

# Grace and Holy Trinity Cathedral

## Minutes, Regular Meeting of the Vestry on Thursday, March 21, 2024

*Approved at the April 25, 2024 Vestry meeting*

### **Vestry Members and Leadership Present**

In-Person: The Very Rev. Andrew Keyse (Dean), The Rev. W. James Yazell (Associate Priest), Steve Moore (Sr. Warden), Valerie Johnson (Jr. Warden), Charles Shipley, Sharon Cheers, Michael Thomas, Blain Lagergren (Clerk), Chip Buckner (Treasurer)

Via teleconference (Zoom): Nigel Jones, Mathias Nichols, Paula Livingston-Lewis, Julie Brogno, Sara Copeland

Absent: Pat Decker

Others Present:

The meeting was held in hybrid format (Common Room and via Zoom teleconference). The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Dean Andy with opening worship.

### **Approval of previous meeting's minutes**

Blain Lagergren presented the February regular Vestry minutes that were distributed in the March Vestry Packet. Valerie Johnson moved to accept the March minutes and was seconded by Michael Thomas. The motion passed without further discussion.

**Dean's Report**, *The Very Rev. Dr. Andrew C. Keyse*

Upcoming events: A reminder that Holy week and Easter are coming up and the schedules for them have been printed and will be contained in the bulletin and the Friday email among other places. Dean Andy will be leaving in a month for the North American Deans' Conference which will be held in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada at Christ Church Cathedral. Next year's conference is, at this time scheduled to be held in Jerusalem. There is conversation concerning whether it will be held given the current conflict in the region. Next year's event would be in May and given the uneasiness about the conflict among those involved, a backup plan has been proposed for Coventry Cathedral in England. The Consecration and Ordination of new bishop for the Diocese of West Missouri will occur May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2025. Grace and Holy Trinity Cathedral will share hosting duties for the Episcopal Parish Network Conference ("EPN") next year along with St. Paul's and St. Andrew's from February 25<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup>, a Tuesday through a Friday. The Cathedral will host the worship service on the final night of the conference, Thursday, which will be a Eucharist. Westin Crown Center will be the associated hotel for conference participants and meetings. Our hope is to have a barbecue focused dinner reception following the Eucharist. This year's conference videos will be released and copied to Vestry for viewing, with a mind to potentially inform building programs to spur conversation with lay leadership.

Parochial Report: Report was updated yesterday which slightly delayed dissemination. The report contains information taken straight from the books. Blain requested clarification regarding the methodology for the figures as presented for Children's program attendance. Julie clarified past report practices as being based in age group numbers via the membership rolls of the Cathedral. Blain requested clarification on the presentation of the budget as presented in the report still containing those windfalls which will not be available for 2024, such as the earned employee retention credit ("EERC"). Valerie voiced concern regarding large figure on the outreach ministries and volunteer activities, food pantry, soup kitchen, meal projects line item. Dean Andy clarified this as direct financial assistance to NourishKC, which would explain the higher figure. Valerie suggested that it would be a good idea to keep this list in front of us when thinking about volunteer opportunities in the future. A voiced concern over absence of figures for cash vouchers and rent assistance was explained as coming out of clergy discretionary so it would not be reported on that line item but rather as expenses for congregation, outreach, and mission. Nigel queried whether

we keep historic attendance figures graphed over certain periods of time e.g. 5 or 10 years. Fr. James said that the national church graphs parochial report figures and maintains a parish lookup to see attendance and other analytics. EPN addressed the general public's perception that the Church and/or Christianity is in decline but that does not mean we have to be in decline and that the Episcopal Church does not need to be in decline based on what we have to offer, and is not necessarily so. It is a time for renewal.

**Nigel Jones moved to accept the Parochial Report and was seconded by Michael Thomas. The motion passed without further discussion.**

The Outreach Department has decided that the Easter offering this year will be shared with Sheffield Place, with which we have shared a charitable relationship over the years.

