

**Church of Our Redeemer
Annual Meeting on Zoom
Sunday, January 31, 2021**

Minutes: DRAFT

Presiding: The Rev. Kate Ekrem
Clerk: Cathy Burns
Parliamentarian: Charles Hornig

The meeting began at 9:50 with Rector's Call to Order, followed by her address, and a celebration of Eucharist in the sanctuary. The address began at 9:49 a.m. with Kate Ekrem addressing the congregation. She started by telling us that she's started running and has learned that it's hard because you have to push yourself to keep going. The author Dan Hotchkiss has used running as a metaphor for church; and turning corner from 2020 to 2021 is like going into lap #2 of a run. To be successful, we need to keep going even though we are tired. In reporting about the state of the parish, Kate told us that our parish is strong and resilient. She asked, *Why are we strong and resilient? First, we have strong relationships; we care for one another and are always thinking of ways to keep in touch. Second, we have continued to intentionally cultivate our worship experimentation. We have shown this by trying new things and discovering what happens. These two elements contribute to the third element, patience. We have continued to be patient and kind to each other. Next, we have made a commitment to God and the community. The work of the parish has continued to get work done and this shows a commitment to a relationship with God and with each other. Another element is being able to be honest about our struggles. We are vulnerable to each other and we share our heartaches and losses. There are many opportunities to share and sharing our burdens helps us continue to be resilient. We are also outward facing. We are really good at recognizing and answering the needs of our mission partners; the Regathering team worked hard to accommodate the food pantry and LexEat; and the Racial Equity group has helped deepen our call to work for racial justice. Lastly, the values of welcome, inclusion, justice, and love that we identified during our worship experiments last year have guided us at every step along the way. We have continued to ask the questions of how to include others and reach out to others. We keep asking, Is it inclusive? Does it show God's love and justice? These values have continued to be true through the past year.*

Kate described how Christmas this year exemplified our resiliency. Although it was a virtual Advent, parishioners jumped in and helped make our Advent and Christmas observance amazing. She highlighted that the Wright's provided materials to make Advent wreaths; Cara Kalf created an Advent calendar; Bethany Friesner worked really hard to provide a pageant on Christmas Eve; Kathleen Mirani and her team invited speakers for Adult forums; the choir took on the challenge of making music virtually; the Mission Committee coordinated with the Grow Clinic for support of virtual holiday party; Susan Burkhardt collected and delivered knitted hats and mittens to the Grow Clinic; Murray Daniels worked on Christmas carol videos; the Pastoral care team sent cards and coordinated the Service of Remembrance and Healing; the Altar Guild, under Susan Dresley's leadership worked hard to make church pretty; the Tech team worked on each service; the Regathering team protocol helped make having communion together Christmas Eve a possibility. Everyone did what they used to do, but in a brand new way. It turned out to be a wonderful Christmas.

Kate told a story about a zoom meeting she had with other clergy and there was a discussion about how their respective stewardship campaigns were going. Many of her colleagues were stating that they felt good because giving at their churches only went down a small percentage. Meanwhile, our giving went up! Parishioners gave more to Redeemer in 2020 than in 2019. This is proof of hard work by the Stewardship Committee as well as a commitment to and faith in this community. We even had nine new members decided to pledge to Redeemer during the pandemic. To be able to report this is miraculous.

Kate thanked us all for all we do as it shows how strong and resilient the parish is today. Kate went on to say that going forward, we will continue to live stream services even after we return to in person church and she expects to have a new assistant rector this spring because of the generosity of parishioners.

In sum, Kate asked us to read the parish collect together:

Loving God, who calls us to restore unity and justice, your son Jesus teaches us that love brings us together in a community where all are welcome. Help us to deepen our faith and relationships so that we can grow our community to make a difference within and beyond ourselves, through Jesus Christ Our Redeemer. Amen

After the Eucharist, the meeting was suspended and the congregation was directed to join the Annual Meeting Zoom call. The Zoom call began with a slide show that included pictures from the many events of 2020 that we shared together.

