

St. Margaret's Church Westminster Parish



Vestry Meeting Minutes

Monday, February 18, 2008

Approved on Monday, March 17, 2008

1. **OPENING.** Following a pre-meeting prayer by the Reverend Mark Wastler, the meeting was called to order by the Reverend Mark Wastler, Rector, at approximately 7:00 PM in the conference room of the Administrative Building. Phil Graham then offered the opening prayer.

Attendance: The Rev. Mark Wastler - Rector, The Rev. Stewart Lucas - Associate Rector, The Rev. Dina Van Klaveren – Assistant to the Rector, Beth Knorr - Senior Warden, George Saroch - Jr. Warden, Gordon Piche – Treasurer, George Breeden - Registrar, Steve Brennan, Jeff Conover, Phil Graham, Sarah Hyde, Betsy Lefler, Larry Lorton, Steve Roth, Jerry Smith, and Arvilla Wubbenhorst, .

Guests/Observers: Jim Hall (Finance Commission), Folger (Mack) Ridout (Churchyard Committee), Catherine Waterman (Landscape Committee) and Sandra Porterfield (Master Gardeners).

2. **MINUTES. George Breeden.**

The minutes of the January 7, 2008 meeting were reviewed by those present.

It was moved and seconded to accept the minutes as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

3. **TREASURER'S REPORT. Gordon Piché.**

Quote

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

At the end of the month of January, there was \$8,490.13 in the Operating Checking account and \$17,544.55 in the Operating Savings account to meet the budgeted monthly operating expenses. The designated account had a balance of \$78,542.21 and the Endowment checking account balance was \$123,475.37. Note that \$27,902.47 from two Sundays' plate collection had been mistakenly deposited into the Designated account rather than the operating Savings account. That was corrected on February 1, 2008. The Designated account currently has a corrected balance of \$51, 821.06. It is noted that as of Friday, February 15, there was \$37,114.93 in the Operating Checking and \$32, 387.35 in the Operating Savings.

It is my pleasure to report that Robert D. Hauck, LLC, Certified Public Accountant, who has been St. Margaret's Church Auditor for the past three years, replaced Fernades DeGennaro as our accountant/bookkeeper this month. Hauck is a local Annapolis firm that is very familiar with St. Margaret's accounts and has some excellent

recommendations to simplify and streamline our financial accounting. Hauck will have an accountant at St. Margaret's each Tuesday to do the bookkeeping and as needed, meet with the financial officer and treasurer.

The financial officer and the accountant have not completed their work to reformat the monthly financial report and convert from Excel spreadsheet to Quick Books format. As a result, I am not currently able to produce a complete treasurer's report. Be assured that St. Margaret's Church is in good financial health at this time.

Gordon Piché
Treasurer

The Treasurer's Report was accepted as presented.

- a. Jim Hall announced that the contractor bookkeeping company had been let go and our former Auditor hired as booker. She will work on-site once a week and is converting our records from Excel spreadsheet to QuickBooks.
- b. Jim Hall said that we had received several end of year pledges in the form of stock. These stocks need to be sold to realize the money. The sale of stock requires vestry approval.

c.

It was moved and seconded to approve the sale of stock provided as fulfilling pledges. The motion passed unanimously.

- d. The Reverend Wastler announced that the budget approved at the January 7, 2008 Vestry meeting and presented at the January 20 Annual Meeting was incorrect. A formula in the excel spread sheet was not operating correctly and the error results in the deficit being \$75,024 instead of the announced \$37,365. The good news is that we are \$15,000 to the good in pledges over estimates and that it is reasonable to expect an additional \$5,000 in plate donations. This additional \$20,000 offsets part of the increase in deficit and brings it down to \$55,000. The diocesan contribution, however, was refigured and will increase by \$4,400 bring the new deficit to \$59,000.
- e. In the discussion that followed, George Saroch remarked that if the congregation was uncomfortable with a \$37,000 deficit, a \$59,000 would only add to the level of discomfort. We need to be proactive in solving the problems that created the errors. Discussion centered on what could be done to fix the problem. Several members raised the issue of cutting specific budgets. Another member raised the question of what makes the vestry think this is the only problem. It was pointed out by The Rev. Wastler that by March we should have a good idea about the problem. He said we need to take a good considered look at the problem when we know more details.

4. Churchyard (Cemetery) Committee. Folger (Mack) Ridout

Mack Ridout stated that a new survey is needed, since it has been some years since a comprehensive survey was done. It is needed to ensure that paths and corners within the cemetery are established and known to all, since some markers had corroded away or sunk. The plot (map) of the survey is to be twice as large as the current plot and easily readable. We have had two bids, \$8500 (aerial survey only) and \$7500 (conventional ground survey). The \$7500 bid appeals to the committee. Cemetery Fund money will be used. The Rev. Wastler pointed out that the Churchyard Committee has its own endowment for the upkeep of the cemetery and that this would be the source of funding. The Churchyard Committee was seeking vestry authorization to spend up to \$8500 for the survey.

