

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

CALL TO ORDER: The Vestry meeting convened on September 28, 2020, at 6:30 PM via ZOOM Conference. Stuart Higginbotham opened with a prayer for the Human Family.

VESTRY MEMBERS/OFFICERS PRESENT:

Dan Scott, Senior Warden
Patrick O'Rourke, Junior Warden
Newsom Cummings
Chaudron Gille
Charles Kelley
JoAnn Manring
Scarlet Pendarvis
Tom Rossi
Gail Sargent
Doug Smith
Christy Wagner
Mike Whitmire
Callie Flack, Treasurer

STAFF PRESENT:

Rev. Dr. Stuart Higginbotham
Rev. Mary Demmler

ACTION ITEMS:

- Financials and Minutes from August were approved. Whitmire/Scott. Unanimous.
- Children of Grace: voted on adjustment of budget and moving funds to offset losses. Kelley/Whitmire. Unanimous.

OTHER:

- Discussion of attendance and services: Evening Prayer service on Sunday evenings has space for 46 parishioners; there have been 18, 10 and 10 at the three services offered to date. There is a possibility of moving the in-person service to 9:00AM and having a ZOOM Evening Prayer during the evening time slot. Currently, the 9:00 ZOOM service averages 50 homes logged in. It is difficult to tell how many are attending the FaceBook service at 10:45; we are working now to also stream the service on YouTube. Charles Kelley has been shadowing Jeremy Landers to coordinate the audio-visual when Jeremy is away.
- Diocesan Council delegates will be: Reba Page, Dan Scott, Patrick O'Rourke, Cheryl Kelley and Jason Voyles. It will be a virtual conference this year.
- Treasurer Callie Flack reported that revenues through August 2019 and 2020 are essentially the same. Expenses continue to be down. Mike Whitmire observed that between Thanksgiving and Christmas is when our revenue is the highest and it is critical to our financial health that the church continue with this trend in spite of the COVID situation. Father Stuart is in the process of examining how we can continue to pay our outreach commitments. Rev. Mary remarked that if parishioners want to come back to "the way things were" at Grace, they need to continue to maintain and sustain their presence in the church. We should know by the end of the year where we stand on the 2021 budget. The decision was made that Vestry members will make

calls to parishioners about finances. Grace in Touch will continue to reach out to members as a separate outreach mission.

- The Capital Campaign remains frozen. Our current financial situation has brought an awareness of how lightly some members are attached to this parish. Chaudron Gille stressed that the church needs to remain relevant after Father Stuart learned from the Clergy Conference that over the past ten years, the Episcopal Church nationwide has lost 20% of its membership. Many parishes founded in the 1950's and 1960's may be unable to remain viable. Grace must invest in families with children. Our average age is currently in the upper 40's and early 50's. Redevelopment will be necessary. Who are we as a parish? How to we shift and evolve? What does faithfulness look like now? It will require flexibility.
- In October, we will gear up with the Nominating Committee, which will be comprised of the four members who rotated off in 2020 and the four who will be rotating off this year: Junior Warden Patrick O'Rourke, Charles Kelley, Scarlet Pendarvis and Doug Smith. Four new members will be selected from a slate of eight. Father Stuart pointed out that complex issues will arise in the coming year.

With a reminder that a drive-by Pet Blessing will be held on Sunday, October 4, Father Stuart asked Rev. Mary Demmler to give the closing prayer. The meeting was adjourned at 7:45PM.

The next meeting will be October 26, 2020 at 6:30PM.

Minutes recorded by Susan Lahey, Clerk of the Vestry