

December 18, 2007
Meeting of the Vestry of Saint Gregory of Nyssa Episcopal Church
7:30 PM in the Chapel
Next meeting: January 15, 2008

Attachments:

Draft Budget 2008

Vestry members present:

Jessica Anderson, Brad Erickson, Anna Marie Hoos, Barb Nicol, Felipe Paris, Rick Storrs, Alissa Worthing

Guests:

Michael Barlowe, Hillie Cousart, Leesy Taggart, Erin Worthing

I. MEETING WITH MICHAEL BARLOWE

The Rev. Canon Michael Barlowe, Canon for Congregational Ministries was invited by the Co-Convenors to discuss the next steps in our transition, as Saint Gregory's is officially entering its "Interim" period on January 1, 2008.

Michael began by commending our co-convenors and all vestry as well suited and well qualified to assume full responsibility for the management of the church during the interim period. As of January 1, 2008, the vestry will report directly to the Bishop.

Also as of January 1, 2008, Paul Fromberg will transition from "Managing Associate Rector" to "Interim Rector." We have asked Paul to continue caring for our spiritual life together, our liturgies and the staff that support the church; however, the remaining responsibilities of running the church will fall to the co-convenors and the vestry. As Interim Rector, Paul will report to the vestry, under the authority of the Bishop.

Michael invited everyone to read more about canonical responsibilities at www.diocal.org. (Ed. Note. A 90-page "Canons of the Diocese" PDF is available for downloading at: http://www.diocal.org/files/docs/diocese/canons_of_the_diocese_of_california.pdf)

Michael clarified that the main distinction between an "Interim Rector" and a "Rector" is that the vestry employs Paul as an Interim Rector; whereas permanent rectors have "life tenure," meaning that the vestry does not have authority to fire a permanent rector: once hired, a rector may serve until age 72 or death. Usually, it is vestries that come and go and the rector stays.

Michael warned that, "There will be a tendency to turn Paul into the Rector before you're ready to actually call a Rector."

The Co Convenors will be issuing monthly letters to members to describe these new relationships and new process. They will also be meeting with Michael Barlowe on a monthly basis.

Barb noted that in many other parts of the country, rectors only stay on five years or so before they opt to move on. Michael noted that rectors in California often serve much longer.

Michael noted that Saint Gregory's has been an official parish for 20+ years and was a mission for years before that. He noted that people all over the world were familiar with Saint Gregory's and reminded us that we are not calling a rector just for ourselves but for all the friends of Saint Gregory's worldwide. Michael related his deep fondness and respect for Saint Gregory's, noting that even before he became a Christian, Saint Gregory's was a place to which he referred people (Scott King included).

Re. A Consultant

When the vestry first met with Michael a year and a half ago, it seemed that Saint Gregory's would need to budget for and hire an outside consultant to assist us in the interim period: in writing the Parish Profile and in the discernment process. Since then, with more information received and fruitful conversations with the co convenors, Michael no longer things it necessary to have a formal and contractual relationship with a consultant. Instead, Michael himself will do much of the work with us that a consultant would have done. He did note that it would likely be helpful to have an occasional outside consultant, just to provide perspective, but on an "ad hoc" basis, rather than contractual. Thus, we need not revisit our 2008 budget to provide for a consultant.

Re. Clergy Participation on the Profile Team

In e-mails exchanged before the vestry meeting, the co convenors stated that Michael's position was that clergy should not be invited to serve on the Profile Team.

Barb raised the issue in the meeting, disagreeing with Michael that none of the very talented ordained priests among our membership should be invited onto the Profile Team. Michael clarified that it is canonically "iffy" because ordained clergy are not considered members of any one parish; rather, they are members of the diocese. He acknowledged that Saint Gregory's considers ordained priests among its members but that the diocese does not share that view. He clarified that the opinions of ordained clergy among the Saint Gregory's membership should most certainly be solicited; however, ordained clergy should not be invited to officially serve, on the Profile Team, the Discernment Team or the Search Team. Michael pointed out that we are now enjoying the results of a long struggle to give lay persons the authority to choose their rectors, with the Bishop as the administrator. Barring direct clergy participation in that process is a way of empowering lay persons and should be heeded.

