

THE CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER

MINUTES OF THE VESTRY MEETING

TUESDAY, MAY 18, 2021

7:00 P.M. – HALE AUDITORIUM

*I wait for the Lord, my soul waits for him;
in his word is my hope.
Psalm 130:4*

Quorum. The May Vestry Meeting was called to order on Tuesday, May 18, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. The following Vestry members were present, representing a quorum for the conduct of business: Ally Abernathy, Peter Bain, Sara Engram, Sean Goldrick, Erin Hagar, Dixon Harvey, Kristen Heerema, Anita Richardson, Peter Shafer, and George Tracy. The following clergy members, staff members, and officers were present: David Ware, Ellen Chatard, Keri Frisch, Steven Sutor, Doug Riley, and Fern Riley. The following Vestry members were absent: Nancy Bowen and James Guyton.

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

Reflection. Keri Frisch offered a spiritual reflection.

Vestry Introductions and Overview. Vestry members, staff members, and officers introduced themselves, and David gave an overview of the role of the Vestry. According to canon rules, the Vestry maintains a fiduciary responsibility for the financial health of the church and its buildings and grounds; is responsible for calling a rector, asking one to leave, and reviewing his/her work; and elects delegates from the church to the Diocesan Convention. They serve as the council of the church. David explained at Redeemer, Director of Program Ellen Chatard creates the first draft of the annual budget with David's input, and it is subsequently reviewed by the Treasurer, the Executive Committee, and the Budget and Finance Committee, but he indicated it is the Vestry's responsibility. He noted the Budget and Finance Committee offers their council to the Vestry, reviewing the budget, following the checking account, and monitoring how the funds are doing. Their ideas and suggestions are discussed with the Treasurer, Doug Riley, who conveys their thoughts to the Vestry. Bookkeeper Katrina Schisler keeps track of our account income and expenses and prepares the checks for Ellen to sign.

David discussed the three funds at Redeemer. The Endowment Fund is an invested savings account made of gifts from past and present generations of parishioners. An allotment of 4.7% of this account is contributed to the annual budget; during the pandemic, this allotment was increased from 4.5%, and David indicated we will hope to decrease this amount by one tenth of one percent per year until we get back to 4.5%. The Heritage Trust Fund is used to maintain, replace, and develop the physical plant and properties of the church, and each year, 5% of the previous three

year average is allotted to fund church projects. The Covenant Fund was created in July, 2017 by an anonymous gift to be used to address the root causes of poverty in our community, and funds have been given before and during the pandemic to community organizations providing services and programs to those in need in Baltimore.

Junior Warden Steve Sutor serves as the chairman of the Buildings and Grounds Committee, and he discussed their work. The committee meets once a month to consider campus projects, and recently while the stock market has yielded good returns, they have approved projects that previously had been deferred. Recent projects have included replacing the heating coils in the chapel, working on creating live-streaming capabilities for the church, improving lighting issues in the sanctuary, and finding areas for wild growth around the campus. Steve indicated environmental stewardship is driving many project decisions such as the North Parking Lot project to address storm water run-off management and changing to LED lighting.

Approval of Minutes. Fern Riley presented the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on May 2, 2021. A motion to approve the Annual Parish Meeting minutes was made, seconded, and unanimously approved. The minutes of the Vestry Meeting held on April 20, 2021 were then presented. A motion to approve the April Vestry Meeting minutes was made, seconded, and unanimously approved.

Rector's Report [David Ware]. David discussed the work of the Parish Day School Discernment Committee to evaluate whether the school is called to add elementary grades to grow from its current preschool model of classes for 2 year-olds through pre-first. Committee members Matt Buck, Deborah Callard, Sara Ingram, Beverly Griffith, Sarah Marinacci, and Ted Winstead, led by PDS Director Mary Knott and David, recommended expanding the school to first grade for this coming year, and following approval by the Vestry, sixteen families signed up their children for the new first grade within ten days.

David noted the goals for expansion are to educate children, to help them to discover their unique worth and beauty, and to build an inclusive community, thereby strengthening the Parish Day School, the Church of the Redeemer, and the Baltimore community. David described PDS as a small, inclusive Episcopal school that welcomes families from diverse religious, cultural, and economic backgrounds. The school provides a nurturing environment grounded in early learning and respectful engagement with others, and it offers a multi-dimensional program to foster curious, confident learners who are joyful and kind. It is a vibrant community where children, teachers, and families build strong connections with each other, the parish, Baltimore, and the world. Founded in 1951, PDS currently has 119 students, aged 2-7 years, from twenty zip codes in the area, and 18 faculty and staff members with an average of thirteen years of education experience, providing a student-to-teacher ratio of 6:1. The 8 acre campus offers outdoor classrooms, a musical garden,

a rain garden, vegetable and herb gardens, and 15,000 square feet of light-filled indoor learning space.

David said the school values an open-ended, mindful process of discovery for its students to support social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development through multi-sensory engagement, blending indoor and outdoor learning and play to foster development of the whole child. Classes offer active, playful, noisy, messy, joyful experiences that embrace wonder, exploration, and the courage to take risks and learn from mistakes, and they encourage flexible thinking, listening, and reflection to help children solve problems, make decisions, and communicate effectively. Programs include character development, outdoor learning, chapel, STEM (science, technology, engineering and math), language and literacy development, play, visual arts, physical education, thematic unit study, community engagement, music and movement, field trips and in-house programs, library, gardening, Spanish and world cultures, and geography.

David outlined the reasons for PDS to grow into the elementary years. He said 90% of brain development happens in the early years, and the school's attention to how children learn during this period of rapid development would benefit students beyond the preschool years. Unstructured play aids healthy personal, emotional, and social growth and development, and outdoor learning at PDS fosters environmental literacy. The school is committed to inclusivity, diversity, and need-based financial aid, and expansion to additional grades would provide an affordable option for families seeking small classes and low student-teacher ratios. The school builds a learning community grounded in faithfulness, and its growth would strengthen the school, the parish, and the Baltimore community.

The committee has been in touch with other area schools including Govans Elementary School to discuss potential expansion, and David said we would continue to be in dialogue with them for students who might benefit from the PDS learning environment. David said the PDS faculty has expressed initial enthusiasm for the expansion. The church would reach new, diverse families and grow stronger roots with them over the elementary years, and interested students could participate in the Choir School of Baltimore. David asked the Vestry to think about this potential expansion and said we will continue the conversation next month with the goal of making a decision by October 1.

Treasurer's Report [Doug Riley]. Doug Riley noted the 2021-2022 Parish Day School Budget was circulated electronically and the Vestry gave its approval. A formal motion to affirm the electronic approval of the 2021-2022 Parish Day School Budget was made, seconded, and unanimously approved.

Other Business. David said we will aim for having an indoor Sunday morning service with the choir in June subject to the approval of the Diocese and the city. The Vestry will meet in June but not in July or August. David said he is in conversation with Morgan State University to use a gift from the Covenant Fund to sponsor one or

two student internships, and he is talking with Coppin State University to fund a program to help students with finances in their last year at the school.

David read a letter from Caroline Stewart announcing she will be concluding her time at Redeemer on July 1, stepping aside from her leadership role in initiating the Center for WellBeing at the two-year mark to allow for its continued growth under new leadership, and departing with gratitude for the opportunities and relationships she has encountered over her years at Redeemer. David said he will be making plans for a new leader with a clinical background and practice to move into the next phase of the Center's programs and growth for the parish and the community. He is grateful for the leadership, insight, and careful attention Caroline has brought to the creating the Center.

Adjournment. David offered a closing prayer, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:53 p.m.

Fern Riley, Registrar