

St. Mary's Episcopal Church
Vestry Meeting
22 September 2015
(FINAL, Approved 10.27.15)

In Attendance: Todd Balfourt, John Funston, Sally Hastings, Lenore Hubbard, Al Krueger, Pam Lanier, Tom Morris, Nick Pasken, Peter Pignataro, Sue Riddell, Harriet Stone, Father Todd, Father Steve, Charlie Lippincott, David Earle, Melissa Lewis, and Trina Perna

Absent: Jim Menendez

Opening Reflections and Prayer, Father Todd: Fr. Todd led the Vestry in a contemplation of James 2:1-13, in which James encourages us to not show favoritism or discriminate amongst ourselves based on outward status. Rather, James asks us to keep the “royal law” and “Love your neighbor as yourself”. The Vestry was asked, what word or phrase jumped out at us, and why. This led to discussions on judgment, mercy, blasphemy, and treatment of the poor. The Vestry contemplated that the reference to “the poor” may not refer solely to those with limited financial resources, but those lacking in spiritual wealth. It was pointed out that maybe these folks need someone to show them some love. As to blaspheming God, we do this when we usurp God’s power by exploiting or judging others. Fr. Todd concluded the discussion by asking the Vestry to reflect on how and to whom do we extend preferential treatment.

Minutes: 25 August 2015, v.5 – Motion made by John Funston to approve version 5 (v.5) of the August minutes with correction. Specifically correcting Sue Riddell’s Stewardship report to delete “based on John 15:12” from the third sentence of the minutes under SR’s report. Motion was seconded by Pam Lanier and passed unanimously.

Committee Reports

Christian Education & Small Groups, Tom Morris – written report provided prior to meeting. New fall programs include Alpha (10-week program starting Sunday 9/27 at 6 pm). Fr. Todd will lead with Tom, Nick and Beth Ferarra providing additional support. Great program to energize and recharge us. If you haven’t been, you will not be bored. Also available this fall are (1) Sunday morning video series, “Simply Christian” (at 10:10 am), based on book of same title by Bishop N.T. Wright; (2) Life Group meetings on Sunday, Monday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings, as well as Friday mornings (Life Groups studying the Book of James); (3) Tuesday Morning Bible Study, “Can you be a Romans 12 Christian?” and (4) Friday Morning Bible Study, “The History of Christian Theology”.

Stewardship Status, Sue Riddell (verbal summary given at meeting) - Letter to Parishioner’s went out 9/21/15. Striving for a balanced budget. Hope to include letters and testimonials of faith at the Stewardship dinner on 10/10/15. Have found a volunteer to video record the dinner.

Stewardship, John Funston (JF, committee chair) provided written talking points and draft Stewardship dinner program. Passed around sign-up sheet to record who on the vestry can attend and who can host tables. JF then passed 2016 pledge cards to Vestry and asked for 100% response before Stewardship dinner on 10/10).

JF proposed a resolution to approve start of search for Assistant Rector. After initial reading, friendly amendments were proposed by Charlie Lippincott (CL)

Resolution made and by John Funston and amended by CL:

“Therefore be it resolved that the Vestry give permission for Fr Todd to take the necessary preliminary steps to continue the search to find an Assistant Rector to fill the position recently vacated. It is hoped that in the course of coming months, sufficient funding will be found. “

Harriet Stone seconded the amended resolution. Discussion ensued. Vestry agreed that we must find a way to fund this position, and thereby fund our future. David Earle noted that the amended resolution was aspirational and would not become effective until we have an approved budget. Fr. Todd then called a voice vote. Vestry members voted by responding: “Aye”, “No”, or “Abstain”. Hearing no “no-votes” or “abstains”, the motion was passed unanimously by all Vestry members in attendance.

Ministry Minute (MM) Reminder [reports to Congregation]

Early October, Stewardship – John Funston (JF) will do Ministry Minute on Oct 4th. JF would like Vestry to be available to answer questions after the 10/4 services (please wear your “VESTRY” name tag at the service). Trina Perna volunteered to spread the Stewardship message at the Tuesday Healing service on Oct. 6th.

Late October, Contemporary Worship - Jim Menendez

Administrative Note: Please coordinate with Fr. Todd who will be providing MM information to the congregation and at what service(s).

Parish Administrator’s Report, Melissa Lewis: Written report provided prior to meeting.

Online Giving – Three new methods for online giving are now available. They are (1) St. Mary’s website (www.stmarys-stuart.org/give-online/); (2) Text to give (send text to 646-832-4848, click on link, enter Quick code = stmarys); and (3) in the near future kiosks will be available in the office, Pittenger Center and the church.

Website - In the past 30 days, the St. Mary’s website has had almost 8800 pages viewed during approximately 1500 sessions, with a bounce rate of 7.2% (rate of folks leaving the website after viewing one page ... the lower the better).

Healing Center – YTD income is \$2015 and has provided almost 400 hours of service to our community (approx. 50 hours/month).

Alpha posting on Facebook starts today (September 22nd)

Advertising – St. Mary's is reaching out to our local community via *The Stuart News*, *Hometown News*, *Yellow Pages* (and yp.com), Facebook, ValPak and *Around Towne*, thanks in a large part to the Richard and Yvonne Ross Fund. If you use AOL as your email provider (e.g. @aol appears in your email address), please let Melissa know so she can pass along your emails to balance of the vestry. Also, Melissa may be able to help you set up a free "gmail" account to eliminate this need/problem.

