



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

**Vestry Meeting, February 22, 2025, 1PM, Vestry Conference Room**

**PRESENT:** Rev. Suz Cate (Rector), Mel Harriss (Senior Warden), Chris Heerwagen (Junior Warden), Bob Taylor (Treasurer), Hap Wheeler, Sarah Trice, Katherine Sosebee, Charlie Curtis, Jody Hunter, Andrew Baker, Will Brown, Lori Graham, Bill Loeffler, Betty Baldwin

**ABSENT:** Martha Williams

**OPENING PRAYER:** Mtr. Suz

Today's meeting was held immediately following the annual Vestry Retreat.

**OLD BUSINESS**

1. **Approval of January 2025 Minutes:** *Hap Wheeler made a motion to approve the minutes from the January meeting; seconded by Katherine Sosebee. Motion passed unanimously.*

**NEW BUSINESS**

1. **Treasurer's Report** [Bob Taylor]:
  - a. **Church Finance 101:** Bob provided an overview of parish finances, mainly for the benefit of new Vestry members.
  - b. **Treasurer's Report:** See **ATTACHMENT A**. The following topics were discussed - all relevant details are provided in Attachment A.
    - i. An abbreviated report on the January 31, 2025 financial statements.
    - ii. The proposed 2025 Outreach Budget.
      1. ***The proposed budget comes from the Finance Committee; no second needed. Vote taken, motion passed unanimously.***
    - iii. Planning for the 2024 & 2025 financial reviews/audits.
    - iv. Miscellaneous on-going Finance Committee activities.

***Hap Wheeler made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report; seconded by Charlie Curtis. Motion passed unanimously.***
2. **Thrift Shop Request:** The Thrift Shop board has asked for Vestry approval to donate \$5000 each to Clemson Community Care and Pendleton Community Center. ***Chris Heerwagen made a motion to approve the Thrift Shop request; seconded by Jody Hunter. Motion passed unanimously.*** It was noted that the Thrift Shop also provides funding to support the upkeep and maintenance of St. Paul's.
3. **Annual Parochial Report:** The Vestry reviewed the Parochial Report presented by Mtr. Suz. It provides statistical data and other information about Holy Trinity to the Diocese and is submitted each year. ***Hap Wheeler made a motion to approve the Parochial Report; seconded by Lori Graham. Motion approved unanimously.***

4. **Calling Process for Assistant Rector:** Mtr. Suz received the Diocesan procedures for calling a full-time assistant priest and the formal letter of agreement that the Bishop will sign with his approval. She will share this information with the Vestry. It includes a parish profile consisting of twelve questions. A search committee has been formed and the job description for the position is being finalized. We will post the job opening on appropriate job sites. The Committee will seek Vestry input once a pool of candidates is formed. It was noted that we have a special fund established to pay for the position; in future years it will need to be an operating fund line item. This is a commitment of faith on the part of the Vestry. Notably, the Diocese will subsidize the salary of an in-state candidate; if the candidate is from out of state, the Diocese will only subsidize the salary if we, as a parish, are current on our Diocesan pledge. We hope to have an Assistant Rector in place by this summer.
5. **Insurance Review Report:** Mel Harriss and Chris Heerwagon reported that a representative of the church's insurance agent made a site visit. The review went well with only a few small citations that have been resolved. The representative suggested in the future we consider raising our deductible to save on premiums. There was some discussion about the pros and cons of doing so; we will revisit the topic when the renewal date comes up next year
6. **Junior Warden Report:** See **ATTACHMENT B** for details. Chris also reported that we have hired a part-time sexton - Jeff Johnson, who is also a member of our Parish. The position is funded for fourteen hours a week, but he is available to work more hours if needed. Chris reported that he has obtained some church volunteers to serve on his Ministry Committee to assist with projects. The volume of projects to manage the upkeep of two church facilities is beyond the scope of a single volunteer Junior Warden.
7. **Parish By-Laws:** We need to review the Parish Bylaws and incorporate a statement previously approved by the Vestry that allows the Vestry to fill empty seats between Annual Parish Meetings. It also is a good time to review the Bylaws in totality. Unfortunately, at this time we are having difficulty locating the most current version of the Bylaws. Once located, Mtr. Suz asks that a Vestry group assist with the review.
8. **Rector's Report:** Mtr. Suz talked about church attendance, which she is pleased with, as well as several upcoming events, including the funeral for Boo Wilson, Shrove Tuesday Supper, Ash Wednesday, and Lenten Suppers.
9. **Unity in All Communities:** Abel Baptist Church, a mostly minority congregation, is continuing its efforts to hold an annual event that unifies all churches. They plan to start a spring event, which will likely take place in April. Several other churches, mostly minority churches, are involved, as well as a growing number of non-minority churches. Hap Wheeler encouraged the Vestry to get involved. He will share additional information as it becomes available.
10. **Next Vestry Meeting:** The next Vestry meeting will take place on March 16 after the 10:30 service. Likely there will be no April meeting due to a busy Church calendar. May 4 was tentatively scheduled as the next Vestry meeting. All will be confirmed by Mel Harriss.

