

THE CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER
MINUTES OF THE VESTRY MEETING
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2024
7:00 P.M. – WOMEN’S COUNCIL ROOM

Show me your ways, O Lord, and teach me your paths.
Psalm 25:3

Quorum. The November Vestry Meeting was called to order on Tuesday, November 19, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. The following Vestry members were present, representing a quorum for the conduct of business: Margie Chandler, David Frisch, Michelle Gutberlet, Anne Haskins, Kathy LaPlant, Mary Lord, Karen McGee, Noel Morelli, Paul Smith, and Jim Stipe. The following clergy members, staff members, and officers were present: David Ware, Ellen Chatard, Lucy Neale Duke, Steven Sutor, Doug Riley, and Fern Riley. The following Vestry members were absent: Jean Mellott 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 October 15, 2024. A motion to approve the minutes was made, seconded, and unanimously approved.

Reflection. Jim Stipe offered a spiritual reflection.

History Committee Report. David Ware welcomed David Wallack to the meeting and thanked him and the History Committee for the extraordinary and important work they have done to help us to more fully know our story, calling this the next stone on a continuing and long path.

David Wallack began by describing the genesis of the project, noting racial reconciliation became a goal of the Diocese in 2007 under the leadership of Bishop Eugene Sutton, the first African-American Bishop of Maryland. A Diocesan Reparations Task Force was formed, and many churches began to look inward and ponder their own history. Following Vestry and parishioner participation in the Sacred Ground anti-racism training course, the Vestry passed a resolution on February 15, 2022 to create a working group 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 and report the effect of these relationships on the holdings, wealth, character, and mission of the church. A 14 member History Committee began the work of identifying and researching archival sources from the parish, the Diocese, Baltimore and Maryland city and state historical collections, and from parishioner interviews. They initially presented their research to the Vestry in the spring of 2023 with additional discussion at the October 2023 Vestry/Staff Retreat,

and they led a series of parish presentations in the fall and winter for the congregation.

The Committee agreed to write a report of their findings, and David Wallack shared this work with the Vestry. He noted the report states when the Committee knew facts from their research and when they did not, adding that it was not their job to judge but to illuminate. He described the report as an acknowledgement and a lamentation. The Committee would like to continue their work under Vestry direction to help the parish understand this legacy together. David Ware said we will consider this report and next steps for the parish at the February Vestry/Staff Retreat. The Vestry thanked David Wallack for his dedicated, thoughtful work in writing and presenting this report.

Rector's Report [David Ware]. David announced Chrishna Williams has been hired to be the development director for the Parish Day School capital campaign. She previously worked as the Director of Development and Alumni Relations at the University of Maryland School of Social Work, and she will begin her work with PDS in December.

Keri Frisch is evaluating how we welcome newcomers to the church, looking at what we currently do and what other churches are doing. The new Welcome Cards in the pews are one step in identifying new people and helping them to connect with church activities and programs. David said Keri will make additional recommendations and a roadmap for staff and parishioners to follow. Amanda Kell is working with parishioner Vicki Chia on the November Sign-Up Sunday responses from parishioners to serve as readers, intercessors, lay eucharistic ministers, flower guild servers, altar guild attendants, and ushers in the month of December. David said Josh Laws, Chaplain to Youth and Young Adults, and Anna Noon, Director of Children's Ministries, are doing great work reaching families in their new positions, noting six new families with children have joined the church in the last two weeks.

David said the Center for Wellbeing will hold an Advent Mini-Retreat on December 14 led by Thomasina Wharton from 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. The Diocesan Vestry Vitality Day has been rescheduled to January 25.

Treasurer's Report and Stewardship Report [Doug Riley, Ellen Chatard]. Based on the October 31 Operating Budget figures, Doug Riley said we will likely have a \$27,000 deficit at the end of the year. While our actual expenses are under budgeted amounts, the shortfall comes in reduced revenue from pledging income, down \$72,000 from budgeted amounts. General Giving and Special Gifts have increased, and Doug said we are optimistic for the future.

Ellen Chatard gave a report on the 2025 Stewardship Campaign, noting \$1,024,273 in pledges have been made from 249 households, compared to \$758,733 in pledges from 212 households for the 2024 Stewardship Campaign at this time last year. She reported 150 households represent new pledges, increased pledges, or those who

did not pledge in 2024, for a net increase of \$118,000 in pledges, and 13 households are first time pledgers to the church. Pledges from 125 households are still expected to be received.

2025 Proposed Budget. Ellen distributed the 2025 Proposed Budget to the Vestry. On the income side, Ellen reminded the Vestry about our ongoing goal to move toward full program funding from current parishioner giving. The Endowment Fund allocation, computed on a three year rolling quarterly average with a withdrawal rate of 4.8% for 2024, has been decreased to 4.7% for 2025. The budgeted pledge number remains the same as in 2023 and 2024. On the expense side, salaries for employees on staff for more than one year have been increased by 3%, and medical benefit costs are up by 8% from 2024. The clergy budget includes funding for a new clergy member for three-quarters of the year and would allow a search to begin in January. The Artist in Residence allocation has increased to fund Organ Scholar Bethany Dane to substitute for Bert Landman during his upcoming sabbatical in the late spring and summer. Gas and electric and liability insurance costs have all increased from 2024. Doug said the Budget and Finance Committee has reviewed the budget and has recommended it to the Vestry for approval. He asked the Vestry to contact Ellen or him with any questions prior to discussing and voting on approval at the December Vestry meeting. The Vestry thanked Ellen for preparing and presenting the budget.

Other Business. David Frisch thanked the Vestry for supporting the youth pilgrimage to Belize in July. The group spoke enthusiastically about their experiences and the significance of their time and activities with each other and in the local community on Sunday, November 10 after the 10:00 a.m. service.

Adjournment. Doug offered a closing prayer, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:31 p.m.

Fern Riley, Registrar