

Grace Memorial Episcopal Church
Vestry Minutes, JUNE 2022 meeting
June 16, 2022
Approved by Vestry **August 18, 2022**

Members and clergy present: Alan Cowart (Rector), Gloria Cardwell, Marsha Cooper, Lessy Nixon, Sharon Davis, Barbara Carter, Guest: Elysia Lyday (Administrator)

Absent: Katey Greaney, Barbara Sherburne

The meeting opened with a Dwelling in the Word reflection and prayer.

Buildings and Ground: Sharon Davis shared that the roof repairs discussed last month have been completed. The narthex door is being repaired and refinished. The Buildings and Grounds committee has suggested that the narthex door be painted red instead of the original finish. Once work has begun the door can be repaired and repainted within a week.

Motion from Buildings & Ground to paint the narthex door red: All approved.
Opposed: None.

Freedom school lunches: Freedom Schools are a nationwide network of sites that are literacy focused for students who might not otherwise have access to books and literacy support. Randolph College is hosting the event and several Lynchburg churches are helping provide lunch for staff (college interns) and one dinner for families. Grace is teaming with Trinity, Boonsboro for this effort. Alan reminded that we have outreach and discretionary funds available for needs such as this. Volunteers will be needed to serve dinner as well as pick up and drop off lunches.

Young family article: Vestry members discussed an article offered by Gloria Cardwell and shared by Alan as pre-reading, titled "Why bringing in young families is not a magic bullet for your congregation." The glorification of young families as a solution to a problem for churches was discussed, as well as what it means for a small church to have a healthy mindset about certain groups within the church. However, Lessy shared that she is very pleased with the several newer members and attendees at the church. The Vestry discussed how it is important to "Be the church here and now," appreciating the current state of the church and also looking for signs of growth and life.

Parish Life: Alan spoke on behalf of Katey about the different upcoming events.

- 7/24 - Kathy Maddox celebration
- 7/31- Newcomer-focused potluck
- Wednesdays in July: Trinity & Grace memorial will have Compline for young adults at Riverfront Park
- Hopes to bring back game night

- Planning back to school bash before the start of the school year which would be open to the community and include backpack blessings
- Movie night on the following Sunday 8/14

Outreach: The vestry has discussed having an outreach fundraiser focused on choral groups from the area. Candidates for concerts include Heritage High School and EC Glass. Hill City Pride is approaching in September and the vestry is planning on having a booth, recruiting volunteers, and providing information (and giveaways!) about the church and the affirming nature of our tradition.

Discussion: The Vestry also discussed the possibility of renting out the church facility as a venue for events and weddings. Making the church facility a venue for events will create another stream of income. It can also be a ministry of the church to be available for community needs. The discussions around wedding venues will continue in the coming months.

Financial reports: As the church transitions to receiving reports from QuickBooks (the new accounting software), the Treasurer has created a new set of monthly reports. Both new and old reports will be generated each month as we learn what is helpful in the new reporting.

Overall the church expenses are exceeding the budget. The Vestry wants to continue to have conversations with the congregation as upcoming decisions will be based on the current financial situation. The vestry considered it would be beneficial if the treasurer gave a brief synopsis of the financial situation to the congregation. After the June reports are submitted, Alan will ask the Finance Committee for a timeline for making more difficult cuts to the budget. As we continue with a large deficit and looming financial-driven changes to personnel, it is critical the church see itself as doing vital ministry and continue to discover what that might look like even as we lose things that we see as valuable or important. Alan reminded the Vestry that any changes to personnel or budget should be seen as a response to the ministry that we believe is at the core of our call as a faith-based community.

Motion to accept the financial report into the minute: First motioned by Sharon Davis, seconded by Lessy Nixon. All approved.
Opposed None.

New Financial Reports: The vestry members are enthusiastically in favor of the new formatting for financial reports. Some changes that vestry requested: displaying the total budget to compare current expenses, the percentage change of the expenses rather than raw numbers, etc. Alan suggested the vestry members use their areas of responsibility to see how the new reports look and to report back about changes they need to see in the reports. The format of the reports can be changed to suit the needs for oversight, so this time of transition is important.

The reports reflected spending of the Digital Mission Grant funds. Vestry discussed the new website which is being supported by these funds. So far, we have a new subscription for the

new website and plan to hire a photographer to create new photos and web content for the site, including Vestry and personnel photos, liturgical images that would be helpful to newcomers.

The financial support for the completed roofing project is in process. The finance committee will consider taking a loan from the diocese (Revolving Parish Loan) to assist with our out-of-pocket payments. Email votes may be requested depending on the recommendation of the Finance Committee. Alan will also be submitting an application for the Patterson Grant for Historic Churches in Virginia for the scope of the roofing work that effects the historic nave.

The meeting was adjourned with prayer.