



Love with the heart of Christ, think with the mind of Christ, and act in the world as the Body of Christ.

Vestry Meeting January 19, 2025, 11:45 AM, Vestry Conference Room

PRESENT: Rev. Suz Cate (Rector), Mel Harriss (Senior Warden), Bob Taylor (Treasurer), Hap Wheeler, Martha Williams, Katherine Sosebee, Betty Snowden, Charlie Curtis, Mark Stokes, Jody Hunter, Andrew Baker, Will Brown

ABSENT: Jean Ellen Zavertnik, Sarah Trice, Chris Heerwagen (Junior Warden), Chesley Rowe

GUEST: Lori Graham, Bill Loeffler

OPENING WORSHIP: Mtr. Suz

Discussion followed on Chapter 5 *When Church Stops Working*

CALL FOR ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA:

Vote on Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer for the coming year.

OLD BUSINESS

1. **Approval of December 2024 Minutes:** Hap Wheeler made a motion to approve the minutes from the December meeting; seconded by Betty Snowden. Motion passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

1. **Treasurer's Report** [Bob Taylor]: The items listed in **ATTACHMENT A** were discussed and/or voted on as follows (*note: page numbers reference the full financial reports distributed to Vestry members prior to the meeting*):
 - A. **The Finance Committee's Review of the December 31, 2024 Financial Statements** (pages 3-7):
 - a. The First Citizens checking account is higher than needed, and a transfer of \$50,000 to the Edward Jones account is being processed (page 3).
 - b. It appears that pledge income will be \$18K (page 5) short of budget, but 2024 total income will exceed 2024 total expenses by \$8K (page 6). (the projected surplus for 2024).
 - c. Review of other financial incomes and expenses were deferred to the consideration of the 2025 Operating SOM
 - B. **A Summary Report on pledges and plate offerings for 2024:** The anonymous spreadsheet of giving units (which include data for the past 3 years and pledges for 2025) was reviewed, but little insight was obtained on the larger than usual non-collection of pledges in 2024 and the absence of the usually large December collections. Summary of 2024 Contributions:
 - a. 99 pledging unit pledged \$477,104.00 for an average of \$4,819.23
 - b. \$452,070.29 pledge income was collected for a 94% collection percentage, typically about 96 to 97% is the collection percentage.
 - c. 65 pledging units exactly met their pledges.
 - d. 20 pledging units exceeded their pledges. Most of the overages were small.

- e. 14 pledging units did not meet their pledges. Only two of these deficits were significantly large.
 - f. There were 38 non-pledging units. Only a half-dozen of these units had large contributions (\$1.3K to \$13K).
 - g. 99 pledging units pledged \$483,315.00 for 2024 for an average pledge of \$4,881.97
 - h. Slightly less than a dozen units which pledged and met their pledges in previous years have not yet pledged. Their total pledges were about \$30,000 in each of the previous years.
 - i. Jody Hunter reported that our Stewardship campaign has resulted in 101 pledges for a total of \$489,315 pledged thus far. Our goal is \$522,000. They are following up with those who pledged last year but not yet this year, and they also will send out a thank you to those who have pledged and ask everyone for support in meeting our goal.
- C. A Finance Committee recommendation on St. Paul's undesignated plate offerings:** The Finance Committee unanimously recommended that the Vestry rescind the transfer of St. Paul's undesignated plate offerings to the Renovation Fund and return it to the Operating Income category starting in February 2025. (page 4)
- a. ***Motion from the Finance Committee to rescind the transfer of St. Paul's undesignated plate offerings to the Renovation Fund and return it to the Operating Income category starting in February 2025. No second to the motion is required. Motion passed unanimously.***
- D. Finance Committee's Endorsement of Episcopal Day School Budgeting:** The Finance Committee reviewed the following:
- a. December 31, 2024 EDS financial statements
 - b. Proposed EDS Budget for 2024
 - c. Proposed EDS Budget for January thru June 2025 (pages 8-10)
 - d. The Finance Committee endorsed the planned change to a July to June EDS budget year and the submitted EDS budget for January thru June 2025. The EDS program appears to be very productive and financially sound with the awarding of grants over the past 3 years.
 - e. The Finance Committee recommends that the Vestry approve the 2024 EDS final financial statements listed on pages 17-21 of this full report.
 - i. ***Motion to accept EDS budget by Hap Wheeler. Seconded by Betty Snowden. Motion passed unanimously.***
- E. The Finance Committee's Recommended 2025 Trinity Place SOM (pages 11):**
- a. The planned increase of season football parking passes from \$850 to \$1000 provides an increase in total income which compensates for the dwindling individual contributions since the Doors campaign ended September 2024.
 - b. Budgeted income of \$114,500 exceeds planned expenses of \$113,400, and there are excellent prospects for additional principal only payments which will continue to shorten the loan's payoff date of December 2033 for the Trinity Place loan.
 - i. ***The recommendation to approve the 2025 Trinity Place SOM comes from the Finance Committee and needs no motion or second. Motion passed unanimously.***
- F. The Finance Committee's Recommended 2025 Operating SOM (pages 12-14):** The extensive set of Vestry comments provided for the November Draft of the SOM and Hap's December comment on the goal of 10% operating allocation for outreach provided ample guidance for arriving at the final recommended 2025 Operating SOM. An apology to Hap is included on pages 12-14. Fine tuning changes of the 2024 December Draft to this recommended 2025 Operating SOM include:

