

Church of the Holy Comforter, Vienna, Virginia

Minutes of the Vestry Meeting

November 11, 2025

The meeting opened at 7:03 p.m. with a prayer led by Jon Strand.

Brady O'Beirne shared a reflective meditation regarding being thankful in all circumstances, even unfavorable ones.

Clergy Report:

Jon reported that there was no lack of fullness, with weddings, baptisms, support to the refugee ministry, and the reception for the Bishop Denig Society on November 1. Thanks were expressed to Kim for her work with the Newcomers Brunch. Melissa's ordination will occur on Saturday, December 6, at 11 am.

The Diocesan Convention was held; Lisa Kimball, Associate Dean of Lifelong Learning at Virginia Theological Seminary, spoke about supporting newcomers and integrating them into parishes to form communities.

Melissa is working with the areas of the Center for Spirituality and Well-being, pastoral care, and adult formation. The Center is a focus within Holy Comforter, rather than a separate entity.

Warden's Report:

The voting to affirm vestry candidates will occur over the next two weekends. Online voting will be open from 8 am Saturday, November 15-Sunday November 23. Nominees for the Vestry Class of 2028 are Kate Nider, Winifred Conkling, Bob Dorch, and Jane O'Connell.

Gini Barazia was introduced as next year's Junior Warden.

It was noted that the role of the labyrinth is as a worship space, and ideas were shared on how to communicate this to those who visit the labyrinth.

Creative ideas were discussed with the preschool for courtyard activities to divert children away from playing on the labyrinth..

After the vestry meeting on Thursday, January 8, vestry members will attend a dinner with their spouses or partners on Friday, January 9, at 6 pm. On Saturday, January 10, the vestry retreat will take place from 9 am-1 pm in the fellowship hall. The vestry was asked to consider 2026 committee assignments.

Vestry was asked to be at the 11:15 ribbon-cutting ceremony this Sunday, November 16, for the third-floor renovation, and to help in moving coffee hour to the 3rd floor.

Treasurer's report:

The preschool payment was received for 2025, reflecting five percent of their receipts.

A motion was made, seconded, and approved to accept the November financial reports.

A motion was made, seconded, and approved to accept the October vestry meeting minutes.

Vestry Person of the Month, VPOM:

November's VPOM is Jon Collom, and the backup is Linda Lee Malone.

Communications:

There will be a blood drive Nov 21.

A request has been made to offer a feedback/comments section on the new website, which will send input to the vestry. A request was also made to add the capability to click photos for a bio on each vestry member. It was noted that there is a poster in the narthex with all the vestry members' photos and bios.

Buildings and Grounds Report:

The committee is sending out requests for proposals for the “Door 2” staircase that leads to the office entrance.

Pete Eareckson presented a report on the Lillian Croy Room HVAC zone, requesting funds for a heat pump conversion. This zone is the furthest distance from the other zones and includes the Lillian Croy room, nursery, library, former music room, and bathrooms. It is at twice its expected life span. A new heat pump conversion will reduce natural gas usage and provide backup heat in case of boiler outages. The lifespan of the recommended commercial equipment is 15 years, but we use it at a level less than commercial use. A motion was made, seconded, and approved to move funds into the capital improvement budget for the Lillian Croy zone heat pump conversion. The work will begin after the holidays.

The next HVAC project will be the main office area, in about 5 years, with a life expectancy of 15-20 years.

The committee is gathering estimates to build an ADA-compliant boardwalk to a deck in our Seven Acre Wood, along with a bio-retention pond, the latter fulfilling an environmental stewardship. There is a county program accepting applicants to reimburse 80 percent of the bioretention pond costs. It was noted that Feb 1 is St. Brigid’s Day, and ideally, the project could be consecrated on that day, coinciding with this Celtic first day of spring.

Finance Committee Report:

The 2026 budget was introduced. There is an increase in the ECW pledge. Included are annualized capital replacement funds, calculated from looking at past capital replacement expenses since 2010. The vote on the budget is to take place in December.

Outreach Report:

It was noted that ECW funds, Christmas giving, and other giving projects total \$300,000 spent outside the parish on outreach. The outreach grants proposal for 2026 will be sent to the vestry next week.

Stewardship Report:

So far, pledges for 2026 are at \$425,000, 34 percent of our \$1.25 million goal. The vestry was asked to help encourage parishioners to pledge by the November 23 deadline, before Advent begins the following Sunday.

Fellowship Report:

The committee is encouraging support from within the Second Saturday service attendees to be able to staff Second Saturday events.

Adult Faith Formation

Matt Streett's engaging forums on the development of scripture from spoken tradition have been well attended.

The yoga class on Wednesdays has had an attendance of ten in the first two classes.

The committee plans to use the pass-through counter in the fellowship hall, rather than setting up coffee hour in the narthex, so it is easier to set up from the kitchen, and also easier for parishioners to join the forum program in that area.

Pennywise and ECW:

Sherryl Dorch will chair Pennywise in 2026. The vestry congratulated and thanked her.

A luncheon for front desk volunteers had 50 in attendance.

Newcomers:

Thirty-one newcomers attended the Nov 8 newcomers brunch. Many young families are coming to Holy Comforter.

The meeting adjourned at 9:26 pm with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Stager, Registrar