

Minutes of the Meeting of the Vestry
Church of the Redeemer, Bryn Mawr, PA
Tuesday, December 14, 2021
7:00-9:00 PM via Zoom

Vestry members present: Paul Adkins, Jim Buck, Elisabeth Cooke, Lisa Davis, Melanie LeBoeuf, Harry Miller, Susan Rushing, Tracy Steele, Jacques Vauclain and Christopher Zafiriou.

Absent: Jennifer Copas, Al Greenough.

Redeemer staff present: The Rev. Peter Vanderveen, The Rev. Jo Ann Jones, The Rev. Michael Palmisano, Ken Garner, Francesca Merritt, and Jay Einspanier.

Recorder: Francesca Merritt

The meeting of the Vestry was called to order at 7:33 pm. Jo Ann gave the opening prayer.

Approval of Consent Agenda

Lisa moved to approval of the November 2021 meeting minutes and committee reports. Elisabeth seconded the motion. The vestry unanimously approved.

Old Business

Budget overview – Chris reported that the 2022 budget will be presented for approval in January. The inflation rate used for the budget will be 3.25%. He recommended maintaining the 4.25% draw on the endowment, though he advised that a lower rate in future years would be a more prudent and sustainable draw. The budget projects a substantial increase in revenue from Parish House use.

Accounting Warden Report

Chris is working with the Investment Committee to draw up an investment policy statement. The Finance Committee is also mapping long term trends in membership and pledging. A great deal of parish data is being collected, organized and analyzed according to five different rates of giving (bins). Movement of pledging units within the bins, along with the loss and gains of pledges, will provide a substantial picture of the primary challenges and the areas of strength in stewardship for the coming years.

Committee Chairperson Report – Report on Communications & Stewardship by Ken Garner

Ken stated that he would give specific updates on the parish survey, stewardship, the new website and the Voice publication. Initial response to the survey, Envisioning Redeemer's Future, was slow. It will be redistributed in January, with the hope of gaining more replies. We received 76 responses; 387 persons opened the email. 19% responded.

Ken highlighted the various changes in the new website, noting that ACS built the new website free of charge.

Stewardship results to date show an overall increase of 6.20%, with 259 pledges received, for a total of \$887K. Ken remarked that the stewardship task force has done incredible work. Victoria Leidner and Ryan Northington are new members to the committee. There will be mail follow-up for 1) LYBUNTs (pledging last year but not yet this year), 2) those who give but do not pledge, 3) members who do not pledge. This spring we will reinvigorate the Lycett Legacy Society.

The Voice will continue but in an all-digital format. It will appear on the website and via email. The look of it will not change. For anyone who asks a print copy of the Voice will be mailed to them.

A Livestream channel is being developed, with designated folders for Sunday worship, special music and concerts, and funerals. There will be four separate channels, all accessible from one link from the livestream page.

Ken has noticed a big uptick in the opening of emails, which is typically 33% and has recently grown to 52-55%. Ken also mentioned when it comes to church growth, the most impact comes through individual parishioners inviting people to church. Vestry members commented on the possibility of an Adult Forum to hear from parishioners who are successful with inviting people to church.

Old Business

Christmas Village Update – Elisabeth reported the Christmas Village event netted about \$60K. Elisabeth thanked the team and everyone for supporting the event. Beyond the fundraising, it was a successful community building event. The neighbors appreciated being invited. The night event was very successful, and the focus on children on families was also excellent. The committee did debrief as a group to discuss areas where we can improve.

Nominating Committee – Jim reported that two years ago the vestry proposed having the incoming chair for the following year sit through the committee process. Jim sat through it last year, and Al Greenough will be the chair for next year. Since Tracy has been approved by the vestry to continue into a second consecutive term, the Nominating Committee had to find only three candidates. Jim listed the Nominating Committee members. The three nominees are all under 50 and are very accomplished individuals that also have a depth of involvement at Redeemer. They are: Catherine Carruthers, Chris Chojnacki, and Kevin Leahy. Catherine joined Main Line Health as the Director of Brodsky Breast Center. She and her husband Dave, started at Redeemer in 2008, and they have three children that were baptized here and attend church school. Chris is an Army veteran with an MBA that moved here in 2014. He works at Vanguard. Chris has been deeply involved in stewardship and communications in addition to hand crafting the signs for the Christmas Village. Kevin Leahy is a physician and is a professor otolaryngology at the University of Pennsylvania. He and his wife, Devika, have 2 children. Jim made a motion that these three members of the parish be presented to the parish as nominees to the vestry at the annual meeting on the second Sunday in February. Tracy seconded, and the vestry unanimously approved. Peter abstained from the vote.

