

St. Alban's Vestry Meeting Minutes

November 12, 2013, 7:00 PM

Present Jen Tarling, Kelly Moughty, Frank Governali, Audrey Delafield, Gretchen Hartley, Fr. Tim Boggs, Jim Croft, Connie Babcock, Erik Olsen, Bill Bell, Bruce Babcock, Nancy Pezzullo, Peter Merrill

Absent Michelle Whitney, Jason Burks

1. **Opening Prayer** on leadership by Fr. Tim, plus a second on those in poverty written by Audrey, read by Fr. Tim.
2. **Endowment committee** update by Gordon Gayer. Gordon is here for the first of the committee's recommended quarterly meetings/updates ongoing. Committee formed in summer of 2012 to implement and care for endowment. It consists of Dave Wakelin, Justin LeBlanc, and Gordon is chair. Based on their recommendation, we agreed to self-manage endowment in a low cost fund. Current status: substantially all of our endowment has been moved to the Vanguard Star Fund. \$613,966 is current endowment. \$58K is in the Ministry Fund, about \$78K is in Mission and Outreach Fund and about \$94K is in Youth and Children Fund. \$384K is in General Endowment. One Foundation campaign has successfully built endowment back to point where it was before construction of Bonoff Hall; it had dropped to close to \$200K.

We opted to transfer whole portfolio to Vanguard, then sell stocks, which saved significantly in transaction fees, which were high at UBS. This slowed down the process, and we got some tailwind from the success of US stocks over the last quarter in the meantime, so there was even more of a net gain. Star fund continues to do well, beat it's benchmark - the 44% US broad market, 25% US bond index, 12.5% short term bond index, approx 19% non-US stocks index. Data from third quarter 2013 reports shows 2% over index (which is \$12K per year earnings for us) in short term, 0.75% over 3 years.

Committee is pleased with performance. They met Oct 24th, and plan to meet quarterly after the end of each financial quarter from here on out, then report at the following Vestry meeting (Feb., May, Aug., Nov.) Plan is to make a benchmark against which the committee will assess funds in future. Lipper average of blended funds will be one, to keep open mind about fund performance. Lew Phillips has given the committee some thoughtful advice to consider. Committee also looking at reviewing compliance with our policy. Frank reminds us that our annual possible drawdown for annual budgeting purposes is based on average rolling balance over prior 12 months, so we will have slightly more available this year to be used.

Tim charged the committee to take a look at ways to include several vestry members' desire to be sure that we are investing in a socially responsible way, sort of a social audit of the Star Fund to report back to us on. Gordon accepted this charge.

3. **Listening Project update** Frank: 86% of all cards have been returned, benefits of project will be incalculable in many ways. Mike Watson has been tracking cards, and managing project. Tim is excited to share results with parish - people were honest, generous, smart, enthusiastic for staff. Great ideas, some anxieties, wide range of perspectives. 200 conversations by end of project. Dec

8th will be the day that results will be shared after coffee hour. General themes will be presented. Intangible benefits include feeling of connection within parish. Pledging of time and talent seems to be a place to do work - pledge card seemed to emphasize financial over time and talent gifts, emphasis which was not meant. 140 meetings, 30 telephone calls, 233 listener cards back (86%).

4. **Stewardship** Numbers really close to last year's - impressive since we have lost a number of large donors, and this is after very little dogged pursuit of pledge cards. Frank thinks the effort to nudge the cards back will be lower, and calls can be more targeted, since information about people who don't consider themselves members any more has been removed.
5. **Financials** Trends from preceding 9 months continue and Frank thinks we will come in fairly close to budget. Pledge fulfillment seems on track with historical data - looks to be about 98%, which is amazingly high for this area of the country. Expenses - office still enjoying new efficiencies. Parish breakfast costs continue to outstrip donations.
6. **Clergy Reports**
 - a. **Tim**: Great attendance in worship and Sunday School this fall. All Saints Sunday was well received, many comments. Listening Project, Living Compass, New Art of Dying, all Health Committee sponsored - a good test of new communications capacity and ability of committees to take advantage of said capacity. Priscilla, the presenter, was thrilled with turnout and reception. Frank commented that diversity and frequency of message is important. New gear - projector and microphone and recording equipment worked well. Second half of the New Art of Dying will be avail on CD to be checked out, and she will be coming back to re-record the first half as well. Tim would like to continue to improve staff's identification of newcomers, though a very successful Newcomer Reception was hosted at the Rectory last week.

