

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

Nourse Hall

Vestry Officers Present: The Rev. Dr. Deborah A. Meister, Deborah Potter (Senior Warden), Bill Edgar (Junior Warden), Lindsay West (Secretary)

Vestry Members Present: Craig Albright, Mark Edwards, Lauri Fitz-Pegado, Rich Jensen, Marcus King, Sandy Kolb, Donna Palmer, Mark Shima, Lin Tate, Jordy VandeBunte.

Staff: Rev. Jim Quigley, Rev. Juan Pastor Reyes

Diocesan Delegates: Cay Hartley, Amanda Hobart

Call-to-Order: A meeting of the Vestry was called to order by The Rev. Dr. Deborah Meister at 6:38 pm.

Check-in:

Donna Palmer shared people were glad to hear that a balanced budget was passed, but they would have liked to see a particular ministry get more money.

Sandy Kolb shared a resource on different types of planning which she passed out to Vestry members.

Approval of the Minutes

Rich Jensen offered a MOTION, seconded by Sandy Kolb, to approve minutes of the Vestry's January 20, 2015 meeting. The MOTION was approved by unanimous voice vote with corrections made for typos and formatting.

Adoption of Consent Agenda

Reports on Planned Giving, Pastoral Care, Ministry with Seniors.

Mark Edwards offered a MOTION, seconded by Sandy Kolb, to adopt the Consent Agenda for the February 17, 2015 meeting. The MOTION was approved by unanimous vote.

Finance Report

Bill Edgar, Junior Warden, shared that the parish is on good footing for January. Both income and expenses were right on budget. The Endowment was slightly down due to market factors. The Reserve Fund is fully funded.

Lin Tate asked if more money had been pledged since the budget was passed. Mr. Edgar shared that approximately \$20,000 in additional pledges had been received.

Junior Warden's Report

Addendum to Discussion of 2014 Budget Surplus

Mr. Edgar, Junior Warden, noted that since the 2014 budget surplus was applied to the operating fund for 2015, and the Vestry had agreed to stipulate where those funds went, a decision needed to be made as to where those funds were to be allocated. He suggested allocating the surplus to the Crossroads apartments.

Rich Jensen noted that the Mission Committee looks at percentage of pledge income used for outreach, and this might affect that number. Lin Tate shared her concern that it will inaccurately reflect the numbers the Mission Committee uses for 2015 pledge income used for outreach.

Rev. Meister suggested the money instead be attributed to Children's Ministry, both operating expenses and personnel.

A MOTION offered by Mark Shima, and seconded by Sandy Kolb, to allocate 2014 budget surplus funds to Children's Ministry in the 2015 operating budget was approved by unanimous vote.

Discussion: The 5:00 Service

Lauri Fitz-Pegado shared that since the town hall meeting several weeks before, there have been a series of meetings to discuss the 5:00 service and its future. Spanish language service members met with the Bishop and with the Latino Missioner, Sara Beth Goodwin. These meetings were held after services, and were pretty rich in their exchanges. The Spanish language service congregants want to remain at St. Alban's. It is home. If they were to prioritize, they would like to continue at 5:00 because it is more convenient due to work and cultural reasons. They were flexible as to whether the service would be bilingual. After Rev. Juan Pastor Reyes leaves at the end of his contract, they would like a supply priest. They suggested Deacon Debbie Kirk who has attended services and knows the congregation well. She'll probably be ordained in June and is bilingual. Their second choice is a combination of maintaining their 5:00 service twice a month and having a service in the morning. They do not prefer to be at church at 9:00 in the morning. Most Latino services are at noon or in the afternoon in the city. They were hoping they could worship in the late morning.

They were flexible and willing to discuss options. They do want to hear the gospel in their own tongue, but they understand there have to be compromises. Their children would be able to attend Sunday school if they came in the morning. They realize that they may lose their musician, Julio. They do want to know soon what decisions will be made. They are very anxious about it dragging out. They want to be able to plan. They have offered to raise money. They feel that this is very much about money and they feel hurt and that they are the sacrificial lambs.

A second town hall meeting on the 5 p.m. service had been scheduled but was canceled. This stemmed from a sense that those involved weren't ready and it wasn't clear what would be said. There was a suggestion at a previous Vestry meeting that David Wolf might be invited to speak at the town hall

meeting because he had done bilingual services at a church in New Jersey. When it turned out that he could not attend a town hall on that day, a small meeting was held at Ms. Fitz-Pegado's house instead, where David met with parishioners who expressed interest in the service. The conclusions out of that meeting were that: 1) it is very difficult, if not impossible, to jump from a Spanish language to a bilingual service, particularly if it replaces an existing service. That is usually a mistake. It is a difficult leap to make for both cultures. He would not recommend that unless it was done over time in a process. People do have a desire to worship in their native tongue; 2) it is critical to know where the clergy are on this and that there is 100% clergy support; 3) the Vestry must be on board and must provide leadership and support to make this happen. The Vestry was urged to set up a task force to work toward a plan by March 30 to allow people to know what's going on and to make clear what the Vestry thinks in terms of moving forward.

Another discussion with 5:00 service members was held on Sunday, Feb.15. They were still very nervous and wanted to know why the town hall was cancelled. They asked some serious questions, like where the clergy was and why clergy besides Rev. Meister had never shown up to the service. They asked about the Vestry, and suggested that if they are to stay at St. Alban's they would like to have someone on the Vestry to represent the Spanish language service; possibly a special slot reserved for a Latino Vestry member.

