

April 8, 2025

Vestry Meeting Minutes

Called to Order: 4:01 PM, Al Snell

Attendance: Al Snell, Fr. Eric, Deacon Pam, Rick Pearce, Ellen Burnett, Craig Allen, Paul Bailey, Tracy Balz, Ross Lively, Paul Palmer

Absentees: Marygrace Barber, Bill Happer, John Kennedy, Donna Foster

Guest: Margaret Bearden

- Deacon Pam – Embracing Change

As we face changes at St. Philips, consider this period as one with fresh opportunities instead of fear. View each day as a process of death, rebirth, and renewal, especially at Easter; each day offers us chances for new beginnings.

- Parish Finance Discussion/Treasurer Status Rick/Al
 - Chris Barber resigned as Treasurer of St. Philip's effective March 20, 2025 (See attached resignation email.)
 - The Vestry Executive Committee has not identified a new treasurer, although several qualified individuals are under consideration, -Karla Platt is now managing the bookkeeping and, along with Lorraine Beamer, our Parish Administrator, and Margaret Bearden from Finance and Facilities, can manage St. Philip's finances until a treasurer is identified.
 - The Committee hopes to have a new treasurer in place before the external financial audit begins in May. An incomplete financial report was available for the meeting. It will be updated and resubmitted within the next two weeks.
 - The Vestry requested that a monthly, year-over-year budget comparison be added to the monthly financial reports to track budget performance.
 - As of March, it appears our year-to-date pledge revenues are off an estimated \$30,000, half the \$60,000 level reported in January.
 - Reasons for the reduction in upcoming expenses may be attributable to the following:
 - Leadership transition of our priest to an interim priest at a potentially lower salary
 - Lower than the budgeted expense of a part-time facilities maintenance coordinator

- Budgeting of an assistant priest from July through the end of 2025 may no longer be needed with Deacon Pam's continued employment as Director of Pastoral Care.
- Parish Financial Audit expected May 11 or 12
 - The new treasurer, Rick, Karla, and Loraine will work with the auditor
 - Financial records have been prepared in advance of the audit.
- Margaret Bearden asked who had the authority to sign a 941 – Quarterly federal tax return by 4.30.25. Al Snell moved Rick Pearce to sign the document. Craig Allan seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously. Rick will confirm with the diocese and work with Margaret to facilitate the process.
- Columbarium – FR Eric
 - Not more than 50% of St. Philip's congregation has given a response to the columbarium issue. Approximately 36% gave feedback. A portion was supportive, with a lesser amount unsupportive.
 - ⊖ The Columbarium Committee provided a comprehensive report to the Vestry regarding data collected and opinions provided by parish members.
 - Al identified four reasons in addition to the current challenging economic environment:
 - Lack of overwhelming support
 - Issues with financial plan – not fully funded
 - Rector is in transition
 - Truly have not completed due diligence on all alternatives
 - A motion was made by Rick Pearce, seconded by Craig Allen, that recommended putting the columbarium decision on hold for an indeterminate amount of time. The motion was passed unanimously.
 - Communication Plan
 - An announcement will be made on Sunday, 4.12.25, by Fr. Eric.
 - The decision will be discussed at various chair and board meetings.
 - Each vestry member will be responsible for passing on information.
 - Payment Status Options
 - Refund of down payments
 - Funds held until a new decision is made about the columbarium
 - Option to direct funds to another parish need
 - Finance and Facilities has recommended that a new Columbarium Committee be formed to explore other options once a new parish priest has been appointed.

- Strategy Teams Overview:
 - #1 – Whole Person Ministry – Ross Lively
 - To reach more parishioners, Ross informed the vestry that Strategy #1 proposed alternative methods of reaching out to folks who may not use a phone, such as a box where people can put in a note requesting help. Fr. Eric suggested that Ross check with Ricky, who manages the Worship Team and oversees the Narthex, where such a box might be located.
 - #2 – Structure for Change – Paul Bailey
 - Analyzing the structure of the parish for resiliency
 - Establish and improve the budgetary process
 - 5 and 10-year plans for facilities and grounds. Pointing to the new hire of a part-time facilities coordinator on 4.28.25. Fr. Eric asked that this individual be present on Sundays. Paul will follow up.
 - A 5-10-year plan is underway for the future of the parish hall.
 - Ensure funding is set aside for future expenses, including a new roof and other extraordinary needs.
 - #3 – Grow the Church - Craig Allen
 - St. James Apothecary advertisements on bags are in place.
 - St. Philip's Swag (T-Shirts, Hoodies, Baseball Caps) sales are going well. Sales occur on the first Sunday of the month. The team is looking for a retail manager and will ask the parish at a future Ministry Minute.
 - The Ambassador Team is going well, although the responsibility is heavy and needs new leadership. They are looking for a new board chair.
- Warden's Time
 - Upgrade Annex – Liz Halbert, Outreach Chair, manages an annex upgrade with an architect. One builder came in with a \$200K estimate, which covered the renovation of the downstairs, an additional bathroom, and an upgrade of the kitchen, among other items. It was not considered a serious offer and will not be pursued.
 - Vestry Meetings occur on the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 4:00 PM unless otherwise noted. He asked that Vestry Members inform Lorraine or him if we cannot attend so that we do not need to reach out.
 - Any other sticky wickets?
 - Volatile political climate is creating some underlying anxiety
 - Economic instability may be impacting current pledge activity

- We must consider how to communicate information to our fellow parishioners while diminishing unnecessary gossip during this time of transition.
- Rector's Time
 - Fr. Eric suggested we include information about our three strategies in the church website with short updates. Name the strategy, include leaders, and a summary of their purpose and focus.
 - Holy Week begins this Sunday with Palm Sunday and ends with Easter. (See the bulletin and newsletter for the schedule. There is no Celtic Service.)
 - Vestry will provide breakfast for the clergy and choir on Easter Sunday. Please bring your dish at 9:45 AM.
 - Craig Allen is VPOD on Easter Sunday

Meeting Adjourned 6:04 PM

Next Meeting: Tuesday, May 20th, 4:00 pm

Motion to defer Columbarium Discussion:

"It is moved that the Vestry will defer any final decision regarding a columbarium on the grounds of St. Philip's until a later date. At such time that a new Rector has been established, additional feedback regarding demand is collected from the parish, alternative internment options are further researched, and our financial position fully supports it, this topic may be reconsidered by the Vestry."

Moved by Rick Pearce, seconded by Craig Allen, unanimously approved.

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