- a. A slight adjustment in the income section from \$579,900 to \$582,000.
 - b. The Diocesan Assessment being increased from \$65,000 to \$67,000.
 - c. Fellowship being increased from \$4,000 to \$5,000.
 - d. Direct Outreach being increased from \$32,000 to \$35,000.
 - e. Facilities Budget being decreased from \$80,000 to \$78,500 as more information on expected premiums became available.
 - f. Approval of salaries changes effective January 1, 2025 is included in this proposed SOM.
 - i. ***The recommendation for approval comes from the Finance Committee, so no motion or second is needed. Recommendation passed unanimously.***
- G. Finance Committee recommendation on the 2024 Operating surplus, estimated to be about \$8,000.** It is recommended that the 2024 Operating Surplus of \$8,177.78 be distributed as follows:
- a. to compensate for the loss of funds to Trinity Place via the barter arrangement with Palmetto Smokehouse that \$2,880 of the operating fund surplus from 2024 be transferred to the Trinity Place Fund,
 - b. \$4,797.78 be transferred to the Assistant Priest Fund.
 - c. Everyone be provided with a \$500 bonus for the extra work she has done after normal working hours and on weekends.
 - i. ***Vestry unanimously approved the Finance Committee's Recommendation for the 2024 Operating Surplus.***
- H. Motion to accept Treasurer's report by Hap Wheeler. Seconded by Charlie Curtis. Motion passed unanimously.**

2. Legacy Fund Committee Recommendation for Disbursement:

- Disburse \$5,500 to
 - \$550 tithe to Outreach with the preference for local outreach
 - \$2950 to the Assistant Priest Fund
 - \$1000 to St. Paul's for maintenance of the grounds
 - \$1000 to the SAME Garden
 - ***The Vestry voted unanimously to approve Legacy Fund Committee Recommendation for Disbursement.***

3. Review and Approval of 2025 Statement of Mission:

- See Treasurer's Report above for details on the review and approval.

4. Review of Agenda for Annual Meeting 1/26/2025:

- We will use last year's agenda with the addition of commissioning ALL vestry members. Hap Wheeler and Mel Harris will present information from the Mutual Ministries Survey. Stewardship will give an update during the Finance section of the meeting.

5. Schedule Vestry Welcome/Orientation/February Meeting:

- Tentative date 2/22/2025, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

6. Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer for 2025.

- ***Betty Snowden made a motion to name Bob Taylor as Treasurer and Dorothy Meeks as Assistant Treasurer; seconded by Mark Stokes. Passed unanimously.***

REPORTS

1. **Mutual Ministries Survey Report Review/Comments** – Hap reviewed MMS Report sent to Vestry earlier in week. It will be presented and distributed at the Annual Meeting.
2. **Junior Warden’s Report: See ATTACHMENT B.**
3. **Rector’s Report: See ATTACHMENT C.** Mr. Suz said that Anna Fitch Courie, who wrote *Walking with God*, wants to come and do a book signing. She also gave heartfelt thanks to Betty Snowden, Mark Stokes, and Jean Ellen Zavertnik for their years of service to the Vestry.
4. **Senior Warden’s Report: See ATTACHMENT D**

TREASURER AND ASSISTANT TREASURER FOR 2025:

- **Motion to name Bob Taylor as Treasurer and Dorothy Meeks as Assistant Treasurer by Betty Snowden. Seconded by Mark Stokes. Passed unanimously.**

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING: January 26, 2025 following the 10:00 a.m. Service.