Budget Committee Charge Update: Given the dearth of third-party examples as potential models for our budget charge moving forward, Dean Andy is continuing to explore options. Dean Andy made inquiries of the Dean's conference and the direction suggested was to have the Vestry put together a priority list for the Budget Committee. It was recommended the Budget Committee focus on funding ministry through the lens of our five pillars or focus areas of the strategic plan. Worship, Community Engagement, Internal Fellowship, Service, and Operations. The schedule for Budget starts in April, charting out under those five pillars what fits into those categories.

#### **Associate's Report, *The Rev. James Yazell***

Pre-conferences at EPN were incredibly valuable. Coming into a new role over the last few months it was nice to be able to meet with other who are bright, energetic, and engaged in the same role. Great opportunity to meet with colleagues from other parishes here in Kansas City. Highly recommend workshop videos, particularly the video discussing church roles and artificial intelligence. This allows us to ask philosophical questions about what it means to be a human being and an opportunity to enter public discourse. The importance of human relationships as part of the human experience and engaging with wider culture. We have finished both Lenten programs; the Book of Jonah and Anglican Spiritual Practices, and Fr. James has been encouraged to offer classes again in the future. On April 14<sup>th</sup> we are hoping to do a joint workshop with youth and adults, called Eucharistic Practices. Fr. James is recording his contribution to the two-part All Things Episcopal podcast on death, the first of which will come out on Good Friday.

#### **Financial Report presented by *Chip Buckner, Treasurer***

January 2024 revised reports. Last month we were suspicious of certain clergy expenses showing in the negative, that has been rectified on this report. January saw clergy salaries and related at \$31,546.00 and lay salaries and related at nearly \$68,000.00. The issue was that when employees were having withholding taken from their paychecks for medical, dental, disability, etc. that money is put into a holding account and when the actual expenditure is made that money comes out of the operating fund then the operating fund is reimbursed from the holding account as a negative number going into the expenses. For seven months in 2023 the reimbursement was not made. This amount was building in the holding account over this period. Brenda Colburn noticed this accumulation. All those reimbursements were then dumped into January of 2024. We have since backed out that bulk deposit and placed it back into the appropriate months in 2023, thereby improving the numbers as initially presented last year.

In January we saw pledges \$10,000.00 less than anticipated and budgeted and plate was roughly half of what was anticipated and budgeted. Gifts and bequests have been more robust in January, bolstered by a \$38,000.00 gift in that month. Expenses for January are very close to what was budgeted. Chip is comfortable that these numbers make sense given their proximity to other months, namely December and February, in amount. The withholding figures have been zeroed out where previously unusually large numbers were present in the medical, dental, etc. line items.

In February 2024 we collected slightly more than expected in pledges, while plate was again roughly half of what was budgeted. Question regarding the identity of line 49 was answered as money that we receive from the investment endowment, at 4% and \$57,572.00, a little bit less than was budgeted. The interfund transfer line item was at zero for February.

Michael Thomas questioned the endowment to operating difference. We are assuming that this difference is accounted for by the fact that the yearend balance was not present to accurately calculate the 4% endowment to operating for 2024, at the end of 2023. For the purposes of budget, we try to project as of September. The month to date actual and month to date last year relationship is reasonable given market activity. We have made \$300,000.00 on investments over the course of the most recent month.

There have been no large changes in positions that cause concerns except for the operating fund balance at the end of December as \$339,000.00 and January as \$39,000.00, showing a \$300,000.00 difference. Chip will be investigating that as well as line item 3110, why the music guild fund balance is negative and why it went from \$22,000.00 negative in December to \$66,000.00 negative in January.

**Michael Thomas moved to accept the March Financial Report and was seconded by Sharon Cheers. The motion passed with further discussion.**

Valerie requested clarification of music fund and clergy discretionary fund showing negative in January and February even though funded from investments. This was clarified by Chip and Steve that the decision had been made but transfer has not been made on the books. We do have money in clergy discretionary fund in part because that previous funding and the budgetary allowance of \$1000.00 per month for that purpose. Our best guess is that the transfer did not happen but debits did.

