

St. John's Episcopal Church Vestry Meeting  
November 20, 2013

**Members Present:** Larry Bennett, Betty Culley, Ed Fain, Randy Pickering, Meegan Reidy, Jim Suren, Debbie Swanson, Kim Roberts, Cindy Turner and the Rev. Jan Oller

**Members Absent:** none

Others Present: John Culley

The Rev. Jan opened the meeting with prayer at 7:04 pm.

**Minutes**

The minutes of the October 16 meeting were adopted upon a motion by Meegan Reidy, second by Randy Pickering.

**Financials**

Financials are looking good. Details are in the committee reports. Accepted upon a motion by Ed Fain, second by Jim Suren.

We completed an audit. There were no concerns. The audit was accepted upon a motion by Larry Bennett, second by Ed Fain. (See attached, hardcopy version only)

There was a discussion of details of outreach projects such as CROP Walk and REINdear with regards to flow of payments through St. John's.

**Liaison Reports**

Columbarium – No new applications. Several people expressed interest during the end of life seminars.

Parish Life – the White Elephant party will likely be in January, but no date has been confirmed. The Epiphany tea has been scheduled for January 5<sup>th</sup>.

St Martha's – Laminating machine is being discussed. The cost of one outweighs the benefits of having one in house.

Outreach – Bell ringing forms are on the credenza outside Whitlock hall.

**Warden's Concerns**

There are no concerns.

**Old Business**

Bid on church roof repair – \$13,000 is a preliminary bid. A more solid bid will be obtained when the roofer comes on site. This is not something we need right away, but need to plan for it.

Acoustic paint for Whitlock – Information has been obtained from Town & Country for a paint that has texture and sound absorbing qualities. It's estimated that it would take 6 gallons or more at \$32/gallon. We would need to get professional painters due to the height of the ceiling

Jim Suren to train those interested on the A/V system in Whitlock Hall.

### **New Business**

Discussed the application for the Mission Strategy Grant. It looks good. (See attached)

Annual Housing Allowance Resolution was accepted upon a motion by Meegan Reidy, second by Ed Fain. The wording is as follows:

*Whereas, the Rev. Janet Oller is compensated by St. John's Episcopal Church, Crawfordsville IN exclusively for services as a minister of the gospel; and*

*Whereas, St. John's Episcopal church does not provide Rev. Oller with a rectory, there it is hereby,*

*RESOLVED, that the total compensation paid to Rev. Oller for calendar 2014 shall be \$55,768, of which \$15360 is hereby designated to be a housing allowance pursuant to Section 107 of the Internal Revenue Code, and it is further*

*RESOLVED that the designation of \$15360 as a housing allowance shall apply to calendar year 2014 and all future years unless otherwise provided.*

Vestry Nominations – People are being contacted to confirm their interest and willingness to serve on the vestry and to live up to the expectations of the vestry.

### **Other Items**

We are looking at the second Saturdays of February, March and April to host a lunch for Firefighters/EMT, Police officers, Sheriff's department and corrections officers. To start with, soups, breads and desserts are planned.

December Meeting Date – The meeting will be on December 18<sup>th</sup> at our normal time. The draft of the 2014 budget will be discussed.

The meeting concluded at 8:16 upon a motion by Kim Roberts, second by Larry Bennett.

# Committee Reports – November 2013

The name of the vestry liaison listed with each committee.

## **Altar Guild** (Betty Culley)

Altar Guild members met for breakfast on Saturday, November 16. Only two members were unable to attend. Updated Altar Guild procedures were discussed. Members shared suggestions. We enjoyed our time together.

A few members then returned to the church to work removing wax from the carpet, getting down the Advent wreath, and readying the church for Sunday morning services.

A revised listing of Altar Guild Duties will be posted in the sacristy.

## **Christian Ed** (Deb Swanson, Cindy Turner)

Children's Christian Ed continues following the lectionary during Sunday morning activities. The children packed shoe boxes on Sunday, Nov. 17th for Operation Christmas child and during Advent will prepare and present a pageant.

