

Minutes of the Meeting of the Vestry
Church of the Redeemer, Bryn Mawr, PA
Tuesday, June 13, 2023
7:00-9:00 PM in Rm 125 and via Zoom

Vestry members present: Paul Adkins, John Black, Catherine Carruthers, Chris Chojnacki, Kevin Leahy, Lisa Raymond, Susan Rushing, Tracy Steele, and Chris Zafiriou

Redeemer Staff present: Tory Dunkle, Francesca Merritt, The Rev. Jo Ann Jones, The Rev. Winnie Smith and The Rev. Peter Vanderveen

Absent: Jennifer Copas, Edwin Shafer, and Joe Spadaro

Recorder: Francesca Merritt

The meeting of the Vestry was called to order at 7:05 pm. Winnie Smith gave the opening prayer.

Approval of Consent Agenda: The consent agenda consisted of the minutes of the April 2023 vestry meeting and committee reports. Paul Adkins made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda, and Kevin Leahy seconded the motion. The Consent agenda was unanimously approved.

End of Program Year Summary: Peter began by offering a review of the program year. Reestablishing all the programs was a challenge since the return of people post-Covid was slower than expected. Significant transitions in staffing also presented difficulties. Nonetheless, programs showed growth throughout the year, and participation in the spring was very strong. Peter also addressed issues cited in the vestry's rector's review and spoke of ways to improve communications.

Report from Initiative Groups:

John Black reported that the External Growth committee is focusing on three major areas: the music program, the youth program, and the Christmas village event. The committee has been discussing various ways to increase attendance and participation through these already robust programs.

Tracy Steele led the discussion on the Internal Growth Initiatives committee matters. Formal name tags for vestry members were ordered by Tracy Steele and will be distributed in vestry member mailboxes upon arrival. These are an incentive to invite vestry to be open and welcoming to parishioners and newcomers. During the announcements, there will be discussion about the peace as a time to connect with one another. She asked the vestry to take the lead and ask people what their name is. To create connectedness between the service and coffee hour/Adult Forum, she encouraged vestry members to be present in the narthex when people are proceeding out and to encourage folks to proceed to the Parish House.

New Business:

Youth Programming

Winnie Smith, Tory Dunkle, and Rebecca Northington provided a review of the Arc of Formation, which is a grounding document for all our formation programs. Winnie explained that the Arc of Formation is a guide for spiritual growth from earliest childhood through adulthood. She emphasized that formation is circuitous, not linear; continually circling back to stories and lesson is a means to an increasingly developed understanding.

Tory Dunkle reported on the wide scope and breadth of the formation program. It includes exposure to the Scriptures, theology, worship, and the ways the church puts its faith into action.

Rebecca spoke about the Redeemer Youth Group, and the work of integrating Christian ideas and faith into the youth's increasingly diverse sets of influence and interests. The group discusses who we are as humans and who God is to us, and they explore who God calls them to be.

Tracy suggested that once the Arc template provided to the vestry is finalized and graphically designed it could be made available to the NEW committee and posted in the narthex. The more it's made available, the more effective it will be.

Winnie added that this fall the first Sunday of every month will be a truly aligned Sunday throughout the arc from the young kids through adult forum.

Vestry calendar: Ken announced that he is putting together a vestry calendar with important events for vestry members to be aware of and consider attending.

Did you know content: Chris Z. discussed the "Did you know?" in the insert of the news. If there are committees that need attention or volunteers, vestry members can contact Arden Saligman so that it can be highlighted.

Old Business

Christmas Village - John Black discussed the Christmas Village in his previous update. Tracy added there were many volunteers at the kick-off meeting. The vestry was asked to come up with an auction item. The bidding system will be streamlined this year.

Churchyard Bylaws - Peter asked the vestry to consider adding specific criteria for the purchase of graves to the churchyard bylaws. There have been several requests from nonmembers to buy graves in the last two months; the current bylaws require vestry approval of the sale, but the bylaws do not include grounds for acceptance or rejection. The only requirement is to make a formal request to the vestry. An ad hoc committee was formed to study this issue and is comprised of Peter Vanderveen, John Black, Tracy Steele and Catherine Carruthers. Peter will distribute the current bylaws to this committee.

Attendance numbers/analysis – John Black discussed the attendance statistics circulated to the vestry. The trends are positive. There is some seasonality in the change in numbers and the good news is in person attendance is coming back. The online attendance is lower, but there is evidence that there is a core group that really needs it. Tory added that she is seeing new families consistently. Vacation Bible School was discussed as a consideration for families with children, but the expectation of such a program needs to be better understood (connecting with the community or bringing in new families).

Villanova Marketing Group – Peter announced that a team of students and faculty from Villanova will be reviewing our marketing and communications practices. This will be a three month project, beginning in September. They will help us create a strategic plan for the expansion of the media we use and for effectively targeting specific demographic groups. They are going to be on campus regularly and will have meetings with staff very two weeks. The Community Awareness Task Force will be included in student meetings.

Rector's Report - Peter noted that three of the four candidates who had on campus interviews were still being considered for the position. The decision and offer will be extended soon after discussions with the search committee.

There is a new posting out for the position of parish administrator. Once again, Mackie MacLean is receiving applications and conducting initial interviews.

Playground donations remain open.

Prysm will be returning to the campus for a summer camp that will run for two weeks in August in the Parish House.

Peter has had discussions with Eric Rabe about the Diocese and its request for a significant increase in the assessment. It appears going forward the voluntary share may be replaced by a single assessment of 9%.

Peter proposed a half-day vestry retreat in September at which the staff can provide the vestry a more comprehensive understanding of how they work individually and collectively to form, manage, and review the programs of the church.

Peter invited vestry members to pass along to him any names of those who might like to participate in the growth breakfasts.

Rector's Warden Report – Tracy Steele talked about the September vestry retreat and dates will be circulated for consideration. Tracy also spoke about the Rector's annual evaluation meeting.

Accounting Warden Report - Chris Zafiriou reported that, financially, the church is in very good shape. There have been some staff losses, Michael Diorio (Director of Music) and Jen Leith (Parish Administrator). In terms of revenue, it is difficult to know how the year is really going to shape up. There is still an outstanding balance of \$365K on the Legacy into Promise loan, which has been significantly paid down in the last nine months. There are some small trusts which may require going to Orphan's Court to clean up. John Pickering and Chris Z. will investigate the process.

Jo Ann Jones gave the closing prayer. The meeting ended at 9:02 pm.