



St. Margaret's Church Westminster Parish

Vestry Minutes Monday, August 18, 2008 Approved on Monday, September 15, 2008

1. Opening: The meeting was called to order by the Reverend Mark Wastler, Rector, at 7:00 pm in the conference room of the Administrative building, followed by the opening prayer.

Attendance: The Rev. Mark Wastler – Rector, The Rev. Stewart Lucas – Associate Rector, Beth Knorr – Senior Warden, Bud Billups – Senior Warden-Elect, Gordon Piche – Treasurer, Steve Brennan, Jeff Conover, Leah Drooff, Phil Graham, Sarah Hyde, Missy Kelly, Larry Lorton, Emilia Nardi, Jerry Smith, Carly Wilson and Arvilla Wubbenhorst

2. Minutes: Larry Lorton, substituting for Stacia Bontempo (on vacation) The minutes of the July, 2008 meeting were reviewed and approved as presented with the following amendments: (1) The discussion on the temporary classroom was led by George Saroch not Beth Knorr, (2) minutes presented were June, not May, (3) John Purgason, not John Purgeson.

3. Treasurer's Report:

Quote

St. Margaret's Church Westminster Parish Treasurer's Report 18 August 2008

At the end of the month of July, there was \$55,055.52 in the Operating Checking account and \$22,922.06 in the Operating Savings account to meet budgeted monthly operating expenses. The Designated account had a balance of \$34,840.10 and the Endowment checking account balance was \$190,617.12. It is noted that as of Friday August 15, there was \$36,662.14 in the Operating Checking and \$22,922.06 in the Operating Savings.

On the **income** side of the ledger, the deficit grew by \$8,557.68 through the end of the month of July; ending \$35,443.93 under total budgeted income. Actual yearly income through July 31 was \$398,440.44 against a budgeted income of \$433,884.37. Donations were \$17,479.65 short of budget and the delta continues to increase (\$11,687.00 vs. budgeted \$29,166.65). As usually happens during the summer season, income from pledges continues to fall short of budget, now at \$18,761.00 (\$344,434.56 vs. budgeted \$363,195.56). Plate offerings are a big plus (\$8,965.07 over budget) at \$20,631.72, which exceeds the budget estimate for the whole year.

On the **expenditure** side, we were under expended by the amount of \$24,185.30 having budgeted expenditures of \$433,302.31 against actual outlays of \$409,117.01. It is noted that nearly all cost centers were under budget as of the end of July. No one line item within any of the cost centers shows an unusual delta from budget.

The **net total** or bottom line for the year to date period ending 31 July 2008 showed a income of negative \$10,736.57. As a result of reduced spending, we did have a plus \$10,161.59 net income for the month of July.

Gordon Piché
Treasurer

End Quote

- a) Gordon Piche, Treasurer, noted that overall spending is under last year's level and income continues its typical summer lag. July saw the deficit cut about in half from \$20+K to \$10+K. Phil Graham pointed out that utilities are up nearly \$5K over last year and that over \$21K has been spent through July out of the \$29K budgeted. Gordon noted that for reasons that are not clear we are behind two months on utility bill payments. A short discussion ensued regarding accounting of plate v. pledges v. donations, how receipts are accounted for, and whether or not receipts are actually overstated.
- b) Jerry Smith offered a special thanks to George Saroch for his graph of historical plate and pledge receipts by month which provides a basis for better budget planning. It was very interesting and instructive.

4. Temporary Classrooms Report – Beth Knorr

- a) While the project is progressing as quickly as possible it appears delivery will not be until mid-September with opening a couple weeks later near the end of September.
- b) Mark noted that Teresa Todd has done extraordinary work shepherding this project through permitting and zoning but the county inserts one stumbling block after another into the process. Two of the most recent include parking which has been resolved and a required turn-around for a fire truck that by county code cannot exceed 100 feet. Two options appear feasible with the most likely option to build a gravel pad on the south side of the sidewalk between the Parish Hall and the Administration Building extending up the slight grade toward the Administration Building off the back parking lot/drive way.
- c) Beth expressed some concern that only two parishioners have mentioned the new temporary classroom despite the “wonderful” article in the last Newsletter. Jerry recommended that if resources were available to place a rendering of the campus and location of the new classroom facility in the narthex so parishioners could see it on Sundays. Stewart said he would follow-up with more electronic publicity in an effort to get parishioners' attention.