The word would be--as you have experienced it--our three-part Madeleine L'Engle series based on Walking on Water. (We sold 15 books for that.) We also did Which Saint Are You? on All Saints' Sunday. Now we're coming up to our second Sunday on Rob Bell's ideas....Then on to Christmas Advent Wreath making, and Jan's leading us in discussion of Christmas story in one of the gospels. Don't have my schedule right at hand here. In January (under our new leader :) we begin with Dan Booher leading us in a several part video series called, I believe, God in America.

Attendance at Adult Ed runs between 17-25 each week. (We had 23 this past Sunday.)

Also, Adult Education has a budget line at St. John's and we will be discerning how to spend our \$500 too. Since we are finishing a year which we began with an intentional discernment about how to put Take This Bread (Sara Miles) which we read a year ago) into action, we will likely do something related to food insecurity and perhaps something that helps our Adult Education learning all through the year. I'm copying this to Jan as there has been no public discussion about these monies at this point. We could also add books to our collection, buy some DVDs, and so forth. Just brainstorming here, but budgeted money should be used to promote what it's intended for.

## **Financial (Ed Fain)**

Expense in the month of October exceeded income by \$3,432, primarily due to pledged income coming in \$1,953 less than budget and expenses running \$976 more than budget. Overall, St John's finances are still in good shape year to date with pledged income running \$664 ahead of budget and total expenses running \$19,350 below budget. We will however incur higher than

normal expense during the final two months for facility repairs and our diocesan assessment which was not paid in in September. Year to date income has exceeded expense by \$14,126, resulting in an Operating Fund balance of \$43,753 at the end of October.

### **Gratitude (Ed Fain)**

2014 pledge ingathering results as of 10/27/13;

- Pledge increases 20 families
- New pledges 4 families
- Pledge losses 2 families
- Total # of pledges 40 families
- Total \$ of pledges \$105,312
- Still expected \$ 24,840 (based on 2013 pledge contributions)
- Total projected \$130,152

The Current Year Pledges included in the 2013 Budget total \$130,300, so the total projected Pledges for 2014 are expected to be similar to the current year. Cindy Smith is following up with those who have not yet made a pledge and will send letters of confirmation in early December thanking those who have pledged financial support to St. John's for 2014. The finance committee will meet on November 30th to develop the 2014 Budget.

### **Outreach (Larry Bennett)**

The Outreach Committee met on Sunday, November 10, after church to discuss the budget request. We discussed the events and programs that we wish to continue next year. Ellen Ball has indicated that she will eventually require reimbursement for up to \$200 for REINdear boxes. The committee feels positive about many of the initiatives, especially the food assistance programs.

### **Parish Life (Kim Roberts)**

It was mentioned to Ed that last years Parish Life budget appears to include the St. Martha's Guild budget. Since we are now 2 separate committees, those should be separated.

There will be a wine tasting at Coal Creek winery on Sunday December 8 at 2:00. For details please see her email sent out to St. John's google group on November 18.

### **Property (Jim Suren)**

you will find some new Exit signs leading people in the children's areas out of the building in case of an emergency... This was a suggestion made at the last fire inspection.... thank goodness they do not have to be "back lit"... (Thank you Brian Albrecht for that & other building improvements) ...Moving along with the drywall project & a door replacement at the North West basement corner.... Will discuss painting the ceiling in Whitlock hall tonight..... Hope & Peace & Safe Travels.... Jim

**St. Martha's & St. Andrew's Guild (Meegan Reidy)**

Chas informs me that we need a new water pitcher for the Bunn Coffee Maker. He will make arrangements with Nancy Bennett to pick up one when she is in Lafayette. Chas also plans to label the garbage disposal switch. He would also like to purchase a laminating machine in order to laminate signs for the kitchen so that they will be more durable. Others would be able to use this laminating machine for their signs as well.

