

St. Alban's Vestry Meeting Minutes

January 10, 2014, 7:00 PM

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

1. **Opening Prayer** by Father Tim
2. **Minutes from December, 2013** meeting approved.
3. **Listening Project Updates:** Mike Watson came to help review the project logistics, training, appointments, materials, etc.
 - a. First, impressions and comments about the materials:
 - i. Ainsley, the trainer from United Way, was much appreciated.
 - ii. Some of the contact information on cards was out of date, mostly due to folks not updating it on their own; the fact that we were able to update this is actually an accomplishment of the project .
 - iii. Sometimes, it was hard to reach people and schedule appointments. Some wondered if there had been enough communication prior to the project, to be sure that people know that the focus was not just stewardship, even though there was a stewardship component. Most of the conversations were very rich, and provided a great deal of feedback. Most people had not heard of the project when called - if we do this again, we might want to have more of a media blitz to make sure everyone hears about it before they receive a call.
 - b. Place: Some folks mostly met at St. Albans, some mostly did it on the phone, some in people's homes, some in many places.
 - c. Ask: Mike wondered, did you make the ask: "Will you make a pledge?" Some felt uncomfortable with this question. Mike wonders, what could the training add that would help with this?
 - i. Tim pointed out that explicit asking might have not fit well within the kind of conversation one had, after the quality of the conversation.
 - ii. Michelle thought that the brochure which illustrated the impact of small increments of additional giving was helpful, and used that in the conversation to refer to pledging.
 - iii. Most listeners felt that the training emphasized the importance of connecting through conversation over the solicitation of pledge. Ainsley, the trainer, had

given the example of "Will you join me in pledging?" as a less confrontational way to ask folks to pledge.

- iv. Connie mentioned that she got the asking out of the way at the start of the conversation by mentioning that she would leave the card at the end of the visit.
- v. Mike says about half the cards which came back had answers, either yes or no, mostly yes.
- d. Office support: It was good - some suggestions were offered around helping get in touch with people: an email loop to ask for help if not being successful.
- e. Should we do this again? Most say yes, but not the whole thing next year - maybe every three years? Yes, but we might miss two years of important conversations. Perhaps a portion every three years.
- f. Cards often didn't reflect the pledging of talent. Ministry Fairs were mentioned as a way to encourage people to join ministries - pledging their talent. Or periodic highlighting of ministries.
- g. Several folks mentioned how nice it was to meet others all over church. Frank says that the effort to engage folks this year laid important groundwork for future years of successful parish life.
- h. Kelly wondered how being a listener might have affected vestry members' experience on a Sunday morning in the church community. Erik mentioned it was nice to have new faces to greet.

4. **Nominating Committee Reports**

- a. **Vestry:** After careful consideration, Scott Reid, Julie Merriam, and David Abiatti have been nominated to the Vestry. Thirty people were nominated - an impressive and diverse pool, compared with other parishes!
- b. **Wardens** were selected from a pool of recent vestry members, since Connie and Jim have been Wardens for a long time. Peggy Keyser has agreed to serve as Warden, with John Hartley as Junior Warden.
- c. **Convention delegates** will be selected in time to be voted upon for the annual meeting- the venue for the 2014 Diocesan Convention will be in Aroostook County, or far Down East.

5. **Year End Finances:** Overall, things turned out to be quite consistent with our budget.

- a. **Income:** Many pledges (47) are not yet fulfilled; Frank expects to realize about \$8-10K of those. At the same time, forty-nine pledges came in over the pledge amount. Thanks to several special gifts, we did not have to take a large draw from our operating reserve as planned to mitigate the lower pledging income after the passing away of high-pledging

parishioners over the last few years. The current endowment balance is \$650,424. That generates about \$12,000 in annual income, which can be used in the ongoing operating budget; the endowment benefits all the current operations of our parish - and is not just for future expenses.

- b. **Expenses:** Expense control was good in 2013. Printing and copying expenses stayed low, Christian Education was on budget, guest musicians were covered by gifts, as was the communications expense. Worship expense was higher than budget, but offset by gifts for musicians, Utilities were a bit higher, and Hospitality was also a bit higher.
- c. **Account Balance:** There is \$72K in the operating account at year end, vs. year end 2012 at \$84K, which reflects higher pledging in that year.