CLOSING PRAYER

Respectfully Submitted,

Martha Williams, filling in for Rebecca Eidson Diemer, Clerk to the Vestry
Edited by Rebecca Eidson Diemer

**Revised Treasurer's Report to the Vestry
Bob Taylor, January 19, 2025**

This report has:

- A brief review of the December 31, 2024 financial statements
 - A summary report on pledges and plate offerings for 2024
 - A Finance Committee recommendation on St. Paul's undesignated plate offerings
 - A Finance Committee endorsement on EDS budgeting
 - The Finance Committee recommended 2025 Trinity Place SOM
 - The Finance Committee recommended 2025 Operating SOM
 - A Finance Committee recommendation on the 2025 Operating surplus, estimated to be about \$8,000.
- **The Finance Committee's Review of the December 31, 2024, financial statements (pages 3-7) was very brief and is summarized by the following comments:**
 1. The First Citizens checking account is higher than needed, and a transfer of \$50,000 to the Edward Jones account is being processed (page 3).
 2. It appears that pledge income will be \$18K (page 5) short of budget, but 2024 total income will exceed 2024 total expenses by \$8K (page 6). (the projected surplus for 2024).
 3. Review of other financial incomes and expenses were deferred to the consideration of the 2025 Operating SOM
- **The anonymous spreadsheet of giving units (which include data for the past 3 years and pledges for 2025) was reviewed, but little insight was obtained on the larger than usual non-collection of pledges in 2024 and the absence of the usually large December collections. Summary of 2024 Contributions:**
 - 99 pledging unit pledged \$477,104.00 for an average of \$4,819.23
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 - There were 38 non-pledging units. Only a half-dozen of these units had large contributions (\$1.3K to \$13K).
 - 99 pledging units pledged \$483,315.00 for 2024 for an average pledge of \$4,881.97
 - Slightly less than a dozen units which pledged and met their pledges in previous years have not yet pledged. Their total pledges were about \$30,000 in each of the previous years.

- **The Finance Committee unanimously recommend that the Vestry rescind the transfer of St. Paul's undesignated plate offerings to the Renovation Fund and return it to the Operating Income category starting in January 2025.**

- **The Finance Committee reviewed the following:**

1. December 31, 2024 EDS financial statements
2. Proposed EDS Budget for 2024
3. Proposed EDS Budget for January thru June 2025 (**pages 8-10**)

The Finance Committee endorsed the planned change to a July to June EDS budget year and the submitted EDS budget for January thru June 2025. The EDS program appears to be very productive and financially sound with the awarding of grants over the past 3 years.

The Finance Committee recommends that the Vestry approve the 2024 EDS final financial statements listed on pages 17-21 of this report.

- **The Finance Committee's Recommended 2025 Trinity Place SOM is on pages 11.**
 1. The planned increase of season football parking passes from \$850 to \$1000 provides an increase in total income which compensates for the dwindling individual contributions since the Doors campaign ended September 2024.
 2. Budgeted income of \$114,500 exceeds planned expenses of \$113,400, and there are excellent prospects for additional principal only payments which will continue to shorten the loan's payoff date of December 2033 for the Trinity Place loan.
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 5. Facilities Budget being decreased from \$80,000 to \$78,500 as more information on expected premiums became available.
 6. Approval of salaries changes effective January 1, 2025 is included in this proposed SOM.

- **It is recommended that the 2024 Operating Surplus of \$8,177.78 be distributed as:**
 1. *to compensate for the loss of funds to Trinity Place via the barter arrangement with Palmetto Smokehouse that \$2,880 of the operating fund surplus from 2024 be transferred to the Trinity Place Fund,*
 2. *\$4,797.78 be transferred to the Assistant Priest Fund.*
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ATTACHMENT B

Jr. Warden's Report

December, 2024

Roof Insurance Claim (status) – we received an Acceptance of Proposal contract from Dolly's Roofing that will kick-off the work (once signed) at the Thrift shop and both buildings / bell tower at Holy Trinity. We are working through some verbiage issues within both the contractual terms and scope of work sections. We are scheduling meetings in late January as it pertains to getting a structural analysis what's needed at St. Paul's church.

