

December 23, 2008
Meeting of the Vestry of Saint Gregory of Nyssa Episcopal Church
7:00 PM in the Chapel
Next meeting: February 3, 2009

Vestry members present:

Susan Abernethy, Jessica Anderson, Elizabeth Boileau, Brad Erickson, Paul Fromberg
AnnaMarie Hoos, David Kincaid, Rick Storrs
Leesy Taggart, Treasurer, was also present

INVOCATION

I. APPROVAL of November 25, 2008 MINUTES

November 25, 2008 minutes were approved.

II. TRANSITION FOLLOW-UP

Meetings with the Rector

Paul, in order to ease the transition from interim Rector to permanent Rector, has met with several members of the community since the announcement of his calling.

Celebration of New Ministry

Paul has been in communication with the Diocese with regards to scheduling the Call to New Ministry celebration. The scheduled event needs to accommodate the Bishop's schedule, the schedule of the majority of the community, happen as quickly as possible (okay to occur during Lent) and if scheduled during the week of March 9, St. Gregory's Day is really significant. There will be more information on all this being achieved as it becomes possible.

III. VESTRY OVERNIGHT RETREAT

Paul asked that the Vestry plan a retreat with him with the hopeful outcome of 'working with new stuff' and long range planning. He spoke of adding new commissions and working on the vision of what Vestry would look like in June 2009-2010. Paul further discussed how arriving at a vision of St. Gregory is a joint process between the Rector and Vestry. Participants would pay for this retreat, there would be a facilitator, the place has yet to be determined and there will be a planning meeting on February 3rd. Paul will work on an agenda, finding a site and facilitator.

It was Moved, Seconded and Approved to hold a Vestry Retreat on February 28, 2009.

IV. FINANCES

Clergy Housing Allowance

Under Internal Revenue Service (IRS) rule those congregations that don't provide housing to clergy could designate a certain portion of income/salary to housing which is nontaxable. In the past because of the housing market in San Francisco the entire compensation of Rector has been designated as housing. The Vestry must pass this

designation as a resolution. The following resolution was Moved, Seconded and Approved:

WHEREAS the Reverend Paul Fromberg, an ordained minister, has accepted an appointment to serve at St. Gregory of Nyssa Episcopal Church; and

WHEREAS St. Gregory of Nyssa Episcopal Church does not provide a residence for its appointed ministers:

THE VESTRY HEREBY RESOLVES that the housing allowance paid to the Reverend Paul Fromberg for the period beginning January 1, 2009, and ending December 31, 2009, shall be set at an annual amount of \$42,000, and that it is designated as rental allowance within the meaning of that term as used in Section 107 of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code of 1986; and,

IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED that, so long as the Reverend Paul Fromberg remains a minister of St. Gregory of Nyssa Episcopal Church, the housing allowance shall be paid in like amount each year after 2009 unless this resolution is superseded by a subsequent resolution of the Vestry; and

IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED and affirmed by the Vestry that the Reverend Paul Fromberg is not being paid to be a member of St. Gregory of Nyssa Episcopal Church.

Budget

The Finance Committee (Paul Fromberg, David Kincaid, and Leesy Taggart) reported on the projected 2008 operating results and the proposed 2009 operating budget. Based on actual numbers through mid-December and conservative estimates on the final two weeks, we should finish 2008 above break-even, compared with a budgeted deficit of \$11K. These positive results come from extra-ordinary expense control, and better than expected fundraising and rental income. Regular giving is down about 10% from budgeted levels.

These results reflect only the Operating Fund. Major building repairs and principal payments on our debt, which come from the Building Fund, are not included. Because of unexpected repairs (the new roof and other repairs on the admin building, as well as emergency repair of the back fence), the Building Fund is nearly empty. We have had to stop paying down our loan, as is allowed by the loan agreement. It was agreed that we need to begin planning and budgeting the Building Fund as well as the Operating Fund, as repair needs will likely increase as our building ages. We also recognized that it is generally easier to do targeted fundraising for capital needs than for ongoing operations.

