

St. James' Episcopal Church
Vestry Minutes
February 23, 2009

WORSHIP

Rev. Nancy Gossling opened with a reading from Evening Prayer. Rev. Nancy explained what Transfiguration Sunday meant and how Brother James prepared himself for Lent. Rev. Nancy asked Vestry members to ponder three questions: What do each of us need to let go of?, What will we commit to? And What do we need from God in order to commit?

DISCUSSION

The monthly meeting of the Vestry of St. James' Episcopal Church was called to order at 6:36 pm at St. James' Church.

Present were Rich Mills, Jim Bennett, Fred Larson, David Buddington, Lisa Brainerd, Leslee Flanagan, Gail Lebert, Gayle Kataja, Nancy Goodwin, Rick Edwards, Scott Thompson, Jennifer Daukas, Rev. Paul Habersang, and Rev. Nancy Gossling.

Christian Formation Commission

Lisa Brainerd, Rev. Paul and Danielle Phelan went through the September 26, 2008 Action Plan for Christian Formation, which had been previously sent via e mail to Vestry members (a copy attached hereto for reference with the information below). Lisa, Danielle and Paul provided us with an update on each item:

3. Moving along successfully and steadily. They have had great results. There is a need for at least three (3) more teachers and six (6) or more subs.
4. There had been some dissatisfaction among the Tweens with the planned program. It felt too much like what they had been going through in workshop rotation and they felt it was too "little kidish" and did not want to be treated like "babies". Danielle investigated and purchased a program called Grapple and has received positive feedback from the kids and parents. Grapple uses technology which the kids love. The kids have expressed that they do not want to fill a time capsule and bury it. Lisa, Danielle and Rev. Paul will discuss further. This feedback comes from the monthly meetings Rev. Nancy, Rev. Paul, Danielle and Lisa have with the teachers and shepards.
5. Danielle has been contacting other churches to gather information on vacation bible school. Gail Lebert suggested contacting a church in East Hartford as they have run a school. Vacation Bible School at St. James is tentatively scheduled for July 13 – July 17, 2009. Danielle will speak with Kathye Flanagan about the music component. It will be open to everyone not just church member's children.
6. Going well. The schedule is two (2) weeks lessons, one (1) week fellowship and one (1) week in church.
7. Same as #6 above.
8. Presently the confirmation class has 19 young adults enrolled. The service for confirmation will be held on the Saturday before Easter at the Cathedral in

- Hartford. It was suggested that we have a confirmation class for adults next year since we do the young adult confirmation class every other year.
9. Plans have been made for a trip to Borderlands in South Dakota. The youth are selling frozen pies with the proceeds going to help pay the costs of their trip.
 10. Programs for adults have been running since September and will continue through June 2009.
 11. Chip Flanagan has been identified as the lay leader to coordinate “fun events” for the youth.
 12. Colorful calendars have been posted on our new bulletin boards. It was suggested that this be announced at Vestry announcements before the 10:15 service.
 13. A trip to Mississippi that Rev. Nancy was going to take is not going to take place at this time. The outreach committee and the Christian Formation Commission will meet to review the option of putting resources locally into Heads up Hartford or spreading resources between local and a possible trip outside of Connecticut.
 14. Recruiting new teachers is ongoing. Presently we are looking for three (3) teachers and five (5) subs.
 15. The College-Connection Ministry has been busy with several projects (sending “exam kits” to students and a welcome home Christmas college brunch). Both projects were very well received by the kids.
 16. Improving communication with the youth has been explored and it has been decided that postcards to youth is an effective avenue. E mail blasts from St. James will continue. Rick Edwards suggested a youth section on the church website. Carl Benker will look into this. There was a discussion of the importance of incorporating the “Safe Church Practices” into our communication plan with youth.
 17. Although the Christian Formation Program did not received many feedback forms, the feedback forms they did receive, provided excellent information. Rev. Paul would like to have another feedback form at the end of the school year.
 18. “Catchy” postcards have been ordered to send to youth that have been absent from youth weekly gatherings.
 19. Although parental participation is hard to track, the perception is that many more parents are involved in some way. Contributing items for the college exam boxes and pizza at Confirmation Class were two examples of opportunities that parents have to get involved.

