



St Philip's
episcopal church

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a church for all people

Vestry Meeting Minutes

February 23rd, 2026

Attendance

Vestry Present: Heather Beard
Jillian Downs
Marty Nelson, *Sr. Warden*
Andy Slaughter
Mike Uhl, *Jr. Warden*
Caroline Wang

John Bowman
Sue Guptill
Jeff Pitts
Natalie Sommerville
Bynum Walter
Emily Yeatts

Vestry Absent: None

Clergy: Rev. Maryann Younger, *Rector and Chair*
Rev. Gabe Lamazares, *Associate Rector*

Guests: Marcus Southern, *Treasurer*
David Kneeburg, *Clerk*
Connie Semans
Liz Sappenfield

Call to Order

The February meeting of the Vestry of St. Philip's Church convened on February 23rd, 2026, at 6:03PM in the library. Marty opened the meeting with a reading of an Ash Wednesday blessing by Kate Bowler.

Public Comments: Sacred Spaces

Connie and Liz provided an overview of the Sacred Spaces presentation. They reviewed the scope of work, including the history of previous construction and modifications to the church building. Historic images were shared to illustrate how the altar area has evolved over time.

They outlined key design priorities, using St. Philip's vision statement—worship, love, and action—as a guiding framework. These priorities focus on enhancing liturgy, improving accessibility and inclusion, and increasing design flexibility.

Connie and Liz recommended launching Phase Two of the Sacred Spaces project, which would address interior plaster and painting. The goals of Phase Two are to halt the ongoing and rapid deterioration of interior plaster, create a more inviting and beautiful worship space, establish a clear vision for the remaining work and fundraising, and build momentum for a capital campaign. The estimated cost for Phase Two is \$175,000.

Consent Agenda

1. December Minutes
2. January Minutes
3. Treasurer's report
4. Rector's report
5. Senior Warden's report
6. Junior Warden's report

Marcus presented the Treasurer's report where he noted that the church received \$1700 after redeeming credit card point earnings. Also he highlighted that an anonymous donor gave \$20K to The Trees. Expenses increased in January due to Christmas programs and preparations for the ice storm. Dean Dorton has signed the engagement letter to become the auditor for church finances in 2026.

Maryann, Sue, and John noted corrections for the December minutes, David to correct prior to uploading. Bynum motioned to approve the consent agenda, Emily seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Updates

Welcome and Introductions

Marty welcomed the newly elected 2026 vestry members—Jill, Andy, Bynum, and Natalie. She then led a roundtable introduction in which each vestry member shared a brief introduction, including whether this was their first, second, or third year on the vestry; their vestry or committee experience at St. Philip's or elsewhere; and what draws them to serve, whether seated in the pews or around the vestry table.

2026 Focus and Goals

Maryann also welcomed the new vestry members and spoke about high-level goals for 2026. She shared that the parish will continue the welcoming and parishioner-engagement work begun in 2025. In addition, she highlighted plans to introduce a ministry fair that would include outreach ministries and ministry leaders, with the goal of elevating and empowering the laity.

She noted that these are broad goals, with more detailed planning to be presented at the upcoming vestry retreat, which will include staff participation. Maryann also announced that she has scheduled a sabbatical from May through July, during which she plans to rest and recuperate. An official letter to the parish regarding the sabbatical will be sent tomorrow.

Discussion

Parochial Report

Gabe provided an overview of the annual Parochial Report process, noting that it is required by canon law and due on March 1. The report includes both membership and financial information for the church. Gabe and Laura Dearth, the bookkeeper, complete the report prior to submission.

Gabe also discussed the diocese's goals related to the Parochial Report, including understanding how churches impact their communities through outreach and engagement with members and their families. He noted the challenges of accurately tracking church membership, particularly during the transition from paper records to electronic record-keeping systems.

Sue motioned to approve the parochial report, Bynum seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Vestry Committees

Marty provided an overview to the vestry, presenting the vestry member job description, including responsibilities and expected time commitments. She also introduced the vestry committee structure for 2026.

Marty outlined the committees for the 2026 term, including Building, Grounds, and Technology; Community Connection; Finance; Outreach; Bylaws and Governance; Stewardship; Trees Development; Staffing; Nominating; and Urban Ministries.

Vestry members were given cards to indicate their committee preferences using a ranked-choice method, listing their top three areas of interest. Marty noted strong interest in youth programming and Urban Ministries. She also shared that the Community Connection Committee will be responsible for organizing the ministry fair.

Executive Session

An Executive session was not required

Epistle Talking Points

As published in the week following the meeting:

The vestry met Monday, February 23. Here's what happened:

Maryann and the vestry welcomed our four new members, elected at the annual meeting. After brief introductions, Maryann outlined goals and priorities for the year, including deepening community connections, supporting congregational growth, and renewing plans for a ministry fair to strengthen engagement across parish life and outreach.

Gabe presented the 2025 parochial report, noting the diocese's growing focus on community impact and engagement beyond Sunday worship. He shared encouraging news of renewed energy at St. Philip's, with attendance and participation continuing to rise since the pandemic. The vestry voted unanimously to approve the report.

Senior Warden Marty Nelson reviewed vestry committee structure and introduced two new committees – Youth Programming and UMD – reflecting growing engagement across the parish. Vestry members submitted preferences for committee assignments, which will be finalized at the next meeting.

Connie Semans and Liz Sappenfield shared an update from the Sacred Spaces Committee, celebrating Phase I accomplishments – including the new roof – and previewing plans for Phase 2. You're invited to the March 15 Sunday Forum to view renderings and learn more about the next chapter of caring for St. Philip's historic church!

The vestry discussed Maryann's upcoming sabbatical this coming May through July. Vestry members expressed strong support for this time of rest and renewal. More details will be shared in the coming months as we prepare for Maryann's time away.

Adjournment

Maryann ended the meeting with a closing prayer and the Vestry adjourned at 7:57 PM

Respectfully submitted,

David Kneeburg, Clerk of the Vestry