



St Philip's
episcopal church

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Vestry Meeting Minutes

May 26th, 2026

Attendance

Vestry Present:	Heather Beard	Sue Guptill
	Jillian Downs	Jeff Pitts
	Marty Nelson, <i>Sr. Warden</i>	Natalie Sommerville
	Andy Slaughter	<i>Bynum Walter</i>
	Mike Uhl, <i>Jr. Warden</i>	Emily Yeatts
	Caroline Wang	

Vestry Absent: John Bowman

Clergy: Rev. Gabe Lamazares, *Associate Rector*

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

Call to Order

The May meeting of the Vestry of St. Philip's Church convened on May 26th, 2026, at 6:05PM in the library. Mike opened the meeting with a prayer for leaders.

Consent Agenda

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

The vestry requested pulling out the April financials for discussion. Jeff asked about an apparent double-counted item in the budget deficit. Marcus will review with Laura. Marcus spoke about the strong 1st quarter income results.

Sue motioned to approve the Treasurer's report, Bynum seconded and the motion was carried unanimously.

Sue motion to approve the consent agenda, Jeff seconded, and the motion was carried unanimously.

Updates

Anti-Racism survey results

Sue presented St. Philip's responses to a diocesan-wide anti-racism survey compiled from ministry leaders across the parish. The survey showed impressively broad, parish-wide understanding of what anti-racism actually means — not just passive welcoming, but active work. The group discussed how to release the information to the congregation. The report will be shared via Grace for communications/website use, included in the Annual Report, or made available as printed copies.

Audit Report

Marcus gave an overview of the audit process – delivery is expected within the first two weeks of June. The audit must be voted on and submitted by August 1st. Discussion proceeded regarding a potential remote June vote prior to the next vestry meeting – if the audit is clean and uncontroversial.

Intergenerational funding

Gabe provided an overview of the diocesan Lilly grant for intergenerational worship and education programming. St. Philip's is one of 22 congregations selected across 6 convocations; the grant supports capacity-building around intergenerational engagement. Emily Sparks is shepherding the committee process; results/programming likely in the fall.

No June Meeting

Marty reminded the vestry that a meeting is not scheduled for June, but it's possible that a remote vote and/or update may be necessary.

Discussion

The Trees

Emily led a discussion on how to structure The Trees as a separate or semi-independent entity. She began collecting objectives and constraints from the group.

- Objectives include clearer decision-making, better grant eligibility (some funders prefer non-Episcopal recipients), and interfaith partnerships.
- Constraints include IRS rules, land covenants, and stewardship of Jacqueline Harris's gift.

The vestry brought up the following points during the discussion:

- Multiple vestry members pushed back on "they vs. us" framing; Laura and Henry are St. Philip's employees — there is currently no separate entity.
- Concern raised: the farther The Trees moves toward independence, the harder it is to justify retaining the land without selling it.
- Creating a separate identity gives the Beloved Community and long-term partners stability and a sense of belonging, not just guest status.

- A written covenant or statement of purpose for the "development phase" is missing and needed for future vestry reference.
- Discussion ranged from a long-term land lease model (like UMD) to full conveyance with claw-back rights.

Parking Proposal

Mike presented a proposal for a managed paid parking solution to address unauthorized use of the church lot.

- Problem: Employees from nearby offices park all day for free; the lot is unmanaged and creates safety and access issues.
- CarPark proposal (Option C): ~\$250/month in fees; 75/25 revenue split; license-plate-based enforcement using a roving camera vehicle; "barnacle" device for repeat violators.
- Finance Committee recommended matching downtown day rates up to \$25/day to deter all-day parkers while keeping short visits affordable.
- Parish members, staff, and regular groups can be permanently validated by license plate; temporary validations available for occasional visitors.
- Free parking in nearby county decks noted as an alternative for those who don't want to pay.

Bynum motioned to move forward with Option C with CarPark, Marty seconded and the motion was passed unanimously.

Episcopal Housing Ministry

Marcus presented the background and proposed RFP for distributing \$300,000 in EHM funds. St. Philip's received \$300,000 when the Episcopal Housing Ministry liquidated its affordable housing properties post-COVID; funds must be deployed within 3 years of receipt. Marcus proposed three granting pillars:

1. Investment – "seed money", not the ceiling
2. Concentrated impact – not spread thin
3. Development – construction, maintenance, rental assistance (not services alone)

A discernment committee will grade proposals and bring recommendations to the vestry in September. Marcus requested a vote on the release of the letter-of-intent/request for proposals to the parish. Sue motioned to approve, Emily seconded and the motion was passed unanimously.

Sacred Spaces

An update was presented on the Sacred Spaces project. Sacred Spaces received more funding than requested; the approved budget fits within those funds. Summer AV work (microphones, cameras, receivers, charging docks, additional channels) was not originally in the three planned phases but is needed now to enable live-streaming during the summer sanctuary move. Equipment will serve both the temporary space and the sanctuary once work is complete. Heather motioned to approve the purchase of AV components, Bynum seconded, and the motion was carried unanimously.

Executive Session

An Executive session was not required

Epistle Talking Points

As published in the week following the meeting:

The vestry met Monday, May 25. Here's what happened:

Parking improvements are moving forward. The vestry approved plans to implement a managed parking system for the church lot, helping address long-standing issues with all-day parking by employees of neighboring businesses. The goal is to ensure that parking remains available for parishioners, visitors, and church staff. Parking will continue to be free and easy for those using St. Philip's; we'll share more details as plans develop.

St. Philip's affordable housing grant is entering its next phase. Marcus Southern presented plans for identifying projects to receive support from the parish's \$300,000 Episcopal Housing Ministry grant. The vestry approved a request-for-proposals process that will invite local organizations to share ideas for projects that preserve or expand affordable housing. Recommendations are expected to come before the vestry this fall. Learn more about the grant and application process

A diocesan survey highlighted St. Philip's ongoing anti-racism work. Sue Guptill presented results from a diocesan survey of anti-racism efforts in local congregations. The survey showcased a wide range of work taking place at St. Philip's, from pilgrimages and educational programs to outreach partnerships and truth-telling initiatives. The vestry expressed appreciation for these efforts and discussed ways to share the results more broadly with the congregation. Stay tuned!

The Trees continues to gain momentum. Vestry members discussed the ongoing growth and development of The Trees. The Trees Development Committee will continue sharing regular updates with the vestry as progress and plans take shape. To learn more about upcoming programs, events, and opportunities at The Trees, visit The Trees' new website: www.thetreesdurham.org

Adjournment

Gabe ended the meeting by starting a round-table expression of thanksgiving and the Vestry adjourned at 7:48 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

David Kneeburg, Clerk of the Vestry