

Vestry Minutes

R.E. Lee Memorial Episcopal Church

September 19, 2016 (approved)

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), and Don Whittington, Absent: Susan Cross, Keith Gibson, Susan Lawrence, and Daniel Wubah

Opening: Woody opened the meeting with the prayer written by the Reference Team/Discovery and Discernment Committee. 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."

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

Capital Campaign: Woody requested a special Vestry meeting next week to review the roster of parishioners and gather information that would assist callers who will be going out to meet with parishioners. This information will include campaign projects which parishioners might be interested in supporting, potential level of their financial support, and any additional helpful information, e.g. their relationship to the parish and willingness to contribute to the campaign. Woody noted that the Vestry members represent a cross-section of the parish, thus hopefully able to provide the desired information for the majority of parishioners. The meeting was scheduled Thursday, September 29th at 4:30. Woody added that there will be a training session for those making calls to parishioners, and that the search for a campaign chair and a coordinator for callers is ongoing.

Committee Reports:

Finance Committee: Don's report: The finance committee met on September 13, 2016 and the following is noted. The Revenue and Expense report for the period ending August 31, 2016 reflected that pledge support, even though still behind \$11,388.32, it is gradually catching up from the \$20,000 plus deficit or so from several months ago. This is possibly a result of some parishioners initially not receiving statements, which is now corrected. The report also indicated that the expenses ending in August were less than projected, specifically, \$1789.94, which is good. Overall, the R&E appears to be in order.

The acting FC chairman, Joe Simcoe, indicated we need to begin soliciting 2017 budget requests from the various church missions and it would be helpful to have preliminary draft of the budget by the November 2016 FC meeting.

It was also noted by Jim Farrar that the Gadsden committee approved the \$8,000.00 for the elevator and \$11,000.00 for the brass work contingent on matching funds from the parish. The remainder of the needed funds will come from grants and a few parishioners.

Vestry Meeting Minutes – September 19, 2016 (approved)

Tom noted that the columbarium niches will be expanded.

Stewardship: Doug's report: The committee met on Sept. 8 to sign cover letters with a brief personal note, and stuff these with pledge cards into envelopes. I was absent, but Lyn Dent, chair, reports that they got all of these done and are ready to distribute before/after services on Sept. 25.

The text of the cover letter:

Dear

This is an old church, even for Virginia. But its significant history in this community has always been based not on its past but on a refreshed sense of mission. Our church welcomed college students, helped start a food pantry, a meals-for-shut-ins program and an early childhood learning center, and mobilized to help victims of Hurricane Katrina, the earthquake in Haiti and, recently, the floods in West Virginia.

Now is a time when we are renewing our sense of who we are and what God would have us be about in Lexington and in the wider world. We know our past, but it is the future that holds our attention and can make us breathless.

As you reflect on where we stand between past and future, please consider, prayerfully, raising your pledge by ten percent. On Pledge Sunday, October 2, place the enclosed pledge card in the offering plate. Otherwise mail it to the church in the envelope provided. We need for each parishioner and newcomer to support the continued work, worship, learning, and growing that are the heart of our life in Christ.

Faithfully,

It was noted that the Stewardship campaign will precede the capital campaign.

Discovery and Discernment Committee: Signup forms for the group meetings are still available. This information will be included in verbal and printed announcements,

Christian Outreach: Susan's Report: The Christian Outreach Committee meets again in October. The only issue of note is the Time and Talent Surveys are being filled and returned to the church office and the COC will begin culling the responses soon.

Construction Committee: Grigg reported that work on the elevator is roughly a week behind schedule, due to complications with the shaft.

Old Business;

Additions to the Columbarium Tom reported that four units will be added to cover the back of the church. These will be smaller than those already installed, because of the balcony support. There are seven niches per unit, with a uniform design. Approximately twenty of the existing units are already subscribed. Funds from parishioners who have reserved a niche will cover the \$6500 cost of the new niches, and we have more than sufficient funds for the additional niches. . This cost is significantly lower than the \$13,000 for the original niches. The savings is due to the architect teaming up with a computer control shop. Catherine pointed out that parishioners should be informed that funds for the new niches are already in hand, in view of current and planned fundraising efforts for other projects.