New Business

Christmas Service Update

Peter stated that Covid-19 is starting to surge again with the new omicron variant. We are still planning to have all of our Christmas Eve services; the 4 pm pageant, 6 pm Matins, and 10 pm Eucharist. There will be a Christmas day service and Sunday regular services on the 26th. Masks will be mandatory. For Lessons and Carols, in-person attendance was down, although the online attendance was robust. Peter noted that we are going to let people know that we are not maintaining the social distancing pews for the Christmas pageant.

Rector's Warden Report

Tracy reported that Jacques will be leading the Community Awareness Task Force. She also noted the impending location of a designated smoking area outside of the building.

Administrator's Report

Jay reported that a cabinet will be installed for the livestream equipment in the Flower Guild room the week between Christmas and New Year's. This should cut down on the livestream difficulties. Jay is also a member of the storm water committee for the Township. Lower Merion Township is planning to initiate a storm water fee for property owners. It could potentially have significant impact on the church budget, as high as \$10K a year.

Rector's Report

Peter emphasized the success of the Christmas Village by every measure. He also noted how attractive the Parish House is proving to be to visiting groups. Peter said he had signed 110 letters thanking benefactors for the Christmas Village. He remarked that this is a striking number and it's a joy to look at all the people that contributed in a meaningful way. If they think about being part of the parish with us, events like these let people see how we operate. Ken is just finishing up the note cares for stewardship in thanks for their pledging.

Peter asked for approval of the submitted housing allowance resolutions (see attached). Jacques made a motion to accept all three and Jim seconded. The vestry unanimously approved.

Michael gave the closing prayer. The meeting concluded at 9:19 PM.

Housing Allowance Resolutions

Whereas, Section 107 of the Internal Revenue Code specifies that the amount of a minister's compensation that is designated in advance by their employer as a housing allowance is not taxable in computing federal income taxes to the extent that it is used to pay for actual expenses; and

Whereas, the Rev. Peter Vanderveen is compensated by the Church of the Redeemer exclusively for services as a minister; and

Whereas, the Church of the Redeemer provides the Rev. Peter Vanderveen with a parsonage.

Therefore, it is resolved, that, of the total compensation paid to the Rev. Peter Vanderveen for calendar year 2022, \$20,000 is hereby designated as a housing allowance pursuant to Section 107 of the Internal Revenue Code.

This designation will be in effect without change for each succeeding year unless otherwise noted and approved by the vestry of the Church of the Redeemer.

Whereas, section 107 of the Internal Revenue Code specifies that the amount of ministers' compensation that is designated in advance by their employer as a housing allowance is not taxable in computing federal income taxes to the extent that it is used to pay for actual expenses; and

Whereas, the Rev. Michael Palmisano is compensated by the Church of the Redeemer exclusively for services as a minister; and

Whereas, the Church of the Redeemer does not provide the Rev. Palmisano with a parsonage.

Therefore, it is resolved, that, of the total compensation paid to the Rev. Michael Palmisano for calendar year 2022, \$25,000 is hereby designated as a housing allowance pursuant to section 107 of the Internal Revenue Code.

Whereas, section 107 of the Internal Revenue Code specifies that the amount of ministers' compensation that is designated in advance by their employer as a housing allowance is not taxable in computing federal income taxes to the extent that it is used to pay for actual expenses; and

Whereas, the Rev. Jo Ann Jones is compensated by the Church of the Redeemer exclusively for services as a minister; and

Whereas, the Church of the Redeemer does not provide the Rev. Jones with a parsonage.

Therefore, it is resolved, that, of the total compensation paid to the Rev. Jo Ann Jones for calendar year 2022, \$35,000.00 is hereby designated as a housing allowance pursuant to section 107 of the Internal Revenue Code.