Michael clarified that lay leaders choose their candidates for rectors. The Bishop then approves candidates by assessing whether they are someone who can actually get things done and does a criminal and credit check. Since trying to remove a rector after they have been called is so very difficult and awful (often causing the collapse of the entire parish), the Bishop takes this vetting very seriously.

Michael said that the most important thing we as a vestry can do is to pray every day and open ourselves to God's discernment at every step of the way.

Michael then clarified that, canonically, the selection of the rector is up to the vestry and not the congregation at large. He acknowledged that we will likely need to some education around that fact. It was suggested that Michael come in on a Sunday between services or after the 10:30 a.m. services, to offer that education.

Felipe asked whether the vestry is governed by the same personnel laws that apply to most boards. When asked to clarify, he asked "Must vestry meetings always be open to the public or can we have closed meetings when discussing these sensitive issues?" Michael replied that certain vestry meetings most certainly can and should be closed when making the decision about calling a rector.

Rick asked for clarification that first the vestry decides whether to call Paul as our permanent rector. If we choose not to call Paul and launch a search, does the vestry still call the new rector? Michael replied, "Yes."

Michael and the co-convenors have agreed that we should make the decision about whether we are to call Paul as our permanent rector in the next 6 months.

It was then asked whether the Discernment Team has the ultimate decision making authority in calling a rector or whether the vestry decides. The vestry decides.

Hillie then asked for suggestions for how to best communicate amongst the Profile Team, the vestry, the discernment team and the congregation.

Michael replied that there is not much research on that because parishes doing what we're doing are usually recovering from some fiasco. Michael then said, "The best interaction between the vestry and the search team is to listen and not be in conversation."

Michael also advised that we commit to certain standards to evaluating Paul (preferably based on the Parish Profile) so that Paul does not feel that every move he makes is subject to intense scrutiny.

Michael then went on to advocate sharing stories of observation of Paul at work in liturgy, rather than random opinions or observations. He said, "I strongly discourage an attitude of 'thumbs up' or 'thumbs down' evaluation of Paul." Instead, frame the discussion around prayer and where God is leading us.

Barb noted that she could see the Discernment Team really struggling between a decision that is concrete, i.e. keep Paul, with one that is nebulous, i.e. launch a search.

Michael replied that the most important work is the development of the Parish Profile. The discussion should not be "Do we think Paul should be our rector?" The question should be,

“Paul shows unique leadership qualities in X or Y area. Does that align with our needs and goals?” Most importantly, Paul should NOT be evaluated against Donald and Rick. We joked that we should set up a jar at the church and any time a comparison is made between Paul and Donald/Rick, the comparer would have to put a dollar in the jar.

The purpose of the Parish Profile is to figure out where God is at Saint Gregory’s and where God is calling us to go.

Rick Storrs commented that Saint Gregory’s is in transition in many ways. People who joined Saint Gregory’s at the very beginning when it was a mission church might have a much different perspective on “Who we are and where we are being called” from those who have more recently joined the church.

Hillie shared a recollection of her experience “trusting the process” when Donald first announced his candidacy for bishop. She recalled wondering how she could ever compare Donald with the other candidates. Although she initially was sure that Donald was the very best candidate, she saw what new things working through the process can bring to light. That is a similar, recent experience that we can all draw upon.

We then had a brief discussion about whether Paul would stay on as Interim Rector if the Discernment Team concluded that they would not call Paul as permanent rector. Michael advised that staying on would be very difficult for him and that we should be prepared for his departure if he is not called as permanent rector.

Rick clarified that the Profile will help us determine who we are and who we are called to be. With that, we can then evaluate whether Paul’s gifts accord with that vision. The Discernment Team is called to provide “pros” and “cons” for Paul’s possible rectorship, not just decide “Paul” or “Not Paul.”

