

St. Luke's Episcopal Church Vestry Meeting
Thursday, April 3, 2008

Present: Phoebe Davoli, Laura Thomas, Alva Stuard, John McKenzie,
Father Koehler, Jan Cassidy, Brookie Allphin-Smith, Allen Bodron,
Ian Hipwell, Mary Saporito, and Laura East

Absent: Larry White, David Stockinger and Deacon Wiggins

Visitor: Jamey Hopper

Father Koehler:

The meeting was opened with a prayer for the parish] and for Fr Miller Armstrong. He requested that Father Miller Armstrong's family be kept in our prayers. Father Armstrong passed away since our last vestry meeting.

Jamey Hopper spoke to the vestry members about Stephen Ministry. Stephen Ministry will begin another training session in August.

The forensic audit has been completed. Father Saik has made full restitution to St. Luke's, but the language and construction of an appropriate release is yet to be negotiated and the check has not been cashed as of this date. Father Koehler is going to ask Bishop Jenkins regarding communication about the resolution of the issue to the parish.

Fr Saik voluntarily submitted to the discipline of the Church; Bishop Jenkins has passed a sentence and the sentence was communicated to the Vestry according to Canons.-

The vestry unanimously voted for St. Luke's Church to enter into an agreement with Armento Liturgical Arts to purchase two (2) additional units of our Columbarium. The larger unit will accommodate 120 niches and the smaller 40 niches. The Church will purchase 160 internal liners for the niches. Based on estimates the total expenditure for this expansion is estimated to range from \$47K and \$50K.

The vestry will consider setting aside ten niches for special needs and the pricing of the niches at a future meeting.

Shannon is doing a great job with EYC. There is a growing commitment from our children.

The following report was submitted to Father Koehler from Shannon Hannaman.

So what has EYC been up to?

Well, the truth is that we have been up to a little of everything! It's been a busy year! The Junior High EYC just returned from the Solomon Episcopal Conference Center. Eleven members of our youth group attended the Junior High Rally, and I'm pleased to say that out of the 30 participants, our church had the largest group by far! The keynote speaker for Rally was from a church in Zachary and he did a phenomenal job of making the Bible come alive for the youth. The weekend also included a healing service, many games, a dance, and a talent show. Junior High Rally received rave reviews from our kids – and our youth received rave reviews from the adults at Rally. I was extremely proud!

We have also been getting ready for our summer events. There will be a Junior High Vacation Bible School in June for rising 6th-8th graders. As always, the week will be planned so that there is time for worship, service, and fun! The times will coincide with the elementary Vacation Bible School to allow parents and youth to participate in both.

We have been preparing for two summer mission trips as well. Last year, 10 Junior High EYC youth traveled to Houston, Texas and worked with Christ Church. They fed the homeless, laundered their clothing, and passed out additional clothing and supplies. The youth also worked to clear a lot. Well, I am pleased to say that the trip was a success and word of mouth has spread. We already have 17 youth planning to attend this year. I am hoping that the Honduras trip will have the same effect. As of now, we are taking five Senior High EYC youth to Honduras to work on a school for the village children. We are planning to make the mission trip to Honduras an every other year occurrence.

I haven't even included monthly events yet! Each month, we have been spending time enjoying Christian fellowship, worshipping, and serving others. For instance, some of our events have included or will include (within the next month): Bowling, making Christmas cards for soldiers, collecting canned goods for the needy, going on a mall scavenger hunt, worshipping with musical instruments, working at Our Father's Garden, and going on a Bible verse scavenger hunt.

One thing I am working on for the future, is cultivating relationships with youth directors from other churches. I just spoke with the youth director from St. John's in Thibodeaux today and we are hoping to plan an all out food fight day for the youth from both of our churches. I am also working on planning a retreat with the youth directors from other Episcopalian Baton Rouge churches, so that our youth have plenty of Christian fellowship.

I can not thank you enough for your support of our program! We honestly could not do it without you, and we are truly blessed.