It was moved and seconded that the Vestry authorize the Churchyard Committee to spend an amount NOT TO EXCEED \$8,500.00 for a survey of the Churchyard (Cemetery). There being no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

5. BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS. Phil Graham

- a. Phil Graham introduced Catherine Waterman of the Landscape Committee of the Buildings & Grounds Commission who introduced Sandra Porterfield of Master Gardners of Annapolis. Buildings and Grounds have sought out a grant from the Master Gardners to conduct a model project at St. Margaret's. They submitted a proposal with 3 possible locations and 2 plans and will receive a grant to develop the garden. The locations are (1) along side the church building between the building and St. Margaret's Road, (2) in the vicinity of the playground, and (3) in the "Ridout Park" vicinity. The plans would be either a formal colonial garden or a meditation garden. The Master Gardners are an organization that supports "Sustainable Gardening" using native plants to ensure they are of minimal upkeep in the Maryland climate. A colonial garden is appropriate to the historical character of St. Margaret's as is a meditation garden. In either case appropriate plants to the 1600-1700s would be used.
- b. In discussion several members offered comments concerning the location. The first was that placement should not be in an area that might be considered for future construction or other uses. The playground area is not visible to the public and would be susceptible to use by children. The Ridout Park vicinity would be ideal, because of the trees and hillocks, but might be included or disrupted by future construction. The area between the church building and St. Margaret's Road has neither the children nor possible construction problems and is very visible.
- c. A question concerning exactly who the Master Gardeners are was raised. Ms. Porterfield explained that the Master Gardners are a 60 year-old non-profit organization dedicated to horticultural education. They have an educational system that supports non-profit gardening and grants. Among the organizations that have received their grants are the Severn River Association and St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church in Annapolis. Their grants are very rigorous and every

penny must be accounted for. Additionally, there can be no co-mingling of funds.

- d. The Rev. Wastler pointed out that there are no decisions for the Vestry to make at this time. This was an informational report of what the Buildings and Grounds Commission, and specifically the Landscape Committee, was doing.

6. CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION FROM THE VESTRY RETREAT. The Rev. Wastler

- a. The Rev Wastler asked each member to recap what was still with them about the retreat. Topics listed included (1) team building, (2) Norms, (3) listening, (4) clergy anxiety – during the water pouring exercise both on the part of the clergy and the vestry members.
- b. One member wanted to know if the output would be compiled. The Rev Wastler replied that he had it all and that a lot was done. To which a reply was provided to the effect that it could be like an agenda for the coming year.
- c. Another member noted that the last three hours were about building, while another said they had noted the increasing references to “growth” in the sermons.
- d. The Rev. Wastler asked “How do we move forward on things that were discussed: (1) What are our space needs? (2) Long Range Planning on the Internet, (3) Capital Campaign, (4) Talking Points, (5) Financial Budget—the necessity for a “narrative budget”, (6) Building Design, (Communicating Mission and Outreach, (7) Property Management—taking care of what we have and the role of the Sexton, (8) The need for Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) to institutionalize processes.
- e. Together George Saroch, Junior Warden, and the Rev. Mark Wastler outlined four working groups or committees in which all vestry members should be willing to work in at least one: (1) Facilities – realistic design to budget; (2) Capital Campaign Committee – working with a consultant and budget issues; (3) Communications – what is it that we are talking about and what we are doing, the need for communications also on attendance; and (4) Spiritual emphasis—the need for prayerful guidance and to be mindful of others.
- f. The Rev. Wastler continued saying that the Vestry will work in these four groups plus (1) validate requirements based on attendance, Sunday schedule, Sunday School (need 13 classrooms), and Admin requirements. (2) The Vestry decides the scope of the project and how much is spent. (3) The Vestry sets facilities priorities. If needs and scope do not agree, then the Vestry decides what has priority among education, fellowship, administration, and worship. This is an Action Plan to move on.
- g. In discussion one member said that we certainly need to look at requirements and there are a lot of ways to do that. Another said that the Process was not

clear or transparent to the congregation to date. We must ensure they understand the process. Another said that we must draw together the disparate efforts of the past including the Master Plan of the mid 1990's and our more recent efforts. The Rev. Wastler said that the Long Range Planning Commission did not work in isolation. They drew upon the Master Plan of 10 years ago, the survey conducted in the new priest search in the past six years, and the Survey of a year ago.

