

All "attachments" referred to in the minutes follow the last page of the minutes.

MINUTES OF THE VESTRY
Otey Memorial Parish Church
May 4, 2013, 9:30 AM
Brooks Hall

Present: Joe Ballard, Rector; Ann Millar, Sr. Warden; Amy Burns, Jr. Warden; Roy Millar, Treasurer; Steve Blount; Alex Bruce; Karen Keele; Carol Sampson; Theresa Shackelford; Beth Wiley, Clerk

Absent: Pratt Paterson; Dave Spaulding

Guest: Pamela Snare, Canon to the Ordinary

The meeting began at 9:30 AM with an introduction and devotions led by Canon Snare. Next, Ann read a statement she had written to the Vestry outlining contact she had recently made with the Bishop and actions she and Amy have taken together since. (Statement attached.) Canon Snare offered an explanation of the process to date and read a letter to the Vestry from Bishop Bauerschmidt proclaiming his support of the Wardens, this process, Joe, and Otey Parish. Joe offered his appreciation for the actions taken by all and outlined his recent and planned cooperation throughout the full process. Vestry members asked questions and were answered by Canon Snare, Ann, and Joe. Joe asked Vestry members to keep this process confidential at least until a diagnosis is made and a plan of action is determined. Members expressed their support and thanked Canon Snare for her assistance.

A tour of the basement of the Parish House followed as the upper floor was sealed by RVC, probably due to heavy weekend rains.

A few weeks ago I contacted the Bishop's office. I did this out of concern for Joe and for our parish. Some aspects of Joe's behavior have troubled me for some time. People I trusted to love Joe and the parish as I do had come to me with their own concerns. I know that some of you have also witnessed behavior that was disturbing and seemed out of character for Joe.

This was by no means a sudden decision on my part, nor in response to a few incidents. The three of you who are new to the vestry this year may not know that last summer there were strong feelings among a group of leaders in this parish that Joe needed some help. They were ready to go to the bishop's office with their concerns, but I asked them to let the vestry try to work with Joe first. The junior wardens and I tried to address these problems in a discussion with Joe.

We agreed on some managerial solutions. One of the results of our meeting was the replacement of the parish secretary with a parish administrator who could take some of the administrative burden off of Joe. Hiring Frieda has made a tremendous difference in the life of the parish and, I think Joe would agree, in his life, as well.

However, wonderful as Frieda is, she cannot fix everything and there were continuing concerns. I have no experience in addressing the behaviors that others and I observed in Joe. This is why I finally sought the assistance of the Bishop and Canon Snare. As one wise member of our parish told me, "Ann, the Bishop is Joe's priest. He will want to help him just as Joe would want to help you."

The Bishop and Canon Snare have been tremendously helpful and supportive. They hired a professional to look into ways to help Joe. This past Tuesday afternoon the Bishop and this professional facilitator came here for a meeting with Joe, Amy and me. This professional is helping us to address the problems in a positive way and to seek solutions.

I was greatly relieved when Joe shared with us that he was aware that he was having some problems. He had begun to look for ways to address them himself.

The wonderful thing about getting the Bishop and Canon Snare involved is that they did the research and hired this professional to assist Joe in assessing the problems. We could not have done this on our own.

Joe is taking an active part in this process. He has already had one professional assessment and there are plans for at least one more assessment. These assessments will help Joe and us know what care he needs so that we can try to get him appropriate care.

I don't think there is anyone in this room who doubts that I care deeply for Joe. I also care deeply for this parish. I don't think any of you doubt that either. We are trying to help Joe get the care he needs for the good of the parish and for himself.

I remain concerned about the physical and emotional health of Fr Joe Ballard. Credible evidence of erratic behavior as well as impairment was presented to me, along with indicators that Fr Ballard had used alcohol at unusual times and situations (before committee meetings). These indicators have not been explained. Fr Ballard has been screened twice for possible substance abuse issues and these tests indicate that the easy answer of substance abuse is not the cause of his erratic behavior and impairment. These tests come with a recommendation for continued evaluation by professionals for the indicated issues of emotional stress. These issues are serious ones, and I intend to follow up with suitable action in the best interests of Fr Ballard and Otey Parish.

(Statement composed on Friday, May 3, by the Rt. Rev'd John Bauerschmidt)

In the Morning

From Psalm 51

Open my lips, O Lord,
and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.
Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.
Cast me not away from your presence
and take not your holy Spirit from me.
Give me the joy of your saving help again
and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

A Reading from John

"I have said these things to you while I am still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid. You heard me say to you, 'I am going away, and I am coming to you.' If you loved me, you would rejoice that I am going to the Father, because the Father is greater than I. And now I have told you this before it occurs, so that when it does occur, you may believe."

John 14:25-29

Prayers may be offered for ourselves and others.

The Lord's Prayer

The Collect

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought us in safety to this new day: Preserve us with your mighty power, that we may not fall into sin, nor be overcome by adversity; and in all we do, direct us to the fulfilling of your purpose; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*