5. Continued Conversation on Long Range Planning

- a) Mark opened the discussion by announcing his solicitation of individual Vestry comments. In summarizing his thoughts he has concluded we need to bring in someone with relatively recent parish experience in capital campaigning and the process of

planning and building. Mark emphasized he is not proposing a professional consultant with services to sell but a rector, Warden, committee chair recently experiencing St. Margaret's situation with a parish or congregational perspective. The Alban Institute website offers useful insights the Vestry should become familiar with. Mark summarized by noting that no matter how much time and thought he devotes to parish space needs and issues he keeps coming back to three constants: (1) the silence; the absence of discussion, what we are not hearing from the congregation; the absence of dialogue despite efforts to inform the parish about space and parish growth; (2) the dominant and ever-changing role county zoning and permitting is likely to play in any construction effort; and (3) church needs simply do not go away. They are real, here now, with no letup in sight.

b) The open discussion elicited the following comments, assessments, and suggestions:

- changes in county zoning and regulations are constant and its role will make any parish effort frustrating and difficult
- work St. Margaret's has done in the last 5-10 years is probably worthless today
- bringing someone in as Mark described is probably very much needed
- the arrival of the new temporary classroom will very likely generate discussion
- the level of detail and the projected costs from the last campaign were overwhelming and shocking
- need a very practical, bare bones, economic approach this time
- any consultant we might use needs to know Anne Arundel County and Bay culture
- technical help is important but in some ways a parish is a parish—not different
- building costs are skyrocketing, reducing scope of project to fit budget very likely
- reaching parishioners remains a big concern given experiences to do so in last year
- strong feelings by many who like church just as it is
- attendance, parish growth, programming and space needs—data are solid, not arguable
- very difficult issue emotionally and spiritually trying to decide where resources should go
- issue isn't just building, it's creating resources for the parish
- sociology of parish size places St. Margaret's in most difficult of positions, on edge, in a climate of stagnations, lack of excitement, within comfort level
- must face fiscal realities, still spending more than we have, appetite may be exceeding ability to pay, not supporting current facility, how can we pay for more
- successful church campaigns often are moving from temporary quarters to worship facility, not from a church to a church—problem for us, no sense of urgency
- sacred places have history, hard to shed and start anew. Aesthetics are important but must be practical, too. Last effort was received by parish as a done deal.
- have to answer the question; what is most pressing need, worship or classroom space? If someone gave us \$10M, what would we do first?
- capital campaign has own driving forces. Current parishioners pay for building. New members pay for operations.
- whole discussion very interesting. Thought issue was dead and buried.
- May have to sort out parish gifts, what is our calling (Romans 12). How to move forward is most difficult problem. Staff's #1 time allocation is empowering parishioners, different from past, a new direction? Giving more may be our calling.

6. Wardens' Report – George Saroch/Beth Knorr

a) No report.

7. Associate Rector's Report – Stewart Lucas

a) Status report on several projects and events:

- New Wedding Customary is printed and available for use
- Alcohol policy has been drafted. Vestry asked to examine and give feedback to Stewart
- New Building use policy under study with a draft ready by next Vestry meeting.
- Parish photo directory now on computer, Stewart and Ruth trained.
- Day school children report on 25th. Teachers reported today the 18th. Tricia doing tremendous job organizing and getting ready.
- September 7 is open house for Sunday School.
- September 14 choir and Motet start musical year.
- September 14 annual Camp Wright service will take place on campus. Special post card will update parish on events and rationale.
- September 14 at 9:00 service Bud Billups will be sworn in as Senior Warden.
- September 14 at 4:30, 3rd Sunday Band performance with release of new CD.
- September 21 Beth Knorr to be recognized. Details being worked out.
- October 6, new Bishop Sutton will visit parish. Vestry should plan to be here, luncheon likely around 12:30. Details being worked on.
- Vestry owes Joan Rich and Karen Gosnell huge thanks for great work filling in for Ruth.

8. ADJOURNMENT. There being no objections, the meeting adjourned at 8:50pm with the singing of the doxology.

Submitted by

//s//Stacia Bontempo

Stacia Bontempo, Registrar

Nota Bene: Opening Prayer Assignments
September, 2008 – Sarah Hyde
October, 2008 – Gordon Piche
November, 2008 – Phil Graham