



Minutes of the Vestry

December 17, 2007

Present: Betsy Creedon, David Dieter, Lisa Flores, Stuart Grigg, Monte Jahnke, Susan Larsen, Joe Maycock, Theresa Muzzi, Pat O'Brien, Jeff Stallings, George Sutton, Don Sweeny, Al Torp, John Van Osdol, Pat Wenzel, Brad Whitaker

Absent: Heather Albrecht, Richard Beadle, Mike DeFillipi, Susan Heinen

I. Opening Prayer

Don Sweeny said the opening prayer.
Brad shared a meditation.

II. Opening Matters

Announcements: Brad informed vestry that Slim Higbie, who had been in the hospital since September 20, passed away. Please keep the family in your prayers.

- There are some staff changes in the communications coordinator position and the Youth Director's position. Melissa Pirani has been offered a position to be program director of the Girls Scout Camp in Columbus, Michigan. Lisa and Brad are putting together a small group of people to help with the interviewing process.
- Open house at the rectory was a success. Thank you to Richard Thomas for decorating the rectory and the rest of the staff for hosting it with the Whitakers.
- Work has begun on the rectory windows and it will be completed after the first of the year.

Wardens' comments: Betsy Creedon distributed the evaluation forms for the rector. Please get them back to her by January 18. After the responses are computed Betsy and Monte will meet with Brad.

Pastoral Concerns: Please keep in mind those who are alone and that this is also a difficult and scary time of year for some people financially.

- Career Transition group is off to a strong start.
- Lynne Cameron keeps the pastoral care records. From September 4 through December 13 there were 94 pastoral contacts made by clergy and Eucharistic Ministers.

Correspondence: No report.

III. Approval of the Minutes of November 19, 2007

The minutes were approved as circulated.

IV. Parish Ministries Reports

Parish Resource Ministries - Investment Policy: George Sutton reported that George Nicholson presented the Investment Policy to the Finance Committee.

- Joe Maycock distributed the policy (Attachment A) which is an amendment and restatement of the present policy that was adopted in 2001.

- The main change is to add as a possible investment so called alternative investments, such as hedge funds, private equity, venture capital, managed futures, commodities, etc – unusual types of investments that are not stocks and bonds. According to this policy, investments of up to 15% will be placed in alternative investments to maintain reasonable withdrawals from the endowments.
- Allocation ranges for the different classes of investments were also changed (refer to the bottom of page 2 and top of page 3).
- Change was made to a separate index or class of investment (refer to the top of page 4). Shows the benchmark for each of the investments.
- Limited the investment managers so they could not have more than 20% of their portfolio in short term investments. It has been cut back to 10%.
- There are two exhibits attached to the policy: Exhibit A, *Reasonableness of Investment Return Objective*; Exhibit B, *Determination of the Endowment Funds' Annual Withdrawal Rate*.
- Please read over the policy and if you have any concerns or questions, contact either George Nicholson or Joe Maycock and be ready to vote on this policy in January.

Parish Christian Formation Ministries: Jeff Stallings reported that they held their quarterly meeting.

- Jeff expressed some concerns about the youth group since Melissa Pirani has resigned effective December 30.
- All areas of Parish Christian Formation are running smoothly at this time.

Parish Outreach Ministries – Year End Report from Outreach Funding: David Dieter reported that Gifts and Greens projected a \$5,000 increase over last year. Many of the vendors were local and received well. Part of the money is going to the support of rebuilding of New Orleans. Another trip is planned for the last week of April.

- Bound Together East is moving along. David has been elected to the board of the Bound Together Corporation to help them in their transition.
- *Crossings* contains a report from Outreach Funding of the agencies that have received funding.

Parish Life Ministries: Pat O'Brien reported that the Worship Council had a meeting that was very productive. Plans have been made through May

V. **New Business**

2008 Budget Draft: Pat Wenzel reported that there were 31 pledges that were decreases; 88 that were increases; 25 new; 122 with no change; and 141 that have not yet pledged amounting to \$365,000. The Finance Committee assumes total pledges to be at the same level they were last year – \$969,605.

- The endowment draw is 5% which is a decrease from last year's 5.5%. DeHaven Trust is contributing \$50,000. Tannahill Foundation has an increase of \$25,000.
- No salary increases except for three employees to bring them into the range for their position.
- Program staff and director of facilities will be given a cell phone allowance.
- Health insurance costs have been reduced by 11% by moving to a new carrier.
- The Children's Formation Director position will be combined with the Youth Director position.
- The diocesan pledge is \$18,299 higher than 2007.
- Outreach budget has been increased to \$60,000.
- There has been a 10% cut across the board in all areas except music, communications, and compensation.
- Current version of the budget represents a deficit of \$14,814.

