

THE CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER
MINUTES OF THE VESTRY MEETING
TUESDAY, JANUARY 16, 2024
7:00 P.M. – WOMEN’S COUNCIL ROOM

*Arise, shine; for your light has come,
and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.*
Isaiah 60:1

Quorum. The January Vestry Meeting was called to order on Tuesday, January 16, 2024, 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, Jean Mellott, John Schmick, Paul Smith, and Jim Stipe. The following clergy members, staff members, and officers were present: Cristina Paglinauan, Ellen Chatard, Keri Frisch, Steven Sutor, and Doug Riley. The following officer was absent: Fern Riley. David Ware was on sabbatical.

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

Approval of Minutes. Fern Riley electronically presented the minutes of the Vestry Meeting held on December 19, 2023. A motion to approve the minutes was made, seconded, and unanimously approved.

Reflection. Margie Chandler offered a spiritual reflection.

Priest-in-Charge Report [Cristina Paglinauan]. Cristina met with House Meeting leaders on Sunday, January 7 to see how the 17 monthly meeting groups started in the fall are going. She said the consensus among the leaders is that they are going well, helping participants to deepen their relationships with each other and to grow in faith.

Cristina said Redeemer hosted BUILD’s Housing Briefing and Training Meeting on Monday, January 8. Over 70 people met to learn about their agreement with Baltimore City and the Greater Baltimore Committee to raise \$3 billion from public and private sources over 15 years to solve Baltimore’s vacant and abandoned housing crisis and how to move forward with the campaign to reinvest in the city’s historically disinvested communities. The next public actions will take place in Annapolis on Wednesday, January 31 and Friday, February 2.

Cristina announced the 2024 Lenten VOICES Speakers series:

February 21 - Dartmouth College Professor of Religion and Episcopal priest Randall Balmer, whose recent work includes, “Solemn Reverence: The Separation of Church and State in American Life”, will discuss Christian nationalism and American democracy.

February 28 - Former Redeemer parishioner and author Rev. Tim Schenck will discuss his recent book, "Devotions for People Who Don't Do Devotions".

March 6 - Johns Hopkins University Professor of Political Science and Director of the SNF Agora Institute Hahrie Han will discuss her latest book, "Undivided: The Quest for Racial Solidarity in an American Church".

March 13 - Journalist and author Scott Shane will discuss his book, "Flee North: A Forgotten Hero and the Fight for Freedom in Slavery's Borderland".

March 20 - Writer Joseph Hooper will discuss his book, "Fire on the Levee: The Murder of Henry Glover and the Search for Justice After Hurricane Katrina", written with prosecutor Jared Fishman.

Cristina reported Christmas Eve services were well attended with 192 parishioners at the 11:00 a.m. service, 790 at the 4:00 p.m. service, and 374 at the 9:00 p.m. service; 25 parishioners attended the 10:00 a.m. Christmas Day service.

Cristina noted Colleen Everett is no longer a Redeemer employee by mutual consent, and Rebecca Ogus is now stewarding Sunday School and Children's Ministries. Liz Kallmyer is continuing to offer support with classes on Sunday mornings. Additional plans for the program will follow David Ware's return from sabbatical.

Senior Warden's Report [Keri Frisch]. Keri Frisch announced 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 continue presenting their research findings to the parish over the next several weeks. Parish meetings discussing the church's history during the slavery era were held in October and November, and the following sessions will be held to discuss findings from the Jim Crow era: Sunday, January 21 at 9:00 a.m. in the Dining Room; Wednesday, January 24 at 7:00 p.m. in the Parish Hall; Sunday, January 28 at 11:30 a.m. in the Parish Hall; Saturday, February 10 at 10:00 a.m. at Blakehurst; and Sunday, February 11 at 11:30 a.m. in the South Transept of the church. Keri circulated a sign-up sheet for Vestry members to help in leading and facilitating the meetings. She said the Vestry will discuss next steps after the sessions are concluded.

