

Grace and Holy Trinity Cathedral

Minutes, Regular Meeting of the Vestry on Thursday, October 29, 2024

Approved at the November 21, 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), Michael Thomas, Valerie Johnson (Jr. Warden), Nigel Jones, Blain Lagergren (Clerk), Charles Shipley

Via teleconference (Zoom): Julie Brogno, Pat Decker, Paula Livingston-Lewis, Mathias Nichols

Absent: Steve Moore (Sr. Warden), Chip Buckner (Treasurer), Sara Copeland, Sharon Cheers

Others Present:

The meeting was held in hybrid format (multi-purpose 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 September regular Vestry minutes that were distributed in the October Vestry Packet. Valerie Johnson moved to accept the September 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: All Saints Sunday is coming this next Sunday, November 3. The Diocesan Convention will be Friday, November 8 and Saturday, November 9 with the election of the new Bishop for the Diocese of West Missouri occurring on Saturday, November 9. Once the election occurs there must be consent by a majority of sitting bishops and standing committees of the Diocese. The Ordination of the new Bishop is set for May 3, 2025 here at the Cathedral. This Saturday November 2, the new Presiding Bishop will be installed. The installation will occur at the Episcopal Church's headquarters, 815 2nd Ave, New York City. Soon to be former Presiding Bishop Michael Curry will be with us in January for the Martin Luther King service and event. The new Presiding Bishop will be with us for the Consecration of our new Bishop in May. The new Presiding Bishop will also be in Kansas City for the Episcopal Parish Network (EPN) conference at the end of February. Kirkin o the Tartan will be Sunday, November 17, coinciding with the Bishop's visit. She will preach at both morning services, while the 5:00 p.m. service will be Evensong. That will be the Bishop's last official visit, and she will not be with us for Christmas. The Bishop's last day will be May 3. Our Thanksgiving Service will be 10:00 a.m. on Thanksgiving Day, Thursday, November 28.

Strategic Plan Update: Mark Galus, Steve Moore, and Blain Lagergren have met with Dean Andy to discuss the update to the bylaws. Those updates are currently being worked on and they will be presented to the Vestry prior to their submission for approval at the Annual Meeting.

Associate's Report, The Rev. James Yazell

Current formation class on The Path has been getting great feedback and tomorrow is the second week of the William Jewell class concerning ancient cosmologies which has been and continues to be a very interesting examination.

Financial Report, presented by Dean Andy on behalf of Chip Buckner, Treasurer

Let's start with the year-to-date operating fund analysis. (Treas. Supp. YTD Analy of R&E.pdf). As always, red cells are financial concerns and green cells show places where (from a financial standpoint) something good is happening. "Pledges" and "plate" are less good than last year's budget committee had guessed they would be. We are behind where we were last year. "User fees"—that is parking and event space charges—are a big bright spot. "Endowment to operating" figures are less than predicted and less than last year. The yellow cells highlight our Interfund Transfers. You'll remember that we budgeted \$200,000 of COVID money for use during the year. We haven't used that money, yet. I find it interesting that if you pull the COVID money out of the 1.6 million dollar revenue budget, we are very, very close to the 1.4 million dollars we have actually received. The RESULTS are very similar, but the path to get those results wasn't terribly close to what we expected. Moving down to the "Expenses" rows. We're spending more on people than we expected to spend. The things that save the budget are that "facility" and "parish life" and "music" expenditures are, collectively, about \$90,000 under budget. Even so, if you compare total revenues to total expenses, we've spent about a hundred thousand dollars more than we've brought in. If "facility," "parish life" and "music" had spent their budgets, we'd be about \$200,000 in the red.

The beginning of the year through about Easter were great. Since then, our revenues have dropped. I haven't been around long enough to tell you what Christmas and the end of the year do for our revenues, but summer and fall have been discouragingly low.

Let's flip over to the balance sheet. (I've asked Steve Berman to give me the numbers in an Excel spreadsheet, so that I can use some calculations and ask the spreadsheet where we need to devote our attention.) In the far-right column, you can see where a number changed by more than five or more than 10% from August to September. Let's start with line 10, the "Cash Accounts". This is the checking account. In line 1100, you can see that the operating fund is being depleted at the rate of fifty or sixty thousand dollars a month. We keep our checkbook in the black (see the "Total 10" line) by moving money from the money market fund I set up. Moving down to Line 12, you can see that September was a good month for our investments. We made about \$350 thousand during the month. Moving down to line 2601, we have some money that we need to move to the various discretionary accounts. 2420, the parking lot account and 2460, special events account continue to grow.