Lin Tate suggested that what the Vestry needs to discuss is where they should go from here with clear direction so they are prepared for budget discussions in the fall.

Rev. Meister said she does not believe turning one of the current services into a bilingual service is an option. It would cause too much pushback. A new service could be created that incorporates a core group from both cultures so it would be viable. If an effort to become multicultural has a chance of succeeding it needs to impact everything the parish does, she said. The gala committee spent a lot of time last year considering how to incorporate Spanish speakers. Everything would have to become that purposeful. The parish has to decide they are full members of the family or they are not.

Ms. Tate suggested the issue of multiculturalism is one that has to be considered. There are people who are now members of St. Alban's that want to stay. The Vestry does need to consider how the church is to structure an ongoing service and how it will be funded.

Mr. Jensen asked how a bilingual service would involve a sermon that is accessible to both languages. Rev. Meister responded that a sermon might be preached in one language and in print in the other language. Or the sermon could alternate week by week, or there could be discussions in each language in place of a formal sermon. It would be necessary to look at what models are out there that work well.

Ms. Tate said that it would be a mistake to get caught up in bilingual because it is a big chunk to bite off. Integrating other non-worship ways is better. A possible solution could be having a service at 11:15 in the little chapel and then involving Spanish speakers in volunteer opportunities. The spirit of the Spanish-speaking members is something the morning services could really use and would make the parish stronger as a whole.

Deborah Potter agreed that support from the clergy and the Vestry is necessary, but the full support of the congregation is also needed. There is a sense among some long-time parishioners that this service just used our space and that was nice. The Vestry has to get everyone to recognize that that 5 p.m. service members are members of this church and deserve full support.

Mark Edwards said that time was of the essence and asked if it could be made clear what the task force might look like and who would serve on it. Ms. Fitz-Pegado said that she and Ms. Tate hope that leadership will decide that those who have been heavily involved in these meetings be involved in the task force.

Vestry members engaged in discussion as a group as to where the church should go with the 5:00 Service and its members; whether to create a long term plan to integrate these two cultures or to say goodbye to the Spanish language congregants.

There was an overall agreement that the Vestry wants to keep these members of the church at St. Alban's and that a task force be formed to do long term planning. There was some concern that the larger church isn't as interested in this issue as the Vestry is. It was discussed that in order for the church to grow and thrive, incorporating other cultures would be necessary.

A MOTION was made by Mark Shima and seconded by Mark Edwards that St. Alban's commit as a parish to be multicultural. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

A MOTION was made by Sandy Kolb to charge a task force with coming up with ways to integrate the English and Spanish speaking members of our congregation in joint ministry and worship and to report back by the Vestry meeting on April 21, 2015. The MOTION was seconded by Jordy VandeBunte. It was approved by unanimous vote with Craig Albright abstaining.

Membership of the Task Force: Ivan Fermin, Karina Rodriguez, Reyna Baires, Jordy VandeBunte, Donna Palmer, Lauri Fitz-Pegado, Lin Tate, and Dick Parkins.

Senior Warden's Report

Deborah Potter, Senior Warden, shared that before her tenure Vestry members were expected to act as greeters on occasion for morning services. She was looking for someone to volunteer to create a rotation for Vestry members to serve as greeters. She proposed that Vestry members do this as the Ushers do, serving one month at a time. She hoped that people would feel interested in doing this and in welcoming people. The Vestry should be the face of the parish as people walk in the door. She will approach people individually to request their help with creating the rotation.

She also wanted to ask how many people were coming to the Wednesday movie nights. The current count seemed low, so she requested that Vestry members spread the word about the lower price, \$25 instead of \$50, for home cooked dinners which will be eaten as the movie is shown with a discussion after.

Rector's Report

In addition to her written report, Deborah Meister drew attention to the discovery call that was held with the people designing the new parish website. There was pretty good consensus on what goes on the front page. It has taken longer because there were few ideas about logo. Progress is being made and a first draft of front page should be here within days.

She visited with the American University Chaplaincy, and it seems that they are interested in reinvigorating their relationship with St. Alban's.

A manager for the Opportunity Shop has been identified and an offer has been extended and accepted. The name cannot be released until mid-April – Jim Sottile is working on a letter of agreement.

Now that the Vestry is entering strategic planning, she asked Vestry members to attend any services they have not been to. It is critical to informing the discussion around services for the strategic plan. She asked for names of possible strategic planning consultants.

Rev. Meister addressed the resolution made at the end of the budget meeting about what could and could not be shared with the parish as it seemed to leave some confused. What was remembered by some and was her understanding was that Vestry members could share the decisions made and the discussions that led up to those decisions, but that what would not be shared was the names of individuals who made specific points, opting instead for "we" language.

Associate Rector Reports (written reports)

In addition to his written report, Jim Quigley stated that he was pretty amazed at what happened tonight. What the church is really good at is assigning task forces to think about things, he said, but this Vestry made a pretty big decision that will take a lot of work to make happen. It will be a lot more than just a list of ways to integrate and will take more work than what is being done now.

The St. Alban's Vestry adjourned with the Doxology at 9:05 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lindsay West, Secretary