Rick asked how we can determine what Paul’s gifts are. Michael suggested interviews and closely watching particular liturgical occasions.

Felipe asked what would happen if the vestry were “deadlocked” on whether or not to accept the Discernment Team’s recommendation. Michael replied that a deadlocked vestry would necessarily mean that a search would be launched.

Michael then made it clear that the Bishop has no hidden agenda. They have no candidates that they are hoping that we elect. Michael stated that he intentionally has not envisioned anyone here at Saint Gregory’s.

Jessica then asked about vestry participation on the Profile Team and Discernment Team. Michael replied that there should be one member of the vestry on each team to serve a communicative function.

Michael stated, “Your job as vestry members is to be good leaders and good communicators and to take on the mantle of spiritual guidance.”

We then discussed the sensitive issue of whether to make an “open call” to participate in the Profile Team. Michael felt strongly that the announcement that a team was being called was enough to identify anyone who feels passionately about doing this work. However, it is the vestry’s responsibility to identify Profile Team members and directly ask for their help.

Michael stated that the best candidates for serving on the Profile Team don’t necessarily fit into neat demographics but rather are people who are connected to wide segments of the Saint Gregory’s community.

Before leaving, Michael stated his opinion that the complexity of the Interim Rector job warrants higher compensation for Paul. Leesy asked for compensation comparables, which Michael was not at liberty to provide.

Finally, Michael shared that everyone at the Diocese is praying for us and with us. “God will provide Saint Gregory’s with a great rector.” He commended the vestry as a great leadership team and assured us that all we have to do, fundamentally, is to be faithful.

II. APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER 20, 2007 MINUTES

November, 2007 Vestry Minutes approved.

III. APPROVAL OF SEVERAL MOTIONS RE FINANCIAL PROCEDURES

- Marking authority for bank accounts.

Currently Leesy and Brad can sign checks. Leesy would like for Jessica to be added. Motion passed.

- There is a \$645 deficit in the Writer’s and Artists retreat account, due primarily to last-minute cancellations. Jamie worked hard to recoup some of those funds but could not recoup all of them. Next year, the Writers and Artists retreat will be in All Saints Company’s purview. Motion to cover the \$645 deficit from the Saint Gregory’s operating fund. Motion passed.

- Youth and Family Ministries is in a \$420 deficit. Move to cover the deficit from operations. There was a question about whether we needed a Youth and Family ministries account, when we had no Youth and Family Minister. Leesy clarified that it is primarily an event fund. Motion to cover the \$420 deficit passed but discussion about this to resume at a future date.

- The gate that accesses the Sunday school had to be replaced at a cost of \$1,600. La Scuola Piccola paid half of the cost of the gate. Motion to cover Saint Gregory’s half with funds from the Building Fund, since it is a capital expense. Motion passed.

IV. APPROVAL OF 2008 RECTOR HOUSING ALLOWANCE AND 2008 BUDGET

There was a spirited discussion about Paul's compensation in light of (1) Michael Barlowe urging us to pay more than the diocesan minimum that we currently pay and (2) a misunderstanding with Paul about whether Saint Gregory's is a "c" parish or a "d" parish, and what effect that would have on his compensation.

At the end of the discussion, the vestry voted and the majority felt that it would be unwise to increase Paul's compensation as part of the 2008 budget. The vote was not unanimous and the issue will be discussed again.

We also had a discussion about whether the expenses of site monitors should be tracked in personnel or events. Leesy sees site monitors as being a direct pass through from the rent for an event and thus should not be tracked in personnel.

The 2008 Budget, with some slight amendments to correct errors in the Parish Administrator's salary and benefits, was passed. The Treasurer's Consent Agenda was passed.

V. PROFILE TEAM CANDIDATES

We had a lively discussion about possible candidates for the Profile Team, keeping in mind Michael's advice to choose people with many connections to the Saint Gregory's community. About 15 possible candidates were agreed upon. Jessica and Brad were to commence requesting that those candidates serve on the Profile Team.

