

**St. Alban's Episcopal Parish**  
**Minutes of the Vestry Meeting**  
**Tuesday, December 15, 2015 – 6:30 pm**  
**Nourse Hall**

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

**Vestry Members Present:** Mark Edwards, Ivan Fermin, Marcy Fisher, Marcus King, Sandy Kolb, Tomás Montgomery, Ann Morrison, Donna Palmer, Ken Patterson, Joan Phalen, Marty Welch, Susana Hair (Youth Representative).

**Staff:** The Rev. Jim Quigley, The Rev. Matthew Hanisian, The Rev. Emily Griffin; Douglas Dykstra (Director of Finance).

**Others Present:** Susan Morris (WSA Board Representative), Samantha Gottlich (Seminarian), 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 Marcus King.

**Check-in:** Rev. Meister informed the Vestry of arrangements for the funeral of Mary Wade, the spouse of long-time St. Alban's Rector, The Rev. Dr. Frank Wade. She pointed out that Rev. Wade had decided to not involve St. Alban's parishioners in the service out of concern that some who were not involved would feel hurt; for that reason he was involving only other clergy friends. Rev. Meister reminded the Vestry that there is a special Vestry Meeting on January 9, 2016, at 10:00 am to discuss the work of the Strategic Planning Task Force.

Joan Phalen presented her concern that the Parish staff's work environment is negative because of, in her view, the Rector's management style. She added that she has heard from five parishioners that they are considering leaving the Parish because of the Rector's leadership style. Phalen emphasized that she wanted her concern regarding this issue to be recorded in the Vestry minutes. Phalen then asked why the Staff Retreat had again been cancelled from the planned December 10 date reported in the November minutes; in response, Rev. Meister stated that the facilitator had cancelled the Retreat because the facilitator was not ready to conduct it in December. Phalen offered the opinion that the cancellation was evidence of the fact that "the way we treat one other" is not a priority; Deborah Potter countered that the postponement in no way reflected disregard for Parish personnel. Rev. Meister explained that she is working with the consultant to get a new date, and noted that the consultant had already met one-on-one with staff members. Marcy Fisher said she also is concerned about the management issue. There was discussion about whether to retain a different consultant, but Rev. Meister noted there has been investment to date by this consultant, who she believes to be highly qualified. Donna Palmer voiced concern about whether the Rector's management of the staff is an issue that belongs with the Vestry. Ken Patterson opined that the proper forum

would be with the Bishop; he added that he is also troubled by what he believes are problems between WSA and the Clergy, and it is his sincere hope all these problems can be worked out. Marty Welch said it took a great deal of courage for Joan Phalen to raise this difficult issue, and for that he thanked her.

Tomás Montgomery reported that he has been speaking with parishioners from the Spanish language Service who are very concerned that Debbie Kirk, the bilingual priest who leads the Service and supports them, should be kept on the Staff. Montgomery said these parishioners want to support her and the Parish, but lack clear understanding about how Episcopal Church funding works. He attributed this confusion in part to differences between the Roman Catholic Church's funding practices, with which the Spanish-language parishioners might be more familiar, and those of the Episcopal Church.

Sandy Kolb reported that the Syrian blanket and coat drive was a huge success. Three vanloads of blankets and coats were collected, with the help of the Cathedral, St. Columba's and others.

Marcus King reported that Children's Chapel is continuing to grow, and he noted Rev. Griffin's positive impact on the ministry.

**Approval of November Minutes:** With regard to the November Vestry Minutes, Sandy Kolb noted that the final sentence of the paragraph beginning on page two and continuing onto page three was somewhat misleading in that it implied various recipients of outreach money would only receive one gift in 2016. After discussion, it was agreed upon that the sentence would be dropped from the minutes. Sandy Kolb moved that the Minutes be approved with the above deletion; Mark Edwards seconded the motion and all members present voted in favor.

**Consent Agenda:** Written reports from Revs. Quigley, Hanisian, Griffin and Kirk (Attachments A-D) were distributed and accepted without further discussion. Donna Palmer asked that reports on the Consent Agenda as well as the minutes from previous meetings be distributed well in advance of Vestry meetings. Rev. Meister noted the deadline for such reports is the Thursday before the Vestry meeting, but they are often submitted late.

