

Grace Episcopal Church
Minutes of the Vestry Meeting
August 8, 2023

Vestry Present: John Adams, Mike Casey, Jane Cenova, Kelly Eschenroeder, Mike Lillmars, Rebecca Harrison, Chris Ludbrook, Susie Reis, Ann VanConia, Jim Wethington

Vestry Absent: None

Clergy Present: The Rev. Thomas Skillings

Guests: Shari Bonham, Director of Development and Ministries Coordinator; Tim Engelbrecht, Treasurer; Lyn Ballard, Transition Team

The meeting was called to order at 7:00.

The opening prayer was given by Susie Reis. Kelly Eschenroeder will give the prayer at the September Vestry meeting.

Rebecca Harrison moved, and Susie Reis seconded, that the evening's agenda stand as drawn. Motion passed.

Rebecca Harrison moved, and Jane Cenova seconded, that the minutes from the July 11, 2023 Vestry meeting be approved as drawn. Motion passed.

Devotion: Thomas led the Vestry in a devotional exercise aimed at getting prepared for the work that will be undertaken in the fall when the discernment process resumes.

Ministry Area Leadership: Vestry members reported on the ministry areas that they liaise with.

Pastoral Care: Mike Lillmars reported that the visitation team is on track, and that parishioners are appreciative of the visits.

Outreach: John Adams provided the Vestry with a handout that reviewed what the outreach committee has done in 2023, with next steps planned for the fall. The outreach committee is committed to getting information out to the parish about the organizations that Grace supports, as well as opportunities for members of Grace to volunteer in these organizations.

Buildings and Grounds: Rebecca Harrison reported that the St Louis County Health Department inspection will take place on August 10.

Murphy was at Grace on Monday to repair the thermostat in the library. The rooms in the newer part of the lower level are not cooling properly. This will be investigated.

New carpet for the library has been selected.

The chimney has been tuckpointed.

Christian Formation: Ann VanConia reported that the church school committee has determined that they will need four classrooms this year. Ann and the committee have reviewed curriculum and talked about the timing of classes. Ann is looking for volunteers to prep supplies for church school lessons so they can be ready for teachers to use on Sundays. Ann reported that the Rite 13 confirmation class is large this year.

Communication/Social Media: Jim Wethington reported that he and Shari have had meetings with the website designers, with two more meeting planned in August. Work on the website should be completed by mid-September, and Jim is confident that the website will be much improved.

Worship Teams: Rebecca Harrison and Mike Casey provided the Vestry with a handout listing the five worship teams (acolytes, altar guild, Eucharistic ministers, lectors and intercessors, and ushers), with information about what the teams do and how each team works. All teams are in need of more participants.

Invite, Welcome, Connect: Kelly Eschenroeder reported that there are some parishioners interested in serving as greeters. There will be training in the near future.

Personnel: The Rev. Mary Haggerty's last day at Grace will be August 27. Ann VanConia will organize a farewell for her.

As Rev. Skillings is staying with Grace longer than anticipated, he will sign a new letter of agreement when Dick Entenmann gets back into town.

Amy Escobar's last day at Grace will be August 10.

Julie Amos is doing a great job taking over the bookkeeping duties.

Knitting ministry: Susie Reis reported that several parishioners have donated hand-knitted items such as hats and scarves to be donated to an organization that will be able to distribute them to the needy.

Discernment Team: Lyn Ballard reported that the discernment team has not paused entirely, but they have not had an official meeting this summer. Five people from the team have volunteered to serve as a sub-group that will work with Sr. Warden Chris Ludbrook and Rev. Skillings as they gather more information about who Grace is. The sub-group participants are Leslie Hoffarth, Jen Wethington, Dianne Casey, Mike Gibbons and Brent VanConia.

Lyn Ballard and Dick Entenmann met with one of the candidates who withdrew from the search process. Lyn reported that they had a wonderful conversation, and learned that there was nothing about Grace that caused them to withdraw.

