

St. Alban's Episcopal Church
Minutes of the Vestry Meeting
Tuesday, November 17, 2015 – 6:30 pm
Nourse Hall

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

Vestry Members Present: Craig Albright, Mark Edwards, Ivan Fermin, Marcy Fisher, Sandy Kolb, Tomás Montgomery, Ann Morrison, Donna Palmer, Joan Phalen, Marty Welch; Susana Hair (Youth Representative)

Staff: Rev. Jim Quigley, Rev. Matthew Hanisian, Rev. Emily Griffin

Others Present: Susan Morris (WSA Board Representative), Cay Hartley (Diocesan Delegate), Barbara Manard (parishioner)

Call-to-Order: A meeting of the Vestry was called to order at 6:30 pm by The Rev. Dr. Deborah Meister. An opening prayer was offered by Marcy Fisher.

Check-in: Marcy Fisher requested that Vestry members assist on Sunday, November 22, in the preparation of 100 casseroles for the SOME Ministry. Sandy Kolb also requested support at the Adult Forum this Sunday where the Strategic Planning Committee would provide updates on their work to the Parish. Sandy Kolb noted that the session would be recorded for those who could not attend in person. In response to a question, Rev. Meister said that the Staff Retreat has been postponed until December 10. Rev. Meister also pointed out that the previous weekend's dinner at the Tubman School was a great success. Rev. Hanisian said he heard very good feedback on Vestry Member Craig Albright's stewardship statement of last Sunday.

Approval of October Minutes: Rev. Meister asked if anyone had changes to the draft Vestry Minutes for October. No changes were proposed. Donna Palmer moved that the Minutes be approved; Marcy Fisher seconded and all members present voted in favor.

Consent Agenda: Written reports from Revs. Quigley, Hanisian and Griffin (Attachments A-C) were distributed and accepted without further discussion. Sandy Kolb provided a written Report to the Vestry on God's Work in the World (Attachment D), explaining that the new structure for outreach was created a year ago in hope that funding for outreach would be better coordinated across funding sources. The structure includes two representatives each from the Vestry, WSA Board, TLC/DC, Global Mission, and Sustaining Ministries, and the Associate Rectors for Outreach and Youth. In response to a question, Rev. Quigley said he believed the structure has accounted for significant progress, but there is work yet to be done. Rev. Meister asked if the Report should be adopted. Craig Albright moved for adoption for the Report, Tomás Montgomery seconded, and all members present voted in favor.

Treasurer's Report: Hollis McLoughlin distributed the detailed "2015 Financial Summary of Operating Activity, the First Ten Months" and Draft Version #4 of the "2016 Operating Budget". He also provided a one-page summary of suggested adjustments to the 2016 Budget that were the result of previous work on the budget by the Wardens, Treasurer, Director of Finance, Finance Committee, and Rector (Attachment E). Ann Morrison, on behalf of Ken Patterson, explained the "Quick Summary of the 2016 Pledge Campaign (as of November 17, 2015)", contained in the "2015 Financial Summary" package as the page bearing handwritten number 12 (Attachment F). She reported that the Annual campaign was going well, with 243 pledges, totaling \$943,343 – or 75% of the goal – received to date. She noted that by this time last year, the amount pledged was \$881,000. Sandy Kolb moved that the Pledge Campaign Report be approved, Donna Palmer seconded, and all members present voted in favor.

Hollis McLoughlin discussed the 2015 Operating Activity Report to date. He noted that expenses are on target, personnel costs have increased as anticipated and thus are over budget, and income has risen. He noted the Endowment income is up 4% for the year, and the Opportunity Shop income continues to grow.

Discussion: Budget 2016 First Look: Hollis McLoughlin led a discussion about the first look at the Draft 2016 Budget, summarized in his one-page handout. At this point, it is assumed there will be a 2016 Operating Income of \$1,818,960 and total expenses of \$1,951,207, resulting in a deficit on paper of \$132,247. He noted that much of the deficit could be made up through a \$123,000 Endowment draw if such a draw were not needed for the 2015 budget. McLoughlin affirmed that the sense of the Finance Committee is to use the endowment draw one time for the 2016 budget. Beyond that, structural problems with the budget would persist if everything remained the same. Finally, McLoughlin pointed out that estimated costs for repair of the Satterlee Hall boiler are lower than previously reported – about \$75,000 – and this amount would come from the Parish Reserve Fund.

Ann Morrison raised an issue regarding unrestricted bequests. At present, 90% of any unrestricted bequest goes to the Reserve Fund as soon as it is received, until the Reserve Fund reaches \$600,000, at which point the 90% goes to the Endowment. (The remaining 10% goes toward the current year operating budget.) Morrison commented that she believes this practice is too restrictive and artificially restraining, and suggested the Vestry consider a policy of waiting until the end of the fiscal year to allocate requests. There was no further discussion or action on this issue.

