



# VESTRY ORIENTATION MEETING

**Tuesday, February 9, 2010**  
**Leffler House Living Room, 6:00 – 9:00 pm.**

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## **Vestry Members Present**

Phil Haas, Sr. Warden  
Randy Revelle  
Marge Anderson  
Janet McCully  
Katie Bishop  
Scott Smallwood  
Roger Valdez  
Stacy Andersen  
Dale Ramerman  
Nancy Jacobs

## **Vestry Members Absent**

Bob Kirkman  
Terry Brandon  
Bishop Greg Rickel  
Erik Anderson  
Dennis Andersen  
Patty Baker  
Joan Anthony, Bishop's Rep.

## **Officers Absent**

John Hoerster, Chancellor

## **Staff Members Present**

Rev. Rebecca McClain, Canon Missioner

## **Guests**

Keith Moore  
Diane Stevens

## **Officers Present**

Virginia Lenker, Clerk  
Jonathan Nicholas, Treasurer

## **Welcome**– *Keith Moore, Nominations and Leadership Committee*

Keith welcomed new and returning Vestry members, and asked everyone to introduce themselves around the table. He thanked Janet and Diane for preparing the dinner. Rebecca offered a prayer before dinner.

## **Vestry Orientation**

### **Calendar**

There are four parts to this year's Vestry orientation: dinner and presentation tonight; spring Vestry retreat on Feb 20 (form committees, set yearly goals); presentation by Diana Gale (community leadership expert) on March 16; presentation by diocesan chancellor Judy Andrews at April 27 Vestry meeting (discuss diocesan and national canons and constitution).

### **Fundamental Questions**

Keith polled the group on three fundamental questions, and provided answers from the 1979 prayer book's catechism: Who is the head of the church? *Jesus Christ*. Who are the ministers of the church? *Lay persons, bishops, priests and deacons; all the baptized*. What is the church? *The Church is described as the Body of which Jesus Christ is the Head and of which all baptized persons are members*. In the past, a common belief was that the clergy or bishops were the head of the church, and the ordained were "closer to God." Keith suggested that previous problems stemmed from that belief, which led to the priest or rector running the Vestry, with the expectation that the Vestry would "do what they are told." Some previous Saint Mark's deans were asked to provide a vision or strategic plan, which is different from our recent process.

### **3 Ways to look at Vestry**

**Legally:** Vestry is board of directors of a non-profit corporation, and has fiduciary responsibilities as representatives of the cathedral corporation. Keith explained that the Vestry has a "duty of care" to know what is going on and ask questions, and provide reasonable oversight; a "duty of loyalty" to the corporation as a whole, not to personal or special interests; and a "duty of obedience" to follow state and federal law.

**Church polity:** The Vestry balances lay leadership and clergy leadership, just as diocesan and national conventions have both lay and clergy sections. Within the Vestry, Rebecca appoints senior warden and chancellor, and Vestry elects junior wardens, treasurer and clerk.

Theologically: Recognizing that we are all ministers, the Vestry shares responsibilities and leadership and can't just sit back and wait for the staff to do it all. Keith described the recent vestry efforts and discussions around the budget as a good example of Mutual Ministry. Everyone had different skills and responsibilities, but all worked together to share the burden of difficult budget and staffing decisions. In contrast, Keith offered as a bad example the previous dean's hiring of a new administrator and simultaneously raising his own pay without consulting the Vestry or finance committee, followed by cutting some positions without consulting the Vestry. A definition of Mutual or Shared Ministry includes "mutual respect, accountability and direction without domination."

#### Church is different from other non profits or organizations

Janet suggested that opening meetings with prayer makes a difference, even in difficult times. Rebecca praised the Vestry's "mindfulness" or spiritual approach, even in the finance committee. More than simply following a business model, that group worked on sustainable stewardship as a spiritual practice. Jonathan explained that the finance committee was mindful of their responsibility to future generations. Keith reminded that the congregation is neither a client nor a shareholder, because all the baptized are essential members of the Body of Christ at St. Mark's. People feel very passionately about the church. He suggested that the Vestry's role includes listening to the congregation, maybe in a formal way of collecting comments before making decisions. In the Church, such discussion is neither voting nor lobbying, but rather a process of discerning the direction of the Spirit. Keith warned against becoming isolated and not wanting to share leadership, which has occurred in the past. Rather than making assumptions or leaping to conclusions, he encouraged asking people directly about their intentions.

#### Clergy training

Rebecca explained that clergy are poorly trained to be 21<sup>st</sup> century church leaders. In seminary, they are taught to integrate theology, history, and scripture, along with sessions in pastoral care and leading worship. Unfortunately, they are generally not trained in management or organizational systems. Rebecca had good mentors. She experienced most of the church's transformations in the last 40 years. She was dean of a cathedral, helped many troubled congregations, and worked in the national church.

#### Vestry manual

Blue notebooks and updates were distributed, including Bishop Rickel's *Ten Rules for Respect*, as well as Gerald Keucher's book "*Remember the Future: Financial Leadership and Asset Management for Congregations.*" Former Vestry members have volunteered to be buddies for incoming Vestry.

#### Vestry Retreat – Sat. Feb 20, Randy Revelle's vacation home in Gilberton WA

Phil and Liz will email an agenda and other info for the one-day retreat, starting with a ferry ride leaving Seattle at 7:35am. Committees will be based around the strategic plan and targets, and goals and objectives will be created for the coming year. Randy distributed maps and directions. Carpooling is encouraged.

#### Adjournment

Keith reminded to enjoy each other, care for each other, and have a little fun. The meeting adjourned at 9 pm.

**The next meeting is the Vestry retreat, Sat. Feb 20 at Randy Revelle's home in Gilberton, WA.**

Respectfully submitted,

Virginia Lenker  
Recording Secretary and Clerk

Liz Sloat  
Vestry Support