

Grace and Holy Trinity Cathedral

Minutes, Regular Meeting of the Vestry on Thursday, March 24, 2022

Approved April 21, 2022

Members Present: The Very Rev. Dr. Andrew C. Keyse (Dean), The Rev. Canon Ryan Wiksell (Associate), Candace McDowell (Sr. Warden), Michael Thomas (Jr. Warden), Valerie Johnson (Clerk), Nick Smith, Pat Decker, Ron Michka, Kay Woolley, Paula Livingston-Lewis, Sharon Cheers, Amy Cornwell

Members Absent: Ken Stewart, Bill Colvin

Others Present: David Barker (Treasurer), Steve Moore (Chancellor)

A digital vestry packet was emailed to members prior to the meeting. Contents of the packet: Vestry Meeting Agenda for tonight; Minutes from the 2/17/22 Vestry meeting; Vestry Retreat notes from 3/5/22; Finalized Vestry Covenant based upon Vestry Retreat discussions of 3/5/22; Financial Reports as of 2/28/22 with Financial Committee Minutes from 2/16/22; Report of the Buildings and Grounds Committee from 3/8/22; Vestry Calls Schedule for 2022.

The meeting was held via Zoom teleconference due to the COVID-19 pandemic and was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Dean Andy with opening worship.

1. Approval of previous meeting's minutes

Valerie Johnson verbally presented 2 edits of the minutes from the Regular Vestry meeting on February 17, 2022. Edits served as clarifications within the Senior Warden's report.

Michael Thomas moved to accept the minutes as presented during the meeting. It was seconded by Amy Cornwell. The motion passed without further discussion.

Vestry Retreat Notes: Dean Andy noted corrections to these notes. Sharon Cheers is on Safety and Security and Budget Committees—not Buildings and Grounds. Ron Michka is on Stewardship Committee in addition to Budget and Community Engagement. Kay Woolley has not been assigned to a committee yet and Dean Andy will determine where she is needed to serve.

2. Dean's Report, *The Very Rev. Dr. Andrew C. Keyse*

Holy Week and Easter: Services are posted online and banners will be displayed on campus fences to promote service times. Also, 5,000 postcard/mailed pieces will be distributed to surrounding residents. Tuesday morning of Holy Week will have a livestreamed, open Diocesan service for renewal of vows and blessing of oils followed by a clergy luncheon.

Vestry meeting in April: The next meeting will be held on Thursday, April 21 at 5:30 p.m. rather than the 28th. Dean Andy will be attending the N. America Deans' Conference and unable to lead on the 28th. There were no objections to this proposed meeting change.

Rogation Day: This has not been scheduled yet but will likely take place in May. Ric Sweeting has stepped down from being our garden caretaker. We are extremely grateful for all the wonderful work he has done over the years with our Cathedral landscape.

Vestry Covenant: This was updated from last year's version at the Vestry Retreat on March 5. No additional comments/suggestions were offered by the members.

Ron Michka moved to accept the Vestry Covenant in its current form (as it appeared in the Vestry Packet). This was seconded by Paula Livingston-Lewis. The motion passed without further discussion.

Members were asked to sign, date and return to the office whether digitally or in person to Dean Andy or Julie Toma.

Vestry Packets: In the future, digital packets of reports and documents in need of review by vestry members will be sent out 5-7 days prior to the Vestry meeting.

Strategic Planning: The Strategic Planning Committee is almost finalized and will begin meeting with Tom for consulting. The Vestry is considered a focus group and will be included as part of this planning process.

Mask Guidelines: We will be considering guidelines regarding Missouri and Kansas counties in the metro area. Chances are the 'green' indicator will determine when we will announce "mask optional". We will be weighing the opinions of choir, staff, and vestry.

Dean Andy's CEEP/EPN Report

(Note: CEEP is now renamed Episcopal Parish Network or EPN): Highlights from Dean Andy included Pre-conference sessions for rectors and deans:

Dr. Jessica Brown, university Psych. professor looking at religion and health; Bob Flanagan, seminary professor in Pastoral Theology. Jessica looked at psychological aspects of the pandemic on clergy and congregations. Bob compared differences and similarities of today to the 14th century plague (1348-49) in England. Small groups discussed how we envision moving forward, asked what we thought theologians 50-100 years from now would write about the past two years, theological shifts, etc. We see a split in community: in-person vs. online, how some of that may never change, so we need to adapt.

