

Grace and Holy Trinity Cathedral

Minutes, Regular Meeting of the Vestry on Thursday, September 24, 2024

Approved at the October 29, 2024 Vestry meeting

Vestry Members and Leadership Present

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

Via teleconference (Zoom): Paula Livingston-Lewis, Julie Brogno, Chip Buckner (Treasurer)

Absent: Sara Copeland, Pat Decker, Nigel Jones, Mathias Nichols

Others Present: Jeff Johnson

The meeting was held in hybrid format (Multipurpose 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 August regular Vestry minutes that were distributed in the September Vestry Packet. Charles Shipley moved to accept the July meeting minutes as presented and was seconded by Michael Thomas. The motion passed without further discussion.

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

Upcoming events: We had a busy week and Dean Andy is grateful for all who came out to support the Bishop candidates and Pete's Garden. We had our Volunteer Appreciation brunch at 11 am Saturday, September 28. We have the Blessing of the Animals Saturday, October 5 and our Hymn Sing Sunday, October 6 in the afternoon. Our healing service will be Sunday, October 20. The Fall Festival will be Sunday, October 27.

Out of office: Dean Andy will be out of office on September 25-27 Omaha, for the Deans' Conference planning session. Deany Andy, Fr. James, and Deacon Barbara will be out of the office October 7-9 at the Diocesan Clergy Retreat at Conception Abbey. Dean Andy will also be taking personal vacation time October 18-23.

Strategic Plan Update: We will be setting dates for the by-law review with Mark Galus, Steve Moore, and Blain Lagergren. We will be finishing sending stewardship materials out and then Dean Andy will be sending out a form with which to solicit worship form ideas and variations within the rubrics.

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

Sunday formation has started again and is being held in the multi-purpose room. Attendance is up over last program year. Fr. James will be out of town September 28 - October 4. Fr. James will be teaching a course on Biblical cosmology through the William Jewell Center on Faith and Culture on October 23 and 30 and November 6 and 13.

This course will look at Biblical cosmology and what it tells us about the purpose of the universe and our place in it as humans. This will be contrasted to scientific understanding of the universe and how we navigate that as responsible Christians.

Financial Report *presented by Chip Buckner, Treasurer*

Year-to-date revenues. Our pledges and plate are lower than budgeted. We had budgeted \$422,000 and received \$360,000. Gifts and bequests are up, though almost all came in January. Recurring bequests are right where expected. User fees are up, we budgeted \$35,000 and received close to \$60,000. Our endowment to operating is low but not so much that it is worrying. Interfund transfer, which was the covid money we had budgeted, and sitting in the checking account, was still available to be used and as such has been moved to the money market account earning interest. Total revenues are down \$70,000 from what was expected, but actually up from last year.

Year-to-date expenses. We spent more on community and social ministry, clergy and lay salary, and clergy support than last year. Facility expenses, thanks to Valerie Johnson, are under what was budgeted. Utilities have been under budget all year until the last couple of months, which says that it costs less to heat the Cathedral than cool it. Ultimately, we are slightly over budget on utilities. From the Treasurer's perspective our total expenses are lower than we had budgeted for. Education, music, and parish life expenses are down, with parish life significantly lower than budgeted.

Month-to-month revenues. July and August. Plate offering is a little bit low, but has been steady throughout the year. We budgeted \$4583 per month and we are \$1500 under that in August and \$2500 under that in July. Gifts and bequests. We had the large bequests early in the year and none since then. Recurring bequests, we have \$200,000 in June from Kemper and \$60,000 in August from an unknown source. Year to date we are right where we expect to be with bequests. User fees were big in spring owing to parking and building rental and have tapered off a bit. We budgeted \$4300 a month and we were a little high in August, but lower in June and July. Endowment to operating is lower than the \$61,000 that we had budgeted, but not enough to be worried. We have \$24,000 in Covid money that we expected to be transferred into operating, but had not, that has been moved to the money market account.

Month-to-month expenses. Our people expenses were high in August. While they were much higher than the preceding month this month saw three pay periods. Our administrative expense was higher than budgeted. Education, music, parish life are all under budget. We spent \$48,000 more than we took in in August. We spent \$56,000 more than we took in in July.

Three-month balance sheet analysis. Cash accounts show majority of movement over June, July, and August. We took \$649,000 out of the checking account and put it in an interest-bearing money market. At the end of June, we moved \$86,000 back to the checking account. At the end of July, we moved \$80,000 back to the checking account. The value of our securities went from 16.36 million at the end of June to 16.71 million at the end of July to 16.92 million at the end of August. Chip is putting together a packet to assist with an examination of our investments and any changes to those that would be appropriate moving forward. Chip will also be exploring Fund Principal Net Asset Balances group.

