

St. Alban's Episcopal Church
Minutes of Vestry Meeting (AS APPROVED)
Wednesday, February 7, 2018 – 7:30 pm – Nourse Hall

Vestry Officers Present: The Rev'd Geoffrey Hoare (Priest-in-Charge), Laura Ingersoll (Senior Warden), Diane Adams (Junior Warden).

Vestry Members Present: Adrienne Allison, Michele Bond, Walker Carter, Leo Coco, Julie Clements Smith, Glenn Davis, Emily DiBari, Lucy Fraser, Tom Gustafson, Tomás Montgomery, Jane Shubert; Woodfen McLean (Youth Representative).

Staff: The Rev'ds Jim Quigley, Emily Griffin, and Debbie Kirk; Doug Dykstra (Director of Finance).

Others Present: The Right Rev'd Mariann Edgar Budde; Barbara Manard (Diocesan Delegate); Ted Swett (Diocesan Delegate); Robin Rudd (WSA Representative);

Call-to-Order: The Priest-in-Charge called this Special Meeting of the Vestry to order at approximately 7:00 p.m. After an opening prayer, the Senior Warden welcomed newly elected members of the Vestry. The Senior Warden noted that previous Vestry has approved by email vote the minutes of its last meeting, held on January 17, 2018. [VESTRY ACTION 2018-01.06]

Election of Officers: Upon the recommendations of the Executive Committee, the Vestry unanimously elected the following officers to serve the 2018 term: Hollis McLoughlin (Treasurer), Trevor W. ("Ted") Swett III (Secretary), and Mary E. Koster (Chancellor) [VESTRY ACTION 2018-02.01].

Appointment of Youth Representatives: The Vestry unanimously accepted the recommendations of the Executive Committee to reappoint Corinna Gilmore and Woodfen McLean as Youth Representatives. [Vestry Action 2018-02.02]

Process for Calling Rector: Senior Warden Laura Ingersoll noted that the principal business of the Special Meeting was to discuss what process the Vestry should follow in determining whether to call the Priest-in-Charge, Geoffrey Hoare, as the next Rector of the parish, to receive the Bishop's guidance on that process, and to discuss the prospect of such a call with Hoare.

Ingersoll noted that the congregation did not seem to think an extensive search process would serve the best interests of the parish, in light of past experience. She recalled that, in connection with Hoare's appointment as Priest-in-Charge effective March 1, 2017, the Bishop advised that there would be no set process for eventually calling a Rector but that the congregation should use the interim period to "rest in" its collective identity by way of gaining clarity on what sort of parish we wish to be.

Bishop Budde commented that a parish's transition from a Priest-in-Charge arrangement to the calling of a Rector generally produces the best outcomes when the congregation and the Priest-

in-Charge arrive at the same conclusion as to whether or not their relationship makes it desirable that the Priest-in-Charge be called as Rector. The Bishop confirmed that the Episcopal Church no longer has rigid requirements governing the process of calling a Rector and noted that the Church has come to recognize that lengthy and elaborate search processes sometimes prove detrimental to the progress of a parish because they run very long. She stated that the important thing is for the Vestry to be confident that it is reading the congregation accurately and confident of the Vestry's own sense as to whether or not the incumbent Priest-in-Charge would be well suited to lead the parish as Rector in the context of its present situation, needs, and goals.

The Bishop noted that the Vestry is the decisionmaker in the calling of a Rector, but that the involvement of the congregation is key. There is no set amount of time that a Priest-in-Charge should serve before the Vestry calls the question of his or her being made Rector. The important procedural question, she stressed, was how much time the Vestry and the Priest-in-Charge feel they need in order to be clear in their own minds.

Hoare commented that it is critical that the process be such that the congregation feels respected, which requires transparency and communication.

Senior Warden Ingersoll noted that in her memorandum to the Vestry dated February 4, 2018, which was distributed to the Vestry in advance (and is attached to these Minutes as Attachment A), she offered reasons for believing both that Vestry should address the question of calling Hoare without delay and that the parish would be well-served by his becoming Rector. Ingersoll pointed out that the Letter of Agreement provides that after the Priest-in-Charge has served in that role for 18 months, the Vestry, the Priest-in-Charge, and the Bishop should meet to consider whether it would serve the best interests of the parish and of the Priest-in-Charge for the latter to be called as Rector. This agreement did not, however, foreclose the parties from dealing with that question sooner. Ingersoll commented that the 11 months during which Hoare has served the parish have been a very active period, that he and the congregation have had a good opportunity to get to know one another, and that strong support exists among parishioners for calling Hoare as Rector.

Several Vestry members spoke of the need for transparency in the Vestry's discernment process, and the importance of taking the right amount of time for the decision. There was also strong agreement that parishioners should be invited to let the Vestry know of their views, and to be particularly attentive to those who might be reluctant to express their view in public.

Executive Session: The Senior Warden proposed that the full Vestry go into Executive Session to discuss the question of calling a Rector and that the discussion proceed in three parts: first, in dialogue with the Priest-in-Charge and the Bishop together; then with the Bishop after excusing Hoare from the meeting; and then privately among the members of the Vestry themselves. Upon motion made and seconded, the Vestry voted unanimously to go into executive session.

[VESTRY ACTION 02-07.03]

Parish Communication: After emerging from Executive Session, the Vestry expressed a consensus (without formal resolution) that (1) the Vestry should vote at its regularly scheduled meeting on March 21, 2018, on whether to call Hoare as Rector; (2) the Vestry at present is strongly inclined to issue that call to him; and (3) parishioners will be informed soon of the Vestry's intentions so that those who wish to do so can have ample time to discuss these matters with members of the Vestry.

