

Grace Episcopal Church

Regular Vestry Meeting

Monday, April 19, 2010

Members present: Jon Augspurgen, Heidi Barnhill, Mary Ann Germanson, Kenn JeSchonek, Michael Leland, Al McCoy, Mitch Nakaue, Judy Rose, Carole Trone

Member absent: Terry Gibson

Clergy present: the Rev. Jonathan Grieser, the Rev. Pat Size, the Rev. Carol Smith

Officers present: Sparky Watts (Treasurer), Nelson Flynn (Assistant Treasurer), Jason Loch (Clerk)

- (1) Judy Rose called the meeting to order at 7:07 pm. Fr. Grieser led the Vestry in devotions.
- (2) Judy presented the agenda. Jon Augspurgen moved the approval of the agenda. The motion was seconded and agreed to unanimously.
- (3) Jason Loch presented the minutes from the March meeting. Judy drew the clerk's attention to a misspelling of Mary Ann Germanson's name, which would be corrected. Kenn JeSchonek moved the approval of the minutes as amended. The motion was seconded and agreed to unanimously.
- (4) Sparky Watts presented the Treasurer's Report. He told the Vestry that, in general, our finances were looking good and our utility expenses were better than usual on account of our new boiler. Jon Augspurgen moved acceptance of the March financials. The motion was seconded and agreed to unanimously. Sparky also said that, last month, an ad hoc committee had met to consider the issue of socially responsible investing. He turned the floor over to Al McCoy who presented the following motion:

“That the Vestry advises the Finance Committee that, as general policy, Grace Church should avoid investments, either single stocks or mutual funds, that the Committee deems to hold a significant position in activities inappropriate for Grace's mission. Moreover, the Finance Committee should consider shifting some of its funds to invest in the socially responsible fund within investment firms where it already has accounts.”

Jon Augspurgen moved that the motion be considered. The motion was seconded and agreed to. Sparky presented a brief summary of the background to the motion, namely that the Finance Committee had previously considered the issue and found it to be impractical. Several members of the Vestry then objected and urged the Finance Committee to reconsider. Al McCoy told the Vestry that there were in fact metrics available to evaluate stocks based on ethical guidelines. Fr. Grieser said that he was talking with diocesan and national church financial officials in an attempt to learn the wider church's policy on socially responsible investing. He said that it was important that, as a parish, we should ensure that our investments reflect our values. Jon Augspurgen suggested that, if we are going to engage in socially responsible investing, we must set guidelines and then adhere to them, even if it puts us at a disadvantage. He said that we also needed to have clear oversight of the socially responsible investment. Mitch Nakaue pointed out that, just

because something is socially responsible does not necessarily mean that it is doctrinally acceptable to an Episcopal Church. Sparky suggested that Al McCoy's motion be referred to the Finance Committee for comment before the May Vestry meeting. Kenn JeSchonek moved that it be referred accordingly. The motion was seconded. Judy Rose called the question on the motion to refer. The motion was agreed to unanimously.

- (5) Sparky Watts reported to the Vestry that he had told the Finance Committee where Grace was in terms of pledging. Pledge income is down from last year, which flies in the face of our stated goal of consistently increasing pledge income. The Finance Committee asked Sparky to relay their concerns to the Vestry. In essence, they believe that, in terms of pledging, we are going backwards and we will have to continually cut our budget to stay in the black. The Finance Committee believes that Grace just does not have enough pledging members to be sustainable. Judy Rose said that the Executive Committee was of the opinion that we needed to have a supplementary canvass to get additional pledge income. Sparky said a substantial portion of our pledges were made by a small number of parishioners. They also tend to be elderly, which means we cannot plan on their pledges for an extended period of time. Kenn JeSchonek said that it was important that we get new members to pledge. Fr. Grieser said that, based on his conversations with other clergy, 2010 seemed to be a bad year for stewardship all around. He also reminded the Vestry that, over the last three or four years, we have whittled our membership rolls down by twenty-five percent. Fr. Grieser said that all mainline churches had to face the fact that people today were much less committed to the institutional church; we cannot pretend that we will get the same response to a stewardship campaign that we would have gotten in 1950. Society is also much more mobile than it was in the past. Fr. Grieser also pointed out that there are a lot of expenses that have never been quantified, such as how much we subsidize the men's shelter. He said that Grace has a culture of pulling money out of endowments whenever necessary, which has prevented us from a judicious relationship with our restricted funds. Carole Trone said that it was possible that a lot of this was out of our control due to the economic downturn. Kenn said that stewardship had changed a lot over the past fifty years. Now, many people were giving to a number of causes, and the church suffers. Sparky said that, while the economic had certainly had an effect, the main problem was that our church was heavily dependent on a few elderly pledgers. In the absence of a suitable resolution, the church would have to take some very stringent cost cutting measures. Fr. Grieser said that the Vestry could take immediate action to solve the problem by developing programs to reach out to visitors and get them to stay.
- (6) Fr. Grieser reminded the Vestry that, when he took up his appointment at Grace, there was a commitment to a mutual ministry review, which would be taking place shortly. He also updated the Vestry on Holy Week attendance. He felt that the weekday Eucharists were very well attended.
- (7) Fr. Grieser presented the Vestry Work Plan based on the decisions made at the Vestry retreat. There had been no formal progress on integrating the Hispanic Ministry or developing a year-round stewardship plan. We had revitalized our committee structure and our open Saturdays were turning out to be a huge success. The Outreach Committee had been established as a standing entity and we were in the middle of a review of our phone and IT systems.
- (8) The Vestry heard brief updates from the Personnel, Communications, Outreach, Buildings and Grounds, and Nominating Committees.

- (9) Judy Rose told the Vestry that Ben Farrow and Jon Augspurger had been appointed to a task force to consider ways to 'green' the church. She also said that the church was moving forward with improvements to the sound system.
- (10) Sparky Watts presented an update regarding our IT program. He hoped that Tom Stone would be able to finish his work on an IT.
- (11) Judy Rose and Pat Size mentioned the idea of offering Spanish classes through the church. Carol Smith updated the Vestry on her husband's trip to Haiti. Judy said that the first meeting for Kara Pagano's discernment process had gone well.
- (12) Judy Rose adjourned the meeting at 8:49 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jason Loch

Clerk of the Vestry