

Minutes of the Meeting of the Vestry of the Chapel of the Cross. October 19, 2023

The Vestry of the Chapel of the Cross met in the Overlook Room and via Zoom on Thursday, October 19, 2023, at 6:00 P.M. The following Vestry members were present: Brian Coggins, Anita Howell (Zoom), Katherine Lavine, Caren Parker, Harriet Pegram, Gail Perry (Zoom,) Roman Perun, Alan Rimer (Zoom), Brad Ross, Faith Turchi (Zoom)

The following clergy were present: The Rev. Elizabeth Marie Melchionna (Rector), The Rev. Mary Catherine Young (Associate Rector for University Ministry, Zoom), The Rev. Keith Esposito (Curate), and The Rev. Dr. Karen Connor McGugan, Curate for Family and Youth.

Also present were Diane McOmie (Parish Administrator and Stewardship Coordinator), Sabrina Olsen (Treasurer), and Alice Cotten (Clerk).

The Rector presided and called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Devotion/Prayer

Roman Perun led the devotion, reflecting on how to trust God when a situation seems hopeless. He closed with two prayers from the BCP, "For the Human Family" and "For Peace," both on page 815.

Approval of Consent Agenda

The following items were on the Consent Agenda:

- Minutes and Summary from September 2023 Vestry Meeting
- Rector's Report
- Campus Ministry Associate Rector's report
- Curate's report
- Curate/Youth and Family Ministry report
- Christian Formation report
- Parish Life and Worship report
- Music report
- Communications report
- Buildings & Grounds report – September
- Faith in Action report
- Stewardship Committee report - October

On motion of Harriet Pegram and seconded by Brad Ross, the consent agenda was unanimously approved.

Rector's Update

Talking to Each Other: "Why do you serve?"

The Rector asked those present to pair up and talk with each other for a few minutes, asking, "Why are you serving in a leadership position at this time?" Then the pairs changed and discussed that question with another person. (Zoom attendees had a less than ideal experience but tried to participate. Ms. Melchionna noted that by next month the parish expects to have an "Owl" camera, which will provide improved hearing and views for those Zooming.) The Rector asked those who were willing to share their responses. Some responses were as follows: I was asked, I was invited, I wanted to be part of the solution, I wanted to make connections with other parishioners, I'm setting an example for my children, I saw my parents in leadership roles in our church and wanted to follow.

Ms. Melchionna pointed out the power of an "ask" and a conversation when engaging parishioners in shared goals and leadership roles.

Annual Campaign

The Rector said that she was excited about the annual campaign and the positive energy it has generated and encouraged all to thank Sally Goodnight for her leadership role.

Ms. McOmie reported that there have been 251 pledges so far, totaling \$1,074,322. Of these 251 pledges, 129 have increased by an average of 12%.

Standing Committee Updates

Buildings & Grounds

Committee Chair Faith Turchi reported that the Yates roof needs repair and that Joe Rosemond is seeking bids for this work, which needs to be done before the solar panels are installed. The town denied the permit application for the first design effort for the solar roof panel array because it was not designed to NC code. There is some variation within the state in what is required, but Chapel Hill requires strict adherence to the state code. A new design is being prepared that meets state code requirements.

Finance

The Rector welcomed back Brad Ross, Chair of the Finance Committee, who had returned from South Africa the previous night. Mr. Ross reported that there had not been a Finance Committee meeting since last month but that work was continuing by both the Investment and the Policy teams. He then asked Sabrina Olsen to give a Treasurer's report.

Ms. Olsen reported that through September 30 the parish has a deficit of about \$60K. Current year pledge payments have been slow to come in, though there was an increase in both pledge payments and plate income in September, likely a result of issuing contribution statements and the beginning of the parish program year. She is concerned about pledge payments not coming in but assured everyone that "the sky is not falling." Expenditures are generally within budget, though some exceed budget due to prices, parish needs, and timing.

The balance sheet shows the parish in a strong cash position. Most of the parish money is invested. The general reserve has decreased because of the excess of expenses over revenues. In purpose-restricted funds, the Organ and Light fund has received \$2.1M, spent \$1.2M, and has a balance of \$934,130. The amount still to be raised is \$182K. The Capital fund balance is \$755K, of which \$444K is committed for specific projects.

Discussion included questions about how the parish follows up on unpaid pledges (statements after Thanksgiving usually bring in a lot of payments) and whether the parish could self-fund the organ project and avoid borrowing (too risky—would leave the parish with too little readily-available cash).

Personnel:

The Rector reported for the committee. It is time for open enrollment for health insurance plans. There are limited options for health insurance coverage through the mandatory Diocesan plan in which everyone in the diocese has to use the same pool. Clear, transparent communication with staff about rate changes and coverage decisions is important. The Rector, along with parishioner Patrick Long, will review health insurance options and consider how to approach the diocese with our experience with mandated plans that may not be competitive in the marketplace. The Rector believes the parish is in a good place now.

Stewardship:

Co-Chair Katherine Lavine reported that there have been two successful calling nights, with another coming up on October 26. They hope clergy and vestry will attend this one. Ingathering will be on Sunday, November 12.

Other reports/updates, as needed:

From the Rector

The Rector reported that Bishop Samuel Rodman will be here on November 5, preaching at 9:00 and 11:15, and joining parishioners in the Parish Hall at 10:15 for cake and conversation. He will have lunch with Vestry and staff.

Ms. Melchionna will soon be joining the Bishop and other rectors in a wrap-up meeting for the “Reimagining Curacies” program.

The Rector reminded everyone of the upcoming services at noon on Nov. 1 (All Saints’ Day) and Nov. 2 (All Souls’ Day), and the All Saints’ Day and All Souls’ Day (transferred) services on November 5.

Organ Project

Brian Coggins reported from the Organ Project Committee. He had visited Casavant last week, during which he met some employees and saw many of the completed parts for our organ. There will be another visit to Casavant in the winter, when someone from our parish will get to play the new organ. Mr. Coggins has clarified with the engineers what we need at this point and is “cautiously optimistic” that their work will speed up. The permit that the Organ Project Committee believed that the contractor (Resolute) had submitted to the Town of

Chapel Hill for approval had not actually been submitted, a fact the parish learned when the town called a member of the Organ Committee to inquire when the town would receive the permit application. This unforeseen delay will adversely affect plans for building use as well as the installation of the organ. Discussions have begun between the parish and Resolute's president to ascertain what happened, why, and what will be done about it. The company president will also talk with the town to find out how far work can proceed without a permit.

Discussion followed, focusing on how to prevent such an occurrence from happening again. Recommendations included getting everything from contractors in writing, "trust but verify," and having written procedures to follow and to pass along to future vestries dealing with large projects. The Rector commented that she was grateful that the Vestry was eager to assist in this situation, something that in her experience was not always the case.

The Rector offered a closing prayer. The meeting was adjourned at 7:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alice R. Cotten
Clerk of the Vestry

The next meeting of the Vestry of the Chapel of the Cross will be on Thursday, Nov. 16, 2023, at 6:00 p.m.