## Request for Financial Assistance from the Diocese in 2014

Please answer the following questions. Microsoft Word will add lines as you type so please use as much space as you feel is necessary for your responses. Please direct any questions about this or the financial documents to either Canon Bruce Gray or Canon Marsha Gebuhr at 317-926-5454.

Congregation and City: St. John's Episcopal Church, Crawfordsville IN 47933

Contact Person: Rev. Jan Oller

Phone: 765-225-8554

Mailing Address: PO Box 445, Crawfordsville IN 47933

E-mail Address: janet.oller@gmail.com

Please list the names of all who participated in developing the following answers (vestry members, committee chairs, congregational forums, clergy, etc.) (a) Rev. Jan Oller; (b) Mr. John Culley, Treasurer; (c) Mr. Ed Fain, Chair, Finance Committee; (d) Ms. Cindy Smith, Pledge Secretary and Assistant Treasurer; (e) Vestry: Jim Suren, St. Warden; Randy Pickering, People's Warden; Larry Bennett, Betty Culley, Cindy Turner, Debbie Swanson, Kim Roberts, Meegan Reidy

- 1) What was the amount of diocesan financial assistance received in 2012, anticipated for 2013, and what are you requesting for 2014?  
2012- \$0;  
2013-\$10,000;  
2014- \$10,000.
- 2) What were the significant changes (positive or negative) at your congregation in 2013?

Rev. Jan Oller became priest in charge on November 16, 2012 so we have had one year with her as our clergy. This has brought stability and helped to rebuild trust within the parish during 2013.

We have engaged in many different activities, including ecumenical efforts (combined with the Methodists and First Christian for Ash Wednesday, Good Friday and the Crawfordsville Strawberry Festival in June 2013). We are currently working with the ELCA and Presbyterian Churches in Crawfordsville to jointly host events for young children/youth. These three churches are about the same size (about 70 ASA) although the numbers of children and ages vary quite a bit. St. John's hosted the first joint event on November 20<sup>th</sup> with future events in the planning stages.

We continued a St. John's tradition of "Breakfast at the Shore" with Eucharist and a pitch in at the farm of a parishioner. This is the same farm where we have a Christmas Eve stable service.

In addition to Sunday services (8 and 10:30 a.m.), we have a midweek service. Eucharist is offered when Rev. Oller can be present. The focus of the service is, most often, one of the

persons identified in Holy Women, Holy Men.

We also have started a quarterly Healing Service and a thrice-annually Taize service. We had a Blessing of the Animals at the Montgomery County Animal Welfare League, which included blessing of the animals then at the animal shelter (including a goat who had been raised with two dogs).

Rev. Oller attends the weekly chapel service at Wabash (when classes are in session) and has been asked to preside both spring and fall 2013 (there is a rotation of clergy and faculty leading these services). We also participated in Community Expo with Wabash, offering coasters and mugs with St. John's identifying information on them.

We have several new members, including two with very young children. Both of the parents have said the reason they stay at St. John's is because the people of St. John's have welcomed their children in worship.

Due to past good financial planning, St. John's had a reserve account for building repairs and maintenance. This reserve was used, together with regularly budgeted funds, to perform needed maintenance including tuck-pointing and painting, which helps St. John's present a welcoming and cared-for external appearance that is inviting to newcomers. We have been blessed with lay leadership that has many gifts in the building trades, such that our need for outside paid labor for building repairs is less than many parishes experience. Similarly, we are blessed with lay leaders who care for our outside entrances and gardens. This means we do not have to employ an ongoing gardener or other maintenance crew.

Due to a gift, we were able to purchase and install a dishwasher and a disposal in the parish kitchen. This eliminates the cumbersome dishwashing process that was required by the Health Department and it assists greatly with time and commitment from those working in the kitchen. St. John's is blessed by the many groups that rent our parish hall and use our kitchen. The dishwasher and disposal have made this use even more efficient and effective.

