

St. Paul's Episcopal Church  
Vestry Meeting Minutes  
August 11, 2025

**PRESENT:** The Rev. Caleb Lee (Rector), Barbara Ellington Banks, Steve Bucci, Tori Cannon, Karen Day, Carol Field (Rector's Warden), Steve Haughey (People's Warden), Anne O'Dell (Clerk), Scott Sheble (Treasurer), Denise Sheehan (via Zoom), Frank Wolf.

**ABSENT:** Cecelia Peers, David Tousignant.

**OPENING PRAYER:** Fr. Lee called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm and Steve Bucci opened with prayer.

**APPROVAL OF JUNE MEETING MINUTES:** A motion was introduced by Tori Cannon and seconded by Karen Day to approve the Vestry Meeting Minutes from June 9, 2025. The motion passed unanimously, and the minutes were approved as written.

**RECTOR'S REPORT:** Summer worship attendance has been steady. This past Sunday we had very strong numbers with 210 at the 10:30 service and 19 at the 8:00 am service; many were present for Fr. Michael Singer's last Sunday at St. Paul's.

During our month-long hiatus, the summer schedule continued with Summer Arts Camp in late June, and Glory Ridge in mid-July. We also had our 90-day reviews for new employees Lynne Rooks and Jeanne Fitzpatrick. Following this process, Jeanne's hours were adjusted to match her actual hours worked, and she was provided with health insurance. These adjustments are within the existing budget, as health insurance funds initially allocated for Lynne became available when she declined coverage. Fr. Lee added that Lynne and Jeanne were both excellent hires, and he is grateful to the HR Committee for the successful implementation of the hiring policies and procedures.

The Parish Retreat, originally scheduled for Labor Day weekend, has been canceled due to low interest. No funds were forfeited as a youth retreat at Trinity Center is in the process of being organized for the weekend of November 7-9. Over the summer, Fr. Lee was in conversations with clergy from St. Andrews On-the-Sound, Church of the Servant, and St. James regarding the need to get our Wilmington area youth together. From these conversations emerged a plan to hold larger quarterly events for youth ministries from all the local Episcopal churches. The retreat in November will be a Wilmington area youth retreat. Isaac McDowell has been working hard to help to ensure the success of this retreat.

As previously noted, this past Sunday was Fr. Singer's last day at St. Paul's. He will begin his ministry at St. Andrews On-the-Sound as Interim Rector on August 24. While it is sad to see him leave, Fr. Lee fully supports his new ministry. Fr. Singer has the needed skills and experience to assist St. Andrews On-the-Sound at this time of transition. It is the right decision for St. Andrews and for the greater church. Yesterday's celebration for the Singers and their ministries at St. Paul's was greatly appreciated by Michael and Teresa.

No decision has been made regarding a replacement for Fr. Singer. During transitions such as this discernment is needed and required. In the meantime, there is approximately \$6,000 budgeted for clergy assistance through the end of the year. Catherine Powell will cover in September while Fr. Lee is at Happening. James Green is also available to preach, although he cannot celebrate the Eucharist. Fr. Singer will cover the Wednesday service when Fr. Lee takes some time away at the end of August, and in case of an emergency, St. James could spare one of its four priests. There are other people in the area that Fr. Lee may speak with, but he has no intention of rushing into a decision. Fr. Lee recognizes the increased responsibilities he now bears, particularly in relation to pastoral care. While he is currently managing these duties, he will need assistance to ensure that nothing is overlooked, especially when he is out of town. Recruiting clergy to assist with pastoral care on a part-time basis is difficult due to the 'on call' nature of this ministry. Plus, there is a clergy shortage throughout the church.

St. Paul's had 3 college students apply for grants from the Lehto Foundation. These grants are awarded first to St. Paul's college students, and if none apply, then the money is awarded to other Episcopal churches. The 3 students received a total of \$58,000 based on need. St. Paul's serves as an intermediary, receiving the funds

from the Lehto Foundation and then forwarding the money directly to the institutions. If tuition bills have already been paid, we will reimburse the families.

