

St. Mary's Episcopal Church
Newton Lower Falls, Massachusetts

Minutes of Vestry Meeting, April 28, 2009

PRESENT: Paul Pyzowski, Mary Green, Beverly Hurney, Elisabeth Rippy, Kitty Smith, John Turtle, Dick Sabin, Isabel Phillips, Elisabeth Comer, Jon Hayden, Stewart Tucker, Isabel Phillips, Dick Sabin, Maryjane Burgess, Elisabeth Rippy, Sarah Williamson, The Reverend Margaret Schwarzer (guest for portion of meeting)

The Vestry meeting opened with a prayer by Paul Pyzowski.

The minutes of the March 24, 2009 meeting were approved as amended.

**NEW
BUSINESS:**

Interim Rector Candidate:

The Wardens met with The Reverend Margaret Schwarzer, currently the Interim Sabbatical priest at Christ Church, Andover. Reference checks at Christ Church and other independent resources resulted in favorable recommendations. Paul Pyzowski reviewed the process of selecting an Interim with the Vestry. A candidate is part of a limited pool of clergy, specially trained to serve in interim roles. One candidate at a time is presented to us for a yes or no vote. An explanation is given to the Diocese for any no vote and another candidate is presented. Questions from the Vestry included when would Margaret be available and for how long. Paul reminded the Vestry that the Interim is expected to be here for approximately one year and **is not** eligible to be considered as the next rector to succeed Peter Chase. Paul also described the Quaker vote process which would be used following an opportunity for the Vestry and Margaret to meet and ask questions.

Following brief introductions and statement of what is important about St. Mary's by each Vestry member, there was a question and answer period between the Vestry and Margaret. After Margaret had left the meeting, a Quaker vote was taken, resulting in a **unanimous approval** to offer Margaret the position as Interim Priest.

Paul will communicate our decision to Margaret. The goal is to negotiate a contract prior to making the official announcement to the congregation. In the meantime, the congregation will be updated on the current status.

Transition Update:

Paul thanked the Vestry for their support and reports that all is going as well as can be expected. He asks for continuing communication of any dissent or concern.

Review of Plans for Celebration of Peter's Ministry:

1. As a result of push back to the original proposal for Peter's farewell celebration, the current plan is believed to be appropriate. Plans include (a) a pizza and ice cream party for all children of the parish following Babson Night on May 17 and hosted by Sarah and Mark Williamson at their home, (b) a Pentecost Brunch in the parish hall following the 10 AM service on May 31 and hosted by Peggy Scott and Kitty Smith and (c) a cocktail reception the evening of May 31 hosted by Lucille Rossignol and Paul LaViolette at their home. Collections to date will cover the cost of all of these events, and there will be an additional collection for the cash purse for Peter and Abbie. Some of the initial collections were understood to be for the celebrations as well as for the purse. Paul suggests a total goal of \$15,000 with approximately \$5,000 allocated to cover the expenses of the celebrations. Members of the Vestry commented that this would mean an average contribution of \$150 per pledging member, the possibility to structure the purse to be tax advantaged, and a reminder that the \$16,000 reduction in the original 2009 budget resulted in no ability to fund these expenses from the church budget.
2. Constructive edits were made to an update letter to the parish which had been previously circulated to the Vestry. The letter will be mailed to the parish this week.

Candidates for Search Committee:

The nomination period ended April 26. Nominations were either for oneself or for others; many were submitted anonymously. Nomination is not a guarantee of inclusion on the Search Committee. Nominees with copies of any supporting rationale were circulated to the Vestry on a **confidential basis** with a request for any comments or additional names. One nominee had asked to be withdrawn after prayerful consideration of the potential perception of a conflict of interest.

The Search Committee chair and the Wardens will choose the final slate and present to the Vestry for a vote on May 19. The suggestion is made to have a couple of extra members participate as non-voting members in case a member is unable to complete the process. There is also a discussion about the pros and cons of having a younger member, e.g., an older high school student.

Annual Picnic:

The annual picnic will be coordinated by Stephan Braun and held on June 14, which will also be the last day of Sunday School until September.

**COMMITTEE
REPORTS:**

Due to the unusually full agenda, committee reports were limited to the following:

Treasurer:

In the absence of the Treasurer, Paul reported that there are no unusual budget variances for the period ending March 31, 2009.

Property: Jon Hayden reported a focus on the sagging organ pipes, which have been previously reported. The immediate focus will be on refurbishing the rectory over the summer, following a walk through by a local realtor. The Committee will address the \$1,900 estimate for the leaky furnace valve later in the year.

Rector & Staff: The Wardens are in frequent contact with Denise and Kirsten during the transition. Vestry members are encouraged to also acknowledge the staff's valuable contributions. Kirsten will be updated on the Interim status.

Youth & Christian Education: The K – 2nd grade curriculum will be going out of print this year, and the curriculum materials for grades 4 – 6 need to be reordered. Isabel plans to review the materials available from the Diocese prior to making final decisions for the best curricula. Sunday School will be canceled for May 31 so that teachers and children can attend the service and Pentecost Brunch. The last day of the current Sunday School period will be June 14. Isabel Phillips will organize a finger print collage as part of Peter and Abbie's farewell gifts.

Women of St. Mary's: Maryjane Burgess circulated a proposed allocation of outreach funds for final vote at the next WSM meeting.

Worship: Rabbi Weiss will preach May 3. Confirmation is May 16 at 10 AM at Grace Church, Newton. Peter will be here every Sunday in May. Kyle Sweatt will be baptized May 17 at 10AM. Peter's nephew Chris and brother Ben will be participating in the 10 AM service May 24. May 31 will be Jet Warner's baptism and the celebration of Pentecost. Peter requests that this service be about the Church and any words spoken about him be done after the liturgy. Bev Hurney has volunteered to help Peter review 17 years of files, saving appropriate material for the archives.

Paul Pyzowski closed the meeting with a prayer.

The next Vestry meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 19 at 7:30 PM to approve the final Search Committee, among other items.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Green for Lynn Farnell, Clerk