There was discussion on how to handle parishioners who are unhappy with certain aspects of CC and are withholding or decreasing their pledges.

Discussion continued on the budget expressing concern about making a presumption of funds that have not been pledged and making an assumption that the funds will be received.

- There are 127 outstanding pledges and John Van Osdol projects that CC may get between 80% and 90% of them because they are people who have pledged in the past.
- John Van Osdol mentioned that we have a deficit of approximately \$24,000 as of December 2007. It averages to about \$68 per family and he suggested that we appeal to those families that have pledged for an extra \$68.
- Stuart Grigg suggested that income assumptions may be faulty. He stated that pledging units have fallen at an average rate of 5%/year for 11 years. If this trend continues in 2008, which is likely, then pledging units will be about 366. If, as is assumed, the average pledge is the same as 2007, then there will be \$38,000 less in income, than is assumed in the draft budget. Don Sweeny expressed concurrence with this statement, and suggested we need a "worst case" budget.
- The diocesan pledge was discussed and whether we are in a position to increase it per the Diocese's new calculations. Monte pointed out that CC's pledge to the Diocese was made in August 2007, provided we have income per our 2008 budget. Susan Larsen expressed concern that as one of the largest and wealthiest parishes in the Diocese CC needs to honor our pledge to the Diocese and if we cannot we need to contact them right away so they may plan as well for 2008.
 - Stuart Grigg stated extreme concerns about not honoring a signed, vestry-approved contractual commitment to the Diocese, specifically:
 - we were aware of the Diocesan apportionment formula when we signed the commitment;
 - we should honor contracts we have made;
 - our operating budget" represents only a portion of the funds expending each year at Christ Church. In the past year we have undertaken completion of more than \$500,000 in Columbarium construction, and \$90,000 in clergy housing improvements, for example, which are not included in our operating budget. It is wrong to "cry poor" and break a contract, by means of parsing budgetary distinctions;
 - We are the leading parish in the Diocese. We have the resources of funds and people to work for change and improvement in the Diocese, if we feel it is needed. As major contributors, we should ask for commensurate representation and work to make improvements if we feel they are needed, not withhold pledged support;
 - How can we ask our donors to stand firm on pledges and support, if we do not do so as a parish?
- A question was raised by Stuart Grigg about the surplus. (Clarification about the surplus will be made at the January meeting.)

Ministry Chairs: Brad distributed a draft of the various ministry chairs (Attachment B). Please read it over and let Monte, Betsy or Brad know in what capacity you would like to serve.

VI. Old Business

Treasurer's Report: Pat reviewed the report that was distributed at the meeting.

Vestry Nominating Committee: Monte mentioned that the nominating committee of Stuart Grigg, Susan Heinen, George Sutton, Laura Huebner, Penny Soby and John Woodhouse met about 4 or 5 times. The slate presents a good balance – 5 men and 5 women, different age groups, new parishioners along with established parishioners. The roundtable will take place on January 13 in the Undercroft. Each nominee will be assigned a mentor and they are as follows: Heather Albrecht with Lois Bendler; Dick Beadle with Libby Candler; Betsy Creedon with Ann Eatherly; Mike DeFillipi with Ted Hagan; John Van Osdol with Joe Katulic; Al Torp with Jessica Mitchell; Susan

Larsen with Brendan Ross; Pat O'Brien with Carrie Sutton; Don Sweeny with Dave Redfield; and Joe Maycock with Jeff vonSchwarz. Please seek the nominees out to see if they have questions.

Process for Clergy Housing Policy: Jeff Stallings reported that the clergy housing policy is in the hands of Buildings and Grounds and they are coming back to the vestry with recommendations. Jeff would like B & G to have all of the vestry's comments and not just a summary. Results should be back to the vestry in either January or February.

Clergy Housing Allowance: Brad explained that per IRS regulations a certain amount of income is designated as clergy housing allowance and for tax purposes that money is reduced from the clergy income for federal income tax purposes. Lisa has set hers at \$3,000; David at \$5,000; and Brad at \$17,000. These are expenses that are incurred in maintaining a house.

Al Torp moved that the Vestry of Christ Church Grosse Pointe approve the Clergy Housing Resolution for the Rev. Bradford G. Whitaker, the Rev. David D. Dieter, and the Rev. Lisa C. Flores as presented at the Vestry meeting. Betsy Creedon seconded the motion; all approved.

John requested that vestry be prepared to be contacted for the phon-a-thon coming up in January.

VII. Vestry, Reflections on Parish Programs, Ministries, etc.

Off the record.

VIII. Closing Prayer

George Sutton said the closing prayer.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kay Yntema-Gruner
Recording Secretary

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