

THE CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER

MINUTES OF THE VESTRY MEETING TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2020 7:00 P.M. – VIRTUAL MEETING

*Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit,
but in humility regard others as better than yourselves.
Let each of you look not to your own interests,
but to the interests of others.
Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus.
Philippians 2:3-5*

Quorum. The September Vestry Meeting was called to order virtually on Tuesday, September 15, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. The following Vestry members were present, representing a quorum for the conduct of business: Millicent Bain, Nancy Bowen, Sean Goldrick, Beverly Griffith, Anita Richardson, Doug Riley, Jan Schroeder, Peter Shafer, Anna von Lunz, David Wallack, and Ted Winstead. The following clergy members, staff members, and officers were present: David Ware, Ellen Chatard, Keri Frisch, Steven Sutor, Tony Brandon, and Fern Riley. The following Vestry member was absent: Lis Green.

Opening Prayer. David Ware opened the meeting with a prayer.

Approval of Minutes. Fern Riley presented the minutes of the Vestry Meeting held on August 18, 2020. A motion to approve the minutes was made, seconded, and unanimously approved.

Rector's Report [David Ware]. David said the staff has been making plans for this program year, and he is excited to say that understanding and addressing the impact of racism and striving for racial justice will be a significant aspect of the year's work. Clergy and Vestry members will facilitate the Sacred Ground anti-racism training course with parishioners; six discussion groups will be starting in October. Freda Marie Brown has started an on-line African American authors book club this summer, and she is also leading the Conversations: Change and Future Possibilities discussion group. Rebecca Ogus and J2A teacher Stephanie Brizee will continue their book club for parish youth with plans to read, "Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You" by Ibram Kendi and Jason Reynolds.

David said we will be starting off the year with Holy Listening small group conversations with as many parishioners as possible to discuss three questions: 1) What has been most pressing or challenging to you in the past 6 months? 2) How do you want to respond to what you have experienced or to what you have heard others talk about? 3) What feels most hopeful to you in this time? These discussions and responses will help us to prepare and plan for the year.

As part of our work on the North Parking Lot to construct bioretention areas to improve storm water run-off management, David said the Caring for Creation Committee and our building partners will present an on-line Wednesday Speakers Series in the spring to discuss environmental stewardship. Three sessions will focus on Baltimore city waterways, the means and impact of climate change, and regional geologic formations and the implications for water conservation.

David said Bert Landman is planning for on-line music offerings in place of the Compline and Evensong services now on hold due to the pandemic. More information will follow about these monthly presentations.

With the permission of the Diocese and the agreement of the Way Forward Committee, David and the clergy staff will be expanding on-campus Eucharist services. In addition to Monday and Wednesday 12:00 noon services and Tuesday and Thursday 8:00 a.m. services for 10 participants, the clergy will begin to offer Sunday 8:00 a.m. Eucharist in the front courtyard starting on September 20 for 25 participants. Parishioners may sign up for the service through E-Redeemer as with the weekday services, and participants will wear masks and maintain social distancing. On-line Morning Prayer services continue on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at 8:00 a.m. and Noon Day Prayer services on Tuesday and Thursday at 12:00 noon on the Redeemer Facebook site. On-line Faith@Five continues on Saturday at 5:00 p.m., and Sunday Morning Prayer is offered at 10:00 a.m. on YouTube. David said he is grateful for his clergy colleagues Freda Marie, Cristina, Rebecca, and Caroline.

The Parish Day School opened this month with a good enrollment of students. David said the faculty is fully committed to providing a safe in-person learning environment for their preschool students to foster the important social, emotional, and developmental growth that comes with children playing and learning together. Many teachers said it was the most moving opening day of school they have ever had.

Several small groups are meeting outdoors on the campus. The Redeemer Youth Group will meet this Sunday in staggered groups to keep the number of participants down to 25. The staff is also assessing our indoor facilities to determine the needs and prepare for safe meeting spaces in order to invite small groups to come inside to meet.

