

## **St. Gregory the Great Episcopal Church**

### **Vestry Meeting Minutes**

**August 9, 2022**

#### **In Person and via Zoom**

**Present in Person:** Eddie Bennett, Les House, Jane Hudson, LeeAnne Krause, Nikki Mathis, Mark Richardson

**Present via Zoom:** John Bray, Stacie Court, Gail Eilers, Blaine Everson, Anna Hiers, Lane Norton, Maggie Reinberger, Caley Ross

#### **Devotional:** Eddie Bennet

Eddie spoke about marginalized people he had known, wondering what we as a vestry could do to help meet the needs of similar folk in our midst. A discussion ensued, bringing up the following ideas:

- We could do more to regularize coffee hour. The problem is that while congregants want to help, they are often wary of working the machines (coffee, dishwasher) and of coming early to set up and staying late to clean up. Stacey suggested offering a stipend of perhaps \$50.00 to someone to host coffee hour each Sunday—perhaps to a parent of a child attending Barnett Shoals school. →Stacey and Gail will continue to discuss coffee hour and bring ideas back to the vestry.
- We could reach out to the community in more ways than we do. Nikki pointed out that we used to help the Barnett Shoals School—a Title 1 school—with school supplies, a practice that has fallen into disuse. →Mark said he would contact the Outreach Committee to try to reinstate this ministry.
- We could perhaps reach out to those who have not returned from COVID departure.
- A question was raised about a possible Newcomer Reception at a coffee hour in March, which is already an approved practice. →The Pastoral Care liaison, Stacey, will contact Alice Mohor (in charge of welcoming) about possibly reviving the reception this coming March.

#### **Approval of Minutes:** Nikki Mathis

Nikki called the meeting to order. →The minutes of the June meeting, sent to vestry members in advance, were approved unanimously.

#### **Financial Report:** Les House

Prior to the meeting, four documents were sent to the vestry: *July 2022 Treasurer's Report, 2020 and 2021 Draft AUP (Audit), July 2022 Ministry Budget Status, and 2023 Preliminary Budget R2.*

With regard to the Treasurer's Report, Les pointed out that the July revenues were \$28,077 and expenses were \$33,998, resulting in a net total loss of \$5,921 for the month, explaining that this is normal for the time of the year as we move away from early non-pledge giving that was well over budget and as the church has become more active following the COVID slowdown.

Les added that our YTD revenue is \$30,805 higher than it was in 2021 but that our expenses are similarly higher because we are more open. Two other points emerged from his report:

- The church owes \$4,800 to auditors--the balance due for the cost of our audit of the last 2 years
- Budget requests for the gift of \$56,682 totaled more than twice that amount

Les went on to explain the Independent Accountant's Report for 2020 and 2021 done by Aldridge and Associates for St. Gregory. He highlighted the following issues:

- A number of weaknesses identified by the independent audit were the result of bookkeeping errors triggered by incompatible technologies. (Monies were present but were incorrectly labeled.) Les explained that he is in the process of improving the spreadsheet software so that these errors can be rectified.
- One or two deficiencies cited—such as the absence of regular journal entries for transactions—seem to be the result of incomplete information gathered by the auditors. For instance, Les does in fact make regular journal entries.
- A few weaknesses may be the result of policy deficiencies. →These policies should be updated by the Finance Committee and submitted to the vestry for approval.
- We have not had a valuation of the property recently, so it is hard to say what those assets amount to. →Nikki indicated that the Buildings and Grounds Committees need to arrange for an assessment to be done.

Les suggested the following two motions:

- To accept the audit
- To request the Treasurer to further investigate the issues raised by the audit and report back to the vestry

→Both motions were approved unanimously.

Finally, Les led the vestry in looking at the Preliminary Budget for 2023. The following items were discussed:

- Item 0185B: Nikki pointed out that Priest Discernment should be greater than 0, suggesting \$700 to cover costs for *Here I Am* among other activities.
- With regard to Supply Clergy, Les asked if we should include funds to pay a locum for pastoral care during Nikki's sabbatical. Nikki thought that would be a good idea. A discussion of sabbatical expenses ensued.

At the end of his report, Les announced that if asked, he and Jeff Welch would serve one more term as Treasurer and Finance Committee Chair, respectively.

On the subject of finances, Nikki reported that several checks she had written out of the Rector's Discretionary Fund to aid people in distress had bounced owing to the bank's failure to correctly transfer funds as directed. (We should keep the bank in our prayers as they seem to need them.)