People's Warden's Report, Nick Pasken: Written provided prior to meeting. Our 2015 fall season is filled with multiple opportunities for us as we "Grow into Jesus, Reach out with Love." If you're interested in Growth, please consider joining the Alpha class (Sunday evenings), Adult Christian Education (Sunday mornings), or a Life Group. For any of these options, please feel free to invite a friend!

For those who would like to Reach Out, help is needed in the Office (M-F), Mary's Kitchen (Wednesday night's), Mary's Closet (M-Th), as a lay Eucharistic Visitor (Sundays), as well as projects such as the campus extreme makeover (10/3) and Oktoberfest Stewardship dinner (10/10). Everyone is invited to become involved and join our community in Acts of Love. Please feel free to contact Nick directly at peopleswarden@stmarys-stuart.org.

Rector's Warden's Report, Harriet Stone: Written provided prior to meeting. New Vestry (NV) Search Committee – Rotating off the Vestry after our January 2016 meeting are Tom Morris, Nick Pasken, Peter Pignataro, and Harriet Stone. These same members constitute the search committee for new members. The NV Search Committee will meet at 5:30 pm on October 27th (one hour prior to vestry meeting). If you know of anyone who might like to serve on the vestry, please send their names to Harriet, who will pass them onto Fr Todd for vetting.

Assistant for Pastoral Care, Father Steve: Verbal report given at meeting. Tuesday Healing Service concentrating on Jesus' 26 healings recorded in the New Testament also part of Tuesday Morning Bible Study. Eleanor Hanley has started a new program to provide consistence in follow-up with our shut-ins. The fall Thursday Luncheon & Lecture program will include presentations on Depression (Oct. 1st); Health & Relationships with our Adult Children (Nov. 5th); and Remaining Relevant, Recreating & Reconnecting (Dec. 3rd).

Rector's Report, Father Todd: Written provided prior to meeting. Combined Vestry and Staff Meeting to be held Wednesday, Oct. 7th, at 5:30 pm in Smith Hall. Goal is to coordinate Vestry and Staff SMART goals, job descriptions, and improve teamwork. Dinner will be provided. On the staff, every area of ministry has their job descriptions, SMART goals and budgetary restrictions. Vestry needs to coordinate same with staff. Note: "SMART" Goals are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time Bound. Assistant Rector Search – The process has begun and includes posting the position with the National Church, as well as advertisements in *The Living Church*, and on the Episcopal News Network. Please keep Fr. Todd and St. Mary's in your prayers as we walk through this process.

On the evening of Friday, Nov. 6th, there will be a celebration of Bishop Frade and Diane's ministries at the Harriet Himmel Theatre in West Palm Beach (former church in center of City Place). The Vestry has been especially invited to attend.

Parish Renewal Weekend (Feb 20 & 21st, 2016) – Will include “Faith Stories” program, by Tom Riley, former President of Faith Alive. Please save the dates.

Financial Report, Charlie Lippincott (CL): Written report provided prior to meeting.

2015 Financials – CL is pleased with pledge performance, but plate collections have been worrisome. This fall we may need to access extra free cash flow from other accounts, on a temporary basis (up to approximately \$40K).

2016 pre-Draft Budget – A loss of our Health Care Tax Credit (approx. \$12.5K) and end of the last matching gift program (loss of \$75K), plus increased need for Youth Programs, amongst other cost increases, means we need to increase the combined 2016 pledge and plate contributions by approx. \$105K over 2015. If we receive an increase of 8.8% over 2015 income, the 2016 deficit would be reduced to approximately \$88K. If 2016 pledges are increased if 20%, this would produce a balanced budget.

2014 Financial Audit to Diocese – Was due September 1st, but St. Mary's requested an extension to Nov. 2nd, which was approved by diocese on 9/22/15.

Motion to approve the Treasurer's report was made by John Funston and seconded by Lenore Hubbard. Motion passed unanimously.

New Business:

Healing Center, David Earle (verbal report given at meeting): Karen Lindsey from Healing Center came to see David about an outside grant request she is preparing (grant required significant amount of financial disclosure from St. Mary's). Additionally, the request would require outside audits of other financial information (including Heritage and Reserve funds). (Q) Is St Mary's the appropriate entity to seek grants? (Q) Should we form a separate “501(c)” type entity to include the Healing Center? This would probably require a working group. Discussion – Peter Pignataro is working with an outside organization, which has had to form a separate 501(c) to handle grant applications. Vestry commented that since St. Mary's helps many in our community outside our parish, forming a separate 501(c) entity to obtain funding seems a good idea.

Motion to form an Exploratory Committee, to be established by Fr Todd, to investigate the possibility of soliciting/investigating private grants for the Healing Center and to form a separate entity for same purpose. Motion made by Peter Pignataro and seconded by Sally Hastings. Discussion – Healing Center (HC) would be part of this new entity. Entity would require approval by IRS. (Q) Do we run the risk of the HC falling apart in the next year? (A) Fr. Todd “no, not at all”. Motion passed unanimously.

Vestry Reports due in October: Lenore Hubbard on New Members (postponed from Sept); Peter Pignataro on Mission & Outreach; John Funston on Communications

Old Business: Please provide your Vestry reports in written format and distribute electronically a minimum of 24 hours prior to the meeting to: vestry@stmarys-stuart.org. Please read all reports prior to each meeting. Only questions about a report will be discussed at the Vestry meeting.

This coming Saturday is Tom Stone's memorial service – Please keep Harriet and her family in your prayers to uphold and strengthen them through this difficult time.

Meeting adjourned at 8:07 pm
Respectfully submitted
Trina Perna, Clerk

(Note: Vestry minutes represent the highlights of meeting discussions and/or reports and are not meant to record verbatim conversations.)