offered his cell phone number to be added to the listing).

Financial Reports: Considerable discussion was given to the Income and Expense Statement, the Balance Sheet, the Funds Report and the approved budget for 2017. The Rector announced that when all pledges for 2016 have been received,

income for this past year should end up as projected with the remote possibility of a slight surplus. He pointed out that at the end of the year any surplus is added to the “Vestry Designated Funds” account, now more properly labeled “Accrual For Capital Projects,” as approved by the Vestry. Additional questions ranged from seeking clarity about the use of funds not spent in various categories in 2016 and not being available for the same categories for 2017. **(General Accounting Principles [GAP] dictate that charitable entities, such as churches, are instructed to accrue any surpluses at the end the accounting year into a specific account whereby the authority of the entity may re-designate and redistribute those funds in the future. [Added by the Clerk]).** Grigg noted that this process permits the church to have a “rainy day” fund for emergencies and other unexpected needs. Further discussion was given to budget cuts in certain activities for 2017, potential year-end deficit, questions about endowed funds, and budget commitment to the Capital campaign. Additional questions were raised concerning the Gadsden grant to the capital campaign, the Rectory Fund, the restricted endowments, and the title and use of various funds, among numerous other financially related issues. The discussion concluded with **Catherine and Merce proposed, supported by common consent of the rest of the Vestry, that it would be very helpful to the have the treasurer, the financial secretary and the chair of the Finance Committee, to meet with the Vestry at a special meeting to explain in considerable detail the complete financial statements in addition to addressing other questions related to the church’s financial posture. The Rector agreed to call such a meeting for the purpose of addressing this request in the format of a financial seminar, with the time and date to be announced.**

The Gadsden Trust: The aforementioned financial discussion also included specific questions pertaining to the history of the Gadsden Trust, the role of the Gadsden Committee and the Vestry and Trustees relative to the trust, whereupon the Rector provided the background of the trust and the guidelines that govern it. He pointed out that the annual draw on the trust will be considerably less than in the past, given that the conditions of the trust permit only the actual cash earnings each year to be drawn upon from the Trust’s investments rather than taking both the earnings and a percentage of the growth in the total portfolio. He also pointed out that the role of the Gadsden Committee is to make annual grants

mostly for outreach purposes from the available funds provided by the trust, with the added provision that the guidelines provide for up to a maximum of twenty-five percent (25%) of available income that may be granted in a single year toward the physical property of the church, under the conditions that those funds are matched by an equal amount from other parish sources. It was noted that three members of the Gadsden Committee are appointed by the Vestry and two members by the Trustees, with the additional appointment of one sitting Trustee and one sitting Vestry member, making up a committee of seven who serve a term of three-years each. **(Note: both a listing of the Church Trustees, who are appointed by the Vestry and their terms of service, and a listing of the Gadsden Committee members [including those appointed by the Trustees and those appointed by the Vestry and their respective terms of service], are provided as attachments to these minutes).** Tom announced that for planning purposes, the Warden reported that the Gadsden Committee is seeking from the Vestry the amount of any request for a grant toward the property for 2017, **whereupon Buster moved, with second by Catherine, that 25% of the Gadsden income be granted to the Capital Campaign in accordance with the terms of the Gadsden Guidelines..**

Church Security: The Rector announced that the Church Staff had brought to his attention their concern with the church being unlocked until late in the evening, when it is eventually locked up by Sexton Connie. Frequently the Staff often are working after hours and, given that during the winter months when darkness outside sets in early, occasionally unknown visitors appear, ostensibly seeking assistance or directions. The Rector noted that, unlike other churches in the area, R. E. Lee is open to the community from early a.m. until quite late in the evening, primarily to serve several groups that traditionally meet at the church. The Vestry discussed the potential hazards, given the nature of today's society, of visitors after hours with possible ill intentions, causing loss of and/or damage to the property. Several suggestions were made to protect the Staff that work late while still keeping the facilities available in some way to legitimate groups that normally meet at the church and especially in the Parish House. Woody inquired if it was possible to lock up all the doors except the one under the bridge, whereupon the Rector announced that there is now the capacity to

lock up the entire property (both the church and Parish House) while still keeping the Red Door room in the Undercroft open but not the rest of the Undercroft. Sharon inquired if each door could be locked with a deadbolt along with installing motion sensors for those that depart the church after dark. Keith proposed that the church could benefit from a having an ad hoc committee to undertake a comprehensive overview of the safety issues of the church in as much as there is likely a liability issue at stake, whereupon Susan L. announced that the security of the church had been addressed a few years ago by an ad hoc committee that submitted a preliminary report on which Mo had served. Keith asked if that report was still available, **and Mo agreed to provide a copy of that report to each member of the Vestry with the distribution of these minutes**, and reported also that a copy was on file in the church office.