Closing Prayer and Adjournment: The business of the Special Meeting having been concluded, Junior Warden Diane Adams led a closing prayer and the meeting adjourned at approximately 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Trevor W. Swett III
Secretary

February 4, 2018

TO: The Vestry

FROM: Laura Ingersoll, Senior Warden

RE: Moving forward with our discernment of a potential call to Geoffrey to serve as our Rector

As I announced to the parish at last week's Annual Meeting, a first task of this new Vestry is to discern whether Geoffrey should become our Rector. It's the Vestry's duty, acting on behalf of the parish, to make the decision whether to extend the call to Geoffrey. **I am writing to lay groundwork for our discussion, with Geoffrey and Bishop Mariann as well as among ourselves, at Wednesday's specially-called Vestry meeting.**

Geoffrey began serving as our Priest-in-Charge on March 1, 2017, under a three-year letter of agreement providing that:

"After 18 months the Vestry, the Priest-in-Charge and the Bishop shall meet and determine whether it is in the mutual interest of the congregation and the Priest-in-Charge to call the Priest-in-Charge as Rector. If the Vestry, the Priest-in-Charge and the Bishop agree that the Priest-in-Charge is to be called to serve as Rector, they will agree on a process to implement this transition. If it is the decision of the Vestry not to call the Priest-in-Charge as Rector, the Priest-in-Charge will be given the opportunity to serve the remaining 18 months of this agreement as the Interim Rector, not eligible to be called as Rector."

Geoffrey has been with us for almost a year. It has been, in effect, a year-long job interview. It's my belief – based on my conversations with you and with scores of other parishioners and the staff, and based on the congregation's consistent approval for Geoffrey's evolving ministry among us (most recently, the explosive sustained standing ovation for him at the Annual Meeting!) – that we are prepared to make the determination *now*. For example:

The congregation has had ample opportunity to get to know Geoffrey personally. He's been highly visible at parish events, and has actively engaged with individual parishioners, making himself available as pastor, counselor, teacher, and interlocutor on matters great and small. He and his wonderful family have been generous in spirit and service to our community.

We've learned a lot about Geoffrey's faith and his ability to lead us in developing our own faith. Right after joining us, he led five Lenten Forum sessions on Worship, giving us insight into his theology and style of ministry. In more than two dozen finely-preached sermons, he has shown us how he connects Scripture and our faith traditions to the issues and challenges in our lives today. In his current Enquirers' Class, he's leading about 30 people in exploring the foundations of our faith. In more private ways, he has served as pastor to many among us.

We've witnessed Geoffrey's skill in leading worship, streamlining and energizing our Sunday services. We know he highly values beautiful liturgy, and especially liturgical music, and has deep appreciation for our worship traditions.

We've seen Geoffrey discern our programmatic priorities for the parish, and creatively marshal resources to accomplish them. As soon as he came on board, he recognized that three priority needs were shoring up our youth program, developing a children's music program, and supporting the San Albano community. He's already taken us well along those roads.

Geoffrey's personnel and management skills have been manifest, to the Vestry, Executive Committee, Personnel Committee, and staff. He has optimized the allocation of staff time and energy, and has regularized staff accountability and performance reviews. His executive abilities are apparent in his leadership of our Vestry meetings.

Geoffrey's three-decades' experience in leading parishes is especially evident in his financial acumen and ability to balance the strategic with the tactical. While he inherited a rock-solid financial system, he has worked well with our Treasurer and Director of Finance to improve its transparency and nimbleness. The optimism and confidence he instills in the community in this regard was evident in the very strong response to our recent annual pledge drive.



All that being said, **THERE IS NO PURPLE SQUIRREL**. Geoffrey isn't perfect – but neither is any of us, and nor is our community. What we need to discern is whether he and we are a right match at this time. And it's important for our purpose now that Geoffrey and we know each other pretty well by this time, and our decision about a call to him at this time would be an informed one.

So, I propose that we consider taking the following steps:

1. On Wednesday, February 7, we'll discuss this project with Bishop Mariann and Geoffrey, and among ourselves (with and/or without either/both of them), and agree on the steps forward. We also have the opportunity to reflect and discuss, together, at the upcoming Vestry retreat.
2. Because it's of paramount importance that this process be transparent to the congregation, by means of the Senior Warden's "Vestry Meeting Highlights" I'll publish to the parish our agreement about the steps forward, letting the parish know the Vestry is preparing to make its decision and inviting parishioners to give us any comments.
3. In the next two weeks, Diane Adams, as Junior Warden, and Tom Gustafson, as Chair of the Standing Personnel Committee, will
 - a. meet with each of the 9 staff members – clergy, lay, and volunteer – to elicit comments on the matter;
 - b. ascertain that all staff job-descriptions are up-to-date, and performance reviews have been appropriately conducted; and
 - c. report back to be Vestry.
4. I'll work with Geoffrey to finalize a proposed letter-of-agreement for his Rectorship.
5. The Vestry will have opportunity for discussion during our upcoming retreat on February 16-17, and will take up the issue, and vote, at the regularly Vestry meeting on February 28.

Because Bishop Mariann will be on Sabbatical from mid-March to mid-June, we wouldn't be able to have Geoffrey installed as Rector – if that's our decision – until June. I've tentatively "booked" the afternoon of Saturday, June 23 – St. Alban's Day weekend! – for that celebration, subject to the Vestry's final decision.

Please prayerfully consider all this, and let me know if I can answer any questions before we meet on Wednesday.