



## Vestry Meeting Minutes

November 24th, 2025

### Attendance

Vestry Present:

Sarah Johnson  
Jeff Pitts  
Caroline Wang

John Bowman  
Lowell Dargbeh  
Sue Guptill  
Marty Nelson, *Sr. Warden*  
Mike Uhl, *Jr. Warden*  
Emily Yeatts

Vestry Absent: Addis Crook-Jones  
Heather Beard  
Erin Gasch

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

Guests: Marcus Southern, *Treasurer*  
David Kneeburg, *Clerk*

### Call to Order

The November meeting of the Vestry of St. Philip's Church convened on November 24<sup>th</sup>, 2025, at 6:06 PM in the Library with the Rector presiding. Caroline opening the meeting with a reflection on "The Chambered Nautilus by Oliver Wendell Holmes.

### Consent Agenda

1. October Minutes
2. Treasurer's report
3. Rector's report
4. Senior Warden's report
5. Junior Warden's report

The vestry asked for corrections to the October minutes clarifying credit card outreach usage and adding nominating committee member names. David to correct before archiving. Sarah motioned to approve the consent agenda, Jeff seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

### Updates

Stewardship

Marty summarized year-to-date pledge numbers – 164 pledges versus 115 at the same time last year. Also a difference of \$675K vs \$635K in total amounts. Vestry reminder calls to members have been effective, totals-to-date have allowed some analysis of pledging trends and level setting.

### The Trees

Emily reviewed recent news from The Trees. The newly formed development committee has met twice, mostly working on reviewing historical plans and ideas. Maryann noted that these are the hard times with a new endeavor when transitioning from discernment to development – ideation to action. The vestry agreed to “give them grace” to continue to explore possibilities.

### Response to Tuesday Letter

Maryann updated the vestry on responses to her Tuesday Letter to the parish on November 11<sup>th</sup>. The letter described details behind illegal drug activity on the church campus after hours. Maryann met with our neighboring churches downtown -- which have all seen an uptick in drug activity in the last 6-8 months. She has also scheduled a separate meeting with HEART (Durham’s Holistic Empathetic Assistance Response Team). The increase in activity could be a consequence of UMD’s staff cuts in March.

### Urban Ministries Durham Collaboration

Marty met with Vicki from UMD to plan the upcoming (December 14<sup>th</sup>) adult formation session. The relationship needs caring – it is not as strong as it was before the pandemic. Marty has personally invited active members to the session. We need to search for a leader to resume dialogue and plan with UMD in the coming years.

### Global Missions Committee

The GMC’s budget line for Bromley and Haiti donations, previously set at 0.7%, lapsed after COVID. GMC now seeks funding to support Bromley and is considering collaboration or merging with Outreach. Sue reported on Liberia support and committee history. There’s discussion about reorganizing GMC, which also raises funds through chocolate and coffee sales. No specific requests at this time—just raising awareness to restart resolutions and rebuild relationships.

### Nominating Committee

Sarah summarized the latest developments from the vestry candidate search. At this time, there are no “yes” commitments, but the upcoming Vestry 101 adult formation session could yield some improvement on the numbers. Maryann asked to view the current spreadsheet and asked if there was any representation from the 8:00 service group.

## **Discussion**

### Budget

Mike and Marcus provided an update on the draft budget, reflecting on progress since the previous vestry meeting. At that meeting’s conclusion, members had indicated their comfort levels with a potential deficit by submitting responses on note cards. The consensus was that a modest deficit would

be acceptable, but larger shortfalls were not favored. Duncan presented version 6 of the budget spreadsheet, which incorporated the latest figures from pledges and plate income.

To facilitate the discussion, Marcus introduced four distinct budget scenarios. Mike encouraged the vestry to evaluate each budget category by considering both the appropriateness of the amount and the timing of expenditures. These scenarios were displayed on flipchart paper for all to review during the meeting:

Budget 1 \$128K Deficit

Fully funds Personnel increases; the Vestry's request for COLA for staff, health insurance increases, Vestry Salary increases, PT Security

Fully funds the increased Outreach budget.

Fully funds The Trees' increased budget.

Budget 2 \$48k Deficit

50% of the proposed increases for Personnel

50% of the proposed increases for Outreach

\$22k Decrease from the FY2025 Budget for the Trees (~30% cut)

Budget 3 \$60K Deficit

100% of the proposed increases for Personnel

100% of the proposed increases for Outreach

\$22k Decrease from the FY2025 Budget for the Trees (~30% cut)

Budget 4 "Luke" \$93K Deficit

100% of the proposed increases for Personnel

100% of the proposed increases for Outreach

No change to the Trees Funding from FY2025 to FY2026

The vestry engaged in a detailed discussion, seeking clarification on the proposed scenarios and specific budget line items. Members emphasized the importance of clear messaging, recognizing that—regardless of which scenario is ultimately chosen—expectations must be managed and many requests will need to be scaled back. While there was general agreement around Budget #3, everyone concurred that further dialogue is necessary. The group decided to reconvene on December 8th during the finance committee's scheduled time to continue the conversation and address any outstanding questions. To support those unable to attend, Marcus offered to create a brief video explaining the budget scenarios in more detail.

## **Executive Session**

An Executive session was not required.

## **Epistle Talking Points**

As published in the week following the meeting:

*The vestry met Monday, November 24. Here's what happened:*

***The vestry discussed renewing our commitment to our downtown neighbor, Urban Ministries of Durham.*** Members acknowledged how COVID and the loss of federal funds in Durham's safety net has created challenges for UMD, and wondered how we can step up to help and boldly welcome all. The vestry invites you to come explore this question at the December 14 Sunday Forum, when we'll gather ideas for uplifting our neighbors.

***The vestry discussed recruiting candidates for next year's vestry class.*** Please consider running! Serving on the vestry is a meaningful way to support your fellow parishioners, and we welcome people from all backgrounds to participate and collaborate. If you're undecided, mark your calendar for the December 21 Sunday Forum, "Vestry 101."

***Junior Warden Mike Uhl and Treasurer Marcus Southern guided the vestry through a range of fiscal scenarios*** regarding St. Philip's 2026 budget for the remainder of the meeting.

## **Adjournment**

Maryann ended the meeting with a closing prayer and the Vestry adjourned at 8:29 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

David Kneeburg, Clerk of the Vestry