

St. Alban's Episcopal Church
Minutes of the Vestry Meeting (As Approved)
Tuesday, September 15, 2015, 6:30 pm
Nourse Hall

Vestry Officers Present: The Rev. Dr. Deborah A. Meister, Deborah Potter (Senior Warden), Rich Turner (Junior Warden); Hollis McLoughlin (Treasurer); Tom Jansen (Secretary)

Vestry Members Present: Craig Albright, Mark Edwards, Marcy Fisher, Marcus King, Sandy Kolb, Tomás Montgomery, Ann Morrison, Ken Patterson, Joan Phalen, Marty Welch

Staff: The Rev. Jim Quigley; The Rev. Matthew Hanisian; The Rev. Emily Griffin; Doug Dykstra, Director of Finance

Visitors: Susana Hair, Youth Representative; 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 Joan Phalen.

Check-in: Rev. Meister reminded the Vestry that Massachusetts Avenue northbound will be closed near the Observatory next Wednesday and Thursday for the Papal visit. Sandy Kolb briefly discussed the upcoming St. Alban's Creation Café process and the role of Table Stewards. Susan Morris noted the signage for Opportunity Sunday at Lychgate Road and Wisconsin. Marcus King advised that Sidwell Friends School recently purchased the Washington Home facility to consolidate their school facilities, and the Washington Home is scheduled to close by December 2016. Several of those present expressed surprise, and concern about the effect on residents of the Washington Home, as to whom St. Alban's has a longstanding involvement and commitment.

Approval of the Minutes: Sandy Kolb offered a **MOTION**, seconded by Tomás Montgomery, to approve the draft minutes of the August 18 Vestry meeting subject to the addition of Joan Phalen as among those present. The **MOTION** carried and the minutes are approved as amended.

Consent Agenda: Reports on Children's Formation at St. Alban's (Attachment A) and on Youth Formation (Attachment B) were well received. Marty Welch expressed anticipation that the ASP program, under Rev. Hanisian's leadership, will explode next year and then continue to grow exponentially. Mark Edwards offered a **MOTION**, seconded by Sandy Kolb, to accept both reports, and the **MOTION** carried.

Annual Pledge Campaign: Ken Patterson reported that he and co-chair Wendy Reaves are working on kick-off events for the Annual Pledge Campaign. One will coincide with the October 3 Service for the "Blessing of the Animals" and the other will be a social event at the Reaves' home on October 18 at 5:00 pm. Patterson noted that the Campaign goal amount has not yet

been set and that the budgeting process needs to move forward before the goal can be determined. Patterson reported that he has ordered lapel pins to be given out to those pledging this year. The theme for the Campaign is “All in for St. Alban’s”. Patterson also said that the date for the annual Phonathon has not yet been set, but urged Vestry members to volunteer to participate in it.

Associate Rectors’ Reports: Written reports by Associate Rectors Jim Quigley, Matthew Hanisian, and Emily Griffin were distributed (Attachments C-E), and Rev. Meister noted that because of a computer problem they could not be sent in advance. Rev. Hanisian reported that the new St. Alban’s website is now up and running. He also showed to the Vestry a new nametag holder, created by Bob Witten and Bella Hanisian, that will be kept in the Wade Room. Rev. Quigley highlighted Outreach efforts set forth in his Report and noted he will be working to more closely coordinate and integrate all outreach efforts, although doing so could result in controversy. It was generally acknowledged that this was important to do. Rev. Griffin reported that since her recent arrival her efforts have been largely focused on getting acquainted with families, recruiting teachers, and welcoming new families to the Children’s Formation Open House last Sunday.

Treasurer’s Report: Hollis McLoughlin distributed and summarized the St. Alban’s Audited Financial Statements and Supplementary information for 2013 and 2014, noting that the Audit found no issues at all. McLoughlin also noted that in August the Endowment fund saw a 4% decline, which reflected Stock Market declines. Upon McLoughlin’s request, Craig Albright made a **MOTION**, which was seconded by Tomás Montgomery, for approval of the Audited Financial Statement, and all present approved. Also upon McLoughlin’s request, Montgomery made a second **MOTION** for approval of an administrative notification to the Vanguard Fund of changes in persons having authority to direct changes in our Endowment account (substituting current Junior Warden Rich Turner and Treasurer Hollis McLoughlin for their respective predecessors, Bill Edgar and Curt Large). The **MOTION** was seconded by Sandy Kolb, and approved by all present.