Discussed how we will reform ourselves by looking at John Hus, church reformer. What do we offer as faith leaders when people can access most "things" on their own via internet, social media, etc.? How would we start the next movement of reform and renewal? Go back to accessibility, create safe spaces, understand a more fluid membership.

"Leadership and Self-care" (especially as Rectors/Deans caring for selves and staff) Understand why fatigue has set in:

--Consistent gravitation pull of "wanting to go back to normal." When things don't work or people are not satisfied, they 100% go after leadership.

--The metrics being used don't match our context and reality. Measures used for success don't work as much anymore (ASA). Need to measure engagement, finding life-changing relationships in community, etc.

--Realizing just how often a leader gets to the end of their knowledge today. Ask the question: In my daily work, do I get to use my best gifts or am I problem solving, putting out fires, tending to other things? Ask employees if they feel engaged in their work.

--Looked at the brain and how it functions. "We weren't wired for this." Prefrontal Cortex vs. The Emotional Brain (Limbic). Normally, the Prefrontal Cortex can be overtaken by the emotional "fight, flight" stress for short periods of time, then cooler heads can prevail. When we've been overtaken for two years, not how it is intended to work. We're dealing with trauma and prolonged uncertainty. We need to be mindful of this and realize overcoming the "inertia of languishing" requires self-discipline and compassion for oneself.

--Talked about creating psychological safety for our teams and dealing with grief. This grief goes beyond how we've been trained, it incurs almost daily loss for two years. Must learn to "grieve well."

--How is leadership different now? Stay connected, trust one another. The world is different now, flexibility is different, we need to be different leaders.

"Strategic Conversations" Workshop

--Panel discussion with Rectors/vicars from three different sized congregations (sml., med., lrg) and how that impacts the conversation. How to have the right conversations for a strategic plan. "It's more about tactics and less about strategy." Tactics means finding what's there and what you can use, Strategy means having a plan. Kept using the idea that the Church doesn't have a monopoly on "dancing," and we have to realize people are already engaged in the "dance," as it is already happening. We aren't the only game in town. We need to learn and understand HOW the "dance" is happening and be willing to make adjustments.

"Leading Through" Workshop

--Being a Servant Leader/Shepherd in this time.

--"None" is the most common religious affiliation in US right now. Disaffiliation is not secularization; decline is in both religious and secular communities. "Nones" still have religious practices and many believe in God. Disaffiliation is individualization (not individualism), something that happens to us, whether we believe it or not. Ex. Labor disputes/private wealth – all add to this.

Lunch Sessions included:

--"Stewardship: 11 Ideas" (we are doing most, if not all, of these)

--"Choral Residencies in the United Kingdom"

End of Dean's CEEP/EPN Report

Julie Toma and Brittany Sparrow Savage will be submitting reports to Andy and he will share with the vestry in an email.

Proposals: Dean Andy presented two topics to consider regarding personnel and William Jewell.

1. Personnel: Canon Ryan recognized Brittany Sparrow Savage was employed without the nursery oversight included in the job description although this is part of the children's ministry staff member's role. We would need to include these additional hours (from 20 up to 29 hours/week) which includes pension and retro pay (from Oct. 2021) but not health insurance. This cost was previously discussed with Treasurer, Dave Barker, who confirmed there is room in the operating budget for this adjustment. No action is required of the Vestry on this point.
2. William Jewell: Center for Faith and Culture program is in development and they are proposing a teaching partnership agreement with GHTC. This would take place in the Fall 2022 and Spring 2023. It involves two, 5-week courses to be taught on our campus by WJ faculty. These are not college courses as enrollment would be open to anyone in the community. Classes would be capped at 30 people. Dean Andy and Canon Ryan would also be course leaders on behalf of GHTC. The WJ faculty would be teaching content based upon faith intersection with their chosen class subject/topic. (ie. Faith in Physics, Faith in Economics, etc.) Classes would be promoted to WJ alumni in the area (approximately 10,000+ alumni). In return, WJ would offer scholarship opportunities for any GHTC members hoping to enroll at WJ. Clergy supports the idea as it would continue to build a relationship with WJ and brings community members into our campus. Cost is \$8,000 for us to participate in this program.