Advent - trying to have a reasonable Advent season:

- Parish reading simplified. A daily reader from Living Compass will be free, and one gathering will happen Dec 15th after 9:30.
- Secondly, rediscovering the Christmas story - Monday evening, the 9th of Dec. 4 images telling the story of Christmas with new images. One hour family program with cookies and milk. Taking the words of the scripture and internalizing it in our own unique way, in preparation for the coming of Christ.
- Two quiet mornings - one Friday and one Saturday - idea is to create a space from 8-noon on those mornings, where quiet, calm, reflective time can be found inside the building. Still being developed, but perhaps the labyrinth could be utilized, a harpist, scents, etc.
- Rectory Buffet and Carol Sing will happen December 15th. Potluck format.
- Pageant on 21st, also Family Service.
- Regular Christmas services.
- Teacher thank you of free babysitting being offered Dec 14th - older kids volunteer while parents check out for the morning.

- Dec 1st - Advent wreath making, and Kelly will give multi-media presentation for homily to introduce Rediscovering Xmas...
- Angel Tree for Root Cellar going up soon.
- Advent Compline service will be Dec 12th after choir rehearsal.
- Lessons and Carols Sunday Dec 29th @ 9:30 - just one service.

Tim asked for input and discussion of format of Rediscovering Xmas evening to appeal to children.

New Albanor journal format being launched - the theme is Hope for the first one. Chris Calloway written a piece on hope in the face of evil. Hope LeBlanc - interviewing of women in prison. Debbie requesting poetry from kids.

Vestry retreat on Feb 1-2, since usual weekend is booked. Annual meeting the last Sunday of January.

Centennial celebration will begin this summer, having church under tent at Ft. Williams with Bishop Lane, reception afterward. Events through year. Visiting preachers in summer, outreach effort, music event, kids event. (Would each committee want to plan something?)

January - plan to look at communications and evaluate over the year - analyze data so far.

- b. **Kelly** - Rite 13 Lock in with 9 kids until 3:45am - very successful - emphasis on their ownership of this space, their current membership. Made ornaments for Angel Tree - goes up this Sunday b/c gifts due 1st Friday in Dec. Root Cellar - this year we are being asked to donate fresh celery - 100 bunches. Vestry asked to bring 2 bunches celery on Sunday the 24th. HS Youth Group trip to Lewiston not working out this weekend due to pastoral and timing reasons.

Social service hours tracking project: Jane Anderson, Michelle Whitney, Kelly met last week to plan. Concept of passbook to log hours of service, passages and messages to reflect on. Launch in January, possibly a liturgical aspect as well.

- c. **Audrey**: Essentials party today went well today, some new volunteers. Tim sending out letter about Long Creek to gauge interest in sponsoring a unit. Farwell to Scott Scharf, stepping down from B&G and soup kitchen - announcements next week - also thanking Betsy Lewis who is retiring.

7. **Committee reports**

- a. B&G storm windows ordered, Fall cleanup planned for this Saturday morning.
- b. Communications/Health - busy fall!
- c. St. Alban's Cares planning to do some unveiling of services on 8th and 15th.

8. **Warden's report** Nominations committee convening in early Dec., to gather nominations for new Vestry Members to replace Jen, Bill, and Erik.

Erik brought up concept suggested by Wendy Rainey to have a St. Albans veggie swap next summer. It was met with enthusiasm.

9. **Thank yous**

- a. For setting up Living Compass and Art of Dying programs: Triss Critchfield by Bruce, Anita S. by Nancy P. , Terri Ann Scriven by ?.
- b. For helping with Rite 13 Lock in: Nancy Richardson by Gretchen H., Lisa Newbold by Peter .
- c. Jim thanking James for hosting Newcomer Reception at the Rectory so graciously.

10. **Minutes from November** were approved unanimously.

11. **Closing Prayer** by Connie Babcock.

Minutes recorded by Gretchen Hartley