

Minutes of the Vestry of the Church of the Redeemer April 22, 2025

Attendees: Charlie Merwin, Danielle Trucksess, Joshua Castano, Tiffany O'Neill, John Black, Jim Jordan, Daniel Wesley (virtual), David Woods, Cheryl Masterman, Rev. Jo Ann Jones, Lisa Raymond, Rev. Jeremy O'Neill, Rev. Peter Vanderveen

Absent: Joe Spadaro, Win Shafer

Meeting commenced at 6:30 PM in the Pembroke Room

Opening Prayer: Jo Ann Jones

Approval of Consent Agenda: Charlie introduced the consent agenda that included the approval of March 2025 meeting minutes. Peter pulled minutes from consent agenda and made a correction with respect to the “dissolution of GAIA Global Health Initiative....” in paragraph #1. Minutes should read “dissolution of the African Children’s Ministry with a final residual payment...” A second substantive correction was made regarding the important distinction between our escrow account vs. our discretionary account. He offered this distinction as a matter of rationale and transparency consistent with best practices. Peter revised the description of funeral planning and clarified he “officiated at” in addition to “participate in” and “provided sacred care.” Other typographical/spellcheck errors were corrected. Motioned for approval made by Cheryl and seconded by Lisa. The minutes were approved, as corrected, unanimously.

Accounting Warden’s Report: Daniel Wesley

Daniel attended our meeting virtually and took measures to ensure that all could hear his report before beginning. He offered the following:

New accountant: COTR has hired new accounting services and deferred to Joshua to discuss further during his report later in the meeting.

Timing of Finance Reports: Regarding the preparation of finance reports to Vestry: the Finance Committee will vet carefully expense statements by the end of each month, and after thorough review, reports will then be shared with Vestry in the final version. The timing of reports (and therefore their accuracy) will shift as we prioritize and better align investment reporting. Vanguard follows a better preparation schedule and timeframe compared to the Church Foundation’s preparation, and we will continue to prioritize and strategize committee schedules over the course of 2025. Peter emphasized the importance and expectation that Vestry will work from final expense reports and not drafts.

“Legacy Into Promise” Loan: a 2024 Resolution gave Vestry the ability to borrow against “Legacy Into Promise.” As we were able to pay the loan off early without borrowing against the endowment. The Finance Committee suggests that Vestry

3

Approve a new supplemental Resolution that states the fact that we did not borrow against it in the end, and this would be prepared out of an abundance of transparency and would memorialize fiscal constraint. Conversation ensued specifically to whether the 2024 resolution was revolving, which it is not. Joshua has drafted a Resolution for our future consideration. This resolution ought to be considered a model for “best practices” and should be available long-term so that management and vestry can refer to

these documents (2024 and 2025 resolutions as a package) should a similar need to potentially borrow against the endowment arise at a future date.

Bequests: Peter reported that we have \$1.2 million to collect from Legacy outstanding, as well as a \$500,000 gift earmarked for maintenance of the Church and Parish Hall. Daniel will report the amounts at our Annual Meeting.

Continue to be prudent: Daniel offered general comments about the U.S. Equities market: it is down 9.9% YTD and we should expect that it will affect our endowment this year: the amount drawn from it will not be very different from current actual, but rather a larger fraction of our investment income will be withdrawn as operating revenue in order to see through our core and outreach functions. He reminded us that our portfolio is global and diverse, and while carefully managing our funds under very sound stewardship, we will need to be disciplined and prudent throughout the rest of the year. During questions, Joshua spoke to the importance of bolstering the endowment and we must grow this asset. The Lycett Society is a great instrument in that regard.

The Rector's Report: Rev. Peter Vanderveen

Holy Week: Peter thanked every guild and volunteer who helped to make Holy Week reflective, meditative, and joyful. Attendance was very strong on Easter Sunday (well over 600 with over 100 online), but all other services were down. Easter service recognized newly confirmed members and The Choristers moving up and that was wonderful. Peter asked for our response to Holy Week and points made include that we should weave additional education opportunities around what Holy Week is. Peter would like to start explaining it earlier in Lent. Several vestry members also agreed that the music was exceptional, and we are encouraged to let him know how we might further improve the overall.

Meeting with Bishop: During the meeting with Peter, the Bishop spoke about closing churches and selling buildings so that those proceeds can be used for other purposes. This was a bit of a sea change in the Bishop's opinion and Peter sees more alignment than he had expected. He noted no negative response to the letter in response to Canon Doug Horner regarding the Diocesan Sacred Ask and believes that it was effective in communicating our position with care and positivity.

We completed and submitted the Parochial Report. Peter reported that there is still ambiguity around the direction the Diocese intends on making its annual parish ask. The report also used a new method for calculating parish Net Operating Income (NOI) which did not include the value of any endowment draw this year. This lowers NOI and therefore impacts the total amount of any percentage-based ask. This remains an evolving situation.

