



Vestry Meeting Minutes

December 15th, 2025

Attendance

Vestry Present: Addis Crook-Jones
Heather Beard
Erin Gasch
Sarah Johnson
Jeff Pitts
Caroline Wang

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

Vestry Absent: -

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

Guests: Marcus Southern, *Treasurer*

Call to Order

The December meeting of the Vestry of St. Philip's Church convened on December 15th, 2025, at 6:30PM at the Rector's home with the Rector presiding. Erin opened the meeting with a prayer.

Consent Agenda

1. November Minutes
2. Ad hoc December 8th minutes
3. Treasurer's report
4. Rector's report
5. Senior Warden's report
6. Junior Warden's report

Upon motion made and seconded, the vestry approved the consent agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

Updates

Nominating Committee

Erin summarized the latest developments from the vestry candidate search. There were several candidates confirmed and roughly twenty people remaining on the outreach list with varying levels of

interest. In many cases, people asked to be contacted in the future or were interested in getting more involved in church ministries.

Downtown Church Conversations

Maryann reported on a meeting with HEART (Durham's Holistic Enthusiastic Assistance Response Team) and police representatives. They shared there was a rising rate of disturbance calls as well as police staffing challenges to address the need. New officer academies were expected to help address capacity issues in 2026. The next step was _____

Bylaws Amendments

Emily shared progress on the proposed by-law amendments regarding remote attendance and nominations. Parishioner feedback had been received through open meetings and feedback forms. There was strong support for allowing remote attendance and electronic voting at the Annual Meeting and there was a preference to reduce the number of nominees from eight to six.

The Bylaws Committee proposed amendments to allow electronic attendance at annual and vestry meetings, reduce the minimum number of vestry candidates from 8 to 6, and clarify that electronic voting technology could be used. The vestry discussed allowing more than 6 candidates to be on the slate, while maintaining that the nominating committee would aim to present 6-8 candidates.

Upon motion made and seconded, the vestry unanimously approved the amendments to the bylaws including allowing for both paper and electronic ballots, to reduce the minimum number of candidates to six, and to give the Bylaws Committee discretion to clarify the process for additional nominations from the floor.

Discussion

Budget

The vestry meeting focused on budget discussions for the upcoming year, with particular attention to funding outreach initiatives, staff salaries, and the Trees program. The group placed a priority on all three of these areas in service to the strategic plan and promise of St. Philips to the community. Significant expense reduction had been accomplished from utilities management and savings from new solar panels. The vestry requested that the Finance Committee provide a balanced budget for action at the January board meeting, that includes a 4.5% revenue increase over 2025. The Outreach Committee will make also final recommendations for the distribution of outreach funds at the January meeting.

The vestry discussed additional ways to support the Trees as it works to become more financially independent. These included guidance to the Trees on additional grant opportunities and connection with potential grant writing support and exploring the possibility of supporting the trees with a deacon or other clergy resources.

Executive Session

An Executive session was not required

Epistle Talking Points

As published in the week following the meeting:

The vestry met Monday, December 15, convening at Maryann's house for a festive December meeting. Here's what happened:

Updating our bylaws: *Thank you to everyone who gave feedback about the proposed changes to our bylaws – stay tuned to hear more soon about the recommended updates. We'll vote on proposed changes at the annual meeting on February 1 (mark your calendars)!*

Want to help shape St. Philip's? *We're shaping up to have a wonderful slate of vestry candidates – and it's not too late to consider running. Come to this Sunday's 10am forum, Vestry 101, to get your questions answered. If you're ready to put your name in the hat, reach out to a nominating committee member: Lowell Dargbeh, Erin Gasch, Sarah Johnson, Jeff Pitts, Shamiaka Rhinehart, Liz Sappenfield or Caroline Wang.*

Budgeting! *The holy work of budgeting continues, and we're deeply grateful for all your pledges thus far. In an era of significantly rising insurance premiums for our amazing clergy and staff – and alongside our commitments to worship, youth programming, ministry at The Trees, and sharing our gifts with our Durham and global communities – we warmly invite you to prayerfully discern your pledge to St. Philip's. **Your pledge will allow this work to flourish without a budget deficit.***

Adjournment

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

Respectfully submitted,

David Kneeburg, Clerk of the Vestry