In Christ,
Shannon Hannaman
Youth Director

The carnival is two weeks away. An online ordering system will be available via our website. The school is working to encourage students to attend the carnival. Sandra Lane is working on outside media. Gerry Lane is sponsoring the stage again this year.

Senior Warden – Alva Stuard:

Alva reported that the 8th grade classrooms are now located in the correct location.

The 50th Anniversary is this weekend. Alva requested that everyone try to attend.

The School Board is looking for a Middle School Coordinator.

Stewardship Committee:

Father Koehler will be writing a letter to givers next week regarding the lagging contributions. He is going to request that they consider giving an extra month of their pledge to the Church.

Following the next Vestry meeting, Merrill Lynch will give a presentation to the Vestry members at 6:30 p.m. with a light meal being served. The Vestry meeting agenda will be short.

Communications Committee:

Brookie Allphin-Smith reviewed the following results of the fifty surveys that were returned to her at the Parish meeting.

To assist the Vestry and Clergy in planning at the Vestry Retreat, a survey was distributed to the Parish members at the Annual Meeting in January, 2008. Members were asked to answer the following questions and return the surveys to a Vestry member. The following is a summary of responses, prioritized by the most often recurring responses, as numbered items, to the least frequently occurring responses.

1. What do you think was the most positive activity in our parish in this past year?

- #1 Middle School completion/ Enlarging the school
- #2 Deacon Reese coming on full time (several responses
- #3 Dr. Dart's Children's Choir/ Music at 9:00/ Contemporary Music
- #4 Arts and Crafts/Carnival
- Social opportunities to strengthen relationships
- Worship opportunities/ Bible Study/ We worship God

User friendly Sunday bulletin
Enjoyed Jesus study last Lent
Outreach ministries
Lent programs
Our traditional services/ worship / Keeping Christ and tradition in hardships

2. What, if anything, about our programs, ministries or services would you like to see expanded or changed?

#1 More youth programs;
Youth involved in community outreach
Grade 6-12 Bible study
More programs for families with young children/ young families
#2 Community outreach – focus on our church and school
#3 Relevant topics for young families / adults/ college age
#4 More Bible studies
More small group opportunities to socialize/ fellowship
Revitalize (beef up) adult forum (no more canned series or programs- this has hurt attendance)
#5 Clear concise communication on our programs. We do not see things enough / early enough
Communication often and early about programs
A way to communicate other than or addition to website/ email. Many don't have it/ many don't read it
#6 Expand nursery program; better nursery that attracts young families
#7 Encourage more to attend Cursillo; Vestry should attend Cursillo; Tell more about Cursillo
Need a real, professional pictorial directory
Singles programs
Evergreen program is confusing. Stewardship letters need to be on our stationary/ Our appeal
Add a younger priest – Glad Fr. Gleason is coming
Expand Stephen Ministry- its weak
Ministry for elderly/ at home visits for elderly; Drivers for those who cannot get to church any longer
Alpha Program
Bring back RSV readings at 11:00
Advent Wreaths – bring them back
Honduras

3. What about our church/our ministry do you think attracts newcomers to St. Luke's?

#1 (Overwhelming) The School
School activities that bring in the public
The School – it should be our highest priority and our most important ministry
Day School Worship/ Children's Chapel
#2 Environment – Warm ; Energy (we need more); Healing; Friendly; Worship God;
Friendly Clergy; Dynamic Clergy; Spiritual Foundation; Tradition; Liturgy

Lay Ministry activities

4. What priority goals should our Clergy and Vestry strive to achieve in the coming year?

#1 Outreach to the unchurched in our community/ church/ school

Expand our Lay Ministries to get more involved especially school parents without a church

Outreach to Day School – our most important ministry- younger families

Outreach to the Community

Outreach to all groups in the church

Find a way to bring in unchurched school families

Vestry and Clergy need to be more visible / accessible to church families and children

