

Minutes of the Meeting of the Vestry
Church of the Redeemer, Bryn Mawr, PA
Tuesday, January 14, 2020
7:00-9:00 PM

Vestry Members Present: Susan Adeniyi-Jones, Jim Buck, Andrea Cayley, Jan Clarke, Lisa Davis, Mackie MacLean, Andrew Masterman, Carolyn Morris, Tracy Steele, Scott Stephan, Carter Williams.

Absent: Jacques Vauclain

Redeemer Staff Present: The Rev. Peter Vanderveen, The Rev. Jo Ann Jones, The Rev. Michael Palmisano, Francesca Merritt, Jay Einspanier.

Recorder: Francesca Merritt

The meeting of the Vestry was called to order at 7:03 PM.

Peter gave the opening prayer.

The meeting minutes from the December Vestry meeting were approved.

Review of the January 12, 2020 Meeting

Andrew reviewed the major points of Sunday's meeting for those who were not able to attend. Andrew asked for general impressions of where we are and ideas of what we can discuss at the retreat in February.

Jim appreciated Matt's humility and thought he had heard us very well as reflected in his responses. He was able to take some of the macro trends and apply them to Redeemer. Jim liked the goal of having three pastoral priorities. Jim pointed out the only growth was acquisition from other parishes.

Lisa expressed she liked the idea of parish priorities.

Jan said he presented a very good framework to assess where we are and some simple elegant approaches to making the changes we want to make.

Carter said Matt had a nice way about him. This is the fourth growth summit in seven years. He expressed that what do we do with this information is more important than what was heard on Sunday. Carter suggested that we try different things, such as doing an Evensong every Sunday or stopping the 11:15 am service.

Jay stated he has known Matt for 8 years and he presents in a soft way. Jay said as staff he will assist in anything he is asked to do.

Jo Ann added that it will call for a different use of vestry time in the coming years before there is a crisis.

Michael said that Matt's dedication to the church to was clear. He came away with a sense of urgency in that we have something life giving that we are offering to the community.

Mackie stated that Matt had done his homework and was a very good facilitator. Matt expressed that he is willing to remain a facilitator and come back for check-ins.

Andrew stated it is not often that Matt speaks with parishes that are coming from a position of strength.

Susan expressed concern about the 3% decline that doesn't seem to be alarming, but it really means in that in 15 years the congregation will be half of what it is now. She thought it was helpful to point out that we don't truly understand why people come to church. The way to draw in new people is developing people's relationship and walk with Jesus Christ. The other thing Matt mentioned is change and how difficult it is, there is the willingness, but there is discomfort with making change and moving forward.

Carolyn thought it was a good time to address this and asked if this information will be presented at the annual meeting? Andrew said yes, that this needs to be a parish wide engagement and ask for volunteers to make themselves known. He added that how we communicate this will have to come out of our vestry retreat. Peter said that MEG has been disbanded until the vestry retreat. During the retreat we will discuss how to recreate MEG and also the 5-3-1 rules that were presented.

Carter added it is important to see the people who are on the rolls but not attending and those who were on the rolls to be involved in this discussion. Tracy said we should tie into that why the newcomers come.

Andrea stated that she has experienced missing folks who have left the parish even in the time that she has been back of the US.

Susan asked is there any idea of what our digital community is like? Peter said that we know who reads our emails.

Peter said this is a time of real challenge and opportunity. We have to find a way to be the kind of community where we are a priority.

Tracy walked away with a sense of concern with the trends. She thought we have to be bold and open to conversation and communication that might not be comfortable.

Fran added that some of the metrics were not surprising given that she keeps the metrics. She liked that Jo Ann added that the newcomer piece was missing to the juxtaposition of baptisms versus funerals.

Peter shared with the vestry an article from Sunday's Washington Post. The main line denominations are just caught in the mix of publicity between the Roman Catholic Church and the Evangelicals. If people are not even coming to church, they don't want to spend an hour with

people that don't know why they are there. We should be serious about why we are here and why that is important.

Rector's Warden Report

Andrew expressed that Redeemer had a very successful Advent and into Christmas. He was shocked at how many people were in attendance at the Christmas pageant. Andrew requested a comprehensive communication about the developments in the parish house to go out.

Accounting Warden's Report

YTD Operating Report

Mackie stated that the pledge receipts came in higher than anticipated a month ago at \$128,623. The deficit for the year is \$11,415.

2020 Budget

Mackie explained that initially in the budget, we were looking at potential of \$100,000 deficit. The finance committee looked at tightening the belt and increasing the spending rule. This is how we achieved the deficit number of \$231. Peter and Jay went over every line item, and \$23K-24K was cut out of the budget. The finance committee increased the spending rule to 4.5% which adds \$24,000 to the operating funds. We have a capital spending account, which is currently at \$40,000. We bumped it up to \$63,000 this year, this was due to the organ repairs. We have several issues including repairing the furnace at the rectory, replacing the air conditioning in the church and patching the south roof of the church. Mackie stated we are backing off adding to the capital spending budget. This brings us down to the \$231 deficit in the 2020 budget.

The projected income for pledges in 2020 is \$994,000. Mackie said cuts were made across the board including to the Rector's discretionary account and the percentage for the staff pay increase. Mackie encouraged the vestry to read into the line items of the budget.

Carolyn said questions about HVAC system of the church and that it has been uncomfortable in the church during services. Peter said the systems in the church cannot keep up with some of the situations like doors being opened. Jay said the system is 20 years old. We do have money in the buildings fund in the endowment that is earmarked for replacing the system.