Compline: At the appointed hour of 9:30 p.m., the Rector called for a recess of the Vestry meeting until 8:45 a.m. the next day (Saturday. Jan. 14), temporarily ending the business session followed by a brief Compline service lead by Sharon.

Saturday , January 14 @ 8:45 a.m.

Morning Devotion: The Rector lead the opening session with Morning Prayer.

Business Session Continued with the Election of Officers of the Vestry.

Election Of Wardens: On behalf of the Nominating Committee, the Rector announced that although there were two candidates for Senior and Junior Warden, two had withdrawn their name from consideration, leaving one each for the two positions, **namely Woody Sadler for a second term as Senior Warden and Don Whittington for a first term as Junior Warden. By acclamation, the Vestry approved the two candidates for their respective positions.**

Election of Treasurer: The Rector announced that Michelle Hentz has submitted her resignation as Treasurer of the Church, given that she was elected to the City Council, leaving this position temporarily vacant. Mo was asked to read from the church bylaws the duties of the Treasurer. **(Note: attached to these minutes are the duties of the church treasurer.)**

Financial Secretary: The Rector also announced that Cindy Irby has resigned as Financial Secretary, given that she has accepted a full time position at W & L. Buster inquired as to what can be done to ensure the keeping of a staff person for the long haul, given that Cindy has been with us a relatively short time. Further discussion pointed to the part-time nature of the position, the amount of salary and benefits, and the realization that the budget remains tight, whereupon the Rector announced that Angie Fafatas, a qualified CPA, had been identified to take Cindy's place and is expected to report for duty later this week. Susan L. reemphasized the value of participating in a financial seminar with the presence of the church Treasurer (to be elected), the new Financial Secretary (Angie Fafatas) and the Chair of the Finance Committee, Megan Hess, to enlighten Vestry members on financial management and budget matters of the church, and given further an example whereby several parishioners had inquired of her where the funds came from to employ the consulting firm for the Discovery and Discernment process, which she was not able to answer.

Clerk Of The Vestry: The Rector announced **that Mo Littlefield had consented to serve as Clerk (Secretary w/out vote) pending approval of the Vestry, whereupon by acclamation he was so approved.** Mo announced that the bylaws of the church spell out the duties of the Clerk, as it does the duties of other officers of the Vestry and of each Vestry member. **(Note: attached to these minutes is the listing of the duties of Clerk provided by the bylaws in addition to the duties of the Rector, the Wardens, and the Treasurer and Vestry members.)**

Gadsden Committee Appointment: The Rector announced **that the Vestry is due to appoint a member of the parish to the Gadsden Committee,** and that there **are two who volunteered to be considered, Doug Cumming and Jane Brooke and Jane was selected.** Further discussion followed seeking, merely for the record, the names of the current Trustees and who appoints them including a listing of the current Gadsden Committee members that

are appointed by the Trustees, those appointed by the Vestry and including terms of service of each. **The Clerk announced that he would present that information along with the guidelines of the Gadsden Committee as an attachment to the minutes of this meeting.**

Vestry & Committee Assignments: The Rector announced that both Wardens, because of the nature of their duties, are not assigned to be liaison to the church standing committees. Other Vestry liaison committee designations follow:

-Administration and Personnel: The Rector announced that traditionally the outgoing Senior Warden serves as Chair of this committee. However, Jim Farrar, as the outgoing warden, found that his role at W & L during the search for the universities' new president and the ultimate transition of leadership demanded his full attention, leaving him no time to serve as the Chair of the Administrative and Personnel Committee for the church. Consequently, this committee did not meet during 2016, but the Rector announced that Senior Warden Sadler intends to reconstitute this Committee at the outset of this year. Consequently, **Doug Cumming has agreed to serve as the Vestry liaison to the Administration and Personnel Committee.** (To respond to questions concerning the duties of this Committee, a copy of the Committee's role is attached to these minutes.)

-Christian Education Committee: With the resignation of Holly Pickett as Chair, and Julia Grossman rotating off the Vestry, a chair for this Committee is needed, however, **Ann Hansen has agreed to serve** as its Vestry liaison.

