

R. E. Lee Memorial Episcopal Church

Vestry Meeting

20 March 2017

- MINUTES -

In Attendance: Woody Sadler (Sr. Warden), Don Whittington (Jr. Warden), Susan Cross, Doug Cumming, Lynn Dent, Catherine Harcus, Susan Lawrence, Buster Lewis, Anne Hansen, Grigg Mullen, and Merce Brooke, along with Joe Simcoe (Treasurer) and Mo Littlefield (Clerk)

Absent: Keith Gibson and Daniel Wubah

Staff In Attendance: Tom Crittenden, (Rector), James Keane (Chaplain) and Sharon Massie (Program Director)

Guest: Cindy Mullen

Welcome and Opening Prayer: The Senior Warden welcomed all and called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. followed by his offering A Prayer For Renewal. The Senior Warden announced that a lot of business lay before the Vestry, and called up on the Rector for comments.

Bible Exercise Of God's Word: Tom passed around a sheet with the words of Matthew 9, asking first for a volunteer from the Vestry (Anne Hansen) to read aloud those words and then he sought open comments on Matthew 9, followed by his seeking a response from the Vestry on "What word or phrase caught your attention?" Following several responses, he then paired off the Vestry in teams of two to discuss more fully the meaning of the passage and then for the Vestry to openly share the results of their discussions.

Approval Of Minutes of the February 20 Meeting: On motion by Buster with second by Susan Cross, **the minutes of February 20 Vestry meeting were approved unanimously.**

Approval of Minutes of the Vestry Special Meeting Of March 7: On motion by Doug with Second by Don, **the minutes of the Special Meeting of March 7 were approved unanimously, (whereupon, in as much as the final draft of the minutes**

Page 2

of this Special Meeting received minor adjustments from Vestry members on the day of the meeting and, therefore distributed again by e-mailed only a few hours before the meeting, the Clerk announced that, “to give the Vestry one last opportunity to review and propose any changes, the circulated minutes would remain in abeyance for seven days before being committed to the church files as a part of the permanent record of the church”).

College Ministry Review: The Chaplain distributed a report entitled “Higher Education Ministry Reporting Form” from the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia. This report is filed quarterly and provides detailed information on the use of diocesan funds, parish support for college ministry, and student participation in the life of the parish. Considerable discussion followed that focused on gaining a better understanding of the Student Choral Scholarship program, the number of students who are active versus occasional participants in our parish, and the utilization of the newly constructed Canterbury Room on the third floor of the parish house. The Chaplain reported that he sends weekly e-mail updates to approximately 250 students that serves as an invitation to participate in upcoming events. Approximately 90-100 are tracked as having read the e-mail with responses made to any requests for additional information or clarification of the information provided. Discussion then turned to the viability of the “host family program”. The Chaplain reported that in prior years we generally had between 30-35 requests by VMI Cadets for a host family. As the number of parish families volunteering to serve as a host family declined, the decision was made to adopt a hybrid approach to meet the needs of this ministry, i.e., a host family would be provided when possible and other Cadets housed in the Canterbury Room on Sunday afternoons with a chaperone volunteer. This approach has proven to be very successful with all requests for a host family met for this academic year and volunteer chaperones available for those Cadets who chose to utilize the Canterbury Room on Sunday afternoons. Catherine suggested that “we need to find a successful way to recruit more ‘host families,’ perhaps by just calling them up!” The Chaplain pointed out that VMI’s recent change in regulations allows the Cadet Rats to be off Post from noon until 6PM which has reduced the number of Cadets who need or want a host family. He then announced that there is a strong possibility that our parish can expect a reduction

Page 3

in the support we have received from the diocese in the past. The funding model in prior years called for budget requests from each participating parish at the end of the calendar year. Going forward, requests will have to be made twice a year and awards made based on the level of student participation. Additionally, the diocese would like to consider expanding college ministry to the community colleges in the region. A trial location has not been selected but if successful it will put additional pressure on annual funding for this ministry (currently \$27,000 shared by three parishes) with each parish asked to pick up a higher percentage of the annual cost. For the first half of the year we have been given \$4,500 which is half of the \$9,000 requested for all of 2017. In summary, the Chaplain noted that we may have to either increase our own budget or find a way to do more with less.

