

**Council Meeting**  
by Zoom  
**July 13, 2020**  
**MINUTES**

The US Grail Council

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**Present:** Renee-Wormack Keels, Judy Alves, Judith DeFour Howard, Lucy Jones, April Goering, Deborah Sullivan, Terrie Puckett, ex-officio

**Opening**

Lucy read Eva Fleischner's favorite Psalm 139 from Nan Merrill's *Psalms for Praying: An Invitation to Wholeness*.

**Executive Director's Report**

Terrie Puckett submitted a report to Council that addressed the current status of the Payroll Protection Program (PPP), Cornwall rental and occupancy, Coronavirus status in counties around Grailville, and the annual Grail financial audit. The ED noted that if Covid restrictions increase in the counties surrounding Grailville, staff will return to working from home. Council accepted the report and discussed the following:

Grail Participation in PPP: Nonprofits like the Grail were/are eligible to apply for PPP assistance to maintain current staff on payroll. The Grail received a loan of \$35,000 for this purpose and is using the funds to cover payroll of staff working at home on a variety of projects. The Grail Finance Manager is tracking the use of these funds for the next step in the PPP process, which allows conversion of the loan to a grant with documentation of acceptable use of funds. When converted to a grant, the PPP funds will result in reduction of projected deficits in Grail spending this year in the total amount of \$35,000.

Agricademy, Inc.: Work by Agricademy ([www.agricademyinc.org](http://www.agricademyinc.org)) has begun at Grailville, and Mary Lu Lageman has been involved in conversations with CEO Nadia Ruffin. Agricademy work has begun in the north side fields, and the group has been assigned use of one basement room in the Oratory, which they pay rent for. Nadia Ruffin will provide reports on Agricademy efforts that can be shared with Grail members, and announcements about volunteer opportunities that may include Grail members will be made at the appropriate time.

A press release on learning labs is available on the Grail website.

<https://www.grail-us.org/what-we-do/care-of-the-earth/>

<https://www.grail-us.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Press-Release.pdf>

### **Young Women's Initiative**

The six women in this group – each with a busy professional and personal life -- have been meeting since January 2019. They met by zoom in April and May and have a meeting scheduled for later in July. Coronavirus and professional commitments have impacted their ability to gather in face-to-face meetings.

Council's intention is to nurture their work as an incubator process. Council sees their focus as building relationships to explore how the Grail vision and mission might find embodiment in their generation and this time – this is a goal, although not a specific task/goal, set before their meetings started. They are using the book *Emergent Strategies* as a resource and approach, and this will influence how they look at goals and results. The group will continue to provide reports to the Council that can be published to members. Lucy remains the Council liaison person.

### **Pre-GA Planning Group**

Four members have agreed to form a team for pre-GA planning – Terri Carter, Mary Kay Louchart, Elmira Nazombe, and Maureen Tate – with Judith as Council liaison. They held an initial meeting last week by zoom.

After discussion, they report that they will initiate a participatory process with a focus to build community and hone in on the central issues that the GA should focus on. This process will invite all members to participate in building GA content that considers the future for the Grail in the US. Council affirmed this group and their approach.

### **Deficit Reduction Task Force**

The recently created Deficit Reduction Task Force, with Renee as Council liaison, has been meeting every other week by zoom call. The group has raised questions about where Grail money comes from and where it goes. Renee and Grail staff are sharing information transparently to assist work of the group.

Reducing deficits requires increasing income and/or reducing expenses, and the task force is looking at both sides of this equation. Some members have made calls to inquire of members about their donations to the Grail, and the team has raised questions about various categories of expenses. In addition, the Task Force is reaching out to other communities of spiritual women dealing with debt as their membership declines and they face the challenge of maintaining or selling property. The Task Force will look at the financial implications of maintaining centers.

Council members noted that understanding the life cycle of organizations and patterns noted in the book *Managing Transitions* could be important for this group. Further, members of the Task Force and the Grail generally need to learn more about use of Grail resources and implications of our deficit spending.

## **Grail Finances**

Budget Process for 2021: The budget process for 2021 will begin in the summer and early fall. Council needs to articulate overarching goals for 2021, which will impact decisions about Grail and staff activity and their financial implications.

Finance Education: The current co-Treasurers, Carol Skyrn and Sharon Woods, have scheduled a zoom meeting on July 14 for interested members about Grail finances. The purpose of these quarterly meetings is to promote transparency and educate Grail members about our financial situation. In addition, the Co-Treasurers learn from discussion about member questions and concerns as they relate to finances. Council noted that some members find spread sheets difficult to understand and a narrative financial report could be helpful.

Collaboration: Council members suggested that a meeting between the Deficit Reduction Task Force and the Finance Committee could be helpful

## **Cornwall**

Last week the Council received a letter from the self-constituted Cornwall Planning Team in response to a Council message of May 29. In a recent zoom call, Council has informed these members that we are negotiating the possibility of renting the property to a mission-congruent group.

Council will review a draft response to their letter and send it this week.

## **Other Business**

By-Laws – Judith requested that Council discuss by-laws, amendment procedures, and Council membership concerns in our July call.

Taking Stands as the Grail: Sally Timmel and Carol Barton are working on broad position papers for review by membership. These positions will make it possible for the Grail to take a stand in a timely manner on issues of concern to us.

Recently California members signed a letter of their concern with their names and “member of the Grail,” rather than announcing a Grail stand that had not been articulated.

Last week, Mary Farrell alerted Grail members to national action that will restrict asylum seeking. Although we are not prepared to take an organizational stand, individual members were invited to respond.

Search for International Finance Officer: The current international finance officer will be stepping down after the IGA in 2021, and the Grail is seeking another member to take on this task. Lucy reached out to Thanh Nguyen who is willing to be considered. Council agreed that we will nominate her.

### **Closing**

Deborah read a closing reflection entitled *For Light* from the book *To Bless the Space Between Us: A Book of Blessings* by John O'Donohue

### **Post Meeting Decision**

Young Women's Leadership Training Program: After the meeting, Council members consulted and approved the application of one candidate, Rachel Hockl, for the Young Women's Leadership Training Program. Lucy will forward this information to the international working group.

Next Council Meeting / Zoom Conference Call:

**Date: August 10, 2020**

**Time: 10:00 am – 12:00 EDT**

Next Face-to-Face Meeting:

Dates: Oct. 1 – 4, 2020

Place: Tidings