Rev. Paul passed out a handout on Christian Formation and Space. This was used to address the updates of items 1 and 2 on the Christian Formation Commission Action Plan. Paul, Danielle and Lisa explained that the number of children they are seeing each Sunday is increasing. We discussed the space challenges this presents but agreed that this a wonderful challenge to tackle. A short term solution of using existing partitions in the parish hall to divide space up was discussed. There were many suggestions made and there will be more discussion at next month’s vestry meeting. The Christian Formation Commission will work with the Facilities Group to look into long term solutions.

Rev. Nancy commended Rev. Paul, Lisa Brainerd and Danielle Phelan for their hard work and great team work.

Radical Hospitality

Gayle Kataja updated the Vestry on the progress the Radical Hospitality Committee has made. Gayle read a wonderful book by Stephanie Spellers titled Radical Welcome. She read passages from the book and suggested that Vestry Members read the book for a better understanding of Radical Hospitality. Rev. Paul put together a flow chart of where new members come into the church. The Radical Hospitality Committee needs to work with every commission at St. James. It was suggested that we could possibly invite Stephanie Spellers to come speak to us. Rev. Nancy explained the difference between a committee and a commission. It was suggested that the Radical Hospitality Committee work in partnership with the Fellowship Commission. The Vestry discussed the need to get their arms around just what Radical Hospitality is so we will continue to discuss this at next months Vestry meeting.

Parking Shortage Issue

Jim Bennett updated Vestry members on the Parking challenge. Jim has made contact with several individuals at St. Pauls about St. Pauls parishioners parking in St. James parking spaces. Jim also spoke with the owners of the adjacent business, Home Gallery. It was discussed that we would like to solve this issue peacefully but that if St. Pauls parishioners continue to park in St. James spaces, we have no choice to move forward with some action as St. James parishioners have no place to park when they arrive for church. It was noted that St. Pauls does have ample parking for its members but St. Pauls parishioners continue to park in St. James spots for convenience. Jim discussed further signage, leaflets to be put on trespassing cars, and towing options. We will continue to ask our parishioners to park in the bank and veterinary parking lots in order to leave the spaces close to church open for those that are visiting or need close proximity parking.

Bulletin Boards Update

Jim met with Scott Thompson who has hung some of our bulletin boards. Scott plans on hanging the remaining boards by the end of the week. There are commission bulletin boards, bulletin boards for sign up sheets and there will be a bulletin board in a visible location which shall have pictures of Vestry members with their e mail address so they are accessible. Jim and Scott will work with Sandy Ouellette on what type of bulletin board to purchase to put Vestry Pictures on.

Jim and Scott mentioned there were a number of items they found in cleaning out the basement. It was suggested that if these items were in working order, they could be sold at the Spring Fling in May.

Commissions' Needs for Guidance/Support from Vestry

Rich Mills explained that this item would be a standing item on each Vestry Meeting agenda. This is the place to bring up Commission Needs or support needed from the Vestry sooner rather than later.

Rev. Nancy mentioned that Carl Benker will be updating the website and each Vestry Member responsible for a commission should take a look at the website and provide any updates to Carl as soon as possible.

Nancy Goodwin reported that the Share the Faith/Evangelism Committee has lost several members and Nancy is hoping to attract some new members at the Potluck luncheon on March 1st. Please pass along to Nancy names of anyone you think may want to be a part of this exciting ministry.

Scott Thompson reported that he has worked with Jim Bennett to inventory what work needs to be done at St. James and is working on a spreadsheet with the hope of having parishioners pitch in to get the job done. Scott is also looking in to a possible fundraiser at Rentscher Field. The fundraiser is comprised of either cleaning up from 8am to noon the morning after an event or selling beverage/food at one of the concession stands. He would need a commitment from 30 – 35 individuals and this could net as much as \$1200. Fred Larson asked Scott and others who have fundraising ideas to coordinate with the Stewardship Committee. David Buddington pointed out that there are three members of the Stewardship Committee on Vestry so it would be acceptable to bring your fundraising idea to Vestry and they could inform the Stewardship Committee of the idea. The vestry concurred. Scott is looking into compiling a list of youth that would be willing to babysit for children of members. This list could be shared with parents of our church who are looking for a sitter. Scott will gather more information and report back to the Vestry next month.

