

Report from the Vestry

August 14, 2007

The Vestry met at its regular meeting on Tuesday, August 14. After celebrating the Eucharist together, Fr. Howard opened the meeting. Fr. Howard reported actions in five areas of ministry:

1. **Church Membership** – The Stairs will host a Welcoming Brunch on Sunday, November 4th. Invitations will be extended to new members, returning members and newly active members as well as vestry, staff and lay leaders.
2. **Stewardship** – Fr. Howard invited Bert Ackermann and Steve Catron to report on Stewardship. Bert and Steve have volunteered to chair the Stewardship committee. They have developed an ambitious plan to reach out to ALL the families of Ascension. Beginning in September, Fr. Howard will celebrate 32 in-home Eucharists hosted by various parishioners. Each host will invite 15 to 20 guest parishioners. The Eucharist will be followed by a dessert and coffee fellowship and discussion time. Persons wishing to volunteer as hosts should contact Bert or Steve.
3. **Pastoral Care** – A Stephen Ministry is being initiated at Ascension. Deacon Amy Morehous and Jane Phillips reported on a training session they attended in Pittsburgh. They, along with Fr. Howard and Peg Hess who are already trained, will begin to recruit and train Stephen Ministers from our parish and then to identify those in need.
4. **Children and Youth** – Ascension is challenged in these areas by the need to design and mount programs without full-time paid staff. Caroline Vogel is focusing on children and ran a great Vacation Bible School. Fr. Howard will lead a Youth Ministry Team in designing and implementing a weekly youth program and has hired Molly Slabbekorn to be a part-time youth leader.
5. **National Church Issues** – In anticipation of potential actions by some Primates of the Anglican Communion, Fr. Howard and Tom Ladd will offer on Sunday mornings beginning September 23 a special class about the Church in transition. We will all have the opportunity to focus on the substance of these issues, not the rhetoric or politics. The study will provide a safe place for learning, discerning, and open discussion that will better equip us for what the future may bring.

The Wardens and Vestry members reported on their ongoing work. Tom Ladd reported on work in the area of By Laws and wrapping up the building fund issues. Mary LeMense reported on the palpable presence of the Spirit at our Homecoming and on plans for a great Rally Day. *Buildings and Grounds*, Jim Phillips reported that a planting design for the Church grounds was completed by Doug and Pam Douglass. We thank them for their generous assistance and for the lovely flower pots and plantings in the front of the building. *Communications*, Lida Barrett, reported that her committee is looking at ways to enhance the parish web page and has asked each vestry member to report to her on what they like or dislike about the current layout. *Outreach*, Les Hargrove and Nancy Butler, reported on actions in the neighborhood and sought and received approval for a grant application for improvements to the Harley House. *In-Reach*, Babs Richardson, reported on the many activities of her committee and thanked Cindy Alexander for coordinating Parish Life activities. *Pastoral Care*, Anne Kaminsky, reported that Helping Hands is active and noted the Stephens Ministry report already given. *Worship and Music*, Robin Kell, reported on a new flow pattern for communion that should

move more quickly and keep families together at the rail more easily. *Stewardship*, Tom Hale and George Arrants, submitted a detailed written report on current stewardship plans and on future vision for stewardship. *Youth*, Danny Maddox, reported on the organization of a Youth Committee and plans for the fall.

Finance, Rick Deaderick and Vaiden Taylor (Treasurer), reported on the financial picture of the Parish. The summer had its expected lull in giving. Bob Wadley is doing all he can to manage the out flow of money, but we do have to pay our bills. We are blessed to have new lay and ordained staff, but they do increase our expenses. Two unexpected expenses arose: a new computer system was required for us to continue to function and we refinanced with a new bank at a very favorable rate but had closing costs to pay. The fall receipts will be critical to our ability to continue with the many wonderful programs we have at Ascension.

At the conclusion of the regular meeting, the Vestry met in executive session to evaluate the first six months of Fr. Howard's ministry as Priest-in-Charge, as is required by Canon.

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 PM. Please contact any Vestry member if you wish further information or to comment on any of these matters.

For the Wardens,
Mary LeMense,