Part-Time Sexton / Jr. Warden Assistance – the search is underway for a part-time Sexton, seeking a handy-person that is willing to work 2 days per week. Also, the Jr. Warden has put out an official call for help knowing that role is well beyond that of a single volunteer. By the end of January, we hope to have in-place a team of ministers who are willing to help tackle open issues. This team is absolutely needed above and beyond the part-time Sexton if we expect to stay on top of all buildings and grounds related needs impacting our parish

Landscaping / Addison Lane cut-through traffic – Elias Outdoor Services installed new holly bushes along Addison Lane. They also installed large sized boulders to prevent vehicles / bicycles from driving down the grass hill by the stairs. They installed temporary fencing to protect the new plantings, but will return next month to use a different type of fencing that will hold-up better in high winds. Mulch in the holly beds will finish off Phase 1 of this project – we plan to leave a cut through path for pedestrians until the plants take solid hold.

St. Paul's Thrift Shop – December was a busy month for repairs. 1st we had to have the entire HVAC system replaced due to age and issues with the gas furnace. 2nd we had to replace the instant-hot water heater in the kitchen. Finally, Elias Outdoor Services spread grass seed and straw around the areas along the parking lot that got disrupted when the new water line was installed earlier this year.

Rodent Gone Wild (St. Paul's Church) – no kidding, we had an alarm call-out issue at St. Paul's church that prevented us from resetting the alarm system after it tripped. Carolina Burglar was dispatched and discovered that a rodent had chewed through a wire that runs in the crawl space under the church. That caused the laser-style motion detectors that protect the altar area to lose connectivity. Wire spliced / issue resolved!

St. Paul's – Tree Damage – Tree South has rescheduled the work for major tree removal / pruning until the end of January, 2025. They will coordinate the use of a crane to remove the huge water oak that was damaged last summer. We hope to use a crane that is small enough to maneuver through the gates so we don't have to disrupt power to the Thrift Shop while the work is taking place.

St. Paul's Restoration (status) – no change – this project is on-hold pending getting a new roof installed. Still looking to rebid the actual restoration work (painting / wood repairs) later this year. Project likely tracking for re-start in Spring, 2025. A 2nd update was sent to the Parish in the August / September version of Tempo.

St. Paul's Fence Damage – this project is on-hold pending the completion of the tree removal work in the churchyard. Clemson University thinks they can secure a team of students to remove the damaged chain-link fence along Elm Street. We still need estimates on the new fencing we'll need to buy. Targeting Spring, 2025.

St. Paul's Land Swap Proposal (status) – no change to report – we still have not received an offer from the developer (John Gumpert). Any efforts to move forward with conducting an official survey ahead of any possible negotiations will push into 2025. We still plan to use the data / maps put together by Parishioner John Wilson to resolve obvious property border issues within the Anderson County Tax Mapping system.

Parking Update – the Finance Committee recommended to the Vestry that we put the Pay for Park proposal On Hold until Spring, 2025. The reason for the delay is to address any potential tax implications as part of a hard audit that will be conducted by an outside firm in the April timeframe. Meanwhile, Evyone reported that we collected 100% of our annual revenues for Merchant Parking in 2025. Spaces sold for \$40 per month and are reserved Mondays through Fridays from 8am until 5pm. We are still awaiting the report from Death Valley Towing as to the number of vehicles actually towed in December.

Few Tidbits – Anderson Mechanical fixed a bad compressor in the refrigerator in the main kitchen that was on the verge of failing. They also performed a service on the Warming Oven to ensure it is operating as designed. Chesley Rowe is working to build a custom box to hold historical brochures for guests visiting the St. Paul's churchyard (his plans are being shared with the St. Paul's committee).

Future Items (Heading into 2025)

Improved Lighting over Choir area – will likely add similar black spot-light fixtures now that we also have a few burnt out bulbs that need to be replaced up in the Nave rafters.

Security Committee – need a team leader (to be discussed at Vestry annual kick-off).

Master Door Keys – Chesley Rowe and the Jr. Warden will likely present a proposal for a long-overdue upgrade needed at both Holy Trinity buildings. Target Spring, 2025 for review.

Possible HVAC Unit Swaps – moving forward with replacing the small unit that serves the Sacristy area and adjacent hallway in January, 2025.