Chip pointed out that last month he was not provided the necessary information far enough ahead of the meeting. He praised Steve Berman for having this information in his hands nearly three weeks ahead of this meeting.

Addressing a final question, endowment to operating, while lower than budgeted, was consistent in that the earnings which fed those transfers are a little bit less than we had hoped they would be.

Steve Moore moved to accept the July and August Financial Reports and was seconded by Valerie Johnson. The motion passed without further discussion.

Stewardship Report and Senior Warden Report *presented by Steve Moore, Stewardship Chair*

At the February Episcopal Parish Network (EPN), there were various recommendations for stewardship, and amongst them a focus on a much more personal approach in handwritten notes. In tandem with the Dean's address at the Annual Meeting this year's theme focuses on our status as a family. We have prepared a letter from Dean Andy with space at bottom in order that each member of the Vestry add their personal thoughts to it. We have a packet for Vestry members with necessary supplies. The order of operations is to write your note and business fold the letter, card, and return envelope together. As the theme is Bless Our Family, Formed in Faith, we should be mindful of the personalization that we add in that spirit. Dean Andy and Steve Moore have had success in the past with planned gifts, and it is time to revisit that. In the process of re-forming a planned giving program, we will combine that with educational planning materials to be provided to parishioners who wish to make a gift to the Cathedral from their estate.

Junior Warden Report *presented by Valerie Johnson*

The Buildings and Grounds report was included in the Vestry packet. The Memorial Garden and Common Room are highlighted. We are still getting questions answered by monument company. The Common Room is in the process of construction, as indicated by the fact that we are meeting in the Multipurpose Room. Nigel Jones is currently examining comparisons from flooring companies for next steps regarding floor. Maintaining optimum humidity will be an important component of any plan instituted.

Senior Warden Report *presented by Steve Moore*

Incorporated into the Stewardship Report, above.

Other Committee or Vestry Liaison Reports

Dinner with Friends, *Julie Brogno*

Social Outreach, *Paula Livingston-Lewis*

Community Engagement, *none*

Safety/Security, *Sharon Cheers*

Children's Formation/Young Adults, *Sara Copeland*

Communications, *none*

Budget, *Sara Copeland*

Additional Discussion

Old Business

Jeff Johnson's update on expanding REALM functionality. Deacon Barbara and Fr. James have been discussing tracking pastoral care needs and homebound parishioners and assignment of clergy utilizing Realm. The first question is, is the platform functional enough to use. The system operates as a CRM and each person has a record. You can enter notes regarding contacts, which does not necessarily implicate Pathways. As Pathways is more involved, we need a two-tiered approach with information recording preceding actual assignment through the system in terms of any relevant ministry.

There are two failure points, we give the job to people who do not like doing it, or we make calls without context. Calls need to be more frequent and effective. We need a team of people who are motivated and interested. Pathways is taking information and setting it on a pathway concerning that individual. We might put someone on a volunteering pathway, a serving pathway, a receipt of pastoral care pathway, etc. We can implement monthly calls, quarterly calls, or single step pathway, perhaps simply a call from the Dean. But in any event a step-by-step pathway process involving a cross functional team of lay, vestry, clergy, and staff.

This affiliated team can move people out into the appropriate pathways. It is formalized and any individual can be on multiple pathways at once. For instance, a book study interest proceeding into the education pathway or formation pathway. What we need is a commitment from Vestry to sustain something that creates an environment in which the people stay in the church for all those reasons that they traditionally do. To serve, to be served, to be affiliated with others. This will allow us to find out if you need to serve, be served, update you, or if you just need to keep current. Pastoral care does not necessarily start with the hospital, it starts with the relationship.

We need an educational session on basic REALM interaction prior to engagement with higher functions. Creating tags for need lists. Super users to educate others and data process. Tags and pathways can be used together, with pathways acting as a fast track. How do we activate people? We want to supercharge them on that path. As a Vestry we can form a group to signal how committed we are to this process and how we are going to structure it. The sooner we get a group, somebody would 'own' the team. The owner should be Vestry, when that person leaves Vestry, another Vestry member must take that slot. Doing the business of contacting extremely well. We need the game change that this could be. What is the best process for recruiting? We still need to figure out cost of access, scripting, and training. There is also the potential for incorporation with communications committee.

New Business

The election is coming up, early voting starts October 22, and the Cathedral is a polling place.

Who Should We Thank?

Vangie Rich and Ron Michka – for setting up and running the croquet tournament. Julie Toma – for the preparation of the stewardship campaign materials and her work on the Pete's Garden event.

The next Vestry Meeting will be October 29 at 5:30 p.m. in the Multipurpose Room and via teleconference.

Charles Shipley moved to adjourn the meeting and was seconded by Michael Thomas. The motion passed.

A closing prayer was led by Dean Andy. The meeting adjourned at 6:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Blain Lagergren, Clerk