

VESTRY MEETING St. Stephens Church  
December 17, 2009  
Fellowship and Dinner  
6:30

Present:

Sheri Anderson  
Kathy Brooks  
Keith Conforti  
Davenport Crocker, Jr.  
Sandy Emler  
Robin Fusco  
Rober Hill  
Rob Jurgel  
Paul Pitts  
David Theodore  
Ginny Wieland  
Margot Critchfield

Life in the Spirit

The meeting officially opened with the December prayer from the Vestry Handbook.

Minutes of the November Meeting were approved and will be published on the web site.

1. New Business

A. Repentance and Amendment of Life: Margot shared that she recently had a grace-filled Advent experience of self-examination and repentance that she wanted to share with us both as an illustration of the Advent spiritual discipline to which we are all called, and because it involved a former member of the vestry who had recently resigned. Margot said that it felt like a tremendous grace not only to have been given a new perspective on how she responded to what happened in the vestry while she was away last July, but especially to have been given the opportunity to then repent of it, i.e. to apologize. Specifically, Margot said that she has come to believe that when she came back from vacation last July and was told about what happened between two members of the vestry at the July meeting, she should have immediately called for an emergency meeting of the vestry to deal with the crisis rather than waiting for the next regularly scheduled vestry meeting to address it. She said that by not addressing the hurt and brokenness of the July meeting immediately, she feels she failed the vestry member who later resigned, she failed the vestry member who lost his temper and still hasn't forgiven himself for doing so, and she failed the entire vestry who---having witnessed the event---might not feel safe. Margot said she wants us to understand the freedom and joy that comes with admitting one's shortcomings and apologizing for them. "Regardless of what anyone else has done, we always own a part in any broken relationship," she said, adding, "We need to

clean up our own side of the street.” Margot apologized to the vestry for not taking immediate action when she returned from vacation, and assured us that while she couldn’t imagine such an incident occurring again, she wanted us to know that in the future, as our spiritual leader, she would be more aggressive in addressing any situation in need of healing and reconciliation within the vestry. She concluded by inviting us to consider taking time for a period of self-examination, to look at our own part in any broken relationships in our lives, and to offer apologies and amendment of life to those we have harmed—whether intentional or not (sins of omission and well as commission).

As part of her personal Advent repentance praying, Margot was reminded that “we always own a piece of whatever problem ourselves when there is a disagreement between or among people. Imagining how someone else may feel can help each of us look at our actions from their perspective and more easily see how we might apologize for being part of the problem. “We get to clean up our side of the street”. In reflecting upon recent vestry meeting tensions, Margot acknowledged that she did not act as our spiritual advisor which is her official role as rector of the church. For this she apologized. The entire vestry might have been better served had she realized the need for advice and counsel for each of us. The joys of “repentance and amendment of life” going forward were clearly visible as Margot shared and promised to be more attentive to this role as we go forward as a vestry.

B.Nominating Committee update: The Nominating Committee has met several times. They have reviewed the strengths and weaknesses of those currently serving on the vestry. They have looked at the overall parish and are seeking those who not only are active parishioners but also have skills which would be an asset to the current vestry. Dick Cook as agreed to be our new senior warden and Bob Jackson has agreed to be our new treasurer. Much prayer has proceeded the asking of parishioners to serve for the next term.

C Planning Parish Conversations: Robin Fusco’s enthusiastic description of the conversations around our cornerstone goals has prompted us to plan table conversation, Jan. 24 for the entire parish. Robin and Davenport will help facilitate the logistics of the morning; Kathryn Earle will be the facilitator in general. Two questions, “What do you like at St. Stephen’s? What would you like to see us do in the next 5 years?” are being considered. The idea of engaging the kids was well received and smaller tables will be included in the mix. Perhaps Godly Play teachers can help at these tables as the kids know them and would feel comfortable talking.

D.Joe Spangenberg and Wallace St. John joined us for a discussion about property needs for 2010. The property committee gave us their Capital Improvement Plan for 2010. High Priority needs must be addressed to prevent more extensive damage to our property. Parish input might be helpful for what items seem most relevant to the parish at large...i.e. amplification

system for the sanctuary might have a higher priority than expected esp. if you tend to sit in the back of the church. Electrical wiring which will be costly probably needs to be addressed “sooner rather than later”. While the committee is uncomfortable about asking for more money, they raised the question about using funds from the Centennial Fund or raising money for specific projects. They also requested \$500 in unrestricted funds so they can purchase material when they are tackling the work themselves, donating labor but being able to purchase materials within their budget. \$30,000 allocated in the past to Capital Improvements worked well.

E. 2010 Budget initial review: Current shortfall of projected budget is approximately \$20,000. No salary increases are anticipated this year. One suggestion is to ask all those who have made a pledge to consider adding \$20.00 a month. This would eliminate the shortfall. David Theodore praised Gordie Stevenson’s work as Stewardship Chairman and questioned the wisdom of “going back to the well” to these generous parishioners once again. David also raised the challenge of getting someone to replace Gordie as Stewardship Chair for 2010. No decision was reached at this meeting.

Margot mentioned her need of an Interim Rector until the current seminarians graduate in June when hopefully there will be addition choices. Our budge includes a 20 hour week for Colette. Margot is having conversations with a candidate to see if an agreement can be reached for an interim position, insurance, hours much is on the table at this point. Margot reminded us that the vestry passes the budget and inform the congregation at the Annual meeting.

Given the lateness of the hour, a special meeting of the vestry was scheduled for the purpose of 2010 budget Jan. 7<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m., no meal prior to the meeting.

F. Housing expense for rectory, which has no impact on the budget, will be approved by email vote as soon as numbers are established.

Meeting was closed by prayer by Keith Conforti at 9:35.

Up coming dates:

Special vestry meeting, re budget; Jan. 7<sup>th</sup> 7 p.m.

January 21 January Vestry Meeting

Jan. 24<sup>th</sup> Parish Conversations following 10 o’clock service. (What about after the 8?)

February 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting

## Addition to the December Minutes

The following Resolution was moved, seconded and voted on unanimously via e-mail by the vestry:

Whereas the Reverend Margot D. Critchfield is employed as a minister of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Cohasset, MA, which although providing a residence for her does not provide full cost of maintaining and furnishing such a residence; the vestry resolves that of the total compensation of \$69,700 to be paid to The Reverend Margot D. Critchfield during 2010, that \$10,000 be designated a parsonage allowance within the meaning of that term as used in section 107 of the IRS Code of 1986.