It was suggested that we should add a prayer for the Profile Team to every liturgy, starting in January, 2008.

Rick Storrs offered to set up a list serv for the Profile Team. The first meetings of the Profile Team will begin in March, 2008.

Next meeting January 15, 2008

** meeting adjourned **

DRAFT BUDGET 2008							
Money coming in	Budget 2006	Actual 2006	Budget 2007	Budget Jan-Nov 2007	Actual Jan-Nov 2007	Projection 07	BUDGET 2008
ASC grant	\$ 157,000.00	\$ 156,000.00	\$ 157,000.00	\$ 143,916.67	\$144,000.00	\$ 157,000.00	
Cash from the plate	\$ 13,000.00	\$ 11,607.00	\$ 12,000.00	\$ 11,000.00	\$10,798	\$ 13,000.00	\$ 13,000.00
One time/misc					\$ 6,760.00	\$ 6,038.00	\$ 8,000.00
Fundraisers	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 7,654.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 9,166.67	\$ 21,323.00	\$ 22,000.00	\$ 30,000.00
Space rental	\$ 22,000.00	\$ 18,494.00	\$ 12,000.00	\$ 11,000.00	\$ 19,888.00	\$ 21,000.00	\$ 22,000.00
Unrestricted gifts	\$ 318,000.00	\$ 292,405.00	\$ 325,000.00	\$ 297,916.67	\$ 274,364.00	\$ 335,000.00	\$ 340,000.00
YFM grant	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00					
Total in:	\$ 536,000.00	\$ 511,160.00	\$ 516,000.00	\$ 473,000.00	\$ 477,133.00	\$ 554,038.00	\$ 413,000.00
Money going out							
Accounting/Finance	\$ (5,000.00)	\$ (1,970.00)	\$ (3,200.00)	\$ (2,933.33)	\$ (2,244.00)	\$ (2,800.00)	\$ (2,800.00)
Assessment/Deanery	\$ (59,832.00)	\$ (59,263.00)	\$ (71,181.00)	\$ (65,249.25)	\$ (65,163.00)	\$ (71,181.00)	\$ (71,272.00)
Communications	\$ (5,445.00)	\$ (2,550.00)	\$ (3,000.00)	\$ (2,750.00)	\$ (3,434.00)	\$ (4,000.00)	\$ (3,000.00)
Fundraising cost		\$ (3,351.00)	\$ (5,000.00)	\$ (4,583.33)			\$ (3,000.00)
Insurance	\$ (15,372.00)	\$ (13,357.00)	\$ (14,692.70)	\$ (13,468.31)	\$ (10,275.00)	\$ (14,692.70)	\$ (16,161.97)
Interfund transfer					\$ (833.00)		
Loan interest	\$ (18,000.00)	\$ (22,445.00)	\$ (22,500.00)	\$ (20,625.00)	\$ (20,686.00)	\$ (24,000.00)	\$ (24,000.00)
Occupancy	\$ (47,516.00)	\$ (42,143.00)	\$ (45,000.00)	\$ (41,250.00)	\$ (39,599.00)	\$ (45,000.00)	\$ (45,000.00)
Personnel	\$ (402,402.00)	\$ (392,726.00)	\$ (352,929.14)	\$ (323,518.38)	\$ (321,439.00)	\$ (352,929.14)	\$ (224,048.37)
Supplies/incidentals	\$ (27,000.00)	\$ (27,452.00)	\$ (28,000.00)	\$ (25,666.67)	\$ (34,262.00)	\$ (40,000.00)	\$ (35,000.00)
Total out:	\$ (580,567.00)	\$ (565,257.00)	\$ (545,502.84)	\$ (500,044.27)	\$ (497,935.00)	\$ (554,602.84)	\$ (424,282.34)
Surplus (Deficit)	\$ (44,567.00)	\$ (54,097.00)	\$ (29,502.84)	\$ (27,044.27)	\$ (20,802.00)	\$ (564.84)	\$ (11,282.34)