

Vestry Retreat 2008

Friday Night 1-25-08

Attendees: Bob Hoffman, Anne Mortensen, Joan Morgan, Gretchen Waters, Nancy Papet, Carol Hyland, Fr. Jonathan Sams, Harold Hotelling, Penny Piantedosi, Deacon Liz Forest, Miranda Spates, Tim Maxwell, Ronnie Karlsson, Bob Bagnall, Pastor Manisha Dostert, Steve Fragnoli, Cathy Hoffman, Cheryl Davenport, and John Morley.

1. Jonathan opened the retreat with a prayer.
2. The Vestry introduced themselves with a fun or strange object they had brought that represented themselves.
3. Jonathan presented several readings for reflection and discussion.
4. The various church committees explained and pitched their various ministries for the new vestry members.
5. The meeting closed with a prayer.

Saturday 1-26-08

Attendees: Anne Mortensen, Cheryl Davenport, Nancy Papet, Fr. Jonathan Sams, Harold Hotelling, Carol Hyland, Pastor Manisha Dostert, Ronnie Karlsson, Tim Maxwell, Bob Bagnall, Steve Fragnoli, and John Morley.

1. The meeting opened with a prayer and chant.
2. The Vestry reviewed the goals from 2007.
 - Sabbatical Planning. The church ran smoothly through the sabbatical. Special thanks went to Manisha who was stretched very thin during the summer.
 - Stewardship. The year began terribly with the worst January and February on record, and ended with a surplus. The year was a financial success.
3. Areas of Concern.
 - Buildings and Grounds. The Vestry needs to prioritize projects, plan the funding of, consider alternative approaches, and communicate to congregation. Focus on the spirituality of the physical environment.
 - Treasurer's Role. A replacement for the Treasurer is needed in 2008. Roles and responsibilities should be redefined to shift bookkeeping tasks to paid staff.
 - Future Vision 3. Growing Membership, Celebrate transitions, a Reconciling Church, Small Group Discipleship.

4. Graffiti Boards.

Two graffiti boards hung on the wall Friday night and Saturday for comments. One was titled “A mistake we don’t want to make in 2008” and the other “An opportunity we don’t want to miss”. The comments were organized into three categories:

1. Attitude. “Don’t panic...”, “Don’t become complacent...”. “Don’t let programs come before people”, “be flexible to their schedules and needs”.
2. Adult Faith. Brainstorming on when/how to have more interest and participation of Adults.
3. Presenting & Explaining the church and programs. Bulletin Boards, and announcements can be better explained and mapped to specific ministries. Announcements seem unorganized.

The Vestry Voted to rank order these three categories plus Buildings & Grounds and the Treasurer’s role. The order of the priorities were:

Presenting/Explaining 23 votes
Buildings & Grounds 21
Attitude/Morale
Adult Faith 8
Treasurer 4.

The Vestry broke to small groups to develop the top 3.

5. Communication:

As a new member of St. Stephens, Ronnie made an impassioned case that our church is difficult/impossible for a new member to decipher. The separation between Mission and Stewardship is not clear. The many ministries blend together. Announcements are simultaneously energetic and chaotic. A new member has a difficult time figuring out how to fit in. Some Brainstorming ideas:

- Create a Master Graphic in the gathering area with the Mission Statement at top, and a breakdown of the church’s Ministries.
- Create a Master Calendar to hang in Fellowship Hall.
- Rearrange the Bulletin Boards by Ministry.
- Assign logos or color codes to the ministries to be used on the Web, the calendar, and publications in order to build an identity for each Ministry, and to make their activities instantly recognizable.
- Have the Web Site replicate all of the above.
- Have a Web sign up in parallel to all bulletin board sign-ups for those who forget to sign up for events on Sunday. At a minimum a “mail to” link so the member can email the Ministry chair for sign up.
- Create a newcomer’s resource to be placed in the pew to walk a visitor through the Episcopal service.
- “What is an Episcopalian?” Either poster or web.

6. Buildings & Grounds

- Develop a maintenance & replacement plan (Employ a professional)
- Prioritize maintenance with future needs/wants
- Consider alternative approaches. Determine appropriateness of capital drives.
- Communicate to the congregation.
- Focus on the Spirituality of the physical environment and its contribution to the flow of community life.
- Reorganize the Buildings & Grounds Committee into Planners and Doers. The Doers want to show up with tools and work, not attend meetings.

7. Attitude & Morale

Goals:

- Maintain a hopeful focus in difficult times.
- Trust in God.
- Mutual Respect.
- Enjoy each other and humor.
- More attendance at social events

Actions:

- Each Vestry Member will make an extra effort to attend Hosp/Fellowship events and invite one more person to attend.
- In place of Opening Prayer @ vestry meetings, each member will relate a 60 second good news item from their life.
- Designate 2008 as “The Year of Stubborn Joy”.

8. Offices and Assignments

- Steve Fragnoli was elected Senior Warden.
- Tim Maxwell was elected Junior Warden.
- John Morley returns as Clerk.

Committee Assignments:

- Outreach – Carol Hyland, w/ Cheryl Davenport
- Worship – Harold Hotelling
- Hospitality – Steve Fragnoli
- YACYM – Ann Mortensen
- Adult Faith – Ronny Karlsson
- Caring Ministries – Nancy Papet
- SWAT – Tim Maxwell
- Finance – Steve Fragnoli
- Buildings & Grounds – Bob Bagnall, w/ John Morley
- Staff Development & Personnel – Wardens and Rector
- Member Development – Joan Morgan w/ Judy McQuiston
- Information/Communication – Ronnie Karlsson, w/ John Morley and Anne Mortensen.

9. There will be no February Vestry meeting.

10. Annual Meeting resolution on compensation. Steve will distribute the compensation data for the Vestry to review. The Vestry will address the topic at the March Vestry meeting.

11. The meeting closed with a prayer.

Respectfully Submitted,
John Morley
Clerk of St. Stephens