

SPECIAL JOINT MEETING OF THE VESTRIES OF  
ST. MICHAEL & GRACE AND ST. MARTIN'S  
January 4, 2007

Meeting was called to order at 7:10 by The Rev'd Jennifer Pedrick  
Opening prayer was offered by The Rev'd Scott Gunn.

In attendance: The Rev'd Jennifer Pedrick, The Rev'd Scott Gunn, Bob Bergstrand, Don Leggat, Bill Dench, Steve McGrath, Carolyn McDonough, Mike Seger, Linda LeBreux, Bonnie Wright, Richard Messier, Carol Marsland, Virginia Rocha, Michelle Callahan, Janice Fagan, and Attorney Jim Hahn.

Absent: The Rev'd Richard Shippee, Nancy Leggat, Marilyn Fuller, Susan Hawryluk

Attorney Margaret-Mary Hovarth was inadvertently not extended an invitation to attend. Linda and Jennifer apologized for this oversight.

**Welcome:** Each person introduced themselves and what their role has been either with their church and/or with the merger process.

**Pastoral Check-in:** Jennifer invited anyone to share how they are doing or what it is like for them at this point. She explained that this is something that the Merger Committee has done regularly.

Carol: Michelle and I stopped by to pick up items to bring over to SM&G from St. Martin's tonight and found it dark. It was hard knowing there will never be another Sunday service.

Richard: The last few services have been hard and tears were shed. Everybody realized it had to be done but it was hard on people. We are looking forward to new friends here.

Jennifer: We had our parish meeting to vote on accepting the agreement of merger before Christmas and then we have bracketed the merger so that we could tend to the celebration of Christmas. Now it feels like there is much to do.

Don: There still seems to be many loose ends to be tied up like reviewing property lists. I keep getting variations about what property is coming and what is staying. Larry Fogarty has been involved. The cross was measured but there has been nothing about that since. I understand that the Stations of the Cross are not coming.

Response:

Jennifer: The property committee needs to regroup and then those items will become clear. Our task tonight is not to figure out the property.

Linda: It has been felt that property has not been the priority at this point in time as there are so many other issues that need to be addressed.

Carolyn: I am feeling disappointed about the response of some of our members in our discussions about a name change.

Scott: This time is a chance to grow as most hard times in life. This is an opportunity that many communities don't get. I have been impressed with the energy. The body of Christ here in this place will be much stronger in the end. The hope is that grief will end in resurrection. Most people at SM & G are excited but some are also grieving. There is some challenge, but this is a great place to be.

**Discussion:** What is the church?

Scott began the discussion stating that it is easy for us in the church leadership to get side tracked with the stuff and forget why we are here. After a passage from the Book of Acts about the day after Pentecost was read he reflected that what is striking is that after Pentecost with all the amazing things that were seen and heard, they didn't just say "WOW" but heard a message and 3000 were baptized. They then broke bread and shared what they had. They were generous after this and kind to one another. They added to those who were saved. They were made whole, transformed. This is a reminder that breaking bread and sharing of prayers can transform us. Mission is transforming. All the other stuff is important but the mission is the focus.

What are some of the things that keep us from transformation?

Responses: Fear, fear of change, fear of the unknown, fear of cranky people, pride, realizing you could be wrong, lack of gratitude, greed, power.

What practices can we engage in to remind us of transformation?

Responses: Communicate, listen, offer a product that people will respond to, give of ourselves and our time, spend time with God's word, be people of blessing and healing even or especially in those difficult places, believe in what is transforming you and not treat the Church as a social club, look for God in all of this, practice ridiculous generosity, remember that Christ is the head of the Church, focus on the worship and not the tasks that may support the work of the Church.

### **Review of Merger Agreement**

A copy as reviewed at the last Vestry meeting of the Agreement and Plan for joining St. Martin's and St. Michael & Grace was passed out.

Questions were entertained about the document. There being none, Attorney Jim Hahn explained that some issues need revision including:

1. St. Martin's fund
2. Severance package for Ruth, the parish administrator who has been with St. Martin's for 19 years.
3. Who signs the document?

The agreement and plan can be signed by any officers of the Church.

Regarding Ruth: St. Martin's requested a severance of 6 months of salary, which would be approximately \$6000 to be paid upon the sale of the St. Martin's property. St. Michael & Grace had voted to offer Ruth employment for 6 months instead of a severance package.