Other faith communities in the metro are being approached as program partners with WJ as well (ie. Second Baptist in Liberty, Country Club Christian on Ward Parkway).

Treasurer, Dave Barker, believes we have the funds available to participate in this program—whether \$4000 now and \$4000 later or \$8000 at once. It is not known when the payment(s) would be due. If we continue this partnership, it would be an ongoing cost every year.

Dean Andy asked the vestry for a motion for the allocation of \$8000 to move forward with the teaching partnership/program. No motion was made and questions included:

Is there a breakdown of what the \$8000 includes/covers? Since our facilities are being used for the program and providing teachers, what does the \$8000 payment cover? The WJ faculty are presumed to be compensated under their own salaries. Is it to cover administrative and program costs? Are participants being charged to attend the classes or is it free? (Dean Andy read aloud: \$50 per class per student will be charged by WJ)

Is there compensation for the teaching efforts of our clergy? (Dean Andy recalled being told they would be treated as adjunct professors with a possible stipend) It was suggested by Michael Thomas they should be compensated as adjuncts because of the time it requires to prepare coursework.

Canon Ryan suggested the coursework could be carried over into Sunday formation classes.

A motion was made by Candy McDowell that we move forward with allocating the \$8000 toward the William Jewell partnership for Center for Faith and Culture, but clarified it would be important to know the use of the \$8000 required to participate and to see the overall budget of the continuing education program. This was seconded by Sharon Cheers.

Discussion included apprehension to move forward without a complete understanding of the cost to participate as well as the use/cost to us with our facilities, added clergy and staff time, additional care and utilities for our building(s). There was general agreement this type of community education endeavor is worth pursuing but we need more information before casting votes of support.

Dean Andy said he could get more clarification of what the \$8000 does cover and relay that information to the vestry.

Candy McDowell moved we now table the motion to allocate \$8000 toward the William Jewel partnership for Center for Faith and Culture until more information is obtained for further consideration. It was seconded by Ron Michka. There was no further discussion and the vote was unanimous.

3. Associate's Report, *The Rev. Canon Ryan Wiksell*

Youth/College Ministry: Clare Stern-Burbano continues leading an online book club reading with college students entitled *Just Mercy*. This is team taught with her intern, Elvarea Bennett. Clare is also assuming volunteer leadership of the Young Adult ministry, which was being facilitated by GHTC member, Nick Smith. Should this require more of her staff time in the future, it may need to be revisited as part of her job description. Because this is not currently her staff responsibility, Canon Ryan does not oversee her role leading Young Adults.

Welcome Committee: Bags are being offered to new visitors. It will include a mug and voucher card for Vested coffee at their shop located 8th and Central.

Permanent nametags have been ordered for the Welcoming Committee members.

Coffee hour: refreshments are now being picked up from Sun Fresh by volunteer Danny Valencia. Coffee hour on April 3, will serve Vested Coffee. Five carafes of coffee will be purchased for the coffee hour (also being picked up by D. Valencia). At some point, it may also be a coffee partnership with lower Founders' Hall.

Sunday Formation classes and Wednesday Lent class has had approximately 10 in-person attendees. Wednesday night has not had any online participation.

NourishKC: Canon Ryan has joined the Nourish KC Board and has had a couple of meetings with them. He met with the Director of Nourish KC (Sue Fenske) and have discussed the potential use of lower Founders' kitchen as a satellite prep kitchen because their facilities are limiting their growth of programs and services. This can be discussed/considered further as part of Strategic Planning in the future.

Clergy Discretionary Fund: Referrals to Bishop Sullivan's Center (BSC) for utility/rent assistance is ongoing. To date Canon Ryan is unaware of referrals sent to BSC that have been helped. If referrals from clergy are helped by BSC, we would offer some financial assistance with that client so the burden does not fall completely on BSC. Clergy are still referring to the library for resources and keeping the \$25 gas cards, Aldi on hand. Angie has also been able to distribute gift cards as needed.

