

St. John's Parish
Minutes of the Vestry
June 17, 2008

The June vestry meeting convened in the Parish Life Building at 7:00 PM.

Members present were: Junior Warden Boyd Baker, Dannie Barteet, Darlene Blitch, Neal Edgerton, Senior Warden Perry Gervais, Stephen Haynsworth, Sherri Houston, Sue Jenkins, Adair McKoy, and Libby Puckette. Also present were: The Rev. Dr. Greg Snyder, Rev. Joe Gibbes, Treasurer Cindy Pennington, and Recording Secretary Susan Shealey. Absent were: Billy Crowther and Trace Paradise.

Father Greg asked vestry members for any prayer requests. He then prayed to open the meeting.

After the prayer, Father Greg asked Father Joe to introduce the guest speaker, who was there to present a proposal for use of space in the LaRoche building. He advised the vestry that after her presentation they would continue according to the agenda.

Joe introduced Sarah Hocutt, owner/operator of Creative Play Preschool. She began the pre-school in October 2007 for children between the ages of six weeks to four years. Sarah is an art therapist and also has her master's in education. Her preschool has grown, and therefore requires more space than she has in her home currently. A previous location did not allow for any faith-based curriculum. She is therefore looking for a permanent location, at St. John's, that will allow her program to expand to a maximum number of 24 children and be able to incorporate a faith based learning element to the curriculum. The program runs less than four hours per day, Monday through Friday. Sarah desires a relationship with the clergy and staff, not just rental space and would like to relocate to the LaRoche building as soon as possible as the vestry approves.

The vestry thanked Sarah for sharing her information, and agreed to let her know of their decision as soon as possible.

Father Greg gave a meditation. He told the vestry of dreams/visions that he has been having over the last years about water flowing through St. John's. The water would flow from the altar, starting as a trickle and then rising until it overflowed. In his dream, there was no panic only peace. Some parishioners told him that twenty years ago, when Rick Belser was here, he and others had that same vision. Father Greg believes that the water represents the Holy Spirit, and that the infusion of the Holy Spirit here at St. John's would be overflowing. He continued to talk about how important water is in scripture as it is, for example, in Revelation 22 and Ezekiel 47. He asked the vestry to think about how we would interact with the Holy Spirit when He is really moving? He reminded them that it might be messy as symbolized by the water. You can't contain or control water when it is overflowing.

After the meditation, the vestry read the vision.

The minutes were accepted and approved with one minor change by Neal Edgerton regarding a comment he made at the last meeting.

Old Business:

Stewardship:

Perry opened the discussion by thanking Billy Crowther, in his absence, for bringing the financial issue to the table for the vestry to study and discuss. Perry commented that it gave the vestry an opportunity to clarify things, and he then brought some insight from the last Finance Committee meeting.

He learned that all the money that had been borrowed from the "Grace Chapel" funds for various things had been reinstated in full by virtue of interest accrued or by repayment.

He also clarified that the wording of all documents found, suggest that once Grace Chapel is fully taken care of, the other money can be used as determined by the vestry.

There was a legal opinion on what that means but it cannot be located at this time.

Cindy Pennington educated the vestry about the source of the money and stated that the money is actually from multiple sources such as the Barnwell money which was given in the 1970's and the Rich money that was given in the early 2000's. The legal opinion from 1983 was not clear then, according to documents found, but simply stated that Grace Chapel was to be "taken care of". The Rich money had no restrictions placed on it and was merely "given to Grace Chapel".

Cindy also reminded the vestry that there was \$36,000 borrowed in 2005 but was repaid in 2006 and 2007. She has records back to 2003 that show that we borrowed only this once, in this time frame, and it has been repaid.

Perry Gervais directed the vestry back to the charge from the last meeting that all vestry members should pray daily leading up to this meeting. He asked if anyone had any revelations regarding the situation.

Boyd Baker stated that he liked the fact that the church/membership was getting the financial information as evidenced by the postings in the Bridge, as well as the potential outgoing letter. He said that you "never know what direction this will take when the congregation has the information" and then he made the analogy of a wedding stating that, "God is in charge of this bridal party".

Perry Gervais acknowledged that he had not had an audible answer to his daily prayer regarding the finances. He even spoke with Adair McKoy who suggested that he not worry, "the Lord will take care of it". Therefore, after prayer and discussion, Perry is no longer worried. He believes the vestry should continue to watch the finances, but feels that God doesn't want us worried about the money situation.

Libby Puckette expressed a great desire to manage what we have. She feels that St. John's needs to be a good steward of the resources, but that as a whole we don't do a good job of surrendering. The question we should be asking is, "Are we doing the Lord's will?" She feels that the Holy Spirit is here and circling, but there seems to be some reluctance to change, and this is a surrender issue. She didn't get a clear cut answer to her prayer, but does have a sense of peace about the money and where we are. She also feels that maybe God is calling on the congregation to give offerings above and beyond the tithe instead of trying to cut the budget. She reminded the vestry that the church is really not spending that much money on programs, as most programs charge fees to cover costs, and generally pay for themselves.

