

Vestry Meeting Minutes (Approved)

R.E. Lee Memorial Episcopal Church

October 17, 2016

The regular meeting of the Vestry of R.E. Lee Memorial Episcopal Church was held on Monday, October 17, 2016 at 5:00 p.m. in the Parish Hall of the church.

Present: Vestry Members: George Brooke, Susan Cross, Doug Cumming, Carole Elmore, Keith Gibson, Julia Grossman, Catherine Marcus, Elizabeth Knapp, Susan Lawrence, Sharon Massie (Program Director), Holt Merchant, Woody Sadler (Senior Warden), and Don Whittington, Absent: Rev. Tom Crittenden, Grigg Mullen, and Daniel Wubah; Guest: Libby Cumming

Opening: Woody invited prayer concerns from Vestry members and opened the meeting with the Discovery and Discernment Committee prayer.

“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.”

Approval of September minutes: The September minutes were approved unanimously.

Capital Campaign: Woody reported that the campaign brochure, including the Case Statement, has gone to printing, and that Doug and Sharon are working on the campaign website. Woody also thanked Vestry members for participating in the recent meeting to identify potential donors and their likely area of interest in campaign components. He circulated a list of parishioners who had been identified as prospective “askers” and asked Vestry members to sign up to contact individuals on the list about their willingness to serve in this role. Woody will share with Vestry members a handout Bob Glidden has prepared describing “asker” expectations. Bob and Farris have agreed to lead training meetings for the askers in November.

Committee Reports:

Finance Committee: *(submitted electronically by Don Whittington)* The Finance Committee met on Tuesday, October 11, 2016 and the following is noted:

Revenues and Expenses for period ending September 30th reflect that the total pledge support continues to be less than projected in the amount of approximately \$14,000.00; whereas, the total freewill offerings exceed to almost \$4000.00 which is greater than expected. Also, analysis of the R&E summary report indicated that revenues exceed expenses in the amount of \$3460.95. The church’s total current assets are “almost” \$6,000,000 which is good as well.

With an endorsement by the finance committee, Michele was given authorization to request from Dan Vance a reimbursement from the Columbarium fund in the amount of \$30,000.00 in order to cover architectural and design costs. Specifically, \$15,000 now and \$15,000 in January 2017.

Diana Kenney, representing the property committee, indicated that, at least, TEN air conditioners need to be replaced because the units are “leaking” or are in disrepair. Consequently, the property committee is recommending replacement of these units which is essentially the next “need” following completion of the elevator. Diana also indicated that the brass work will begin in about two weeks and on location.

Christian Outreach: Doug reported the COC's desire to expand the exciting ongoing efforts. Bringing the disaster relief/emergency response trailer and its equipment and supplies back to Rockbridge County, building an infrastructure for refugees in our community, and opening an elderly day care center similar to the one in Buena Vista are among the projects that have been proposed.

Libby Cumming followed up on Doug's introduction by describing the COC's recent discussion of making the parish's mission in the world our priority, and demonstrating this commitment by earmarking ten percent of the church budget to outreach programs, using the balance to make decisions about remaining budget items. Thus, we could be a parish that tithes to outreach, transforming the thrust of our outlook, and making a difference in terms of who we are and what we do. The ten percent would allow us to implement and expand outreach programs. Examples for improving lives and lifting up individuals include outfitting another trailer in Rockbridge County for disaster relief, helping low-income residents repair their homes, and providing support for caregivers. Partnering with RARA and other churches in our community could have a significant impact in our community.

Susan Lawrence noted that outreach should be our priority, like savings in a family budget. Doug calculated that our current outreach spending is approximately 2.5% of our operating budget. It was noted that the ECW and Gadsden Fund are additional parish entities that contribute to outreach funding in the community. Holt pointed out that the Senior Center in BV is a United Way agency, so we should apply to that as well. Responding to a question, Libby said that the center would not be housed on REL property, and added that there are many moving pieces, including a variety of possible income streams.

Doug observed that this new approach to the budget would take much discussion and prayer. Carole expressed her reservations about increasing requests related to the budget without equal increases in pledges, and the upcoming requests for pledges to the capital campaign. Woody asked Libby to inform the COC the Vestry's agreement that the matter warrants further discussion, and will be placed on the agenda for a future Vestry meeting.