Fr. Lee shared a few final items of interest. The June 18 concert at Bowstring Burgers and Brewery was well attended and raised over \$4,000 for the youth mission trip to Glory Ridge. Proceeds from the purchase of food were approximately \$200, which was less than expected, but Fr. Lee indicated that he would consider returning to this venue for future fundraising events.

Next year, St. James youth will be joining St. Paul's, Wilmington, and St. Paul's, Beaufort, on the mission trip to Glory Ridge. The team from the Cathedral in Charleston will not be returning with the group. This is part of the effort to build connections among our youth locally and within the diocese.

During July, Fr. Lee met individually with his program staff to plan the program year and then the entire team met together to review the calendar to ensure that everyone was fully aware of all church planning.

This fall as part of his training, James Green will lead the adult faith formation classes. The topic is the Book of Common Prayer from beginning to end.

Fr. Lee will be away during the last week of August.

The Blessing of the Backpacks is scheduled for the 10:30 am service on August 24. Following the service, there will be a ministry fair for children and youth and an ice cream social in the parish hall.

#### **PEOPLE'S WARDEN REPORT-JUNE 2025** The following was submitted in writing prior to the meeting.

##### Parish Hall and Church

- Flores & Foley could not locate the source of the leak but caulked the NW corner of Parish Hall roof on Tuesday, June 3. We have not experienced any further evidence of rain incursion.
- The dishwasher stopped working during the Sunday reception on June 6. HOBART was contacted on Monday, June 7 for a service call.
- Salt Rock Builders installed the Arch in the North Stairwell on Wednesday, June 19.
- No longer valid SENTINEL Alarm Codes for OC and PH have been removed from the Security System. Outside door access codes have also been deleted.

##### Ormond Center

- The window blind in the Mechanical Room was installed June 12.

##### Hospitality/Activities

- St. Paul's Yard Sale June 5-7 raised almost \$6,000.
- SPEC at Sharks Baseball Game on Thursday, June 12.
- Bowstrings and Brewery Concert Wednesday, June 18 featuring Fr. Caleb Lee.
- Summer Fine Arts Camp was held June 23-27 with 35 attendees.

##### Grant Update

- Beginning to do the legwork for the LEHTO and Diocesan Grants. Both will need to be ready for submission by late August.

##### Looking Ahead

- Glory Ridge Youth Trip July 20-25.

#### **PEOPLE'S WARDEN REPORT-JULY 2025** The following was submitted in writing prior to the meeting.

##### Parish Hall and Church

- SENTINEL conducted a fire alarm inspection on Thursday, July 3. No issues were found with our systems.
- LRPC Sub-Committee toured the Church and Parish Hall on Wednesday, July 16.
- The compressor for unit HP-1B has failed. SEHVAC quoting \$3827.75 to replace. Installation is expected during the week of August 4.
- A capacitor on unit HP-11 was replaced and new Freon added after the unit stopped working.
- Met with SILKWOOD on Thursday July 24 to inspect east and west sides of the Parish Hall windows. The paint on a number of windowpanes is peeling. SILKWOOD will make repairs/touch-up. Exact date will be sometime in August. There will be no charge for this work.

- Telecom network review for both the Parish Hall and the OC was started during the month. The intent is to properly document all wiring schemes within the networks and clean out old wiring that is no longer usable or of service.

#### Ormond Center

- Salt Rock Builders repaired the ceiling in the Rectors' Office on Monday, July 21.
- Kitchen sink and faucet may need replacing.

#### Hospitality/Activities

- Glory Ridge Week July 20-25.

#### Looking Ahead

- Blessing of Backpacks on Sunday, August 24.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** Scott Sheble presented the Monthly Treasurer's Report, which compares the proposed annual budget for 2025 to actual year-to-date figures.