6. 2014 Budget

- a. **Income:** Pledging netted about 415K from 192 pledges, the exact number of pledges we had at this time last year. Amount per pledge is up slightly. Plate offerings will be budgeted about the same. Special gifts usually budgeted at low level; We budgeted to receive about \$2K in special music donations, and the vestry will be asked to help fundraise another \$3K. Last year's amount was raised by Thompson concert. Endowment income is added per endowment policy. It increased due to a good year of fund performance and completion of One Foundation pledges. The amount from the operating reserve to be transferred will be about \$7,500 to balance budget. Hopefully in a future year, this will be zero, but we are still recovering from a loss of significant pledges in 2012.
- b. **Expenses:** Small, token bonuses for each of the five staff members will be given, and for the Assistant Rector, a small merit increase to help bring her salary closer to the percentage range of the Rector's salary recommended by the Diocese. The vestry members unanimously were in agreement that the performance and value of these employees merit more of an increase and financial remuneration. However, without drawing from the operational reserve, we cannot afford to increase expenses beyond this level. A discussion ensued about ways we can appreciate our staff members as a parish, and work towards growing income in a way that allows more freedom in compensation and bonus decisions. Expenses added include \$500 for health ministry, \$1,000 for another summer seminarian, a budget for guest musicians - to be covered by donations, \$1000 towards the centennial celebration.
- c. Jason moved to approve budget as presented, Connie seconded, unanimously approved.

7. Clergy Reports

Tim:

- Adult formation program called Winter Wednesdays, beginning 1/29, 7:00-8:30 pm.
 - i. Episcopal 101 thru 1/29-2/12, led by Kelly

ii. Tim, Coming Home 2/19-3/5th

iii. A discussion of Zealot: The Life and Times of Jesus of Nazareth 3/5 - 17th.

- The New Art of Dying series will continue: On 2/9 from 2-4 pm , the parish health ministry will screen a film: Consider the Conversation, a Documentary on a Taboo Subject and host conversations facilitated by Priscilla Platt. On 3/2 Spiritual issues and hospice will be discussed, on 3/9 they will host a discussion of "A hard question: Hastening Death", and finally on 3/16, the topic will be Advanced Directives.
- Haiti committee meeting soon to discuss plans for trip to Haiti.
- Annual meeting will be the Sunday after next. Listening project outcomes and action plans will be presented. Also, farewells and thanks to three vestry members and two wardens who will be leaving.
- The Vestry retreat will follow at Pineland on the following Friday through Saturday afternoon.
- Beginning June 22 of this year will be St Albans' 100th year since the first meeting in a tent at Ft. Williams. We will plan several events and projects over the year to commemorate our centennial throughout the year. Retired wardens through recent history will be asked to help brainstorm event ideas.

Kelly: Youth attendance has been up over last year. Epiphanies photo project has been put on hold until Marjorie and Stacy can be involved again, since they were an integral part. Youth outreach project will launch Lent 1. Family services going well. Rite 13 and Connect leaders are needed in these weeks with many people away for winter sports, etc. Recruitment has been hard for these programs, partly due to long commitment. Kelly will attend Forma conference at Virginia Theological Seminary. Confirmation prep for 7th and 8th graders will move ahead soon.

Audrey: Monday Jan 27th at 7pm, there will be a meeting for those interested in sponsoring girls unit at Maine Youth Center.

8. **Warden Report:** Jim Croft has been a warden for 10 years, and 5 years before that was involved - 15% of St Alban's history! He thanks the parish for the opportunity. Connie has enjoyed her tenure, getting to know all the people she has met, and serving the parish. Erik appreciates the opportunity to learn more about the parish and has enjoyed the opportunity to serve. Bill's vestry experience was rewarding; even though he serves on similar committees for his job, he was pleasantly surprised at the difference, which he attributes to opening and closing prayers. Jen has loved serving on the vestry, and will miss it. She is thankful for the growth she has experienced during her tenure. Tim appreciated the wardens for the help, wisdom, and support of him and of James in transitioning to his new position here, and also thanked the departing vestry members for their contributions over the last three years.
9. **Thank yous** Michelle will thank Patti Oldmixon for stepping up for extra teaching of Connect. Erik will thank Mike Watson for spearheading the listening project.

10. **Closing Prayer** by Jim Croft:

Prayer to Close a Meeting

Heavenly Father, as we come to the end of our time together we thank you for what has been accomplished here today.

May the matters discussed serve as a catalyst to move us forward and cause us to advance and see growth in all areas of our lives.

May we leave here recognizing You are the God of all wisdom and You are willing to lead us forward.

This we pray in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Amen.