-Christian Outreach Committee: With the resignation of Marcy Orr as Co-chair, Libby Cumming remains as Chair, **with Susan Cross serving as the Vestry liaison.**

-Finance Committee: With Megan Hess as Chair of this Committee, **both Lyn Dent and Daniel Wubah have agreed to serve as Vestry liaison for this Committee.**

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-Greening Committee: This Committee, initially inspired by Elizabeth Harralson, has been inactive in recent years. Consequently there is no Chair and currently no Vestry liaison.

-Higher Education Committee: With Elizabeth Knapp rotating off the Vestry, **Merce Brook has agreed to serve as the Vestry liaison for 2016.** The Chair of the Committee is yet to be identified.

-Stewardship Committee: With Lyn Dent rotating off this Committee, a new Chair is needed, whereupon **Keith Gibson has agreed to serve as its Vestry liaison.**

-Worship Committee: Alex Brown has relinquished the Chair of this Committee, leaving the need to identify her replacement. **Buster Lewis has agreed to serve as its Vestry liaison.**

-Memorials Committee: Carol Elmore has agreed to Chair this Committee **and Catherine Harcus has agreed to serve as Vestry liaison.**

- Property Committee: **Susan Lawrence is the current Vestry liaison for this committee** with John Dickerson and Diana Kenny currently serving as Co-chairs.

Sharon asked that the Vestry consider adding the Hospitality Committee to the Standing Committees. She proposes that the task of a Hospitality Committee would include welcoming, receptions and other occasions.

Comments from the Senior Warden: The Rector distributed a printed report entitled “The Senior Warden’s View,” highlighting four specific topics for discussion, namely **Membership, In Reach, Outreach, Worship and Property,** followed by each Vestry member reading the report and reviewing its contents. Comments ranged from the need to have a strategic plan, perhaps by reviving the Ministry Review report undertaken two years ago, to develop a wish list focused on what the church might look like five years hence, that the church patio and steps might be used as an amphitheater at lunch with mod music and to follow up on a suggestion made two years ago by Dick Rathmell to make daily contact with shut-ins and others living alone. Doug pointed out the impact that the Clothes

Closet has at Christ's Church. The Warden further suggested that it is a matter of "branding" that defines a church and its actions, recognizing that our church is much more involved in the community than most citizens realize, concluding that we need to be more than a "check writing church." Numerous other suggestions focused on enhancing the vitality of our church family especially in addressing current and future needs of the church. The Senior Warden asked that the vestry liaisons be prepared to report at each Vestry meeting on the actions and needs of the church committees to which they are assigned and to post the Rector and/or the Senior Warden if they are going to be absent from future vestry meetings. Catherine stated that the bylaws state that any member missing three consecutive meetings automatically vacates his/her membership on the Vestry. (The Rector noted that, while other parishes have similar attendance rules, he has never encountered one that actually upheld that particular provision). The Clerk suggested that it would be useful to have an ad hoc committee appointed to review church bylaws and to propose amendments where appropriate.

Sign-Up Sheet For Closing Prayers:

The Rector passed around a sign-up sheet for each Vestry member to select their preferred date of offering a closing prayer at the conclusion of each forthcoming Vestry meeting.

Capital Campaign: Discussion was given to the status of the Capital Campaign. The Rector announced that \$20,000 from Vestry Capital Funds provided seed money for legal and architectural fees to get the capital campaign rolling. He also explained the background on the unrestricted Rosa Mason bequest and announced that it provided \$280,000, which the previous Vestry approved to be allocated toward the elevator and the College Ministry Room. It was noted that the four areas of support, as illustrated in the thermometers in the Parish Hall, provide the update on pledges and gifts from parishioners toward the four support areas of the campaign, namely the elevator, college ministry room, the undercroft and the organ. Total support from parishioners to date in gifts and pledges has reached \$340,000. He also noted that the Lucy Buford Maintenance Fund and the Pam Simpson Fund were relegated by the Vestry to the capital campaign specifically for the elevator and college ministry room.

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Memorial Gifts Fund: A brief discussion was given to the Memorial Gift Fund, noting that its source are gifts provided by parishioners in honor of deceased members of the parish. The Memorial Gifts Committee receives requests and allocates funds from this account primarily, although not exclusively, for vestments and Altar Guild purposes.

Conclusion Of The Retreat Agenda: The Rector concluded the Retreat working agenda with biblical readings and prayer at 11:40 a.m.

Faithfully submitted. –Mo Littlefield (Clerk)