Junior Warden's Report [Steven Sutor]. Steven Sutor reported the Buildings and Grounds Committee discussed current and planned projects for 2024 at their first monthly meeting for the year, and he noted the budget from the Heritage Trust Fund, dedicated to building and campus maintenance, is generous. The Cheston Memorial beech tree, several London plane trees, and two American chestnut saplings have been planted, and several more trees including a magnolia and a Leyland cypress will be planted to replace trees lost to age and storms. New lighting at the base of the existing St. Paul's Courtyard ramp is being evaluated, and design and contract bidding for the new west ramp to the Courtyard have been completed. Ramp construction will begin this winter if it can be finished before Easter and will otherwise start in the spring. A deposit of \$45,000 from the 2023 budget for the

project has been made, and an additional \$40,000 will come from the 2024 budget. One of the two chapel heating units is 25 years old and needs to be replaced for approximately \$42,000. Several areas of slate roof repair due to leaks, including one near the ambulatory and one in the chapel sacristy, will be made for approximately \$7,500. Building an outdoor labyrinth is being considered once the expanded Parish Day School building design is completed and the use of the grounds has been determined. Additional projects the Committee would like to consider include tending to bluestone settings and drainage issues in St. Mary's Courtyard outside the Parish Hall; refinishing scratched and damaged church pews; creating a quiet, comfortable space in the west end of the Parish Hall by the fireplace; and making the Welcome Center more visible and welcoming to visitors entering the ambulatory.

Treasurer's Report [Doug Riley]. Doug Riley advised the Vestry that the \$137,000 Fiscal Year 2022 budget surplus, held during 2023 in the Operating Account to cover any unbudgeted emergencies, has been added to the Endowment Fund. He noted that in some years, the Vestry directs the use of surplus funds for unforeseen expenses, such as when a portion of the Fiscal Year 2021 surplus was used to buy cameras and broadcast equipment to begin on-line worship during the Covid pandemic. In most years, surplus funds go into the Endowment Fund as the Vestry has previously authorized.

Doug reported he has received and will sign engagement letters from Redeemer's auditor, Gross Mendelsohn. The cost to audit Redeemer's financial records through December 31, 2023 will be \$20,500, and the cost to audit the Parish Day School's records through June 30, 2024 will be \$8,000. Both amounts are included in the respective approved budgets for Fiscal Year 2024. Doug noted Redeemer has used Gross Mendelsohn for many years, and he has found their work to be careful and thorough in identifying, addressing, and correcting any accounting irregularities. He also said the auditor works for the Vestry, and if the Vestry ever wants to meet with the principals of the company or to seek bids from other auditors in future years, this is the Vestry's prerogative.

Doug presented the 2024 Clergy Housing Allowances to the Vestry. In lieu of providing a parsonage or rectory for clergy and their families, Doug explained that a religious institution may designate a certain amount of clergy compensation as a tax-free housing allowance. A motion to approve the 2024 Clergy Housing Allowances as shown in the 2024 Operating Budget was made, seconded, and unanimously approved.

Doug informed the Vestry that the Columbarium Committee has requested an increase in the interment fee set forth in Section 4 of the Columbarium Rules and Regulations. The subscription and interment fees were last revised by the Vestry on September 19, 2017. The Columbarium Committee reports the \$400 interment fee is no longer adequate to cover current \$600 engraving costs. A motion to revise the Columbarium Rules and Regulations to increase the Section 4 Interment Fee from \$400 to \$600 was made, seconded, and unanimously approved.

Ellen Chatard gave an update on the 2024 Stewardship campaign, reporting \$1,180,609 in pledges have been made from 322 households. Pledges from 80 additional households who pledged in 2023 but have not yet pledged in 2024 are expected, and a second stewardship letter will be sent to them early next week.

Other Business. Vestry members were encouraged to think about potential candidates for the new Vestry class this spring with more discussion about the nominating process to follow at the February Vestry meeting.

Adjournment. Doug offered a closing prayer, and the meeting was adjourned.

Fern Riley, Registrar