Stephen Haynsworth said, "Do the programs and God will take care of it."

Cindy Pennington challenged the group to communicate the "good stuff" to those who are not necessarily participating in the programs and don't see the compelling story that is happening at St. John's.

Neal Edgerton stated that he did not get a clear cut answer either. He can go along with the vestry by saying he is not worried, yet every month the financial statements show that we are behind. "If I worry less", he states, "I hope it's in the right spirit".

Father Greg stated that maybe we can be concerned about being good stewards and watch without fretting.

The vestry decided to go ahead with the financial report.

Cindy presented the financials as had been emailed to all vestry members previously. She pointed out that in May 2008, we brought in \$9000 more than we spent but that Year-to-Date we are \$33,800 behind budget overall.

She showed the vestry additionally, that we are ahead of where we were at the same time last year.

Sue Jenkins commented about the economy, and wondered out loud about how it would affect giving.

Father Joe reported to the vestry that he was on a vestry the last time the economy slowed, and they went through the same thoughts and process.

Father Greg believes that a slowing economy actually gives St. John's more opportunity for ministry.

Cindy Pennington reminded the vestry that when there was, or has been, a specific need, the money has always been there. She cited examples of times when this congregation came through, and feels as though the congregation wants to come through for needs that are presented.

Father Greg asked the vestry to set aside a time for fasting along with their continued prayer on this issue. He feels a need for the vestry to fast corporately. The vestry determined that they will fast beginning on Tuesday evening June 24, 2008 through Wednesday June 25, 2008 and end with Eucharist at 6 PM on June 25 2008.

Perry Gervais passed out a letter that he, Billy Crowther, Father Greg and Father Joe had worked on at the request of the vestry from the last meeting. Discussion followed. The vestry agreed in principle with the letter but there were questions and concerns about the timing and the wording of the letter. All agreed to amend the letter and potentially send after next month to show the church's position at the mid-year point.

Committee Reports:

LaRoche Building Renovations:

There was no report at this time.

Libby Puckette commented that she was excited about Sarah Hocutt's presentation regarding her preschool and the fact that she wanted to use the LaRoche Building.

Stephen Haynsworth suggested that her plan gives the vestry good direction and the ability to move forward and make some changes that need to be made.

Neal Edgerton requested that we contact our insurance carrier to determine any potential considerations.

Cindy Pennington asked the vestry to read a chapter, which will be sent to the vestry in email form, from the book, *Remember the Future: Financial Leadership and Asset Management for Congregations* by Gerald W. Keucher related to the outside use of buildings.

Other comments were made about employee files, proper training of employees, and background check information, and what level of oversight was in the church's best interest. What is the moral obligation to protect the campus versus the legal obligation to run the business.

Father Joe, Sherri Houston, and Boyd Baker will meet as an ad hoc committee to discuss and obtain the necessary information.

275th Anniversary Committee:

There was no report for this committee at this time.

Grace Chapel Committee:

Neal Edgerton reported that the beautification project at Grace Chapel was almost finished. He also reported that some of the new roses were dying because of a lightning strike to the new irrigation system. Repairs have been made. Thanks also to Bubba Jenkins for replacing the "shutter dogs" that hold the shutters in place.

San Juan/St. John's Partnership Committee:

Stephen Haynsworth reported that Rev. Mercedes is continuing to participate in services with St. John's, and that the partnership is going well.

Outreach Committee:

Stephen Haynsworth reported that Claudia Boyce has a lot going on with this committee, and that the Holy Spirit is driving it all. He states that “we are just hanging on for the ride”.

Senior Warden’s Report:

Perry Gervais reminded the vestry that Dr. Charlie Davis will be attending the next meeting to discuss potential future use of the land on Main Road for the Barrier Island Free Medical Clinic.

Junior Warden’s Report:

Boyd Baker updated the vestry on the following current items:

- An air conditioning unit at the Parish Life Building has been replaced due to a bad compressor.
- Berkeley Electric has installed a new light in the parking lot of the Parish Life Building.
- Cleaning Solutions and Supplies has contracted with St. John’s to strip and wax, then buff and maintain the floors in all buildings on campus monthly.
- There are various trees on campus that must come down due to safety issues. Boyd and Adair McKoy are working to get estimates on this project that may run into the \$4000-\$5000 range.

Associate Rector’s Report:

Father Joe Gibbes gave out copies of the SWOT analysis from the vestry retreat, and asked that the vestry be in prayer regarding where this analysis will lead the church.

He also mentioned potential dates of October 16-19 for the next hike.

Rector’s Report:

Father Greg Snyder went over upcoming dates with emphasis on the Bishop’s visit to St. John’s on July 6, 2008.

There will also be a party with the Bishop, for vestry members and spouses, at John and Darlene Blich’s house on Saturday July 5, 2008 at 6 PM.

This concluded the meeting. Father Joe prayed and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Shealey