

**CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER  
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING  
SUNDAY, MAY 1, 2022**

*Jesus said to them, "Children, you have no fish, have you?"  
They answered him, "No."  
He said to them, "Cast the net to the right side of the boat,  
and you will find some."  
So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in  
because there were so many fish.  
John 21:5-6*

The Annual Parish Meeting of the Church of the Redeemer was called to order by the Reverend David J. Ware, Rector, during the 10:00 a.m. worship service on Sunday, May 1, 2022. He began with a prayer for the Annual Meeting.

**Election and Commissioning of the New Vestry** - David acknowledged and thanked outgoing Vestry Members Nancy Bowen, Sean Goldrick, Anita Richardson, and Peter Shafer for their service to the church.

The Vestry Nominating Committee considered all the submitted nominations and developed the Vestry slate from among the many qualified candidates. No additional nominations were received after the slate was published; therefore, according to the Bylaws, the slate as circulated earlier was presented. Keri Frisch presented the following 2022-2025 slate of new Vestry Members: Margie Chandler, Anne Haskins, Kathy LaPlant, and John Schmick. The congregation voted by acclamation to adopt the slate of new Vestry Members. David led Anne and John, present, and Margie and Kathy, in abstentia, in reaffirming their commitment to follow Christ, and to committing themselves to carry out the responsibilities of the Vestry and to serve the congregation. The two new Vestry Members in attendance took the Oath of Office, and David commissioned them for their work with the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

**Senior Warden Update** - Keri Frisch, Senior Warden, said over 100 Redeemer parishioners have engaged in anti-racism work over the past two and a half years by participating in Sacred Ground dialogue circles, learning about and reflecting on the nation's history and the deep roots of racism. As a next step to continue this work and learn about the history of the parish, the Vestry unanimously passed the following motion at the February 2022 meeting:

Resolved that a working group be appointed by the Rector to research the relationship between the Church of the Redeemer and (1) the institution of slavery, (2) the adoption of Jim Crow laws, and (3) other practices in Maryland that disenfranchise communities, and report to the Vestry within 18 months the effect of these relationships on the holdings, wealth, character, and mission of the Church of the Redeemer.

Keri noted this effort connects to the national Episcopal Church's long-term commitment to racial healing, reconciliation, and justice. The Church envisions the way forward as a journey through a labyrinth containing four quadrants: telling the truth, proclaiming the dream, practicing the way of love, and repairing the breach. Through research and discovery, the working group

will seek to learn and tell the history of Redeemer, reporting to the congregation its findings for discussion and response. Over 20 parishioners have stepped forward to begin this work later this month. Keri said the group will proceed with humility and in thanksgiving for the native people who once lived here and for the church's foundational benefactors. She noted that by researching and documenting this history, Redeemer can know its family narrative and gain insight into the mission and pathway ahead for the parish. Keri invited any parishioners interested in being part of this work to contact her.

**Parish Day School Update** - Chrissy Levering, Parish Day School Board Chair, reported on the current school year and the growth of the school. The twelve members of the PDS Board, made up of parents, representatives from the school and the church, PDS Director Mary Knott, and David Ware, set policies and oversee the school's management for immediate issues and ongoing financial and program planning. The past year was dominated by the Covid pandemic, and Chrissy said the school did an extraordinary job in putting the safety of students and families first while also ensuring the continued emotional and educational growth of the students.

This year the school has been able to focus on growth. Historically, PDS has offered classes for two year olds through pre-first grade, and this year a first grade class was added. Plans have been approved to expand to begin a second grade class next fall and a third grade class in 2023. Chrissy said the PDS Visionary Committee has thoughtfully and deliberately considered two motivations for expansion: (1) the ability to offer unique, comprehensive early childhood learning through third grade, and (2) the goal of expanding the school's connection to the larger community, including a relationship with students at Govans Elementary School. The school plans to offer student enrichment opportunities next year with extended hours through 5:30 p.m. to make the school an option for families with parents whose work schedules require an extended school day for their children.

Chrissy said the Board has been working closely with the Visionary Committee to promote a successful, responsible approach to growth. The PDS Bylaws were rewritten to change the Advisory Board to a Board of Governance, to delineate more formal structures and responsibilities, and to create working groups to address key issues involved in growth. The Board plans to increase the diversity of its members for greater insight and understanding of the needs of the community.

In closing, Chrissy said PDS continues to have a tradition of excellence built on dedicated leadership; a passionate, creative, and collaborative staff; engaged parents; a strong connection to the church to allow for Episcopal values and teaching to be incorporated into the curriculum; and a multi-disciplinary approach to learning including social and emotional development, outdoor exploration, character building, cross-age learning and leadership opportunities, and having fun at school. These elements create a unique and wonderful learning and growing environment for all children. Chrissy reported the Board feels that the current and future efforts to elevate the school's offerings are exciting, and they are confident that the school is well-positioned to support this undertaking. She offered her thanks to the church for its support of the school.

