

# Vestry Meeting

Tuesday, March 21, 2009

Minutes recorded by Jane Sullivan, Clerk of the Vestry

Present: Fr. Charles, Chancellor Stephen Hutchinson, the Rev. Cannon David Bailey, Janet van Hartesvelt, Ted Clayton, Sandra Jones, Mac Cover, Aimee Altizer, Jane Sullivan, Claudia Giacomina, Laurel Rizzotto, Dick Miner, Ray Freer, Nancy Conrow, and Mary McEntire

(PLEASE NOTE: During the course of our conversation with Steve and David, they referred several times to the problems at the Church in the early part of this decade as “recent problems” or “your difficulties” or other euphemisms. Since I was typing fast, I just put “Split”, but neither David nor Steve used this term.)

## First we brainstormed questions for Steve and David:

1. How was the Chapel identified to be sold?
2. If we agree to a plan that saves the Chapel now, can it come up for sale under the new Bishop?
3. What is the goal/target for the Diocese with respect to St. Luke's?
4. Did the Standing Committee direct the discussion of the same for now?
5. Are all the members of the Standing Committee aware of this issue?
6. Why the change in presentation between March 21 and 22 and the options that the Standing Committee presented us with?
7. What does the Diocese expect both the Diocese and the Parish to “realize” from the sale of both properties?

## Answers:

Steve Hutchinson said that many of these questions required them to meet with other people first and that they would be unable to answer them with any real authority; they can only offer opinion.

**Question 1.** Dave: there is a duplicated effort in having 2 properties. Other churches (e.g., Grace in St. George) had to sell their duplicated effort (3 of 6 owned acres). The Chapel wasn't sold when Grace sold because of the Split.

**Question 2.** Steve: there is no way to bind a future bishop's or future Convention's decisions. You can take a matter to the convention as a way of having it recorded and recognized universally. In this way, Jubilee was taken to convention (no canonical reason for it); it perhaps wasn't fully understood by the members there. Jubilee said that all properties had to be fully in line with the ministry of the church. The dollar value of the Chapel can be put to other ministry uses.

Dave: we can record what happens here and then we will have something in writing – the promises made by Bishop Bates are only “oral history”.

Charles: I hear you say that from a legal standpoint, nothing the Standing Committee decides will bind future Bishops and Standing Committees. Having a written record will be a part any future discussions.

Dave: Yes. Just like what is decided by a Vestry today will not bind your Vestry in the future. A written record is much better than what we have now, particularly if it reflects that we really struggled with the decision and how difficult it was.

Steve: If the leadership committee decides to put together the kind of plan that would be acceptable to the Standing Committee, then that plan becomes part of the written record. The more you flesh it out, the clearer the reason for

mission of the Chapel becomes and it becomes an expense aligned with the ministry of the church, which then passes the stewardship test laid out in Project Jubilee.

Charles: The people here, who worship at the Chapel, are not hearing you about “ministry at the Chapel.” They do not understand what you mean when you suggest that the Chapel is not a key site of the ministry of St. Luke's. Can you make that clearer?

Steve: You are one parish, your office, identification, educational, cultural events are here (at the church). The Chapel only has the 8 am service as being part of the parish life. Except for allowing other people to use that space, what do we use it for? Its costs -- \$5 – 10K per year to operate, money which perhaps could be used in other ministry? Also, how does this look to other churches struggling to maintain one crumbling church?

Dave: We came up here and heard about the lot and we realized that maybe we could respond to this differently. It was after the conversations that we realized that looking at things “out of the box” might be better. The lot made that possible.

Janet: Would making a case that the chapel is an evangelism tool (a way that we bring in new members) be a worthy argument?

Steve: It would be part of the case that you make.

Mary: This mirrors what is going on in the greater community.

Ray: Example of St. Mary's. They have a new church and kept their old chapel. They do run a food bank, not out of there, but out of a building close to there.

Charles: If we do identify ministry for the Chapel, will we have the volunteers to staff it? Past performance is the best indicator of future performance and past performance would lead me to say no. I would recommend we avoid coming up with a lot of new ideas for new ministries that we are not willing to commit to staffing.

Ray: If we aren't growing the church, then it is superfluous. 10 new pledges a year would mean that we were using the Chapel.

Mac: The Chapel isn't growing; it isn't reaching out into old town and bringing people in. We have problems staffing the services there.

Janet: There are many people who never would have found this church without coming through the chapel. Many, many examples. (Here many people named many names).

Nancy: We did originally think of the chapel for the Hispanic service. We failed with doing it at the big church, but other, successful Hispanic services (Ogden) use small, historic churches.

**Question 4:** Did the current Standing Committee send you? Steve: We are here following through with the decisions made by the Standing Committee that approved project Jubilee (1994). This has been a ten year process and we have now worked our way down to the St. Luke's Chapel on the list of identified properties.

David: It would have happened earlier except for the split – we wanted to be sensitive to the needs of a hurting community.

Ray: Have you no consideration for the financial incentives here?

David: As we said before, we came up just to let you know this was what we were doing. We don't know what we will be able to get for the property.

Mac: The research that I have on the lot has the county declaring it as open space. It is not zoned as open space, though, so if you wanted to subdivide it, perhaps you could. You have to file a petition and the county commission eventually makes the decision. If we are able to subdivide the property off of the church, we should be able to get 2 or 3 lots from it. Ray and Mac gave Steve and David summaries and copies of their research onto the restrictions on the sale of Chapel and lot.

Mary: Are the options from the Standing Committee changeable?