Canon Ryan's CEEP/EPN Report

Canon Ryan also attended the Preconference session described by Dean Andy. Third Place Tract was most meaningful to him as it focused upon programs/events that would welcome the greater community—not just what our own church community needs. Joe Swimmer, Exec. Director (Episcopal

Parish Network) will be meeting with Canon Ryan next week in Kansas City to discuss his experience with church planting, which is similar to Third Place activity. "Sacred Places" information provided insight to grant/funding available to churches who are mission-forward focused. This is done by assessing resources and spaces and how to use for the greatest community impact. He also attended All Saints service in Atlanta and a jazz collective (Jazz Theophony) might be interested in touring around the area churches here. Canon Ryan will have a teleconference call with the Sacred Places director.

End of Canon Ryan's CEEP/EPN Report

4. Financial Report *David Barker, Treasurer*

The Financial Report was submitted prior to the meeting. Dave directed us to the Balance Sheet (page 1) where the operating fund is \$437,804.91. There is an accounting spreadsheet that is not in the Vestry packet as it was completed yesterday but will be available to the vestry next month. This spreadsheet will include each account with an explanation of why each account exists and who has access to the accounts.

February numbers: Pledges were at \$65,000 and the budget was set at \$50,000. In the YTD we are very close but short by approximately \$3000. We pay the entire Trolley Assessment and the Diocese pays us a portion back of that amount. User Fees may begin to grow as opportunities are becoming available to collect at parking events. Endowment to Operating and Larger Church is on budget. We are not 'on budget' with Utilities because of gas costs. Electricity and water seem to be on target.

There were no questions regarding the Treasurer's Report.

A motion was made by Michael Thomas to accept the Treasurer's Report. Paula Livingston-Lewis seconded the motion. With no discussion, the Treasurer's Report was accepted unanimously.

Dave Barker (Treasurer) departed the meeting at this time.

5. Stewardship Report *Steve Moore, Stewardship Chair*

The last report to date includes 129 pledges totaling \$433,400. This compares favorably to last year at this time when we had 137 pledges totaling \$429,000. Our budget for this year is \$456,500 so we are short of that number. We have 21 pledges still not renewed (total \$36,000) so confident we will meet or exceed that number. We have 17 new pledges and average pledge is \$3300 per pledge. We still need to continue follow up with individuals.

6. Junior Warden Report, *Michael Thomas*

The Buildings and Grounds Committee Report/minutes was submitted in the Vestry packet prior to the meeting. Highlights were:

Playground: Gary Bressman indicated installers for the surfacing can be on site April 11-15th. It should take 3 days to install. Doing this during Holy Week did not seem to be a concern with Dean Andy. It was asked if the price of this project was at the original estimate or \$37,000+ Michael indicated he would call him back to confirm cost.

HVAC: 3 of the 4 repairs were completed were the furnace to upstairs of Parish house, the leaking relief valve on boiler in Nave, and the bearing assembly for the circulating pump in Haden Hall.

AC unit in the Chapel: The unit is leaking freon. The question Michael wonders is whether it really provides that much cooling to the chancel. The cost of a unit is approximately \$11,000. Paul Meier had suggested waiting until we no longer have the music in the chancel. The company suggested we purchase and offered to store the AC unit for us, at no cost, until we need it. Dave Barker, Treasurer, had previously indicated to Jr. Warden that we have funds to purchase the unit. Dean Andy confirmed we should move forward with the purchase because of the freon leak and it is compatible with the current system. This could be done once the music is moved out of the area.

Gardening: Angie and Julie have been speaking with a gardener who would consider taking on duties of the upkeep/design.

Ron Michka noted there was evidence of a leak in the Founders' Hall back storage room and around the Archives that could potentially be damaging. Michael Thomas will look into it. It is possible it was related to the pump issue they had there.

5. Senior Warden's Report, *Candy McDowell*

The schedule for 2022 Vestry Calls was distributed with the Vestry Packet. Members were asked to add this to their calendars and stay tuned for more information.