Outreach is in a period of transition for many reasons. However, the parish had a great interest in food-related ministries and needs, partly after reading Take This Bread by Sara Miles. This led to increased participation with FISH (food pantry) and also to beginning a relationship with Food Finders, which delivers food to local communities via an 18-wheeler. St. John's provided monetary assistance to increase the food available and volunteers. Because St. John's does not have a parking lot, we partnered with First Christian and then with Wabash Avenue Presbyterian. This helped build community between the churches while also serving hungry populations. This program will continue in 2014.

After a several year absence, St. John's joined with St. Matthews, St. Mark's and St. Augustine's at Waycross for a family camp weekend. Although numbers were small from St. John's (8 persons), the energy was good and we have signed up to participate again in September 2014. That family camp will also include St. Timothy's to encourage greater sharing with smaller parishes in our Diocese.

We have had successful adult formation and children's formation programs during 2013. Leadership will be transitioning in 2014 (at the Annual Meeting in January 2014), as the current leadership has been in place for several years and has requested to step down. Children are learning the basic Bible stories. Adults move between programs on DVD, book studies, speakers and others types of programs (e.g. a 7 week program on the Book of Common Prayer).

At the request of some parishioners, we offered a program on "End of Life" issues with a local lawyer, bereavement counselor, doctor and social worker and funeral home director as speakers. This was open to the public and had good attendance. During 2014, we may offer a specific program on preparing funeral instructions using the BCP (an outgrowth of this program). We anticipate exploring planned giving, at the request of the Diocesan Stewardship Office.

An EfM group was started with 7 students (6 in year one and 1 in year 3). Rev. Oller is mentor for the current year. Two persons who have completed EfM have expressed an interest in becoming mentors beginning with the next EfM year (September 2014).

Other leadership changes are also underway in other ministry areas for the same reason. One challenge is balancing continuity with "burn out" as the current leadership has, by and large, been in place prior to the trauma that occurred during 2011 and 2012. We are blessed with other ongoing leadership that brings institutional memory and specific skill sets to the tasks.

Several social/fun events have also helped to rebuild community during 2013. We began in January 2013 with a "White Elephant" dinner and gift exchange. Approximately 60 people attended. This was followed in June with a "Porch Party" at a parishioner's home/farm. Again, attendance was around 60. In August, an enthusiastic but smaller group (about 35) went to an Indians game.

Pastoral care for each other is thriving. Several members have experienced hospital stays and the patient/parishioners have received many cards and visits, as appropriate. Once the parishioner came home, meals were offered as the parishioner indicated would be helpful. Further, birthday and anniversary cards are sent by St. John's and by Rev. Oller (as well as others in the parish who wish to so remember their friends).

By and large, people have been wonderful about keeping up with their pledges and with other gifts. We have also been able to "hold the line" on expenses, although how much further we can reduce expenses is yet to be seen.

We shifted the way we handle requests for assistance. Because St. John's usually has only the priest in the building during the week, and the office is in the basement, and because Crawfordsville has a coordinated center for those in need, we are helping to fund "The HUB" using the priest's discretionary account. This has freed up the priest from interviewing persons in need and making decisions about requests for need by sending such person to a central location. Persons at the HUB are well-versed in what resources are available for needs such as utilities, rent, medical assistance, etc. so coordinating needs through them helps to ensure that persons don't "double dip" and that limited resources go as far as possible.