Expand pastoral care

#2 Educational needs of the congregation

#3 Revitalize our Core – Give us a strategic plan/ goal. (“we seem to be wandering in the desert without aim)

Grow our numbers; We need to see the Vestry step us as leaders to regain stability

Clergy more involved in healing ministry

Increase pastoral care of the congregation – hospitals/ elderly/ shut ins

Better money management based on Scripture

#4 More involvement of congregation in Vestry planning/ activities

Inform congregation of what you do –

More information on budget. None was available at Parish Meeting; We want to know about the money

Congregation feel more open about attending meetings

Vestry News in the Evangelist

Publish Vestry Minutes on Website

Stay centered/ “stay at home” to focus on our own needs/ ministry (youth/ adult Sunday School/ young adults)

Expand mission/ Rebuild the congregation/ Be honest with parishoners

Revitalize energy of St. Luke's.

We need to know who Vestry are and how we find them each week

Lay Ministry Chairs are not visible

Communicate to the Community all that we do. We do not communicate often enough in the media

Change format of the Parish meeting to include budget and Vestry announcements

5. What do you believe God is calling St. Luke's to do in the next year or years?

#1 Strengthen our mission – Keep Christ first in all we do

Spiritual renewal or we will lose more members

Unity, come together in faith to invite others to worship (outreach)
Call unchurched to worship
Share the Gospel

#2 Outreach to school – pour all possible human and financial resources in the school /
Expand Middle School

Get as many school families as possible to worship/ attend/
A High School

#3 Growth in numbers –Find out who is not coming and get them to church
Expand Music Ministry
Mission work

Father Koehler stated that Edward Gleason will be focusing on the school and young families.
The School is the number one outreach for St. Luke's.

Mary Saporito will work with Andrea Van Burkleo on the advent wreath activity next this year.

Father Koehler reported that the church roles have grown but attendance is down by 50 people per week. Attendance is down by 100 people per week compared to ten years ago. Spring attendance is not good this year.

Ian Hipwell thanked Father Koehler for the work that he is doing at St. Luke's and is hopeful that the declining attendance will turn around.

Next year we will have an Easter egg hunt between the 9 and 11 o' clock services.

Brookie will conduct her communications flexibility test at the next Sunday adult forum.

Parish Life Committee:

No report was provided. David Stocking was not present.

Facilities Committee:

Larry White was not present

Alva Stuard reported that St. Luke's has entered into a purchase agreement to purchase a house for the Gleason Family to utilize. The purchase price equaled the appraised value of the home. Virginia Gleason's father is donating all of the appliances for updating the kitchen. He owns a kitchen and bath remodeling business in New Orleans. The seller is paying a fee to Gully, Phelps and McKey for the sale of the home. Nell Stuard was the realtor that assisted with the sale.

Father Koehler reported that Edward Gleason's pay will be reduced by an appropriate amount since housing will be provided by the parish. Funds to purchase the house were from invested funds in St Luke's Foundation supervised accounts; repayment and or interest will be from capital funds sources. Terms of repayment to be recommended to the Vestry by the Foundation Board.-

Finance Committee:

Phoebe Davoli reported that as of the end of February, the operating account had a deficit balance of \$114,611, the capital revenue account had a deficit balance of \$73,604, and the restricted revenue account had a surplus of \$73,142 through February. The restricted revenue deficit is due to market conditions. The loss in the restricted revenue accounts are recognized but not realized. Merrill Lynch believes that the market has finished its correction and the balance will increase by year end.

Phoebe reported that the church should make their budget in March because there were five Sundays in March and Easter was in March this year.

Come What May:

Jan Cassidy requested that electronic copies of committee meeting minutes and reports be sent to her electronically.

The Vestry unanimously voted to approve the purchase of an appreciation gift for Margaret Lawhon-Schott for her assistance with the Diocesan Convention.

Alva Stuard thanked Father Koehler for all of his efforts.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed with a prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Jan B. Cassidy
Secretary