



## Vestry Meeting Minutes

March 24, 2025

### Attendance

Vestry Present: Heather Beard  
Lowell Dargbeh  
Sue Guptill  
Marty Nelson, *Sr. Warden*  
Mike Uhl, *Jr. Warden*  
Caroline Wang

Erin Gasch  
Sarah Johnson  
Jeff Pitts  
Richard Williams  
Emily Yeatts

Vestry Absent: John Bowman

Clergy: Rev. Maryann Younger, *Rector and Chair*

Guests: Duncan Krause  
David Kneeburg, *Clerk*

### Call to Order

The March meeting of the Vestry of St. Philip's Church convened on March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2025, at 6:06 PM in the Library with the Rector presiding. Heather led the group with a poem by Mary Oliver and a prayer from Jeremiah.

### Consent Agenda

1. February Minutes
2. February treasurer's report, simplified financial report
3. Rector's report
4. Senior Warden's report
5. Junior Warden's report

Three corrections were noted for the February minutes – next meeting date, spelling, and a correction to the CAN acronym. David will make changes before uploading the final version. Richard motioned to approve the consent agenda, Lowell seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

### Discussion

#### Retreat Debrief

Maryann asked the Vestry for their thoughts on the recent retreat at The Trees. The following is a list of some of the feedback:

- A Joyful meeting with a lot of openness
- Best vestry gathering in memory (going back to 70's and 80's)
- It is wonderful to include staff
- Conversation and discussions stayed with people after the event
- Concrete work was created and a list of actions formed
- Great confidence in Liz and Connie after seeing their Sacred Space presentation
- Suggested improvement - bring back a Friday evening event before the Saturday sessions.

#### Financial Planning for the year

Duncan led the group in outlining a plan for developing the 2026 budget. At the July 28th meeting, Vestry priorities will be requested, and first drafts will be ready by October. The Vestry discussed possible messaging to the parish ahead of the stewardship campaign, such as "if we raise this much, then..." and whether the church could estimate the projected 2025 deficit by July. Members noted that the deficit would be hard to predict due to unexpected repairs in the second half of the year. Marty inquired about the number of pledges typically known by October, to which Duncan replied that about 75% of pledges are in by then. Some parishioners wait until December because they don't know their next year's compensation until the end of the current year. Emily suggested adding a checkbox on the pledge form to pre-emptively ask for a follow-up call in December.

#### Phase II grant resolution

Maryann gave an update on the Phase II grant for "The Beloved Community at The Trees". As recommended from Bishop Sam, the total request is for \$70K with \$42K allocated to continue the work of Beloved Community, and \$28K for St. Philip's to support The Trees. Maryann asked the Vestry to provide a resolution for submitting the grant request at the end of this week. Grant awards are planned for May with fund distribution in June.

The Vestry discussed the specifics of re-evaluation after one year. Emily inquired about the data that should be gathered, Sue responded that, based on previous diocesan grants, a description of activities and feedback would be accepted as evidence.

Heather motioned to approve the resolution, seconded by Sue, the motion carried unanimously. The text of the resolution is listed below:

*The Vestry/Governing Body of St. Philip's Episcopal Church in Durham, NC supports the request for a \$70,000 grant from the Diocese of North Carolina for the*

*The Beloved Community at The Trees project.*

*The governing committee of this applicant church/organization agrees to accept full responsibility of the expenditure of this grant and all other monies raised through solicitations with the church/organization for the purpose set forth in Section A of this application, and further agrees to evaluate the effectiveness of this project after one year of operation. We also affirm that nothing in this project violates the doctrine, discipline and worship of The Episcopal Church.*

#### Discuss Committee Assignments

Marty proposed that the group split into committees for specific discussions. Erin raised a concern about the composition of the nominating committee for the 2026 Vestry selection. If the committee is primarily composed of graduating members, the institutional memory of the process might be lost. Heather offered to join the nominating committee.

The Vestry then divided into three groups: Outreach, Member Connection, and Bylaws

### Miscellany

Sarah asked about the next update on Youth programs. Maryann responded that she would present a summary at the April or May meeting.

### **Executive Session**

An Executive session was held.

### **Epistle Talking Points**

As published in the week following the meeting:

*The vestry met on March 22 for a staff-vestry retreat, on March 24 for their regular monthly meeting. Here's what happened:*

***Saturday's joint staff-vestry retreat at The Trees focused on 2025 goals, including member connection and sacred spaces.*** Vestry and staff members brainstormed ways to better engage new and long-time members and heard a report from the Sacred Spaces Committee on ideas for changes to the church interior, including ways to make our church more accessible and welcoming.

***Maryann presented an update on St. Philip's joint grant application with The Beloved Community at The Trees.*** In collaboration with The Beloved Community, St. Philip's is applying for a \$70,000 Mission Proceeds Disbursement grant from the diocese. Funds from the grant would support both The Beloved Community's ongoing work and our shared ministry at The Trees. The vestry approved a resolution in support, and Maryann will submit the application by the end of March. Learn more about these grants.

***The vestry also discussed the 2026 budgeting timeline and broke into committees to plan for the year ahead,*** starting agendas for the Outreach, Member Connection, and By-laws committees.

### **Adjournment**

Marty ended the meeting with a closing prayer and the Vestry adjourned at 7:34 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

David Kneeburg, Clerk of the Vestry