After some discussion the following recommendation was agreed upon unanimously:

**RESOLVED:**

**St. Martin's will employ Ruth through 1/31. Continued employment is to be determined by Jennifer. A severance package as requested in the amount equal to 6 months wages will be paid for upon termination.**

**A sub-committee as formed at the December Vestry meeting will work out the details and communicate clearly to Ruth what is happening.**

Regarding the St. Martin Endowment: Jim Hahn read the proposal that stated "Upon such time as the distribution to SM&G of its proportionate share of the net assets of St. Martin's, 25% of these distributed assets shall be held in a separate fund to be named 'St. Martin's Endowment Fund' to be invested and the income and principle there from used for charitable and/or scholarship purposes. This fund shall be managed by a panel that, for no less than 5 years from the time of its funding, shall be made up, at least in part, of former members of St. Martin's who have become members of SM & G.

After some discussion and further clarification of the wishes of St. Martin's the following was adopted with 1 vote in opposition from Carolyn McDonough

**RESOLVED:**

Upon distribution to SM&G of its proportionate share of the assets of St. Martin's Church, 25% of the net assets will be used to fund St. Martin's Endowment Fund. The income and principal of the fund, in an amount determine by the vestry and Endowment Committee, will be used primarily for charitable and/or scholarship purposes unless an emergency occurs, in which case, the vestry may elect to use the fund to sustain the church. This fund will be managed by the Endowment Committee which will be include at least two former St. Martin's members for a period of at least five years as openings exist on the Committee

Jim Hahn then explained that the Diocesan Standing Committee has to approve transfers of property. The Agreement and Plan with the amendments agreed upon above will be presented for approval to the Standing Committee on January 9. Other supporting documents are with Attorney Margaret-Mary Hovarth including appraisals and a copy of treasurer's report.

A question was asked about the rental of the church space to St. Gabriel's Church. Richard reported that they wanted many things that could not be provided immediately such as changing the sign in front. Even though they were given approval to rent the space on a weekly basis, they decided to use another space for the month of January. They continue to investigate the possible purchase of the property.

5 minute break

## **The Name of the Church**

Jennifer stated that the issue of what we will call ourselves after the merger has offered both challenge and opportunity.

She asked:

What is important about the name?

Responses included:

The name is unique and identifies who you are.

Something that inspires or something to strive for.

Something that you stand for

A name you are comfortable with

Reflect hopes and what it will mean and be for people

People are more important than the name

It should relate to the Church with a big C

A name that inspires us to follow Christ

Reflect our mission and something thought provoking

A name that draws non-attendees in.

Jennifer shared that some members feel it is a link to the past

To inspire us to move forward

Calls and draws you in.

Scott shared the process undertaken thus far. It was identified as a challenging issue from the beginning. A name group formed and decided to have 2 coffee and conversations. The first was to listen to general thought and the second more specific names were entertained. A survey with a list of names that allowed write ins was circulated at both churches. The name group then did research and recommended names in a report that was given to the Merger team. The opinion survey revealed no consensus but indicated many strong feelings about the name. We are still talking about this because there are strong feelings and we want to make sure that we are doing this the right way. We need to know if this group can reach consensus on how to proceed.

Jennifer shared that although she has had thoughts and opinions throughout the process, her primary role and strategy has been to be a listener. At this point she now needs to be a participant and feels a strong shepherding role. We have experienced spiritual consensus from the beginning of the conversation with the merger team after listening. At the first name meeting at St. Martin's, there were a broad range of opinions with approximately 50 people from both churches present. There was a consensus reached at that meeting. It became more apparent after, that a name change may be a reality and the reaction began at SM&G. We continued to listen. We listened at a second meeting and we have listened to individuals. The name group prayerfully and carefully proposed 2 names to the Merger team. That discussion brought joy and peace and gladness to those who experienced it. There has been some challenging behavior by some in this process as well.

The Merger team came to consensus last night that St. Michael in any form should not be an option for the vote and recommended submitting the names, Church of the Epiphany and St. Jonathan Episcopal Church as the 2 options for a vote.

Jennifer then requested some time of silence before each of us shared our opinions. The goal was to discern what God is calling us to do and what do we call ourselves.

Linda: Participating in the process has brought enrichment and great joy whenever a name change was discussed.

Don: I like the suggestion of new name. The name should cause recognition and it will gain recognition by what we do in the broader community.

Bill: We want to move forward in Christ. We have been brought together and led to this point. This is a new beginning, a rebirth. When you are born you get a new name and we need a new name.

