

## **Vestry Minutes – January 23, 2023**

Dinner & Meeting 6:00pm

**Those Present:** Rector Sarah Odderstol, Senior Warden Yvonne VanLowe, Junior Warden Chris Bedal, Angela Austin, Mike Bader, Linda Baily, Evan Bennett, Roger Brown, Stephanie Gray, Jen Ray, Metty Scarlett-Jones, and Bruce Seeman.

Also Present: Chair of the Budget & Finance Committee and Treasurer Keith Allen

**Opening:** Jen Ray opened the meeting with worship, and Stephanie Gray read the Grace Church *Vision for the Future & Core Values*.

### **Consent Agenda**

***Approval of the Minutes from December 2022 Meeting.*** Metty Scarlett-Jones moved that the Minutes from the December 2022 meeting be approved as submitted. Stephanie Gray seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

***Budget & Finance Committee Report.*** Budget & Finance Committee Chair Keith Allen reported that the Committee had reviewed end-of-year financials for 2022 and had revised its submission of the 2023 budget to the Vestry (see below). On behalf of the Committee, he noted that the Refugee Ministry is giving the remainder of its funds (\$15,000) to the Faridullah family to help them purchase a house, an action that ends Grace Church's support for the family and closes that ministry, with no further support forthcoming. Noting some confusion over the 2022 Christmas offering, the Committee had also recommended ensuring that the church office solicit the holiday funds by envelope and letter in advance in 2023. Keith informed the Vestry that the church credit card was being switched to a Capital One card in Keith's name.

### **Presentation and Approval of Proposed 2023 Budget – Keith Allen**

Keith then submitted the proposed 2023 budget, which had been revised after the December Vestry meeting. On the income side, he noted that the 2023 pledge estimate of \$510,000 represented a significant drop from 2022 pledge (actual and budgeted) levels. Other major sources of income included the \$50,000 surplus from the previous year and the income from rental of the Parish Hall to the Auburn School. He reminded the Vestry of the original intent to set aside \$200,000 of the

Auburn income for transfer to the endowment funds. The Committee's proposal is now to transfer \$133,000, a sum higher than the November proposal and closer to the original \$200,000 goal.

On expenses, Keith noted two major changes from the November budget presentation. The first was a decreased contribution to the diocese (\$93,000), reflecting in part the lower anticipated overall income. The second was the Committee's recommendation to delay hiring a new sexton. In balancing the need for a sexton with the need to live within current and anticipated income, the Committee proposed that any new pledge income above projections be allocated to funding the sexton position and that any additional income to the no pledge/plate projection would be allocated to the set-aside of Auburn school funds to the endowment fund, as would any surplus at the end of 2023.

Vestry questions focused on proposed staffing plans, which include Associate Rector Anna Broadbent-Evelyn's maternity leave from March through early June, the retention of Pastoral Associate Andrew Ogletree through early June at the latest, and the hiring of a new Associate Rector to begin in early summer.

Keith also reminded the Vestry that some reorganization of budget line items and presentation will occur over 2023 and that the Committee will review the budget throughout the year, recommending possible cuts if pledge levels do not increase. The Vestry thanked Keith for his presentation and his work.

Subsequent Vestry discussion focused on the fact that the 2024 budget will include three full-time clergy and will not include a surplus. Thus, the Vestry must focus the parish on living within its means and on increasing the endowment. It was agreed to mention estate planning and to focus on the need for fiscal stewardship at the upcoming Annual Parish Meeting, the theme of which is planning for the future.

Mike Bader moved to approve the proposed 2023 budget as submitted; Chris Bedal seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. The Vestry thanked the entire Budget and Finance Committee for its work during this time of transition.

## **Warden Reports**

*Senior Warden Yvonne VanLowe* asked the Vestry to establish an action plan for updating the congregation on the action steps agreed in last month's change conversations. She will provide the first update at the Annual Parish Meeting. Junior Warden Chris Bedal agreed to update

the Vestry and the congregation thereafter on a monthly and later bi-monthly basis under the action/watch items of the monthly agenda.

**Junior Warden Chris Bedal** asked if a Grace Church email could be set up for the Junior and Senior Wardens. Pastor Sarah will have these set up and will update the Vestry group email. Chris also asked about the usher cards for flower delivery, which will be resumed and expanded.

## **Clergy Report**

**Associate Rector Hire - June 2023**—Pastor Sarah announced that Yaa Addison has signed a letter of agreement as Associate Rector, beginning June 4, 2023. Pastor Sarah said that Yaa had been interviewed by a number of congregants and is excited to be coming to Grace. Her duties will include formation responsibilities. She is likely to be ordained this summer, with time and place to be determined.

**Parish Administrator**—Parish Administrator Micah Morgan has decided not to pursue the post permanently, as she wishes more flexibility than the church can offer. Pastor Sarah will post the position next week.

**Vestry Orientation and Vestry Retreat** – Pastor Sarah is planning a Vestry orientation and retreat in February. It will include time with Rudy Logan, Interim Diocesan Missioner for Equity and Justice, and a financial orientation with Fiscal Officer Andrea McCants.

**Thank you!** – Pastor Sarah and the Vestry expressed deep thanks to outgoing Senior Warden Yvonne VanLowe and to outgoing Vestry members Evan Bennett and Bruce Seeman.

**Amundson Room** – Pastor Sarah announced that the new Sunday School room will be named the Amundson Room in recognition of Dan Amundson's service to the church and will be blessed and named at an upcoming service.

## **Action Items/Watch Items**

**Diocesan Reparations Task Force & Grace - Jen**—No update was available. Pastor Sarah noted that Susan Schulken was part of the team that crafted the reparations resolution for Diocesan Convention. Diocesan delegate Paul Brown will report to the parish on the convention proceedings.

**Tending Our Soil** – Mike Bader reported that the Tending Our Soil team was featured at a recent Adult Forum and was subsequently

commissioned at church. He outlined upcoming events such as creation of a spiritual timeline for the church's collective history, a parish survey, and neighborhood expeditions, all of which will include an equity and inclusion focus. The team has added two new members -- Meaghan Parker Forney and Ben Fortman.

### **Roundtable Forum**

*Yvonne*—thanked everyone on Vestry for being resilient, supportive, and willing to do the hard work. She is looking forward to some rest but also to helping the church live out its values of fairness and equity.

*Evan Bennett and Bruce Seeman* – thanked the Vestry for their time as members.

*Linda Baily* – announced that there will be a newcomer social at the end of February.

*Roger* – noted that the kitchen will need periodic cleaning in the absence of a sexton and that groups should be reminded to clean up after their own events.

**Circle Back** – The Annual Parish Meeting will serve as the monthly report.

**Adjournment** – Jen Ray led closing worship, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:10 pm.