

St. Thomas Episcopal Church

Burnsville, North Carolina

Vestry Retreat Minutes

September 15, 2007

Opening Prayer: *Reverend Bob Reese*

Attendance: *Reverend Bob Reese, Neal Culver, Joann Collins, Jackie Murray, Charlie Stover, Jane Stover, John Davis, Dianna Donovan, and Pat Sharkey as Vestry Clerk*

Approval of Agenda:

Approval of Minutes: *(Neal will email the minutes of the August Vestry meeting to the Vestry)*

Selection of next Vestry Meeting: *Thursday, October 25 @ 7pm*

Financial Reports

- Finance Committee:
- Building Fund:

Action Items

- Convention Alternate Delegates: *Convention is November 8-10. Charlie and Joann are our delegates, and we need two alternates. Please see Neal if you are interested.*
- Vestry Nominations: *Karen Miller and Stacey Lane have been nominated to be the two new Vestry members. Stacey has been coming here 1 ½ years, formerly held a position with TRAC and just became a member of the Board with Montessori. Karen is an author of children's books and a new grandmother. With these two new members of the Vestry we will have a perfect split of male vs. female. They will be nominated at the October annual meeting and will be elected at that time.*

Senior Warden's Report: *Neal had nothing to report*

Committee Reports

Buildings and Grounds

Site plan for St. Thomas buildings and memorial garden

Sub-committee on basement: *Work on the basement is on target, will be finished in approximately 2 weeks. Kerstin has purchased furniture for the space. Lars said he would help finish the tile. Dianna asked if there will be a blessing of the space. Charlie suggested writing a story for the newspaper. There has been a donation of \$1,000 for supplies from a church member.*

Stewardship

Fall Plans

Mission and Ministries

Search Committee: *Completed and combined the survey. Need to carefully look at results before anything is announced.*

Neal said the Canon and Wayne Nelson gave him several meeting dates to meet with the Lutheran's. The Canon doesn't want us to meet without him. Right now there is no meeting scheduled. Neal feels it will be a burden to find a rector who wants to do both services for both churches. We can't afford a full time rector on our own. Charlie suggested the search committee needs some guidance to hear what we think. We are better off to look for an Episcopal priest we can afford because we can handle that by ourselves. Bob said St. Thomas could provide a Eucharist on Sunday and pastoral care. Suggested we go in with a proposal of Sunday service and pastoral care for a certain amount of money. Neal has had two meetings with the Lutheran's and neither church has any thoughts of merging. The question is do we share a minister or not? If the potential priest must have full time pay, then we have this idea as a recourse. Joann said the Lutheran church only needs 1/4 time priest. Neal said the search committee needs to look out for St. Thomas.

Bob said next Saturday, September 22 there is a Small Church Conference Day at the

Henry Center, he would encourage anyone with St. Thomas to come. It is from 10 – 2:30.

Neal said \$8,550 pledge for 2008 has been sent to the Diocese and the Vestry agreed at last month's meeting to give an additional \$1,000. With this we are above 14%. Joann suggested putting it in the Highlander. Diana said we need someone to work with Carol Thomas regarding an article stating how this money will be spent by the Diocese. Jackie said \$50,000 is a lot of money to be over-budget, and there was conversation about the Diocese possibly being over-staffed. Bob said David McNair worked with youth and they have taken that position away. In the 2008 budget that position has been reinstated in recognition of how important it really is.

Calendar

Annual Meeting October 28

Old Business

New Business

End of Vestry Meeting

Vestry Retreat

Devotional: *Bob Reese read the scripture of the loaves and fishes, and a transcript from*

the book “Kneeling in Jerusalem” by Ann Weems.

Joann distributed copies of the Vestry Retreat Agenda

Joann asked for ideas from the Vestry for the following areas, with brainstorming results below:

Parish Growth

- 1. Hire a Rector*
- 2. Invite people – do we invite friends to church? Put St. Thomas brochure at the Chamber Visitors Center. We are upbeat & positive.*
- 3. Participate in events in the community, have a Funday*
- 4. Promote our website*
- 5. Advertise youth programs. Promote our Godly Play program in Montessori newsletter. Promote our monthly youth event.*
- 6. Advertise our monthly simple supper, especially the one with Austin Rios.*
- 7. Add web address when we advertise publicity events. Target our website better.*
- 8. Start a “Growth Committee”, we have a lot of ideas which all take work. Some young people need to be on this committee.*
- 9. Visit other churches who have youth groups. Youth can reach out to other troubled teens.*
- 10. Hand out brochure to every visitor. Thank you notes to visitors, mention website.*