### **Report on 80<sup>th</sup> General Convention of the Episcopal Church and the Lambeth Conference:** Nikki Mathis

The 80<sup>th</sup> General Convention of the Episcopal Church met in Baltimore, MD, for four days instead of the usual two weeks. In that time, more than 400 resolutions were proposed; of them, only 17 were deferred to 2024. One of the deferred resolutions was to label Israel an "apartheid" state. However, another resolution (C039) both affirmed the right of the state of Israel to exist but also condemned "the continued occupation, segregation, and oppression of the Palestinian people."

Another resolution passed by the convention (A059) would allow for liturgies approved by the General Convention to have the same status as liturgies in the Book of Common Prayer without the need for a full-scale revision of the BCP. This would include liturgies for same-sex marriage and proposed gender-expansive language.

With regard to the Lambeth Conference, Nikki reported that despite distress expressed by the Global Southern wing of the Anglican communion over trends and changes (women, lesbians, gays in the church) occurring especially in the US and other progressive states, many important issues such as gun violence as well as instability and war in the South Sudan, Syria, Palestine, Ukraine, and so on, were discussed and prayed over.

### **Rector's Report:** Nikki Mathis

In the interests of time, Nikki spoke only about weekly attendance. Post COVID, church numbers are stable, with attendance as follows:

- 8:00 service: 20-28 congregants
- 10:30 service: 80-89 congregants

### **St. Gregory the Great Episcopal Church Land Acknowledgment** (tabled from 5/17/22): Nikki Mathis

Nikki distributed a land-use acknowledgement and American Indian-based prayer for potential approval. The Native Land statement and prayer is from the Absalom Jones Episcopal Center for Racial Healing, Diocese of Atlanta, compiled by Atlanta author and historian, Sarah H. Hill, an authority on Indigenous history in the South. For members participating via Zoom, →Jane offered to distribute the document via email. →Vestry members were asked to email responses to the document to Jane and Nikki before September 1.

**Signage Cost for Limited Mobility Parking & Parking Lot Repairs** (tabled from 5/17/22): Caley Ross

Caley reported on estimated costs for new signs for the parking lot designating certain spaces for those with limited mobility and also for restoring the graveled area of the parking lot. The costs for the signs are as follows:

- 5 signs (metal): \$87.95
- 5 posts (weighted, no wheels): \$470.60
- Total \$558.55

→A motion that the signs be purchased at the costs stated above carried unanimously.

Caley reported that re-graveling the portions of the parking lot that are not paved would incur the following costs:

- 18 tons of gravel: \$821.00
- Tamper rental: \$83.00 per day (for an estimated two days)

Caley graciously volunteered his and Jeff Welch’s services and Blaine nobly added his own to spread the gravel and tamp it down, but Nikki said that it would be better for various reasons for the church to pay for the labor as well as the materials. → Caley offered to get a quote on the cost of labor to complete the work.

**Approval of AKO Signs’ Estimate to Replace the Directional Roadside Sign:** Nikki Mathis

The roadside sign directing drivers to St. Gregory the Great at the intersection of Barnett Shoals Road and South Barnett Shoals Road has faded to illegibility. AKO Signs has proffered two estimates for replacing the sign:

- Polymetal composition: \$354.60
- Aluminum composition: \$430.20

The difference in composition is that aluminum would last longer. →A motion that we accept the offer to replace the faded marker with a new aluminum sign was unanimously approved.

**Volunteers to Attend the 116th Annual Council:** Nikki Mathis

The convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Atlanta for 2022—the first in-person convention since 2019—will meet at Holy Innocents' Episcopal Church, Atlanta, on Friday, November 11-Saturday, November 12. Nikki asked for three volunteers to attend with her. The delegates are as follows:

- Maggie Reinberger
- Anna Hiers
- Jane Hudson (alternate)

**2023 Vestry Nominating Committee:** Jane Hudson

Jane introduced the vestry members who will serve on the nominating committee for new members in 2023 and asked for suggestions for 2 non-Vestry members to serve on the committee.

The bylaws require that the senior warden, the junior warden, and one member ending their term be included on the committee. These include

- Jane Hudson (Senior Warden)
- LeeAnne Krause (Junior Warden)
- Eddie Bennett (rotating off)

A number of congregants were suggested for consideration.

**Forming a Capital Campaign Committee:** Nikki Mathis

Discussion of this matter was tabled until the next meeting.

Nikki closed with a prayer and the meeting adjourned at 9:07 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Mark Richardson.