

Grace Episcopal Church
Minutes of the April Vestry Meeting
April 14, 2020

Special Note: There is currently a worldwide pandemic of COVID-19 coronavirus. On April 3, 2020, the State of Missouri issued a Stay at Home order, which prohibits gatherings of ten or more people. Grace Church has closed its facilities to all gatherings, both church and community related. This evening's Vestry meeting took place via Zoom, with Vestry, clergy and guests connecting to the meeting from the safety of their homes by way of computer or phone connection.

Vestry Present: Mike Casey, Katie Compton, John Dotson , Kelly Eschenroeder, Rebecca Harrison, Mike Heyer, Chris Ludbrook, Pat O'Brien, Susie Reis

Vestry Absent: none

Clergy Present: The Rev. Todd McDowell

Guests: Shari Bonham, Director of Development and Ministries Coordinator; Tom Petrie, lighting project director; Tim Engelbrecht, Treasurer; Dick Entenmann, Personnel; Betty Bowersox, Stewardship

The meeting was called to order at 7:05.

Rebecca Harrison moved, and Susie Reis seconded, that the minutes from the March 10, 2020 Vestry meeting be approved as drawn. Motion passed.

The agenda stood as presented.

The opening prayer was given by John Dotson. The opening prayer at the May Vestry meeting will be given by Chris Ludbrook.

Lighting Project: Parishioner Tom Petrie reported on the progress of the nave lighting project. Most of the work has been completed. Tom is working with staff to finalize the pre-sets on the dimming system. There will be a toggle switch in the narthex which can be used by workers or by individuals coming in to the church to pray. It will be fully operational soon. The last piece of phase one of the lighting project will be the wiring and installation of two lights on top of the organ swell chambers. Funds were not sufficient to cover the cost of lighting the back wall of the church as had been hoped. Many thanks were extended to Tom for the many hours he has spent coordinating the lighting project. Tom's expertise allowed us to do so much more with the budget we had.

Personnel: *Paycheck Protection Plan (PPP):* Dick Entenmann reported that Grace Church applied and received approval for a nearly \$54,000.00 PPP loan. The Paycheck Protection Program is a loan designed to provide a direct incentive for small businesses to keep their workers on the payroll. The Small Business Administration (SBA) will forgive loans if all employees are kept on the payroll for eight weeks and the money is used for payroll, rent, mortgage interest, or utilities. The loan is part of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES). The next step in the process is to go through the closing process. Mike Heyer moved, and Kelly Eschenroeder seconded, that the Vestry approve completing the closing process for the nearly \$54,000.00 loan under the terms of the CARES act passed

by Congress. Motion passed. Tim Engelbrecht extended thanks to Shari Bonham, Dick Entenmann and Mike Heyer for their help in calculating the dollar amount for the loan application.

Five Marks of Mission: Ministries of Governance, Administration, Stewardship and Facility: *Financial Report:* Tim Engelbrecht reported that the Finance Committee met last week. The committee reviewed the CARES Act loan application and the March Financials. Tim noted that the Diocese of Missouri is allowing churches to defer monthly Diocesan assessment payments until July 1, and that the Church Pension Fund is waiving up to two months of pension assessments. Grace's diocesan assessment is about \$5,200.00 per month, and the pension assessment is about \$1,500.00 per month.

Tim presented the financial report for the month ending March 31, 2020. Pledge Income for the month of March was \$23,983, which was \$4,903 below budget. YTD Pledge Income was \$112,001 versus the budgeted amount of \$119,913. Total Revenues for the month were \$41,209, which was \$7,578 below budget. YTD Total Revenues were \$164,980 which was \$14,249 below budget. Total Expenses for March were \$59,642, which was \$9,259 above budget. YTD Expenses were \$155,944, which was \$4,396 above budget. Net Revenue for March was (\$18,433), which was \$16,837 above the budgeted amount of (\$1596). YTD Net Revenue was \$9,036 versus the budgeted amount of \$27,683.

Tim noted that the last "in person" Sunday church service was held on March 15. It is not yet clear what the impact of the shutdown will be on Grace. Online giving has increased, which is helpful. One area of concern is the "Plate Offering", which funds Outreach. Cash and change placed in the offering plate funds the Plate Offering account. It is hoped that contributions will pick up when church resumes. A virtual plate offering solicitation was suggested. Tim let the Vestry know that any expenses that are not essential are being delayed or eliminated. The March financial report shows that the Diocesan assessment was not paid in March (deferred until July). Continuing education costs for the remainder of the year have been eliminated. Funds had been budgeted for part time help in April and May, but the help is no longer needed. That will help lower the actual expenses for those months. Dick Entenmann has programmed the HVAC to use the bare minimum of resources. Tim extended thanks to all parishioners who are able to keep up with their pledge payments. The cost of online giving was discussed. It was noted that there is no cost if a parishioner sets up an automatic payment with their bank as opposed to making a payment on the Grace website.

Mike Heyer moved, and Rebecca Harrison seconded, that the financial report for the month ending March 31, 2020 be received. Motion passed.