At February's Vestry meeting, Candy requested we consider a memorial gift for Steve Wilson, the late Rector of Grace Church/Carthage. This request is no longer being pursued by Candy McDowell.

Pre-K update Early March Dean Andy and Candy McDowell met with Jill Meriweather (Meriweather Group). They walked through Haden Hall and discussed the Cathedral's desire to do some form of Pre-K programming on our campus--particularly the possibility of becoming a satellite of Operation Breakthrough and being part of the KC Pre-K Cooperative and the logical extension of that and for GHTC to provide Pre-K programming for children who might then attend Crossroads Academy. Other types of early childhood programming were discussed, and as a result, The Meriweather Group has submitted a proposal to provide a Pathways Report which would help us understand the various requirements, potential limitations, and key considerations of opening different types of early childhood centers.

The cost of the proposed consulting services is \$5,000.00. Candy will be put this action item on the April Vestry meeting agenda. Also, in conjunction with the Strategic Planning process, Candy suggested it may be time to form a Steering Committee to oversee our Pre-K programming explorations.

Senior Warden's CEEP/EPN Report

In addition to wonderful keynote presentations on Thursday and Friday, many breakout sessions were offered. One that Candy attended was "Beyond Boilers and Roofs: Catalyzing God's Call for the 21st Century Church. The session was sponsored by the Episcopal Church Building Fund: (ECBF)

The Episcopal Church Building Fund helps congregations thrive through the strategic, resourceful and creative use of their buildings. ECBF loans are available to Episcopal Church parishes for building and

renovation projects for churches, schools, rectories and ministry buildings. Their loans are made directly to Episcopal parishes with the permission of their diocese.

One of ECBF's projects which was highlighted during the session is in Jacksonville, Florida where ECBF has helped St. John's Cathedral buy and rezone a neighboring property and then resell it at a profit. It is part of Jacksonville's Cathedral District which is a 36-block area around St. John's Cathedral in Downtown Jacksonville. In addition to St. John's - which is in the center - the District embraces four other historic houses of worship "which is moving 'church' back into the heart of that community. (Jacksonville is where the 2023 EPNetwork Conference will take place and St. John's is Clare Stern-Burbano's home parish.)

Another project that was discussed in the Beyond Boilers and Roofs session was ECBF's efforts in the realm of renewable energy. They have a renewable energy team that works with churches and dioceses to better steward the earth and financial resources. One area in which they are expanding development is solar energy. They are working with a vendor who in turn is working with dioceses to put in multiple installations. One example cited was the Diocese of Newark where they have installations at 22 different sites.

On the Wednesday of CEEP, Candy participated in the pre-Conference gatherings for Wardens and Vestry Members. The topic was "How Lay Leadership Drives Congregational Vitality". There were wardens and Vestry members from about 20 churches in attendance at the formal morning and afternoon sessions which included presentations by 3 speakers.

In the evening there was an opportunity for an informal gathering over dinner at a local restaurant. In attendance were wardens/members from 7 different churches and Will Stanly, Vicar of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church – Richmond, VA. Others at the dinner were Drew Abbot – Jr Warden and Chairman of the Music Committee of Christ Church Cathedral – Cincinnati; a member of the Vestry St. Andrew's Episcopal Church – Greenville, SC; Nicole Spencer – Sr. Warden of St. James Cathedral -Chicago; Britton Gregory member of the Vestry of St. David's Episcopal Church – Austin; Miriam Schneider – Senior Warden of St. Bartholomew's, NYC; and a warden from an Episcopal church in San Antonio.

Conversation was lively and included discussing the joys and challenges of ministry in interesting times. Topics included ministering to indigent persons in our neighborhoods; how to continue to be fed by church while being leaders in our congregations; how to be good stewards of the generosity of our parishioners; and how to get and keep members engaged in parish life. In reflection of some of these conversations, Candy suggested that we consider establishing (or re-establishing) a Memorials and Bequests Committee. This committee would be charged with advising members who want to make a planned gift to the Cathedral and looking at our current restricted funds to see if there are ways we can legally and pastorally be better stewards of the gifts we have been given.

