

Minutes of the Meeting of the Vestry  
Church of the Redeemer, Bryn Mawr, PA  
Tuesday, November 8, 2022  
7:00-9:00 PM in Masterman Hall and via Zoom

Vestry members present: Paul Adkins, Catherine Caruthers, Chris Chojnacki, Elisabeth Cooke, Al Greenough, Kevin Leahy, Melanie LeBoeuf, Harry Miller, Susan Rushing, Tracy Steele, and Chris Zafiriou

Absent: Jennifer Copas

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

Recorder: Francesca Merritt

The meeting of the Vestry was called to order at 7:01 pm. Jo Ann gave the opening prayer.

**Approval of Consent Agenda**

The consent agenda consisted of the October 2022 vestry minutes and committee reports. Al requested time for the Vestry to discuss issues regarding the Adult Forum. Chris Chojnacki asked if all the committees submit reports. Fran answered that not all the committees' submit reports every month. Tracy asked for Fran to send her the list of committees that are solicited for reports each month. Melanie made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda and Kevin seconded. The Vestry unanimously approved.

**New Business**

**Welcome of Jen Leith** – Peter welcomed Jen Leith as the new Parish Administrator. Vestry members introduced themselves, and Jen spoke of her experience to date as Administrator and her previous work history.

**Adult Forum**

Al voiced concern about the low attendance at the adult forums. He noted that the quality of presentations have been high and wondered if steps could be taken to improve participation. Various potential changes in location were discussed, as well as specific program topics.

**Christmas Village** - Elisabeth announced that a mailing went out to raise awareness about the Christmas Village taking place on November 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>. She requested that Vestry members attend the event and invite friends. She also asked for Vestry members to volunteer for the registration table and greet people.

**Old Business**

**Stewardship** – Chris Chojnacki reported that, to date, 134 pledges have been returned for 2023, and they amount to a 6.3% increase over their 2022 amounts. 7 of the pledges received in 2022 will not be renewed in 2023 due either to death (6) or to relocation. 4 new families have become new pledgers. At the end of November there will be a follow-up process. Chris Zafiriou asked why the pledges over \$10K did not reflect a bigger increase. Peter noted that the Stewardship committee has focused on getting lower pledgers to move more towards the median.

**Debrief on Open House/Jazz Vespers** – Paul thanked the Vestry and staff for assisting with the Open House and Jazz Vespers. He also thanked Jo Ann for making personal invitations for others to attend. The Open House did not have the kind of numbers Paul was hoping for, although it afforded a good bonding time for

the Vestry. The Vespers service was well attended, including children, and Paul thanked Peter for his assistance in the liturgy. Future use of yard signs for advertising was discussed. Tracy suggested incorporating the RYG fun fair in the planning. Paul said the graveyard tour was very popular. Peter emphasized listing an open house does not mention what kind of experience people would have and that more specificity about activities would be helpful. He also noted that the musicians for the vespers were excellent, but he didn't feel that the liturgy melded well. Paul pointed out that this was a new process which showed initiative in holding the event.

**Playground Funding Options** - Peter is preparing a draft proposal for raising additional funds to cover the cost of the playground. He will distribute this to the vestry soon. Catherine suggested that if people donate, they could have their child's name on something, such as a plaque on the fence.

**Christmas Village** - Elisabeth said there will be yard signs available for parishioners to advertise the Christmas Village.

**Nominating Committee Update** – Al reported that there were two potential nominees carried over from 2020, and that in all the committee has 31 candidates under review. Responses were received from the request for nominations from the parish. There will be a report out at the December vestry meeting of those candidates selected for nomination.

**Strategic Plan Updates** - Tracy asked what could the vestry do between now and the end of the year to drive growth? Elisabeth said to bring back a sense of community Vestry members should invite people to come to the Christmas Village and to come to church. Melanie highlighted that Lessons and Carols is coming up, and this would be another good opportunity to invite guests. Chris Z. asked if we could do yard signs to advertise events more broadly. Elisabeth suggested limiting livestream to only certain Sundays or hours other than the time of worship. Peter said he thought it was too soon, following the pandemic, to do this.

Al briefly spoke about attendance statistics. Our records show that attendance for 2022 is essentially equivalent to what it was in 2021. The vestry reviewed a handout graphing year-to-year attendance numbers in support of this conclusion.

Catherine announced that Sophie's Eagle Scout project was approved, and she will begin working on her project in the area behind the youth cottage.

### **Administrative Report**

Jen attended her first finance committee meeting and is beginning to work through the budget. She noted that there was a major plumbing problem during her first week caused by a clog in a drainage pipe. It did some damage in the hospitality suite. Harry Miller suggested that we may be able to get discounted vendor bills since we pay our bills quickly. Chris Z. will be discussing ways to improve such as automated bill pay with Jen.

### **Rector's Report**

Peter reported that the church activities and programs are rebuilding in fits and starts. The longstanding habits of church attendance on Sundays were seriously disrupted by the pandemic. This has led to significant stress on the staff.

Peter asked that we cultivate greater awareness of the volunteer needs for any proposed church events. Volunteers are harder to find. Coming out of pandemic we just don't have the same ready resources.

Peter will begin to hold his breakfasts surrounding how to talk about Redeemer and invite people to church. The first group for the breakfast would include possible co-leaders who could help keep the conversation going across the months that we do this. Peter is working out an arrangement with the Merion Cricket Club to get a private room at no cost.

Paul commented that the Duruflé Requiem this past weekend was fabulous, and Alex (our organ scholar) was phenomenal. He remarked how fortunate we are to be able to have this kind of quality offering.

### **Accounting Warden's Report**

Chris Zafiriou reported that we are in good shape for this year with either a small deficit or small surplus. A draft budget will be submitted in December and by that time we will have more information regarding stewardship. Pledging gives the finance committee the information needed to make a healthy budget.

Winnie Smith gave the closing prayer. The meeting concluded at 8:48 pm and the elected Vestry members participated in a closed Executive Session.