

The Church of the Ascension

Minutes of the Vestry

April 17, 2016 Meeting

Present: Rev. Stewart Tabb, Bill Willey, Nancy Long, Michael Murphy, Suzanne Tate, Jane Hedgecock, Doug Thompson, Sam Webster, Susan Meredith, and Anne Doyle.

I. Welcome: Rev. Stewart Tabb called the meeting to order at about 12:30 p.m. Jane Hedgecock led the opening devotion.

II. Register: The minutes of the March 15, 2016 meeting were approved. Anne is to send them to Nellwyn for posting.

III. Senior Warden Report: Nancy reported that Courtney Wheeler would be hosting an open house for Camp Chanco on May 15th from 1-5pm. Courtney will send this information to Nellwyn for publicizing. Nancy reported on Genevieve's ordination ceremony that was held at Christ Church. Nancy also noted that Lynn Farlin wrote a letter of thanks for the holiday bonus.

IV. Junior Warden Report: Bill Willey reported on the electrical work that will be performed in various areas of the church in May. He summarized the report of the Building and Grounds Committee, stating that the paint work in the day school was nearly complete, and noting that the aluminum section of the roof would be re-attached.

V. Clergy Report: Stewart briefly reported on the events of Holy Week/Easter. She made note of several of the Liturgy Committee's decisions in planning for next year's Holy Week/Easter: 1) not to continue the Vigil, 2) to consider a joint choir, and 3) to put added focus upon Easter morning's worship service.

Stewart noted that three vestry members' terms will end: Nancy Long, Jane Hedgecock, and Doug Thompson. Regarding the preferred method of selecting a three-person vestry slate, Stewart asked for and received the vestry's suggestions of parishioners who might be willing to serve.

Stewart also noted that the Mutual Ministry Review is scheduled for the May 17th vestry meeting. Charles Robinson, Canon for Transition Ministries and Clergy Development, will attend the next vestry meeting to discuss the review. He will send a survey via email in advance of the meeting. Stewart asked that vestry members please give it their thoughtful attention.

Finally, Stewart announced that Richard Butler was receptive to serving on the day school board. The vestry unanimously passed a motion to accept Mr. Butler on the day school board.

VI. Treasurer's Report: Doug Thompson reported that March performance versus the budget was favorable. Pledges are ahead of budget both for the month of March and year-to-date. Expenses are in line with the budget also for the month and year-to-date. The monthly pledge payments to the Diocese have been caught up and are now current. Lastly, among Ascension's accounts, the only funds transfer that remains to be completed is the \$8 thousand for the organ repair.

VII. Old Business/New Business:

Church Pews: Ginny has asked to take out the first rows of pews in order to create a space for parents with young children, to provide for other musical options, to allow for additional performance space during Vacation Bible School, and to accommodate persons with disabilities. Stewart asked for the vestry's input in the discussion of taking out the first two rows of pews. Based upon the discussion, Stewart noted the following suggestions: 1) the opinion of young parents and grandparents should be sought, 2) the Building and Grounds Committee should be consulted to provide an estimated cost, 3) the benefits of removing the pews should be specified so that all parishioners are clear, in advance, on the reasons behind the action, 4) the option of removing the pews on a temporary or short term basis should be considered, and 5) the long term ramifications of removing the pews should also be considered. Stewart expressed gratitude for the vestry's input. Sam offered to draft a letter to parishioners on this subject. Stewart agreed to bring the topic up again during the May meeting.

Service Times: Stewart recognizes that the service start time is an issue that members of the congregation raise periodically. In light of the fact that most churches have done away with the 11:00 am start time, she asked the vestry to consider this topic. Sam would like to read some of the studies published on this topic and look at the models of churches whose Sunday schedules are working well regarding the services, Christian formation, and choir practice. Stewart agreed to get with Lynn and Ginny to further research and share the church models. Sam also inquired about the start times of other Episcopal Church services in the area. Suzanne, via smart phone, was able to find the following:

- St. Stephen's: 10am
- Good Shepherd: 8am and 10:15am
- St. Andrew's: 8am and 10:15am
- Christ & St. Luke's: 8am and 10:15am
- Old Donation: 8am and 10:30am
- St. Paul's: 10:30am
- St. Peter's: 8am and 10am
- Epiphany: 8am and 11am

Bill noted that both the pew and the service-time topics are major changes and suggested that they not be rolled-out at the same time. He also suggested that if the service time is moved up, that it be moved up at the beginning of summer and then remain the same at the beginning of fall and beyond. Stewart asked the vestry to consider the fellowship aspect of the Sunday schedule, for instance, about the appeal of serving breakfast versus lunch, or whether to hold informal social periods between the services, or after the last service.

Finally, Stewart reminded that the Vestry Retreat would be held June 3-4.

VIII. Vestry Task Group Reports:

1. Communications and Web – Suzanne reported that Ascension's web site is good; she would like to remove some of the old/outdated information. Going forward, she suggested putting less specific, dated material on the web site. She asked who had access to the website, and whether she could be given access. Stewart would like to clarify who has been given access to update the website. Suzanne agreed to meet with Bob Postle to discuss all items related to web communications.

A possible solution was discussed to make the web liaison a part-time, paid position. Another option would be to offer training in order to teach parishioners how to update and improve Ascension's web site.

2. Connecting with the Neighborhood - Jane discussed the possibility of getting area churches and temples involved. She also suggested Task Group members attend civic league meetings, like the regular meetings of Cromwell Farms and Belvedere Civic Leagues. Vestry members would like to better define the concept of *Neighborhood*, and it was agreed to spend more time on this topic during the retreat.
3. Liturgy Committee – Stewart noted the Rt. Rev. Herman Hollerith, Bishop, would be visiting during Pentecost on May 8th, and that she would be out of town for Bill's son's graduation on Pentecost, May 15th. David Davenport will be the supply priest on that date.

IX. Schedule/Devotions: Jane led a beautiful closing devotion. Nancy volunteered to lead the opening and closing devotions for the vestry's May 17th meeting. Stewart adjourned the meeting at 3:00 p.m.

X: Copier/Office Machinery Contract: On April 27, 2016, a motion was carried to approve the lease of a new copier through ESI.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Doyle