

## **Report from the Vestry May 13, 2008**

The Vestry met for its May meeting on May 13, 2008. Vaiden Taylor, the treasurer, reported that expenses were approximately \$9,000 over budget for April. These expenses included payment for the one-time, pass-through youth pilgrimage, quarterly health insurance, and pension payments. Income fell behind by approximately \$26,000. With Easter falling in March this year, some income expected in April was received in March. When taken together, March and April income and expense differences from the budget are not considered significant. The Finance Committee reported on their efforts to stay on top of trends during these tougher economic times. Some adjustments to the budget may be recommended in June. However, the summer months traditionally bring lower income with recovery in the latter part of the year. Planning for next year's stewardship campaign is already underway.

Several buildings and grounds recommendations were presented, discussed and approved by the Vestry. Up to \$100,000 was authorized for repair and repaving of the parking lot, repairing and sealing sidewalks to address safety related concerns, and correction of heating and ventilation system issues. The cost for heating and ventilation system modifications will be recovered through savings in energy costs for the future. With rising oil (asphalt) prices, any further delay in repaving the parking lot would significantly increase costs. Another reason to proceed was that the quote for the repaving was substantially less than our knowledgeable consultants expected. The work is expected to begin the third week in June.

The Priest-in-Charge reported significant progress has been made toward fulfilling a long-held goal of the Vestry to hire a second full-time priest. Father Howard presented an analysis of clergy costs at Ascension for 2008 and 2009 and, based on a number of assumptions, projected the cost impact of acquiring another full time clergy. The Vestry discussed this matter at length, focusing on the fact that all other clergy at Ascension are only part-time, and on important programs that need attention beyond what can be provided with only one full-time priest. Father Howard pointed out that under the "Priest-in-Charge Model", a second priest would involve a two-year commitment.

The Rev. Lauren Browder Kuratko will be visiting Church of the Ascension May 15-18 and is a prospective candidate for the position of a second full-time priest. Father Howard's information provided the Vestry with significant clarification on this issue. The Vestry continues to support this objective and feels we have the financial resources to accomplish it. It was agreed that appropriate information should be communicated through bulletin boards, Parish Paper, efforts of the Parish Self-Study group, and other means to answer questions from parishioners and promote understanding within the parish.

The Vestry unanimously approved a proposal by Father Howard that a letter of appreciation be sent to Rick Turner regarding his very generous commitment of time and substantial personal funds in making necessary repairs to the belltower over the past few months.

The Vestry heard a proposal from the East Tennessee Icon Guild to provide Stations of the Cross icons to be displayed during Lent at the Church of the Ascension. Following discussion with Bob Parrott (church architect), the Worship and Music Commission recommended that this gift be accepted, subject to continuing consultation with the Building and Grounds Commission and the Vestry on matters of style, design, and location within the church. The Vestry voted unanimously to accept.

Father Howard reported that the Contemporary Sunday Services will begin on Memorial Day weekend at 9:15 AM.

Submitted by Larry Jones  
Clerk of the Vestry