Scott Thompson is a certified teacher of CPR and has offered to provide training and certification for the caretakers of our children. He is also looking in to getting a donated AED (automated external defibrillator) to keep at the church. Scott will coordinate with Christian Formation regarding setting up CPR classes for our caregivers. Rev. Paul thanked Scott for offering his time and talent to our church. Scott will pursue and report back to the Vestry.

INFORMATION

Rector's Report

Rev. Nancy reported that she is running two discernment groups. She attended a Bishops Forum at St. Mary's where St. James had good participation from members. She has attended many meetings including the Alter Guild, Confirmation Class, Stewardships, Worship Committee and Christian Formation. Rev. Nancy is looking in to a Possible Hunger Fest sponsored by the outreach committee and Confirmands. Rev. Nancy reported she has also performed funerals, preparations for a marriage, helped plan and prepare services for Lent, Holy Cross Monastery retreat, and oversight for all staff.

Pastoral conversations included surgery, addictions, grief, children, employment and marriages.

Assistant Rector's Report

Rev. Paul reported that he has attended two (2) boundary seminars. He has arranged a Lenten Lecture series with the first lecture scheduled for Wednesday, March 4 from 7:00 – 8:30pm on Forgiveness. He will advertise in the Glastonbury Citizen and the Reminder. Paul is looking in to advertising on Channel 15 (local station). Rev. Paul is already planning programs for the Fall 2009. He is looking at a program called Challenging Lifestyles. It is a program that comes out of London and consists of six talks. Paul reported that Borderlands is scheduled for July 18 – July 26, 2009. He is working with the airlines to get group rates. He will need trip deposits by March 15th. One member of our church offered to fund the trip if there was someone interested in going that had financial challenges. Paul Gossling offered some of his frequent flyer miles to the trip. Thanks to both for such generous offers. Rev. Paul also reported that he is planning training for the ushers and greeters.

Feedback

Nancy Goodwin reported that she was approached by a few elderly parishioners who would like to have folding chairs available during coffee hour. All agreed this was a great idea and Rev. Nancy suggested that the Building/Design Committee take 6 Chancellors chairs from the church, which are not being used, and place them in the foyer.

Leslee Flanagan reported that perceived there was some confusion on what Safe Church Training was. She suggested making it clearer during announcements.

David Buddington reported that he heard from some parishioners they did not like the communion stations that were set up at the Christmas services. Rev. Paul explained that the stations were implemented to speed the service time up but the concern was duly noted.

DECISIONS

Approval Minutes

Gayle Kataja moved and Gail Lebert seconded the motion to approve the minutes from December 8, 2008 Vestry meeting. It passed unanimously.

Gail Lebert moved and Gayle Kataja seconded the motion to approve the minutes from he December 15, 2008 Vestry meeting. It passed unanimously.

Minutes from the Annual Meeting, held on January 25, 2009, were handed out. Although these minutes do not get approved until next year's annual meeting, Rich Mills asked members to send any changes they see to Jennifer Daukas.

Minutes from the Vestry Retreat held on February 7, 2009 were handed out and Rich Mills asked that vestry members communicate any changes needed to the clerk, Jennifer Daukas. We will vote on approval of these minutes at the March Vestry meeting.

Treasurer's Report

Fred Larson reported on the financials. He stated that January 2009 was a good month for revenue vs. expense. He explained that the financials at the end of the 1st quarter will be more telling of how we are doing. There is a stewardship meeting on March 9 to specifically address how to keep pledges current. Fred reported that this will be a challenging year for our parish as it will be for the entire economy. Expense Control will be critical. David Buddington will be paying special attention to pledges and tracking early, pledges that seem to be dwindling.