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

Respectfully Submitted,

Rebecca Eidson Diemer, Clerk to the Vestry

## ATTACHMENT A

### Treasurer's Report to the Vestry Bob Taylor, February 22, 2025

This report has:

- An abbreviated report on the January 31, 2025 financial statements
  - The proposed 2025 Outreach Budget
  - Planning for the 2024 & 2025 financial reviews/audits
  - Miscellaneous on-going Finance Committee activities
- **Review of the January 31, 2025 financial statements (pages 3-7).**
    1. Too early in the year to detect any trends, but no danger signs are present. Month to month fluctuations, quarterly payments, closing of 2024 financial statements in mid-January and early printing of the January 31<sup>st</sup> financials are all reflected in the statements.
    2. A Designated Gift of \$2,500 to the Operating Fund and \$2,500 to Outreach was made in December. The \$2,500 will be recorded as other income in the Operating Fund Treasurer's Report. Outreach has been advised that the \$2,500 can be expended from the Designated Gift Fund in addition to the allocated \$35,000 for Outreach in the 2025 Operating SOM.
    3. The absence of the SOM line item of \$30,000 in the Treasurer's Operating Fund Report will be corrected in the February financial statements.
  - **The Finance Committee reviewed the Proposed 2025 Outreach Budget (page 9).**
    1. The determination of the appropriate allocations of the Outreach budget is the purview of the Vestry. Hence, the endorsement by the Finance Committee is based more on consistency with previous Outreach budgets and alignment with the 2025 Operating SOM.
    2. The 2024 Vestry approval expenditure policy is given on page 8. Note that **The outreach committee will present a budget for the whole year as soon as possible after the first of the year. After vestry approval, they may spend their budget as approved without additional approval.** The undesignated category provides flexibility for decisions during the year, and the Vestry is apprised of allocations from the designated category when they are determined.
    3. Recall that the Outreach Committee also has access to the \$2,500 in Designated Gifts and \$550 from the 2024 Legacy Fund in addition to the \$35,000 budgeted in the Operating SOM for 2025.
  - **On going Finance Committee activities**
    1. The Finance Committee is examining bank drafts for some vendors to supplement the current predominant practice of writing checks and mailing payment. Dorothy will work with Evyone to prepare a list of vendors where First Citizens PC banking could be used for electronic payments (with paper documentation used for audit purposes), possible bank drafts for vendors whose payments are preapproved by inclusion in the SOM, and payments for vendors which should remain check and postal mail payment. The list will be reviewed and acted upon in the next Finance Committee meeting.
    2. Assistant Treasurer Dorothy Meeks has begun planning for the 2024 Financial Activities Review Committee (which should be in action by May) and preliminary

planning for the external audit for the 2025 Financial Activities. Bob will request suggestions for members of the Review Team from the Vestry.

3. The Finance Committee had an extensive discussion of the 501(c)(3) tax code, non-profit organizations, distinctions between Unrelated Business income (which is subject to taxes) and Related Business income which is not subject to taxes for non-profit organizations. FC members were asked to continue to study the issues for a continued discussion in a future FC meeting.

## ATTACHMENT B

### Jr. Warden's Report

January, 2025

**Roof Insurance Claim (status)** – we continued to work through some verbiage issues with Dolly's Roofing before we will agree to sign their contracts. We hope to have this resolved and everything finalized in February – targeting Spring Break to have the work completed at Holy Trinity (the Thrift Shop soon thereafter).