The meeting was recalled to order at 10:48 a.m. on Zoom with an opening prayer by Kate Ekrem. Charles Hornig served as our Parliamentarian. He led an orientation to the meeting. Parishioners signed into the chat function in for attendance.

A quorum was certified by the clerk and a **motion** was made, seconded, and unanimously passed to approve the minutes of the 2020 Annual Meeting.

2020 Nominating Committee Report (Kate)

The committee worked for several months on the slate. Thank you to the members of the committee: Christopher Huggins, Jackie Potdevin, Lee Noel Chase, Karen Schragle, and Tony Johnson.

The following nominees for officers, vestry, and deanery representatives:

Senior Warden: Murray Daniels

Junior Warden: Sarah Conrad

Treasurer: Winthrop Brown

Clerk: Cathy Burns

Vestry for 3-year term: MaryAnn Burnside

Vestry for 3-year term: Helene Sullas Huggins

Youth members for 1-year term: Christie Burnside and Heath Fox

Deanery representatives (one year term): Linda Kukulich and Sarah Klein

The following vestry members will continue to serve their elected terms and are not standing for election this year:

1-year term: Susan Dresley, Dan Voss, Cassie Bowlby, and Susan Burkhardt

A **motion** was made, seconded, and **unanimously approved** to elect the slate of officers, vestry and deanery representatives as submitted and included in the annual report.

This group will be commissioned next Sunday, February 7, 2021.

Election of the Nominating Committee for 2021-2022

The following candidates have expressed an interest in serving on next year's Nominating Committee. We need 5 members and 1 alternate. We will take nominations from the "floor" and vote on Zoom. The following are the candidates: Endy Chiakpo, Richard Friesner, Joanne Frustaci, Judi Dimicelli, Randy Bowlby, John Bernhard, and Karen Schragle. Additional nominations: None.

We will have a vote. The slate is on the screen. Choose 5 candidates.

The Nominating Committee for 2021-2022 are: Endy Chiakpo, Richard Friesner, Joanne Frustaci, Randy Bowlby, John Bernhard, and Judi Dimicelli will serve as alternate.

Leadership Report

Warden's Report and Budget Presentation (Bill Vogele, Murray Daniels)

Bill Vogele started by remarking how wonderful it is that we are all together. We are a parish that is resilient, loving, and full of hope whose members are drawn by faith, empowered by love, committed to justice. He stated that our faith helped us leap into the unknown last year; our love for one another was exhibited by our Regathering Team looking for ways to be together safely and nurture our community; and our commitment to justice strengthened our relationships and helped us respond to hurt in the world. Bill went on to thank parishioners who were finishing their term of service on the Vestry and those that were just elected. He thanked the Regathering Team, Tech team, and anyone else who worked so hard this past year to help us stay connected to each other and to God.

Murray Daniels talked about the work of the Regathering Team, led by Paula Antonevich with Cassie Bowlby, Murray Daniels, Christopher Huggins, Lori Wright, Erica Brotschi, Kate Ekrem, and Andrew Goldhor. He talked about how the team needed to address Diocesan guidelines, with checklists, support, and oversight. The team used parish surveys to ask questions and developed ways for the Food Pantry and Lexington Play Care to use the building, along with AA groups, and our staff, in particular our Sexton. They also focused on live-streaming technology and how best to ventilate our building, recognizing the importance of fresh outside air.

Murray continued to address our worship and music and how to keep our parishioners safe while still sharing worship together with music. He remarked that in 2020, we were from full in-person worship to online morning prayer to online Eucharist to in person Communion on Christmas Eve. In music, we went from live music to a mix of remote, previously recorded, newly recorded, and on-line music. Special thanks to the Tech team, staff, and guest musicians all helping to make things happen.

