

In Brief - Meeting notes from the Program Ministry Council (PMC) & Vestry

July, 2020

As I leafed through my Grace papers this morning, I came across a full-scale, multi-page Grace bulletin from the service of February 23, 2020. It seemed so commonplace, another of the several hundred I've read from, sung and, prayed along with. So odd in this time when we read our bulletins entirely on-line and meet face to face in postage-stamp sized Zoom frames. And yet, how glad I am to see you, to talk at our "no-coffee" Breakout Sessions. Breakout Room #2 -- how we have laughed.

Though much is taken, much abides. We still baptize a baby, albeit in very limited numbers, we still worship together, some of us in silent rooms and some in a Grace Church illuminated, as ever, by the streaming-in light and emptied of most of us. We remember those who have left this earth, in prayer and thanksgiving, and by hanging banners pieced from bright cloth and stitched with memories.

Grace leaders, as you know, continue to meet to carry the work forward "as can." Some things we relinquish, some we replace with other works. Here is what we have talked about in July:

PMC - July 8:

Our meeting commitments are "start on time/end on time" with 7 - 9 as the time frame. We open and close with prayer and often a reflection.

Stephen provided a poem and prayer

Wardens' Report: **Grace Homecoming** Sunday, Sept. 13

and **Leadership Retreat** (focus on the Strategic Plan): Saturday, 9/12, 9 - 1:00

Rector's Report:

Wren shared highlights from the recent parish-wide **Survey**, pointing out demographics, total return and more. PMC discussion focused on data about Outreach, how people feel connected, intergenerational connections, music and more. Members were reminded the survey is to some degree a "satisfaction" survey of current offerings and is therefore a "snapshot in time." Focus group meetings will factor heavily in the vision for the strategic plan, including a recent session with Families with Children. A member questioned whether further analysis would show if specific demographic groups favored different areas of focus.

Memorial Garden proposal - Wren showed preliminary sketches for enhancements to the Memorial Garden; preliminary design will be funded from recent gifts specifically for the memorial garden.

Reopening Grace - Wren reported on building a small group tasked with creating plans and orienting volunteers when we get the "go ahead" to once again hold in-person gatherings (Phase III & Bishop's guidance). Current thinking is to continue Zoom services for 9:30, ensuring access for all, and to add smaller in-person gatherings for those not at risk/those who choose to attend. Details are in development. Lots of lively ideas offered.

Banners - Wren announced the upcoming private dedication of the new banners at the front of the church, honoring the memories of people dear to the maker, Janie Ekberg.

Curate's Report: Stephen was the recorder for a recent Strategic Planning focus group. He is beginning to make pastoral care visits and getting to know people here.

Pastoral Care: The team is continuing its work and is planning a special focus for Caregivers, week of August 7. Look for details in e-News.

Faith Formation: Engaging and well-attended book group and film series which have been detailed in the e-News.

Tribes: Many tribe leaders are willing to extend their terms-- Hooray! Only two tribes have openings for leaders. Tribes want to be incorporated into Reopening activities. A suggestion was made to organize Sunday Breakout session into Tribes.

Outreach: Received a nice note from Peace Trees Vietnam for the Grace masks sent to the Grace Kindergarten. In general, it's hard to feel connected to the work when we can't do our Service Sundays; much of the satisfaction is from "doing with." Most outreach partner agencies need direct donations and some are beginning to call back volunteers. Wren suggested sending the money we would have used for Camp Resurreccion to Iglesia de la Resurreccion for use with "our" families and kids there.

Membership: Leaders of this ministry raised the question whether there are other needs they can fulfill, since greeting newcomers is solely an email greeting right now. The group discussed options for greeting visitors, including small group connections between families and elders, a socially-distanced outdoor visit/greeting and more. It was suggested connections aligned with location might work.

Parish Life: Similarly to the Membership report, a leader in this ministry acknowledges a sense of loss in this "distanced" time. Pegge asked if there were a way to set up online games for those interested.

Pegge was thanked, along with Team Flower and Jan Jeffcoat, for **Stephen's "Welcome Event."** The day turned out beautifully and greeting each other face-mask to face-mask was joyous.'

Music: Martin continues to partner with Ann Strickland. Although it's a challenging time for musicians, Sunday music is lively and features both local singers and those living in other parts of the country, a Zoom benefit, for sure.

Youth: The Youth program is on a summer break. However, Faith plans to ask youth to write cards to accompany Grace's gifts (grocery store gift cards) when they are sent to Resurreccion for families there.