- h. The Rev. Wastler said we cannot do this in 1 vestry meeting. We need a full ½ day. We need to bring in Teresa Todd, John Sutton, Dave Boyce and others. One member said that we need close communication with the congregation so that they understand where we are in the process and why.
- i. The Rev. Wastler challenged each of the Vestry members to be on at least one of the committees.
- j. Senior Warden Beth Knorr said she endorsed the idea of a Saturday meeting. She said she was convinced a few months ago that the time was right to move forward, to regain the momentum. The lesson she learned was that people forget. They forget the survey they took just a year ago. Leadership must communicate effectively so that they do not forget.
- k. Other members said that as a matter of practice the vestry should be given more than they need. They need to review past communications and get people involved from the start. A separate meeting is good because the vestry can focus on one task and allow the new members to come up to speed quickly. Another said that we need to keep the flow of information and ideas moving or next year we will again be in the same place. Another emphasized that we need to identify shortfalls and build requirements to overcome the shortfall areas. Another said the vehicles we have for communication: coffee hour, newsletters, sermons are not specific enough—we need something different and specific. Another said that we need to get those with doubts in the congregation involved and part of the process. We also need to assure those who mistrust the vestry as a governing body that we are working for their good and not to some hidden agenda. There is talent in this room, we must ensure that our clergy, and the Rev. Wastler specifically don't take too much on that it detracts from their professional and personal lives. George Saroch asserted that the Vestry needs to take "ownership" of the campaign and Jeff Conover suggested that a campaign should be a Vestry initiative.
- l. It was decided by consensus that the meeting would be March 15, 2008, from 8:00 AM to 12:00 Noon, commencing with a breakfast. It will be held in the conference room of the Admin building.

7. WARDENS' REPORT. Beth Knorr, Senior Warden

- a. The Rev. Wastler asked that each member review the Parochial Report prior to the election of Officer so that George Breeden could sign it as Registrar. The

report is a snapshot of attendance, services, financial data, and employee data. The Vestry need to approve it, please pass it around.

- b. Beth Knorr announced that Steven Roth has accepted an appointment to the Coast Guard Academy. May will be his 1st Vestry meeting.
- c. Beth Knorr then passed around the Opening Prayer List and asked that each of the members sign up for an opening prayer at a Vestry meeting. She also passed out the list of email addresses of all vestry, clergy, and other personnel.
- d. She has included in the Newsletter information about the Bishop Candidates "walk-arounds. She hoped the Vestry members would make an effort to attend one of the "walk-about" meetings.
- e. Finally she reminded all that as Vestry members you will be assigned to count the Sunday offerings. Please be there or arrange for a knowledgeable substitute. She will ensure that the schedule is sent out to all again.

8. RECTOR'S REPORT. The Rev. Mark Wastler

- a. The Rev Wastler announced that due to professional reasons, Betsy Lefler was resigning from the Vestry. Betsy Lefler said that she was moving to Minneapolis for professional reasons with mixed feelings. Professionally it was right, but personally she felt she wanted to do so much more here. Missions will have needs to be addressed. This would be her last meeting. The Rev. Wastler stated that George Tolley would be handling grants but we will work out the transition. There was discussion as to how to fill the position. There can be a special vestry election or the person can be appointed for the remainder of the term.
- b. The Rev. Stewart Lucas announced that the St. Margaret's Day School Director Pam Abruzzo will also be leaving and will not be back next year.
- c. The Rev. Dina van Klaveren announced that the Youth will be participating in a day of fasting at St. Martins in the Filed—March 1, 2008. She said they also need chaperons for a trip to NYC for High School youth on March 8, 2008, and for Middle School on April 19, 2008. The Appalachia Trip will be July 20-26 and chaperons are needed, and there will be more information about the Heifer Project forthcoming.
- d. The Annual Parochial Report was read by each Vestry Member.

It was moved and seconded to approve the Annual Parochial Report as written. The motion passed unanimously.

9. ELECTION OF OFFICERS.

The Rev. Wastler introduced the slate of officers of the Vestry for 2008:

Beth Knorr – Senior Warden
George Saroch – Junior warden
Gordon Piché – Treasurer

Stacia Bontempo – Registrar

There were no nominations from the floor.

It was moved and seconded to adopt the slate as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

8. ADJOURNMENT. There being no objections, the meeting adjourned at 8:55 PM with the singing of the Doxology.

Submitted by

//s//George L. Breeden

George L. Breeden, Registrar

Nota Bene: Opening Prayer Assignments

March 2008 – Larry Lorton	September 2008 – Sarah Hyde
April 2008 – Steve Brennan	October 2008 – Gordon Piche
May 2008 – Arvilla Wubbenhorst	November 2008 – Phil Graham
June 2008 – Jerry Smith	December 2008 – TBD*
July 2008 – Jeff Conover	January 2009 – TBD*
August 2008 – George Saroch	February 2009 – TBD*

* TBD = To Be Determined, volunteers required.