Brass and elevator: Woody reported that the Trustees approved the request for Gadsden funding for both projects, and that Mo Littlefield has pledged from parishioners for the \$5000 still needed for the \$6000 total contributions from parishioners (to be added to the \$5000 from the Titmus Foundation, making the total to match Gadsden funds \$11,000). Soliciting funds from the Sons of Confederate Veterans is now off the table. Responding to a question about other potential funding sources, Woody stated that he and Mo had approached half a dozen organizations, including the Patterson Foundation that had previously approved a grant to the church for repointing, but these had all denied applications. Efforts are continuing to identify organizations that might help us with capital improvements. Woody added that he has not yet received the updated estimate from the company. There may be an extra cost for labor, now that OSHA has disallowed using student labor, which was originally planned. If the updated cost is higher than \$22,00, the restoration can be done piecemeal. It is hoped that the project can be completed by Christmas.

New Business:

Vestry Elections: Tom reported that Vestry Elections require a 60-day notice to the parish. This window has already closed for October elections, so they will now be held on November 13th. Tom observed that the later date might be an advantage, since it will come after the Discovery and Discernment meetings that may inspire greater interest in Vestry service. Outgoing members of the Vestry were appointed as the Nomination Committee. These are George Brooke, Carole Elmore, Julia Grossman, Elizabeth Knapp and Holt Merchant. Four new Vestry members will be elected. Sharon will send to the parish the announcement of the November 13 election, and include the nomination forms. Bios for nominees who choose to run will be due by October 20th.

Catherine suggested a more detailed orientation for new vestry members. She will work with Tom to schedule the date and plan the agenda. Catherine also suggested choosing a vestry retreat date sooner rather than later to reduce the likelihood of conflicts and to increase Vestry attendance.

Trustee appointments: Tom asked for a Vestry vote to reaffirm the second six-year term for Trustees Anna Crockett, Bob Glidden, and Farris Hotchkiss. The Vestry vote was unanimous.

Vestry appointment to Gadsden: Tom reported that Don Ellis is completing in December the second of his three-term appointment to the Gadsden Committee. Since Don's position is a Vestry appointment, the Vestry will need to elect a new member to fill that vacancy. Tom asked for nominations to be considered for election at the October Vestry meeting.

Suggestion Box: Julia brought up the suggestion made some time ago to create a brochure highlighting noteworthy aspects of the church, e.g. its history, stained glass, brass items, etc. Such a brochure would be of value to both parishioners and visitors. Tom explained that Dennis Cross had pursued progress on such a brochure, and Elizabeth Oliver thought that her students might take it on as a business-oriented project in the community. This has not worked out, however. Doug observed that a student he met recently was unaware of the work of the Discovery and Discernment Committee, and suggested that we find ways to include students and cadets in communicating information.

Program Director: Sharon reported a number of activities in the busy past two weeks: the Ministries Fair, setting up of the Sunday School classes in the new space and good attendance there, including four cadets; strong student/cadet attendance at the 10:30 service, although lower at the Canterbury service (seven attended yesterday),. As President of the August Convocation, Sharon announced Fall Mission Day on October 23rd, and encouraged Vestry members to consider running for available lay positions. Nominees are not required to be Council delegates. She noted that this would be a good opportunity to learn about activities taking place in our diocese.

Comments from the wardens:

Junior Warden: none

Senior Warden: Woody stated that he has enjoyed being Senior Warden, but has noticed in recent weeks that the parish does not effectively demonstrate the capacity to forgive, regardless on which side of an issue individuals may be. We cannot even forgive ourselves. We seem to personalize a disagreement against individuals or organizations for acts or beliefs of a few if they hold different view than our own, sometimes jumping to conclusions before fully and cordially discussing such views and differences. We pray to love our neighbor and to forgive, but sometimes appear to forget Christ's words when it comes to practicing what we pray for. Woody further shared that he had received a gracious letter from SCV saying they understood and were glad that we had considered them

Comments from the Rector: Tom expressed hope that we can identify some of the underlying issues and challenges that we face as a congregation. We need to address the dynamics that have strained our church in the past year. Tom sees a way forward that will bring us to reconciliation, and is encouraged with the energy of the church. He also expressed the hope that we can identify a leader for the capital campaign, and that strong new vestry members will be elected.

Closing prayer: Tom offered the closing prayer.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 6:05.

Next meeting: October 17, 2016; 5:00

Respectfully submitted,
Anna Crockett