

THE CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER

MINUTES OF THE VESTRY MEETING TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2023 7:00 P.M. – WOMEN’S COUNCIL ROOM

*The Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought,
but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words.
Romans 8:26*

Quorum. The September Vestry Meeting was called to order on Tuesday, September 19, 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, Michelle Gutberlet, Dixon Harvey, Anne Haskins, Kristen Heerema, Kathy LaPlant, John Schmick, Paul Smith, and Jim Stipe. The following clergy members, staff members, and officers were present: David Ware, Cristina Paglinauan, Ellen Chatard, Keri Frisch, Steve Sutor, Doug Riley, and Fern Riley. The following Vestry member was absent: Jean Mellott.

Opening Prayer. Cristina Paglinauan opened the meeting with a prayer.

Approval of Minutes. Fern Riley electronically presented the minutes of the May 16, 2023 Vestry Meeting in June, and the minutes were unanimously approved by electronic vote.

Reflection. David Ware read the poem, “Wild Geese” by Mary Oliver.

Parish Day School Update [Dixon Harvey]. To open a discussion about the Parish Day School expansion and plans for the future, PDS Building Growth Committee member Dixon Harvey reviewed the vision and mission of the school. For the past 79 years, PDS has been a leader in early childhood education in Baltimore with its focus on child-centered, classroom and outdoor, hands-on, experiential learning. The school sought to extend its commitment to early childhood education by growing into the early elementary years and by building a public/private school partnership with Govans Elementary School to strengthen the school, the parish, the community, and the city. In September 2021, the Vestry committed to expanding the school one grade at a time through third grade, and PDS currently has 154 enrolled students, including first graders who meet in the lower level of the Parish Hall, second graders based in the Cottage (previously Mr. Vu’s house), and the inaugural third grade class now meeting in the Youth Council Room pending final approval for use of the temporary learning cottage module near the South Columbarium. Having fulfilled the commitment to expand through third grade, the school needs more space. Initial design plans from GWWO Architects and Whiting Turner Contracting Company were created in 2022 and now have been revised to build three classrooms and a multipurpose room with the option of building additional classrooms

in a second construction phase if the school continues to grow. The PDS Development Committee would like to hire a development consultant to equip them to raise the necessary capital. The expansion project so far has cost approximately \$200,000 for design and engineering plans and to rent and prepare the learning cottage module. The PDS Building Growth Committee has asked the Vestry to approve proceeding with design development by authorizing \$300,000 of the \$500,000 gift of Mary Frances Wagley previously designated for Parish Day School growth. A motion to approve the use of \$300,000 of the gift of Mary Frances Wagley in the Endowment Fund for design development for the Parish Day School expansion was made, seconded, and unanimously approved. The Vestry also discussed and approved the need for a development consultant.

Junior Warden's Report [Steve Sutor]. Stone work in areas of the chapel and the spire are in need of repair, and Steve Sutor said this repair work and cleaning has been authorized and will proceed. The construction of a second ramp to the west side of St. Paul's Courtyard to mirror the current ramp on the east side is being planned and will likely be part of next year's budget. Redeemer will be one of 45 featured sites for Doors Open Baltimore, a citywide festival of architecture and neighborhoods sponsored by the Baltimore Architecture Foundation on October 7. Steve has written and created guidebooks with photographs for visitors to learn about and explore the church, and he asked Vestry members who are able to welcome and assist visitors on that day to contact him.

Treasurer's Report [Doug Riley]. Despite a decrease in income of \$60,000 from budgeted amounts over the summer as fewer pledge payments were made, Doug Riley said expenses have also been lower than budgeted amounts by \$20,000, and the church has a current surplus of \$85,000. The church incurred some large tree removal expenses this summer as a result of storm damage to several trees in August. Doug noted investments for the church's funds are rebounding from last year.

