

Minutes of the Vestry of the Church of the Redeemer

March 18, 2025

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

Absent: Hope Knight, Win Shafer

Minutes prepared by John Black

Meeting commenced at 6:30 pm

Opening Prayer: Jo Ann Jones

Approval of Consent Agenda: Charlie introduced the Consent Agenda consisting of January 2025 meeting minutes (removing Community Connections Committee Report). Peter Vanderveen described the dissolution of GAIA Global Health Initiative with issuance of a final residual payment. The committee will decide how residual funds spent. Appropriate Parish volunteers including Prill Bradshaw are to be recognized by Peter for their diligence in this effort.

Peter also wanted to highlight the scheduling conflict that unfortunately arose between the University of Connecticut Ministry and hosting Family Promise this month. It was pointed out that Joshua worked extremely hard to find an acceptable compromise but to no avail.

Peter asked the attendees whether there was an improved sense of well being on the Christmas Village Committee since the beginning of the year(?). Both Cheryl Masterman and John Black agreed and noted the ongoing/ year-long activity relieved much of the stress encountered in the past. Motion approved to accept Consent Agenda and minutes.

Administrative Reports

Rectors Report

Peter noted that Andrew Senn did a phenomenal job with the combined concert with Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church on Sunday March 16th and should be congratulated. The concert featured 20th Century British Choral Masterpieces and was the first combining the two institutions. Peter felt this was a significant step toward community fellowship and perpetuating Redeemer's role as an anchor Institution.

Peter pointed out we have a new ping pong table in Masterman Hall that he acquired using a rector's discretionary fund. Already a winner with the younger set.

Continuing dialogue on the Diocesan Scared Ask....Peter shared a copy of the letter addressed to Canon Doug Horner of the Pennsylvania Diocese which presents the Redeemer's response to the Bishop's budget request. Charlie Merwin was most concerned that the Vestry be objective and help move this issue forward. While it was suggested that the letter reference actual programs impacted by the loss of funds, following discussion it was agreed to issue the letter as drafted by the Executive Committee and have it signed by Peter and the Rector's and Accounting Wardens.

Peter confirmed a 12% increase in the Redeemer pledge base....and excellent stewardship result.

Peter provided a short overview of his approach to funeral planning and how he plans and conducts the appropriate service. Annually he participates in between 35 - 40 funerals with 52 being the most in one year. He places significant effort on this ceremony making sure every family receives the attention required and the deceased is provided scared care by Peter standing vigil until all have left the grave. With our churchyard as a key component of the Redeemer "generations come back" and that is a fundamental concept of our institutional being.

Accounting Warden Report

Daniel provided a brief report indicating we were off to a good financial start but it was too early to make any broad forecasts.

The final results of the 2024 year produced a surplus of \$54,067.05

Daniel confirmed receipt of the anticipated early payment of the large “Legacy of the Promise” pledge which will allow payment of the internal loan and close out the account.

Following a short discussion, it was agreed the Vestry should initiate an annual investment review.

Danial and Joshua are initiating a search for a new external accounting firm.

Rector’s Warden Report

Charlie described plan to revisit the major issues discussed at the Vestry Retreat as a platform for the Vestry in 2025. Plan to have one item of New Business each month tied to one or more of the Retreat topics: Fundamental work of Church; Committees/Volunteer impact; Community Connections effort; Anchor Institution fulfilment.

Charlie reduced the length of his report in the interest of time but stressed his desired emphasis on greater Vestry visibility. Plan to have 1 vestry member take part in parish announcements once each month:

- Rotating schedule so each Vestry member should take part 1/year
- Introduce self, explain why you serve on Vestry, share some recent Vestry business
- Charlie will do first rotation in April
- Intent is assigned person will make announcements at both an 8am and 9:30am service during their month

Parish Administrators Report

Joshua was excited to report that the Church will be ready and spectacular for Holy Week with scaffolding removed and the organ fully repaired.

The restoration of the eagle lectern is underway and the results are stunning.

Joshua highlighted the Building and Churchyard Committee that has been reinstituted and reviewed a number of specific projects. A Churchyard Day will be held on Saturday May 3rd

The departure of Fran Merritt was noted and her knowledge of program support and finance will be sorely missed. Joshua is working with Mackey MacLean to focus the search and begin to identify strong candidates.

Emerging projects include:

- Narthex roof
- Chancel Arch Damage
- Acoustic Study utilizing grant`

New Business

Vestry Housekeeping - Charlie Merwin:

Future meeting dates which consist of both Tuesday evening and Sunday afternoon dates were reviewed and approved. It was stressed that time is valuable and please be on time. If a dinner meal is served it will typically be available by 6 pm.

Committee Liaison Update – Charlie Merwin:

Current Committee assignments were discussed and Charlie will confirm appointment in a separate correspondence to the Vestry.

Committee Assessment by Liaisons – Charlie Merwin:

At Charlie’s request Peter Vanderveen initiated a short discussion and shared a handout on the role of vestry members who serve as “liaison” on Committees. The role of “liaison” is different from being a member and carries with it a broader role in the context of church governance. Liaison objectives included:

- Determine Committee chair
- Does Committee have determined size?
- Are all Committee Spots filled?
- Do Committee members have identified terms
- Are there persons appointed for succession?
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Charlie requested that each Vestry liaison prepare a short report based on those questions and present it to the Vestry at the May meeting to initiate a conversation about the health of our Standing and Special Committees. We will consider doing the same thing with the Groups later in the year.

Departure of Fran Merritt – Peter Vanderveen:

Peter requested that in recognition of Fran Merritt's meritorious service to the Church her final pay check should be amended to include a bonus of an extra week. This action was approved by a unanimous vote of the Vestry.

Old Business

Peter Vanderveen distributed Hope Knight's report on the open question submitted to the Parish during the Annual Meeting.

Charlie gave a brief update on plans for 2 more Vestry-hosted events before Summer.

Closing Prayer Rev Jeremy O'Neill

Adjourn: 9:05 pm