

Present:, Fr. Eric Mills, Bill Bittenbender, Bill Carney, Tom Propst, Bryan Wester, Margaret Bearden, Deacon Pam Hayes, Rick Pearce, Steve Ammons, Don Halbert, Jim Belvin

Absent: Paul Bailey, Al Snell

The meeting began at 10:00 am with an opening prayer by Fr. Eric.

The following items were discussed and/or decided:

Fr. Eric addressed the Board regarding the roles of F&F and Vestry in making financial decisions. In an attempt to resolve or clarify issues of responsibility, Fr. Eric has called a “Tiger Team” to address these situations. Chaired by Deacon Pam, the team will include Tracy Baltz from the vestry, Tom Propst from F&F, and Susan Chase and Dana Richardson, former senior wardens. The rector asked the current wardens not to attend and asked the treasurer to leave the meeting after his portion.

Members of the board then had an open discussion to let Tom and Deacon Pam know what we individually perceived to be the issues around vestry and F&F roles.

The June minutes were previously approved via email.

It was noted that Bob Fuchs had recently resigned from the Board and his role as Deputy Chairman. His contributions as treasurer and board member were varied and many, and he will be missed greatly as we go forward.

Rick Pearce, Interim Treasurer, presented the June Statement of Activities and Statement of Financial Position. It was noted that pledge payments and revenues are under budget through June and will continue to be watched as we go forward; expenses are also under budget. There was discussion of several items in the June reports that had been posted incorrectly as well as

concerns regarding pledge receipts. Rick noted that pledge statements will be emailed this week.

Audit results have been received with recommendations from the audit firm. It was announced that the vestry voted at its meeting Monday to hire the Jordan CPA firm, which handled the audit, to restructure our chart of accounts, as recommended in the audit.

Tom Propst offered the following as Stewardship Chair:

I asked for and received information about average attendance over the last three years, so better to address the "growing congregation messaging" as part of the FY 2026 Stewardship planning in an appropriate way, and to reflect upon Strategy 3. I got that information last week.

2023

Average Attendance - 250  
Pledging Units- 184

2024

Average Attendance - 237  
Pledging Units- 190

2025

Average Attendance - 220

I consider an attendance comparison of the first half of 2025 to 2024 & 2023 reasonable. The first half of 2025 does not include Advent or Christmas, but likewise it does not include July or August. Overall membership in 2023 was 405 and in 2024 was 418. So, total membership is up. The number of pledging units is up. Attendance is down, on the order of 10%. The increase in pledging units in the face of declining attendance is noteworthy.

Rick Pearce noted that he plans to call a meeting of the budget owners to discuss any possible reductions in their budget requests, if needed, once the stewardship results are available.

Deacon Pam reported that an interim priest has not yet been assigned to us and we expect to employ supply priests for the time being following Fr. Eric's retirement later this month.

Margaret Bearden, for the Investment Committee, reported that the majority of our investment assets have been transferred to the umbrella of the Diocesan Foundation accounts held at Schwab. It had been agreed by the Investment Committee to seek professional money management of St. Philip's investments once they reached \$1,000,000. After a search was conducted by the Investment Committee, the Foundation of the Diocese of East Carolina was selected. There are two Schwab accounts, one containing the Outreach Endowment, the General Endowment, and the Moore Endowment, which have scheduled quarterly and annual withdrawals, and follow guidelines of the St. Philip's Investment Policy Statement updated and approved in 2022. The second account, which also follows our investment policy, holds one endowment, ECW's investment assets, the Maintenance Reserve Account, the Insurance Deductible Account, and St. Philip's Cash Reserves. Our account at Vanguard continues to hold sufficient cash reserves and restricted account balances for transfers as needed to and from our local bank. Although the proceeds from the redemption of Vanguard mutual funds were transferred on June 27, the June 30 year-to-date returns show the following, for reference: Vanguard Balanced Index Fund, is up 5.4%, the FTSE Ex-USA International Fund is up 18.2%, and the Federal Money Market Fund is yielding 4.23%.

Jim Belvin, for Endowments, reported that his conversations with parishioners are continuing. He noted that most endowments will take place after a donor's death via a will or trust.

Bryan Wester reported that Mansfield has ordered a new part in order to resolve the condensate drip issue in our HVAC systems. Mansfield has been at the church weekly since the drip problem was discovered back in April. Bryan also noted that the tree stump in the gravel parking area in front of the church office has been ground down and the city has laid new gravel in the area.

Steve Ammons, our facilities coordinator, reported that he was not able to engage Safelite to repair the small crack in the Bell Tower Narthex window, as that company only works on autos. He is exploring other options.

Bill Carney discussed the need for a new manager for the Memorial Garden. This could be someone outside of Finance and Facilities.

Bill Carney offered the closing prayer and the meeting was adjourned at 11:35 am. The next meeting will be held on August 12 at 10 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Margaret Bearden