Vestry Meeting May 19th, 2026
6:30pm

Minutes prepared by Danielle Trucksess
Additional agenda item notes prepared by Charlie Merwin

Attendees: Charlie Merwin, David Woods, Danielle Trucksess, Hope Knight, Tiffany O'Neill, Jessica Caverly Rae, Rita Davis, Scott Carter, Eric Rabe, Rev. Peter Vanderveen, Rev. Jo Ann Jones, Joshua Castaño, Cheryl Masterman (on zoom)

Absent: Daniel Wesley, Jim Jordan

Meeting commenced at 6:30 pm in the Parish House Conference Room.

Opening Prayer: Rev. Jo Ann Jones

Approval of Minutes and Consent Agenda

With April 2026 minutes, one correction is that Cheryl Masterman *was* present at the last vestry meeting. Charlie Merwin made a motion to approve consent agenda and April minutes; approved unanimously.

New Business – Added to Agenda

Receipt/Response re. Diocesan Request for Support

Gordon Fowler, COTR parishioner and member of diocesan financial committee, addressed the Vestry over Zoom.

Gordon described a $75k budget line in diocesan budget for awarding grants across the Diocese. 5 months into 2026 that amount is oversubscribed Diocese has a gap of at least $50k in meeting grant applications. Diocese considered how to raise funds to close the gap, leading to a written appeal to several large parishes including COTR.

The Rector, the Accounting Warden and Gordon met to consider the request. There are opportunities for the Diocese to improve its budgeting and forecasting for

grants. COTR can help meet the request by asking the Diocese to use our existing grant process to request funds. We are interested in the welfare of the Diocese and want to help.

Gordon highlighted 4 specific causes the Diocese wants to support through this ask:

1. Corinth 13 – an after-school program that has led directly to 25 baptisms
2. Small churches in the Delaware Deanery need a consolidated Youth Director
3. A growing parish in Kennet Square (150 members) needs an Associate Rector
4. A Germantown parish needs support for food bank and other programs for the local disadvantaged

QUESTION: How much money was required and how many parishes were asked to give it?

Peter answered the appeal was to 10 large parishes, without any specific ask to any parish.

There were several other questions and comments on topics including:

- Why would parishioners give money to support Diocesan grants program instead of supporting COTR's grants program?
- Appeal letter implied parishes should draw down their endowments to meet the ask – this is a bad example and not a fiscally responsible action
- COTR doesn't have money to support local causes our own parish members care about – why do we feel we can support causes from elsewhere?

Peter addressed the group:

- COTR has a reputation of not caring about smaller parishes and their needs, despite our increases to our Diocesan pledge the past few years
- We do care
- Several people at COTR believe in the Diocesan programs Gordon highlighted and will give if asked
- Rather than say no, would prefer to offer to help through our Grants program
- This would be a productive way to develop the conversation within Diocese over fiscal transparency and governance

Motion for Resolution:

Vestry resolves to support Rector in responding to diocesan letter along lines of

"Church of Redeemer wants to help. We believe we could in range of $5-10k. We need information on the programs this would support in the form of grant applications, whether new or using those already provided to the Diocese. We will put these through our Grants process to review and approve."

Rector's response could include a list of the 4 causes that Gordon identified.

Rector will provide a copy of the response to the Vestry.

Resolution passed unanimously.

Rector and Wardens will prepare and send the letter. Intent is to send prior to Pentecost 5/24.

Administrative Reports

Rector's Report

Rev. Peter Vanderveen - Peter shared that he was very pleased with the Garden Party on May 9, 2026. Stoneleigh was a great place. Andrew Senn did an excellent job with choirs and displaying organ pipes on 2nd floor. Peter would recommend doing it there again. There were not additional auction/fundraising items as there had been in years past. David Woods added that he heard from many people that the sentiment was very positive about the Garden Party and it was the right venue. There was a lot of help from Edward Senn who works there. David is hopeful Stoneleigh would like to work with Redeemer again.

Parish Administrator's Report

Joshua Castaño wanted to convey how the church building is going to continue to require attention. Masonry work is being done. Two other areas still in major need: 1) Narthex - water coming through the stone and 2) Tower - masonry project sealant was put at top of tower but temporary fix; need to rebuild crenulations. These will require substantial costs, so Joshua wanted people to note this in order

to be prepared for these repair costs in the next few years. Parishioner Nancy Schriber would like to put a bench with a plaque (plaque would not be on the tree) in memory of her son Peter Schriber. Hope Knight made a motion to approve; Charlie M. seconded. All in favor. Joshua continued - the iIrrigation system is off right now by memorial garden and won't be fixed until after May 21, 2026. Another item - Durston Saylor grew up in parish and is currently in NJ. Mr. Saylor would like to buy a plot in churchyard. As non-parishioner fee would be $4k; Joshua discussed the idea that we could charge a fee and the remainder could be paid through Mr. Saylor's services as a professional photographer. Joshua will contact him. Burns Hall plans - acousticians would recommend putting stuff on ceilings or walls. One idea is doing all sides of the walls. Architects are concerned that it won't be a seamless finish. Hope is to finalize a plan before Christmas village. Joshua said he would get samples for us to see in the future before we approve. The goal is to balance aesthetics and acoustics. Also needed upgrade on computers. One small project is cooling units - one of the exterior fans got damaged (Pennswood side of church).

Accounting Warden's Report

Eric Rabe shared that heating system in youth cottage has failed and it's not a good idea to have a building without heat. Question is what to do. Interior has been damaged. Things have been fixed and replaced over the years. There is plenty of opportunity to spend money on the cottage yet there is no money budgeted for that. Might need to re-think the funding we have done. He suggested getting three people (plus Eric) on a sub committee to discuss options for what to do with youth cottage (called "Youth Cottage Task Force").

Rector's Warden's Report

Charlie M. re: liaisons - looking for more Buildings and Grounds committee members. Scott is the vestry liaison. Newcomers - Charlie M. is interested in doing that. Charlie reminded vestry members to check assigned Sundays for giving your vestry message.

Vestry retreat - June 13, 2026 at 8am. There will be an agenda and 1 hour worth of vestry meeting. Re: the 4 sub committees; diocesan relationship committee has not met yet. We will break into the 4 groups.

Parochial Report Briefing

Rev. Peter Vanderveen - this report can be viewed upon request. Attendance, online presence etc.

Old Business

Christmas Village Update
Cheryl M. - Christmas Village is Nov. 20 & 21 2026. The Friday night dinner event will be more inclusive in terms of everyone feeling welcome regardless of attendance ticket price/donations. There will still be an auction. Saturday will be similar to before but all inside the parish hall. 11-12 vendors. A little more intimate.

175th Committee Update
Rev. Peter Vanderveen - there was a productive meeting held on May 3rd. All who attended and others have expressed interest in participating in a committee. Peter will arrange for follow up meeting.

Additional comments:
Rev. Peter Vanderveen - some difficulty finding people to apply for the position of Associate Rector at COTR. This has been surprising and he has been trying to get the word out and network. Redeemer "Voice" (former newspaper - Peter would like to bring it back, quarterly or monthly. There is an opportunity to have lengthier articles than in the Redeemer News.

Closing Prayer: Rev. Jo Ann Jones

Meeting adjourned: 8:20 pm.