

Vestry Minutes – Church of Our Redeemer

Wednesday, April 13 – 7:30 p.m.

Handley Library, Church of Our Redeemer

Attendance: The Rev. Kate Ekrem (Priest-in-Charge), Connie Parrish (Sr. Warden), George Murnaghan (Jr. Warden), Anna Kern, Frank Kern (Treasurer), Paula Antonevich (Clerk), Emily Charlton, Susan Emanuel, Ian Fox, Sandy Keshishian, Peter Lund and James Surprenant.

Absent: The Rev. Sabeth Fitzgibbons, Bob Bettacchi, Jim Neumann

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Kate Ekrem and began with prayer offerings that included a community building exercise where participants were invited to share a joy and something they may want prayers of support for.

Vestry Goals for 2011:

With the adoption of the “DRAFT Vestry Goals for 2011-12” as a working document, three working groups were created in February to elaborate the action steps within each goal. Each group is working on their goal area and acting upon previously identified action steps [Attachment 1].

Strategic Plan task group report (Emily, James and Susan):

They created a Vestry bulletin board with names, photos and liaison information. With Lisa Thistle’s help, blue name badges have been created for all Vestry members for easily identification at Worship and other church events. The next step is to create a Strategic Planning bulletin board that will highlight and share the progress of the Strategic Plan.

Property/Capital task group report (Bob, Connie, Frank, George and Ian):

In an effort to develop a strategic view of the Property Maintenance and Capital needs, the working group is planning a joint meeting with property and finance committee members to evaluate the ongoing maintenance needs identified “Blue Book” to propose a multi-year capital expenditure plan.

To evaluate current and anticipated (“wish list”) space requirements the working group will survey and meet with ministries to help determine space needs. Ian Fox, liaison to the Music Committee has begun the conversation with that group (see notes in liaison report), and Connie met with Kate and the Worship Committee to start the discussion on how space can better support worship. Kate provided two articles that are helping to provide context for the discussion, *The Theology of Community* and *Liturgically Informed Buildings*. Copies of the articles were made available.

Property Leadership (Frank):

The working group is also focusing on recruiting new leadership and membership for the Property committee. With the Executive Committee’s support, Frank has approached Karen Schragle, current Property Committee Chair who has expressed desire to step out of the leadership role, to assist with the transition even though a new chairperson has not yet been identified. Property is ultimately the responsibility of Vestry and preparations for the possible leadership vacancy as well as for critical record keeping, the following is to occur:

documentation of all of committee responsibilities and procedures, list of approved contractors, current and pending contracts, inspections, and regular and emergency maintenance plans. Connie and Frank will attend the next Property Committee meeting on May 2.

Leadership Development task group report (Paula, Peter and Sandy):

To accurately assess the human resources, the working group is contacting every committee and program leader and staff member – either directly or through the Vestry liaison structure – to collect data on committee leadership and membership. The data is being placed in spreadsheet to provide consistent evaluation for further Vestry discussion.

Minutes (for approval) (Paula):

A MOTION was made and seconded to approve the minutes from the Vestry meeting of March 16, 2011, previously distributed for review over email. The motion was approved unanimously.

Treasurer's Report (Frank):

Revenues through March are \$39K behind budget. This is due to *linear* spending pattern transferred over to a *seasonal* spending pattern, fewer pledged gifts received (\$122K in 2010, \$86K in 2011 (to date)), and an unusually lower contribution amount in March. Because contributions in March were below average, Frank transferred \$10K from Fidelity reserves to cover immediate obligations. This action is within the Treasurer's discretion and included the support of the Executive Committee.

Expenses are \$13K under budget through March and all expense categories, except heating oil, are running below budget. Based on heating oil cost and increased consumption due to the harsh winter, Frank predicts the heating oil will be approximately \$5K over budget.

A MOTION was made and seconded to accept the Treasurer's Report previously distributed for review over email from the month of March 2011. The motion was approved unanimously.

Vestry Liaison Reports:

Music Committee (Ian):

There have been a few changes in the music committee membership and the latest meeting was to review past projects as well as to share the information about the Strategic Plan and the corresponding Vestry goals, particularly the Property and Capital needs assessment. How the music program is adapted depends on space available but there are three areas critical to Music: space to support the non-worship activities (rehearsal, storage & choir library); space to sing during worship; and equipment and instruments, including the organ. Creating a long-term plan for the organ, including determining how much to invest in maintenance and other interim solutions, will depend on our strategic goals for worship, and the scope of any reconfiguration or re-architecting of our primary worship space.

Two goals of Music Committee include nurturing intergenerational music and fully integrating different types of music into every service. To meet these goals, the choir is considering rehearsing earlier on Sunday morning and offering childcare or carpools (note from Kate: nursery care can be made available at 8:30 a.m.); Bernadette is in the process of surveying the

availability of musical talent/instruments from the congregation; and the Music committee is also hoping to co-coordinate a program with Adult Formation Committee on the history of music.

The Music Committee reviewed Bernadette's proposed Building Use policy setting out appropriate access to the organ for members of the congregation; and approved re-allocating organ maintenance funds to hire brass musicians for the Easter Sunday main service.

Communications Committee (Paula): Paula met with the committee that is composed of Janet Kern and Alice Bennett. This is no current committee chair. There was a review of projects and expectations of communications for the church. To create context and consistency of Redeemer's communications, the committee is going to investigate examples of communications policies and consider an adaptation of one for Redeemer.

Assist Priest Report (Sabeth):

In Sabeth's absence, Kate shared the highlights of the Assistant Priest's report that previously distributed over email.