Steve: The proposals outlined in Options 1 and 2 are works in progress – ideas that need to be refined. Look to the Project Jubilee protocols for the language you should use with your proposal.

Mary: What is the value of the word of the Bishop? Roger Stephens has “things in writing” from capital campaign of 1998 for this church.

Steve: Roger and I have different memories of this. I remember that we said we had no plan for selling the Chapel to help pay for the church and that is different from saying that we will never, in the future, sell the Chapel. It was more a statement of intent at the time.

Ray: can we figure out a way to use the Chapel? Have there been discussions? If we remain static we are dying... Now we must do soul searching about how we go forward.

Janet and others: That's what we're going to come up with in our small group meetings.

Ray: If we can't grow, then we're dead anyway, chapel or no chapel. David and Steve, I want you to know that all the people who are in that committee are interested in what is good for the church as a whole, not just the Chapel.

Dave: If the chapel were to be seen as an evangelism tool, that would add some value or excitement.

Steve: Have you ever thought of a van that would pick up people from the hotels or whatnot and bring them to church?

Charles: Let me ask that we keep in mind the reality that we will never grow our congregation by focusing on guests who are in town for a week or two, but live somewhere else. It is a ministry to reach out to and welcome short-term visitors, but we cannot build our organization with them. We were having a tough time staffing the Christmas Eve services and so we cut those at the Chapel and one of the services at the Church. We went from four Christmas Eve services to two and our overall attendance dropped by MAYBE 10% with respect to the total attendance for all 4 services.

Nancy: Does a congregation have any equity in their church? Do they get credit for remodel, etc?

Steve: All properties are held by the Diocese or in trust for the Diocese. It's a negotiation for each situation. If a congregation is selling and buying because they are growing into another building, that church gets almost all of the proceeds of the sale, but in other cases (3 churches into 2, for example), that church gets nothing. There is sweat equity, but usually the Diocese has put in a bunch of money as well.

Charles: Pastorally, all our mission efforts have come from within our community and now, this call to use the Chapel as a base for mission is coming from outside our community. It feels forced to some people, which is why you heard the phrase “authoritarian regime” in the first meetings. It feels like something being done to us, rather than something being “joyfully given to the life of the Diocese.”

Steve: During the “difficult times” St. L was isolated from life of the wider diocese. If the people of St. Luke's had been more fully connected and engaged with the larger Diocese during the past two decades, they would have observed other congregations stepping up to make their contributions to the Diocese. Other congregations have volunteered the sale of excess properties and have attempted to restore the financial strength of the Jubilee Fund. St. L lost the vantage point to see that other people were already doing this. Nobody wanted it “done to you”

Mary: It's 2 way, though. Maybe we don't have a feeling for the Diocese, but the Diocese doesn't have a feel for us either. Park City is unique in that it has Main St. and the larger county area. In our local culture, the debate of Park City vs. Summit County is not an either /or proposition, but a both/and situation.

Claudia: Part of our response to the Standing Committee must be to do some education about that.

David: We originally just came up to Park City to EXPLORE selling the Chapel. It is an evolving process. We are all in this together and we will come up as many times as necessary. I dealt with the split and I was there and I care about this church.

Charles: There are all these regulations regarding the sale of chapel and the lot. It may be a long time before we even know what is possible. In terms of process, we can come up with something by June 1, but that can become moot as you find that certain properties can or cannot be sold. Should we wait until you find this out before we craft a response?

Dave: The process must be one that defines “who you are” and make a decision about the chapel. The process should take place regardless of land restrictions.

Charles: This is a church growth issue and there is no one here that has the expertise for that.

Steve: Look at the Jubilee protocols and say “this is the type of growth we want to pursue and this is how we are going to go about it”

Charles: There is no expertise here about growth in resort communities. We need help with this.

Steve: Some churches don't want to grow – they want to keep things as they are and not adjust to new people. What is growth and what does that mean about what you want to do at each threshold of growth?

Claudia: This is an exciting opportunity to determine what we value.

Dave: If you don't have the resources, come to me and we will provide you with resources which will guide you. It won't do either of us any good if you sit up here being a maintenance congregation.

Aimee: If we give up the Chapel, will there be any tangibles to say this is where our money went (ie, here's the new roof you funded!, etc)

Steve: We opened the books in 96, so you can see where every dollar goes and there is more visibility on the budget process. We are in a bad time now, so we have to be careful with our funds and we have no discretionary funds. When money comes in there is a priority list of how that money is applied. So yes, I think the people will know where the money goes. Not dollar for dollar, but pretty clear.

Aimee: Can we make a request?

Dave: Yes, but if there is a critical need somewhere, that is where it will go, regardless of request. We are more than open to coming back, and also to providing resources about growth.

Ray: Is there a dollar amount that the Standing Committee would like to see in terms of if it is worth it?

David: \$300,000. The Diocese is in debt to Project Jubilee for that amount to fund its present commitments and that doesn't respond to upcoming crises.

Steve: I think it is much higher than that.

Dave: This is helpful and we will move forward. What the Diocese needs today and what it needs 3 years from now -- Diocese can take a short term note on property.

Steve: What is the appraisal data on the lot, assuming that we can jump through the bureaucratic hoops and I think we can?

Ray: Minimum year to 2 years to do anything on lot, and chapel MAY realize \$300K, but it will take a least a year to sell.

There was a lot of talk about scheduling and when everyone on the Vestry Special Task Force would be in town to formulate a response to the Standing Committee, so that the Standing Committee would have time to look at our response before everyone leaves for General Convention in July, then Dave and Steve left.

The Vestry approved, by consensus, the Revised Missions Budget for 2009.