*The above is only a brief listing of positive changes during 2013.*

One other major change during 2013, and whether it will prove to be positive or negative is yet to come, is that the parish secretary who began with St. John's in November 2011, is no longer with the parish as of November 15, 2013. She and her family moved to Lafayette during 2012. In winter, 2013, she indicated she could no longer commute to Crawfordsville two days a week but we worked out an arrangement where she would work remotely one day and in the office a second day (for a total not to exceed 15/hrs/week). Then, in July 2013, she indicated even commuting one day a week was no longer feasible for her. We worked out an arrangement to try her working both days remotely (not more than 5 hrs/week). At the beginning of November, Rev. Oller determined that a completely remote working arrangement was not workable as it meant she could not print, fold, stuff and distribute bulletins nor handle invoices and other tasks which required a physical presence. Conversations have been had with the Vestry and the Executive Committee about office tasks and how that work might be met. This is still a conversation in progress. Several members of the parish have volunteered to help as needed, so all necessary office tasks will be taken care of.

On the challenging side, we have had two instances (and there may be more, but two of which we are aware) where murmuring was occurring. Rev. Oller has asked the parish to be aware when this occurs and to raise all concerns with her or with the appropriate Vestry member. We had one formal complaint from a parishioner that resulted in conversations during several Vestry meetings and a resolution on action. The parishioner was notified of the decision but has chosen not to return to church since this occurred. We believe this is a fairly isolated instance. We believe this concern was handled in an appropriate manner.

3) Do you anticipate any significant changes (positive or negative) in 2014?

We hope that changes during 2014 will be positive although we may not know until we look back after 2014 is over. As with many parishes, St. John's is predominantly an aging parish. This means that we will have funerals, although none, we pray, are imminent.

We hope to have an ecumenical Lenten series with at least Christ Lutheran and Wabash Avenue Presbyterian. Whether we will repeat an ecumenical Ash Wednesday or Good Friday has yet to be determined.

As noted above, leadership in several of our ministries are in transition. We welcome new energy and vision even as we do not know at this time what this will look like going forward. We hope to continue to expand Outreach efforts, in particular, and to shift away from a "self-funding" model of outreach into a budget line item and program that more closely identifies the many, many outreach efforts made by so many at St. John's over the years. It is important both to the communities we serve and to individuals both within and outside St. John's that more of our efforts be known as efforts of St. John's and not only efforts of individuals.

4) What was your:

a) Average Sunday worship attendance in 2012 and 2013? As reported in the 2012 Parochial Report, our ASA was 71. 2013 continues at about this same level, with fairly

significant swings during the summer months when many persons are away.

b) Easter worship attendance in 2012 and 2013? Easter attendance in 2012 was 132. Easter 2013 was 96.

c) Christmas worship attendance in 2012 and 2013? Christmas worship for 2012 (two services on Christmas Eve) was 134. Christmas Day was 12. Christmas 2013 has not yet occurred so we cannot report.

5) How will you use the financial assistance you are requesting? While we had hoped for an increase in pledges sufficient to offer up a balanced budget, we fell short. Our pledge dollars did increase, just not sufficiently to have a balanced budget.

A Mission Strategy Grant will help us continue to have a full-time priest while we continue to work on ways to increase revenue through pledge, plate, building rental, etc. St. John's is definitely in a re-building mode. We will also continue to look for ways to reduce expenses although after the reductions in 2013, there may not be a lot of additional room for such reductions. We have come a good ways towards our goal but just are not there yet and a Mission Strategy Grant will give us support as we continue to work towards our goal.

6) What diocesan and/or deanery resources is your congregation using to enhance its ministry? (examples: participation in Pathways to Vitality, Vestry College, other Waycross activities, joint Christian Education offerings, etc.) Please elaborate on their usefulness and effectiveness.

During 2013, St. John's participated in the following Diocesan resources: Vestry College, the Barnabas Project, Pathways to Vitality. We also attended the Diocesan Convention, including workshops re Pathways and related to Planned Giving. Rev. Oller was part of a Fresh Start group through spring 2013.

7) Is there anything else you would like to communicate to Mission Strategy or Diocesan Staff at this time?

We appreciate very much the resources and support of the Mission Strategy and Diocesan Staff. They are great at answering questions and at helping work through Mutual Ministry Review (May 2013), things like the Mission Strategy program/process and other issues like endowments/fund identification/restrictions as applicable.