

## **Minutes of the Meeting of the Vestry of The Chapel of the Cross**

**18 January 2024**

The Vestry of the Chapel of the Cross met in the Overlook Room and via Zoom on Thursday, January 18, 2024. The following Vestry Members were present: Jessica Aylor, Brian Coggins, Woody Coley, Anita Howell, Katherine Lavine, Caren Parker, Harriet Pegram (Jr. Warden), Alan Rimer, Brad Ross, Faith Turchi.

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

Also present were Diane McOmie (Parish Administrator and Stewardship Coordinator) and Alice Cotten (Clerk, via Zoom).

Guests present were Sally Goodnight (Chair of 2024 Annual Campaign) and Nancy Tunnessen (parishioner at COTC and Treasurer of Orange County Justice United)

**The Rector presided and called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.**

### **Devotion/Prayer**

Brian Coggins offered a prayer from St. Alcuin of York (c.735-804) invoking Light, Goodness, Power, Wisdom, and Pity as we follow Jesus and seek God.

### **Approval of Consent Agenda**

The following items were on the Consent Agenda:

Minutes and Summary from December Vestry Meeting

Rector's report

Pastoral Letter

Campus Ministry Associate Rector's report

Curate's report

Curate/Youth and Family Ministry report

Christian Formation report

Music report

Communications report

Parish Life and Worship report

Finance Committee Minutes – December 2023

Faith in Action report -- January

Stewardship Committee report -- January

Church Organ Committee minutes – 1/8/24

Church Organ Status report of 1/17/24

*Upon motion by Brad Ross, seconded by Alan Rimer, the consent agenda was approved unanimously, with no abstentions.*

### *Annual Campaign Recognition*

The Rector recalled Woody Coley's question at the December meeting, when he asked how the Vestry could express appreciation to the Stewardship Committee for such a successful year. Sally Goodnight, who led the annual campaign, had been invited to be present and responded that it was one of the most fulfilling things she had done in a long time. There was a round of applause. The Rector then invited Harriet Pegram, Jr. Warden, to speak. Ms. Pegram spoke "on behalf of a very grateful Vestry, staff, clergy, and church," and presented a small gift to Ms. Goodnight in recognition of her leadership. She also thanked Ms. Goodnight for a fun and entertaining annual campaign, one that always remembered the ministry and mission of the church. She quoted two parishioners who had declared, "it was the best campaign!"

### *Justice United Listening Session*

The Rector, noting that Justice United was an affiliate of Industrial Areas Foundation, with which she did some training about 20 years ago, then recognized Nancy Tunnessen, parish liaison with Justice United (and its current treasurer), and invited her to speak. Ms. Tunnessen explained that this was a "listening session," the first step in the organizing process, to be followed by defining achievable goals, reasonable asks, and designing a campaign. She had requested that Vestry members consider what they saw in their community that was of concern and to be prepared to summarize that in one minute. Concerns mentioned included affordable housing for seniors, respite care for caregivers, aftercare and teacher workday care, aging in place for underserved communities, mental health needs, nutrition and food insecurity, and translating services. Ms. Tunnessen thanked everyone for their input and noted that the Outreach Committee of the COTC allocates some of its budget to Justice United.

### **Rector's Update**

The Rector thanked the Vestry on behalf of the staff, who all received increases in compensation. She noted that construction was happening in the building, requiring adjustments in usual patterns of getting from one place to another, as well as developing a tolerance for a fine layer of dust everywhere. Attendance was up over Christmas services. The Adult Inquirers' Class has 35 people enrolled. The Youth Inquirers' Class is full. There is exciting energy around the church. The staff is working on compiling a list of parts of their jobs that might be suitable for volunteers to do, an idea that emerged from a Vestry meeting.

Ms. Melchionna invited comments about the *MLK Day of Service*. Anita Howell, who worked with the Creation Care team helping remove invasive plants from Bolin Creek, responded that it was awesome, and that coordinator Allison Worthy had said that everything she was overseeing also went well. Dr. McGugan reported that most of the Youth Inquirers' Class and three adults were at SECU House at 7 A.M. on the holiday to prepare breakfast for those in residence. The Rector commented that this year there was an opportunity to read some of Dr. King's writings and reflect on them, and that this action-reflection model was effective.

She asked everyone to mark their calendars for the afternoon of *Sunday, March 10*, for the *retreat* for Vestry (incoming and outgoing) and other parish leaders from standing committees of the Vestry. The Rev. Lindsey Ardrey, the Diocesan Canon Missioner for Diocesan Reparations and Restitution Ministry, will be there to help our parish do some work around racial healing in response to the recent Pastoral Letter from the Bishops of the Diocese of NC.