For the seven months ending July 31, 2025, St. Paul's reported total income of \$527,999, which is 53.9% of the total annual income budgeted for 2025 (\$979,000). Total expenses for the same seven months amounted to \$520,006, which is 53.1% of the total annual expenses budgeted for 2025 (\$979,000). Net income as of July 31, 2025, was \$7,993.

Other account balances as of July 31, 2025, were reported as follows:

Wells Fargo Investments (Endowment Fund)	\$1,008,517
First Carolina Reserves	\$99,262
Wells Fargo Special Gifts	\$93,430

Scott also reviewed the status of the capital campaign as of July 31, 2025:

Total Pledges (2024-2027)	\$1,460,823
Total Gifts	628,403
Total Pledges & Gifts	<u>\$2,089,226</u>
\$2.5M	84%

We have raised approximately 84% of the \$2.5 million needed for Phase 1 & Phase 2 renovations. The outstanding pledge payments were as follows: \$5,776 for 2024; \$211,034 for 2025; and \$354,559 for 2026. It was asked if outstanding pledge payments from 2024 will need to be written off. Scott indicated that the finance office is still working with the donors, and he will have more information next month. It was also suggested that with inflation and other items that will crop up during construction that our target number is probably closer to \$2.7 million.

With no further discussion, the Monthly Treasurer's Report was unanimously accepted.

**BUDGET REALLOCATION:** The overall budget was unchanged at \$979,000, but reallocation of funds was recommended by the treasurer and finance manager. Funds were shifted from areas of surplus to areas with shortfalls to ensure that monies align with current ministry needs. The changes were approved by the Finance Committee at this morning's finance meeting.

The finance office has transitioned to Realm, which has helped with the budgeting process. Karen Day has also done significant work on Realm with membership information. Soon parishioners will be able to sign up through a secure portal to receive statements as well as access an online church directory. It is not possible to make payments through this system.

With no further discussion, the Budget Reallocation was unanimously accepted.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:** The following reports were submitted in writing prior to the meeting.

**Membership:** The Membership Committee is co-chaired by Karen Day and Lisa Sanders-Park, working closely with Head Usher and Head Greeter. We welcome newcomers and guide them through the process to membership. As well, Membership plans events to help old-timers forge new connections and to embrace newcomers into the church family.

Period: 1/1/2025 to 8/5/2025

Transfers In Since January 1, 2025: 13  
(2 new to this report; transferred in 6/26/2025)

#### Prospects

Definition: Newcomers or visitors who have signed guest book or filled out a visitor card

# of Current Prospects: 61, needs to be culled based on usher/greeter input about attendance

# of Active Prospects: 17 (attend regularly and some even serve on committees)

#### Events

- Monthly dinner groups: 34 signed up and assigned to 4 dinner groups. The season kicked off at the Erways' on May 18. The four dinner groups have leaders and have met in June and July; August dinners are starting up.
- Occasional pop-up dinners: First pop-up dinners were held April 27 in three homes (Karen Day, Lynda and Ron Miller, Brian and Lisa Sanders-Park). 28 of the 62 who signed up participated. 29 have signed up for August 17. We did not get enough hosts to hold in homes, so will be in groups of 8-10 in three restaurants.
- Newcomers' Social: Lisa Sanders-Park and Karen need to plan for October.

#### **Capital Campaign/Building Update:**

July 15, 2025: Subcommittee walkthrough with Steve Haughey, Mona Clites, and Caleb Lee.

The subcommittee consists of William Gwathmey, Rob Nipper, and Darren Jones.

August 7, 2025: Report from Mona Clites

We had a meeting with Gray yesterday and have information to get together next week and make our outline of a plan for selecting a contractor.

I asked Gray about the structural engineer and repairs - he says that there are no repairs that will need to be done at this time - it is for making the final plans and for when we do construction.

The original blueprints - he still wants to keep them as he has digitized them but he says that they still look at them because some of the details get lost in the digitized version and they go to the originals to see them. We will get them back - he just appreciates having them for the details right now.

