



**Minutes of Trinity Cathedral Vestry Meeting
December 19, 2023 – 5:30 p.m.**

Present:

Vestry Members: Jeff Spiess, Sr. Warden; Kim DeNero-Ackroyd, Jr. Warden; Paul Herrgesell, Treasurer; Mark Biddlestone; Elizabeth Billings; Marie Curry; Martin Hermes; Diane Hexter; Audrey Hudak; Antoinette Ponzio; Cynthia Ries; Marilyn Valencia

Staff: The Very Rev. Bernard Owens, Dean; The Rev. Adrienne Koch, Priest Associate; Dan Hout-Reilly, Controller; Cheryl Williams, Director of Development and Community Programming

Clerk of Vestry: Darrell Lausche

Guest: Char Nichols, Chair of Peace, Justice, & Mercy Mission Team

Absent: All members were present

- The Vestry meeting was called to order at 5:34 p.m.
- Beth Billings led the Vestry in the opening devotional.

Formation

- Mission Team: Peace, Justice, & Mercy

Char Nichols, Chair, presented on the work of the mission team. She shared the similarities between the Peace, Justice & Mercy mission team and the other mission teams at Trinity Cathedral. The mission team focuses on creation care, Greater Cleveland Congregations, Episcopal Peace Fellowship, and the Racial Inventory and related work. The mission team has been working on connecting individuals to projects of interest, partnering with other organizations that are working on similar projects, revitalizing Greater Cleveland Congregations, revitalizing the Creation Care Ministry, and developing next steps.

Char highlighted events that included the Guns to Gardens project. The Greater Cleveland Congregations Core Team is conducting one-on-one conversations with members to identify important topics and leadership potential. A January 16, 2024, event will be held where candidates for County Prosecutor are invited to attend and talk about issues. Other topics the mission team has focused on include abolition of the death penalty in Ohio, fighting human trafficking, the Trinity Cathedral's racial inventory, etc.

- Skills Building: The J-Curve of Change

Dean Owens shared information on the J-Curve of Change, from the College of Congregational Development series. The presentation was made available to Vestry through the Vestry Dropbox. The graphic includes five stages, Status Quo, Disruption, Exploration, Rebuilding, and Mastery. He explored how change happens and how it compares to the expectations that people have. Things tend to become negative, before becoming positive and meeting the expectations. There are different results for thoughtful change and unmanaged change. Discussion, questioning, and input from Vestry members occurred.

- Dean's Report: Sabbatical 2025

Dean Owens shared positive news about attendance at The Abundant Table 9:00 a.m. service. He discussed initiatives for the new calendar year, including a "setting the table" campaign with the goal of involving more members in assisting with the work of serving in worship, conducting one-on-one conversations with the help of the

Greater Cleveland Congregations Core Team, and the continuation of the Dean's Forum and Trinity Forums. He also discussed his desire and plans for a sabbatical in 2025. Trinity Cathedral will assist in applying for a grant, by mid-March, that will help fund the sabbatical. The goal is to help reconnect with the Spirit and what draws clergy to ministry.

Fiduciary Work

- Adoption of Consent Agenda
 - November Minutes
 - Staff credit card policy

Audrey Hudak moved, "to accept the consent agenda." Cynthia Ries seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

- Executive Session: Clergy Compensation

Paul Herrgesell moved, "to move into Executive Session." Martin Hermes seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The Vestry moved into Executive Session at 6:36 p.m. The Vestry returned to the regular meeting at 6:44 p.m. Jeff Spiess facilitated the Executive Session.

- Stewardship Committee

Cynthia Ries updated the Vestry with the monthly stewardship reports. The Stewardship Dashboard was made available in the Vestry Dropbox. The trends are moving in a positive direction.

- Finance Committee & Treasurer's Report

Paul Herrgesell provided the monthly reports for both the Cathedral and Trinity Commons for November. He entertained questions from the members of Vestry. Income is higher and expenses are lower, continuing the trend. It is anticipated that the year will end below budget for expenses.