Next the Rector offered a “shout-out” for the *Youth “Winter Trip”* that Karen McGugan had adapted (several times!) from the planned skiing trip when the weather at Beech Mountain was predicted to be so bitterly cold that skiing did not seem advisable. She also thanked Parish Administrator and Stewardship Coordinator Diane McOmie, whose job description does not include driving and chaperoning youth on a weekend mountain trip, for volunteering to do just that when an additional adult volunteer was needed.

Ms. Melchionna said that Dr. Michael McVaugh, parish archivist, has been transcribing the first parish register and researching some of the individuals whose names were on it. The Chapel Hill Historical Society will publish this register on May 13, 2024, the anniversary of the founding of our parish. This will be a good resource for those interested in the history of our county and our town. In doing that research, Dr. McVaugh came across one of William Mercer Green’s journals, including a prayer for the six (total!) UNC faculty in 1849 at the start the fall semester (Green was also the chaplain at UNC). Ms. Melchionna was struck by how fresh the words seem even today. In response to a question, the Rector added that the parish was “dormant” during the time the University was closed after the Civil War because it did not have the three men required to constitute a Vestry.

### **Standing Committee Updates**

*Organ Construction:* Chair Brian Coggins reported that there was lots of activity and things were going well, with most attention now devoted to little things. There is still a window of a few weeks between when Resolute is supposed to finish and Casavant is supposed to arrive, which is good. The committee is hoping to have final pricing next week, after which it will update the budget and the fundraising goal. A lot of cash came in in December; we are in a good cash position. Mr. Ross commented that we should thank Mr. Coggins for his note to donors, which was very well done. Ms. Melchionna added that things have gone remarkably well so far. Mr. Coggins noted that Resolute’s site manager is very good.

*Stewardship:* Co-Chair Katherine Lavine reported that there was no update other than what was in the packet. They are still working on the annual fund. Sally Goodnight added that there are a few people left to call as “check-ins” (people who pledged last year but not this year) and to let her know if this is something you can do. She and Ms. Pegram will send a list of these names to Vestry members.

*Personnel:* Chair Jess Aylor confirmed that all reviews have been completed.

*Finance:* Chair Brad Ross remarked that he wanted to take the Vestry back to 18 months ago when, under Ms. Aylor’s leadership, the Finance Committee and Treasurer were trying to put

together a budget for 2023. We were coming out of pandemic, looking to be fully staffed, a sabbatical was coming up, the “organ fund” was going on. The Finance Committee decided to pull \$51,000 from reserves in order to balance the budget. Though the books have not been closed on 2023, we are in a much stronger financial position now due to expense control and revenue generation. This stronger position should allow contribution to the general reserve and the capital fund. Mr. Ross said we were fortunate to have an excellent staff that manages money well and a very generous congregation.

Mr. Ross also reported that the Diocesan Standing Committee and the Bishop have both approved the loan terms that the Vestry approved last month. The Bishop will be signing the document next week, after which the parish will move ahead with the loan from Southern Bank and Trust. He commented that this could not have happened any faster than it did.

*Building and Grounds:* Chair Faith Turchi reported that the committee did not meet in December but will meet later in January. The subcommittee on the nave lighting met last week. One thing they’re working on is getting information to Resolute so they can take down the current lighting system. The roof repair work has been completed. Mr. Rimer reported that he is hopeful that the modified solar panels can be installed during UNC’s spring break in March. Ms. Melchionna added that she appreciates the care with which the committee is considering the proposals in order to make the best choice.

*Other:* The Rector let the Vestry know that the Rev. Mary Catherine Young’s fifth anniversary at the COTC was coming up, and she will be on sabbatical this summer. This information will be shared with the parish around the time of the annual meeting.

### **Closing Prayer and Adjournment**

Katherine Lavine offered a closing prayer, incorporating information from the Vestry meeting into her favorite Epiphany hymn, “Songs of Thankfulness and Praise,” p.135 in *The Hymnal 1982*:

"Songs of thankfulness and praise, Jesus Lord to you we raise:  
 Manifest in the excitement of our new adult inquirers and youth inquirers classes,  
 Manifest in 400+ more people joining us for worship at Christmas this past year than the last,  
 Manifest in organ construction on track,  
 Manifest in a surplus in 2023 and not calling on the general reserve.  
*(Pause for a silent moment of thankfulness.)*

May our lives and all we do imitate and honor you, that we all like you may be at your great Epiphany:

Manifest in our conversation tonight with Justice United,  
 Manifest in our call for better respite care and elderly care,  
 Manifest in our quest for affordable housing,

Manifest in our seeking aftercare, teacher workday care, and nutrition solutions for our community's children,  
Manifest in our hope for increased inpatient mental health capacity,  
Manifest in the youth winter retreat this weekend.  
*(Pause for a silent moment for petitions.)*

May we praise you, ever blest, God in man made manifest. ***Amen.***"

The meeting was adjourned at 7:04 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Alice R. Cotten  
Clerk of the Vestry