End of Senior Warden's CEEP/EPN Report

At this point, our 2-hour time limit for the Vestry meeting was met. Honoring the Vestry Covenant, Dean Andy invited brief committee reports either verbally or in writing at this time.**

Pat Decker called attention to the Lenten Journey booklet written by Social Justice member Kari O'Rourke and another member of the group.

8. Vestry Liaison Reports

No further reports from the committees of: Safety, Community Engagement, Children's Formation, Communications, Young Adult

9. Old Business

Ron Michka mentioned an Old Business item of Safeguard Training for Vestry. Dean Andy noted this and will send out to Vestry.

There was no further discussion or New Business to address.

The next Regular Vestry Meeting will be Thursday, April 21, 2022, 5:30 p.m. via Zoom.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Ron Michka and seconded by Pat Decker. The vote was unanimous to adjourn.

Dean Andy closed in prayer.

ADDENDUM

**Due to the time limit, written committee reports not shared during the Vestry meeting are included here as an addendum to the minutes:

Safety and Security, submitted by Sharon Cheers

KCMO Homeless Prevention Coordinator: Josh Henges, is the Homelessness Prevention Coordinator with City of Kansas City. He began his new position with City of Kansas City on January 31. In his new position, Mr. Henges is tasked with implementing community-wide strategies to expedite assistance to both the homeless/houseless and those at-risk.

The City is allocating \$12.5 Million to the city's affordable housing trust fund to help with landlord/tenant evictions, the Houseless Task Force, construction and restoration of 3,000 affording housing units, redevelopment of vacant properties and vacant lots, and more. Another \$16 million will be used for emergency rental assistance. Contact info: Josh Henges, through KCMO Media Relations Manager Maggie Green, at 816-379-6562.

Homeless Engagement Coordinator -HJ Youth and Community Center: St. Andrew's Episcopal Church has a VISTA Homeless Engagement Coordinator. Contact Zach Beall, Director of Operations at HJ's Youth and Community Center, located at 6425 Wornall Road, Kansas City, MO (Note: Zach Beall is also a member of the national CEEP, now Episcopal Churches Network, Planning Committee) Contact Info: HJ's Youth and Community Center, 6425 Wornall Road, Kansas City, MO 64113. Zbeall@standrewkc.org. (816) 606-3239

Metro Kansas City Emergency Preparedness Booklet: A FREE and updated Metro Emergency Preparedness booklet is available at www.preparemetrokc.org.

This handy booklet covers everything from COVID, cyber security, public safety, weather events, and much more. It covers all the 9 counties and 39 municipalities that make up the Metro Kansas City regional area.

The digital booklet is on the website or hard-copies of this booklet available at MARC, 600 Broadway, Suite 200 Kansas City, MO 64105. I recommend the cathedral link to this information/website as an emergency preparedness resource.

Please feel free to share this information with others.

Social Outreach, *submitted by Terri Curran*

- 1) Outreach sent \$2,000 to ERD for Ukraine Crisis Response to be used for cash, blankets, hygiene supplies and needed assistance for families from Ukraine
- 2) Outreach sent \$1,500 to ERD as Lenten Response for programs to enable women to live free from gender-based violence, supporting healthy starts for children, particularly during the first 1,000 days of life and helping communities adapt to a changing climate.
- 3) Outreach supported school tuition of \$765 to educate 2 girls living in Pakistan (Renee Neff-Clark initiated this ask 4-5 years ago)
- 4) 70 hygiene items were collected from the congregation for the February Urban Necessities Drive
- 5) 125 Easter Baskets will be assembled on Palm Sunday between services for children at Crittenton and KAW Valley Children's Center and Sheffield Place.
- 6) Food is being collected during Lent for Saint Mary's pantry 7). 150 Family Bags were assembled for Backsnack students for spring break

Children/Youth, *submitted by Amy Cornwell*

Children's Formation: Volunteers continue to be needed, but Brittany did report she has a new volunteer who will begin training soon and should be a great addition to the roster of teachers/volunteers. Brittany continues to be hopeful and optimistic about the program, its growth and direction. Her plans for summer ideas include a parents-night-out concept but also to serve especially those in need of help, such as those working downtown. Being a servant church in the heart of the city provides a real need and opportunity to serve.

