

Rector's Report to Vestry

Submitted for the March 7, 2023 Meeting

Campus Development

- Our meeting with Bishop Diana about relocating the Diocesan Resource Center to the Grace campus was energetic – and my hunch is that it will not likely lead to a scenario in which the Diocese relocates to the Grace campus. While our geographical location is appealing – maybe even ideal – the Diocese's goals include substantial on-site parking. That goal likely incompatible, or at least unaffordable, when coupled with our new affordable housing development. Bishop Diana is also (rightly and wisely) mindful of appearances, of folks telling a story in which the Diocese is conferring special status on a given parish by locating its headquarters at that parish.
- The chapel renovations are spectacular. If you didn't know that there used to be a platform at the chapel's west end (and if the baseboards didn't exist as a "tell") you would never guess that the space was not always one level; Stefan, our floor contractor, did such an extraordinary job threading the new hardwood into the old. And the room suddenly looks *huge*. It will be an amazing resource for the parish and for building partners going ahead.
- Kevin made a surprising discovery while speaking with one of our neighbors about the street vacation, and that is that this neighbor sent in their approval for the vacation months ago. (Our advice was that we had received no responses to the letter that went out to neighbors asking for their consent for the strip of land to be returned to Grace.) We are now wondering if there are others who also consented – and if their consent is languishing on someone's desk at City Hall.
- In conversation with Curt, Kevin, and Kris recently, it became clear to me that we are in some danger of "making a decision without making a decision," of drifting into a new campus plan without being intentional about doing so. As we improve the chapel – and as we talk about reroofing the parish hall and renovating its kitchen – we are implicitly saying that we intend to preserve and renovate the parish hall rather than replace it.

That may very well be the right decision – new construction has become precipitously expensive these past few years and our vision has become muddy with PHAME's exit. But my sense is that Vestry should devote some energy (maybe via a Trinity Wall Street grant to obtain the help of an outside consultant) to making such a decision in a deliberate way. Whatever we do, we should do it on purpose!

General Administration

- PHAME has indicated that they expect to remain on campus through the Spring of 2024. Kris and I will be meeting with PHAME soon in order to negotiate a new rental agreement.
- I wonder if it would be valuable to form a disappearing task force (i.e., a task force with a limited mandate which will dissolve when the mandate is satisfied) to answer two questions. 1. Who will be PHAME's successor on the Grace campus? 2. What is the highest and best use of Halsey House after Dan and Kim depart? My sense is that Halsey House must not sit empty this fall – that would be poor stewardship of our resources and it would invite problems as our neighbors recognize that it is once again empty. And we want and need the wider campus to be busy throughout the week.
- Thank you to everyone who participated in the Campus Steward search and, in particular, to Kris Doty. It is early on in his time at Grace, but Spencer Marcotte is thus far proving to be a fabulous hire. He is personable, enthusiastic, and his maintenance skills are remarkable. His recent participation in the conversation about repainting and restaining in the chapel was immensely helpful. And, along with Kris, he has made a couple of major receptions in the parish hall go smoothly.
- In a frustrating development (see our Junior Warden's report) the sacristy roof continues to leak – a further \$2000 intervention notwithstanding. Liz is, wisely, counseling us to pull the once-again soaked carpet out of there promptly.
- Kevin and I did a 3-month review with Kris Doty. It was an excellent and energizing conversation – and very low on surprises.

Liturgical/Pastoral Stuff

- Despite some good enthusiasm and volunteerism, the recruitment of altar guild leadership is proceeding more slowly than we wish. We are in need of a new leadership team.
- I am looking forward to – and sad about – marking the departures of the Reverends Matthew David Morris and Dan Carlson. Matthew David will be here for a farewell Sunday this coming March 12th. Dan's final day will be April 30th.
- Evelyn and I are deep into research about AV upgrades in the church. We envision focusing on microphone improvements, thereby improving audio quality on the ground and online, as well as moving the mix/streaming control position to the back of the church. We will also meet a longtime goal to put more reading light on the choir and on the altar (the latter may have the capacity to change color, which will be exciting come the pageant) as well as architectural lighting on the reredos. The

new lighting fixtures will be LED, using less power and requiring less maintenance than incandescent fixtures.

- I did a funeral last Monday for Gwen Gerald at Lincoln Memorial Park. I never meant Gwen, but it sounds like she continued to understand Grace Memorial as her church. It is a privilege to be invited into these tender and holy moments.
- The Memorial Concert for Gail Parker was simply wonderful. Thank you to everyone who made it shine.
- The Wednesday-evening adult education series continues to be excellent. Thank you Dan and Liz.
- And speaking of Dan and Liz: thank you to both of them for our amazing new Lego resources. These are part of the deepening outward and visible signs that children are core members of our community.
- I will say something to this group that I said to Kevin and to Lisa Freedman, and that is that the *State of Grace* forums that we do at the end of every month are one of the best interventions that we have done in the Grace system in the past several years. They are well and enthusiastically attended, they are informative, and folks come with excellent suggestions, questions, and wonderings. Thank you Kevin and Lisa for this fabulous suggestion. And thank you Grace for participating so generously.

Representing Grace in the Community

- I will be attending the PHAME Gala this coming March 9th. Grace Memorial is once again a sponsor of the gala (a recognition of the sub-market rent that PHAME pays to be here).

Continuing Education

- During our Budget Meeting, someone noted that I have drawn very little on the moneys that we have budgeted for my continuing education. That is not because I do not take continuing education seriously (I take it very seriously indeed). It is because I am pretty good at getting outside entities to pay for it. This summer, for instance, I will be once again serving as a Trainer at College for Congregational Development, this time in the Dioceses of Indianapolis and Olympia – I will be there on Indy and Olympia's nickel. CCD always sends me home with new ideas, resources, and inspiration.

A Closing Personal Note

- Thank you to everyone for your prayers, patience, and empathy as I have navigated my Father's dying, my Mom's overlapping health crisis – and, here at Grace, the

departure of two staff people and the onboarding of two others (all on top of the regular joys and griefs of parish life, and all of that coupled with parenting). It is *a lot*. Your kindness means so much to me.