

VESTRY UPDATE SUMMER 2008

New Pastoral Care Associate

Over the past few months, many dedicated Grace volunteers have come forward to visit our parishioners who are unable to attend church. We are very appreciative of their efforts during this time of transition. Father Jim Croom has accepted our offer to serve as the parish's new part-time assisting priest with responsibility for parishioner care, in a ministry to be focused on our senior population — with particular attention to homebound and shut-in parishioners. He will begin on September 1. We recognize that filling this position is an essential boost to the Pastoral Care capacity of our church, and we are thrilled to have Father Croom on board for the start of the Fall season.

Youth Ministry

At our June meeting, the Vestry approved the hiring of a consultant to assist in the further development of youth ministry at Grace. This consultant, Steve Argue, is working with the Christian Formation staff and youth ministry lay leaders to help us establish a profile for a full-time youth ministry staff position. He will also be advising us about how we can build on our already-strong foundation of this vital ministry within our parish. Steve's final recommendations will be presented at our September Vestry meeting.

Deacon

Bishop Gepert and the diocesan staff are working with us on the placement of a Deacon at Grace Church; the name of one promising individual has already been proposed as a possible candidate. There are currently more open positions for Deacons within the Diocese than there are Deacons available to serve, so the process of assigning someone to Grace Church will necessarily involve careful discernment by everyone involved. While the final decision is in the Bishop's hands, Fr. Holmgren and the Vestry are working with the Diocese to expedite this key appointment — hopefully within a few months. Our new Deacon will assist in maintaining the many active Outreach ministries sponsored by the parish.

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Fellowship Team

Under the leadership of Vestry member, Lynne Perrin, the Fellowship Steering Committee is re-establishing with representatives from all our guilds, the Men of Grace, the Funeral Reception Committee, and interested volunteers from the congregation. This team will help us better coordinate and communicate our many fellowship events and activities throughout the church year. Volunteers are invited to contact Lynne Perrin as soon as possible.

2008 Vestry Goals

The Vestry continues to address the six goals we set at our retreat this winter. One goal, developing a Rector Position Description, is receiving special focus at this time. Our objective is to complete this initiative by early September. In particular, we are examining the role of the rector in a larger church like Grace, as well as the special needs of our parish.

Strategic Planning Team

A Strategic Planning Team was appointed by the Vestry last Spring. It consists of Polly Hewitt, Chairperson; Tom Curran, Vestry Representative; Alice Porter, Senior Warden; Stephen Holmgren, Rector; Dan Baker, Vestry member; and Kevin Cumings, member-at-large. This group has been meeting regularly since its formation and is presently focusing on two projects: a comprehensive communications strategy for this period of transition, and the development of the Rector Position Description discussed above. Once the description has been developed, the Strategic Planning team and Vestry will share it with the parish, as part of a larger conversation on pastoral– and program-sized church dynamics and their impact on our community.