Ellen Chatard is editing a magazine to be sent out to the parish in early October. It will include profiles of Freda Marie and Rebecca, poetry, and some recent sermons among other articles.

The church will be offering St. Francis in the Field, a Blessing of the Animals service at several locations around Baltimore, including the church, the Lakes at Homeland, Lake Roland, and the Wyman Park Dell. David said the staff is considering how we may be able to gather safely to celebrate All Saints Day.

Treasurer's Report [Tony Brandon]. Tony Brandon reported the church remains in a remarkably solid financial position. Due to positive gains in investments, the Endowment Fund, the Heritage Trust Fund, and the Covenant Fund are continuing to grow. Revenue from the operation of the Parish Day School is on track as the school has opened this fall. While pledged giving has remained strong through the pandemic, revenue for the year from reduced service offerings on Sundays, Easter, and Christmas will be under budgeted amounts. Expenses are down from budgeted levels, but the church is expected to end the year with an operating loss of \$39,000.

Tony noted the 2019 church operations resulted in a budget surplus of \$56,090. While past operating surpluses have been transferred to the Endowment Fund, Tony proposed the Vestry consider retaining this surplus in the Operating Account to help in easing financial uncertainties from the pandemic. A motion to retain the 2019 operating surplus of \$56,090 in the 2020 Operating Account was made, seconded, and unanimously approved.

Tony indicated the Covenant Fund has given \$60,000 to community partners during the pandemic, and \$20,000 to the Parish Day School for scholarships. David said our financial resources are a gift and a responsibility, and we need to use them.

Junior Warden's Report [Steve Sutor]. Steve Sutor reported the Buildings and Grounds Committee held an outdoor meeting at the church and is addressing several issues around the church campus. Mark Schroeder is evaluating our lawn service and investigating alternative plans to decrease our lawn chemical use. Plans are forming to change some areas of the lawn into meadow and to increase other low mow growth. Lydia Kimball and Steve are assessing the campus to find areas for placing benches and chairs to promote contemplative and restive spots for people to sit and enjoy. The Committee is also seeking to address water run-off from the South Parking Lot behind Mr. Vu's house. Cityscape Engineering is working on plans to reduce water flow.

The North Parking Lot has been resurfaced and is waiting for trees to arrive to plant in the bioretention areas. Improved lighting will also be added. A sign will be placed along the new sidewalk explaining the work and its aim to reduce storm water run-off to improve the health of the Chesapeake Bay. We will be planning a dedication of the new area to include our funding and planning partners who helped to make the work possible.

The renovation of the restroom above the Choir Room has been completed, and new carpeting has been installed to replace the first floor carpeting in the main hallway and the Welcome Center. New lights have also been placed along the sidewalk by the circular driveway for better nighttime visibility. The Vestry thanked Steve for planning and guiding these many projects.

Annual Meeting and Vestry Nominations [David Ware, Ellen Chatard]. David announced we will have the 2020 Annual Meeting virtually on November 15 to discuss the financial state of the parish and have reports from several key leaders. We will acknowledge the work of the retiring Vestry class and elect a new Vestry class. Ellen said we will be sending out Vestry nomination information in E-Redeemer and noted the church by-laws state candidates must be members of the Church of the Redeemer by baptism or letter of transfer and must be financial givers of record. Nomination forms are due by October 20, and a slate of candidates will be brought to the parish by November 1. David noted the Annual Meeting was postponed from the original date due to the onset of the pandemic and the closing of the church in March. He said we have moved past where we were in the spring and have matured in our understanding of how to be a church during the pandemic, and the time is right for meeting as a parish.

Sacred Ground. The Vestry discussed final thoughts about the Sacred Ground anti-racism training course and initial plans to bring the course to the parish.

Adjournment. Doug Riley gave a closing prayer, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:53 p.m.

Fern Riley, Registrar