

St. Alban's Episcopal Parish
Minutes of the Vestry Meeting (As Approved)
Tuesday, August 18, 2015 – 6:30 pm
Nourse Hall

Vestry Officers Present: The Rev. Dr. Deborah A. Meister (Rector), Deborah Potter (Senior Warden), Rich Turner (Junior Warden)

Vestry Members Present: Craig Albright, Mark Edwards, Ivan Fermin, Sandy Kolb, Ann Morrison, Donna Palmer, Joan Phalen, Marty Welch, Ken Patterson

Staff: Rev. Matthew Hanisian; Douglas Dykstra, Parish Director of Finance

Others: Cay Hartley, Diocesan Delegate; Susan Morris, WSA

Call-to-Order: A meeting of the Vestry was called to order by The Rev. Dr. Deborah Meister at 6:35 pm. An opening prayer was offered by Sandy Kolb.

Check-in: Several people noted the successful visit to St. Alban's on Sunday by Ruby Sales, whose preaching and forum created good buzz and publicity, with stories in the Washington Post and on Episcopal News Service. Donna Palmer said some older parishioners aren't joining in hymn singing because the print in the hymnal is too small. The Vestry discussed acquiring a large type hymnal and providing copies of the week's hymns to anyone who needs bigger print. Marty Welch said Sandy Loether is at Stephen Minister Leader training this week; discussions are underway about adding a Spanish-speaker to the fall class of Stephen Ministers. Ken Patterson requested more participants for the greeting ministry. In that connection, Rev. Meister said she is providing information to ushers and greeters about safety and security. Rev. Hanisian said the recent youth pilgrimage to Ireland was the best he's ever led.

Approval of the Minutes: Mark Edwards offered a MOTION, seconded by Sandy Kolb, to approve the minutes of the Vestry's July, 2015, meeting, with a correction to the language of an amendment to the June, 2015 minutes, as follows:

"Ann Morrison asked that the section headed 'Year-Ahead Priorities' be amended to add a statement to the effect that: 'The Vestry will revisit its commitment to pass a balanced budget by a certain date every year in its commitment to stewardship that is appropriately serving the Parish.'"

The June minutes will be amended to conform. The MOTION carried.

Incorporation Committee Report: Craig Albright reported that the system for identifying newcomers and connecting them with welcomers based on common interests is working well. A committee reviews newcomer cards and a contact is made within a week. A Spanish version of the newcomer card needs to be produced for the 10:30 service. Sandy Kolb offered a MOTION, seconded by Marty Welch, to approve the report. The MOTION carried.

Fellowship Committee Report: Craig Albright reported that scheduling 4th Sunday Fellowship events has become more difficult because of competing demands for time between services. The committee proposes providing fellowship only for special events. Some Vestry members said parishioners might be disappointed at not having 4th Sunday Fellowship hours. Deborah Meister said she will discuss alternatives with the committee. Sandy Kolb offered a MOTION, seconded by Joan Phalen, to approve the report. The MOTION carried.

Stewardship Committee: Ken Patterson reported that Wendy Reaves will co-chair the fall campaign with him. He said several ideas for new approaches are being discussed, including "swag" for pledgers and two kickoff events.

Finance Committee: In the absence of Treasurer Hollis McLoughlin, Doug Dykstra presented the report. He noted that pledges in July were below budget and below 2014, but saw this as no reason for concern unless the trend continues. Parish support, facilities use, weddings and funerals also were below budget. Nevertheless, the income-to-expense variance was a positive \$3,306 through July. Mr. Dykstra said salaries will likely be over budget by the end of the year due to the hiring of new staff members, Rev. Emily Griffin and Charles Porter. Rev. Meister reported that another bequest is expected from the estate of Peggy Belknap.

Junior Warden's Report: Junior Warden Rich Turner reported that the Property Committee is looking at the need to re-grade around Nourse Hall to stop water leaking below grade and to repair water damage in Satterlee Hall. As light bulbs in the sanctuary are about to be replaced, he is looking into whether LED bulbs will work with the dimmer system. The Satterlee boiler has a leak and it is hoped that it can be repaired as replacement would be very costly. The sign project has been stalled because it has come to the committee's attention that we need approval from DC Historic Preservation.

Vestry Charge to Strategic Planning Task Force: Mr. Turner asked for comments on the latest version of a "Charge to the Strategic Planning Team, with Additional Information." Craig Albright asked that the team, of which he is a member, be asked to reflect back to the Parish what is currently happening, to be clear about how much is going well now, even as we plan for the future. He proposed an amendment, seconded by Donna Palmer, to add new language to item 1 b) as follows:

"Gather, analyze and share the story of where the Parish is now and integrate it with the needs of our parish and neighbors, immediate and farther away, consulting leaders from a variety of internal and external constituencies."

Ann Morrison offered a MOTION, seconded by Ken Patterson, to approve the charge as amended. The MOTION carried.

Senior Warden's Report: Senior Warden Deborah Potter reported that the Strategic Planning Task Force is meeting every other Thursday, working on gathering information and preparing questions for the Parish and our neighbors. On September 20, a brainstorming session will be held at St. Alban's; a parallel session will be held for those attending the Parish Weekend. A review of the audio system in the sanctuary has been scheduled for August 23 with Charlie

Wilson, a sound engineer who until recently ran the audio at a large church in Virginia. Ms. Potter also distributed new St. Alban's car magnets to Vestry members; the congregation will get them in September. Finally, she reminded Vestry members to begin thinking now about their pledge for 2015. The goal is to have 100% of Vestry pledges in hand when the stewardship campaign launches in October.

Rector's Report: Rev. Meister provided a written report. She asked the Vestry to spread the word that scholarships are available to help more people attend the Parish Weekend. Current sign-ups are 14 short of the number we have guaranteed and will have to pay for. There is discussion underway about a possible joint Bible study for English- and Spanish-speaking parishioners this fall. More teachers are still needed for the youngest Sunday school children. Rev. Hanisian said leaders also are needed for Senior Youth and Rite 13. Rev. Meister said Rev. Griffin's first Sunday will be September 13. A full staff retreat is planned for mid-October.

Service Times and Styles: The Vestry continued a discussion about attendance trends and their implications for service offerings. Rev. Meister reported that since 2003, overall attendance has dropped by about 35%. The decline has been most pronounced at 8 a.m. and 11:15 a.m. Rev. Hanisian pointed out that attendance has stabilized since 2011. The Vestry discussed whether continuing the summer schedule would be a good idea, as many people seem to like it. Rev. Meister said her preference is to retain three Sunday morning services but that we may want to alter our current offerings, as we have two services that are very much alike. There was some discussion about scheduling a new, casual service, possibly on Saturdays. No action was taken; the conversation will continue.

Executive Session: Vestry began an executive session at 9:16 p.m. and concluded the session at 9:55 p.m.

Joan Phalen then led the Vestry in singing the Doxology and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted
Deborah Potter
Secretary pro tem