

Church of the Holy Comforter, Vienna, Virginia

Minutes of the Vestry Meeting

January 8, 2026

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

Kim welcomed the group and shared a spiritual reflection on the poem “A Solstice Blessing” by John O’Donohue.

Executive Report:

David presented three orders of business:

The parish exceeded the requirement for a vote of 10% of active membership to confirm the vestry nominees: Kate Nider, Jane O’Connell, Winifred Conkling, and Bob Dorch.

The vestry oath was passed around for all to sign.

A motion was made, seconded, and approved to accept the Wardens and officers for the year:

Senior Warden, Kim Brailey

Junior Warden, Gini Barazia

Registrar, Susan Stager

Treasurer, Peggy Miller

Assistant Treasurer, Shelia Creswell

David asked each member to read Section 10 of the Canons of the Episcopal Church.

https://episcopalvirginia.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/CC_2023_English_Final.pdf

Clergy Report:

Jon reported that there was a baptism in December, a funeral, a pastoral care team meeting, the preschool Christmas program, and various other committee meetings.

Melissa will be out on short-term disability for approximately twelve weeks, beginning mid-February. Her responsibilities will be covered by the Pastoral Care Steering Committee and Susan McGuire, the Spirituality and Wellbeing Committee and Alexandra MacCracken, and the Adult Faith Formation Committee and Norma Williamson. Melissa will be grateful to receive support from a Meal Train. Updates on her recovery will be provided through Caring Bridge.

Matt Streett will be included in the preaching rotation. He travels to us on weekends from Norfolk, where he is a Lieutenant Colonel in the Air Force. He received a Transfer of Holy Orders to the Episcopal Church. Currently completing his training, he will be able to celebrate the Eucharist by the end of April. He will be deployed by the Air Force at the end of July. Matt holds a PhD in New Testament studies, is a member of the Men's Bible Study, and has 25 years of experience as an Orthodox priest.

Philene Ware-Dunn will be available for service and pastoral support.

Vestry Orientation:

David noted that there are both tactical and strategic tasks for the Vestry. The Episcopal Church Constitution and Canons indicate how to conduct the business of the parish. Canon 12 lists the duties of wardens and parish officers. The Vestry is to support the spiritual welfare of the congregation, to ensure proportional giving, and to support the rector.

Each member reviewed their binders, which include the Vestry bylaws, last updated in 2018. Bylaws are updated as the organization evolves. There can be up to 18 members of a vestry; at Holy Comforter, there are 13 voting members, including Jon. The required committees are finance, building and grounds, stewardship, and communications.

Melissa Fauci, Peggy Miller, David Grove, and Susan Stager are non-voting members.

Financial report:

Peggy reviewed the December financial reports as she provided a financial orientation for the vestry and noted key line items for the start of the new year. She noted that ECW, the preschool, and Pennywise each have separate accounts and treasurers.

Clergy discretionary funds are audited annually.

A motion was made, seconded, and approved to accept the treasurer's December report.

Warden's Report:

Wardens meet with Jon and Melissa on Tuesday mornings.

Kim noted handouts for Vestry best practices, the year's calendar, expectations of the vestry, and the VPOM (Vestry Person of the Month) monthly assignment rota. A template was provided for Vestry members' reports, each compiling all their assigned committee reports.

If a room reservation is needed in the church, Vestry members are reminded to accept the invitation to the Google church calendar, as all rooms are in use each day of the week at various times.

The annual meeting will take place on Sunday, February 8. Several committees will present their "celebrations and aspirations" for the past and coming year.

Vestry Person of the Month, VPOM:

Kim presented Linda Lee Malone's December report, which noted each of her activities on behalf of the Vestry. Members were directed to the handout listing VPOM duties, and asked to complete the VPOM log on the Google drive, and to save their reports in the appropriate folder. Instructions were provided for saving PDF versions to the Google drive.

Committee Reports:

Stewardship:

Brady noted that so far, \$1.05 million has been pledged.

Buildings and Grounds Report:

There will be an upcoming chimney flue repair. Pete Eareckson is handling the bids, and there will be a request for funds at the next Vestry meeting.

The Outdoor chapel dedication is scheduled to occur on February 1, the Feast of St. Brigid, patron saint of gardening, and the Celtic first day of spring.

Administrative Issues

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

Parochial Report:

The largest Christmas Eve attendance was 530 at the 4 pm service. There was overflow seating in the narthex and the chapel, and the service was broadcast to screens.

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The meeting adjourned at 9:06 pm with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Stager, Registrar