Steve: I feel uncommitted: This is 1 week before the vote and we have not effectively communicated introducing the names. If we introduce a motion for a vote, we have to accept motions from the floor. I would consider postponing the vote to allow for more discussion on the names.

Bob: In prayer, I have been asking about how the name related to me. People are strongly expressing their opinion about the name. In a search of the Internet, I found an article about congregational growth. It states that conflict correlates with non-growth. I am in favor of postponing a vote.

Richard: With the name comes sacrifice. We have all had to sacrifice and everyone needs to sacrifice to meld and grow.

Scott: I have heard very strong opinions that we need to honor history and others to move ahead. I would like to suggest the practice of ridiculous generosity. Giving up the current name would be inspiring. It is a Godly Generosity. As we give up other things, we grow. It is a good spiritual exercise. Not giving up things will stunt our growth.

Virginia: A name change would be strongly welcoming. I am opposed to postponing.

Mike: I would be sad to see the loss of St. Michael but I understand the need for a name change. I get my ear chewed regularly and I try to answer questions. When I was asked about the name I said I didn't know the name because at the time I didn't. The comment was, "Oh yea, it's a secret."

Jennifer shared an email from Susan Hawryluk who could not be present. Susan was concerned that not including St. Michael as an option would be alienating.

Carol: I have been trying to listen to what God is leading us to do. I think about the Biblical heroes who walked by faith. We are going where none of us 1 year ago knew where we were going. Biblical people who stepped out in faith were given a new name. With a new name was a new purpose and new faith. There is a new group which is in new relationships in Christ. It is appropriate to begin with a new name.

Carolyn: I have thought at different points that it was not a bad idea to add St. Michael to the choices. There are so many difficult things. How do we make it happen? Should we stay with the proposal of the 2 names? It seems that with the current leadership and the direction we are going we are growing. The name St. Michael represents our past. I think we have to look toward what is bearing fruit. By their fruits you will know them. Other difficult things, like the whole pledge issue, have helped us to grow in the past and when difficult decisions were postponed it became more chaotic.

Bonnie: We should have a new name. Otherwise St. Martin's will feel they are being controlled by SM&G.

Janice: Will the SM&G people feel that the name had to change because of St. Martin's people? Will this cause them to resent St. Martin's people?

Jennifer: The pressure to change the name does not come from St. Martin's. It has emerged in a much more organic way. I am aware that for former Grace people, going back to St. Michael and All Angels would make them feel that they have lost what they have brought to this community. Why are people tied to St. Michael? Why do people get excited about changing the name? SM&G is tied to a lot of wonderful memories of what this parish has meant to people. People feel that their contributions to the past may be overlooked. In whatever name is chosen these memories are important.

The criteria for making the decision are also very important. Many of the reasons for staying with some version of St. Michael's are that it is about what other generations have contributed, and about people associated with the past. Many of the fond memories have to do with the social life of this parish. When people have proposed a new name these criteria are about the spiritual life of the parish, its present and future. There is excitement about mission and the identity of church. What Carol said reminds us that the head of our church is not us but God. In the big picture, spiritually there will be something gained by giving up. Our greatest growth has occurred not when we avoided conflict or backed away from making a hard decision. Our greatest growth as leaders and in our parish occurred when we proceeded to lead through the conflict. We have learned that we will love those who are behaving badly, "I care for you but we /I believe this is the right way to proceed." We have learned to trust more but there has been incredible sabotage. We, as parents, want this family to thrive but there are criteria.

There was further discussion regarding procedures and the best way to present the vote to the parish. There were questions about whether consensus was reached, whether to postpone any decision as it was getting very late.

Don Leggat, Mike Seger, and Bonnie Wright had to leave.

Jennifer then asked how many people would support the name Church of the Epiphany and how many would support the name St. Jonathan Episcopal Church. Six people voted for Church of the Epiphany and 5 for St. Jonathan. When asked how many people who voted for Epiphany could support St. Jonathan 4 of the 6 voted yes. Of those that voted for St. Jonathan's, all 5 could support the name Epiphany.

Linda made the motion, Richard seconded and all approved the following:

**RESOLVED:**

**The name Church of the Epiphany is recommended for presentation to the members for a vote as the new name for our community on January 14 at the special parish meeting.**

It was decided to have another Special Vestry Meeting on January 10 at 6PM to make sure everyone was united and to plan for the Parish meeting

The meeting was adjourned with a prayer by Jennifer.