Paul followed up the discussion about the insurance premium from the November 2023 Vestry meeting. Dan Hout-Reilly and Paul Herrgesell talked to the Church Insurance representative to get clarification about the premium increase. Paul explained the reasoning presented to them, including annual trends and increases in construction costs. The trend is in line with Paul's research of increases across the country. Clarification questions were asked by members of Vestry.

Paul also provided an update regarding the continuation of the lease of storefront space to Cleveland State University. Clarifying questions were asked.

- Property & Sustainability Committee

Mark Biddlestone discussed the visit to the Whitney Stained Glass studio to view the restoration work. He updated the Vestry on the plans for 2024 capital projects.

- Staffing Update

Dean Owens shared that there are no significant staffing updates. There have been meetings with Operations Manager candidates. Applications are still being accepted.



- Vestry Returning to In-Person Meetings

Jeff Spiess asked members of the Vestry if they were comfortable in returning to in-person meetings. He shared that the “owl” would be available to allow members unable to be in-person to still participate via Zoom. The Vestry members agreed that a return to regular, in-person meetings would be in order.

- Clergy Housing Allowance

Jeff Spiess shared information about clergy requests for housing allowances. He reminded Vestry that the housing allowances do not affect the budget but are allowances that can be claimed by clergy on their income tax. **Jeff Spiess moved, “to approve a housing allowance of \$45,000 for The Very Reverend Bernard J. Owens, and \$62,000 for The Reverend Adrienne Koch.” Martin Hermes seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

- By-laws Amendment

At a past meeting, Vestry had discussed that, in addition to the change to the bylaws regarding the Treasurer position, that elimination of the requirement that delegates to Diocesan Convention be elected at the Vestry’s April meeting should be proposed to the members of the congregation. This requirement does not fit with the current schedule of the Annual Meeting. Vestry did not vote on this proposal at that meeting and is required to publish bylaws amendments one month prior to the Annual Meeting. Therefore, **Jeff Spiess moved via email, “that the phrase ‘at their April meeting’ be stricken from Article X, Section 1 of the Trinity Cathedral Bylaws.” Cynthia Ries seconded the motion. The motion passed with 11 votes in the affirmative via email, meeting the 2/3 majority of Vestry required for bylaws amendments.**

Strategic Work

- 2024 Budget

Paul Herrgesell discussed the budget revisions made after the November 2023 Vestry discussion regarding the draft budget. Paul commended Dan Hout-Reilly, Controller, for the work he has done in helping to detail the budget and work to keep the finances in line with the budget. **Paul Herrgesell moved, “to approve the 2024 budget and for the Vestry to authorize the 5% draw on the endowment.” Audrey Hudak seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

- Major Events/Wedding Receptions

Dean Owens shared information about recent events that are over-extending the capacity of the cathedral staff. He shared that there are currently no scheduled receptions for 2024. Continued discussion on the topic will occur at a future meeting.

Generative Work

- Capital & Capacity 2024-26

Cheryl Williams and Dean Owens led the discussion. Cheryl shared a draft of a possible timeline for a major gifts initiative. She shared what is possible. Much of the “heavy lift” is up front and is an “all in” initiative. She encouraged the Vestry to think beyond the present and to anticipate what could happen in the wider world that the church can impact.

The Vestry brainstormed hopes and aspirations. An invitation to generative thinking was extended to the members of Vestry. 2024 would be used as a discernment opportunity and for having conversations with individuals regarding their hopes, views on gaps in ministry and/or capital, etc. The Vestry also began the process of identifying



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the opportunities and challenges a campaign presents. Cheryl explained the various decisions the Vestry will have to make that will help an initiative a success, including a planned giving policy, creating policies around gift acceptance beyond cash, etc. Clarifying questions were asked by members of the Vestry.

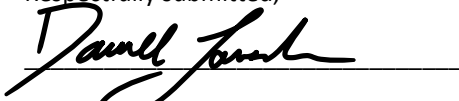
Closing Prayer

Beth Billings led the Vestry in a closing prayer.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

Next Vestry Meeting: January 16, 2024, at 5:30 p.m. In-Person

Respectfully submitted,



Darrell Lausche, Clerk of Vestry