Our next steps are to determine how we want to proceed with the selection process. I think that the sub-committee has ideas and they listened to Gray as well so we had a lot of conversation and once we can get together again as a subcommittee, I think we can narrow it down a bit - yesterday was a brainstorming all over the place conversation - now I hope to start getting focused and organized with a step by step plan.

**Stewardship:** As of July 31, 2025, pledge payments are \$25,000 ahead of payments made at the same time last year. Stewardship Campaign 2026: The theme this year will be "Tell Out My Soul". The "ask" letter will be mailed to the congregation on October 8. The drive will conclude on In-gathering Sunday, November 16.

#### **Community Ministries:**

Apr. - May

1. Sent second part of initial \$1,000.00 payment to 2Share for their operational expenses.
2. Delivered \$3,000.00 to Good Shepherd for their operations of feeding and housing.
3. Contributed \$200.00 to the Blessing Box
4. Posted "Save the date" notification for Diaper Drive and finalized donation options.
5. Gave \$500.00 to Kids Making It for supplies for ongoing projects.
6. Donated \$600.00 to V.O.Y.A.G.E to support after-school programs, mentoring, and snacks.
7. Spent 2 days introducing Rev. Deacon Green to many of our partners and EDs

**Human Resources:** See notes in Rector's Report.

#### **Children, Youth & Family:**

August events include:

- August 7: Jungle Rapids Waterpark

- August 24: Blessing of the Backpacks (during the service) and a Children & Youth Ministry Fair following the service. The Ministry Fair will offer information on upcoming events and share the group's vision to prospective members and their parents.

Looking ahead:

- EYC Kickoff on September 7th including "Coffee & Conversation". This is an opportunity for students in grades 6-12 to meet at 9:30am to discuss how to apply God's word to our lives
- September 18th-21st: Happening at the Trinity Center. More information to follow.

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

**Election of New Vestry Member:** Four parishioners stepped forward to be considered for the vestry vacancy. Each submitted a brief written statement outlining their experience, qualifications, and reasons for wanting to serve on the vestry. All candidates are suitable to fill the vacancy, and it is hoped that those not elected to this position will consider standing for election to the vestry in the new year. After weighing the current needs of the church and carefully considering each candidate, Denise Sheehan made a motion to nominate Mait DuBois to fill the vestry vacancy; the motion was seconded by Karen Day and unanimously approved. Mait is a cradle Episcopalian and a retired engineer. He previously served as Jr. Warden at St. John's, and he will fill an important void when both Steve Haughey and David Tousignant roll off the vestry early next year.

**Approval of Diocesan Grant Request:** The Grant Team is requesting vestry approval to submit a grant to the Foundation of the Diocese of East Carolina. We are requesting \$25,000 to help finance the purchase and installation of new exterior, double front doors. The existing doors are damaged beyond repair because of exposure to the southern sun, harsh weather conditions, and leaks in the front exterior wall. In addition to serving a functional purpose, these doors are the face of St. Paul's on Market Street, and a powerful symbol of our Episcopal faith. And while it is beyond the scope of the grant, in 2026 the church has plans to install a permanent metal and glass awning-like canopy above the front entrance to help protect the doors from the elements and extend their useful life. Steve Bucci made a motion to approve the diocesan grant request; it was seconded by Barbara Banks and unanimously approved.

**Organ Console Proposal:** At Fr. Lee's request, Brendan Conner has begun to explore the cost of a new organ console. He received a preliminary estimate from Parsons Pipe Organ Builders in Canandaigua, NY in the amount of \$340,000-\$350,000. There is no urgent need to replace the existing organ console and additional research is required, but it's important for the vestry to be aware of future needs for long-term planning purposes.

## **OLD BUSINESS:**

The vestry's request to the Endowment Board for \$1000 to cover the cost of shared expenses for the 1858 Circle Choral Evensong (2024) remains pending.

With no additional business before the vestry, the meeting was adjourned at 7:19 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne O'Dell,  
Clerk of the Vestry