

Minutes of Parish Meeting, May 5, 2019

Tanny Clark, the Sr. Warden, called the meeting to order at 11:30am in the parish hall following the 10:00am church service. Rev. Bill Hague offered The Serenity Prayer to begin the meeting. There were approximately 30 members of the parish in attendance.

Bob Keteyian, the facilitator for the meeting, was introduced. He had attended a meeting last summer with the Vestry and several other members of the parish when the church was in a state of "turmoil" so he was familiar with the parish and the current situation. His understanding was that this meeting was to start a discussion about what the church community needs right now and to begin looking to the future.

Tanny announced that Rev. Ken Fields from Texas will be the supply clergy for the month of July and Rev. William Billow from Virginia will be the supply clergy for the month of August. They will be staying at the Rectory. Bill Hague and Hornor Davis have donated furniture to the church for use in the Rectory. Bill will be returning to St. Mary's in September and will be conducting services through the end of the year.

It was explained by Lauri Fernald the church treasurer that we will not have enough money for a full-time rector in the future and therefore must consider having part-time clergy. The Leadership Fund has been used up and we are currently taking a larger draw than recommended from the Doane Endowment Fund to pay for the severance package for Jane Cornman. Pledging is down and with fewer people attending church our income has declined.

For the past two years Lauri and Janet Stratton have been attending meetings between the three other Episcopal churches on the island as observers where there has been an ongoing discussion about shared clergy. When this group started St. Mary's had a full-time rector and St. Saviour's rector was looking to be called to another church. Our situations have changed in the past year and talks are proceeding slowly. Tanny will be attending the next meeting on May 30th with Lauri and will report back to the parish after the meeting.

Topics brought up for discussion were as follows:

A profile needs to be developed defining what the church is looking for in a rector. There is no Episcopal job description for a rector. It differs in each church. Parish administration is not something that is taught in seminary.

The Rector needs to be a team member and a leader. Needs to have passion, vision, love. Needs to have communication skills.

St. Mary's has three separate congregations that have different expectations and needs which make it a difficult parish for a rector.

It was suggested that what we need is a strong parish administrator, possibly a full-time position, who can do many tasks with minimal direction. An administrator directs the business of the parish. The responsibilities need to be defined such as having computer skills and accounting knowledge; creating bulletins and newsletters; scheduling meetings and services.

Could this be a shared position with other churches?

What is the Vestry's responsibility? It needs to be more pro-active and involved in the work of the church. It is hard to get people to commit to being on the Vestry. The year 'round members of the parish and Vestry already do a great deal of the work – parish dinners, coffee hours, alter guild, reading, outreach.

It was suggested that we need a parish survey and then need to create a parish profile. These are steps done when looking for a new rector. In doing this we need to establish the needs of the church and what we are looking for in a rector.

Questions that were asked and need to be considered:

- What is our role in the community? What is our identity? Are we a necessary part of the community?
- What can we do to reinvigorate the church?
- How do we attract new members?
- What do we want to be in the community?
- What sustains a church community?

Another suggestion was to have social events that include the entire church community so that they feel part of the vision. Need to create a sense of community within the church.

It was suggested that we need to continue discussing the issues identified at this meeting. We need to acknowledge that this is an aging community with a declining population.

Several people volunteered to be part of the ongoing discussion. It was also suggested that members from the summer community be included in further discussions. A meeting will be set up in the near future.

Overall the sense of the meeting was positive. Members are concerned about the future of the parish and want to be part of the solution.

Blessings to all,

Tanny Clark
Sr. Warden