Recommendations to Review and Amend the Current Budgeting Process: Ann Morrison, a member of the budget committee, presented a two-page paper titled as above (Attachment F). She pointed out that in the current process there is good transparency and discipline, but the Parish is forced to produce an annual balanced budget before we are really ready to do so. Funds on which an early balanced budget is based often don’t come in until after the budget is enacted, creating anxiety and tension among parishioners when they are admonished about cuts that would have to be made if pledge goals are not met. Morrison’s recommendation, as set out in some detail in her paper, was to abolish the requirement for an annual balanced budget and instead permit the Vestry to make a multi-year budget, except in the event that the parish had two consecutive deficit years. Those present engaged in lengthy discussion about the yearly concern that the Parish would not meet its pledge goals, but it was generally acknowledged that in recent years each pledge goal has been exceeded, albeit very belatedly. It was noted by several that it is not appropriate to meet and exceed pledge goals through use of “scare tactics” and “crying wolf”.

Real concerns about any change were also expressed. Rev. Meister pointed out that any change needs to be communicated to the parish ahead of time and buy-in is absolutely necessary. She also pointed out difficulties in anticipating available funds based on past three year averages rather than using current growth projections.

Ken Patterson inquired, as co-chair of the current pledge campaign, whether plans for it need to change. Rev. Meister advised that the only anticipated change would be to not use “scare” speeches, if pledges lagged toward the end of the year. She also noted that because the actual budget package is not typically published until January or February, there should be time for late pledges. There was discussion of whether to vote on eliminating the requirement for approval of an annual balanced budget before year end. Rev. Meister proposed that the Director of Finance be asked to prepare for Vestry consideration, at the October meeting, a specific recommendation for the proposed change to the current budgeting process. It was the sense of the Vestry that this should be done.

Junior Warden’s Report: Junior Warden Rich Turner reported that approval for the new Parish sign is pending before the District Historic Review Board, and he hopes approval will be granted within the next six weeks. Turner noted that the Parish IT system continues to be under study, with the hope that all information can be backed up in the “Cloud” instead of the current system. Turner reported that the sound system in the Church is broken and will need repair or replacement. In addition, the Satterlee Hall HVAC system, though still working, is dying and will likely need expensive replacement. Those present discussed the status of Satterlee Hall space that will become available when the Early Childhood Center moves out. Rev. Meister stated that the number one priority is to relocate our children’s activities from the basement, and that the Opportunity Shop has requested some of the vacated basement areas. Some present expressed the view that the entire structure needs to be gutted. No time line was evident for replacement of the HVAC system.

Senior Warden’s Report: Senior Warden Deborah Potter reported that the Strategic Planning Committee is sponsoring Creation Cafés this weekend, and encouraged all present to participate. The hope is to be able to develop mission statements from this activity. Potter also requested that the Vestry and Staff submit their pledges for 2016 as soon as the Campaign kicks off in October.

Rector’s Report: Rev. Meister presented a written Report (Attachment G), and noted that the upcoming Parish weekend is now fully subscribed. Both the National Cathedral School for Girls (NCS) and St. Albans School for Boys have recently requested that they be allowed to use our Church for their school worship Services. The NCS request is based on the fact that the space they used for Services is being renovated. St. Albans requested the use of the Church for 54 Services because their chapel is too small to accommodate their numbers; Rev. Meister advised that we can make the Church available for 36 of these requests. Rev. Meister reported on conversations she recently held with parishioner Patsy Connor, who heads a program entitled *Youth With Purpose* that she had established with a Transformation Grant from the Parish. Patsy Connor is retiring and wants the program to be taken over by St. Alban’s, but St. Alban’s would not be doing so. Rev. Meister also said she has had a good conversation with Bishop

Mariann Budde, who wants to “rethink” relationships among the Close institutions, including between St. Alban’s Parish and the Cathedral Congregation. The Bishop will explain her thoughts in a meeting in the near future. Finally, Rev. Meister reported that Rev. Carol Flett has offered the opportunity to show *Journey into Europe*, a new documentary about Islam in Europe, by Akbar Ahmed. The film will be shown at St. Alban’s on October 15, at 7:00 pm.

Rev. Meister concluded the meeting at 8:45 pm, whereupon Compline was led by Susana Hair. The meeting was then adjourned.

Respectfully submitted.

Tom Jansen

Secretary