Testing / Inspection Calendar – Jr. Warden to work with Wesley Ramey to create (eta = 2025).

Choir Room expansion needs – possibly designating a 2nd room for Choir storage (C Curtis place holder).

ATTACHMENT C

Rector's Report January 2025

Worship

Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services were exceptional last month. Our Children's Service had 185 in attendance, the 7:00 service had 85, and there were 70 at St. Paul's for Christmas Eve. The Christmas Day service had 32 people, including those who were cooking and prepping for Meals on Wheels. Two families of 4 came to the service, one attended last year specifically to help us serve the MoW Christmas Dinner, and the other family saw our service listed on the website and came to join us. They said it was the most meaningful service they've attended in the Christmas season.

January brings us two new Christians to celebrate as we baptize them into the household of God. We began the year with a special Epiphany service featuring a visit from the Three Kings and a wonderful time of fellowship. There is no denying that people are being drawn to worship with us and find it to be both welcoming and Spirit-filled.

I've tabulated our attendance for 2024, and I'm happy to report that our Average Sunday Attendance has increased 12.5% over last year's ASA.

Formation

We still struggle to provide meaningful formation for families with children, given the pattern of attendance. We have 4 or 5 children whose parents bring them consistently (meaning 2 or 3 times per month), and several more whose parents bring them about once a month. This presents great challenges for Children's Sunday School.

The Youth/Confirmation Class meets on the 3rd Sunday of each month, and the attendance there is pretty steady. The class almost always has 7-9 youth in attendance. That class is led primarily by me, with Hap Wheeler, Bill Purkerson, and Lori Graham sitting in. Many thanks to Hap for teaching the youth about the Creeds.

Our most recent initiatives, *The Path* Bible challenge and the Discovery Class have seen great enthusiasm and interest. We have handed out 50 copies of *The Path* to adults in the parish and to Canterbury Students. I have about 8 or 9 people planning to attend the Discovery Class.

Staff

Each member of our staff continues to work exceptionally hard, with strong collaboration. Eeveryone, especially, has been putting in long hours, often from home during the school holidays and snow day. Wesley has juggled many requests and responsibilities with grace and skill, while Jerae continues to grow the Fellowship and work of the parish. Wesley and Jerae collaborate every other week to ensure that the calendars and communications are in sync, a complicated task given the many activities that are populating our calendar these days. The Personnel Committee is working on the recruitment of our new Sexton.

Assuming that the SOM that includes funding for the hiring of the new Assistant to the Rector is passed, I have been working with our Sr. Warden to plan for a call team to be assembled in early February. Their first task will be to craft a job description for the Vestry to approve as soon as possible.

My Continued Formation

I will be attending the Pastor Boot Camp in February. I have a meeting scheduled week after next to discuss with the Sermon Roundtable director the details of implementation in the parish. I'm looking forward to both opportunities to grow and learn as your rector.

ATTACHMENT D

Senior Warden's Report

Senior Warden Report—January 19, 2025

The New Year is off and running. I am excited that we have a full slate of candidates for the Vestry for 2025. Betty Snowden did a wonderful job of recruiting candidates on the Nominating Committee and her hard work is very much appreciated.

I feel that our Parish is growing. It was exciting to see all the families with young kids at January's First Sunday. Jerae does a wonderful job of welcoming families and seeing that activities and snacks are available and enjoyed by all.

The Memorial Service for Jim Hylkema was filled with love as we remembered Jim's spirit and all that he offered to Holy Trinity. Mtr Suz honored Jim's wishes while providing a service that supported his family, co-workers and the Parish. It was a special afternoon. The pizza and wings at the reception were well received by all.

ECW's Food for Thought was well attended on Thursday, January 16. Rachel Rowe, speaking for our Outreach Committee, did a wonderful job informing us about the unhoused population in our community and how we can be aware of their needs and humanity. The discussion was lively, resources and ideas were shared. There was a lot of Food for Thought.

This will be the last meeting for Betty Snowden, Jean Ellen Zavertrnik and Mark Stokes. I came onto the Vestry with these three and they have taught me so much. I am so grateful for their hard work as we have gone through the highs and lows of the last 3 years at Holy Trinity. I will miss seeing you at these meetings but look forward to seeing you at Holy Trinity. I ask that you continue to pray for Holy Trinity's leadership as you move off the Vestry.

Peace,

Mel Harriss Sr. Warden