

REPORT FROM THE VESTRY

September 8, 2009

What an outstanding Rally Day!!! From the thought-provoking production during the 10:30 service to the wonderful fellowship time during lunch, the events of the day could not have been better planned or executed. Our heartfelt thanks to Angela Smithey and Megan Vesser who obviously worked extremely hard pulling things together. I am confident they had many helpers, the identity of whom I am simply unaware.

The vestry held its regular September meeting on September 8 in the parish hall rather than in Room 101 due to the presence of Family Promise families.

Vaiden Taylor reported that August operating income exceeded the budget expectation by \$18,409. This included an unexpected gift of \$10,225. For the year to date, our total operating income exceeds the budget by \$32,345. Total operating expenses were over budget by \$8,706 for August, or \$19,921 for the year to date. The August expenses reflect the fact that the FISH program took most of its budget during August. At this point in the year we expected an overall shortfall of \$82,000, compared to an actual shortfall of \$57,000, i.e., we are \$25,000 ahead of our year-to-date budget. John Pannell reported that borrowing has been held to \$50,000 for the past four months due to the strength of revenue collection. Revenues have held up well through the summer. Bert Ackermann observed that sustaining the current cushion of about \$44,000 into next year would allow us to give well-deserved raises to the staff, increase our foundation funds, and fund the Bishop's request more fully. In his report, Father Howard reminded everyone that the Rev. Corky Carlisle will be the speaker at the Stewardship Celebration Dinner on September 25 and will also preach the following Sunday, September 27. Father Howard also briefly discussed the bishop's proposal that had resulted in a reduction in the staff of the church headquarters in the New York, a move designed to pass savings to the parishes. This year Ascension contributed 12% of its revenues to the diocese, compared to the request for 17%. It was noted that we have been trying to increase the amount given to the diocese by 1% each year but were not able to do so in 2009. The formula for the diocesan asking will be an overall smaller percentage, but there will be a higher expectation of its being met.

Junior Warden Julie Hembree reminded everyone that volunteers are needed for the diocesan convention and for Rally Day at Ascension on September 13.

Father Howard noted that this year's Rally Day activities have been expertly organized by two new parishioners, Angela Smithey and Megan Vesser. These ladies have gotten very excited about this event and worked tirelessly to sign up over 200 people.

Members of the vestry were encouraged to acknowledge their efforts. Bob Wadley presented a status of building and grounds improvements discussed at the August meeting. Wrought iron handrails are being replaced at a cost of \$750. A baby change station has been installed in the women's restroom at a cost of \$250. The bench in the women's restroom was donated by Susan Pannell. The carpet in the nursery and in Bob's office was replaced for \$4,100. All of these came in at less than budgeted. Signage is being replaced for the expected cost, with changes in the color scheme to make them more consistent with church buildings. It was reported that Rick Deaderick has been monitoring our cooling cost. Water usage and electrical cost are down because the new cooling tower is more efficient. A study of the heating, ventilating and cooling (HVAC) system has been completed.

Tom Hale led the vestry in an extensive discussion aimed at building consensus around fundamental concepts that would lead to the development of a Vestry Stewardship Statement as suggested by the Rev. Corky Carlisle at a previous vestry meeting. Tom provided the group with a list of questions intended to solicit answers that would define what the word stewardship means to us. A lively discussion ensued. The discussion was concluded by a reminder that our goal is to draft a Stewardship Statement that will cause a parish as diverse as Ascension to really think about their personal approach to how they use the many blessings God has given them. This effort will be taken up again at the October meeting.

Robin Kell briefly discussed several sets of bylaws revisions, noting that even simple changes and editorial corrections will need approval by the bishop and an affirmative vote by the parishioners. The first set of changes were distributed (labeled A) and includes basic updates. The next set (labeled B) includes the A changes and some additional changes that seem straightforward and noncontroversial. A complete set of changes for consideration (labeled D) was also provided to the vestry members. Bert Ackermann made a motion that the vestry approve the changes in sets A and B, include (at Scott Poland's suggestion) a reference to the latest edition of Roberts Rules of Order, and defer discussion of the other, less straightforward changes until the October meeting. Paul Banick seconded the motion which was approved.

Bob Wadley reported that a separate bank account needs to be established for accumulating contributions to the Bolivia Mission Fund. A motion made that this bank account be established as proposed was approved unanimously. Thank you to all for keeping up with pledges during the summer months. Let's not slack off now, but finish the year strong.

Financial Report listed on following page

Financial report through August 2009

	Aug. Budget	Aug. Actual	YTD Budget	YTD Actual
Pledge, plate, & unpledged contributions:	\$74,487	79,034	677,865	691,287\All
other income:	2,693	24,511	140,782	200,018
Total income:	77,180	103,545	818,647	891,305
Total expenditures:	92,452	105,737	900,616	948,335
Net Surplus (loss):	(15,272)	(2,192)	(81,969)	(57,030)