

Parish Life and Mission & Ministry Committees

Joint Meeting

September 5, 2023

Members Present: Lori Hackett; Matthew Hackett; Ken Dyker; Karen Kobylak; Mike Kobylak; Michele Wogaman; Dyann Hayes; Nancy Derby; Karen Lee; Jim Lewis-Chair of M&M; Mary Beth Tygielski-Chair of Parish Life; Rev. Chris Johnson

Guest: Gregg Bloomfield- Chair of Trustees

Meeting opened at 7:10 pm with a reading from the Book of Common Prayer by Mary Beth.

Welcome to all members given by Jim and Mary Beth.

Jim explained the purpose of the meeting between the two committees, and opened with the questions: *“Why are we here tonight?”* And *“What is the Spirit calling us to do?”*

At the August Vestry and M&M meetings, the idea of taking money from the Doremus Endowment fund and hiring a full time paid Youth Minister to bring in more people/children to our parish was presented by Mike K.-Co Sr. Warden. Discussion at the M&M meeting resulted in Chris J, stating that he felt that the Parish Life (PL) and Mission and Ministry (M&M) committees should join together to figure out how to accomplish this idea and implement it.

Jim and Mary Beth talked over this suggestion and picked Tuesday September 5th as a time to pull the two committees together for just this purpose.

Before tonight’s meeting, Jim and Mary Beth met to discuss how best to present the topic and begin the process of discernment. A few committee and vestry members suggested we also contact the diocese to seek direction and support, which was done. By doing this, we discovered that there are a lot of resources available to us which we plan to take advantage of as we strongly believe that this is a decision that requires much research, time and effort and should not and will not be made hastily or quickly.

Due to the financial strain that all churches in the diocese as well as All Saints’ are experiencing along with low attendance, we stressed that we plan to take our time and do our due diligence in handling this subject. We were tasked to lead this project and we want to make sure we look at every aspect that will be affected especially the financial impact.

To help prepare to start our discernment process with this joint task force, Gregg conducted an exercise called: Assessment of Congregational Strengths Tied to Church Growth, adapted from *Beyond the Ordinary: 10 Strengths of U.S. Congregations*, Cynthia Woolever and Debrah Bruce, 2004.

There were 10 church strengths and we were asked to rank each strength as either current or aspiring, going from 1-10, with #1 being most important that we would need in attracting new congregants.

After about 10 minutes, everyone was asked to once again rank the 10 strengths as how each believed which strength would help retain current members and new members who have recently joined the parish.

Gregg asked if anyone was comfortable in sharing either ranking with the group. Some members discovered that their rankings had a big or little swing in ranking of importance and was surprised how they were looking at things.

It was almost unanimous among the members present that a sense of “belonging” or being welcomed as a new person to the parish was probably the most important asset that a church and its members could and should portray at all times.

Gregg then gave a brief explanation for those members who are not vestry members and have not had previous information and/or input to the financial handling by the vestry and trustees regarding the Doremus Legacy Gift of \$2 million the past 3 years and where we stand financially with the money today. The vestry and trustees have worked diligently to use wisely and protect this money for the wellbeing and future of All Saints’.

Mike K: Mike explained how a “Vision Survey” was done in the spring of 2021 where people were asked to tell what and where they wanted All Saints’ to be in 5 years and that data was correlated by Sharon and Alan Hoffman and goals were listed. At the Vestry retreat that year the vestry adopted 2 goals to focus on that coming year and it has been continued to be a primary focus of the vestry this year as well. The goals were to support families with children and to support the LBGTQ community and especially those within that community who have children.

Mike went on to say that the world is not the same as it was 5, 10, 20 years ago, and especially during and pre COVID.

And when thinking or talking about “growth”, the word growth can have many different meanings to many different people.

Michele W: When discussing “family”, children cost money! And families with children are not going to bring in money. People with children who come to church don’t necessarily have financial ability.

A tentative timeline was then given to the members.

Step #1 Find out and support Robyn Brandenburg and other parish members who are starting on Sunday, September 17th to have a Bible reading/study during the sermon portion of the 10:30 service for our 9 young children.

Step #2. Mary Beth and Jim will meet with Rev. Canon Ellen Ekevag and her assistant Carmen Piggins, Friday, September 15th to begin this discernment process.

Step #3. A report about this meeting of the joint committees and the meeting with Rev. Ekevag and Miss Piggins will be given at the September 19th vestry meeting.

Step #4. Rev Ekevag will meet with this committee to present ideas that might develop from the Sept 15th meeting with Jim and Mary Beth.

(This meeting has been scheduled to take place on Thursday, October 26th at 5:00. We will have a light meal of soup and salad).

Step #5. Both committees will engage in ongoing study and prayer in their respective meetings which will hopefully result in recommendations to the Vestry.

The joint committee meeting was then closed at 8:10 pm with a prayer by Jim and the committees went off to continue their individual committee meeting.

Respectfully submitted

Jim Lewis

Mary Beth Tygielski

