

THE CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER
MINUTES OF THE VESTRY MEETING
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2024
7:00 P.M. – WOMEN’S COUNCIL ROOM

*For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works,
which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.*
Ephesians 2:10

Quorum. The February Vestry Meeting was called to order on Tuesday, February 20, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. The following Vestry members were present, representing a quorum for the conduct of business: Ally Abernathy, Margie Chandler, Michelle Gutberlet, Dixon Harvey, Anne Haskins, Kristen Heerema, Kathy LaPlant, and John Schmick. The following clergy members, staff members, and officers were present: David Ware, Cristina Paglinauan, Ellen Chatard, Keri Frisch, Steven Sutor, and Fern Riley. The following Vestry members were absent: Peter Bain, Jean Mellott, Paul Smith, and Jim Stipe. The following officer was absent: Doug Riley.

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

Approval of Minutes. Fern Riley presented the minutes of the Vestry Meeting held on January 16, 2024. A motion to approve the minutes was made, seconded, and unanimously approved.

Reflection. Kristen Heerema offered a spiritual reflection.

Priest-in-Charge Report [Cristina Paglinauan]. Cristina said the seventeen House Meeting groups are continuing with monthly meetings, cultivating relationships in small groups where parishioners are able to get to know each other and share their thoughts. The groups will meet over the next few months, and Cristina said participants will then debrief and evaluate how the sessions have gone and consider if and how we continue in the next program year.

BUILD is continuing its work in addressing Baltimore’s vacant and abandoned housing crisis and reinvesting in the city’s historically disinvested communities. Cristina said many members traveled to Annapolis on January 31 and February 2 to meet with state legislators to advocate for their support of Governor Wes Moore’s \$50 million budget allocation for this initiative. She will be testifying on behalf of BUILD before the legislature on February 22.

Freda Marie Brown began a Lenten book study on Sunday, February 18 after the 10:00 a.m. service. She is leading a discussion of the book, “Prayers of the Cosmos,” by translator Neil Douglas-Klotz, a work that examines the words of the Lord’s Prayer in its original Aramaic form. Cristina said the discussion was lively, with parishioners sharing personal resurrection stories of new life arising out of situations

or relationships that were dying and ending. The group will meet for the next four Sundays through March 17.

Cristina said the 2024 Lenten VOICES Speakers series will begin tomorrow at 7:00 p.m. in the church. The following speakers are planned:

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.

Senior Warden's Report (Keri Frisch). Keri Frisch said 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, has completed the final parish presentations of their research findings from the Jim Crow era. Parish meetings discussing the church's history during the slavery era were held in October and November. The History Working Group members will put together their findings for the church archives and will discuss how to share this information with parishioners who missed the presentations. Keri said the Vestry will discuss next steps for the parish to follow up this work and to consider opportunities that may come out of what we have learned. Vestry members said parishioners were engaged and interested to hear about this history, and many were poised to consider next steps for the parish. Cristina said BUILD's work now is relevant to addressing these historical issues and is one path the parish is currently participating in and supporting. Keri thanked the History Working Group and Vestry members for helping with the presentations.

Junior Warden's Report (Steven Sutor). Steven Sutor gave an update on current church building and maintenance projects. The new west ramp to St. Paul's Courtyard is under construction and will be finished before Easter. The West Columbarium is now illuminated at night with a new soft light for better visibility while keeping the main focus from Charles Street on the chapel steeple. The east window and the south transept window have also added evening lights. Flood lamps have been placed to improve lighting on the original east ramp to the courtyard.

Treasurer's Report (Ellen Chatard). Ellen Chatard presented the 2023 fiscal year end Treasurer's report prepared by Doug Riley. In 2023, the Vestry budgeted revenues of \$2,238,000, and actual income was \$2,240,000, about \$2,200 more in revenue than expected. The Vestry budgeted expenses of \$2,234,000, and actual expenses were \$2,237,000, about \$2,900 more in expenses than expected due to unanticipated tree removal and storm damage clean-up costs. Overall, the church had a budgetary surplus of \$2,800, thus achieving the goal of having a balanced budget. Budgeted pledge income for 2023 was \$1,475,000, and actual pledge income was \$1,435,000. This \$40,000 pledge shortfall was more than made up by an increase in general giving of \$48,000 more than budgeted. This may indicate that while parishioners are still willing to give generously to the church, they are less willing to make a pledge commitment for giving, a trend to watch for in 2024 and to consider in drafting the 2025 budget. The Endowment Fund, the Heritage Trust Fund, and the Covenant Fund have all increased from last year as the financial market has improved.

Ellen gave an update on the Stewardship campaign, reporting \$1,305,000 in pledges have been made from 345 households. The budgetary pledge goal is \$1,475,000; as noted earlier, general giving from parishioners is increasing and will likely make up the difference.

Other Business. Ellen said the new Vestry class will be elected at the Annual Parish Meeting on April 28, and outgoing Vestry members Ally Abernathy, Peter Bain, Dixon Harvey, and Kristen Heerema will serve on the Vestry Nominating Committee along with Ellen Chatard, Keri Frisch, and Fern Riley. An announcement seeking interested parishioners who are members of the church by baptism or letter of transfer and are givers of record will appear in E-Redeemer on March 7. Nominations must be received by April 7, and the slate of candidates will be announced on April 18.

Keri said the Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper was a success, with over 200 people attending and many volunteering. Members of Ruth's Sisters worked along with parish youth to help with cooking and serving. The Belize pilgrims raised about \$2,600 toward their trip. They will be hosting a talent show fundraiser on April 14.

On behalf of the Vestry and the Executive Committee, Keri presented Cristina with a terrarium, a gift to acknowledge and thank her for serving as Priest-in-Charge during David Ware's sabbatical, for keeping us grounded and helping us to grow.

David thanked the Vestry for giving him the time and financial support for his sabbatical. He walked the Camino de Santiago through Portugal and Spain and began a spiritual direction training course in addition to personal travel and time with his family. He said he will be sharing moments and insights from this time with the parish in the days to come, and he read the poem, "Blessed Are You Who Bear the Light," by Jan Richardson.

Adjournment. Dixon Harvey read a prayer of gratitude written by Doug, giving thanks for the Vestry, for Cristina's leadership, and for David's journey and safe return, and the meeting ended at 8:23 p.m.

Fern Riley, Registrar