Outreach

- 1. Gifts to local charities have increased, publicize in announcements so church members are aware.*
- 2. Use of new space – such as literacy council; we need to name this space. Ask members to help with an idea for the name.*
- 3. Visitations for the home-bound*
- 4. Needs in Latin community*

5. *Listening for other needs*
6. *David Johnson – advertise what he is doing; sponsor a fundraiser; provide a DVD showing what he is doing in the Dominican Republic; include his emails on his progress*
7. *Non-local efforts*
8. *Prisoner Dinner – have 2 a year rather than 1*

Education

1. *Simple suppers*
2. *Mid-week Eucharist and healing service*
3. *Lectionary reflection – include older youth*
4. *Early Sunday breakfast*
5. *Dinners with new families including Mexicans – “let’s get acquainted”*
6. *Environmental Education – in November the Haaga’s will host a program*

Meyers Briggs Test

Jane Stover administered a Meyers Briggs Test to all vestry meeting attendees, then explained the results to everyone. This was extremely helpful as we can see how different each and every Vestry member is, and how we need all components to form this group. We could also see that due to our differences, we need to be more sensitive and understanding of each individual, even though his or her thought process may be so very much different from our own.

Presentation from Stewardship Chair

Joann began her presentation by stating, “We are created to be givers.” It feels good to be a giver, and gives you a sense of integrity. Money is our biggest spiritual challenge.

Joann would like the vestry individually to work towards a goal of giving 5%; think

about a baseline income and starting percentage, even if only you increase ½% per year. Really look specifically at our response to God. Is this something we can present to our congregation? Jackie said she thought the congregation did give well and we would not have been able to build the church if they did not. Neal said God has given us so much we should give it back. We need to work towards what our resources are to give some percentage back to God.

Tom Bailey – Finance Committee

Tom Bailey distributed copies of the General Operating Fund Financial Report, and there was a general discussion of same. \$417 monthly goes to the Diocesan loan. Joann asked what is the formula about putting money into CD's or savings accounts. Tom said he knows of no particular formula. Tom said we may at some point want to start a replacement fund for the building as things begin to break down.

Building Fund – Charlie Stover

Charlie said the current balance is now \$8975. The bank loan was paid 1 ½ weeks ago. Will need to spend possibly \$18,300 for Children's Chapel, Memorial Garden and landscaping. The Finance Committee recommended we transfer it out of the General Fund when we need it. May need around \$10,000 out of the general fund when building fund runs out of money after construction is finished.

2008 Budget – Tom Bailey

Joann said she was asked by someone to include approximately \$800 they had spent for mulching and weed-wacking in the 2008 budget. Neal said we are doing our budget before we get our pledges back. He doesn't mind doing budget after we find out what our pledges are. Joann asked that we revisit the budget after the pledges are in and before the annual meeting. Charlie said if we agree on expenses at this meeting we can readdress income at another time.

Tom talked about pledge history – biggest windfall is Plate Income. Every year 2-4 people don't renew their pledge but continue to give, so that goes into Plate Income. 27% of pledged income comes from seasonal members. Charlie said he will continue to send Weekly Announcements to them. We need to continue communication with seasonal members. Tom said he thinks 2008 is the first year we have both feet on the ground and he thinks we will do very well. Bob said he knows of an outreach fund in Sylva where several churches get together and develop a fund to help transients and people in need. Neal said it's a good thing to have a central point to communicate with . Joann commented that we have a lot of money in the checking account and we may

want to spend some of it on outreach, say 10%. Step out on faith and use some of our reserve that we have. We have more in our bank than we need to have. Neal suggested we get our pledges in and see what's happening there and make the decision at the October 25th meeting. We have been blessed and we have more money than we need. We have been conservative in our budget in the past. Tom agrees with Neal and we should wait to get the pledges.

Joann asked the Vestry if they are willing to have her go to the congregation and ask people to work towards giving 5%? Yes.

Bob said he thinks we are being up front about what we are asking and asking them to give in the spirit of thanksgiving for God's blessings. Tom asked if we would revisit the budget on the income side? Yes.

Joann made a motion to accept this 2008 budget with the exception that we will revisit the income section and the outreach section, Charlie seconded and all voted in favor.

Tom asked if we should put some money in a vestry outreach fund (say 10%) to be used at the vestry's discretion. When do we want to tell the parish about the 10% to outreach? Neal suggested Advent season. Bob said we have this money but we are not clear what's going to happen with the new Rector. But since we do have this surplus and we may want to give to outreach once we are clear with how much the new rector will cost.

Joann made a motion that next meeting we take a careful look at 2007 expenditures and look at a donation to outreach. John seconded, and all voted in favor.