

**Vestry Minutes – Church of Our Redeemer**  
**Joint Vestry/Priest-in-Charge Discernment Committee Meeting**

Saturday, December 10, 2011 at 9:00 am  
Meeting Room, Church of Our Redeemer

**Vestry in Attendance:** The Rev. Kate Ekrem (Priest-in-Charge), Connie Parrish (Sr. Warden), George Murnaghan (Jr. Warden), Frank Kern (Treasurer), Paula Antonevich (Clerk), Bob Bettacchi, Susan Emanuel, Ian Fox, Sandy Keshishian, Peter Lund, James Surprenant. Absent: Emily Charlton, Anna Kern.

**Priest-in-Charge Discernment Committee members in attendance:** Paula Antonevich (chair), Bob Bettacchi, Randy Bowlby, Tom Digby, Peter Koso, George Murnaghan and Mary Ucci. Phil Whitbeck, Diocesan Facilitator for the Discernment Process was also in attendance.

The meeting was called to order at 9 am by Paula Antonevich and began with a prayer written and read by Mary Ucci.

After a welcome and introductions, Paula, working from the Committee's report distributed to Vestry in advance of the meeting, began with a broad overview of the process that the Committee followed in coming to its recommendation and then stated the Committee's unanimous recommendation that Kate Ekrem be called as the next Rector of the Church of Our Redeemer. Paula then walked through the detailed report and described each of the meetings the Committee held and made reference to those meetings which Kate joined. She then invited each of the Committee members to offer any thoughts or reflections on the process and outcome.

George offered that the process was very positive for Redeemer in ways beyond just the outcome, as it identified or clarified our strengths and challenges as a parish and gave us good perspective on moving forward. Mary said that the process gave us an opportunity to hold up Kate's strengths and to talk about how we can work together. Randy mentioned the value of the strategic plan work and that its influence on the process really shows. Tom said that he felt it important that the Committee be prepared to identify a gap between Kate's strengths and our needs if one existed and that he felt personally able to do so if warranted, but that he came away satisfied in all respects that the fit is a good one. Bob said that he wanted to be sure that the process was thoroughgoing and that it not simply treat the potential call to Kate as a foregone conclusion, and he expressed his full satisfaction with the process.

Kate offered her thoughts, focusing on the things she brought to her meetings with the Committee, especially her concept of building our capacity for having difficult discussions where necessary, on the concept of helping us to gather our vision for Redeemer's future while maintaining a "holy indifference" to the outcome and on seeing that our members live out their baptismal vows: to work, pray and give for the Kingdom of God.

Vestry members were invited to ask questions of the Committee and of Kate. Susan asked if there were any pockets of concern or dissatisfaction with Kate as a potential rector. Paula said that there were not and described the requests for feedback the Committee made of the chairs of the standing committees of the Vestry, including the Executive Committee and mentioned the

universally positive feedback from individuals who approached her or others on the Committee. With the number of announcements about the Committee and with prayers in each service, the Committee felt that there was ample opportunity for inputs should members wish to offer them. Tom described his outreach to individuals and families that her know had concerns about how Tricia's departure was handled to gauge their views on Kate and his positive report back from those discussions. James wondered whether any inputs had been solicited from those who typically attend the 8:00 am service, and Paula noted that she had made the same announcement at the outset of the process to both services and that the feedback she had received directly from attendees at the 8:00 am service we also strongly positive.

Frank noted that the Strategic Plan had modest growth goals and wondered how that worked into the process and whether Kate had thoughts on the maintenance or renewal of the parish going forward, given that some growth was necessary just to offset attrition as people age or move away. Kate said that she and Committee recognized that the Strategic Plan was a good representation of where we were at the point in time it was conducted rather than a more detailed roadmap of the future, which was in keeping with where Redeemer was during this period of healing and transition. She also offered her view that growth, while not an end-result objective of the Strategic Plan, was really a by-product of understanding and articulating a clearer sense of who we are and what matters to us, which would influence our appeal to those who looking for a spiritual home. She related some of the strategies that were used in Norwood to increase membership and said that similar ones might be considered here when the time was right. Peter mentioned that the Committee had deliberatively decided not to address the growth question as it is one that requires a wider discussion, and Bob suggested that the discussion of whether and how to pursue growth were good questions for the next phase after the conclusion of the Priest-in-Charge process.

Kate asked the Vestry to think about where we want to see Redeemer in 3-5 years. Bob recapped his response to Kate when posed the same question to the Committee, that Redeemer would be characterized by:

- Vibrant worship services
- Well-attended Christian formation offerings for all ages
- A vibrant and engaged parish
- Financial security, with sufficient funds to support programmatic and facilities needs, with greater operating funds available to support mission work

Bob characterized the financial components of this vision for the parish as aspirations or "stretch" objectives that would result in significant progress even if not fully achieved.

Following this good discussion of growth and of the future of Redeemer, Kate was excused for further discussion of Committee's recommendation and a vote on whether to call Kate as Rector. Connie made the following motion:

**Motion:** That Vestry to accept the report of the Priest-in-Charge Discernment Committee and authorize the Wardens to call Kate Ekrem as the next Rector of the Church of Our Redeemer.

The motion was duly seconded and unanimously approved.

Following the vote to call Kate, the Wardens left the meeting to advise Kate of the Vestry's decision and to call her to become Rector. Kate and the Wardens then rejoined the meeting, and the Wardens advised the Vestry and Committee that Kate had accepted the call.

The meeting concluded with a discussion of next steps, which involve contacting the Bishop's office, which the Wardens and Kate would do following the meeting, the agreement of a new Covenant of Ministry, planning for Kate's institution at a date convenient to the Bishop and announcement to the parish. Tom encouraged us to specify as clearly as possible the roles and responsibilities of the Vestry in making this decision so that this could be well-understood within the congregation.

Connie expressed thanks to Kate and to the Committee for its discernment and to Phil Whitbeck for his role in overseeing the process. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 11 am with a champagne toast.

Respectfully submitted,

George Murnaghan