Our Journey Continues: Tim reported that \$318,197.00, which is nearly half of the amount pledged to the Our Journey Continues capital campaign, has been received. This is very encouraging, as the campaign is only one year into a three year campaign. Tim has been moving funds received to the appropriate accounts on a quarterly basis. Rebecca Harrison moved, and Mike Heyer seconded, that the following funds received over the last quarter be allocated as follows: \$1,679.48 to the Legacy Fund – Outreach account, \$1,679.48 to the Capital Reserve Debt Reduction account, and \$11,756.37 to the Legacy Fund – Building and Grounds account. Motion passed.

Proclaim the Good News: *Worship, Music:* Father Todd explained the process of pre-recording church services. He extended thanks to Rachel Major and Tom Petrie for their work recording video and sound. There has been positive feedback from those who have watched the services. Various services have been made available via Zoom, which can be accessed by computer, smartphone, tablet or regular phone. Going forward, Zoom may be used for church services since the church is no longer available for filming. There will be a need for lay readers and singers beginning April 19 and continuing until the stay

at home order is lifted. Father Todd noted that worship, social gatherings and the business of the church has been able to continue because of Zoom. Invitations to join a Zoom meeting will be sent to parishioners via email.

Teach, Baptize and Nurture New Believers: *Invite, Welcome, Connect* : Shari Bonham hopes to find a way to invite non-parishioners who have viewed church services on-line to attend in person once church re-opens. Since there has been good online viewership, there was discussion about continuing to provide online services, but using upgraded equipment for recording. Tom Petrie will investigate the possibilities, but noted that there will be budget and manpower issues. Father Todd noted that the issue of Holy Sacraments has been discussed, and that Holy Sacraments cannot be received online. Shari Bonham took a class on creating podcasts at the most recent CEEP conference. Grace's IT support company can help her create podcasts. Online viewership can be counted, but the identity of listeners/viewers cannot. The national church has asked parishes to keep track of online viewers, but the format of record keeping has yet to be determined.

Respond to Human Need, Seek to Transform Unjust Structures: *Outreach Programs, Activities*: Sue Nixon gave a brief report on Kirk Care. Requests for food assistance has increased over the years, with 1,366 families being served in 2015 and 1,820 families being served in 2019. There has not been a noticeable increase in demand for food since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Safeguarding Integrity of Creation: Shari Bonham reported that about \$300.00 was raised for the church school youth Lenten project to donate beehives through Heifer International. Projects that were cut short by the shutdown can be reinstated once church reopens.

Junior Warden Report: Junior Warden Rebecca Harrison reported that the fire alarm system has been sending alarm messages to Shari Bonham and Tim Engelbrecht daily between 8:30 and 9:00 am. A wi-fi update to the fire alarm panel will fix the problem. Some of the cost will be offset by the elimination of a land line which will no longer be needed after the upgrade.

Rebecca noted that while the pews were removed for the painting and lighting project, the floors were cleaned and waxed. The parish hall and Lab School hallway were also waxed.

Rebecca extended thanks to Bill Cadwallader for cleaning and painting the chapel.

Volunteers continue to weed the flower beds. Mowing has begun for the season.

The painters were told not to move the organ pipes during the painting project, but did so anyway. It has yet to be determined if the pipes will need to be repaired, or if a routine annual tuning will put them back in tune.

The irrigation system will be turned on, but watering will not start until needed. Backflow valves for the sprinkler and boiler were both checked in the fall.

Walter Knoll Florist has suspended operations, so there may be issues with replacement of bushes.

Three bids will be solicited for upgrading the fire alarm system. When received, bids will be sent to the Executive Committee.

Senior Warden Report: The Vestry had planned to move forward with action steps pertaining to the long term goals developed at the 2020 Vestry retreat, but actions will be put on hold for the time being. Mike Heyer reported that the 2020 youth mission trip will not take place this year due to the Covid-19 outbreak. Plans are to go to West Bend WI in 2021. It is the custom of Grace Church to use funds raised in support of the mission trip to make a donation of \$1,500.00 to the church that hosts the missionaries and a donation of \$1,500.00 to Habitat for Humanity. In light of the fact that the mission trip will not take place, a donation of \$3,000.00 will be made to Kirk Care.

The Vestry has been asked to make contact with parishioners during this time of social distancing. Vestry members have been assigned a page from the parish directory as their contact list. Vestry members are asked to let Shari know if there are emails or phone numbers that don't work, and to let Father Todd know of any pastoral concerns. Contact should be made once a month while the shutdown remains in place.

Report of the Rector: Father Todd updated the Vestry on how some elderly parishioners are doing, as well as deaths in the parish.

Father Todd will be serving as a chaplain at the temporary morgue which has been set up in Earth City in response to the Covid-19 outbreak. He will be present on Monday afternoons from 1:00 to 4:00.

Father Todd noted that continuing education for the remainder of 2020 will be cancelled so the expenses will not be incurred.

Father Todd extended thanks to Bill Cadwallader for the painting and cleaning of the chapel.

Father Todd noted that the church by-laws dictate that Vestry meetings are to take place at Grace Church, 514 E Argonne. Mike Heyer moved, and Susie Reis seconded, that the Vestry approve allowing Vestry meetings to take place via Zoom conference or other electronic means if the Vestry is unable to meet in person at 514 E Argonne. Motion passed.

The evenings meeting concluded with a reading of Compline.

Susie Reis moved, and Rebecca Harrison seconded, that the meeting adjourn. Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30.

Respectfully submitted

Sue Nixon
Secretary of the Vestry

Motions from the April 14, 2020 Vestry meeting

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