



St. Mary's-In-Tuxedo Episcopal Church
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March 11, 2010

Dear Friends,

This letter is to inform you of some current changes regarding our St. Mary's Preschool as well as future plans. If you have questions or comments regarding this information, I hope that you will either contact me or a member of the Vestry.

First to the current changes: On February 21, the Vestry voted to disband the Preschool Board and put in place a sub-committee of the Vestry to oversee the Preschool for the remainder of the year. This sub-committee, chaired by Josh Bewlay, includes Maureen Coen, Sue Heywood, Prudence Thurston, and me. After the sub-committee met and the Vestry voted, the decision was announced that St. Mary's will take a hiatus in the coming school year (2010-2011) to: a) conduct an overall and extensive evaluation of our buildings; b) determine the cost of running various programs; and c) listen to the community to see what the needs and desires are for the future. More information on this follows below.

On Wednesday, March 3, Susan Cummings, the Head of School, was terminated. This decision was made after consultation with senior Diocesan leaders as well as with the Wardens of St. Mary's. This decision, while difficult, was based on facts relating to what was in the best interest for the most favorable completion of the current school term. We would stress that the termination of the Head of School was not due to any interaction with the children. On Friday, March 5, classroom aide Debbie McGrady resigned.

The Preschool opened on Thursday, March 4 and continues to operate under the team leadership of Danielle Vitta, Paloma Hekl and Kerri Keating-Leu. I am attaching the letter given to the parents concerning the qualifications of this team and trust that you would agree that the qualifications of these individuals will be instrumental in helping to ensure the completion of the 2009-2010 term.

Turning to the plans for the coming year. We would first advise that our enrollment has fallen from 43 in 2007-08 to 32 in 2008-09 to 21 this year. We have drawn from the Preschool's reserves this year to enable classes to be held. During this year, we have added enrichment classes and tried to build greater interest in our Preschool. Unfortunately, the interest has not increased and at the end of our Open Houses, we only had five requests for new applications. Based on this information and the challenging economic times, the Vestry decided to take a hiatus in the coming year. During the hiatus we will engage experts in assessing our buildings and telling us what type of programs we can offer as well as what other opportunities would be open to us with certain upgrades and changes. We are in the process of getting such an inspection. Following the ensuing report, the sub-committee will begin to look at the possibilities brought forth by this study. It is at this time, we will also begin to engage the community as to what is needed and desired as well as what the community is willing to commit to the future. Our goal is to offer a program that serves the families of the community as best we can. If you are interested in helping in this endeavor, please do not hesitate to contact a member of the sub-committee.

It is with sadness that all these things have occurred, yet St. Mary's is committed to serving the families of the community in such a way that our mission as a church is fulfilled in a viable, loving and vibrant program. Please join us in making this a reality in the future.

Again, if you have questions or comments or wish to be involved, please do let us know.

Thank you.

Faithfully,

The Reverend Elizabeth S. McWhorter
Rector