Children's Choir: Some impressive and good news from Linda Martin, she's been invited to be a presenter and on the faculty for the Music & Arts camp this summer at St. Michael's. Linda will be able to share her talents children's choir and with hands-on musical opportunities with the numbers and various instruments Linda has.

Linda is also going to be a guest presenter at Valparaiso this summer at an in-depth children's choir workshop as well as intergenerational workshops for congregations to enjoy choirs made up of all ages and performing songs together.

As many may already know, Linda recently had the G&HTC Children's Choir sing at the service about 5 weeks ago; she's hoping / planning on the Children to sing at an upcoming service.

CEEP/EPN Report submitted by Julie Toma, Cathedral Administrator

I attended the Administrator's Pre-Conference and 3 workshop sessions about how the church can be a "third place." The CEEP Administrator's Pre-Conference session is a roundtable discussion to share information, experiences, best practices and resources. It is always the best part of the conference for me. This year, we discussed the challenges our parishes are experiencing and how to proceed as we are coming out of the pandemic. I got some good ideas and resources for HR records, training and internet security.

The "third place" is the social space separate from the two usual places (home is the first place; workplace is the second place). In the church context, a third place can be viewed as the church meeting in neutral places and using the church facilities as neutral places for third place activities (yoga, 12 step groups, gaming groups, etc.). In today's culture, people aren't building relationships in programmed ways but in organic ways (affinity or activity groups). The church starting/hosting groups should be an intentional part of the mission of the parish. The Friends of Sacred Spaces presented in the third session. They have grants and other funding for churches that the Cathedral should look into as we move forward with the strategic plan and future uses of our buildings.

Some practical take-aways I gleaned from these sessions:

- The key to long-term success is to equip members who feel called to do this work.
- Keep part of user fees in a fund for ongoing facility maintenance (one speaker suggested 20% of the fees).
- Before thinking about expanding use of the spaces, prepare for staffing.
- Understand about the cost of operating the building. Also look at real market rate.
- Understand tax exemptions and if you'll be incurring tax liabilities.

I also attended two "Lunch and Learn" sessions. One focused on the use of use of our websites, podcasts social media and other digital means to tell our stories and build the community. My main takeaway was: What ways can be better ways to communicate and connect with online membership? The second session was sponsored by CSS Fundraising about the importance of a planning study for campaign success.

A highlight of the conference was the closing worship with music led by the Theodicy Jazz Collective and sermon by The Rev. Dr. Raphael Warnock.

CEEP/EPN Report submitted by Brittany Sparrow Savage, Children's Ministry Coordinator

The CEEP Conference now called the Episcopal Parish Network, was a crucible of coordinated speakers, sessions, and organic conversations. It was incredibly reassuring to be in conversation with other church leaders that are asking the same questions that we are at Grace and Holy Trinity Cathedral. I was invited to the CEEP conference to attend sessions that revolve around the topics of diversity, equity, and inclusion. I attended the following workshops: Associates' Pre-Conference, Strategic Conversations-Shepherding Spiritual Curiosity, Racial Reckoning within the Church – intentional team building, Racial Reckoning within the Church – Financing a Long-Term Commitment, and National Center of Civil and Human Rights Tour.

In Strategic Conversations we were challenged to identify the unique culture and ethos of our congregation and utilize that to foster spiritual curiosity. As that pertains to children's ministry this raises the question of what is unique about the children's department at GHTC? What do we have to offer that can foster spiritual curiosity and that will also be a tool for reaching out to the surrounding community? The two Racial Reconning classes open my eyes to the need to cultivate space and voices within our own community. Before we intentionally invite people that are under the umbrella of D.E.I, we must assess the safety of our space. Are minority voices valued and empowered? Do we have inclusive images that indicate our sensitivity to other cultures and life perspectives? Do we curate of budget in a way that will sustain ministries of hospitality and justice? While I do not have specific answers to these questions, I have already started purposeful conversations with Rev. Ryan, Mrs. Linda Martin, and Mrs. Candy McDowell.

Respectfully Submitted,

Valerie Blanco Johnson, Clerk