In past years, we have been able to cover some building needs from the Vestry Designated Fund, which is made up of past bequests to the church. Since these funds are our only emergency reserve, it is not prudent to use them further. Instead, we need to focus on increasing our cash reserves in both the Operating and the Building Fund. In discussing the proposed 2009 Operating Budget, we focused primarily on personnel. The sense is that, compared with other financially healthy churches in this diocese, we are understaffed relative to our program levels. However, we do not currently have the means to increase staffing, or to pay our existing staff at levels that reflect their skills and efforts. This is a concern with no current resolution, but a clear need for focused action over the coming year. The Finance Committee proposed continuing to pay the

Rector at Diocesan minimum, and freezing other staff salaries. The Sunday School nursery workers will receive a modest COLA.

Looking at expected revenues in the face of an ongoing recession, we noted that members are still generally renewing their pledges at current levels or with small increases. Several members have had to reduce pledges in response to job losses or other economic distress, as is appropriate.

The proposed 2009 budget reflects roughly a 10% reduction over the original 2008 budget, in both income and expenses, with about a \$12K deficit. We hope to do better than budget, as we did in 2007 and expect to do in 2008, but if we make budget, we will be able to fund the deficit out of existing operating reserves, without dipping into our emergency reserves in the Vestry Designated Fund.

Acceptance of the Operating Budget was Moved, Seconded and Approved.

V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Communication

AnnaMarie Hoos reported that “hiccups” have accompanied the publication of Nyssen News and that the process should improve. Paul Fromberg is now Editor in Chief with Deb Styer and Dave Cowen remaining on the committee with AnnaMarie.

Learning and Service

Rick Storrs reported on the success of the Christmas Faire and Wreath Sales; the Faire grossed \$1300 and wreaths \$2300. The Cookie Bar again was a roaring success. It was suggested that the Cookies & Carols event could be a venue for the Cookie Bar. In January, Will Hocker will be holding a series of classes about prayer after the 10:30 service. Also, starting February 1, will be a class about Body and Mind held by Mark Graves, a teacher with a background in religion and science. Rick anticipates rolling out community and service projects in the spring.

Membership

Susan Abernethy reported she recruited 13 new members for her committee; Tom Benson, Bruce Bramlett, Pietro Calogero, Misha Cornes, Joe Cousart, Janice del Fiacco, Zach Finley, AnnaMarie Hoos, Maggie Kent, Jackie Lee, Felipe Paris, Shauna Poong.

The first meeting of the committee will be February 22 after the 10:30 service.

The goals of the membership committee are 1) strengthening the practice of ‘welcoming the stranger’, 2) maintaining the rota of greeters for Sunday services and special services, 3) writing a first-time visitor a note of welcome, 4) identifying the repeat visitors (black labeled name tags) and engaging them about St. Gregory, 5) develop methods of moving repeat visitors to being a friend or a member, 6) highlighting the role of sponsoring new members, 7) follow-up of new members especially upon the anniversary of their membership, 8) review of the Member’s agreement for any modest changes, 9) Committee membership participation in the quarterly luncheons for new members.

VI. CLERGY REPORT

Paul reported that he, with Michael Kinman, has been asked to design and conduct the liturgy that precedes the opening of the General Convention in Anaheim in July. He is looking forward to the experience; there will be about 1000 folks in attendance. He is going out of town on a pilgrimage organized by All Saints and Rick Fabian accompanied by many members of the community (and Vestry) to Ethiopia. The group will be there during the festival celebrating the baptism of Jesus. Paul has been asked to join a group whose purpose is to enrich worship using devotional material, specifically designing a Book of Hours. He shared with us the news of the birth of Alissa and Erin's son, Foxen.

At the end of the meeting there was an affirmation of the Vestry Officers as follows: RESOLVED, that the Vestry affirms the status of the following individuals as duly elected officers and authorizes them to represent St. Gregory of Nyssa Episcopal Church to the extent allowed by the By-Laws of the Parish and the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of California: Brad Erickson, President; Jessica Anderson, Vice President; Elizabeth Boileau, Secretary; and Elizabeth Taggart, Treasurer.

For the purposes of Bank of America Account 23313-05095 in the name of "St. Gregory Nyssen Episcopal Church Operating Account," the following individuals and only the following individuals shall have marking authority: Elizabeth Taggart, Treasurer; Brad Erickson, President; and Jessica Anderson, Vice President. Only one signature will be required on any transaction.

CLOSING POEM

Paul read a passage written by Seamus Heaney.

With a recognition of jobs well done the

**** meeting adjourned ****