Capital Campaign: The Senior Warden distributed a report on the good success of the Capital Campaign to date. The financial breakdown revealed that the goal set for the elevator has been nearly reached, and pending the last invoice expected soon, he is fairly certain that this particular project will have been fully paid for very soon, thus saving the church nearly a hundred thousand dollars in interest charges on the initial loan taken out to start the elevator project on the heels of the complete demise of the original elevator. He also pointed out that support to the College Room has been very encouraging as well, and with the anticipated grant from the United Thank Offering, it is more than likely that the cost of this facility will be fully paid for in the very near future as well. He then announced that the cost of the Undercroft renovations are yet to be completely determined, and that the Property committee is currently analyzing whether this project can be phased-in overtime to make that area not only available to serve several important church needs, in addition to being a place for the choir to rehearse, but especially for much needed meeting space for parish committees as well as for community groups. Providing the statistics on the number of Vestry members and parishioners at large, who have supported the Capital Campaign to date, he reported that 82 family units, twelve of them connected to VMI and the rest from the parish at large, have to date either made a pledge or have contributed cash. With that encouraging support, when added to the funds from the Mason bequest of \$274,000, he announced that “Although we have a ways to go to

complete all four projects of the Campaign, we are on target with high hopes of succeeding the funding of the four-piece Campaign -- the elevator, college room, undercroft and organ.” He summarized the initial campaign strategy by pointing out that it was only logical and necessary that the elevator be addressed first and, therefore, was the immediate highest priority but, in as much as it saved a great deal of construction cost to have the contractor address the College Room at the same time, it made those two projects a joint priority. However, the warden also mentioned that it was disturbing that only half of the vestry had pledged to the campaign. He reminded the vestry that they were the leadership of the church and needed to set the example.

The Warden also announced that with the vestry’s permission he would request that the Trustees approve 25% of the available income from the Gadsden Trust toward the Capital Campaign for the 2017 fiscal year, under the conditions that it would be matched by an equal amount of funds from the capital campaign (in accordance with the Gadsden Guidelines), **whereupon by unanimous consent, the Vestry approved the Warden submitting the letter to the Trustees.**

Committee Reports:

Organ Committee Report: The Senior Warden called on Buster to report on the work of the Organ Committee. Buster pointed out that the Organ Committee is meeting to determine if a new organ could do without a few stops initially to bring the cost down to a more achievable level. If possible, this would allow additional components to be installed as funds are available, ultimately achieving the full complement to the pipe organ over time. Buster also announced that the Organ Committee will be organizing a bus trip to St. John’s, Georgetown to hear and compare a similar instrument to the one proposed for us, built by the same builder, Casavant. The committee is also considering other creative fund raising tools to implement with a revised and revitalized Capital Campaign.

Finance Committee: On behalf of Daniel Wubah and in his absence, the Rector, in addition to having submitted by e-mail the church’s monthly financial reports for the end of the month of February, also distributed a

printed copy of the minutes of the Finance Committee held on March 14, which reported that the Committee addressed the following: how to handle the designated funds for the Choir trip to Wells, England, discussed consolidating the three separate funds used for the Mission Emergency Funds, considered a different process of counting the plate offerings by saving a receipt upon completing the counting and keeping an electronic count of weekly collections, conferred on developing a policy and practices manual for church committees, and considered paying down the line of credit on the elevator to reduce the interest charge. In the interest of time with the current full agenda, **the Warden announced, with the unanimous consent of the Vestry, that a full discussion on this report be deferred until the next meeting.**

Administrative/Personnel Committee: Doug announced that the A/P Committee met and reviewed the last Mutual Ministry Review report, agreed to review letters of staff employment, and staff job descriptions with a new expectation of producing an employees' handbook.