Carter questioned at what level is it fair to go and do the assessment of what the priorities are. Youth education gets 1/5 of what the music program gets. Are we comfortable with putting off the improvements that are needed?

Carolyn added real concerns about the budgeted pledge income and looking at individuals who didn't fulfill their pledges. Carolyn has had a lot of questions on Outreach money about how we account for outreach money in and out, it's not in a way folks can understand.

Susan added that if folks knew if the giving was used in a responsible manner, they might give. Increasingly there is a feeling of entitlement to information.

Mackie said the projections for pledge giving, after looking at the numbers and discussing with Ken, is a cautiously optimistic number.

The 2020 budget was approved.

Legacy into Promise

Mackie commented the cash flow expected this month was \$501,251. We are \$350,000 short of that. \$250,000 consists of one line item. We have a procedure for following up for individuals that are late. Peter added that Betsy has not counted any checks that have come in after the 1st of January. Cumby has been slow on bills, so from a cash flow point of view, we are slightly better off. Mackie noted on the balance sheet are some items not up to date. Jay is working on combining two endowments into one and putting together an endowment for John Gregg.

Peter stated that Cumby is trying to get work done despite the weather and will put together a fuller picture for the retreat. Jay added that Cumby has stated they are 3 weeks behind. The hope is that the walls will be going up by the end of January.

Annual Meeting Details

February 2nd. There is no meeting on the second Tuesday of the month for the vestry. The annual report is being compiled which will be distributed online.

Nominating Committee

Carter stated that everything has been published. Meeting minutes will be kept for next year, including names and files from this year. He encouraged those for next year to make it more of an ongoing process.

Peter mentioned not in accord with bylaws, nominations need be published on the church doors ahead of the annual meeting. Since we can get everything out electronically, the congregation does have the opportunity to nominate outside of the committee. Peter has not heard of any outside nominations.

Liaison Updates

Outreach – Jan reported there were fewer Christmas bags due to lack of space. Total of Joyful Giving was a little less probably due to the shorter time period. The new program in Joyful Giving was the Ardmore food pantry at St. Mary's which received the highest giving. Peter thanked Jan and the Flower Guild for all the beautifully done arrangements for the recent funerals and the holiday.

Adult Education – Jim reported they are discussing if they can meet the Sunday of the annual meeting. Michael discussed the Forum series on Hope ongoing in January to the end of February. Michael will interview parishioners in February, one on each Sunday to give an account of their faith. The GOE (General Ordination Exam) class is running.

NEW Committee – Scott is organizing things for annual report. Newcomers that have church school age children were invited to the parent's party. There will be a coffee or tea for

newcomers in March. Michael said he is discussing with Fran and Caroline how to capture folks that have children with baptisms here.

Bazaar Outreach – Carolyn stated the Bazaar is meeting twice monthly to see if participation could be increased and it has. Some folks feel vestry doesn't understand how important the Bazaar is to the parish. Questions and worries raised were similar to those raised on Sunday, where do we find the next group of leadership and how are we going to engage people. The Bazaar made over \$80K, but most of the people that were heavily involved want to do it one more year, and then think it's time for younger folks to be involved. They would like to identify at least one person who would like to spearhead it in 2021. It would be helpful if vestry, clergy, and staff have ideas of who to nominate.

Youth Education – Michael said the lower school programming is running well even in Tory's absence. The youth program is getting ready for confirmation at the end of February. Communicants will have a partial day retreat in February. The RYG work trip is at the end of February. The Arc of Formation was shared with the group for the first time.

Pastoral Care – Jo Ann reported the Christmas plants delivery went well with 39 plants delivered. Caroling took place at Rosemont Care Center. There is a plan to recruit new healing ministers and train them this year.

Rector's Report

Peter felt that Redeemer had a very good Christmas season which was very well attended. The 6 pm Christmas Eve service now has an integrity of its own and we are continuing to see the shift in how people come to church on Christmas. There was a massive amount of work with several funerals adding to busy holiday season. Peter continues to get emails from attendees of the funeral for Francis Seidler. They noticed the beauty of the building, the integrity of the service and how everything that was done was exceptionally personal. Peter expressed we did our best to be attentive and to give them the kind of service that anyone would deserve. Three baptisms were held in a row. In each of those baptisms exists opportunities to strengthen the bond and they have been more present and pledging. Ken suggested we add bios of the families to the bulletin when we have a baptism. At the baptism on Sunday, the grandparents used to be members who moved to Paoli, and Peter had performed the couple's wedding about 3 years ago. This was an example of the generational connection of Redeemer. Peter has been really busy writing to all donors to Legacy into Promise and hand written notecards to everyone who has made a pledge. He thanked everyone for making calls around stewardship and encouraged those who haven't had a chance to do so. Peter was glad that staff members were glad to be part of the conversation on Sunday. It would be good to have a closer connection to the staff and the vestry, so the vestry has a better understanding of who does what. There will be a conversation with the wardens of how to have the staff best work with the vestry in a better way. Finally, Peter is very appreciative of what the staff does during this busy time. Matt said several times that vestry needs to be careful of asking more of what staff has to do. This staff has added a lot more work with Legacy into Promise. The staff is really committed to the heart of Redeemer. Peter thanked the retiring vestry members.

Michael wanted to clarify from last month's meeting, he meant to get approval for the RYG fundraiser. The vestry approved.

Michael gave the closing prayer.

The meeting closed at 9:09 pm.