**Finance Update** - Doug Riley, Treasurer, reported the financial health of the church is fine, and he said because of the commitment and generosity of the parish and the church's leadership,

Redeemer has weathered the pandemic better than many parishes within the Episcopal Church or in other denominations. He presented a written report giving a summary of actual revenue and expenses for 2020 and 2021, the 2021 and 2022 budgets, a summary of pledge income for 2019-2021, budgeted pledge income for 2022, pledge commitments for 2022 as of 4/20/2022, and the balances for the Endowment Fund, the Heritage Trust Fund, and the Covenant Fund for 2020-2022. Despite a slight dip in pledge income last year, the Vestry adopted a budget for 2022 with an increase in pledge income, and Doug reported the parish has almost reached that goal with another 50 pledges still to come. He noted the Covenant Fund continues to grow and to be used to address issues related to poverty, disparity, and discrimination in Baltimore City. The Heritage Trust Fund is used for the care and upkeep of the church's buildings and grounds. The Endowment Fund is an invested savings account, and its income supplements other revenue to balance the annual operating budget. Doug noted the Vestry is seeking to reduce this contribution to the annual budget by weaning down by a set percentage each year so that this income can be used for outreach and other mission-driven purposes. He said Redeemer is in a healthy financial position through the excellent resource management of David Ware, Ellen Chatard, bookkeeper Katrina Schisler, and the members of the Budget and Finance Committee.

Doug also acknowledged and gave thanks for two testamentary gifts from two longtime parishioners who died last year and gave generous, substantial, and unrestricted bequests to the church. Caroline Coleman loved the church buildings and had helped several years ago to replace the wooden doors to the church with the current glass doors. The Vestry has made Caroline's gift part of the Heritage Trust Fund to continue to maintain the buildings and grounds. Mary Frances Wagley was the headmistress at St. Paul's School for Girls, and the Vestry has decided her generous bequest will be used to support the Parish Day School to educate children. Doug said the church is grateful to these women for many reasons, including for their remembrance of Redeemer in their wills.

**Facilities Update** - Steve Sutor, Junior Warden, acknowledged the work of the members of the Buildings and Grounds Committee who are dedicated to keeping the structures and campus in the best condition possible for generations to come. He also thanked Director of Facilities Mark Schroeder and his team, Chuan Phan and Grace Ni, who deal with the details of daily issues throughout the week to keep the church running smoothly.

Steve reviewed the projects accomplished in 2021. The final financial contribution to the North Parking Lot renovation project was made. Plans were developed with a lighting designer to re-light the church nave with LED fixtures to save energy and create clearer light, and the first phase of the work will be completed this summer. The church has signed on to a local solar farm to provide electricity, saving up to 10% annually with the option to evaluate and change this arrangement each year. Parish Day School projects included removing a block wall between two small classrooms for the pre-first grade class and preparing the Parish Hall lower level rooms to serve the new first grade class with painting and also upgrading the restrooms for their use. To catch up with deferred maintenance, areas of rotted wood from the original 1923-1949 Parish Hall construction were repaired, replaced, and repainted. The underground drain system was inspected to identify susceptible areas, and the system will be cleaned out this year. To facilitate wider worship options during the Covid pandemic and beyond, a new console to allow for livestreaming in the church was installed, congregational pick-up microphones were added, and

new speakers for the St. Paul's Courtyard at the entrance to the church were placed. The East Parking Lot erosion control project was completed with new grading and planting, removal of a speed bump to direct water away from the clergy parking area, and drain cleaning. An English oak tree with severe storm damage was removed. Signage and pathway lighting from the North Parking Lot to the main entrance that had been damaged electrically in a lightning strike was repaired. Heating coils in the chapel were replaced. The Women's Council Room refurbishment, designed with Karen Linaweaver, Courtney Iglehart, and Kathy LaPlant, was completed with cleaning the limestone fireplace, installing gas logs, and upgrading to a state-of-the-art audiovisual system.

Steve discussed projects goals for 2022. The Buildings and Grounds Committee is considering options for restoring and refreshing the stone steps and walkway from Charles Street to the entrance to the chapel by recreating the stone steps and nearby walls, deciding whether to restore the stone walkway or to make it a soft, living walkway, and choosing new planting. Boxwood blight irreparably damaged the 1940s era boxwood around the walkway, and the Committee will consider the greater visibility of the chapel from Charles Street without the boxwoods as they make their plans. The sound system in the church will be upgraded to accommodate new speakers, beginning with two new speakers in the North Transept. The controls to the split-system temperature control units in the school building and some offices have been upgraded. A persistent leak in the chapel at the crossing is being investigated and addressed. A bike rack will be added near the church entry.

Steve noted the new Parish Day School Building Expansion Committee, led by former Junior Warden and architect Tom Spies, has met to begin to explore how to expand the school buildings to accommodate the new first, second, and third grade classes. The Committee members from the parish and the school bring expertise in education, school building design, and construction management among other areas, and he is excited to be participating in this work.