Rev. Meister encouraged the Vestry to study the draft budget, and to come to the December meeting ready to propose amendments to the budget. The budget will then be finalized in January.

Hollis McLoughlin moved on to the next agenda item: the WSA/God's Work in the World initiative. He noted that the initiative was designed to align the various outreach efforts and serve as a clearing house for Parish Outreach. One example was WSA's recent approval of \$5,500 for the ASP Mission. Deborah Potter pointed out that all WSA money is part of the

Parish Outreach Budget. Rev. Meister observed that because of the increases in Op Shop income, we as a Parish could begin to dream bigger without canceling current mission commitments. She also noted that the congregation needs to be informed about where all of the Outreach money goes so there is a high degree of transparency. WSA Representative Susan Morris affirmed the need for coordination and oversight, noting by way of recent example that the Bishop Walker School this year separately requested and received funds from multiple sources – pledge and plate income, Mustard Seed, TLC, and WSA – resulting in a higher total funding level than had been planned for.

Executive Session: The Vestry went into Executive Session from 7:55 to 8:30 pm. All non-members except Hollis McLoughlin were excused for that session. At the conclusion of the Executive Session, the open session reconvened, with all those remaining present returning.

Strategic Planning Update: Sandy Kolb distributed a Strategic Planning Task Force Report (Attachment G). She reported that the Task Force personally received input from 104 individuals, and an additional 20 provided comments online. She presented a draft Parish Mission Statement: *To be a beacon of hope by nurturing an inclusive, diverse Christian community and transforming lives as a church that lives outside its walls.* Kolb said that the Task Force would present its results to date at the Forum on November 22, and would have a special meeting on January 9 to finalize its recommendations for presentation to the Parish. She anticipates the work will be finished by April.

EDOW Redistricting Proposal: The Episcopal Diocese of Washington (EDOW) is recommending that diocesan districts be realigned so as to foster greater cooperation and cohesiveness among parishes and greater identity with their communities. St. Alban's would be in the Northern D.C. District. Such realignment has been working very well in the Diocese of Maryland. Rev. Meister said the matter would likely be brought to a vote at the next Convention.

Discussion: History between St. Alban's and the Cathedral Congregation: Rich Turner summarized a history of difficulties between the Cathedral and St. Alban's dating back eight years. He pointed out that the previous Dean started the Cathedral Congregation (which now has 1,400 members) in spite of concerns expressed by the then-Rector of St. Alban's. Disagreements between the two entities worsened over time and eventually a covenant agreement was created and signed by representatives from both entities. Per conversations with Scott Benhase (our Rector at the time), the Cathedral persistently broke the agreement without any consultation with St. Alban's. The result was particularly hard felt at St. Alban's, but the Cathedral Congregation was evidently unaware of either the covenant document or the St. Alban's concerns. Until recently, Bishop Mariann was not aware of the lingering ill feelings. Rev. Meister stated that she, Jan Cope, and the Bishop have been working together to heal any breach between St. Alban's and the Cathedral.

Junior Warden's Report: Rich Turner orally reported that the Satterlee Hall kitchen cleaning has been scheduled and will be completed before Christmas. He said he has three bids for the boiler repair and hopes to have a contract by the next Vestry meeting; the amount will be

around \$80,000. He also noted that the Property Committee has decided to replace the Church sound system at a cost of less than \$15,000; the old system will be installed in Satterlee Hall.

Senior Warden's Report: Deborah Potter orally reported that EDOW is proposing Parishes try to increase their annual contributions to a 10% tithe. In the draft 2016 budget, St. Alban's would contribute 7.5% of its pledge income, amounting to \$94,000. The EDOW request is for 10% of the total budget. With the increased funds, EDOW plans to provide grants for new initiatives. Rev. Meister noted there would be no decision at this meeting on an increase from the current \$94,000, and that she had told the Bishop it was unlikely there would be movement from St. Alban's this year, but the Vestry should consider reaching toward the requested tithe in future years.

Rector's Report: Rev. Meister provided a written report (Attachment H). Highlights include a decision to end Children's Chapel during the 11:15 Sunday Service, because no children of that age are currently attending this Service. She reported that last week's bilingual Bible Study was a great success. She also encouraged everyone present to study the upcoming events schedule in her report because some times for events have been modified.

The meeting concluded at 9:15 pm with the Lord's Prayer led by the Rev. Meister.

Respectfully submitted,
Tom Jansen, Secretary