

SENIOR WARDEN Albert White

Two years ago when Stephen King, DVM and former Senior Warden at All Saints' placed a hand on my shoulder asking me to stand for election as Warden he forgot something.... a complete job description.

He forgot to tell me we would be fully incorporating Boy Scout Troop 85 from another church and denomination into our Church. He must have had a minor lapse when he didn't mention an upcoming months long Sabbatical. Nor did he say it would begin on the heels of an historic Episcopal convention in June, 2015. It came within hours of a Supreme Court decision recognizing the equality and value of all persons. That vote took place while our priest was away. It made us look inside ourselves as a parish. While that time without our parish priest was challenging, we found ways to renew our love and trust of each other as a parish family. We are resilient in our faith in God and in each other.

I can hear Stephen saying. 'Did I forget to tell you...?' when 2016 comes you will need to raise the budget 17% and challenge the congregation to increase its pledges by the heftiest margin perhaps ever. And raise the budget we did. With the potential for a \$24,000 deficit we entered 2016 in faith and now at its conclusion there is no deficit at all.

After the tragedy in South Carolina, All Saints' clergy, wardens and vergers attended security consultations with other downtown churches where the ideas on "safe churches" went from vigilant to vigilante". But at All Saints' we chose to remain welcoming to all who would enter our doors and to have faith that God in His Church is protecting us.

In its tradition of pastoral ministry and its sense of welcome All Saints' reached beyond our doors to invite a congregation in need to become a part of our congregation INDEED. Christ the King Lutheran Church, ELCA brings to us a new sense of faith, and another way of looking towards Christ's salvation for all of us.

Remember the hand rhyme:

Here is the church

Here is the steeple

Open the doors

And see all the People!

Within the Episcopal Church USA Jessica Nelson, FAGO, represents us all on the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music. Her latest report from its recent meeting in Chaska, MN may be found here: http://s3.amazonaws.com/dfc_attachments/public/documents/3231249/MSEpiscopalian_December_2016.pdf

This is yet one more way for All Saints' to have its presence in the wider Church. On December 27, 2016, the church refinanced \$1,729,987 the balance of our capital debt at a rate of 2.49% for eighteen months followed by 3.713% for 101 months, paying the debt in full over the next ten years

and accelerating the eventual payoff by six years! By locking the rate and term over this period (and perhaps before interest rates rise) we established new certainty. When we next approach the parish for capital to pay the remainder we will know the exact amount we need and the precise time we need it.

All Saints' has a sense of outreach that daily renews our purpose in the world. During the week of January 1, 2017, as the result of the affirmative recommendation by the Neighborhood Life Committee and the approval by the Vestry at its December 20, 2016, meeting, All Saints' entered a partnership with the Family Resource Center "for funding from the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program so that the church might serve homeless families and families at risk of experiencing homelessness".

All Saints' is now the custodian of a \$125,000 grant from the Family Resource Center. Funds will be distributed under a formal Agreement with FRC. It is administered by Hannah Maharrey, whose salary is paid by grant funds from FRC. Financial management and oversight is the responsibility of Albert White. Working capital funds for up to \$20,000 have been provided through the Diocese of Mississippi because the grant funds are received as reimbursements following distributions. Funding from The All Saints' operating budget or other church resources is not necessary. The potential for this program is that the All Saints' and FRC partnership may have access to \$500,000 over four years that may produce a paradigmatic shift on the condition of homeless in Northeast Mississippi.

On November 30, 2016, Rev. Paul Stephens met with Wardens, Pamela Cox and me, to be informed that on that morning he had been called by the Right Rev. Brian Seage to become Canon to the Ordinary for the Diocese of Mississippi succeeding Rev. Canon David H. Johnson effective February 5, 2017. However due to urgent matters in the Diocese the Bishop requested that Paul be in Jackson by December 26.

Following a special called meeting of the Vestry on December 5, 2016, it was agreed that Paul would serve the Epiphany Eucharist on January 5, 2017 and would take his leave before the congregation.

Paul and Martha leave us a parish with wonderful memories, renewed faith and purpose along with a marvelous future. As we now enter a path of transition and search for our next Rector at All Saints' I find myself believing as I think we all do. We are strengthened and humbled. This report highlights a few events among many that are significant.

It has been more than an honor and privilege to serve as your Warden over the past two years. I cannot provide a job description. With faith in God and the support of this parish, none is required.