

VESTRY MEETING MINUTES

April 4, 2006

Attendees: Fr. Mike Billingsley, Jay Jacobson, Ruth Warner, Chris Estey, Sue Ramsley, Dianne Belamarich, Peter Dittman, Ralph Edwards, Phil Robidoux, Gretchen Carr

Absent: Susan Cholakis, John Diercks

VESTRY BUSINESS

- 1) **Opening Prayer** – Fr. Mike led the Vestry in opening prayer.
- 2) **March 7, 2006 Meeting Minutes** – voted on and unanimously approved by the Vestry.
- 3) **Eagle Scout Project** – Sean is waiting for the Boy Scout Council to get back to him.
- 4) **Assistant Treasurer's Status** – Dave Spengler will step in as Acting Assistant Treasurer until June
- 5) **Report on 3/20/06 meeting with Christ Church and St. Paul's (Millis)** – The wardens and ministers met to discuss working together. A hand out entitled "Options for Small Churches", by Alice Mann is hanging on the bulletin board in the church hall. The vision work the Vestry is doing dovetails nicely into these discussions. Next meeting: Tues., April 25, 2006. Alice is also available to do meetings with individual parishes on attracting and incorporating new members. There is a cost involved, Jay will ask for a written proposal.
- 6) **Safe Church Training** – Sue is in touch with the diocesan rep regarding hosting the meeting. It has been scheduled for Saturday, Nov. 18, 9AM – 3PM. Sunday school teachers and assistants are encouraged to attend. The cost is \$35/per person. Certificates will be issued to attendees. Jay will contact area churches to let them know we're hosting. Sue will put together a list of requirements from us.
- 7) **Reports**
 - a) **Sunday School** – Nothing new to report
 - b) **Property**
 - Jim has taken down all of the dead trees. Scott's landscaping will remove the stumps and plant grass at no charge. Phil has already contacted the utility companies.
 - Girl Scouts want to plant a tree on the property.
 - Beth at the Board of Health has said we're "good to go", we just need testing strips for the dishwasher. Sue's certificate is now hanging in the kitchen.
 - The new copier is in and working great.
 - Motion lights have been installed out front.
 - Septic troubles: We need to prioritize what needs to be done. The total project cost is approx.\$3,100...consisting of \$1,700 for a new electrical panel, \$245 to pump the tanks, \$700 to pump and seal a leaking tank, \$430 to evaluate a second tank and distribution box.
 - Roof – the bladder is intact. We need to stay off the roof and keep the drains clear to maintain the roof's condition.
 - Father Mike suggested we come up with a Capital expenditure fund goal of \$6,500 using the septic tank need as a platform to kick off a fundraising effort. Peter suggested we could sell memorial plaques for the pews.
 - c) **Hospitality**
 - Maundy Thursday pot luck.

- The Wilson's are renting the hall for Tyler's Eagle Scout ceremony luncheon.
 - Coffee hour volunteers are needed.
- d) **Financial Report**
- Tithes & Offerings are under budget. Jay will put a reminder in the Epistle.
 - \$12K owed for diocesan assessment. Want to try and put \$1K toward this as often as possible to stay ahead of what we owe.
 - Mike's 2005 pension statement was wrong. We'll have to pay the higher amount and get a credit on the next statement.
 - Dave Spengler is doing the deposits from Sunday offerings and emailing Phil an excel spreadsheet to enter in the software.
- e) **Communications** – New signs are in. Phil will call the DPW to arrange putting them up. Peter will look back at old notes to see exactly where it was decided they were to be placed.
- f) **Outreach** – Nothing new to report other than that Wal-mart will be donating \$1000 in goods to Serenity house thanks to Ralph's efforts.
- g) **Fund Raisers** – Rummage sale set for April 29th. Parking for Marathon again this year. Volunteers needed for both. Jay will register us for Polyarts. No golf tournament this year. We need to work on ideas for fund raising. A Chocolate Festival was discussed, briefly.
- h) **Stewardship** – We should go through the “time and talent” questionnaires that were turned in and maybe do a repackaged time and talent campaign.
- i) **Fr. Mike's Report** – See Attachment regarding General convention.
- 8) **New Business**
- a) Ruth sent flowers to Janet Morman after the loss of her husband.
 - b) It was decided that instead of praying for random streets in the “Prayers of the People” we will pray for specific family's of the parish. May's potluck will be a cookout on the 12th.
- 9) **Next vestry meeting** – Tuesday, May 2, 2006
- 10) **Closing prayer** – Fr. Mike led the vestry in a closing prayer and the meeting was adjourned.

The General Convention of 2006 is coming fast.

I have attended an early briefing on the up-coming General Convention of the Episcopal Church. The “Blue Book,” which contains all of the resolutions and other items under consideration has yet to be distributed to the convention delegates, but there are some things that are known will be considered for approval, disapproval or other action. The one item I expect to draw the most attention from the press and from those in the Anglican Communion is the General Convention’s response to the election of a new bishop in the Diocese of California. While this election has not yet taken place, there is a significant possibility that the bishop elect will be either a lesbian woman or a gay man—living openly in a relationship with a member of the same sex.

We all remember what convulsions went through the church when the 2003 General Convention approved the election of the gay Bishop of New Hampshire who was openly living in a relationship with another man. The American press went wild with the story, and some members of the Anglican Communion began to call for the expulsion of the Episcopal Church in the USA (ECUSA) from the communion. Since that time the press has settled down somewhat, but still watches the Bishop of New Hampshire’s every move. The Archbishop of Canterbury called into existence a commission to study the dispute within the Anglican Communion. It issued “The Windsor Report,” which called for ECUSA to apologize for having acted unilaterally in approving the election of the Bishop of New Hampshire and to refrain from approving other such elections until the entire Anglican Communion had come to consensus on the issues of theology and doctrine raised by sexual orientation. ECUSA has complied with the actions called for in the Windsor Report. The upcoming election of a bishop in California might be the first to challenge ECUSA’s compliance.

Only a few weeks ago, the Bishop of Exeter made it clear to the American House of Bishops that this matter was still very sensitive, and that any action to approve the election of another bishop in a same sex relationship would be considered a breach of the “bonds of affection” that hold the Anglican Communion together.

In the lively discussion that followed the presentation, one of my clergy colleagues put it this way, “We may be forced to choose between unity (with the Anglican Communion) and integrity (what we feel the Holy Spirit is telling us). I fear he might be right.

My experience during the aftermath of the 2003 General Convention leads me to think that the parishes who talked about issues of human sexuality before the General Convention came through the ordeal much better than those who pretended there was nothing to talk about.

I propose that we of Saint Paul’s do two things to prepare for the 2006 General Convention:

1. Be in prayer for the election of the new Bishop of California and for the wisdom of the 2006 General Convention, that God’s Will would truly be done in both.
2. Get together and hold honest and respectful conversation about the core issues.

To facilitate the second of these proposals, I suggest that the Wednesday Night Adult CE forum take up issues of human sexuality—beginning after the Second Sunday of Easter, to run through the end of the public school year.

Mike+