Construction Committee: Woody projected that the elevator installation will be completed by the end of the month.

Discovery and Discernment Committee: Keith reported that there have been four or five completed focus group gatherings, facilitated by different committee members, and that there are still opportunities for parishioners to sign up for remaining meetings. He observed that it has been rewarding to meet with small groups of parishioners.

Approximately eighty parishioners (one quarter of the congregation) have signed up for the group, which is encouraging, since ten percent participation is generally considered good, and the larger number demonstrates interest in our church's future. Although it is too early to see trends and patterns, some issues have come up multiple times, and the EMU consultants will have quality material on which to base their recommendations.

Two parishioners have signed up for individual meetings, and there has been input from former parishioners who wanted to be part of the discovery and discernment process. Describing the format of the gatherings, Keith stated that there is a facilitator and a recorder. Participants are asked to respond to a series of seven to eight questions, and also to listen thoughtfully and respectfully. Questions are not distributed in advance because answers are influenced by exchanges in the groups that allow seeing issues from a different perspective. Dynamics change based on the size of the group. The recorders will submit

their notes to the consultants, with the final report to include all focus group reports. Carole shared that she found the questions at her group meeting thought-provoking and the experience a unique and worthwhile one.

Property: Susan Lawrence reported that the elevator should arrive soon and that the air conditioning is basically completed (details described in the Finance Committee report above). Matching contributions from parishioners have been raised for the brass restoration process. That work is targeted for completion on site before Christmas. A bid of \$36,000 has been received from Mr. Friedrichs to replace stonework in the Parish Hall, but this work may be on hold until funds are available. Susan further reported a strong response to the Spring ~~Fall~~ cleanup day, and that there will be a limited cleanup before the Bazaar, followed by a larger one.

Stewardship: (*Doug's electronic report of the October 19 committee meeting*) The committee reviewed pledges received. Names of parishioners who had not returned pledge cards were distributed for follow-up. As of October 14, 110 pledges had been received, totaling \$257,000.

Worship: (*submitted electronically by Carole Elmore*) The Worship Committee met in the Library on September 29. There was discussion about limiting the Stewardship Sundays to one Sunday next year instead of the two that we had this year.

The Readers on Sunday will be reminded to try to sit nearer the front of the Church and to pause at appropriate places during the prayers for private contemplation. It was also suggested that each Sunday there would be a moment for adding, silently or out loud, names of others who needed to be remembered with prayers.

Ted Bickish will be adding some additional interesting information about the music played during the services.

Old Business;

Vestry Elections George reported that there are currently three nominees, with paperwork expected for two additional nominees. Since the committee would like to have at least five nominees, the nomination deadline may be extended from October 21st to October 28th. Members of the Nominating Committee are outgoing Vestry members: George Brooke, Carole Elmore, Julia Grossman, Elizabeth Knapp, and Holt Merchant. Committee members will meet prior to November 13th to discuss the voting schedule (before and after the morning and evening services). The committee will pass the final vote tally to Tom and Woody, who will call the nominees with the vote outcome. In the meantime, nominees will need to provide short bios and pictures to be published in the November newsletter and posted on the Parish Hall bulletin board. Angie manages numbered absentee ballots.

New Business:

Community Table. Doug reminded Vestry members that our parish helps with all shifts at The Community Table on the third Monday of each month, and that TCT staff needs to have volunteer information early. Susan Lawrence and Doug signed up for November 21st. Woody will ask absent Vestry members about their availability on December 19.

Suggestion Box: Julia reported a parishioner request to publish weekly Bible readings in the Sunday bulletin. She contacted the parishioner for clarification, since the Bible readings are not the same as lectionary readings, and has referred the suggestion to Sharon and Tom.

Report from the Program Director: Sharon reported several events: There was excellent participation for last Sunday's Chili and Soup cookoff that raised over \$200 for Cantastic. "Our One Word" group meetings take place on Wednesdays. The next meeting is October 26th. Attendance has averaged eight to ten participants. The Augusta convocation will be held in our parish this Sunday at 3:00, followed by dinner church.

Comments from the wardens: Junior and Senior Warden: none

Comments from the Rector: none (absent due to family illness)

Closing prayer: Julia offered the closing prayer.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 6:10.

Next meeting: November 21, 2016; 5:00

Respectfully submitted,
Anna Crockett