- **Discovery and Discernment Committee:** Anne asked for the prayers of the Vestry in respect to anticipating a very long meeting with the Discovery and Discernment Committee and the Consultants scheduled for Saturday of this week. She announced that the Committee was facing a very difficult challenge in completing its report to the Vestry in respect to the follow up report the Vestry will provide to the Parish. The final meeting of the D & D Committee with the Consultants and the Vestry scheduled for April 6 was given considerable discussion concerning the amount of time needed to allow a full and complete discussion by the Vestry with the Consultants and the D & D Committee while considering the possible need to limit the Q & A portion of this meeting and still allow everyone in attendance full opportunity to speak. Catherine inquired if the D & D Committee were to present their report to the parish, and Anne responded that the Committee, as an ad hoc committee of the Vestry, felt that it was their obligation to present their report to the Vestry, leaving it to the Vestry to accept or reject the report as well as to decide on what,

how and when to report to the parish. For the benefit of the parish, the need for full transparency of the entire experience of the discernment and discovery process was echoed by a strong consensus of the Vestry. Doug noted that it was important that the Vestry inculcate what the D & D Committee experienced from its diligent work with the Consultants prior to the Vestry making its report to the parish. **Upon motion by Doug with second by Susan Lawrence, it was agreed by unanimous vote of the Vestry, that the nature and format of the final meeting between the Vestry, Consultants and the D & D Committee scheduled for April 6 would be determined after receiving advice from the Consultants and the D & D Committee following their March 25 marathon session.**

- **Property Committee:** Susan Lawrence, liaison to the Property Committee, distributed a report to the Vestry, noting that the new Financial Secretary will help a great deal in organizing the budgets of the church. The Rector along with Susan L. will undertake updating the signage inside and outside the church, while welcoming input from church committees. Susan L. further announced that April 8 starting at 9:00 a.m. is “Spring Cleaning Day” and all volunteers are welcomed! She estimates that the task (weeding, raking and clipping) is expected to be completed by noon. She also pointed out that the church labyrinth will be on the City’s Garden Tour on April 22, and that the area will be spray washed prior to the day of the tour. In addition, work on the stage curtain should begin by the end of April, and that Merce Brooke will select the four of the worst air-condition units for replacements, which includes the two in the nursery. Susan noted that some of the pews in the church sanctuary revealed cracks and may need to be replaced, suggesting further that some of the pews in the hall were in good condition. Additionally, she reported that the
- HVAC/Boiler will be contracted for service by Boyer who offered a better price. Calling attention to an extensive list of items needing attention and completion, the Property Committee requests that committees and
- others feel free to add to the list by contacting the Committee’s leadership, John Dickerson (Chair) and/or Diana Kenney (Co-chair). Finally, Susan L. pointed out that the red house now owned by W & L next to the
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- church play ground is currently being renovated and that a temporary fence has been erected for safety reasons during the renovation. (Local church lore suggests that the red house behind the parish hall was the residence formally owned by the late Dr. Marshall Fishwick, also former choir director of the church and professor at the W & L, later at Virginia Tech, who offered to donate the property to the church, but that the Vestry/Trustees voted against accepting it. He, therefore, donated the property to W & L. Warden Woody Sadler recalls that in his days as a Cadet at VMI, the Chaplain of our church lived in the red house with Cadets being welcomed to hang out there when off Post. –the Clerk)

Old Business: Susan Cross shared by e-mail a report from the research conducted by the Chair of the Finance Committee, Megan Hess, identifying the restricted funds that support Mission and Outreach, citing Acct. # 4416 – Ford Fund, Acct. # 4417 Harvey Fund, Acct. # 4421 Royston Fund, and Acct. # 4426 Osburg Fund, with the combined total from those funds for fiscal 2017 of \$18,320.42.