Steve said it is an honor and a privilege to serve the church and to be entrusted with this work alongside the generations of parishioners who have loved and cared for these buildings and this campus.

**The Rector's Address.** David began by thanking the staff: Ellen Chatard, Barb Hart, Katrina Schisler, Mark Schroeder, Grace Ni, Chuan Phan, Rob Lopez, Jan Schroeder, Alison King, Mary Knott and the faculty of the Parish Day School, Robert Chrystal, Bert Landman, Cristina Paglinauan, Freda Marie Brown, and Rebecca Ogus. He said he is part of an extraordinary team leading inward nourishment and outward service to create this community day by day. He also thanked the congregation and named the many groups the parish is involved in: Altar Guild, Ushers, Flower Guild, the Choirs, Prayer Groups, Book Groups, Tuesday Group, Boy Scouts, BUILD, GEDCO, Govans Elementary School, Johnston Square, the VOICES Series, RYG, Sunday School, Rite 13, Journey to Adulthood, the Rector's Bible Study, Confirmation Class, Sacred Space for Grace, Sacred Ground, Buildings and Grounds, Pastoral Care, the Welcome Center, Budget and Finance, the Investment Committee, Women of Wisdom, the Men's Group, Contemplative Prayer, Koinonia, Life in the Spirit, Boots for Baltimore, Habitat for Humanity, the Knitting Group, the Inquirers Class, the Art Show, Friends of Music, Redeemer History

Committee, Parish Day School Visioning Committee, Acolytes, LEMs, Lectors, Vergers, and the Vestry.

David said the church is thriving. Young adults are gathering for Theology on Tap, 12 teens and 5 adults are planning a pilgrimage to Ireland this summer, 6 youth and adults will be confirmed and 4 adults will be received by the Bishop next week, and five Sacred Ground groups are working on anti-racism training for the third year with 150 parishioners having participated. Sunday morning service in-person attendance is rising, and livestreaming is bringing attendance above pre-pandemic levels. The clergy team is preparing couples to marry, baptisms are scheduled every couple of months through December, and memorial service celebrations are being held for the recently departed and those who died during the pandemic. The newly revitalized BUILD core team is leading funding efforts for affordable housing and vacancy amelioration. Re-BUILD Metro continues its work in Johnston Square with Redeemer parishioners serving in board leadership, fund raising, neighborhood cleanup, and fellowship. The Parish Day School is growing, and parishioners have rewritten the bylaws, created a case for growth, and are envisioning building expansion; David invited the congregation to meet on Sunday, May 15 to learn more about the vision and plans for the growing school to be affordable and inclusive, to offer a complete early childhood education, and to be engaged in a public-private partnership with Govans Elementary School. The Covenant Fund has enabled the church to invest in community partners addressing root causes of poverty. This year, gifts totaling \$75,000 were given to support Coppin State University, Morgan State University, and the University of Maryland School of Social Work. GEDCO, Paul's Place, Groundwork Kitchen, Turnaround Tuesday, and Lifting Labels received gifts totaling \$100,000 to support job training, work force development, and affordable housing. The church continues to support its \$500,000 commitment to Re-Build Metro. In addition, the parish annual budget gives \$88,500 to support relationships with community partners. Opportunities for service work at Paul's Place and the Helping Up Mission will be returning as the pandemic eases, and the Center for WellBeing will be searching for a new director to bring the Spirit and mental health together.

David began his address by asking the congregation to think of a compelling experience that turned life upside down, such as a birth or a death, a significant loss or victory, discovering a passion or an identity for the first time, and then struggling to integrate this new consciousness into an old frame. Recent life changing experiences include the pandemic, learning about the nation's full history of race, and any resurrection after a season of darkness and death, and he said one way to cope is to act like nothing happened. David said the Gospel reading from John finds Peter and the disciples two weeks after the Resurrection going back to their boats, their fishing, and their old habits when the Living God shows up to tell them they cannot unsee what they have seen: prisoners becoming free, women being heard and respected, walls of race and class being torn down, religion serving the people, and the sick becoming well. Jesus tells them they are not the same people, so their fishing will not be the same. David said the call, then and now, is not to go back to normal but to go forward to better. He describes Jesus as standing on solid ground and speaking to his friends who are rocking on chaos, telling them to cast their nets on the right side, the other side of the boat, urging them to open up and engage and change, inviting them to love and tend and feed, to reconcile humanity. David spoke about the first century church using the fish as their symbol representing the miracle of breaking bread together across lines of difference, at home and out into the world, and he encouraged us to consider this

model as we recreate our lives here at Redeemer over the next six months. He quoted the words of the poet, saying, “that by caring, helping, giving, we may true disciples be; all our meals and all our living make us sacraments of Thee.”

The meeting ended, and the service continued with the Creed.

Fern Riley, Registrar