Senior Warden's Report [Keri Frisch]. The Vestry/Staff Retreat will be held on October 13-14, and Keri Frisch discussed plans for the weekend. Members of the Redeemer History Working Group, created in response to the February 15, 2022 Vestry resolution to research the relationship between Redeemer and the institution of slavery, the adoption of Jim Crow laws, and other practices in Maryland that disenfranchise communities, will be attending and presenting the information they have discovered. Notes and an annotated bibliography will be sent out for review prior to the retreat. The group is planning exercises to aid in understanding and distilling the information, to consider how the parish may respond, and to think about how to help everyone work through the findings. Sessions using music, art, movement, and writing will offer creative ways to respond. At the end of the retreat, the History Working Group will be decommissioned, and the work will be passed on to the Vestry to discern with the congregation the effect of these relationships on the holdings, wealth, character, and mission of the church, thus fulfilling the final aspect of the Vestry resolution.

After the Retreat, a series of parish meetings will be held to present the History Working Group's findings from the slavery era. Keri asked Vestry members to sign up to help convene the sessions and facilitate table discussions. The dates for the parish meetings are Sunday, October 22 at 9:00 a.m. in the Dining Room; Wednesday, October 25 at 7:00 p.m. in the Parish Hall; Saturday, October 28 at 10:00 a.m. at Blakehurst; Wednesday, November 1 at 7:00 p.m. in the Parish Hall; Saturday, November 4 at 2:30 p.m. in the Women's Council Room; and Wednesday, November 8 at 7:00 p.m. in the Parish Hall. Another series of meetings will be planned for early in 2024 to present the Jim Crow era findings. David said the House Meeting groups that are forming now will be another forum for discussing the information. Keri gave thanks to the members of the History Working Group for all their hard work, and David thanked Keri for her leadership in this effort.

Rector's Report [David Ware]. As part of his upcoming sabbatical, David said he has begun the first of six intensive workshops over a two year period with the Haden Institute for training in Dream Work and Spiritual Direction. His sabbatical will begin on October 15 with plans to include walking through Portugal and Spain on the Camino de Santiago and traveling to London, the Adirondacks for Christmas with his family, North Carolina, and New Mexico, to return to Redeemer in mid-February. The clergy and staff have been making plans to carry on with the work of the church during this time. Cristina will serve as the priest-in-charge, chairing staff, Vestry, and liturgy meetings, and she will meet regularly with Keri and Ellen Chatard. Pastoral care responsibilities will be shared by the clergy and Thomasina Wharton under the direction of Freda Marie Brown. Mary Knott will meet regularly with PDS Board Chair Chrissy Levering. Ellen will meet with staff and coordinate personnel concerns. Freda Marie will lead Tuesday morning Eucharist. The Rector's Bible Study will continue with the Rev. Raynor Wharton, Sr. leading the Wednesday 10:00 a.m. session, Karen McGee leading the Wednesday 12:00 noon session, and Jim Stipe leading the Thursday 6:00 p.m. session.

David said parishioners are signing up for House Meeting groups with one of 24 leaders or leadership pairs for monthly meetings of conversation and fellowship. He said currently in our culture, we have not been making the time to connect and meet new people, and he described joining the House Meetings as a life giving decision to invest in new friendships.

Other Business. Ellen presented the following parishioners for the proposed slate of delegates to the Diocesan Convention: Vivian Campagna, Patty McLean, Raynor Wharton, and Ted Winstead. A motion to approve the proposed slate of delegates to the Diocesan Convention was made, seconded, and unanimously approved.

Keri circulated sign up sheets for Vestry Meeting reflections.

The following Vestry members have agreed to serve as committee liaisons:
Parish Day School Board - Kathy LaPlant
Parish Day School Development Committee - Anne Haskins

Scout Troop 35 and 635 - John Schmick
Budget and Finance Committee - Kristen Heerema

Adjournment. Doug offered a closing prayer, and the meeting was adjourned at 9:08 p.m.

Fern Riley, Registrar