I told you that I wanted to touch on "Endowment to Operating" again. When working with projections for the Budget Committee, I was puzzled by some numbers. The projection was that the next year's 4% draw (the one for 2025) would give us less money to spend than the 4% draw did this year. Given that our investments have had a terrific year, that didn't make sense. I told the Executive Committee that I was puzzled and wanted to look at it. When we got to the Finance Committee, Steve Moore saw it, too.

Although I was told that we were drawing 4% from our endowment, it looks to me as though it was pretty close to 5%. I THINK it was simply a case that cutting-and-pasting numbers and formulae on a spreadsheet caused the planners to use bad numbers. I've put together a new spreadsheet with extensive directions on where to insert numbers and how to add and to delete columns. I think that, going forward, you'll have more reliable numbers. My point is that we spent a higher percentage of our endowment than we intended to spend. As a result, even though our investments had a great year, a 4% draw in 2025 will result in fewer dollars than we had in 2024. We are going to have fewer dollars to spend. Given that, as of the end of September, we are already \$100,000 over our year-to-date budget in a year that saw us spend \$100,000 less than anticipated on the facility, on parish life and on music, I wanted to warn you that I expect the budget committee to face some significant challenges with a budget for 2025.

We have a Wednesday, November 13 budget committee meeting set and Dean Andy will work up several possible different scenarios, i.e. cutting budget, personnel, increasing the draw to 5%, etc. to potentially make up some of the aforementioned shortfalls, but only in an exploratory capacity at this time.

Blain Lagergren moved to accept the September Financial Report and was seconded by Nigel Jones. The motion passed after further discussion.

A question regarding line item 14, and the nature of that figure, is it if we tried to sell that is that the value and is that a fixed number? Yes, it is a fixed number and those are ostensibly the property values. Has there been an assessment of the value of the property recently? Church Insurance may have done an assessment. Julie Toma should be able to tell us if an assessment was done.

Stewardship Report, *presented by Dean Andy on behalf of Steve Moore, Stewardship Chair*

All the letters have gone out, it has been in the bulletin every week, and in the prayers of the people. The incorporation of stewardship prayer into the service will follow the election of our new Bishop. The Bishop will give a stewardship sermon at the Kirkin o the Tartan service.

Junior Warden Report, *presented by Valerie Johnson*

The buildings and grounds committee's next meeting will be Tuesday, November 12. The common room remodel is coming to a close. We are still considering furniture. The largest focus right now is the memorial garden and we are starting to believe that it will be longer than we like to fully address, as it is an important part of the campus. Ask if the Vestry believes there is a way to collect and create an informative method of communicating what is going on to the congregation, especially those connected with family that have been committed. The monument company will come and present to memorial garden committee, and will prepare samples and engravings. We can provide a write up with pictures in emails and announcements to communicate with the congregation. We may benefit from the development of a comprehensive master plan and style guide for architectural and design choices for the Cathedral campus in order to maintain a unified visual character. We will be working on the Pete's Garden lease to reflect the change in square footage. We are working with part-time gardener to take over in November after the departure of Ric Sweeting. We are still assessing interest in making phone calls to develop call ministry through REALM Pathways.

Senior Warden Report, *presented by Steve Moore*

n/a

Other Committee or Vestry Liaison Reports

Dinner with Friends, *Julie Brogno*

We are at the end of taking names. We will meet with Julie Toma to make an accounting of names in order to then form groups.

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

New Business

Who Should We Thank?

The Vestry is appreciative to the Clergy, especially Fr. James Yazell for his homily. Clare Stern-Burbano and Holly Campbell and all the volunteers for the Fall Festival. Mark Galus for his preaching on Sunday.

The next Vestry Meeting will be Thursday, November 21 at 5:30 p.m. in the common room and via teleconference.

Charles Shipley moved to adjourn the meeting and was seconded by Nigel Jones. The motion passed.

A closing prayer was led by Dean Andy. The meeting adjourned at 6:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Blain Lagergren, Clerk