

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

**CALL TO ORDER:** The Vestry meeting convened on January 15, at 6:35 PM in the Grace Center Conference Room. Stuart Higginbotham opened with a prayer

**VESTRY MEMBERS/OFFICERS PRESENT:**

Polly Jones, Senior Warden  
Patrick O'Rourke, Junior Warden  
Charles Kelley  
Stan Lewis  
JoAnn Manring  
Jean Parks  
Scarlet Pendarvis  
Gail Sargent  
Dan Scott  
Doug Smith  
Mike Whitmire  
Callie Flack, Treasurer

**ABSENT:**

Adam Hazell

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Rev. Dr. Stuart Higginbotham

**ACTION ITEMS:**

**REVIEW & APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER MINUTES and DECEMBER 2019 TREASURER'S REPORT:**

There was a budget surplus of \$91,000 for 2019. December Financials were approved along with the Treasurer's Report. Whitmire/Sargent. Unanimous approval.

**HOUSING ALLOWANCE FOR CLERGY:**

Assistant Rector's allowance will remain the same at \$35,700. Rector has requested \$40,000. Kelley/Parks. Unanimous.

**2020 ANNUAL BUDGET:**

The Finance Committee recommends approval of the 2020 proposed budget. The 2020 budget was approved by vestry. Finance Committee/Scott. Unanimous

**PROPOSED PARISH FINANCIAL POLICY REVISION:**

Mike Whitmire gave an extensive report on the revisions to the Parish Financial Policy:

1. Creation of a new Capital Funds checking account at a bank other than Ameris (General Fund) and SunTrust (COG). This account will contain all funds used for capital improvements or expenditures including the Building Fund, Building Reserve Fund, Columbarium Fund and Memorial Fund. Using a third bank will allow us to take advantage of an additional \$250,000

- FDIC deposit guarantee and will reduce the balance of the General Fund closer to the FDIC limit as recommended by our auditors.
2. Creation of an Operating Reserve Fund. This fund will include all unrestricted and undesignated monies in the General Fund plus all end of year surpluses from the Operating Fund if not recommended for other uses (such as the Building Reserve Fund) as recommended by the Finance Committee and approved by the Vestry. This change will allow us to quickly identify the amount of undesignated operating reserves in the General Fund.
  3. Creation of Operating Reserve and Building Reserve Funds for COG. Year-end COG surpluses will be held in these two funds as recommended by the Finance Committee and approved by the Vestry.
  4. Spending Authority for the Building Reserve Fund is given to the Rector for expenditures of no more than \$5000. Expenditures that take the fund balance below \$50,000 or are in excess of \$5000 should be recommended by the Finance Committee and must be approved by the Vestry. This change will allow the Rector to fund small, but necessary capital expenditures (new hot water heater, water cooler, etc.) without going through the entire Finance Committee and Vestry approval process. It is in line with the same Spending Authority that the Rector already has over most of our other designated funds. Charles Kelley suggested an amendment to this amendment, i.e., that the Rector will be required to announce expenditures from this Reserve Fund at the following Vestry meeting. Unanimous approval: Finance/Scott.

#### **SURPLUS OF \$91,000 FROM THE 2019 BUDGET:**

Mike Whitmire reported that the Finance Committee had recommended that \$81,000 of the amount should be allocated to the Building Reserve Fund, and \$10,000 for the development of Spiritual Imagination worship for several Sunday evenings this year. Approved by Finance/Kelley.

#### **OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Mike Whitmire distributed a report on the Stewardship Campaign. In 2019, Grace had 258 families pledged; in 2020, there are 277 families pledging.

The ROTA for Vestry duty during worship services was distributed for members to sign up.

Rev. Stuart Higginbotham announced that the four new Vestry members will be trained by the two Wardens, Reba and him. In addition, the four Vestry nominees who are not selected will be asked to be part of the Participation Cluster, with Patrick O'Rourke and JoAnn Manning leading their efforts. There was a discussion of introducing neighborhood groups according to zip codes.

There will be a group organized to learn more about The HUB, a resource for needy families in the Gainesville and possibly Hall County Schools. Depending on the outcome, Grace Church could contribute \$5,000 for their efforts.

In the future, the audit will be moved from Fall to March.

Stewardship: the pre-campaign dinners went well. The campaign materials will be outstanding.

The Vestry (including the four newly-elected members) will meet on January 26, 2020, immediately following the Annual Meeting. Continuing in their roles will be Callie Flack, Treasurer, Doug McDuff, Assistant Treasurer, Reba Page, Secretary, and Susan Lahey, Clerk of the Vestry. This slate was approved by Jones/Smith.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 PM with a prayer by outgoing Senior Warden Polly Jones.

Minutes recorded by Susan Lahey, Clerk of the Vestry