

Vestry Minutes
R. E. Lee Memorial Episcopal Church
August 15, 2011

The regular meeting of the Vestry of R. E. Lee Memorial Church was held Monday, August 15, 2011, at 5:00 p.m. in the Parish Hall of the church.

Present: The Rev. Tom Crittenden (chair), Mary Doyle (Senior Warden), Melissa Cox (Junior Warden), Alexandra Brown, Doug Cumming, Punky Dod, Don Ellis, Tim Gaylard, Judy Glick, Sarah Lanford, Steve Riethmiller, Mary Webster, and Gail Dick, (clerk). **Absent:** Suzanne Carmichael, Howard Pickett, Gloria Smitka, and Don Whittington. **Guest:** James Keane

Opening and Prayers: Tom noted current prayer concerns and opened the meeting with prayer.

Approval of June Minutes: Stand as published.

Committee Reports:

- **Finance:** In the absence of Don and Suzanne, Tom distributed the Statement of Revenue and Expenses and noted that he continues to be pleased that the church's finances remain in good shape. Tom explained that the Free Will Offerings are given by parishioners who do not pledge but give regularly and by new parish families who have not yet received a pledge card. Plate Offerings are any cash offerings received in the collection plates.

Tom jumped ahead in the agenda in order to introduce James Keane as R. E. Lee's new college chaplain. James has accepted the position for the upcoming academic year. James told the Vestry that he has been in contact with people at VMI and W&L. Burr Datz has been very helpful to James and they are working together. James has put together a team consisting of Melissa Cox, Punky Dod, Sharon Massie, and Merce Brooke, who will be the liaison to VMI. Tom will also be working with James and the group. James has been made aware of the fact that thus far there is a very small number of incoming freshmen at W&L who have identified themselves as Episcopalians. The commandant at VMI is going to be very strict with letting the Rats off campus this upcoming year. During weekdays, he is allowing them only 1¼ hours off campus Tuesday evenings. The 5:00 Eucharist service will continue. Although James is ordained to the Lutheran diaconate, according to Bishop Powell, differences between the Episcopal and the Lutheran understandings of the diaconate prevent James from distributing the pre-consecrated Eucharistic elements (as an Episcopal deacon would be allowed to do). This means that an ordained minister must be present to celebrate at the 5:00 Eucharist. Bob Crewdson has agreed to help celebrate the Eucharist at these 5:00 services. David Cox has agreed to serve one Sunday a month as well. James has agreed to a "salary" of \$150 per week when students are in session. The ministry will also require remuneration for the supply priests as well. **As a formality, Mary Doyle moved that James Keane be accepted as college chaplain. All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously.**

- **Stewardship:** Tom encouraged each Vestry member to sit in on a Stewardship Committee meeting. This year, it is the desire of the Stewardship Committee to personalize each pledge request letter that is sent out. They thought it would be beneficial if a personal letter were sent out signed by a committee member or Vestry member. It was suggested that each Vestry member pick 14 parishioners to whom they would mail a personally signed request letter and follow it up with a personally signed thank you note. Tom distributed a copy of the proposed pledge request letter. Much discussion followed. The Vestry members concluded that they were in agreement to the writing of a letter with the signature of Howard Pickett for the Stewardship Committee, so that "Stewardship Committee" also appears in the signatory line (some thought the Vestry ought also be a collective signatory) to which a committee member or Vestry member would then add their personal note and signature. Most felt that the thank you note should come from the Financial Secretary or the Treasurer. Tom will ask the Stewardship Committee to rewrite the pledge request letter and thank you letter accordingly.

Tom noted that “Cottage Meetings” are being organized. Parishioners are asked to sign up if they are interested in attending one of these informal discussion groups regarding the financial concerns of the parish. These meetings are scheduled to be held during the week of September 18-24th. Howard is going to lead two Sunday School forums on Stewardship in September. On September 25th there will be a lay sermon on Stewardship and all parishioners will receive their pledge packets. October 2nd will be the date for returning the pledge cards. It is possible that a Sudanese Bishop could preach at R. E. Lee on October 2nd.

- **Property:** Steve reported that the patio has been beautifully restored, new lighting has been added and the roof has been repaired and paid for. There is ongoing discussion of having a handicapped access to the patio. Paving of the driveway will be put off until next year. This will be after the meditation garden has been completed in the back of the church and a Gadsden request received.

New Business

- **Dane’s Ordination:** Wednesday November 30th is the planned date for Dane’s ordination which will take place at R. E. Lee Church. Tom handed out a form to be signed by all Vestry members to approve the ordination.
- **Vestry Elections:** Each year, the outgoing members of the Vestry become the nominating committee to put together a slate of church members to stand for the Vestry for the upcoming year. This year this committee consists of Mary Doyle, Tim Gaylard, Judy Glick, Sarah Lanford, and Don Whittington. Tom asked that Mary organize this committee. Vestry elections will be in October using the ballot box format and having the election separate from the Parish meeting as in the past two years.

Old Business

- **Meditation Garden:** Tom advised the Vestry that there is now a formal agreement with W&L in which W&L has agreed to the use of their property for a meditation garden. Preparation for the garden with a Labyrinth will begin this fall with reformulating the play area and landscaping to follow.

Comments by the Wardens

- **Mary Doyle, Sr. Warden:** Mary reminded the Vestry that at a past meeting, the Vestry had agreed to increase the pledge to the Diocese if funds became available. She wants that to be kept in mind.
- **Melissa Cox, Jr. Warden:** Melissa said that in the July issue of “Connections” there is a notice of two “webinars,” one on *capital campaigns* and the other on *giving*. Melissa encouraged everyone to take advantage of this opportunity.

Comments by the Rector

- **Meet with the Rector:** The next meetings with the rector will be Sunday, September 11th at 9:15 a.m. and Tuesday, September 13th at 12:00 p.m.
- **Chinese Adoption:** Tom said that their little Chinese daughter should be ready to join their home within the next few months. He and Christi will be ready to go to China to pick her up as soon as they receive the call. They will probably be away for about two weeks at that time.

Next meeting will be Monday September 19, 2011 at 5:00 in the Parish Hall.

In Don’s absence, Tom closed with prayer and the meeting adjourned at 6:30.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail G. Dick, Clerk