

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE VESTRY
GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH
GAINESVILLE, GEORGIA
APRIL 24, 2025**

VESTRY MEMBERS/OFFICERS PRESENT:

Kimberley Boyd, Junior Warden
Sue Bowron
Jim Bradley
Jim Brim
Steve Carlson
Darlene Hauserman
Cheryl Kelley
Helen Scovill
Anita Smith
Jason Voyles

ABSENT:

Stuart Deaderick, Senior Warden
Jo Brewer

STAFF PRESENT:

Rev. Dr. Stuart Higginbotham
Rev. Dr. Brandon Nonnemaker
Sister Genevieve

OTHERS PRESENT:

Amy Munn, Treasurer
Susan Lahey, Clerk of the Vestry

Rev. Dr. Stuart Higginbotham opened the meeting with a prayer at 6:30PM.

CONSENT AGENDA:

- Treasurer's Report and Minutes approved unanimously. Carlson/Brim.
- Approval to paint Grace and COG. Finance/Voyles.

OTHER BUSINESS:

- We have not yet received final figures from Tipton Construction.
- There is \$100,000 remaining in outstanding pledges.
- Update on building expenses: the HVAC unit in the parlor and four units in COG are failing. The nave needs an air handler replacement at a cost of \$150,000. Repairs will not come out of Building Reserve. More discussion will be needed at the May meeting.

- Rev. Dr. Brandon Nonnemaker gave an update on the Youth program:
 1. Some youth participated in Youth Happening and New Beginnings at the diocesan level.
 2. The new director at Camp Mikell spoke to the group.
 3. Five communicants were confirmed at The Cathedral of St. Philip in Atlanta. One youth was baptized at the Great Vigil.
 4. The youth participated in Easter egg stuffing and an egg hunt, which was held on the lawn at Brenau.
 5. On April 27, the Outreach Committee will meet with youth.
 6. May 11 is Youth Sunday.
 7. May 18 is Graduation Sunday.
 8. In lieu of a traditional VBS this summer, there will be two Performing Arts camps with Cherokee Bluff Theatre. The dates are June 16-20 and June 23-28.
 9. On May 25, the group will be attending the Renaissance Fair.
 10. A pilgrimage to Boston is scheduled for the Fall.
- Kimberley Boyd reported on a Participation meeting that took place on April 23 attended by six parishioners. Topics discussed were:
 1. More emphasis on welcoming newcomers to Grace, with the possibility of a “PALS” program where new people would be paired with members of the parish.
 2. Providing a list of various groups that meet at Grace.
 3. Hosting more events where no RSVP or bring food would be required.
 4. Quarterly meetings, e.g., Bingo nights.
 5. Pairing youth with adult parishioners as mentors.
- The May 4 Forum will feature Bob Pennington introducing the Planned Giving program, the 1825 Society.
- Jennifer Williams has created laminated QR code cards for the pew racks. This will take people directly to the church website.
- Credit card update: the Ameris Bank account will be used for the day to day expenses. The other card will be used for occasional expenses such as the Women’s Retreat.
- May 25 will be Rogation Sunday (Blessing of the Crops). We will use real bread made by parishioners and local wines.
- Discussion followed about how Grace can nurture deeper conversations and make the church more relevant. We need to find more imaginative ways to invite people into deeper involvement. As many people attend the Sound Baths and concerts as the Sunday services. We were encouraged to delve into Krista Tippett’s conversation on “Why Is It So Hard to Talk About God?” There was a Lenten Retreat at Linwood Nature Preserve attended by several parishioners. Father Stuart envisions holding more services there, using Communion Kits to take to the park. Another idea is “Mass on the Grass” concurrent with an inside service. As many churches in the USA are currently struggling with dwindling membership, Grace is fortunate not to be in “survival mode.” Parishes will need to increase endowments and the 1825 Society is a move in that direction. Vestry members were asked to email “nuggets” that can be found online.

- Sister Genevieve is interesting in expanding activities that will bring people into Grace. Some examples are: performing arts, relaxation, art therapy, a day of silence and contemplative activities.
- There will be a ZOOM retreat with Cynthia Bourgeault on Saturday, May 3, from 9-12.
- We will be delving into the Church of Conscious Harmony this summer.

The meeting was closed with a prayer by Rev. Dr. Brandon Nonnemaker at 7:45PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Lahey, Clerk of the Vestry