Valerie requested investigation and clarification regarding the parking fundraiser line item negative, garden guild \$19,000.00 negative figure, and employee advances line item. The bookstore, however, expectedly, and typically runs in the negative. Nigel requested investigation and clarification for \$300,000.00 discrepancy December to January.

#### **Stewardship Report** *presented by Steve Moore, Stewardship Chair*

We received 110 pledges for a total of \$404,000.00 which represents 34 pledge increases totaling \$33,000.00. We have \$103,000.00 in unrenewed pledges as of this time but we are on track to meet our budget number of \$500,000.00. Based on this trend we may even exceed budget. There are a couple of stewardship considerations to take from EPN: initial stewardship letters handwritten per St. David's in Austin, invoking powerful church family associations, resulting in the best pledge campaign they have ever had, and the Mathias pledge, from a church in Colorado Springs, also resulting in a pledge increase. Mathias was the 13<sup>th</sup> apostle and the payment is structured as a 13<sup>th</sup> pledge payment in addition to the total pledge amount customarily divided into 12 payments.

#### **Junior Warden Report** *presented by Valerie Johnson*

Eucharistic Visitors: trainings, led by Deacon Barbara. There was a training March 2<sup>nd</sup> and another Saturday, the 23<sup>rd</sup>. Once that is completed, we will be able to learn the number of currently licensed and NEW EV's we now have. EV's will be sent to visit members according to neighborhoods/as preferred. This can also facilitate developing relationships to support them where they are. At some point perhaps a commissioning during a service so that the whole congregation can see what we are doing. EVs serve as a connection to facilitate/inform clergy of any pastoral care needs and clergy will be able to rotate in at any time.

Getting back to meeting people where they are and trying to connect with our members unable to attend services regularly. We are looking for a group from this body who are willing to assist with deliveries (similarly to poinsettias at Christmas time) or be available to call on for special personal needs. If not you, can you help identify one person who would be willing to do so? (Like bringing a friend to church—bring a friend you know at GHTC who would appreciate the opportunity to be involved.)

There will be more information about this at the April Vestry meeting. Considering ways to manage the communications regarding these calls. Create a more consistent way to communicate across callers from each session. Currently, we have been doing Spring, Late summer and Holiday season calls. Does this only have to happen from vestry members? Could we include clergy? Suggestions from this body about how to conduct this effort of building our community.

March 12<sup>th</sup> was our BG Committee meeting. Financial information regarding BG activities include:

**FH Floor Assessment:** We will be inviting a professional assessment, with recommendations, to physically evaluate the current state of the floor. This is from the National Wood Floor Association in Chesterfield, MO. They are most familiar with the current product in FH – Worthwood product which is unfinished, end grain wood flooring Nigel Jones is leading this effort. The assessment is \$500.00, which will come from the BG budget. The committee believed this is a very important step as it will provide a clear path for next steps—whether treatment, understanding the battle with humidity/dryness or comparing costs of replacement--the costs and benefits, essentially.

**The Common Room Proposal:** This has been provided by Ken Stewart, chair of the CR renovation committee. It will be under review by the BG committee and discussed at the May meeting. It is my understanding, once this leaves the BG committee. It will be brought to the Vestry for approval. The approval from Vestry should consider and discuss which account this money will be drawn from for the project. Once the Vestry has approved the project, the Finance Committee will determine if adequate funds exist and how to proceed. Highlights included: 3-5 weeks to complete the work; the purchase of ceiling fans, window treatments, chandeliers, carpet squares one month prior to construction (\$13,300); Technology and slat wall purchased 2 weeks prior to construction (\$2,970); Total Room Costs: \$54,478. This estimate does not include additional furniture, tables, and stackable chairs.