Bill Vogele addressed our financial situation and started by thanking the parish for their generosity of time, talent, and treasure. He shared that he wanted to highlight the financial minds of the Finance Committee who meet each month they look at the finances. They review the monthly status of the

church finances. He reported that on the revenue side, we are about \$25,000 short of the budget. In January of 2020, the Vestry approved deficit of \$15,000. Because of the pandemic, by end of the year revenues were \$25,000 short. This could be attributed to a reduction in gifts and especially rental income. However, expenses were about \$40,000 lower, due to saying goodbye to Andrew, lower program costs, and much lower utility costs. So, at the end of the year, we had a balanced budget. At the beginning of 2020, we had no way of knowing how things would play out.

Bill addressed the issue of the PPP loan. In August, with Vestry authorization, the Finance committee secured a loan under the CARES act for about \$50,000. It seemed appropriate to support Redeemer staff and mission; it was prudent because times were uncertain and it was opportune because the program was expiring. In 2021, Vestry will have to address how to use any funds that flow in from forgiveness of the loan.

At the end of 2020, we ended up in a good place. The 2021 budget was approved by Vestry projecting a surplus of \$12,000; with expected income of \$542,000 and expenses of \$530,000. Some underlying assumptions were made to come up with this budget. First, personnel costs will be lower because we still do not have an assistant clergy person; second, reduced costs from the use of the building; and third, we think rental income will recover but not until the fall.

Most important budget impact will be hiring a new assistant clergy person. When looking at our income, the largest portion comes from gifts; and on expense side, our largest expense is personnel. They are roughly balanced. Rentals keep the building open. The variables relating to hiring a new assistant are when they begin, what health insurance is needed, and their level of experience. Newly ordained priests will cost less than a priest with experience. The budget was created knowing that these were concerns.

Regarding the Stewardship campaign, while we did lose some members, we had an increase of 9 new pledges leaving us with a net increase of 4 new pledges. The total amount pledged also increased.

In closing, Bill said that looking forward we are in a great place and we are blessed by generally crazy members. The parish is looking forward to a safe return to worship, but we will continue to live-stream services. We will apply the lessons we have learned along the way to keep connected so we can return our attention to the sanctuary design project. The values we have of justice, community, and love will continue to sustain us.

Questions were taken from parishioners and topics covered included questions about how we served our Mission partners and potential solar energy projects.

A **motion** was made and seconded and approved by **unanimous vote** to adjourn the annual meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 11:55 am.

Submitted by,

Cathy Burns, Clerk

Meeting Attendees:

Bill Vogele
Ingrid Klimoff
Cathy Burns
George Murnaghan
Karen Schragle
Erica Brotschi
Ginny Neumann
Debbie LeBlanc
Cara Kalf
Steven Dillman
Adele Purvis
Jackie Potdevin
Susan Burkhardt
Cassie Bowlby
Sarah Conrad
Sam Stevens
Paula Antonevich
Russell Antonevich
Bethany Friesner
Jamie Burnside
Steve Burns
Brad Dillman
Mary Nokes
Frank Fornaro

Charles Hornig
Peter Jacoby
Ian Fox
Christopher A Huggins
Alix Fox
Katharine A Mockett
Jim Neumann
Linda Kukolich
Mary Eames Ucci
Susanne Dillman
Connie Parrish
Peter Koso
Mia Jacoby-Twigg
Noah Jacoby-Twigg
Caroline Wortman
David Cooper
John Bernhard
Mike Webb
Deb Jacoby-Twigg
Mia Ong
Kathleen Mirani
Peter Dillman
Sandy Anagnostakis

Richard Friesner
Murray Daniels
Tony Johnson
Evelyn Hausslein
Susan Dresley
Sandra Koerber
Heath Fox
Jeanne Jacoby
Katherine Ekrem
Lance Conrad
Calie Koso
Judith Dimicelli
Sarah Klein
Randy Bowlby
Bethany Friesner
Claudia Cooper
Christie Burnside
Cara Kalf
MaryAnn Christie Burnside
Winthrop Brown
Beth Murnaghan
Karen Daniels
Chris Needham