The Community Closet Ministry: Susan Cross reported on this important ministry of Christ Church, Walnut Street, Buena Vista, where donated women’s, men’s and children’s clothing, new socks and underwear as well as household items, are available at no cost to folks in need. Sharon Massie and Susan have met to brainstorm ways to publicize this Episcopal ministry to our parish and will implement them after Easter. Donations are welcome, but the real need at the moment is for volunteers on Wednesdays as a sorter as well as a greeter on Saturday mornings to serve as the hands and feet of Christ in this world. Susan personally attests to “how enjoyable both of these opportunities can be.”

New Business:

Tom announced that the Vestry needed to elect parish delegates to the Diocesan Council Meeting for 2017, whereupon motion by Susan Cross with second by Grigg, the following delegates and alternates were unanimously elected: As Delegates --James Keane (Chaplain), Melissa Cox, Punky Dod, Tom Gosse, Joe Simcoe with Catherine Harcus 1st Alternate and Sharon Massie 2nd Alternate.

Report of the Treasurer: Joe Simcoe proposed to the Vestry that the church payment system by check contain two signatures with the Rector and the four elected Officers of the Vestry being authorized as signatories for the signing of the

checks, **whereupon, motion by Buster with second by Lynn Dent, the Vestry unanimously approved the Treasurer's proposal.**

Report Of The Clerk: The Treasure brought to the attention of the Clerk the discrepancy in the official name of the church on several documents, i.e., church stationery, bylaws, exterior signage, and in the records of the County Clerk. He pointed out that the minutes of November 2016 Vestry meeting, given the lengthy discussions and amendments to motions concerning the name of the church, left the final agreed upon official name less than clear, as recently confirmed upon careful review of the November 2016 Vestry minutes by the former Clerk (Anna Crockett). In addition to recent consultation with Clerk and the newly elected Treasurer on this matter, it was recognized that all documents and signs representing the name of the church need to be consistent for legal and financial reasons, **whereupon motion by Doug Cumming with second by Don Whittington, the Vestry reaffirmed the name of the church voted on at the November 2016 meeting, to be R. E. Lee Memorial Episcopal Church, with the minutes of that meeting approved at the December 2016 Vestry meeting.**

(Note: In accordance with Article XVI of the current bylaws, for an amendment to make a change in the bylaws, the Clerk needs to secure the Rector's recommendation and obtain at least two thirds favorable vote of the Vestry (or obtain a request by two-thirds vote of the Vestry to introduce an amendment). In addition the parish also needs to be advised of the impending amendment action at least three weeks prior to the vote of the Vestry. In that regard, **to comply with proper protocol of the bylaws, the Clerk will submit by e-mail a recommended amendment to the Rector and the Vestry and, if agreed upon, an announcement to the parish will take place at a minimum of three weeks prior to the April meeting of the Vestry.** – The Clerk)

Suggestion Box: Susan L. reported the following suggestions received from the Suggestion Box: 1. Update church bathrooms and, 2, replace the lights in the church that blink.

Comments By The Wardens: Don Whittington (junior Warden) reported that there are listed nine church committees, yet only two or three report to the Warden monthly on the results of their meetings. At least for the benefit of the record, he called on the Vestry liaisons at each Vestry meeting to acknowledge that their respective committee either had or had not met and, if when a

committee has met, to offer a brief report on the committee's actions. If their committee did not meet, then to simply report that no meeting was held and, therefore, no report is tendered. **(Note: at one time, less than a decade ago, the church boasted of twelve very active committees, both standing committees and activity committees. – The Clerk)**

Report of The Warden: Given the length of this meeting, the Warden chose to defer his report until the next meeting.

Report of The Rector: Likewise, in deference to the late hour, the Rector chose to defer any further comments.

Adjournment and Closing Prayer: With discussions and decisions on the agenda items having been completed, the meeting was adjourned at 7:03 p.m. by consent of the Vestry, with Grigg offering the closing prayer.

Faithfully submitted, -Mo Littlefield (Clerk)