

**MINUTES OF AN IN-PERSON MEETING OF THE VESTRY  
GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH, GAINESVILLE, GEORGIA**

**CALL TO ORDER:** The Vestry meeting convened on April 28, 2021. After enjoying fellowship and refreshments provided by Cynthia and Reba, the meeting was called to order in the Parish Hall at 7:10PM. Dan Scott led the group in prayer.

**VESTRY MEMBERS/OFFICERS PRESENT:**

Dan Scott, Senior Warden  
Chaudron Gille, Junior Warden  
Barbara Batog  
Newsom Cummings  
Dan Grizzle  
Vance Holifield  
JoAnn Manning  
Sonja McLendon  
Tom Rossi (via ZOOM)  
Gail Sargent  
Christy Wagner  
Mike Whitmire  
Callie Flack, Treasurer

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Rev. Dr. Stuart Higginbotham  
Rev. Dr. Cynthia Park  
Rev. Mary Demmler (via ZOOM)  
Reba Page

**ACTION ITEMS**

- After review, the Treasurer's Report, Financials and Minutes from March were approved. Gille/Manning. Unanimous.
- Approval was given for a new preschool copier lease. Scott/Gille. Unanimous.

**OTHER:**

- Vestry training for Safeguarding God's People and Safeguarding God's Children: Efforts continue to complete the training required by the Diocese.
- PPP (Paycheck Protection Program) forgiveness has been approved.
- Parish Development & Formation: Chaudron Gille reported on plans for the future. She, Cheryl Kelley and Dave Westfall, Sonja McLendon, and Kevin Flack will be gathering soon with groups that have continued to meet regularly throughout the pandemic, starting with an organizational meeting in May, followed by listening sessions. This is the time to "turn a crisis into an opportunity." They will examine how we see ourselves as The Church. What does it mean to be a part of the church community together and part of the greater community as a whole? They will continue listening sessions in the fall with the parish as a whole. They will establish a framework for looking at spiritual learning styles as part of exploring ways to break out of traditional molds.
- Stuart discussed the trending decrease in membership and clergy throughout the Episcopal church. Meanwhile, attendance is holding steady at both our in-person and virtual services at

Grace. We have had several transfers during the pandemic period who haven't yet been met by the clergy. We now have new members from far-flung locations who only attend virtually. Stuart foresees that we will always have a hybrid identity going forward. Indeed, the diocese has restructured attendance reports to include in-person and *devices* during a 24-hour time frame. Using Facebook, Live Stream, Sermon.net and ZOOM, we had 315 in attendance on Palm Sunday. Gail Sargent suggested the possibility of pastoral care on-line.

- As Stuart embarks on his sabbatical, he has increasingly been drawn to nature. He has an idea for a "church in the wild" on July 31 at Vogel State Park. The idea for outdoor services was well received, and he said that the Mansfields have offered to host one at the quarry on their property.

While Stuart is on sabbatical, Wardens Dan Scott and Chaudron Gille will be orchestrating the May and June meetings. The next meeting will be May 26 at 7:00PM in the Parish Hall. Masks are required

Stuart invited Cynthia to close with a prayer at 8:10PM.

Minutes recorded by Susan Lahey, Clerk of the Vestry