Gardening and Rogation Day/Work Day tentatively set for May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2024. A list of duties will be created for gardening (Ric) and buildings (Angie) to be ready so willing volunteers that day will know where to help. Irrigation system is turned on May 1<sup>st</sup>.

#### **Senior Warden Report** *presented by Steve Moore*

One of the observations from EPN is that we get bogged down with corporeal aspects but one of the big takeaways is that the vestry is a spiritual group, recognized partly in Dean Andy grounding us with prayer. It helps reduce conflict and cultivate trust. Reserving time at vestry meetings to consider who should be thanked at the Cathedral, identifying parishioners/staff, sending thank you letters for distinguishing services or activities. Perhaps make it a part of new business going forward. We should explore establishing a second-hand store or thrift shop. We have a strong mission statement and some churches develop core values as a corollary. We should start a discussion about pursuing a core values statement. Bishop Curry was not in attendance but other representatives were fantastic.

#### **Other Committee or Vestry Liaison Reports**

##### **Dinner with Friends,** *Julie Brogno*

We have 15 family units signed up, couples, families with kids, and singles. Varied mix and match approach. There has been positive feedback. There was some negative feedback at the beginning based on physical location and dispersal. It does not necessarily make sense to group based purely on physical location. We will hold off on summer groups due to the prevalence of traveling. We will start advertising in August for September groups through to the holiday season, ending in January then attempt a spring set of groups as well. Locations depend on preferences of hosts and guests, whether at homes, in restaurants, or for coffees. There have been lunches, brunches, and dinners. We designate one person to start, call first meeting then the group makes the decisions past that.

##### **Social Outreach,** *Paula Livingston-Lewis*

No report.

**Community Engagement, n/a**

No report.

**Safety/Security, Sharon Cheers**

No report.

**Children's Formation/Young Adults, Blain Lagergren**

We had our first meeting in person on February 9<sup>th</sup>. Food was provided and we opened with group and individual reflections and storytelling utilizing Conversation Starters from the Episcopal Church Office on Evangelism. The stated goal of the committee is to grow the children and youth ministry at Grace and Holy Trinity. We started discussions with where we see children and youth currently at the Cathedral, places such as coffee hour, acolytes, pageants, communion, Easter, and Christmas, etc. We followed with a discussion of where we do not see the children and youth, places such as choir/music, happening, readers, etc. We concluded with where we would like to see children and youth presence, sitting together in church, oblation bearers, lectors/intercessors, diocesan youth events, etc. In service and outreach plans we hope to have a how2charist (instructed eucharist for parents and children) in Summer or Fall of this year, a Godly Play Open House Sunday in the Fall. Action items: We are continuing to craft our stories, sharing publicly in our everyday life. We are reading Ten Things Churches Can Learn from Starbucks. We are firming up dates for How2charist and Godly Play Open House. Next meeting tentatively scheduled for May 9<sup>th</sup> via Zoom.

**Communications, n/a**

N/A

**Budget, Sara Copeland**

No report in addition to the information provided by Dean Andy in the budget committee charge update.

**An Individual Thanksgiving/Who Should We Thank?**

Newly implemented as of this meeting. This meeting's recipient is Joan Bergstrom.

**Old Business**

Pete's Garden - April 7<sup>th</sup> will no longer work for coffee hour due to a conflict. We will be rescheduling. The fundraiser for Pete's Garden will happen in September. To tag on to the thrift discussion, work with Blessings Abound, suggestion that we bring a truck or trailer that we could fill with donations. Maybe in the fall, no date set yet. We should take every opportunity to increase awareness of Pete's Garden, as there are always volunteer opportunities and they are on-site.

**New Business**

Dean Andy has a meeting scheduled with the director of William Jewell Faith and Culture for shortly after Easter, regarding our partnership.

The next Vestry Meeting will be April 25 at 5:30 p.m. in the Common Room and via teleconference.

Sharon Cheers moved to adjourn the meeting and was seconded by Valerie Johnson. The motion passed.

A closing prayer was led by Dean Andy. The meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Blain Lagergren, Clerk