Vestry Talking Points: The talking points laid out to Vestry in February will require significantly more attention to meet goals as stated and discussed based on existing schedule. Peter would like to revitalize the sub-vestry groups, and we should watch for assignments that will require time and energy on the part of this Vestry. Daniel discussed this more in New Business.

Vestry's Warden's Report: Charlie Merwin

Charlie will consider sending a Sign-Up Genius to Vestry to populate sub committees so we can best organize ourselves. All goals should relate back to remaining and growing our position as an anchor institution within the greater community.

Discussed Vestry's role reminders: to plan for the future, please always welcome parishioners and community, families, others. Educate on and join the Lycett Society.

Stewardship on Easter: a regular parishioner emailed Charlie and Peter on Easter Sunday expressing anger and disappointment over the inclusion of a stewardship insert. This led to a retrospective discussion about whether we should have included it, and how we might approach it next time. Perhaps a disclaimer about the document's intent and/or add more detail about all that Redeemer offers.

How to handle tough conversations: if ever faced with a difficult parishioner Charlie encourages us not to react too quickly, check-in on our messaging to make sure we're always keeping the talking points in mind to stay "on message"; never let an email go answered no matter how easy or difficult it may be.

Based on some Holy Week feedback we discussed whether we should reignite passing the plate. There were different opinions but for those who spoke up, more were inclined to not pass the plate, citing distractions, and stating the importance of humility in our collection efforts.

Parish Administrator's Report: Joshua Castano

Please refer to the Church Fire Report (Addendum #1)

Please refer to the Parish Administrator's Written Report (Addendum #2)

Church Insurance: we are still waiting to see if our insurance rates will be going up. John Black suggested adding all the premiums together over the last ten years and sharing with the insurer to put recent benefit expenses in perspective.

Livestreaming issues: Audio signal processors appear to be malfunctioning and might need to be replaced.

Cintas Inspections: discovered a malfunctioning fire prevention signal in the Church; Joshua prioritizing this. Cintas also discovered that an exterior horn on the Parish House is not working, possibly an out-of-date version, or a dampness issue. Cintas is returning to service both the Parish House and Church to remediate.

Church bells: fixed but stopped working. Looking into why it is failing.

Welcome to the new Parish Staff! COTR hired Roseanne Christian who is working out great and learning a lot. We are encouraged to introduce ourselves.

Pursuant to Daniel's report, Joshua made an offer to a local person currently at Benchmark who has excellent references to oversee our finance and bookkeeping inhouse.

In the meantime, Katie Gibbs will continue to help with the books, but she has limited time to do more. Firm YPTC will step in until the new permanent person begins in May. We did not go with bookkeeping firm CLA for cost.

Acoustic Study: Scott R. Reidel and Associates is very expensive, and JD Sound & Video has recommended that we reach out to a local vendor who has an excellent reputation. The Music Committee is handling this and will report back.

Workday and Tour: Saturday, May 3rd 9-noon. Work begins at 9 and the exact schedule is TBD as of this vestry meeting. We are encouraged to attend.

Headstone Maintenance: Lisa asked a question about how headstone damage is

handled. Joshua explained it is the family's responsibility, so we have undertaken an effort to reach out to all families to explain what their family members' headstone conditions are. H.C. Woods and HCC Heritage Collection could be recommended to families, to ensure they have a few resources available for preservation purposes. The families will be invited to a May 1st workshop on how to clean headstones.

New Business

Charlie noted that we should make notes of where we fall on the 2025 assignment sheet (attachment #3). Be enthusiastic if you are assigned to give a talk!

Charlie also noted that we all need to participate in planning and attending future Vestry Sponsored social events, and we should think about what we would each like to do as a way of getting to know one another and to share our passions (bird watching, wines/whiskeys, nature walks, etc.). (attachment #4)

Organ education and strategic outreach: Peter reported that we will rename the "Organ Committee" to highlight its illuminating role within service and worship. We are planning group opportunities to learn about the instrument that will be designed to better understand why we will eventually need to purchase a new organ. A mission statement for the new organ committee has been drafted and we will be kept informed about this progress. No timeframe was set with respect to the eventual purchase. Survey responses: Hope and Charlie will discuss how to handle and disseminate the survey findings whose responses were circulated and collected at the Annual Meeting.

Church School: Peter reported that Glenn Beamer is doing an excellent job with new teachers and our new Sunday School curriculum. His background and skillset lend to the role beautifully. We will ask him to come and speak at the next Vestry meeting.

Activate our Liaison roles: Relating to Peter's report, Charlie will send a note about our committee assignments so that we can best answer questions regarding the health, vitality and activity of Committees of the Vestry. We will need to be in touch with chairs and eventually Roseanne (who is collecting results).

Closing Prayer: Jeremey O'Neill

The Meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Tiffany O'Neill

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