David Buddington reported that it appears that the request to add an extra dollar to the collection plate has increased the total collected. He reported that some parishioners are putting extra dollars in with their pledge check envelope as well as members putting loose money in the plate. Either method is much appreciated.

Freds report was approved.

Vestry Forums

Rich Mills reported that the previously scheduled Vestry Forum for March 22 will need to be rescheduled. Rich will work with Rev. Nancy and Rev. Paul to pick a new date. It was suggested that one of the items discussed at the forums is Radical Hospitality.

August Vestry Retreat

Rich reported that the August Vestry Retreat will be held on Saturday, August 1. The morning portion will be a meeting with the Vestry only and the afternoon will include spouses/partners/other of Vestry members.

Agenda Items for Following Meeting

Rich asked that Vestry members let him know of any items that should be on the agenda for next month. He reminded us that Worship Commission and the Communication Plan will be discussed.

The next Vestry meeting will be March 16.

WORSHIP

Rev. Nancy explained Prayer Partners. Each vestry member will be praying for another vestry member until the next meeting.

Rev. Paul ended the meeting with a reading.

The meeting adjourned at 9:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer Daukas

Mission Statement:

To format and implement an excellent, comprehensive Christian Formation Program at St. James' that is dynamic, contemporary, engaging, and applicable to Christians of all ages.

**Action Plan
2008**

September 26,

1. For children in the nursery, provide a safe environment where children can socially interact under the supervision of qualified caretakers.
2. For children in pre-kindergarten classes, provide social/intellectual engagement in Bible stories under the direction of designated church school teachers.
3. For children K-4, continue the Workshop Rotation Model where children learn Bible stories through different learning strategies; linguistic, bodily kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, musical, logical, and sequential models.
4. For children in 5th and 6th grade, implement a challenging multi-intelligence "Tweens" approach to Christian Education that includes: dialogue and activities related to Bible study, an introduction to congregational ministries, and the development and implementation of a new time capsule for the next 150 years.
5. Consider the implementation of a Vacation Bible School during the summer of 2009.
6. For grades 7-9, utilize the Rite 13 lesson plan resources that include the topics of: Self, Spirituality, Society, and Sexuality. Lesson plans are considered a springboard for discussion and may be modified for appropriate group discussion.
7. For grades 10-12, utilize J2A lesson plan resources that include the topics of: Self, Spirituality, Society, and Sexuality. Lesson plans are considered a springboard for discussion and may be modified for appropriate group discussion.
8. Initiate a confirmation/reception/reaffirmation class in Lent, 2009.
9. Solidify plans for a spiritual pilgrimage targeted to youth in grades 10-12 to Borderlands Spiritual Ranch, Lakota, South Dakota in July, 2009.
10. Develop a broad based offering of Christian Formation programs for adults that include topics of contemporary society, healthcare, end of life issues, issues surrounding grief, family systems, sharing our stories, spirituality/spiritual direction, Bible study, retreats and quiet days, differing cultural and religious topics, the study of Anglicanism, mission's influence on our spirituality, etc.

11. Identify a lay leader to coordinate the overall years' schedule of fun youth events and then identify a specific leader for each planned event.
12. Provide calendars for each semester for Rite 13, J2A, & YAC for educational and fellowship events.
13. Identify mission opportunities for youth and adults through communication with the Outreach Commission.
14. Continue to recruit teachers for the Christian Education program for pre-kindergarten through YAC.
15. Establish a 'College-Connection Ministry' sending "exam kits" to students from St. James' currently attending college.
16. Improve communication to youth via updated communications such as text messaging, Facebook, email, etc.
17. Establish a feedback form for students and parents to provide comments and suggestions on how St. James' can continually improve its Christian Formation Program.
18. Follow up and connect with youth who have been absent from weekly gatherings.

Endeavor to increase parental participation in the Youth Christian Formation Program by 100% by June, 2009. Participation is not exclusive to teaching, but includes all aspects of offered support given through time, talent, and resources