Transitional Rector Report: Thomas provided the Vestry with a copy of a letter that will be sent to parishioners regarding ways to help us get more comfortable and confident talking about who we are. Thomas has begun to look for a full time associate to serve for two years. The associate could be ordained or a trained lay person. According to church canons, the Vestry votes to allow the rector to proceed with filling the position of associate, and the rector selects the associate.

Financials: Tim Engelbrecht provided the Vestry with the financial report for the month ending July 31, 2023. Tim noted that the parking lot re-sealing project costs of about \$14,000 are included in the building and grounds expense numbers, but some of that will be offset when the \$3,000 grant from the diocese and the \$8,100 pledged by parishioners are received. Expenses for staff will come in under budget for the year since Rev. Haggerty and Amy Escobar were budgeted through December, but will leave before that time.

The commissary kitchen is bringing in about \$1,000 monthly, with low expenses.

Ann VanConia moved, and Jane Cenova seconded, that the financial report for the month ending July 31, 2023 be received. Motion passed.

Tim gave details of the finance committee that took place on July 26:

The committee reviewed year to date financials.

Funding of the parking lot sealing and striping was discussed.

Unbudgeted items such as the website, substitute organist and tuck pointing were discussed.

Grace received an Employee Retention Tax Credit refund of about \$37,000 as a result of not laying off employees during COVID. Part of that sum will fund our new bookkeeper, with the remainder going to the capital reserve fund.

The transition fund will continue to be built up in anticipation of expenses related to the rector search. The 2024 budget was discussed. Ted Sward, stewardship committee chair, was informed that the goal of the 2024 stewardship campaign should be 20% above our current pledge level. The stewardship campaign will start now, instead of waiting until September.

Parishioner Mike Fitzgerald, PhD, performed Grace's annual financial review, at no cost to the parish. The Vestry extended thanks to Mike for submitting his detailed report, which is required by the diocese. Rebecca Harrison moved, and Mike Lillmars seconded, that the Vestry accept the financial review for the year ending December 31, 2022. Motion passed.

The annual golf outing will take place at 1:00 on October 15 at the Aberdeen Golf Club.

Tim asked for Vestry approval to transfer certain funds that have been received to the appropriate legacy fund accounts, as he regularly does on a quarterly basis. Rebecca Harrison moved, and Jim Wethington seconded, that the Vestry approve the transfer of funds from the balance sheet to the appropriate legacy fund accounts. Motion passed. Tim will provide details of funds movement at the September Vestry meeting.

Tim reported that there was a problem with posting accounting items last year, which resulted in an out of balance situation of about \$83,000. There are no funds missing. Mike Fitzgerald and Shari Bonham are working on getting items posted correctly.

Associate Rector: In light of the discussion earlier in the meeting regarding the hiring of an associate rector, Rebecca Harrison moved, and Kelly Eschenroeder seconded, that the Vestry authorize Rev. Skillings to seek and hire a new associate priest/minister at his discretion for a two year contract. Motion passed.

Senior Warden: Endowment Trustees: Chris Ludbrook reported that Brent VanConia and Pat O'Brien will be cycling off of the endowment fund committee. Mary Russell and Chris Pierce are willing to serve as committee members. Rebecca Harrison moved, and Mike Lillmars seconded, that the Vestry appoint Mary Russell and Chris Pierce to serve on the endowment fund committee. Motion passed.

Convention delegates: Rebecca Harrison moved, and Jane Cenova seconded, that the Vestry appoint the following people to serve as convention delegates: Pat O'Brien, Chris Kurth, Becky Entenmann, and Betty Bowersox (alternate). Motion passed.

Christmas Cookie Sale: Chris reported that the church youth will once again run the Christmas cookie sale in December. Carla Hildebrandt has offered to organize and run the used jewelry sale, with proceeds going to the youth mission trip. There will not be a used book sale, as it is labor and space intensive, with little monetary reward.

Shari provided the Vestry with a list of important upcoming events through the end of 2023. Shari reminded the Vestry that it is important to call the office to reserve space for any meetings or events that groups have planned.

Thomas led the group in a closing prayer.

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

The meeting adjourned at 9:05.

Respectfully submitted

Sue Nixon
Secretary of the Vestry

Motions from the August 8, 2023 Vestry meeting

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