Vestry, July 15 -

Stephen offered an opening prayer.

The minutes of June 17 were approved.

Wardens' Report: PMC/Vestry Leadership date is Saturday, 9/12, 9:00 - 1:00

Rector's Report:

Wren mentioned the dedication of Janie Ekberg's banners, new for Grace this year. A motion was made and approved unanimously to accept the gift of the banners from Janie Ekberg, honoring Yaroslavna Adams and David Moen.

A request for private use of the Grace grounds by a local counselor was approved by consensus, with the understanding that use of restrooms will be arranged with Eric.

Curate's Report:

Stephen has begun to work with the Pastoral Care team, and is making pastoral care visits. He and Kim are meeting about Faith Formation.

Survey & Strategic Plan:

Guest Tootie Kuhn, who was instrumental in the development of the Grace Survey, joined Judy McKenzie and the vestry.

Following a thorough review and discussion of Survey results, Judy presented a matrix of "Strengths/Challenges/Opportunities and Threats" using themes and comments from the survey, parish listening sessions and the focus groups. After review and more comment from both PMC and the Vestry, this matrix will become the basis for building the plan. Among the trends of data gathered so far are strong support for the worship service, with hopes for continuing growth in music, for intergenerational faith opportunities, continuing hands-on outreach and a strong desire to support children and youth.

The vestry reviewed and discussed both reports at length.

Subsequent to the meeting, one member sent added comment reminding the group that financial review and considerations were part of the first plan materials and must be factored in. Another member agreed, and also advocated for unfettered visionary

thinking with financial support being then built in, to grow toward the goals. A draft plan is expected prior to the Leadership Retreat.

Place for Grace:

Bike Rack Proposal- Ryan Alsberge, a Bainbridge senior and longtime Grace member, sent a detailed video outlining a proposal to install bike racks at Grace for his Eagle Scout project. His video responded to several questions vestry members raised after Mike proposed the project in June. Ryan also provided several construction options for the vestry to consider.

Mike Leamon made a motion, which passed, to approve a plan featuring three racks and small 2'x2' pads. One member indicated support for the project, but questioned the process inasmuch as this project, along with some other past gifts, are not in any coordinated building and grounds master plan.

Trails Use Request:

Mike provided an update on a trails use request from the Island School, about which he had reported in June. The proposal was thoroughly discussed at a meeting involving Grace, Island School, the Bainbridge Is Parks & Recreation District and the City of Bainbridge Island. The proposal allows the school a path, through a trails easement, to a farm learning center, with the school working in co-operation with the church to maintain Grace trails. The parks district is eager to include Grace trails in the system-wide trails map and may also aid with maintenance; further discussion will be scheduled.

Mike made a motion, which passed, to grant The Island School access to the Grace trails, pending acceptance of release of liability documents.

Mike proposed a future look at the Grace Gifts Acceptance Policy to add language about trees and other plantings. The vestry agreed to postpone this to a later agenda*.
*Note: Following the meeting, a member pointed out that trees and other plantings are already included in the gifts acceptance policy/approval process under the category which includes all "Tangible Personal Property."

Development:

Ann New has been reviewing and analyzing income patterns for pledge and plate. She is also working with the Development Committee on plans for Annual Giving.

Treasurer's Report:

Deborah Schenk sent all financial reports to the Vestry in advance. The Treasurer and Budget & Finance Committee meet monthly prior to the Vestry meeting. Currently, Grace is keeping pace on both pledge and plate, although both are predictably slow in summer. Future trends are unclear.

Deborah reported on results of the 2008 Capital Campaign communications effort (asking donors to lift restrictions on their donations). A few changed the designation of donated funds, one asked for a refund, most agreed with the request. Where donors/heirs are unreachable, the funds will be designated for "Landscape Fund," which was one of the possible original designations.

Deborah made a motion, which passed, to add over \$6,000 currently in the capital campaign fund to the Landscaping Fund.

Deborah provided a detailed report and recommendations from the Budget & Finance Committee, developed by their sub-group on Grace Investments.

Deborah made a motion, which passed, to authorize the Treasurer to invest Grace's funds as outlined in the recommendation. Investments will be reviewed quarterly.

Deborah made a motion, which passed, to designate a portion of the Curate's salary as a housing allowance for tax purposes.

The meeting closed with a prayer by Wren.

Questions about this report?

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