Adult Formation: Bill Fortier's *Bibles, Bread and Battles: Fighting over the Stuff of Faith* was extremely well received and well attended. Tuesday's contemplative Eucharist and the Tuesday evening series on Prayer with Paula Pryce-Digby's and Kate had attendance varied between 3 and 7. It seems that Sundays really ARE the time to engage adults in Christian formation programs. Next formation series will be a localized version of Via Media, which begins on May 8. Each adult formation committee member is organizing a session and inviting panelists.

Education for Ministry (EfM) introduction session will be May 1. EfM is a small group study program that is lay led and quite substantial in its content. Two other churches in the Alewife Deanery will be joining in EfM.

Youth Formation: Sunday, May 1 will be the youth service and plans for that are coming along nicely. Beth Murnaghan and Sabeth are developing a Leadership Development Event/workshop for Sunday May 15, noon to 2, to help identify next year's Christian formation leaders. Soft Space will be implemented in time for Easter.

Personal: Sabeth has been working on keeping her weekly work blocks between 5 and 6 per week (a block is a morning, afternoon, or evening), and has been successful for the last 8 wks.

Announcement (Connie):

The Green Grant request to the Diocese has been approved for \$10K. The grant will be used to evaluate and replace the heating system in the Rectory. The total cost is to be determined and the grant is expected to only cover a portion of what will be needed.

Important Dates:

Next Vestry Meeting: May 18

Executive Meeting: May 9

Bishop's Visit: June 19, Vestry lunch with bishop to follow service & adult forum.

"Coffee Talk" with Vestry: May 15 & May 22. These are abbreviated versions of quarterly the conversations with Vestry, and will occur during 15 – 20 minutes fellowship before adult forum.

Acknowledgements:

Bill Fortier and Paula Pryce-Digby for leading Lenten series; and the Green Grant team.

Meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Paula Antonevich, Clerk

[Attachment 1]

Final Vestry Goals for 2011-12

At our Vestry retreat, we concluded that we should focus on a limited set of goals, centered on the Sustainability component of the Strategic Plan. Based on those priorities outlined at our Vestry retreat, we have identified the following goals and action steps:

Strategic Planning

- **Communicate the recently completed Strategic Plan to the parish through forums and other means to ensure broad understanding and concurrence with the key elements and core values.**

Action Steps

1. Creation of vestry bulletin board with photographs & names, contact info for vestry members and to provide a place to post vestry new items. Location TBD.
 2. Creation of Strategic plan bulletin board to communicate parish happenings regarding Strategic Plan. Location TBD.
 3. Organize parish meetings for strategic plan and PIC discernment issues as needed.
 4. Work to see that all vestry members are identified as such through distinctive name badges.
 5. Explore other avenues for communicating strategic plan news to the parish including a series of RF articles, the use of a blog, Sunday announcements, etc.
- Maintain existing Vestry/PIC oversight of church programs, with particular attention to fidelity to core values of the Strategic Plan

Action Step

- Charge Vestry Liaisons to work with their committees to review Strategic Plan and its applicability to those ministries, and to report back to Vestry on their findings

Property Maintenance and Capital Plans

- **Develop a strategic view of Property Maintenance and Capital needs that enables better planning, funding and execution of Property maintenance and improvement undertakings and results in optimal use of our physical resources in support of our identified core values.**

Action Steps

1. Commission a working group to evaluate the ongoing maintenance needs identified in the "Blue Book" to propose to Vestry a multi-year capital expenditure plan for all existing facilities to project a 10 year horizon. The nucleus of this working group would come from our current Property and Finance committees.
 - Identify and invite membership (proposed Jim Neumann, Frank Kern, George Murnaghan, Peter Koso, Bob Bettacchi and possibly Bruce Francis)

[Attachment 1 cont'd]

- Charge group with preparing a multi-year maintenance budget by end-October for integration into 2012 budget
2. Commission an evaluation of our current and anticipated space requirements for Worship, Formation and Mission and on capital improvements necessary to live into our expressed core values.
 - Commence a survey of our ministries to identify needed and desired capital improvements (Connie Parrish to coordinate)
 - Identify and recruit a working group to evaluate and develop ballpark cost estimates for desired projects and to prioritize.
 - Request working group to communicate closely with the Property Maintenance working group and to issue its findings by mid-December
 3. Evaluate potential means for funding ongoing the identified capital maintenance and improvement needs.
 - To commence in 2012 once maintenance and improvement needs are more fully developed
 4. Recruit new leadership and deeper membership for the Property Committee to enable a more strategic focus on the needs and uses of our physical plant.
 - Currently being pursued by Executive Committee

Leadership Development

Assess our current human resources to ensure sufficient lay and staff resources to support our array of ministries, to encourage broader involvement across the parish and to facilitate smooth transitioning of leadership roles.

Action Steps

1. Assess current and anticipated human resource needs, both lay and staff, across all programmatic areas and supporting groups (e.g., Finance, Property, Stewardship) to identify short-term and longer-term needs and leadership requirements. Use grid from Strategic Planning document as outline.
 - Contact committee or program leader directly or through Vestry liaison for assessment of human resource needs.
 - Synthesize information into format that allows for clear understanding of each committee or program composition.

[Attachment 1 cont'd]

2. With Vestry assistance, evaluate ministries for their criticality to Redeemer's core values and operation so that greatest emphasis on leadership can be given to those of greatest institutional importance.
 - Identify overlapping ministries or gaps in ministries.
3. Evaluate measures Redeemer might adopt to better recruit, train and support lay leaders.
 - Consider coordinating leadership development workshop.
 - Create system to determine to match position vacancies with interest and talent of parishioners.
4. Engage in and support the Priest-in-Charge/Rector discernment process to be launched in October.
 - Recruit and commission a Discernment Committee of 6-8 people, including 2-3 Vestry members.