**Part-Time Sexton / Jr. Warden Assistance** – we conducted an interview with a very strong candidate at the end of January (who is also a recent addition to our parish). Background checks and contractual terms will be completed in early February, with the intent of him starting in the middle of the month. Gathering volunteers for our team of project ministers is well underway and I expect to kick off that effort by the end of next month. Having these 2 initiatives in place is critical to being able to tackle the building and grounds related issues that arise throughout the year knowing this task is beyond the capacity of having only 1 volunteer Jr. Warden.

**Landscaping / Addison Lane cut-through traffic** – the temporary fencing installed to protect the recently planted holly bushes failed in high wind conditions. That will be replaced by a wooden-picket style border fence next month. Mulch has been added to the beds to help retain moisture and improve aesthetics. We also plan to install signage to encourage people to use the concrete walkways (along with a 4-foot cut-through path).

**EDS Heat Issue** – during a very cold streak where temperatures barely got above freezing, a service call was made to Electric City due to heat only reaching the mid 60's in several EDS classrooms. Electric City fixed issues with 2 of our heating systems, but also identified blocked vents and thermostat setting errors that contributed to the problem. We are working with Stephanie to create signage to keep the vents clear and we're looking into options to keep the thermostats locked on schedule.

**St. Paul's – Tree Damage** – Tree South has completed over \$11,000 of tree removal and tree pruning work that was approved by the Vestry last Fall. A huge crane was needed to remove the big water oak in the middle of the churchyard that was damaged by storms in an effort to ensure none of the adjacent tombstones got damaged during this process. Tree South did an excellent job cleaning up after all of the targeted trees were either cut down or pruned.

**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). The project is tracking to re-start in Spring, 2025 (after the new roof gets installed).

**St. Paul's Fence Damage** – this project was put on-hold pending the completion of the tree removal efforts mentioned above. This includes removing an old / damaged chain-link fence, and adding some decorative fencing to the woods-line along Elm Street. This will be added to the list of open issues for the team of project ministers to help with – likely 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). Efforts to move forward with conducting an official survey ahead of any possible negotiations will likely happen in the Spring. We 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.

**St. Paul's Brochure Box** – kudos go out to Chesley Rowe for building a beautiful wooden box to hold brochures for the general public to learn about the history of St. Paul's church and churchyard. The new box has been installed on the main staircase railing in front of the church.

**Phone System Upgrade – Holy Trinity** – kudos to Mark Stokes for working with Evyone Washington, along with several service providers to look into upgrading the phone system at Holy Trinity. They expect the new system will be installed in February – replacing a 20+ year-old system that has been experiencing lots of issues.

**Parking Update** – the Finance Committee reported that the Diocese will not require external audits of our financial processes until 2026. Therefore, the Finance Team will revisit the Pay for Parking proposal and likely solicit professional input on potential tax implications for doing so. The Parking Team will be led by Martha Williams in 2025. Daily Merchant Parking has been paid for the entire year in the Trinity Place lot (\$40 per spot per month). Starting in February it will be time to kick off preparations for the upcoming football parking season. The season ticket price in 2025 was raised from \$850 to \$1000 per space. Death Valley Towing reported a total of 19 vehicles towed in the month of December and only 4 towed in the month of January. Keep in mind that Clemson was closed for winter break for 3+ weeks over these 2 months.

**Few Tidbits** – adding water to a couple of traps in the attic (custodian sink and water heater drain) behind the Archives Room helped to drastically reduce some odor issues in the Parish Hall. This task will be added to the Sexton's role every 2 weeks. We will monitor to see if further action is needed to prevent odor-related issues. The Jr. Warden is working with Sarah Trice to make further updates to the Jr. Warden's manual so the office staff has a better reference when issues arise pertaining to HVAC, Fire and Burglar alarm matters. Finally, a new keypad drawer was installed in the desk of our Finance Administrator

#### **Future Items (February, 2025 and beyond)**

1. 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. Meeting schedule with Golden Corner Electrical in February to obtain pricing.
2. Security Committee – need a team leader (to be discussed at Vestry annual kick-off).
3. 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.
4. Possible HVAC Unit Swaps – moving forward with replacing the small unit that serves the Sacristy area and adjacent hallway in early February, 2025.
5. Testing / Inspection Calendar – Jr. Warden to work with Wesley Ramey to create (eta = 2025).
6. Choir Room expansion needs – possibly designating a 2<sup>nd</sup> room for Choir storage (C Curtis place holder).