Ken Patterson provided a written Stewardship Report (Attachment E) noting that he has received one more pledge since production of the Report. He asked for suggestions of how to close the 2016 funding gap of approximately \$141,000. Patterson's report indicates Senior Warden Deborah Potter sent emails out over the past weekend to families who pledged last year but not yet this year. Patterson's report notes that Potter had received immediate replies that eight more families intend to pledge, but had not done so yet. Donna Palmer asked how the current pledge goal of \$1,250,000 was arrived at. Deborah Potter said that the figure had seemed attainable based upon what was eventually pledged for 2015 even though it was a stretch.

Patterson said that each year thank you notes are sent to pledging families. He asked for help from the Vestry in writing them this year. Vestry members then each took a number of names of pledging units, and agreed to send out the notes before mid January. Sandy Kolb moved that the Stewardship Report be adopted; Tomás Montgomery seconded, and all present voted in favor.

**Discussion: Budget 2016:** Treasurer Hollis McLoughlin noted there is a need for a Continuing Resolution for 2016 expenditures until a budget is adopted by the Vestry sometime in January. He proposed a resolution capping 2016 expenditures at 2015 levels. A Motion to approve the Resolution was made by Sandy Kolb and seconded by Marcy Fisher. All present voted in favor.

McLoughlin then explained that the Vestry needs to approve Housing Allowance letters for IRS tax purposes to be signed by the Secretary. The letters are based on current Clergy compensation levels, and reflect no increase. Marcy Fisher made a Motion that the letters be approved, and Tomas Montgomery seconded. All present voted in favor. The letters were signed and returned to McLoughlin.

McLoughlin reported on current 2015 spending levels and said he is cautiously optimistic that there could be a surplus at the end of the year, in which case there would be no need to use the projected 2015 Endowment draw of \$123,000. If that amount were rolled over into the 2016 budget, the projected deficit for 2016 would be \$110,000. Any 2015 surplus could also further reduce the 2016 deficit. After discussion centering around the need for a balanced budget and the ramifications of using the draw and surplus funds, McLoughlin offered the opinion that the Parish will need all funding it can get for 2016. Ann Morrison made a Motion that the Vestry approve moving any remaining 2015 funds and unspent Endowment draw to the 2016 Operating Budget; Ken Patterson seconded the Motion, and all present voted in favor.

McLoughlin requested that the Vestry discuss the Endowment Fund at a future meeting, noting the Vestry had to be careful to count on using the Fund as an expedience. Rev. Meister stated that in her view it is prudent to take the draw this year, but not necessarily in future years.

**Executive Session:** Sandy Kolb made a Motion to enter Executive Session to address an unspecified matter. Donna Palmer seconded the Motion, and all present voted in favor. The Vestry met in Executive Session from 8:15 to 10:00 pm, whereupon the open session reconvened with only Vestry members and officers (except the Treasurer, who departed near the end of the Executive Session) present (the staff and others present having departed when the Executive Session began).

**Junior Warden's Report:** No report because of lengthy Executive Session noted above

**Senior Warden's Report:** No report because of lengthy Executive Session noted above. Deborah Potter did note that the Vestry needed to authorize the formation of a Nominating Committee, which she will chair. Members whose terms are expiring – Mark Edwards, Marcy

Fisher, and Ann Morrison – will serve on the committee. By unanimous consent, the committee was authorized.

**Rector's Report:** Rev. Meister reported that Samaritan Ministries had requested to have a closer partnership with St. Alban's, including having a parishioner serve on their Board of Directors. Because the God's Work in the World committee had decided a year earlier not to pursue a closer relationship at this time, Associate Rector Jim Quigley, acting in his role of leading the God's Work in the World ministry, had denied the request. Susan Morris has been involved in the issue and strongly believes St. Alban's should support naming someone to be on the Samaritan Ministries Board.

The meeting concluded at 10:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Tom Jansen, Secretary