

**THE CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER**  
**MINUTES OF THE VESTRY MEETING**  
**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2023**  
**7:00 P.M. – WOMEN’S COUNCIL ROOM**

*“You’re blessed when you can show people how to cooperate instead of compete or fight. That’s when you discover who you really are, and your place in God’s family.”*

*Matthew 5:9*  
*The Message*

**Quorum.** The February Vestry Meeting was called to order on Tuesday, February 21, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. The following Vestry members were present, representing a quorum for the conduct of business: Ally Abernathy, Peter Bain, Margie Chandler, Sara Ingram, James Guyton, Dixon Harvey, Kristen Heerema, Kathy LaPlant, and George Tracy. The following clergy members, staff members, and officers were present: David Ware, Ellen Chatard, Keri Frisch, Steve Sutor, Doug Riley, and Fern Riley. The following Vestry members were absent: Erin Hagar, Anne Haskins, and John Schmick.

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

**Approval of Minutes.** Fern Riley presented the minutes of the Vestry Meeting held on January 17, 2023. A motion to approve the minutes was made, seconded, and unanimously approved.

**Reflection.** Doug Riley offered a spiritual reflection.

**Rector’s Report [David Ware].** The Parish Day School Development Committee is making plans for a feasibility study to assess fundraising interest in building construction for the expanding school. David noted the 2023-2024 inaugural third grade class is full, the second grade class has ten students, and the first grade class is also full. The third grade students will be housed in a learning cottage for next year. David and Mary Knott met with the architects and the contractor to discuss essential elements for a new building as the initial proposed design was bigger than needed, and the team is developing a revised design for building three classrooms with the option of a second phase addition in the future. David said if the new plans are acceptable and funding is in place, building construction would begin in the summer of 2024 and continue for a year.

David announced Ash Wednesday services will be held tomorrow, February 22, at 7:30 a.m. in the chapel, noon in the chapel, and 7:30 p.m. in the church.

At the January Vestry meeting, David suggested the Vestry examine ways in which we can improve in engaging newcomers and parishioners. Keri Frisch noted the

Diocesan College for Congregational Development has helpful models and exercises that the Vestry could use to assess our current practices and programs and consider ways to grow. She said we will devote time at future Vestry meetings to pursue this work.

**Treasurer's Report [Doug Riley].** The Budget and Finance Committee met earlier this month to review the church's 2022 finances, and Doug reported the church has a year-end surplus of \$140,000. He noted after the annual church audit is completed, the Vestry will discuss what to do with this surplus. Doug commended David, Ellen, and the staff for creating a balanced budget and for the cost-saving decisions they made over the year.

The Investment Committee, consisting of Katie Gray, Chris Lord, Rick Buck, Tom Spies, Karen McGee, Doug Riley, Ellen Chatard, Steve Sutor, Keri Frisch, and Katrina Schisler, met with Dan Dent and his team, and Doug said they discussed Redeemer's investment returns over the past year and why the church did a little better than the market in a difficult financial time.

Ellen Chatard gave an update on the Stewardship Campaign, reporting 360 pledges have been made totaling \$1,358,191. Additional pledges are still expected to be made to approach the 383 pledges received from 2022. Ellen said we are doing well, noting \$132,000 was received in 2022 through general giving from parishioners who did not pledge and would likely occur again this year to help in reaching our budgetary goals. David said our average weekly worship service attendance is recovering from the pandemic, with 100 more parishioners attending each week compared to last year. He noted that while we are under our pre-pandemic attendance levels, we are seeing new people coming to church every week in addition to returning parishioners, and he is hopeful that we will continue to grow.

Doug said our end of February finances are \$330,000 above budgeted income because many 2023 pledges have come in early in the year.

**Other Business.** Ellen and Keri presented the 2022 Redeemer Parochial Report for the Diocese to the Vestry for discussion. A motion to approve the Parochial Report was made, seconded, and unanimously approved.

Doug presented to the Vestry the following slate of candidates to serve as the Heritage Trust Fund trustees for the terms as specified: Tom Spies, 4 years; John Griffith, 3 years; Katie Gray, 2 years; Doug Riley, 1 year; and Keri Frisch, Steve Sutor, and David Ware, ex officio. A motion to approve the slate of candidates to serve as the Heritage Trust Fund trustees was made, seconded, and unanimously approved.

Ellen noted Vestry elections will be held at the Annual Parish Meeting on April 23, and she said outgoing Vestry members Sara Ingram, James Guyton, Erin Hagar, and George Tracy will serve on the Nominating Committee. She asked everyone to help

identify parishioners who might consider Vestry service. According to the church bylaws, candidates must be pledging members of Redeemer to be eligible to serve on the Vestry. Nominations need to be received by March 31.

Keri asked Vestry members to sign up for the March 5 and March 21 meetings with the Redeemer History Working Group to discuss their research on the relationship between Redeemer and the institution of slavery, the adoption of Jim Crow laws, and other practices in Maryland that disenfranchise communities. She noted the Vestry/Staff Retreat will be held on October 13-14 and will include History Working Group members for more discussion of their findings. The Diocese of Maryland Trail of Souls timeline exhibit outlining the church's involvement in slavery and its legacies will be displayed in the Parish Hall from March 3-20 with plans for Sunday Adult Education offerings during that time.

Keri noted several upcoming events. The Redeemer Youth Group will present "Descendants the Musical" on February 24 and 25 at 7:00 p.m. and February 26 at 12:30 p.m. David will participate as a panelist in the Women of Baltimore Hebrew Congregation's Interfaith Institute virtual offering, "Building Trust: Finding Common Ground", on February 27 from 9:30 a.m.-noon. On March 11, Redeemer will host a Meet and Greet session to meet the Bishop Coadjutor candidates from 1:00-3:00 p.m. in the church with live streaming prior to the election by clergy and Diocesan Convention lay delegates on March 25.

### **Upcoming Events.**

2/22 - Ash Wednesday services: 7:30 a.m. & noon (chapel), 7:30 p.m. (church)  
2/24 & 25, 7:00 p.m., 2/26, 12:30 p.m. - RYG "Descendants the Musical"  
2/27 - Building Trust: Finding Common Ground, 9:30 a.m.- noon (virtual)  
3/3 - 3/20 - Diocese of Maryland Trail of Souls timeline exhibit, Parish Hall  
3/8, 7:00 p.m. - VOICES Speaker Series: University of Maryland Professor Dr. Richard Bell to discuss his book, *Stolen: Five Free Boys Kidnapped into Slavery and Their Astonishing Odyssey Home*  
3/11, 1:00-3:00 p.m. - Meet and Greet with Bishop Coadjutor candidates  
3/15, 7:00 p.m. - VOICES: Author and activist Shane Claiborne to discuss his book, *Rethinking Life: Embracing the Sacredness of Every Person*  
3/22, 7:00 p.m. - VOICES: Historian, educator, and researcher Dr. Joanne Martin, founder of the National Great Blacks in Wax Museum, Baltimore  
3/29, 7: p.m. - VOICES: Attorney and filmmaker Jason Green to discuss his film, *Finding Fellowship*, recounting the merger of three racially segregated Methodist churches in Quince Orchard, MD, following Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s assassination

**Adjournment.** Doug offered a closing prayer, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:24 p.m.

Fern Riley, Registrar