

Vestry Digest
December 18, 2016

PRESENT: The Rev. Randy Lord-Wilkinson, The Rev. Javier Garcia Ocampo, Betsy Hasegawa, Rose Buck, Avin Lalmansingh, Denise Lionetti, Gary McLaughlin, Zadinga Ogada, John Pruessner, Berenice Rodriguez, and Paul Whitmore. **Absent:** Janet King and Najma Stubblefield

CONSENT AGENDA: Avin moved that the consent agenda be adopted as presented; Zadinga seconded the motion, and it passed.

OLD BUSINESS

Javier work status update. Javier's R1 (religious worker) visa will expire in July 2017; it needs to be renewed. Additionally, he needs to get his green card. The cost for these items is approximately \$8,000. Javier offered to pay half and the Vestry discussed having the church provide the other half. Gary made a motion that Ascension contribute one half of the cost for Javier's green card and R1, and finance the other half for Javier to repay over time. The motion was seconded by Denise and carried unanimously.

Annual Giving Campaign (AGC). With only 1 week left until the official end of the campaign, we have reached only about one half of our goal. Avin put a second letter out in the past week asking everyone to consider increasing their 2017 pledge. Paul has a list of about 110 names of people who routinely give but do not pledge. There are also about 70 people who pledged in 2016 but have not yet for 2017. The Vestry agreed to announce that those who have not pledged will be getting phone calls from Vestry members. It was noted that EFTs are only counted at the end of the campaign.

Rice Bowl. Half of last year's Rice Bowl offering was slated for a Welcome Feast for local refugees from the Middle East. The Vestry discussed using it instead as cash and equivalent offerings directly to the refugees, thus benefiting more of those needy families. There are now twelve refugee families in the county. Paul made a motion that the \$1,500 set aside last year for a festive meal be converted to material assistance for Montgomery County refugees. The motion was seconded by Rose and passed.

RenewalWorks status. Randy reported that the committee's findings for Ascension are in a 60-page document. Betsy felt that the data must be made available to the congregation. Randy will create a color-coded document to hand out to the Vestry and to put on our website. The RenewalWorks next committee meeting is on January 9th. The report will be further discussed at the January Vestry meeting.

Ghanaian church rental request. Betsy will call her contact at the church and discuss what we have heard about them, specifically problems with noise, overstaying their allotted time, and storing more material than agreed to.

Fund raising – cookbook. Zadinga put an ad in the colored bulletin asking for volunteers to work on the cookbook. Four people have responded to date. A time-frame for creating the cookbook needs to be developed. She suggested that we actually cook some of the recipes and have Sunday morning tastings. The first meeting will be on Saturday January 28th..

Fund raising – tee shirts. Berenice knows of a company that will give a discount to the church. She will bring a sample to the January meeting.

Tri-State service contract quotation. Upon the Vestry request, Tri-State submitted a more detailed quotation for maintenance work in 2017. The Vestry agreed that it is vital that we avoid emergencies, but questioned whether the price quoted was fair. Gary recommended getting one or two more bids.

Discernment for new Vestry. After listening for God’s guidance, a short list of candidates was created, and various Vestry members will contact them.

NEW BUSINESS

Randy’s housing allowance. Randy submitted a request asking that the Vestry designate \$30K of his stipend as “parsonage allowance” for tax reasons. Gary moved that the money be designated as requested, Avin seconded and the motion was passed.

OPEN MIC:

Rose – bulletin. Rose felt that the financial reports in the weekly colored bulletin do not give a descriptive picture of not just our financial status but also the impact of the situation. Betsy suggested that it should include and specify the money we are taking from the endowment. Avin said we would need input from Howard. Rose will contact him, and she asked Vestry members to think of ways to convey information to the congregation, and contact her with any ideas.

Gary – general comment. Gary suggested that each committee submit an annual report to the Vestry. He further recommended that the agenda for the annual Vestry retreat be discussed and developed in advance, that it be held off-campus, and that no church business be addressed at the retreat.

ADJOURNMENT: At 4:37, Denise made a motion that the meeting be adjourned; Paul seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Sari Stoddard
Clerk of the Vestry